

ABOUT FACE: ASIAN REPRESENTATIONS OF AUSTRALIA

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Statement

This thesis is my own work. Preliminary research was undertaken collaboratively with a team of Asian Australians under my co-direction with Dr Russell Trood and Deborah McNamara. They were asked in 1995-96 to collect relevant material, in English and vernacular languages, from the public sphere in their countries of origin. Three monographs based on this work were published in 1998 by the Centre for the Study of Australia Asia Relations at Griffith University and these, together with one unpublished paper, are extensively cited in Part 2. The researchers were Kwak Ki-Sung, Anne T. Nguyen, Ouyang Yu, and Heidi Powson and Lou Miles. Further research was conducted from 2000 at the National Library with a team of Chinese and Japanese linguists from the Australian National University, under an ARC project, 'Asian Accounts of Australia', of which Shun Ikeda and I are Chief Investigators. Its preliminary findings are cited in Part 2.

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Abstract

This thesis considers the ways in which Australia has been publicly represented in ten Asian societies in the twentieth century. It shows how these representations are at odds with Australian opinion leaders' assertions about being a multicultural society, with their claims about engagement with Asia, and with their understanding of what is 'typically' Australian. It reviews the emergence and development of Asian regionalism in the twentieth century, and considers how Occidentalism strategies have come to be used to exclude and marginalise Australia. A historical survey outlines the origins of representations of Australia in each of the ten Asian countries, detecting the enduring influence both of past perceptions and of the interests of each country's opinion leaders. Three test cases evaluate these findings in the light of events in the late twentieth century: the first considers the response in the region to the One Nation party, the second compares that with opinion leaders' reaction to the crisis in East Timor; and the third presents a synthesis of recent Asian Australian fiction and what it reveals about Asian representations of Australia from inside Australian society. The thesis concludes that Australian policies and practices enable opinion leaders in the ten countries to construct representations of Australia in accordance with their own priorities and concerns, and in response to their agendas of Occidentalism, racism, and regionalism.

Abbreviations

A	<i>Australian</i>
AAI	Asia Australia Institute (Sydney)
AAP	Australian Associated Press
AB	Alison Broinowski
AB	<i>Angkatan Berita</i>
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
A-BC	Australian-Born Chinese
ABRI	<i>Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Armed Forces, to 1999)
ACFOA	Australian Council for Overseas Aid
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADB	Australian Dictionary of Biography
ADFA	Australian Defence Force Academy
AFAR	<i>Australian Foreign Affairs Record</i>
AFR	<i>Australian Financial Review</i>
AFP	<i>Agence France Presse</i>
AFTA	ASEAN Free Trade Agreement
AGPS	Australian Government Publishing Service
AIIA	Australian Institute of International Affairs
ANU	Australian National University
ANZUS	Australia New Zealand United States (Security Treaty)
AO	<i>Australian Outlook</i>
AP	Associated Press
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASAA	Asian Studies Association of Australia
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEAN+3	ASEAN plus China, Japan, and ROK
ASEM	Asia-Europe Meeting
ASPAC	Asia Pacific Council
ASR	<i>Asian Studies Review</i>
ATV(I)	Australia Television (International)
BBC	British Broadcasting Commission
BCE	Before Christian Era (BC)
BP	<i>Bangkok Post</i>
CAB	<i>Current Affairs Bulletin</i>
CE	Christian Era (AD)
CCCR	Centre for Cross Cultural Research (ANU)
CNN	Cable News Network
CSAAR	Centre for the Study of Australia Asia Relations (Griffith University)
CSCSD	Centre for the Study of the Chinese Southern Diaspora (ANU)
DEA	Department of External Affairs
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
EAEC(G)	East Asian Economic Caucus (Group)
ECAFE	Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East
ESCAP	Economic and Social Council for Asia and the Pacific

