



ISSN 1835-2340

❖ **Marginalising Multiraciality in Miss Saigon: an Analysis of Print Media's Effect on People of Mixed Race**

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Introduction

In March 2007 a new season of the musical *Miss Saigon* opened in Australia, advertising itself as "Now more than ever the classic love story of our time" (Miss Saigon Australia website, 2007). As "one of the most successful musicals in the world" (Miss Saigon Australia website, 2007) the production garnered a significant degree of media coverage. The themes of the production however, are more ambiguously addressed. While ideas and controversies surrounding imperialism and war are remarked upon by a number of articles, with comparisons drawn between Iraq and the Vietnam War, print media is significantly silent regarding concepts of multiraciality.

This silence is noteworthy, as the dilemmas which the central characters of the musical experience, and the ultimate tragedy which occurs, hinge not only on a situation of war, but also on concepts of race and racial inequalities.

The musical itself is not free of racial stereotyping and, as this paper demonstrates, could be interpreted as reinforcing racial hierarchies of power. However, it openly acknowledges that ideas of race, interracial romance and the experiences of multiracial children form a core aspect of the production. Multiraciality therefore is, while arguably tinted with historical stereotypes regarding 'Eurasians', nevertheless openly addressed.

The silence with which the Australian print media passes over these concepts is even more notable when considered in relation to its sudden and prolific interest in individuals who are 'mixed race' and 'Eurasian', particularly when those individuals are young, sexy and female. A search of Australian articles from 2000–2008 reveals that a significant portion of articles that contain the word 'Eurasian' connote the word with beauty and sex, and often relate these images with Australian multiculturalism. The Australian print media, therefore, is not completely unaware of multiraciality. On the contrary, it finds it newsworthy when it involves exotic concepts of beauty which work to promote Western culture. But while *Miss Saigon*

presents the print media with a very specific opportunity to explore or acknowledge multiracial issues, experiences and concerns, this opportunity is met with a politically significant silence. Furthermore, the marginalisation of multiraciality by print media could also be interpreted as racism, for it "intentionally or not, results in the continued exclusion of a subordinate group" (Nicole, 2001: 6).

This paper aims to analyse representations of multiraciality in print media in relation to *Miss Saigon* and ideas of multiracial beauty, and the implications these representations have regarding race relations in Western culture. In the context of this paper, the term 'print media' is employed to encompass newspapers and magazines, including articles and opinion pieces. The themes of the musical itself are also analysed, in relation to racial stereotypes. Post-colonial theory, in particular the ideas of Edward Said and Homi K. Bhabha, are also drawn upon in order to inform the analysis of the texts and explore their implications, as are academics within multiracial studies. Finally, interviews with four young Eurasian Australians are also presented to aid an awareness of the effects of cultural representations on individual feelings and experiences.

Miss Saigon

While the 'continued exclusion' and 'absence' of Eurasians in the print media reflects an imbalance in reporting and a lack of sensitisation to multiracial concerns, it can also be linked back to the genesis and the structure of the musical itself. Written by Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schönberg and first performed in 1989, *Miss Saigon* was inspired by an amalgamation of Giacomo Puccini's opera *Madame Butterfly* and a photograph of a Vietnamese mother sending her child to America to be with her ex-G.I. father (Schönberg in *Miss Saigon Souvenir Programme Australian Tour 2007-2008*, 2007: 3). Although, as has been mentioned, *Miss Saigon* openly addresses issues surrounding multiraciality, the musical itself is riddled with stereotypical presentations of race and could be interpreted as ultimately reinforcing dominant racial hierarchies and divisions. The characters of Chris and Kim fall easily into stereotypes regarding relationships between white men and Asian women, a move which is facilitated by the musical's basis on Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*. Puccini's opera arguably haunts the text, as the central plot line of *Madame Butterfly* remains unchanged in its incarnation as *Miss Saigon*, with the result that the underlying theme of 'the classic love story of our time' is identical to that of an early twentieth century opera rife with ideas of orientalism and imperialism.

Another key area which bears an uncomfortable similarity with *Madame Butterfly*, is the musical's treatment of multiraciality. In Puccini's opera, the Eurasian son of Pinkerton and Cio-Cio San is represented by a puppet, which, intentionally or not, dehumanises multiracial children. While *Miss Saigon* is not so blatant in its discrimination and casts live children in the role of Tam, it is notable that the character does not speak or sing. In a piece of musical theatre, this absence takes on increased importance, as the use of the voice is a signifier of status and a tool to engage the audience's sympathy. By relegating the multiracial child to silence, the musical engages in an act of racial repression.

It could be argued that Tam's silence is balanced by the loquacity and charisma of the production's other Eurasian character, the Engineer. However, the Engineer, of French and Vietnamese heritage, is portrayed as an immoral, self-serving, untrustworthy, degenerate pimp. In short, he conforms to derogatory stereotypes of multiracial people stemming from the

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The intersections of a musical production, print media, perceived truth and racial stereotyping, all of which will be explored throughout this paper, are revealed succinctly by Alain Boubilil, who refers to the Engineer as "an actual Vietnamese type that many French and English journalists have encountered" (Boubilil in *Miss Saigon Souvenir Programme Australian Tour 2007-2008*, 2007: 10). Boubilil's use of the word "actual" to convey truth and reality is reinforced by its link with French and English journalists, since Western Europeans and journalists are associated with rationality, objectivity and what is factual. The 'authority' of these sources compounds Boubilil's own engagement with racial stereotyping, confirming that, in fact, there is a group of people who form a 'type' of Eurasian Vietnamese who is base and dishonourable.

By representing its two multiracial characters, both of whom are highly significant to the plot of the musical, as at once the epitome of a stereotype and as something silent and dehumanised, *Miss Saigon* becomes complicit in the propagation of racial stereotyping and discrimination. This complicity is compounded by its loyalty to the structure of *Madame Butterfly*. In order for Tam to be accepted by his white father, his Asian mother, and by extension the Asian-ness within him, must die. The death of what is Asian wins Tam the 'American Dream'. The life of what is Asian, however, condemns him to an illegitimate existence as the half-caste child of a prostitute.

Regardless of its intentions which were to portray "a tragic period of modern history - a time when...a basic misunderstanding between two people could reflect the deeper misunderstanding between their respective countries at war" (Boubilil in *Miss Saigon Souvenir Programme Australian Tour 2007-2008*, 2007: 10), a brief analysis of *Miss Saigon* reveals that ultimately, it remains fixed in stereotypical and hierarchical ideas of race. What is white American survives and prospers, with the potential for a bright new future, while what is not white degenerates and dies. The in-between is faced with the option of assimilation into the white American, or the moral decay represented by the Engineer.

