Title	Whiteness Studies in Japan : Types of Whiteness, Visible and Invisible
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Citation	パブリック・ヒストリー. 2008, 5, p. 1-13
Version Type	VoR
URL	https://doi.org/10.18910/66453
rights	
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Whiteness Studies in Japan: Types of Whiteness, Visible and Invisible

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White Australia imagined as multicultural?

Whiteness is an extremely elusive concept. In certain circumstances whiteness is apparent or quite visible to some, but it is not visible to others or its very existence might even be denied. Visibility or invisibility of whiteness changes with individuals' and groups' perspectives and with the societies in which they are situated.

At the fourteenth Annual Meeting of the Australian Studies Association of Japan in 2003, a panel discussion was held mostly to hear the leading businessmen of companies that have had a fairly long experience of maintaining a large subsidiary company in Australia. Though I cannot remember now what they actually talked about, I was intrigued by their speeches, or rather the framework they used to describe the Australian business world. Despite conscious and unconscious efforts on the part of Australian governments, academics, the media, as well as Japanese scholars, to depict and imagine Australian society as multicultural, these businessmen all referred to Australian society repeatedly as white, without mentioning any diversity in it. Australia is 'a white nation,' run by 'white men,' distinguished by the 'white man's way.' While white supremacy may be 'a fantasy in a multicultural society,' it is quite real and probably the only reality to these businessmen. Moreover, they work very successfully with this reality in their minds. On the one hand they learn and cope with the white man's way. On the other hand, they are critical of its inefficiency and try to avoid its eccentricity.

Japanese scholars and commentators on Australian society, because they are supposed to be more objective, do not represent Australian society or Australian academic circles as white. While they usually point to various discriminations, they focus on the diversity and multicultural aspects of society. Which version of Australian society is 'more real' or 'more truthful?' Such a question may be in itself meaningless in our post-modern world. Yet does the post-modernity eventually belong to 'our' side of the world?

The Japanese businessmen did not mention any incident of racial discrimination against them or any physical marker of whiteness. They never accuse Australians of racism. This suggests that their description is much deeper than an apparent observation of Australian society, though their expression seems to be harsh and offensive to the civilized ear. It is possible that they are simply naming a structural domination of whiteness, for example, described by Ruth Frankenberg as 'the unmarked marker … unexamined — unqualified, essential, homogenous, seemingly self-

fashioned, and apparently unmarked by history or practice.' [1] Then what are we, as Japanese scholars, doing by analysing and describing Australian society without paying attention to unmarked whiteness? What are we doing by submerging ourselves under academic practice without noticing unmarked, structural whiteness? I believe that my standpoint is very tenuous with respect to whiteness.

I am not in a position to tell even roughly how Japanese scholars think of whiteness in the Australian academic world and extendedly in English-speaking academia. Instead, I want to tell you my personal experience and offer my explanation of it.

More than twenty years ago when I was a student, I wanted to be admitted into a post-graduate course in history at one Australian university. When I wrote to a possible supervisor about my proposal for research, I was strongly advised to study Japanese attitudes to 'White Australia' policy. Though this advice seems natural in view of my language skills and the state of research at that time in Australia, it was against my intention and against the purpose of studying abroad since the Japanese attitudes could be more easily and efficiently studied in Japan. I wanted to know and examine the Australian part of the story.

I may say that the letter I received directly and indirectly suggested that the history of the White Australian part of the White Australia policy was fully examined by white Australian historians, if I am here allowed to be as bold as the above Japanese businessmen. That advice sounded like 'we have finished major part of history to which you, Asians could add nothing but minor revisions by studying Asians.' The entire picture of the puzzle belongs to whites and Asians may add pieces by studying only Asians, according to this position. Can the 'Chinese puzzle' be solved only by white Australians in the 1850s as well as now? Now we often see Asian scholars play Asian parts or repeat the repertoire of white scholarship for token representation.

Unmarked and unnamed whiteness is always arguable. As the roles Asians play on the multicultural platform are certainly empowering them, so the whiteness of unmarked whiteness could be vehemently denied by Asians. A Japanese scholar at a session, 'Whiteness in Asian Contexts and 'Asia' in Western Constructs,' will happily deny the whiteness of the session. But this conference could be suitably called a 'white conference' from a different viewpoint.

