

## **Lost in Music: Popular Music, Multiculturalism and Australian Film**

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*Dogs in Space* (dir: Richard Lowenstein) was released in 1986, at the height of the Hawke Labor government's concern with implementing the population management policy of multiculturalism. The institutional structures that gave shape to the policy were founded on the recommendations of *The Review of Post Arrival Programmes and Services to Migrants*, usually known as the Galbally Report after the chair of the committee which provided it, Frank Galbally. The Galbally Report was tabled in Federal Parliament in 1978, the same year in which *Dogs in Space* is set. However, the idea of multiculturalism in Australia was not new. Al Grassby, then Gough Whitlam's Minister for Immigration, had delivered his speech entitled 'A Multi-Cultural Society for the Future' in 1973.

The institutional signs of the breakdown of the Australian incorporatist ideology of assimilation can be found much earlier, in the establishment of the Italian welfare organisation Co.As.It in 1967 and the Greek welfare society in 1969 (Castles et al, 1988: 60). Whitlam's government set up the Australia Assistance Plan which, as Jean Martin describes it in *The Migrant Presence* (quoted in Castles et al: 61), provided the vehicle by which the scattered groups of migrant and migrant-oriented welfare organisations could move towards the centres of political power and also acted as a catalyst to the development of more integrated and articulate migrant organizations. In 1974 the Ethnic Community Councils of South Australia and Victoria were formed, that of New South Wales came a year later. What has all this to do with a film about a punk household in inner city Melbourne<sup>1</sup>?

*Dogs in Space* is an unrelentingly white, Anglo, film – apart from one tantalising element. Focused on one household, and centred on the Melbourne punk scene, the film, as Tim Groves describes it, "has an episodic narrative, covering a flow of parties, gigs, bed hopping and the obligatory road trip spread over several months" (2003: online). In this shared house are Sam (played by Michael Hutchence), lead singer of *Dogs in Space*, Anna (Saskia Post), his lover, Tim (Nique Needles), Grant (Adam Briscoomb), Tony

(Peter Walsh), and Jenny (Caroline Lee). Also, and most importantly for my argument here, there is Luchio (Tony Helou).

Luchio is a second generation Italo-Australian<sup>ii</sup>. While all those in the house live in a chaos fuelled by sex, drugs and punk music, Luchio, with his neatly cut hair and in shirt and slacks, is studying for his structural engineering exams at university. Why is Luchio in this house? We never find out. We never meet his family. We don't know why he isn't living with his parents like most good Italian-background young men of his age.

Portrayed in the mid 1980s, the household functions in the Anglo-Celtic cultural imaginary as an expression of the Anglo crisis of confidence in the preservation of its own power, and its own cultural practices, in the face of the transformation of first generation migrants into second generation European-Australians. In terms of numbers these were predominantly Italo-Australians and Greek-Australians. Blond Anna's death from a heroin overdose could be read, perhaps, as the loss of the old, Anglo Australia given that we are shown Anna in her parents' comfortably suburban, middle-class home. Her overdose is counterpointed with Luchio successfully passing his exams in spite of all the distraction around him.

Punk is a white musical form. Writing about the American proto-punk garage bands of the 1960s, Jon Savage describes their music as a "purely white, blue collar style, in which any black rhythmic influence was bleached out in favour of pure noise and texture: fuzz guitar, feedback, drones and whiny vocals" (1992: 81-2). In Australia one aspect of the acceptance and development of punk was as an expression of the recognition of the loss of Australia as having a totalised Anglo, understood as 'white,' culture.<sup>iii</sup> From the 1970s on, Anglo-Celtic domination would have to be hegemonic, negotiated. In Australia, punk can be understood as, among other things, an articulation of a crisis in an Anglo-Celtic generation which found itself dealing with an Italian- and Greek-Australian generation born in Australia and, on that basis, with as much right to claim Australian identity as the so-called Anglo-Celts (for a discussion of this term see Stratton, 1998: 38-39).