Media representations of *Miss Saigon's* casting issues

New York

Before an analysis of the Australian print media's coverage of *Miss Saigon*, it is pertinent to investigate the United States' print media's coverage of casting issues regarding the 1990 production of *Miss Saigon* in New York. During this time, controversy erupted over the casting of English actor Jonathan Pryce in the role of the Eurasian character the Engineer. *The New York Times* reported the Commission on Racial Equality of Actor's Equity as criticising the producer of *Miss Saigon* for refusing "to allow Asian-American actors to compete for the starring role of a Eurasian pimp" (Rothstein, 1990: paragraph 4) and as barring the chosen actor, Englishman Jonathan Pryce, from reprising the role. Equity is quoted as stating that "it could not appear to condone the casting of a Caucasian in the role of a Eurasian" and that "This is a moral issue ... to correct decades of injustice to actors of all colour ... Asian-Americans should be given the opportunity to compete for this role. All we are asking for is an opportunity to compete" (Rothstein, 1990: paragraph 8). In a similar vein, once Pryce's star status was confirmed and he was permitted to reprise the character, the Mayor of New York "commended Equity for its courage "in support of nontraditional and culturally appropriate casting ... [and] that "valid concerns have been expressed regarding the need for appropriate casting where

ethnicity is critical to the role" " (Rothstein, 1990: paragraphs 28-29).

Of course, all of these sentiments are valid and, in the eyes of many, are quite commendable. However, the dispute and the way in which the *New York Times* reported it, significantly marginalise and render invisible the concept and reality of Eurasian-ness and multiracial experiences. The character is indisputably Eurasian and yet the emphasis is upon locating an Asian actor for the role. Jonathan Pryce himself picks up on this discrepancy, stating that "If the character is half Asian and half European, you've got to drop down on one side of the fence or the other" (Rothstein, 1990: paragraph 23). Of course racial politics are never that pure or simple, however Pryce does at least acknowledge the reality of Eurasian-ness, even though he continues to perpetuate racial polarisation by referring to 'the fence'. It is true that, in the power relations of races today, a Eurasian can 'be' both mixed race and Asian but they generally 'pass' for, rather than 'are', white. As a result, in the eyes of many Eurasians and Asians the casting of an Asian in the role of the Engineer might be more acceptable than that of a white Englishman. Dorinne Kondo, in her analysis of the *Miss Saigon* controversy, emphasises the traditional nature of casting a white actor to play a coloured character, arguing that this traditional casting is racist (Kondo, 1997: 22). Furthermore, she points out that while "the ways people of mixed race are often marginalised by members of all their constituent racial groups is at one level indisputable", this argument "fails to account for the historical overdetermination of the decision to allow a white actor to play Asian and Eurasian". "The 'white' and 'Asian' halves," Kondo states, "are not equally weighted in political terms". While Kondo's position is understandable, her treatment of multiracial issues is minimal and overly simplistic. Kondo even alludes to the possibility that Cameron Mackintosh only decided to make the Engineer's character Eurasian in order to allow Jonathan Pryce to portray him, as the ethnicity of the Engineer is not made explicit in the musical. While it is true that the Engineer's multiraciality is not mentioned in the libretto of *Miss Saigon*, Alain Boubliil specifically refers to him as a "half-French, half-Vietnamese wheeler-dealer" (Boubliil in *Miss Saigon Souvenir Programme Australian Tour 2007-2008*, 2007: 10). While Kondo is correct in asserting that historically characters in Western film were given a mixed race status to allow white actors to portray them, her treatment of the casting controversy does not adequately explore its impact or relation to Eurasians and their experiences. As is demonstrated later in this paper, to some Eurasians the casting of one mono-racial actor, regardless of whether they are white or Asian, would appear to be as insensitive as the other. Furthermore, Kondo's assertion that 'white' and 'Asian' halves are not equally weighted in political terms" has an ambiguous message for Eurasians. It implies, whether intentionally or not, that there is an imperative for multiracial individuals to privilege the 'coloured' side of their heritage in order to right current imbalances of racial power. While this implication is understandable given historical and current racial inequalities, it fails to take into account the complexity of the multiracial experience, the realities of interracial familial ties and the individuality of cultural identity.

This paper however, is more concerned with print media's treatment of multiracial people rather than with the casting itself. Equity states: "Asian-Americans should be given the opportunity to compete for this role. All we are asking for is an opportunity to compete" (Rothstein, 1990: paragraph 8). It is interesting however, that Eurasians are not specifically given this opportunity to compete or acknowledged as existing in Western society. Neither is it recognised that Eurasians have a diverse range of experiences, some of which are similar to

those of Asians, but many of which are unique to a person of multiracial heritage. As the musical itself is concerned with multiracial issues, it is notable that multiracial people are not acknowledged and granted their own opportunities.

Media coverage of *Miss Saigon* in Australia

The events of New York are mirrored to a degree in Australia seventeen years later. While there was no public controversy regarding the casting of characters in the 2007/8 production of *Miss Saigon*, Australian print media reveals a distinct lack of sensitisation regarding the experiences on multiracial people in the Western world. This time it involves print media coverage the search for actors to play the role of Tam, the son of Vietnamese Kim and the Anglo-American G.I. Chris. In order to examine the portrayals of multiracial people in conjunction with the subject matter of *Miss Saigon*, tables have been constructed utilising the search engine Factiva. The search terms 'Miss Saigon', 'the Australian region' and 'the last two years' were entered into the engine. Articles which were repeats or solely session times of the musical were eliminated. Table 1 portrays some trends which occur in the Australian print media's coverage of *Miss Saigon*.

Table 1.

Total number of articles regarding the Australian production of <i>Miss Saigon</i> from 2006-2007	76
Articles which refer to casting calls for the character of Tam but do not contain the word Eurasian	25 (33%)
Articles which are casting advertisements for Tam and contain the word Eurasian once	14 (18%)
Articles which explore or mention ideas of multiraciality in relation to Eurasians	0 (0%)
Articles which mention more complex issues (Iraq or interracial adoption) in the context of <i>Miss Saigon</i>	12 (16%)

From Table 1 it is evident that of the 76 articles which specifically cover the Australian production of the musical, dating from 2006 to the present, only fourteen contain the word 'Eurasian'. Roughly, all of the articles contain the same one line regarding Eurasians, "Producers are looking for Asian or Eurasian boys or girls between four and five years, with dark eyes and hair" (Anonymous, *The City Messenger*, 2008: paragraph 4). The articles are concerned solely with casting rather than in-depth coverage, and average around 100 to 150 words. Additionally, all of the articles are from smaller suburban community newspapers.

Articles regarding the role of Tam also occur in the larger cities of Sydney and Melbourne. Significantly, however, the word Eurasian is completely omitted from these articles in spite of their increased length. The article regarding Tam's casting in *The Sydney Morning Herald* is 879 words long. According to *The Sydney Morning Herald*, "to share the silent, yet significant role of Tam, the show's producers are looking for as many as eight local Asian children" (Anonymous, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 2008: paragraph 1). Similarly, in Melbourne, which has been noted in other media articles as a hub for Eurasian models (Lambert, *The Sunday Herald Sun*, 2003: paragraph 1), the article is 339 words long, yet does not contain the word Eurasian. According to *The Herald Sun*, "The producers of Miss Saigon are looking for Asian children to share the non-speaking, yet pivotal role of Tam" (Duck, 2007: paragraph 2). The article continues to quote casting director Lynne Ruthven as saying "Ideally we would love to have Vietnamese kids, but if that's not possible we will be happy to have Asian kids" (Duck, 2007: paragraph 11). The actual Australian website for *Miss Saigon*, however, states that "The production requires Asian or Eurasian boys or girls aged from four up to seven years of age with dark eyes and hair" (*Miss Saigon Australia website*, 2007).