The elusiveness of whiteness does not end here. I want to introduce two Japanese women today. The first one is Yuri Ebihara who was the best-known fashion model in Japan in 2006. An article says, 'You can't go anywhere without seeing her face in Japan.' Her nickname is Ebichan and she is popularly called by this name. Ebi means prawns in Japanese and McDonald's Japan employed her for the promotion of the Ebi-burger, a kind of prawn burger, and it was an instant success because of her popularity among young Japanese women.

The second woman is Michiko Hamamura, who was a popular singer in Japan about fifty

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[1] Ruth Frankenberg, ed., *Displacing Whiteness: Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), p. 1, p. 15; see also Ross Chambers, "The Unexamined," in *Whiteness: A Critical Reader*, ed., by Mike Hill (New York: New York University Press, 1997), pp. 188–189.

years ago. She sang a Japanese version of the Banana Boat Song by Harry Belafonte. She was the first Japanese woman who dyed her hair brown and her hairstyle and make-up became known as the Calypso style. Although the song originally came from black Jamaican workers, Hamamura's appearance did not look like a Caribbean woman. She wanted to be like a Westerner. She dyed her hair and pioneered a new make-up in order to look like a Westerner. The crooked nature of such cultural transfer is a very interesting subject, but I do not treat this problem here.

When we look at the pictures of the two women, they look quite similar. It may be asserted that the basic perception of the female beauty in Japan has not changed much for half a century, but that is not my point. I do not argue here that the present Japanese woman's ideal of beauty is Western or white. Ebichan and her followers do not consciously want to be Westerners any more. They are pursuing the beauty according to their own tastes whose magic word is 'pretty' or 'cute,' or *kawaii* in Japanese. They are seeking the Japanese ideal of beauty, though the ideal is identical with the style Hamamura regarded as Western. The Western style, a version of whiteness, could be absorbed as Japanese proper on a personal conscious level. The form of whiteness sometimes rapidly changes its meaning.

Then what can we do with such an elusive concept? We must acknowledge that whiteness is simultaneously visible and invisible in a broad range of circumstances including academia. We will have to name unmarked whiteness, an 'objective' structure of academic practice. This must be a very difficult and dangerous task, I believe, as scholarly practice is constantly under attack from a white nationalist ideology in a country like Australia.[2] We also need a theory or map of whiteness which names invisible whiteness in relation to visible whiteness over a long time span. We need a theory that is not binding, but that helps us obtain a larger perspective of connectedness among various manifestations of whiteness. We must attempt to make clear the relationship between the visible whiteness and the invisible whiteness for historical analysis. We also need the people of colour, who play the role of anthropologists on white tribes. This will reveal many aspects of invisible whiteness.

Whiteness as unmarked?

If asked about whiteness studies in Japan, I can say confidently that there are not many except super-nationalistic ones. Thus I decided to set up a research project on whiteness in Japan a few years ago. I headed a research team on whiteness at the National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka, from 2002 to 2004. The name of the project was 'the structuring of whiteness in the world.' I was told later that this was the first project at the museum that contained 'in the world' in the name of the research project. The research projects are usually confined to particular themes, areas or tribes.

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(2) See Keith Windschuttle, *The Fabrication of Aboriginal History. Vol. 1, Van Dieman's Land 1803-1847* (Sydney: Macleay Press, 2002); Robert Manne, ed., *Whitewash: On Keith Windschuttle's Fabrication of Aboriginal History* (Melbourne: Black Inc., 2003); Stuart Macintyre and Anna Clark, *The History Wars* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2003).

I was probably allowed to use that expression because I am not an anthropologist, but a historian, a layman, who does not know what the institution should be. As I am a historian, most of the members were also historians.

In 2002, I eventually ventured into the study of white tribes in the world with a group of Japanese researchers. In pursuing the research, the first thing I had to make clear, though unwillingly, was to define the object of research that had *signifiant*, but did not have clear *signifié* or *référent*. Studying white tribes is easier for historians, but studying whiteness is not. The problem is that 'whiteness' is a word decisively detached from ordinary use of language, while 'whites' has been commonly used and is historically understandable.[3] Whiteness is a word for researchers to give meaning to and by doing so construct the object of their study, although they would not call it the object as it is assumed to be more abstract. Or whiteness, by the definition as 'unmarked marker, empty *signifiant*,' may be essentially without *signifié* or *référent*.