From this perspective the Richmond household in *Dogs in Space* can be read as a metaphor for 1970s/80s Australia. Richmond was the inner-city working-class migrant suburb. While the Anglos reassert their whiteness - as opposed to a southern European non-whiteness - in an existential crisis exemplified by their punk life-style, Luchio, disregarding the mayhem around him, attempts to assimilate into dominant culture and, one presumes, be upwardly socially mobile. This is as compared to his mostly middle-class housemates who have dropped out of the educational system and become déclassé. Luchio's Australianness is evidenced in his Anglo-Australian pronunciation style. The film offers a comparison between Luchio's *faux*-Anglo 'respectability' and the household's first generation Italian neighbour who stands in the street and, in a strongly Italian-accented English, shouts angrily at the house's occupants about their noisiness.

Luchio's acceptance by the household comes in the form of being ignored. He tolerates their lifestyle and they let him be except for the occasional visits from the women in the house. These unmotivated drop-ins suggest some degree of fascination with the exotic. The only time the men of the house take notice of Luchio is when they bring him back a lamb from a road-trip they go on. Why a lamb? Perhaps this can be read as the punks' understanding of Luchio as a version of the Paschal sacrificial lamb; Luchio as the naive (Italian, Catholic, non-white) lamb to the slaughter in the (Anglo, secular, white) punk household. The marker of Luchio's place in Anglo-Australian society will not come from his educational achievements, as he would like. Rather it is signalled by Leanne, the young woman from the lower-working class with whom Luchio has had some sort of brief liaison. Brought to the house by her family, Leanne sees Luchio as her ticket out of her background. She tells Luchio that, even though he is not the cause of her pregnancy, she's sure he will make a good father. Aspiring middle-class he may be, it is Luchio's Italian migrant background that allows Leanne to think that he is available to her.

The film erases all positive signs of Luchio's Italian cultural origins. In films of the 1980s and later that have non-Anglo-Celtic characters, music is used to signify their cultural difference. One example is *Moving Out* (dir: Michael Pattinson, 1983) discussed in Tan, 2000. This coming-of-age film about a teenage Italo-Australian boy uses songs by Umberto Tozzi (see Mitchell, 1998). While, of course, Luchio is not narratively central to

*Dogs in Space*, he gets no Italian music. The film's music is purely punk, as if an aural expression of both assimilation and Anglo crisis; an attempt to erase Luchio's cultural difference.

Where the film is sometimes derided for being formless, the music, both its Australian and non-Australian contributions, is celebrated. Reviewing Michael Hutchence's work outside of INXS (the band of which he was the singer) on the web, Rarebird typifies this distinction writing that:

*Unfortunately the film makes little sense, it is noisy, plotless and esoteric, and is far less effective than many similar films about alienated youth. The soundtrack album, though, is something to hear.*

*... The Dogs in Space soundtrack sounds like a great party record—if you're throwing a real wild party.*

From a purely musical perspective, *Dogs in Space* appears concerned with placing Australian, and in particular Melbourne, punk in an international context. While the majority of the music is late-70s Melbourne punk by Marie Hoy, The Primitive Calculators, Boys Next Door and others, this is set beside American and English punk classics. The film has two Iggy Pop tracks, one of which, 'Dog Food,' opens the film and therefore provides a context for the Melbourne music, a Gang Of Four track 'Anthrax,' and a minimalist, proto-ambient piece by Brian Eno, 'Sky Saw,' off his *Another Green World* album, released in 1975.

With the advent of multicultural policy there has been a limited discursive shift in the organisation of popular music in Australia, and in the use of popular music in Australian films. This is evidenced as far back as *The Heartbreak Kid* (dir: Michael Jenkins, 1993) but in this chapter I will mostly concentrate on *Head On* (dir: Ana Kokkinos, 1999<sup>iv</sup>), *The Wog Boy* (dir: Aleksis Vellis, 1999), *Looking for Alibrandi* (dir: Kate Woods, 2001), and *Fat Pizza* (dir: Paul Fenech, 2003). *Head On* and *The Wog Boy* are both centred on Greek-Australian characters, as is *The Heartbreak Kid*, while *Looking for Alibrandi* is a

coming-of-age film with an Italo-Australian lead. All these films, whether comedy or drama, exhibit similar features that are effects of Australian multicultural policy. And all these films use popular music in similar ways.