<i>FEER</i>	<i>Far Eastern Economic Review</i>
FPDA	Five-Power Defence Arrangement
GEACPS	Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere
G77	Group of 77 (developing countries)
<i>H</i>	<i>Hemisphere</i>
HR	House of Representatives
IDP	IDP Education Australia: International Development Program of Australian Universities and Colleges
IMF	International Monetary Fund
InterFET	International Force for East Timor
IPR	Institute of Pacific Relations
ISA	Internal Security Act (Malaysia)
ISEAS	Institute of Southeast Asian Studies
<i>JP</i>	<i>Jakarta Post</i>
JS	Japan Secretariat
<i>LRB</i>	<i>London Review of Books</i>
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
<i>NHK</i>	<i>Nihon Hōsō Kyōkai</i>
NLA	National Library of Australia
<i>NST</i>	<i>New Straits Times</i>
<i>NYRB</i>	<i>New York Review of Books</i>
<i>PAS</i>	<i>Parti se-Islam Malaysia</i>
PBS	(New York) Public Radio
POW	Prisoner(s) of War
RA	Radio Australia
RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force
RAR	Royal Australian Regiment
RN	(ABC) Radio National
ROK	Republic of Korea
RSPAS	Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies (ANU)
SBS	Special Broadcasting Service
SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation
<i>SMH</i>	<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i>
<i>ST</i>	<i>Straits Times</i>
<i>TNI</i>	<i>Tentara Nasional Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Armed Forces-1999)
<i>TWA</i>	<i>Weekend Australian</i>
UK	United Kingdom (of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
UMNO	United Malays National Organisation
UN	United Nations
UNAMET	United Nations Mission in East Timor
UNCTAD	United Nations Commission on Trade, Aid, and Development
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNSW	University of New South Wales
UNTAET	United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor
US(A)	United States (of America)
ZOPFAN	Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality

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INTRODUCTION

Australia has an image problem. The identity claimed by Australians and the perceptions of Australia held by others, especially by opinion leaders in Asian countries, frequently do not match. This thesis seeks to identify these perceptions, to explain how they were formed, to show how they have been deployed throughout the twentieth century, and to suggest why opinion leaders in ten Asian countries represent Australia as they do.

The economic implications alone justify a study of Australia's reputation in the region: but the political, strategic, and interpersonal dimensions of Australia's unique location in the vertical hemisphere of East Asia and the horizontal hemisphere of South Asia add considerably to its significance. Asian countries are Australia's closest neighbours and largest trading partners, and many Australian opinion leaders repeatedly emphasise the importance of Asia to Australia. But their assertions are rarely reciprocated by their counterparts in the region. Australia's public profile in the ten Asian countries considered here is generally low and in recent years, in several of them, has been sinking lower.¹ Information about Australia's reputation in the region has for long been erratic, scattered among official opinion surveys and media reports. Australia's neighbours' perspectives deserve to be better understood not only for their intrinsic interest but also for what they can show Australians about themselves. These considerations constitute the significance of the subject.

The main body of the thesis is in three parts. Part One sets out the theoretical basis of the study. It summarises Australians' suppositions about themselves, showing how remote most of them have been from Asian ideas about regional identity that grew throughout the twentieth century. It also proposes that an Occidentalists agenda has

¹ 'We don't stand these days where we once did, in the high regard of the nations around us. And yet, in that high regard lies crucial elements of our security'. Kim Beazley, resignation speech, 10 November 2001.

increasingly been used to marginalise Australians, whether or not they seek closer engagement with Asia. In Part Two, a brief historical survey of representations of Australia in the ten countries identifies common and recurrent themes and considers their variations over time in relation to changing national preoccupations. Of the three contemporary case studies presented in Part Three, two provide a comparison between Asian opinion leaders' responses to Pauline Hanson (1996-2000) and their representations of Australia during the East Timor crisis in the same period. The third selects and analyses representations of Australia in fiction by Asian Australians from the mid-1980s to 2000. Arguments about Australia as 'part of Asia' are summarised in Appendix 1. In Appendix 2, additional evidence is presented of Asian opinion leaders' representations of Australia, and further examples of responses in the region to One Nation.