Cynthia Levine-Rasky refers to whiteness as white 'racefulness,' an active participant in systems of domination. She states that she uses the term 'whiteness' to refer to 'the processes through which whites acquire and deploy social dominance' and 'to signify a constellation of social effects and processes, not their repository in a white body.' Her intention is 'to evoke the material and symbolic power of whiteness identifying its relationality and contextuality.'[4] Frankenberg thinks of whiteness as 'practice rather than object, in relation to racial formation and historical process rather than as isolable or static.'[5] To some researchers the research task is simpler. They attempt to fill the unmarked space of whiteness by subjecting it to scrutiny.[6] It is now a fashionable practice to add 'whiteness' to the title of any book related to whites or racism on the European side. But isn't it also problematic to claim whiteness to be an unmarked category and simply to make it the focus of study?

Vron Ware poses a similar question from a different point of view. Referring to the work of David Roediger, she questions 'how that whiteness is defined, in the first place, and how this research is to be carried out, not just in the United States, but also in different specific and comparative locations.' She also questions how gender, class or sexuality enter into the way in which the discursive power of whiteness is perceived, experienced, encountered, and rejected. She finally concludes that the student of whiteness requires a map of possibilities and a steady compass to make sense of the field.[7] The map I want to show here is not the map or the compass Ware attempted to provide. Still I believe that a provisional map of the historical development of

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(3) I am of the position that the concept of whites or the white race is socially constructed and am not here arguing for their 'naturalness'.

(4) Cynthia Levine-Rasky, ed., *Working through Whiteness: International Perspectives* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press), 2002, pp. 2-3.

(5) Frankenberg, *Displacing Whiteness*, p. 20.

(6) Michelle Fine, Lois Weis, Linda C. Powell, and L. Mun Wong, eds., *Off White: Readings on Race, Power, and Society*, (New York: Routledge), 1997, viii.

(7) Vron Ware and Les Back, *Out of Whiteness: Color, Politics, and Culture*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 2002, p. 19, p. 31.

whiteness in the globalizing world is necessary to navigate the structured racial order.

What role can history play in whiteness studies in concert with other disciplines? Frankenberg originally conceived of whiteness in three ways as a location of structural advantage, of race privilege; a standpoint, a place from which white people look at themselves , at others, and at society; a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed.[8] The simultaneous strength and weakness with this sociological definition is that whiteness is replaceable with other categories such as Japaneseness or maleness. For example, we can easily adapt the definition to critically observe Japaneseness in Japan as a natural, unmarked category. It is true that whiteness has often worked through nationality, membership in a nation-state, and that such extended use of the definition may be productive. But we may lose sight of the specific aspects of whiteness with Frankenberg's definition. Whiteness is beyond national membership and far more influential in constituting the globalizing world order. Another problem is that whiteness is not necessarily natural or unmarked.

Frankenberg later argues that 'the notion of whiteness as unmarked norm is revealed to be a mirage, or at least a phenomenon delimited in time and space.' She states 'In the historical moment with which Horsman is concerned, whiteness was not normative and thus unseen and unmarked, but rather named, marked, and still in the making.' Frankenberg means that whiteness was in the making and visible in the United States in the first half of the nineteenth century, while whiteness as unmarked marker belongs to a 'rather recent, historical moment.' The version of 'whiteness as norm, as transparency, as national/natural state of being' has been handed down to 'many of us' through historical processes. 'Whiteness attains (usually unstable) unmarkedness' where white supremacy has been achieved.[9]

The limitation of whiteness as unmarked norm is no doubt a cliché to Australian historians who have the most marked of marked whiteness in the dreams of White Australia. Similarly the historical transition indicated by Frankenberg, from marked to unmarked, seems to apply to Australian experience as well. However, is it possible to explain away the relationship of marked whiteness and unmarked whiteness only in terms of the extent of white supremacy? As whiteness is always a relative term and essentially an analytical word manipulated by researchers, if my argument is accepted, we should try to make clear at least the *signifié* and *référent*, the historical context and the relationship of the two versions of whiteness.

Whiteness in contradiction?

Warren Montag argues that a 'universal was one of the forms in which the white race historically appeared' and that 'whiteness is itself the human universal that no (other) race realizes.' This

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(8) Ruth Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 1993, p. 1.