Print media's coverage of *Miss Saigon* raises a variety of issues regarding multiraciality and Eurasian-ness and perceptions of these constructions in Western society. The Sydney and Melbourne articles devote more space, and therefore presumably greater priority, to the casting of Tam in *Miss Saigon*, and they are also reputed to be the more global, culturally aware and cosmopolitan cities in Australia. Yet they render invisible and marginalise the number of Eurasian children in Australia as well as, consciously or unconsciously, falling in line with old ideas regarding hypo-descent which were never actually formalised in Australia.

There is more than one explanation for the silence with which multiraciality is treated. It is likely that, in the minds of the reporters and editors who sent these articles to press, there is a lack of sensitisation regarding ideas of multiraciality, and the child of a white American G.I. and an Asian prostitute is skewed towards being Asian. While it is easy to disregard the absence of Eurasian-ness from print media's discourse regarding *Miss Saigon* as a product of well-meaning ignorance, as Nicole's remark, quoted earlier, illustrates in the context of literature and colonialism, "absence is as important as presence because it reflects what must be suppressed in the Other culture and maintained in the colonial culture" (Nicole, 2001: 6). The absence of multiraciality and Eurasian-ness therefore, assumes a political meaning regardless of the intent of the individual reporters. What makes the presentation of the casting process even more politicised is the fact that the casting director, and by its inclusion of the quote, the newspaper, acknowledge variety within the Asian community to the extent that they differentiate between the wider label of Asian and the narrower concept of Vietnamese. The concept of Eurasian-ness however, is conspicuously absent.

Similarly the ethnicity of the Engineer is effectively a non-issue in the Australian media in spite of the fact that he was portrayed by an Asian actor. The silence with which the Engineer's Eurasian-ness is met by Australian print media could be viewed as a lack of awareness of multiraciality, however the multiple articles regarding the marketability and attractiveness of Eurasian women illustrate that this is not the sole factor. It is possible that the controversy surrounding the casting of Jonathan Pryce as the Engineer in New York influenced the acceptability of casting Asians in Eurasian roles. The protests by Asian Americans, while valid to a point in their opposition to traditional, racist casting, had the affect of marginalising any exploration of multiracial concerns, both at the time in America and possibly in Australia in the 21st century. Furthermore, it would appear that while Eurasians are a very small minority and as such are liable to be overlooked, there are also certain spaces, topics and situations where it appears more acceptable to discuss Eurasian-ness in print media.

Similarly, it is significant that only 18% of the articles contain the word Eurasian, and all of these articles are small reports which mention the word once. The subject matter of *Miss Saigon* lends itself readily to a discussion of serious issues, one of which is multiraciality. The media has in fact, demonstrated itself at least marginally willing to engage in some serious and confronting stories as a result of the Australian production, as 16% of the articles at least refer to more controversial topics in relation to the musical's subject matter. *The Daily Telegraph* contains a 1200 word article regarding the controversy of the Vietnam War and its similarities to the situation in Iraq (Lennon, 2007: paragraph 1). The show's producer Cameron Mackintosh is similarly quoted in *The Herald Sun* as stating "this could be set in Baghdad today" (Plant, 2007: paragraph 15). Furthermore, at least nine substantial articles about the musical make an explicit link between it and the Iraq war. Evidently, employing the musical's popularity to address or at least refer to, somewhat controversial or darker stories is not taboo in print media, however, issues of multiraciality are not mentioned or referred to in any of the articles concerned with *Miss Saigon*.

Eurasians and ideas of beauty in the mass media

While concepts of multiraciality are avoided in relation to *Miss Saigon*, as the table below illustrates, ideas of multiracial (in this case Eurasian) beauty permeate print media today. The following table was constructed utilising the search engine Factiva. The word 'Eurasian', the Australian region and the last two years were entered. Articles which employed 'Eurasian' in the context of the geographical region were discarded. The articles in the table below all use the term 'Eurasian' to refer to people of mixed race.

Table 2.

Total number of articles containing the word Eurasian from 2000-2008	110
Articles which associate the word with beauty and sex	49 (45%)

Articles which explore experiences of multiraciality in the context of Eurasians	14 (13%)
Articles which contain the word once but do not explore multiracial experiences	47 (43%)

The findings indicate that to a fairly significant degree, the word Eurasian connotes physical attractiveness in the print media. Furthermore, while many articles, some of which will be closely analysed later, are specifically concerned with the popularity of Eurasians in the modelling or entertainment industries, some are not primarily concerned with Eurasians at all, yet they manage to refer to a beautiful Eurasian. One opinion piece from *The Sydney Morning Herald* regarding the popularity of newly elected Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, likens his 'political honeymoon' to "a lengthy St Tropez resort pamperthon with daily massages from Eurasian beauties, parties with P Diddy ... and the world's longest swim-up bar" (Crabb, 2008: paragraph 7). Additionally, another article describes a psychologist's "date with "the world's most attractive android", a silicone-skinned Eurasian robot called Repliee" who "notwithstanding her ... limited conversation ... [is] both beautiful and "compellingly human" " (Farrelly, 2006: paragraph 12). That Repliee is labelled 'Eurasian' is interesting in itself, as she was apparently modelled on a Japanese television presenter who is not herself a Eurasian woman (Farrelly, 2006: paragraph 12). I will return to this particular point later. What is apparent from these articles is that even in unrelated fields, the term Eurasian has become imbued with ideas of beauty and sexuality that are predominately female. That almost half of all articles in the print media connote Eurasian-ness with beauty and attractiveness indicates the pervasive nature of racial stereotyping and would appear to belie claims that multiracial models unambiguously equal increasing racial equality in the Western world.

Given the historical associations of multiracial women with illicit sex and beauty that were discussed earlier, it appears contradictory that print media presents the stereotypes of multiracial beauty, glamour and 'Otherness' as having a positive impact on racial relations. In an article in *Time Magazine*, titled 'Eurasian Invasion', multiracial women are effectively commodified and objectified into little more than desirable marketing tools. Modelling agencies are described as unable "to stock enough mixed-blooded girls" who are perceived as possessing "an approachable exoticism" (Beech, 2001: paragraph 7). Furthermore, the article quotes the publisher of a women's magazine as describing multiracial women as "exotic but not exactly threatening" (Beech, 2001: paragraph 7) and an "ideal to which [Asian] women can aspire" (Beech, 2001: paragraph 7). The acceptability of stereotypes regarding multiracial women becomes even more apparent as a modelling company representative praises "the ability of Eurasian models to let go in front of the camera" as opposed to "more nervous" Asians (Beech, 2001: paragraph 7). The very act of 'letting go' itself evokes the historical sexualised stereotypes of multiracial women and from the media's focus on modelling, beauty and exoticism, it is evident that these stereotypes are alive in the 21st century.