The scope of the study includes the ten Asian countries with which contact with Australia has been the longest and most significant: China (the People's Republic, Hong Kong, and Taiwan), India, Indonesia (and East Timor), Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. It concentrates on these societies in the twentieth century, but its chronological range is from the earliest recorded perceptions of Australia in the region to 2000. Most of its primary sources originate from the public sphere in the ten countries: from speeches, official documents, newspapers, magazines, and monographs, in English or in translation; and in the third case study, from fiction by Asian Australians. More secondary source material is used than is usual in a thesis, but in selecting material, Asian authors have been preferred wherever possible. The bibliography is very large for three reasons: to acknowledge the material I have consulted even if it is not quoted, to indicate the sources of translated material in several languages, and to guide readers who may be more familiar with the literature on some societies in Asia than others.

The thesis takes theoretical guidance from mutual image pioneers such as John Dower, Iriye Akira, and Harold Isaacs, moving on to such later comparative culture studies as those of James Clifford, Michael Hill, and Elena Govor. It seeks to challenge Said and the Subaltern theorists not by pointing to limitations in their work, as others have done, but by reversing their generalisations about the West's constructions of

'Asia'. It applies them to Australia in a way that has not been done, and that Said, in particular, denied was possible. A guiding principle is that it would be an insult to the ten societies considered here to propose that, if opinion leaders use double standards, they should be immune from being identified as such. In analysing their generalisations about Australia, I try to avoid the trap of making equally sweeping statements, perhaps not always successfully, given the need to identify broadly shared opinions. I seek throughout, however, to present the perspectives of Asian opinion leaders in a way that does them justice, and to observe Australians' equal, if not greater, contribution to diminishing their own reputation in the region.

This is the first attempt to detect common motivations and to compare representations of Australia across the Asian region and over a long period. Synthesis and selection are inherent in the approach, but I have tried to avoid substituting my own individual perspective for the many I seek to study. I am well aware that it is impossible to cover completely either the broad universality or specific individualities in such a wide field. I am hampered, as well, by the barriers of numerous languages and scripts, and of limited access to some documents in official archives. The ephemerality of such potentially rich sources as television and the multiplicity of the Internet makes it difficult to do justice to their influence as shapers of opinion. That said, I am reassured to observe, even after the period covered by the thesis, that the representations of Australia that it identifies up to 2000 continue to be consistent with my findings.

Preliminary research was undertaken collaboratively with a team of Asian Australians who were asked in 1995-96 to collect relevant material from the public sphere in their countries of origin. Three monographs based on this work were published by the Centre for the Study of Australia Asia Relations at Griffith University and these, together with one unpublished paper, are extensively cited in Part 2 (Kwak, Nguyen, Ouyang, Powson and Myles). Further research is continuing at the National Library of Australia under the 'Asian Accounts of Australia' project on Chinese and Japanese 'Australiana', which is cited in Parts 2 and 3.² Two workshops at the National Library

² Project Administrators are Ruth Barraclough, Nguyet Thi Chu Barraclough, and Judy Laffan. Research Associates are acknowledged in Part 2.2 (Chinese), Part 2.3 (Japanese), and Part 2.6 (Philippines).

have provided me with valuable guidance from the field. Reports of commissioned surveys on trade, tourism, education, migration, and public opinion about Australia in several countries are selectively used, more for the qualitative than for the quantitative evidence that they provide. Travel for research included two visits to India and one to Singapore, as well as investigations in libraries, museums, and archives in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide. The thesis benefits from comments presented at a conference which I convened at the Australian National University in September/October 1998, 'A Tremendously Dangerous Time: Why Asia Matters'. I am grateful to Dr Denis Blight and to Anna Glynn of IDP for their support in making the conference possible.

Chinese and Japanese personal names are shown with the family name first, and Chinese are in pinyin, unless an individual has used them differently. Wade-Giles transliteration is shown where relevant for place-names and personal names that are more commonly known in that form. Japanese long vowels are indicated by a macron, except for commonly used place-names like Tokyo, Kyoto, Kobe, and Hokkaido.

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