(9) Frankenberg, *Displacing Whiteness*, p. 5, p. 9, pp. 15-16.

argument is not contradictory to the conception of whiteness as an empty, unmarked category, but the problem is its temporal sequence. According to him, whiteness as unmarked is supposed to be inherent to Enlightenment philosophy. We are still imprisoned in the limits set by the whiteness within the discursive network in the age of the Enlightenment. We therefore have been trapped in such unmarked whiteness for at least two and a half centuries. In his reasoning the unmarked whiteness discursively predates the whiteness in the making in the nineteenth century. How should we conceive of this version of whiteness?[10]

Though I feel an impulsive aversion to the emphasis placed on the Enlightenment by a Euro-centred theorist, I find insightful his argument that 'whether, since whiteness is not logically confined to the status of a particularism but can be conceived as one possible form of universalism, the category or attribute of whiteness has functioned historically in opposition to universalism.'[11]

It seems to me that the two versions of whiteness, whiteness unmarked and whiteness marked, existed in opposition to each other in theory, but at the same time reinforced each other by this opposition in reality, or contextually. I want to attempt to locate the two versions of whiteness and their historical relationship to each other and to class, gender and nation.

Since whites as a group or as a race have never been determined by physical characteristics, that is, a social construct, socially and historically changing, they always need to be supported by the attribute circumscribed by society. The whites, the white race, a race among a variety of races, has a relatively definite attribute, visible whiteness or marked whiteness, while the white as a man, representative of humanity, has an indefinite attribute, invisible whiteness or unmarked whiteness. I may be able to say that the latter's *signifiant* is man; its *signifié* is a composite of whiteness and humanity or nationality; its *référent* is the dominant group in society.

In the early nineteenth century, Georges Cuvier, a French naturalist and chancellor of the University of Paris, who 'scientifically' divided homo sapiens into three subspecies and exerted a great influence on later racial theorists and popular images of races, regarded the Caucasians as superior to other races.[12] The white race, visible whiteness, or marked whiteness, like Cuvier's theory, combined human physical differences with cultural and mental qualities and asserted the superiority of the white race over non-white races. The marked whiteness needs a white body for its representation and asserts the dominance and superiority of the white race based on biological or hereditary qualification. The white body is at the root of whiteness and whiteness is limited to those with a white body.

The other form of whiteness, invisible or unmarked whiteness, appears as the norm of humans. In the age of imperialism norms of white nations and white middle classes functioned as the standards of civilization, the yardstick on which cultures of non-whites could be measured. Whiteness was represented as acquirable by any race or nation. In this sense whiteness is universal.

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(10) Warren Montag, "The Universalization of Whiteness: Racism and enlightenment," in *Whiteness: A Critical Reader,* p. 285, p. 292.

(11) Ibid., p. 285.

(12) Michael Banton, *Racial Theories,* 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1998, p. 46.

Savages and heathens could be civilized. Within contemporary nation-states that claim to be multicultural societies, such as Australia, nationality or the membership of the nation with associated national culture, functions in a similar way within national boundaries. Whiteness is open to non-whites, while being restrictive in a number of ways. The importance of the body as a physical marker of human groups has gradually diminished because of the development of technology of identification of individuals. This has made whiteness more accessible to a number of non-white groups, while whiteness is retained as the standard of normal human beings.

Whiteness as the norms of humanity often transforms itself from the ideal human to the ideal member of the nation-state. Since humanity was closely related to the emerging French nation-state in revolutionary France, humanity became inseparable from Frenchness. Frenchness then grew increasingly white in the nineteenth century. In the British Empire, Englishness and later Britishness often functioned as the standard of civilization or the norms of humanity. Invisible whiteness has been historically underscored by visible whiteness as well. Theoretical accessibility has been circumscribed by actual restriction. On the other hand, as modern democracy was created within nation-states, whiteness constituted the basis of democracy through the medium of white nationality in major Western states. Probably the development of democratic institutions helped establish whiteness more directly than the foundational Enlightenment. This is especially true of countries such as the United States, Australia and Canada, where the boundary of the nation was supposed to largely overlap with that of race.

The two versions of whiteness have existed side-by-side in the subjectivity of the colonized and non-whites who faced the dominance of white nations in the ideology and policies towards non-white nations and peoples, and in the public identity and political and social spheres of Western nations. Unmarked whiteness, by suggesting the norms to which non-whites can subscribe, offers a possibility for non-whites to accommodate themselves to whiteness and to take an active part in the power structure while marked whiteness denies such a possibility at the same time.