In this chapter I will be concerned primarily with the diegetic use of popular music, and not with underscored music used for atmosphere and to link scenes. I want to examine how the organisation of popular music, in an Australia dominated by official multicultural policy, is reproduced through the way music is used in films that we might loosely call multicultural—films that have non-Anglo-Celts as their main characters.

### **Australian Multiculturalism**

In order to understand the Australian popular music landscape on which these films draw we need to revisit the development of Australian multicultural policy. Produced during the Coalition government of Malcolm Fraser; many of the Galbally Report's 1978 recommendations were carried through under Bob Hawke's Labor government which came to power in 1983. In *Mistaken Identity: Multiculturalism and the Demise of Nationalism in Australia*, Stephen Castles and his fellow authors describe the Galbally Report as, "[t]he most complete articulation of ... conservative multiculturalism" (1988: 67). By this they mean that the Report emphasised the cultural disadvantages that caused problems for migrants, such as prejudice and language competence, rather than looking at the structural disadvantages migrants faced, that is to say aspects of the social and economic organisation of Australian society which militated against the acceptance of non-British and Irish migrants. Labor's concerns were primarily in terms of social welfare, access and equity, equality of opportunity issues, whereas the Coalition, and the Galbally Report, tended to lean towards seeing problems in more individualised terms, and in terms of the capacities of migrants to live successfully in Australia. As Adam Jamrozik, Cathy Roland and Robert Urquhart write:

*True multiculturalism, some argued, would have to be concerned not only with life-styles but also with life chances, with 'equality, justice and fairness' and not just with tolerance and understanding. (1995: 105)*

A part of the problem had to do with the assumptions that underlay the Galbally Report, that it was concerned with *migrants*, and how migrants might be best accommodated, not with a policy that would manage an ongoingly culturally diverse population. The Galbally Report actually presumed that, over a generation or so, the need for institutional structures to support groups from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds (NESBs) would decrease as the members of these groups assimilated into the general population. From this point of view, Australian multicultural policy might be transitory or, as Jamrozik, Boland and Urquhart put it “multiculturalism as assimilation in slow motion” (ibid: 111).

A key feature common to both Labor and the Coalition's image of multiculturalism policy in practice has been the emphasis on 'ethnic' groups. As Castles et al write: “Both modes of multiculturalism were part of a process of construction of ethnic groups as a focal point of social cohesion and mobilisation in Australia” (1988: 71). In this process the discourse of ethnicity became the marker of difference between those who were accepted as members of the core, mainstream culture and those identified as migrants, and their descendants also marked as not completely Australian in spite of having been born in the country, who were identified as members of a particular ethnic group.

Castles, et al wrote that, at the beginning of the 1980s, “two out of every ten Australians are first generation immigrants” (1988: 25). Of these “37 percent of the foreign born population were from Britain and Ireland, while a further 37 per cent were from Europe” (ibid). In 1976, a couple of years before the timeframe depicted in *Dogs in Space*, the total number of second generation Australians was 2,276,330 or 16.8 per cent of the Australian population (Siew-Ean Khoo et al, 2002: 9). By 1996 this figure had risen to 3,389,962 or 19.1 per cent of the total population. Of these, 1,444,444 came from British backgrounds, 334,048 were of Italian heritage and 153,876 had Greek forebears. Second generation Lebanese, who we will want to discuss in relation to *Fat Pizza*, came eighth,

numbering 82,582, but we need to remember that this figure does not distinguish between Christian and Muslim Lebanese (ibid, 11).

The construction of migrants from NESBs, and *de facto* their children, as a problem that needed to be resolved, combined with a long-established understanding of assimilation in Australia as a one-way process in which migrants gave up their culture for the Anglo-Celtic Australian culture, has led to a core-periphery structure in the Australian population. One very important element of this has been the retention of power by the Anglo-Celtic population. As Jamrozik et al wrote in 1995:

*The monoculture of [the core] institutions is overwhelming. After close to half a century of mass immigration of people from non-English-speaking countries, the vast majority of school teachers, university lecturers, public servants and professionals is monolingual, notwithstanding some presence of non-Anglo persons, usually second-generation immigrants, in these occupations. (108)*

They continue:

*Multiculturalism is evident in the arts, in music, even in some literature. However, there it seems to stop; the closer to economic, social and political power, the less cultural diversity, the more the traditional Anglo-Australian character comes to the fore. (ibid)*

In this core-periphery structure, where members of ethnic groups are isolated from key sites of economic, social and cultural power, Sneja Gunew wrote in 1994 that “multiculturalism in Australia is acceptable as a celebration of costumes, customs and cooking” (22). As we shall see, one of the acceptable customs is music - provided that it predates the era of migration, that the music is, roughly, pre-1960 and can then be identified as a part of a person’s heritage brought from the country of migration. An exception is the use of Tozzi’s songs in *Moving Out*, including his popular track from 1977, ‘Ti Amo’ (which retains this title in its Anglicised version). However, as a film made in Italian and English, without subtitles, and early in the new multicultural

environment, *Moving Out* does not fit within the mainstream multicultural filmic discourse. The best comparison is, of course, *Looking for Alibrandi*, a film on a similar theme made almost twenty years later.

### **The Skip/Wog Divide**

Experientially, the core-periphery structure of multiculturalism is replicated for the second generation in what we could call the skip-wog divide. Skip, or Aussie, and wog are the vernacular translations of the more formal Anglo-Celtic/migrant distinction. In both, the terms designating the more powerful, hegemonic group, skip and Anglo-Celtic, came into use later and signal a certain denaturalisation of that dominance. 'Wog' was the term applied to the second generation during their school days, roughly the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>v</sup> Nick Giannopoulos, who subsequently began the *Wogs Out Of Work* stagershow in 1986, and later starred in *The Wog Boy*, "was called a wog, and teased about the rich food in his lunchbox, the cut and crease of his home-stitched jeans, the smell of his lustrous hair" (in Castles, 2003: online). Giannopoulos was born in 1963, three years after his parents migrated to Australia. Later, George Megalogenis recalls:

*I learned the word "wog" when I changed primary schools in 1972. That was the year that stung. The year I felt isolation before my time. (2003: 8-9)*

He goes on:

*The boy braggart in me was finally quelled after two-and-a-bit years of being told I was a wog. As silly as it seems today, when I was young I thought I wasn't a real person. That is what being a wog in a very white school felt like. (ibid: 9)*

Not feeling real was the existential equivalent of not being regarded as a 'proper' Australian<sup>vi</sup>. In *The Wog Boy*, Giannopoulos (Steve) has a flashback to being a schoolboy and told he is a wog by the 'real' Australians. His reaction was different to that of Megalogenis:

*By his teens, Nick's torment has morphed into something more functional—rage. And in this, he enjoyed safety in numbers. Richmond High was full of Greek-Australians. "We were angry at everyone," he says. "Angry at being called wogs. Angry at our mothers being made fun of. Angry we couldn't get Australian girlfriends—they were all after surfer guys. Angry that the Big M milk ads only had blond-haired, blue eyed guys on them—that the media in general was not acknowledging the true state of what Australia was". (in Castles, ibid)*

This anger, born of powerlessness and exclusion, is one aspect of Ari's anger in *Head On*, and in the novel on which the film is based, Christos Tsiolkas' *Loaded* (1995). Talking to his brother's Anglo, liberal, university student girlfriend in the kitchen of their share-house, Ari says:

*I'm all for racism, I tell Janet, moving slowly towards her, rolling my eyes and putting on a mean motherfucker sneer, dropping my voice very low. I think every whitey deserves to get it in the throat, I whisper in her ear. How about you? she counters, moving away. You're white. I just look at her. I'm not white, I'm a wog. You're white she insists. I say nothing because the conversation is boring. (in Tsiolkas, 1995: 5)*

*Loaded*, and *Head On*, are pervaded by Ari's anger at being constructed and categorised in ways about which he feels ambivalent. As the narratives of the texts proceed, so he is positioned increasingly as gay rather than straight. And he is a wog but is told he is white and yet does not feel fully Australian. Whatever that is, it is what skips/Anglo-Celts feel, not wogs.