Of course, all models are effectively commodified, objectified and employed to market products, however in the case of Eurasian women, the situation is compounded by ideas of race. As the quotation regarding "approachable exoticism" demonstrates (Beech, 2001: paragraph 7), the stereotypes and objectification are not restricted only to models, but are applied to all women of mixed race. Furthermore, stereotypes of multiracial beauty are not solely applied to models or the entertainment industry. As the following examples demonstrate, they are applied generally to all people, but in particular women, of mixed race.

Several articles from the 21st century explore a university psychology study regarding multiracial faces and beauty, with a particular focus on women. "Mix and perfect match" begins *The Sydney Morning Herald*, "Eurasian features have been associated with beauty since Somerset Maugham ... now Australian psychologists have shown there is a scientific basis for the stereotype" (Smith, 2007: paragraph 1-2). The article's linkage of Eurasian beauty and the author Maugham, while providing the illusion of an historical background and context, whitewashes the darker historical link of Eurasians as sexualised and tragic figures while associating the mixed race beauty stereotype with the cultured history of the West. Furthermore, Smith's statement "there is scientific basis for the stereotype" supports the legitimacy of stereotyping races, contradicting any article's attempt to claim that mixed race models indicate an improvement in racial relations (Smith, 2007: paragraph 1-2). According to Smith, "science can prove" that Eurasians are more beautiful than either Caucasians or Asians and it supports the "theory that beauty ... has biological origins" (Smith, 2007: paragraph 3). Smith further refers to Eurasian models as "exotic-looking" (Smith, 2007: paragraph 6), emphasising their alien nature and deviance from the norm, regardless of the fact that some models, like the pictured Michelle Leslie, grew up in Australia.

Another Australian article from 2004, similarly concerned with the perceived sudden proliferation of multiracial models, reinforces the association of people of mixed race with the concept of an abnormality or a genetic idiosyncrasy. Reporter Sushi Das racially analyses the features of a Eurasian model, noting the "Chinese-shaped eyes ... and European nose and lips" (Das, 2004: paragraph 1), effectively separating the woman's physique into conventionally understood races and ethnicities. The model herself engages in a kind of self-exoticisation, labelling her skin "as pale as a China doll in winter and honey bronze Hawaiian in summer" (Das, 2004: paragraph 2). Unconsciously or otherwise, she emphasises her 'foreignness' from Western society by referring to the orientalisised and exoticised lands of China and Hawaii. Her references to dolls and honey further objectify and feminise her sexuality by feeding into stereotypes of the orient.

Eurasians, beauty and multiculturalism

Articles, which emphasise Eurasian beauty, often do so concurrently with presenting ideas of Australian multiculturalism and tolerance. *The Sunday Herald Sun* states that "Melbourne model agencies say the look of the future is Eurasian" (Lambert, 2003: paragraph 1), quoting the head of a modelling agency as stating, "We are an open, multicultural society so the options now [regarding models] are endless" (Lambert, 2003: paragraph 2). Similarly, *The Age* describes the world as "becoming more racially ambiguous" (Das, 2004: paragraph 4), acknowledging that "ambiguity, it seems, is in vogue" (Das, 2004: paragraph 4) and "advertisers and marketing teams are frantically pumping out images that they say reflect a

multicultural society" (Das, 2004: paragraph 13). Moreover, *The Sun Herald* utilises the current popularity of multiracial people in the entertainment industry to "question whether [Australia's multicultural policy] is as dated as prawn cocktails and Skyhooks records" (Teutsch, 2004: paragraph 13). Reporter Teutsch further quotes the chair of the Australian Republican Movement as stating that "race was not a big issue for the younger generation, which is the first to have grown up in a truly multicultural society" (Teutsch, 2004: paragraph 17), illustrating the media's tendency to link multiracial beauty and Australian multiculturalism.

"Asian" versus "Eurasian" stereotypes

Aside from connoting multiculturalism as Matthews notes, Eurasian models are predominate in representations of fashion and beauty, while more stereotypically 'serious' industries such as finance, are dominated by images of Asian women (Matthews, 2002: paragraph 1). Matthews does not elaborate on the implications of this observation. However it appears that the mass media is aware at some level, that while multiracial women may sell glamour, sex and beauty, they do not necessarily sell academic or financial success. Examples from the Australian print media which interestingly correspond with Matthews' observations, include the previously mentioned article regarding Repliee, the beautiful Eurasian android and *The Age's* coverage of Senator Penny Wong. Wong is described by Michelle Gratton, as "the daughter of a Chinese-Malay father and an Australian mother" who "is as Australian as anyone" (Gratton, 2007: paragraph 3). However, in spite of the inclusion of this information, Gratton is insistent on several points. Wong may be Australian, Gratton acknowledges, "yet her Chinese background is a key to understanding this highly ambitious, intensely private person" (Gratton, 2007: paragraph 4).

Throughout the article, Wong and Gratton allude often to "Chinese" culture with regards to Wong's commitment to education, discipline and "not humiliating people" and her wish that she had a respectful title for older security guards (Gratton, 2007: paragraph 2). Wong also refers to herself as Chinese and Asian (Gratton, 2007: paragraph 2). The word Eurasian occurs once in relation to another woman who Wong perceives as looking like herself (Gratton, 2007: paragraph 13), however Eurasian-ness is never clearly linked to Wong, while Chinese-ness is portrayed as her defining characteristic (Gratton, 2007: paragraph 4). Of course, as I will discuss later, people of mixed race have the freedom to define their own identity and it is possible that Wong has a greater affinity with her Chinese heritage and defines herself in that context. However, it is interesting that print media, while arguably over-emphasising Eurasian-ness in the context of modelling and beauty, is significantly more subdued regarding a lawyer and political figure, who is portrayed as stereotypically 'Asian'. Matthews' observation regarding stereotypes of Eurasians and Asians in the media, is also supported by the labelling of Repliee as 'Eurasian', in spite of the fact that her appearance is modelled on a non-mixed race Japanese TV presenter (Farrelly, 2006: paragraph 12). It does appear that there is a trend within the media to associate Eurasian-ness predominately with beauty and physical attractiveness, so much so that a beautiful 'Asian' android becomes Eurasian, and a Eurasian politician is predominately Chinese. While stereotypically diligent, serious, intelligent Asians may be the media's faces of a successful career, the stereotypical Eurasian is lazy, frivolous and mentally unstable, therefore more suited to the non 'serious' fashion and beauty industries.