Frantz Fanon describes the split self of the colonized in the Antilles, a French colony where people had to adopt the norms of France in order to be more civilized, more human and thus to be whiter. This gave them honorary, but not full citizenship. Marked whiteness or blackness prevented them from fully embracing whiteness as humanity. At the turn of the last century, the British Empire espoused the equality of races while acknowledging the right of white colonies to restrict non-white immigration. Japan demanded free entry for its nationals into Australia by asserting that it reached the standards of civilized nations. The standards of civilization were offered as a possibility for Japan to become a great power among Western nations, but their nationals were denied entry to Australia because of racial descrimination. India and China were in a similar position. In the clash of the unmarked whiteness as standards of civilization and the marked whiteness based on racism, Australia was forced to adopt a language test as a method of restricting non-white immigrants for the purpose of making whiteness invisible. The British espousal of equality of races was not simply a hypocritical fake as Gandhi's activity in South Africa

reveals. The adoption of British living standards and British subjecthood were the ground for the Indian claim of civil rights.

The two versions of whiteness are two sides of the same coin. Still it is useful to think of them as separate in order to conceive of the changing nature of whiteness in the last two centuries.

Four types of whiteness

I want to use the phrase 'peripheral whiteness' to refer to the whiteness more clearly marked in the body, or more visible whiteness. This whiteness has often appeared as various categories of the white race such as the Aryans, the Caucasians, the Germans, the Anglo-Saxons. I use the word 'peripheral' because it is often expressed by groups with white identity marginal in class, ethnicity and in the world structure.[13] These white groups need to vociferously assert whiteness since they lack the economic and social advantage usually associated with physical whiteness.

On the other hand I want to use the phrase 'dominant whiteness' to indicate the more invisible or less marked whiteness. I use the word 'dominant' because it is often expressed by groups with white identity dominant in class, ethnicity and in the world structure. Physical markers of whiteness are secondary to such people since the social or geographical distance from non-white groups is large enough to secure their dominance.

Figure 1 illustrates the four types of whiteness in the modern world based on the observation of European countries, the United States and British white settler societies and their relations with non-European countries and migrants.

The imperial and multicultural types are versions of dominant whiteness while the republican and racist types are versions of peripheral whiteness. Dominant here again means that whiteness shows less markedness, while peripheral means that whiteness is more visible. All the types embrace both visible whiteness and invisible whiteness, but in the dominant versions unmarked whiteness prevails while in the peripheral versions marked whiteness prevails. In the dominant types invisible whiteness is more prevalent in the multicultural type than in the imperial type. In the peripheral types visible whiteness is more prevalent in the racist type than in the republican type.

Historical examples will elucidate the four types of whiteness. Those bearers of the peripheral whiteness are usually peripheral white groups as I mentioned. The typical group is Irish workers described by David Roediger in *The Wages of Whiteness*. Similarly in late nineteenth century British white colonies, the white colonial working class, because of the marginality as a colony in terms of its geographical, cultural and political location, and also because of the marginality in terms of its class status, embraced the peripheral whiteness.

The white middle class in nineteenth century British colonies were the bearers of the