The two ambivalences are united in Ari's desire for his brother's new house-mate, the fair haired, blue eyed George in the book, Sean (Julian Garner) in the film—the name change no doubt to reaffirm the character's impeccable Anglo-Celticness<sup>vii</sup>. Ari (Alex Dimitriades) finally discovers that George/Sean finds him attractive. However after they have had sex Ari becomes overwhelmingly angry and hits George/Sean. A fight ensues

and Ari is kicked out. The book is clearer about what is going on here than is the film. Ari feels trapped in a skip/wog power dynamic. George doesn't understand the complexities of Ari's background: Greek but Australian. When Ari's anger explodes and he hits George, George feels rejected. Here, in a metaphor, is the Anglo-Celtic/migrant divide and also, in Ari's feelings of subservience, the feminisation of the wog.

What I am showing is how the fracture, the power dynamic, which is central to the organisation of Australian multiculturalism, is reproduced through the film texts I am discussing. In *Head On* the anger produced by the dynamic is one of the film's motivations. In *The Wog Boy* the anger is transformed into humour. In *Looking for Alibrandi* the anger is repressed by way of a concentration on Josie's sweet character and the quality of her relationship with her mother. Nevertheless the anger is present and we should briefly examine this subtext before proceeding to a discussion of the music.

Josie (played by Pia Miranda) was born out of wedlock. When her mother, Christina (Greta Sacchi) was seventeen she had a brief affair with Michael Andretti (Anthony LaPaglia), the second generation son of the Italian next-door neighbours. The Andrettis moved from Sydney to South Australia before Christina found out she was pregnant. There is a family secret, a curse as Katia (Elena Cotta), Christina's mother and Josie's grandmother, puts it—though she will never be clear about what this curse is. Katia had migrated to Queensland with her husband Francesco. It turns out that Christina is not Katia's husband's child but rather the daughter born of Katia's love affair with an Anglo-Australian, Marcus Sandford, but brought up by the always-resentful Francesco. Here, again, as in *Head On*, sexual relations can be read as a metaphor for the migrant situation in Australia. Katia is unloved by Italy, her Italian husband, but loved by Australia, Marcus Sandford. However, she cannot leave her husband, her culture, as Marcus asks, meaning that she cannot assimilate by giving up her cultural background and taking on Anglo-Australian culture. Christina is brought up apparently Italian in Australia but actually half Anglo-Australian, that is, she is forced to see herself as 'Italian,' as a wog, because of the Anglo-Celtic/migrant divide, when, in fact, much of her cultural make-up is Anglo-Australian.

Read in this analogical way, Josie is the product of Christina's illegitimate relationship because, from the point of view of the dominant Anglo-Celtic culture, migrants are supposed to assimilate through the second generation. The most effective sign of second-generation assimilation would be their marriage to Anglo-Celts. Having a relationship with another second-generation Italo-Australian is inappropriate (read illegitimate) while, because of the way the skip-wog divide works, it is practically inevitable. The book from which the film was developed was set in the present of its publication date, 1992. Josie, herself now seventeen, would have been born in 1975, three years before the time of *Dogs in Space*, the Galbally Report, and during the formal development of multicultural policy<sup>viii</sup>.

Josie has a teenage romance with the Anglo working-class Jacob Coote (Kick Gurry) there is an intriguing resonance with James Cook in the name and Jacob goes to school at Cook High) but refuses to have sex with him. It is worth thinking about Josie's female desire for Jacob in relation to Ari's feminised desire for George/Sean. Like Ari and George/Sean, Josie and Jacob break up, not least because he just cannot understand the complexities of Josie's Italo-Australian life. (At the end of the film, with the commercial need to provide audiences with a happy ending, there is some suggestion that they might reconcile). The barrenness of Josie and Jacob's relationship expresses an attitude to the skip/wog fracture that runs through both the book and the film of *Looking for Alibrandi*. In the film Josie breaks the blond, Anglo Carly's nose with a history book (Edward Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*) when Carly calls her first a wog and then, the clincher, a bastard. Josie rings her father to come to the school to help when Carly's father threatens to sue her. However, Josie cannot bring herself to tell Michael that she has been called a bastard so she just tells him that she was called a wog. Michael's response is that she needs to get used to being called names. Michael is the migrant success story, second generation and a barrister. Yet even he is not quite assimilated. Telling Josie she needs to get used to being called names suggests that he has achieved as much as he has by not reacting to the insults thrown at him, not that he hasn't been called a wog. While the dominant narrative of *Looking for Alibrandi* is Josie's acceptance of her Italian heritage, one secondary narrative concerns Michael Andretti's acceptance of his own Italian heritage, and its Italo-Australian reproduction in his daughter.