"Othering" - exoticism and conditional inclusion

In the aftermath of colonialism and the birth of ideas of racial equality and political correctness, mixed race women have come to be stereotyped in new ways. No longer solely the 'Marginal Man' of Stonequist's imaginings (Stonequist, 1935: 1-12), people of mixed race are now constructed by media articles to represent an ideal, tolerant world, such as in *The Courier-Mail's* report 'The Changing Face of Fashion'. In this world people are "a melting pot of cultures, backgrounds and looks" (Edwards, 2006: paragraph 2). Similarly, while multiracial people are conditionally included in mass media representations rather than 'othered' through a process of demonisation and rejection, 'othering' still occurs. Arguably, multiracial people are only included because they are 'othered' (Ang, 1996: 37), which is seen in their label 'exotic'. As Goon, Craven and Matthews illustrate in the context of Eurasian women, multiracial women are often employed as commodities to be sold to consumers who wish to buy into an apparently racially tolerant, cosmopolitan, globalised world (Goon & Craven, 2003: paragraph 27) (Matthews, 2002: paragraph 22). However, as Matthews points out, "The inclusion of Eurasian ... female images in media representations from which they were once excluded, does not mean Asian or Eurasian women have achieved recognition and full representation ... Inclusion has occurred on specific terms — by virtue of being desirably female and identifiably different" (Matthews, 2002: 22). The choice of female models is especially significant. Women are stereotypically perceived as less threatening to the dominant culture and far more likely to assimilate rather than compete. Hence what is believed to be multicultural tolerance becomes the sexed assimilation, containment and control of desirable others by Western society.

Marginalisation of multiraciality in *Miss Saigon*

In light of the media's current popularisation around the perceived chic beauty of multiracial women, it is notable that multiracial people are marginalised and rendered less visible in other contexts, particularly in *Miss Saigon*. As is evident in numerous newspaper articles, multiracial women and fashion models are exoticised, commodified and sexualised as poster-girls for an imaginary world of race-less, tolerant humanity (Das, 2004; Lambert, 2003). To a degree it would appear they are portrayed as beautiful in order to help to maintain current power relations and ideas of civilisation by depicting Western culture and society as tolerant of difference and as a truly 'civilised' and 'cultured' environment. However, according to Homi Bhabha, this tolerance is not unconditional. In Bhabha's eyes, Western culture tolerates diversity only to the extent that "a transparent norm is constituted, a norm given by the host society or dominant culture which says that 'these other cultures are fine, but we must be able to locate them within our own grid'... [leading to the] creation of cultural diversity and a containment of cultural difference" (Bhabha & Rutherford, 1990: 218). Bhabha continues to elaborate that "the advent of Western modernity" characterised by "the citizen, cultural value, art, science, the novel" occurred side by side with "another history" of the West which involved "colonial possessions ... and despotic power", and which "has not been adequately written side by side with its claims to democracy and solidarity" (Bhabha & Rutherford, 1990: 218). "The history of colonialism," Bhabha states, "is a counter history to the normative, traditional history of the West" (Bhabha & Rutherford, 1990: 218). In Bhabha's eyes the mere presence of post-colonial peoples "as a people who have been recipients of a colonial cultural experience — displace some of the great metropolitan narratives of progress and law and order, and question the authority and authenticity of those narratives" (Bhabha and Rutherford, 1990: 218).

According to Bhabha's theory, it can be seen that the apparently glamorous position of

Eurasian women involves the promotion of Western multicultural tolerance and their categorisation as 'safe' cultural diversity. The rendering invisible of Eurasian-ness in other contexts however, is more complex. It is possible that the subject matter of *Miss Saigon* itself leads to silence by the Western media regarding issues of multiraciality and Eurasian-ness. *Miss Saigon* is, while sweetened and orientalist, nevertheless the story of the Vietnam War, neo-colonialism and of the more negative stereotypes of relations between East and West. The issues raised by *Miss Saigon* are not in line with the promoted narrative of Western modernity involving culture, refinement, humanity and democracy. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the musical is employed by reporters to engage with, or at least refer to, complex issues such as interracial adoption and the Iraq War. However, while the word Eurasian is mentioned once in 18% of the articles, any discussion of multiraciality or the so-called 'bui doi' children of the musical, is absent from any of the major or minor newspapers. There are several possible explanations for this absence.

One possible contributing factor is that multiraciality is not popularly perceived as an area or concern which is worth exploring seriously in the mass media. From the analysis of articles containing the word Eurasian from 2000-2008, it is evident that, while 45% focus on concepts of Eurasian beauty, or at least connote Eurasian-ness with attractiveness, 43% contain the word Eurasian only once as a passing reference, and do not focus on any concerns that might affect Eurasian or multiracial people. In itself, this occurrence indicates that the only significant role that Eurasians play in mass culture is to be physically attractive and as a result present ideas of multicultural tolerance. When the word Eurasian does not occur in these contexts, its importance is diminished and marginalised.

Moreover, the popularised attitude towards multiraciality involving its promotion as a beautiful and positive contribution to racial relations, may be presented partially as an attempt to avoid the more traditionally negative stereotypes of identity-challenged mixed race people, as presented by Stonequist in the early twentieth century (Stonequist, 1935: 1-12). While good intentions may lie behind both the tendency to stereotype multiracial people with qualities such as beauty and cultural awareness, and the tendency to neglect areas which have associations with more visible racisms of the past, an evasion of addressing any aspects of multiraciality, in spite of being granted specific opportunities to do so, seems to reveal a deliberate avoidance of certain issues.

Furthermore, as has been discussed, the dominant portrayals of multiraciality are female, which raises the question as to why there are no corresponding representations of male multiraciality, particularly as the two mixed race characters in *Miss Saigon* are male. It is likely that the masculinity of the mixed race characters contributes, if not causes, the silence with which print media approaches multiraciality in this context. As was mentioned earlier, mixed race women are often perceived as easily assimilated into a white patriarchal world on the basis of their gender. Multiracial men however, are construed as more threatening.

In Gina Marchetti's landmark analysis of mainstream Hollywood's depictions of Asians, *Romance and the "Yellow Peril"*, she comments that "the narrative pattern most often associated with Hollywood dramas involving the "yellow peril" features the rape or threat of rape of a Caucasian woman by a villainous Asian man" (Marchetti, 1993: 10). In this context, Marchetti points out, white women are a "token of the fragility of the West's own sense of

moral purity" (Marchetti, 1993: 10). Kent A. Ono also states that "white women maintain culture, but it is white men's duty to protect white women from depravity" (Ono, 1997: 85). Similarly, he points out that "the protection of white women's pristinity was utilised as a reason to slaughter Native American men [in order to protect them from] the threat of rape; the genetic pollution of the blood supply and the ruination of patrilineal, colonialist power" (Ono, 1997: 85). This perceived threat of "the ruination of patrilineal, colonialist power" arguably contributed to the emasculation of Asian men in film last century and influences the silence with which Western print media approaches concepts of male Eurasian-ness today. As 'half-Asian', multiracial men still threaten to contaminate the West's moral and racial purity, however the threat is compounded by the fact that the men themselves are already representative of that contamination.