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(13) E.g., groups with white identity in the periphery or semi-periphery rather than in the core in the schemata proposed by Immanuel Wallerstein.
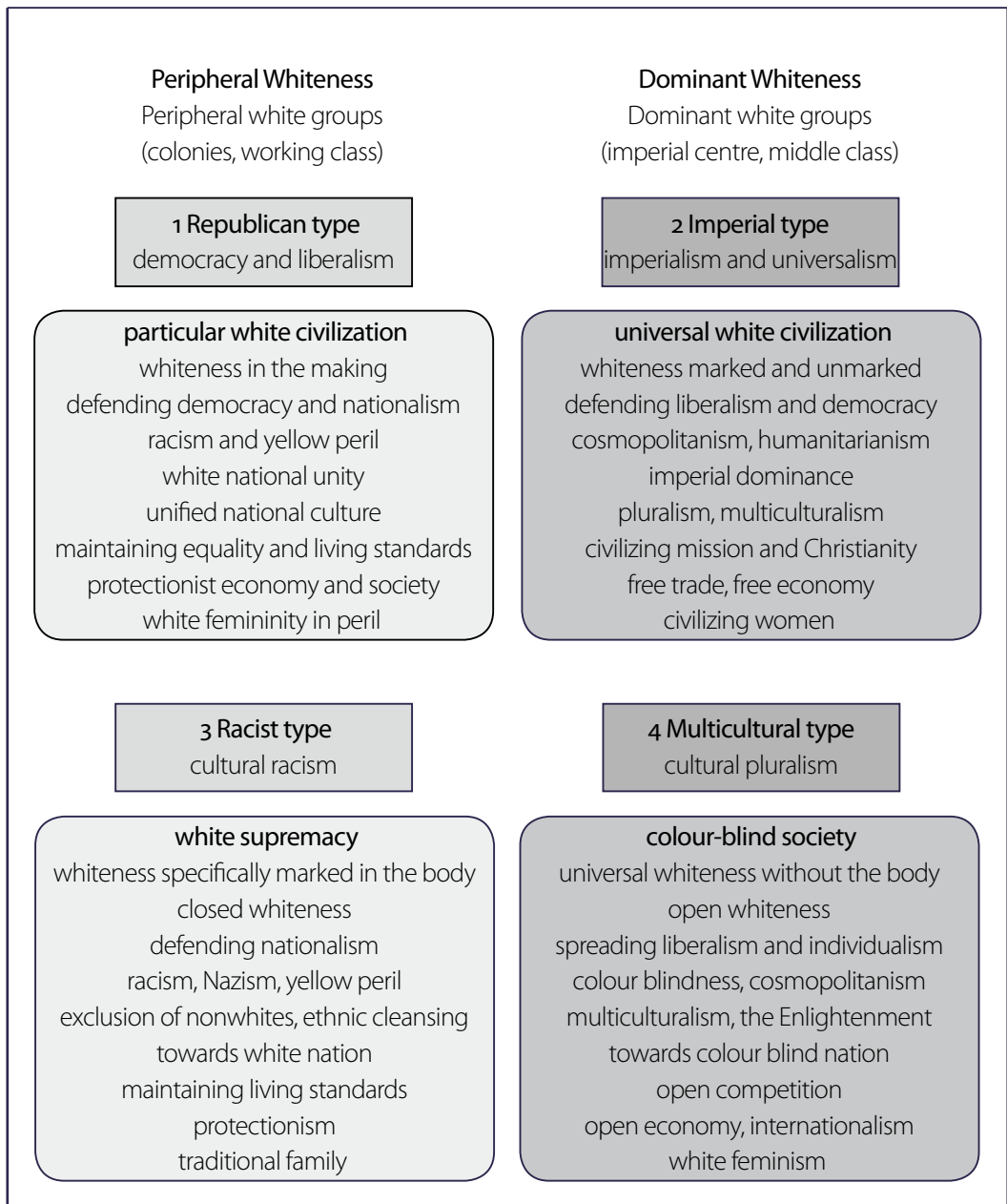
Figure 1: Four Types of Whiteness

dominant whiteness, but also partly influenced by the peripheral whiteness because of its geographical and structural marginality in the British Empire. Structural and geographical location is also important. The white middle class women were in a similar position because of the contradictory nature of class and gender mixture. The dominant whiteness was most clearly sustained by the upper and middle classes in the imperial centres in nineteenth century Europe — groups socially and geographically most distant from non-white workers. The dominant whiteness
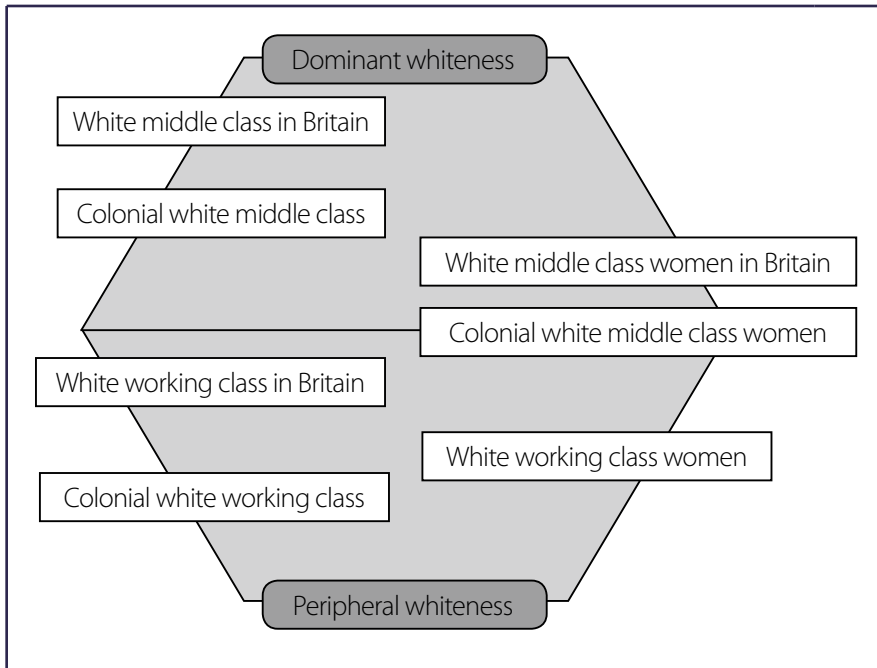
Figure 2