The clearest expression of the skip/wog fracture and its effects is to be found in Lee Taylor, one of Josie's best friends. She is Anglo but from a 'deviant' background; her father is an alcoholic. It is Lee who corrects Josie when she claims "We're masters of our own destiny" by retorting:

*That's rubbish. If your father's a dustman, you're going to be a dustman and if your father's filthy rich, you're going to be filthy rich because he'll introduce you to his rich friend's son. People breed with their own kind, ...the rich marry the rich, Josie, the poor marry the poor. The dags marry the dags and the wogs marry the wogs.* (in Marchetta, 1992: 144)

This is where core-periphery multiculturalism combined with the policy of ethnicising people into more or less institutionalised groups has led us.

### **Rock Music and Australian Film**

We now need to turn to the landscape of popular music in this multicultural order. The popular music charts in Australia are dominated today by what is a predominantly American hegemony, expressed in male vocal groups, female singers influenced by African-American R&B, and rap artists. At the same time there is a strong Australian rock tradition. In his chapter on Australian popular music in *Popular Music and Local Identity*, Tony Mitchell, following Graeme Turner, suggests that there is an "absence of any recognisable indicators of national identity in Australian music, especially the music marketed abroad" (1996: 208). Elsewhere I have criticised this position, suggesting that there are at least two traits that have characterised Australian rock music (Stratton 2003; 2004a). One is its whiteness, the historical lack of an African-American aesthetic input—a lack which can, in part, be related indirectly to the White Australia Policy. The other is the importance of the ballad tradition to the form that Australian rock music has taken, most obviously in the 1970s and 1980s pub rock era; if you like, the important connection between Slim Dusty and Cold Chisel.

What is important for my argument here is the recognition that Australia does have a particular popular musical history and that this is white, Anglo and Irish derived. Furthermore, its formation and historical dominance in Australia has been a function of Anglo–Celtic hegemonic power<sup>ix</sup>. In the semiotic system of Australian popular music this white rock is identified as Anglo-Celtic, but also as characteristically Australian. It is the continued naturalisation of this music as Australian popular music that has enabled it to be not only unmarked in an international context but also unremarkable, that is, its cultural specificity could not be written about, in a local, national context. This is the white, Anglo-Celtic, Australian rock that, within the spectrum of Australian popular music, Australian punk bands from the Saints to the Boys Next Door (Nick Cave's first band), to the other bands in *Dogs in Space* took to its bleached-out limit. This is the music which, in the films made under the impact of Australian multicultural policy, signifies both white, Anglo-Celtic culture and, because of its hegemonic dominance, Australian culture.

There appears to have been a shift in Australian feature films over the last ten years from a tendency to use American, or English, music as an apparently unmarked musical signifier, that is as seemingly having a universal significance, to using Australian rock and thereby signalling the Australianness of the film. Even in *The Dish* (2001), with its nostalgic celebration of the American space landing, there are two Russell Morris songs, including 'The Real Thing', and the Loved Ones classic, 'The Loved One.' The use of Australian rock in films helps reproduce its position as an aspect of the hegemonic culture of Anglo-Celtic Australia. Exemplifying the shift to the use of Australian rock we can compare *The Heartbreak Kid* with *Looking for Alibrandi*. *The Heartbreak Kid* (1993) uses the Neville Brothers' 'True Love', The Persuasions' reworking of The Troggs' 'Love Is All Around', U2's 'One' and a reworking by the Australian musician Stephen Cummings of Elton John's 'Teacher I Need You'. In contrast, eight years later, *Looking for Alibrandi* uses tracks by Killing Heidi, Lo-Tel, Spiderbait and Endorphin among others with comparatively little non-Australian music. All these are artists that musically knowledgeable young Australians will identify as Australian.