Furthermore, their position as 'half-white' complicates their categorisation as emasculated, for to emasculate multiracial men impinges on the masculinity of whiteness. Eurasian men then, can be seen as more threatening to Western culture than Asian men, as they are perceived as more masculine yet still 'other'. Their proximity to whiteness additionally, raises the possibility of their 'passing' for white, something which erodes the alleged pristinity of Western culture/race. A multiracial woman who passes for white is, while still culturally and racially threatening, able to be assimilated into Western society through marriage to a white man. A multiracial man, however, who marries a white woman, threatens to assimilate her into his 'culture'.

Whether or not concerns regarding gender and race were the primary factor resulting in the silence with which print media treats multiraciality in *Miss Saigon*, this absence of coverage, when juxtaposed with the proliferation of articles lauding multiracial female beauty, nevertheless evokes these ideas. Similarly, as will be demonstrated later in this paper, a specific absence of discussion regarding multiraciality in a less frivolous light than the areas of entertainment and fashion, appears to trivialise any concerns multiracial people may have and also decreases the visibility of their presence in Western countries. Furthermore, this absence lends more power to the previously discussed stereotypes of multiracial people as they become the only representations of them in print media.

Counter-histories: War and multiraciality

Possibly another factor contributing to the lack of media portrayals of multiraciality, is that when it is not positioned in a glamorous environment, such as the entertainment industry, multiraciality can lend itself to what Bhabha terms the "counter-history of the West" (Bhabha & Rutherford, 1990: 218). As was discussed earlier, Said's *Orientalism* is relevant to print media's representations of multiraciality. While *Orientalism* deals explicitly with Western Europe's historical and cultural relationships with the Middle East, the ideas that Said raises are also applicable to other areas of Asia and the Pacific, (Nicole, 2001) and by extension people who are associated with those regions. An interpretation of Said's *Orientalism* could indicate that a more thorough exploration of Eurasian identity or perspectives and experiences in print media could prove detrimental to the current orientalisation of Eurasians, and as a result detrimental to the ideas of Western cultured civilisation which Bhabha presents.

While the musical *Miss Saigon* already evokes what Bhabha calls a "counter history" in its exploration of the Vietnam War, and while the media presents a willingness to acknowledge

parallels with the current Iraq War, these factors do not straightforwardly indicate a decrease in the media's orientalisng tendencies or its promotion of the acceptable history of the West. It could even be argued that, in the case of its acknowledgement of the Iraq War, print media is upholding the dominant cultural history of the West or at least deliberately avoiding directly challenging it. In an article in *The Courier-Mail*, Suzanna Clark likens the atmosphere surrounding the war in Iraq to that of Vietnam (Clark, 2007: paragraph 2). Furthermore, David Harris, the actor who plays Chris, is quoted in *The Canberra Times* as saying "We can transpose Iraq for Vietnam and the story could be just as relevant and be played just the same, with the same horrific backdrop of war" (Rudra, 2007: paragraph 2). While in *The Sunday Tasmanian* Harris is critical of the war in Iraq, quoted as observing "here we are, still at war for a silly reason" (Duncan, 2007: paragraph 13), the criticisms of the war, and its parallels with *Miss Saigon*, do not seriously oppose the war. Furthermore, the web of art, 'love' and mild disapproval of war by the artistic world, arguably presents Bhabha's idea of the dominant history of the West which involves ideas of democracy, the individual and artistic creation. Moreover, *The Advertiser* acknowledges that *Miss Saigon* developed from *Madame Butterfly*, involving an American man and a Japanese woman, and in the next sentence parallels the musical to the events in Iraq and Afghanistan (McDonald, 2007: paragraphs 2 and 3). From these two sentences, while the male aspect of each situation is consistently American, the feminine dimension is a homogenised composition of Japanese, Vietnamese, Iraqi and Afghani femininity. The media's association of the wars in Vietnam and Iraq combined with ideas of art and 'love', indicate that a mention of the war alone does not present the "counter-history of the West" (Bhabha, 1990: 218). Furthermore, the media's homogenisation of the Butterfly/Kim character with any 'oriental' land subjected to Western invasion, supports Said's contention that:

There are Westerners, and there are Orientals. The former dominate; the latter must be dominated, which usually means having their land occupied, their internal affairs rigidly controlled, their blood and treasure put at the disposal of one or another Western power" (Said, 1978: 86).

Said's ideas, while more obviously relevant to the war in Iraq, are also applicable to the media's portrayals of Eurasians as they too are subjected to rigorous control and containment. Furthermore, it is arguable that the Eurasian factor in *Miss Saigon* problematises the production's relationship with Western culture even more. While the Iraq war and issues of interracial adoption can be construed to present more 'cultured' ideas of the West, Eurasian children, when not in a context of wealth, fashion or beauty, complicate these ideas. Rather, in the context of *Miss Saigon*, Eurasian children could be construed as more confronting testaments to the less palatable aspects of recent Western history. As the combination of the familiar and the foreign, or, in Conrad's words "the dash of Orientalism on white" (Conrad, 1927, quoted in Inniss, 1970: 42), is arguably the cause of the exotic appeal of multiracial models, so it may also provoke discomfort in the context of imperialism and war. In his analysis of identity and the 'Other', Rutherford points out that "it is the threat of dissolution of self that ignites the irrational hatred and hostility as the centre struggles to assert and secure its boundaries, that constructs self from not-self" (Rutherford, 1990: 11). In this light, it is possible that multiraciality could be perceived as a "threat of dissolution". As a result, any emphasis regarding the politics of multiracial people, or the exploration of related concerns in

the context of *Miss Saigon*, could be construed as both a non-existent issue in light of palpable progressions regarding racism, and an excessively controversial and sensitive topic. Additionally, a more thorough focus on the multiracial experience would be to focus on what Said terms "brute realities", with which orientalism has never been concerned. As alluded to earlier, such "brute realities" of culture, autonomy and identity could even develop to construct impediments to the continuation of orientalism's containment and control. The complex and arguably ambivalent, combination of the perception of multiracial issues as non-serious, a desire to be tolerant and politically correct, a desire to maintain ideas of Western civilised culture, a fear of dissolution and loss of identity and an unwillingness to relinquish orientalisising tendencies, all contribute to the one-dimensional marginality of Eurasian images in the mass media.