thereafter was embraced by the middle and upper classes in Western nation states that adopted multiculturalism or colour blindness. Figure 2 roughly shows the relationship of the two versions of whiteness and the white middle and working classes in the late nineteenth century. The major contribution of whiteness studies heretofore was in the research on white middle class women and white working class men, the two groups that might be thought of as deficient in whiteness either in terms of gender or class.[14] But the role of gender is controversial in the working class. White femininity in the working class possibly makes up for the deficiency of whiteness in terms of class in certain circumstances.

The republican type of whiteness prevailed in the United States, Canada, Australia, and South Africa from the second half of the nineteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century. These countries made use of whiteness as a basis for the consolidation of national unity. Whiteness largely overlay nationhood. The nation tended to be represented as a white body, which in turn became the medium for imagining the nation. The white woman became the symbol of white civilization. The white woman's body was said to be threatened with sexual assault by non-white males and the white nation and civilization represented by white femininity were threatened with contamination. White workers asserted the equality of white citizens and the maintenance

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(14) David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1999); Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth Century America* (London: Verso, 1990); Vron Ware, *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism, and History* (London: Verso, 1992); Ruth Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

of their standards of living, while the dominant classes utilized the workers' demand for the purpose of the unification of the nation-state. The defence of white democracy and national unity variously led to the exclusion of non-whites from the nation, work, and a number of spheres of life.

The racist type of whiteness was typically predominant in Nazi Germany and South Africa under the apartheid regime mostly during the mid-twentieth century. The republican type was affected by the influence of invisible, universal whiteness, but the racist type was almost free from or rather antagonistic to universal whiteness. The white race became equivalent to the nation. Nationalist border controls became extremely restrictive. Whiteness became almost totally dependent upon the white body. However, the body of whites is defined by cultural attributes, that is, the body of whites by itself cannot define whiteness. If the racist type is led to the extreme conclusion, the white body must be violently and irrationally stipulated. This means the annihilation of the space of invisible whiteness, the absolute division of humanity. When invisible whiteness is completely eliminated, the culmination of severe discrimination like the genocide of the Jews in Nazi Germany ensues. Even today right wing organizations in Western societies frequently assert visible whiteness rooted in the white body and demand the creation of exclusively white space within the nation. They represent the racist type in contemporary societies, though they are apparently in a minority.

Now the separation of the dominant whiteness and peripheral whiteness has advanced to the highest stage. The present difference between the racist and multicultural types is far greater than the divergence between the republican and imperial types at the turn of the nineteenth century. The dominant whiteness is increasingly invisible, separated from the white body, and the peripheral whiteness is becoming more marked, marginal in public support. Still the peripheral whiteness retains its influence on considerable sections of society in a disguised form like cultural racism.

The imperial type of whiteness was typically predominant in the British and French Empires from the second half of the nineteenth century to the first part of the twentieth century. Whiteness is presented as the ultimate form of universal human identity. Non-whites who did not sufficiently possess whiteness were encouraged to reach the ultimate form through Christianization and civilizing missions. Democracy and liberalism were presented as the common standards for humans, but it was a future possibility, not a reality for non-whites who tried to acquire whiteness. After the Second World War, the British Colonial Office attempted to promote the education for citizenship in black African colonies, but their independence and the establishment of democratic institutions were scheduled to take place in an unforeseeable distant future. The British Empire offered the universal principles for the imperial reign, but it was impossible for non-white subjects to identify themselves thoroughly with the invisible whiteness couched in universal humanity. The white middle class women were represented as the symbol for Christianity and civilization. They were typically categorized as the lady traveller or lady missionary. White femininity was not something that was menaced with non-white contagion, but it was thought of as the vanguard

of human civilization. The white woman was the model for universal humanity and white feminists moved within this framework in the imperial context. The imperial type presupposes the hierarchy of whites in terms of ethnicity and class and it recognizes the existence of a variety of cultures in stratified ranks.