The changeable nature of Western presentations of multiracial people illustrates their position as outsiders, a perception which will be explored later. The continuing use of 19th century stereotypes and ideas regarding Eurasians similarly presents this racial discrimination against multiracial people as something that is normal and that looks and feels acceptable, regardless of the lack of agency multiracial individuals actually have in defining representations of themselves. Furthermore, it appears that the idea of multiracial beauty is at least partially endorsed by the dominant Western culture because it serves a purpose and maintains current perceptions of Western civilisation. Once it loses its utility, the media's focus on multiraciality can be removed, as it is in the case of *Miss Saigon*. However, from the approval that the multiracial image receives, it appears that power, as Foucault states, "doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no ... it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasures, forms knowledge, produces discourse" (Foucault, 1977: 119). Likewise, Western society doesn't only discriminate against people of multiracial heritage. On the contrary, Western society certainly poses many benefits for multiracial individuals. While this paper focuses upon racism predominately in a Western context it does not posit the idea that racism against multiracial people is absent in other cultures or societies. Non-Western societies have the potential to be just as discriminatory against those of a multiracial background. Similarly, it is possible that being portrayed by the media as beautiful can likewise have many positive effects regarding the development of cultural identity and self-esteem. However, the portrayal of Eurasian beauty by itself does not immediately promote recognition of multiracial experiences. This is particularly the case when the standards of beauty and the types of representations are not controlled by Eurasians themselves, but are created by the dominant culture and predominately serve its interests. By employing images of Eurasians as stylish poster-girls of cosmopolitan tolerance and acceptance, the West is saying 'yes' to people of multiple non-white ethnicities, but under certain conditions. One of those conditions is that the presence of the 'Other' is not allowed to overtly displace the dominant cultural history of the West or impinge upon Western cultural identity, as it can be construed to do in *Miss Saigon*. While power does produce things and induce pleasure in relation to multiraciality, it can also be a repressive force. From evidence which will later be discussed, it appears that the acceptance of the Western mass media's stereotypes is married to a certain loss of agency, self-determination and identity.

Shifting hierarchies of race and identity in the mass media

The lack of agency multiracial people often have in defining their own identity is demonstrated

by the varying portrayals of multiracial people in Western print media. Of course this lack of agency also applies to men and women of non-mixed, non-white ethnicities. However situations for multiracial people can also be similarly complex as they face an alternate succession of positions within the racial hierarchy over which they often have no control. At certain points of history, such as during the Dutch occupation of Indonesia when it was beneficial to have a 'Eurasian class' in order to boost European dominance, multiracial people were perceived as 'white' or 'almost white' (Van Der Kroef, 1950: 456) (fig. 1). However in nearby Singapore, while the more distantly miscegenated Portuguese Eurasians were given a privileged position in society, first generation Eurasians were often denigrated as unnatural degenerates (Daus, 1989: 68) (fig. 2). Similarly, when the existence of a multiracial person or group becomes an inconvenience or embarrassment for the Western world they are often deliberately rendered invisible by being categorised solely on the basis of one parent race, generally the one which is lesser on the scale of the racial hierarchy (Daus, 1989: 68) (fig. 3).

From examining portrayals of multiracial people in print media it appears that these shifting boundaries continue to occur today. Furthermore, they are often not of the making or choice of multiracial people themselves, who are frequently perceived and labelled by others in ways which have no bearing on their own personal identification. The current aura of beauty and glamour which is associated with multiracial women places them superficially above their 'mono-racial' counterparts, while also increasing their objectification and thereby placing them below groups which are 'mono-racial'. Similarly, in some contexts, people of multiracial heritage are categorised with their 'coloured' parent race. This categorisation occurs particularly in contexts which involve more controversial or disruptive aspects of Western history, such as casting issues in *Miss Saigon*. As a result, a multiracial person is often depicted as sub-human, super-human, or even the two simultaneously, but he or she is less commonly regarded as human.

Fig. 1

Whites
Multiracial people
'Mono-racial' non-whites

Fig. 2

Whites
'Mono-racial' non-whites

Multiracial people

Fig. 3

Whites
'Mono-racial' non-whites and Multiracial people as non-whites

A fluidity of identity between racial and ethnic identities is not to be denied multiracial people when it involves their own agency and prerogative, as will be discussed later. However, when it is based on the whims and agendas of the dominant culture, whether that culture is Western or not, it can have detrimental effects.

Effects of the media on multiracial people

The personal experiences of multiracial individuals demonstrate that even so-called 'positive' racial stereotypes, such as that of beauty, can have negative affects. The changeable nature of Western media's depiction of multiracial identity and stereotypes can make multiracial people, particularly women, more likely to 'settle' for a stereotype of beauty and commodified sexual appeal rather than that of the more obvious outcast. As Carol Camper describes, "After messages of ugliness and worthlessness, exoticisation was okay by me. So this is who I became ... The gypsy/Creole woman, big-breasted, big-afroed courtesan, welcome in any man's bed" (Camper, 2004: 179). Camper later realises,

This was not who I was either ... I realized that ... sex was not an indicator of worth but only of gender and availability. I realised that to commodify myself as exotic meant incredible loss" (Camper, 2004: 179).

Similarly, in interviews with multiracial women in Australia, Maureen Perkins notes that "All the women in my interviews revealed a sensitivity on the issue of sensuality" (Perkins, 2005: 112). "Their colour and apparent beauty made them outsiders", Perkins observes, and "this apparently well-meaning practice of exoticisation served to isolate these young women, to make them physically self-protective, to discourage spontaneity and in several cases to engender an ambivalent anger" (Perkins, 2005: 112). Psychologist Maria P.P. Root has also investigated the effects of these stereotypes on the mental health of multiracial women. She states that "the trend towards considering 'exotic' looks intriguing ... may continue the oppressive fantasies and the treatment of multiracial women as objects. Oppression insidiously affects mental health" (Root, 1997: 169). Root also indicates that as a result of this objectification which alienates multiracial women, it is difficult for such women to develop and maintain a stable identity and self-worth (Root, 1997: 163-164). Similarly, from her studies she notes that many multiracial women may have trouble developing intimate personal relationships and that the excessive emphasis of the media on the physical appearance of multiracial women may make them more vulnerable to eating disorders (Root, 1997: 164). Of

course, not all multiracial women are identity-challenged, lonely, depressed anorexics. To focus excessively on these issues as solely the concerns of multiracial women would be to propagate and reinforce old stereotypes of multiracial women's tragedy and mental instability. Similarly, while this paper primarily focuses upon print media stereotyping of multiracial women it does not imply that all the effects of the glamourisation of multiracial women are solely negative. However Root's article does demonstrate the importance of investigating the effects of such stereotypes on multiracial people.

I conducted several interviews regarding print media's depictions of Eurasians and the casting issues surrounding *Miss Saigon* in order to gain a more informed understanding of print media's impacts upon young Eurasian Australians. I engaged in qualitative research, interviewing a small number of people as I wished to explore their feelings and experiences at a greater depth than a large scale study would allow. For a similar reason the interview was only semi-structured, as I wished to allow the interviewees greater freedom to express their feelings and experiences. All four interviewees were raised in Australia, specifically northern New South Wales, the northern suburbs of Adelaide and the northern suburbs of Sydney.