More transparent or invisible than the imperial type is the multicultural type of whiteness. The multicultural type appeared when the imperial and republican types increasingly lost legitimacy after the Second World War. The old European empires have disintegrated and white settler societies and European societies have become diversified within the state in terms of racial and ethnic mixture. The multicultural whiteness is particularly dominant in countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia and Britain. Whiteness is more open to non-whites and societies have become more liberal and tolerant towards non-whites than in the republican type. In the multicultural type not only whiteness is represented as universal humanity, but also it approves cultural diversity. Particular cultures are recognized to be equal to each other under comprehensive universal humanity or nationhood. Whiteness is thrown open to the bearers of various cultures. The significance of the white body is minimized, and therefore non-whites with different physical features can acquire whiteness and thus become like whites in almost every aspect of life. However, this invisible whiteness is not inconsistent with imperialistic domination or civilizing mission. It even legitimates military attacks. While whiteness now could be shared by individuals with a wide range of racial and ethnic backgrounds, it tends to lose some characteristics of universal humanity because it was more firmly embraced by nationalism. Humanity and national membership are often equated, though the advent of universal citizenship is asserted by scholars as well as activists. It is thus possible to replace the whiteness in Frankenberg's definition with Japaneseness. The multicultural type of whiteness sometimes vindicates its legitimacy by denouncing the racist type of whiteness. The multicultural type of whiteness could claim to be different from racism and function as a unifying principle of the nation-state. Whiteness is universalized within nationhood and has become invisible.

The multicultural type of whiteness, from our contemporary perspective, is the most powerful whiteness. The imperial type and republican types follow it and the racist type is the weakest. The multicultural type is the most powerful because it could cohabit with democratic nation-states and a universal free economic system. On the other hand, the whiteness marked in the body and stipulated by law or bound by social custom, is referred to as 'weak' whiteness. It is described as weak because the fact that whiteness is attributed to the whites, a particular visible racial group, would invite criticism against the racially privileged group that uses such discourse. In international relations and social circumstances within the more unified nation-states, which formally oppose racial discrimination, the pronouncement of white racial privilege would endanger the maintenance of white domination by producing a wide range of opposition and resistance. Such weakness is conspicuously visible in the contemporary white supremacist groups.

Pseudo-biological definition of the white race, the Social Darwinism and the Aryanism connected with Nazism, were once extremely influential as racial ideology for the justification

of the legitimacy of white domination. But the racial ideology was vulnerable to the criticism of anti-racist groups because it was based on the white body and that the white body was the basis for racial privilege. Under democratic institutions the racial privilege marked in the body was theoretically against universalized humanity and often challenged by non-whites. The privilege became increasingly costly to maintain and was gradually renounced. The dominant white majority apparently broke with such ideology and now only marginal white groups hold on to it.

Whiteness, humanity and nationhood

Whiteness has been closely related to humanity and nationhood in the modern world. Whiteness could appear either in the form of universal humanity or in the form of national membership and even in both forms at the same time. Whiteness in the shape of universal humanity could be accommodated within the imperial framework or national citizenship. As whiteness is inseparable from gender in terms of universal humanity, its connection with gender has been well studied from such a perspective. Because whiteness being connected to class rather in terms of national citizenship, its connection with the working class has been amply analysed. This made it inevitable that democracy has lived in symbiosis with racism as whiteness transformed into nationhood both in the form of humanity and citizenship. We need to understand the silhouette of the amorphous shape of whiteness in changing circumstances in extended areas of research.

It is absolutely necessary to assume the existence of invisible whiteness well before the twentieth century and to historically clarify the relationship between visible whiteness and invisible whiteness in a long-term perspective. Invisible whiteness, as the standards of civilization, was the power to create international order at the turn of the last century, while marked whiteness was asserted by former white settler societies to uphold their immigration restriction policies. At an individual level, the subjectivity of non-whites was ambivalently affected by the contradictory dominance of whiteness; both by the accommodating invisible whiteness and excluding marked whiteness. From international relations down to personal subjectivity, we have an extensive area of research in which no one has the final word. If we start to name the whiteness in contemporary multicultural, colour-blind societies, historical examination of unmarked whiteness will help us understand it from a different and illuminating angle. I hope that this paper will provide a provisional map to locate the whiteness in a historical dimension.