Radha's experiences as a Eurasian woman in Australia inform the idea that racially-based stereotypes of beauty and sexuality can have a detrimental effect on the individuals concerned. Radha, who identifies primarily as being mixed race, recounted feeling frequently objectified and alienated from mainstream Australian culture while simultaneously being interrogated, quizzed and desired by both strangers and potential boyfriends regarding her 'exotic' appearance. Often men that she dated, she said, preferred to introduce her to others as Eurasian rather than half-Indian. She described the way people spoke about her physical appearance as if they were talking about "a genetic experiment", "a freak" or "a curiosity". Her feelings towards media articles regarding the superior beauty of Eurasians were extremely "uncomfortable". Such stereotypes of mixed race women as sexually attractive and able to unite cultures, held up an expectation which made her feel "inadequate". Radha explained that the media's conception of multiracial people as being able to 'cure' racism was unfair and pressured her into a role she felt she was unable to fully fulfill. She also described the stereotype of Eurasian beauty as pressuring mixed race women to compare themselves to the stereotype and to obsess over their ability to fulfill this perception of attractiveness.

Radha also described several experiences during her childhood involving race and racial stereotypes which made her uncomfortable. One of the experiences is an example of the good intentions that can often lie behind such events. Radha described a time in her childhood when her Indian grandmother pointed out a Eurasian Bollywood film star and told Radha that she would also grow up to be a beautiful actress because of her fair skin. Radha, however, felt unhappy and uncomfortable with this observation, as she felt it implied that a common or similar racial construction was the only defining factor of her personality and future. Similarly, Radha also had the highly uncomfortable experience of being mistaken for, or at least suspected of being, her Anglo-Celtic father's under-age lover/call-girl when she was thirteen and in a car being driven by her father at night. She described being pulled over by a policeman, who shone a torch onto her face and questioned her and her father about their relationship and whether she was in the car of her own free will. Radha recalled that her father was required to get out of the car and explain that he was in fact, her father before they were allowed to leave.

Marie, who identifies as being primarily Asian but also acknowledges that she is multiracial, also found the media's presentation of Eurasian people, particularly women, dissatisfying and uncomfortable. She likened the stereotype of mixed race beauty to celebrity socialite Paris Hilton. According to Marie, while Hilton is popularly admired, she is also the object of the media's derision for her allegedly low mental capacities and lack of morality. However, while Hilton herself arguably manipulates these representations to increase her financial revenue, mixed race women are not possessed of the same agency and control of their stereotypes. Often, rather than cultivating an image of frivolous beauty and sexuality, Marie felt that they are associated with this image because of their perceived racial make-up. Like Radha, Marie also had several experiences of being mistaken for a prostitute, also when she was a young teenager, for no obvious reason other than her perceived race. As a result, Marie described having difficulty with romantic relationships, as she was often suspicious that any romantic interest in her was as a result of stereotypes about Asian and Eurasian women.

Again similarly to Radha, Marie also did not react positively to stereotypes surrounding multiracial people and interracial marriages. She felt that glamourising interracial marriages as solving problems of racism over-simplified both issues of racism and multiracial families. She reacted with annoyance to people who frequently told her that she "had the best of both worlds" as she felt that this did not accurately portray her experience as someone of mixed race. Marie also described feeling unacknowledged, unrepresented and not included in Australian culture. She used the word "disenfranchised" to explain her feeling. While she agreed that she had some similar experiences to first-generation immigrants to Australia, she felt that the physical nature of both her appearance and the interracial nature of her background somehow divided her experience from Australian-born Asians or other immigrants.

Enrique's feelings and experiences as a Eurasian man were less ambiguous than either Marie or Radha, but he too had had negative memories as a result of his multiraciality. He recalled as a child being rejected by many of his father's Croatian friends and occasionally by Anglo-Celtic classmates for appearing "too Asian". However, unlike Radha and Marie, Enrique described being empowered by the current popularity of Eurasian actors and models. "Everyone wants to be beautiful", was his reaction to media stereotypes of Eurasian beauty. Additionally, Enrique remembered that girls at his high school found him attractive specifically because he was mixed race. While Radha and Marie found this experience at times uncomfortable and unwanted, Enrique felt it was a positive occurrence in his life which actually aided his self-esteem and self-acceptance as a Eurasian.

Furthermore, Enrique described seeing Eurasian celebrities as giving him a "chance of being accepted" in Australia. Again, unlike Radha and Marie, Enrique also agreed with the media's portrayal of mixed race people as being possessed of two cultures and therefore able to improve the world. He believed that this background would enable mixed race people to play a large and significant part in the world. According to Enrique, the casting calls for Asian children to play the role of Tam indicate that the reporters and newspapers oversimplify the Eurasian experience. He described the ads as representing the popular view that "think Asian genes are stronger than Anglo genes" in spite of the fact that there are many multiracial individuals who possess less racially identifiable features.

Esther acknowledged that the coverage of the casting in *Miss Saigon* was overly simplistic and demonstrated a lack of sensitivity towards multiracial people, however she posited that it was

human nature to perceive the world in categories and that in order to understand and accept the story of *Miss Saigon*, they needed to see the characters in a way that was "clear-cut and simple". A Eurasian actor, she believed, would be too confusing for the audience. While both Marie and Enrique expressed dissatisfaction at the levels of understanding and acceptance they have received in Australia, Esther felt more comfortable with what she described as the "paradox" of her character and background.

Implications regarding cultural identity

Evidently, current portrayals of Eurasians in print media indicate that Eurasian people are forced to occupy an ambivalent and unstable position in Western society. They are disproportionately portrayed as unusually attractive and culturally progressive while their presence is marginalised when it threatens to displace accepted aspects of Western culture or engage in complex racial debate. Eurasian women, particularly, are glamourised and fetishised excessively, while Eurasian men are passed over in comparative silence. As Hall indicates, identity and representation are interwoven, (Hall, 1990: 222) and the dominance of the mass media indicates that the primary representation that multiracial people are exposed to is that of being 'other'. While print media may frequently portray them as attractive, modern, chic and culturally aware, these qualities are highlighted solely because of their gender and perceived racial composition, which marks them as 'different' from the 'norm'. As a result, the overwhelming message of the media representations is that they are exotic, different, orientalist and other.

Furthermore, print media's neglect of the multiracial aspect in regards to *Miss Saigon*, trivialises the experiences and cultural or identity concerns of multiracial people. The stereotypical, and often highly sexualised, representation of the 'other' orientalist Eurasian female becomes the only image print media promotes regarding multiraciality, while any discussion of multiracial people in the context of war, imperialism or neo-colonialism is avoided. As a result, a multiracial individual's development of an internal, stable sense of identity is impeded by external representations imbued with ideas of normality and difference, and perceptions that multiracial experiences are unambiguously positive and do not warrant any serious analysis. Additionally, while the media portrayals do not deliberately advocate the objectification of multiracial individuals, the lack of balance within the media's representations of multiraciality indicates the absence of effective dialogue regarding race, culture and difference in Australia and other Western countries. The very absence of dialogue and representation not only impedes the development of cultural identity in one aspect of society, but as a result also hinders any meaningful communication between and within diverse groups within Australia.

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