This Australianisation of the mainstream popular music used in Australian films has led to a heightened sense of the play around the core-periphery, skip-wog fracture. Thus, for example, Josie's Australianness is signalled by the constant use of Australian rock as background to scenes she is in: Spiderbait's 'Dinnertime' when she and her friends drive to Bondi, Magic Dirt's version of (American) Liz Phair's 'Supernova' when Josie is riding on the back of Jacob's motorbike, silverchair's 'Miss You Love' when Jacob and Josie almost have sex. In contrast, Josie's mother, grandmother, and friends, when they are positioned as Josie's Italian heritage, are given Italian-style continuity music or, and I shall discuss this below, actual Italian music. Thus, the problem that Josie has to resolve, her wogness in relation to her Australianness - itself a consequence of the distinction between those who are 'proper' Australians and those identified as migrants - is reproduced and played out in the quarantined way the music in the film is organised.

In this regard it is rewarding to think about Michael Andretti. When Andretti picks up Josie and Jacob in his car the radio is playing the Australian band Even's 'No Surprises', another piece of white rock.<sup>x</sup> The lyrics include the line 'I come out clean but I wear my disguises' which suggest Andretti's assimilatory shift from his Italian heritage. When Josie and her father are together in his apartment the music-over is the Church's 'Unguarded Moments'. This is another piece of white Australian rock that implies the Australianness, and assimilatory shift, of both characters as well as suggesting the new depth of their relationship.

Most interesting here though, is Andretti's CD collection. In the book we are told that he "hates all modern music, except Billy Joel" (Marchetta, 1992: 163). As a Jew, Joel is only uncertainly American. In the film Andretti has a large Santana collection. What does Santana signify—apart from mainstream, adult American, blues-rock<sup>xi</sup>? In the United States Santana has become a major, long standing and mainstream recording artist with his mix of African-American, Latin and rock influences. Contrarily, in Australia white rock has taken on board few if any non-Anglo-Celtic influences, reflecting an assimilation demand that non-Anglo cultures should be considered unsatisfactory (uncivilised?) and should be given up in favour of Anglo-Celtic Australian culture. Unlike Santana's cultural syncretism, Andretti's choice, and for that matter Josie's, is more complex: a choice between asserting their wogness and limiting their assimilation

and chances for upward social mobility, or attempting to assimilate, knowing that their wogness will always hold them back.

In *Head On* the use of music similarly reproduces the Australian core-periphery, skip-wog, multicultural organisation. However, the place we need to start is with *Loaded* which, if possible, makes even greater use of music than the film. Ari's music likes are semiotically complex, spanning both his gay/straight and Greek wog/skip ambivalences. He tells us that the Jackson Five's 1970 hit, 'I Want You Back,' is "a supreme moment in music history" (in Tsiolkas, 1995: 19). This track, with its insidious bass riff and shouted chorus by a young Michael Jackson before his voice dropped, has long been a disco favourite. From its inception in the 1970s disco has been an integral part of gay night-life.<sup>xii</sup>

In relation to *Head On*, we need to distinguish disco from the late 1980s and later dance music of house, and especially trance and its related genres. Ari likes disco a lot and another of his favourite tracks is Sister Sledge's 'Lost In Music' from 1979. Also a track by an African-American, it celebrates dancing as a solution to the problems of mundane living:

*Responsibility*  
*To me is a tragedy*  
*I'll get a job some other time, uh-huh*  
...  
*The band plays so very tight*  
*Each and every night, uh-huh*  
*It's not vanity*  
*To me, it's my sanity I could never survive*

With these lyrics it is understandable why Ari should like the track so much, it offers him dance as an escape from his intractable identity problems.

On Ari's perfect tape, the one he has made for his Walkman, six of the tracks are African-American disco and Tamla Motown. For Ari, disco connotes a simpler, probably happier because less complex, time. Ari comments on the AIDS sufferer who is dancing for money:

*He is spinning on the roof of the van looking for heaven, finding jubilation in the gospel of disco music from a time when you could put your dick into anything and not worry what you might find. (ibid: 78)*

Ari has a gay man's nostalgia for disco as evocative of a time before HIV/AIDS.

One of the strongest early scenes in *The Wog Boy* involves Steve (Nick Giannopoulos) and his best mate, the Italo-Australian Frank (Vince Colosimo) dancing at a disco to 'You Should Be Dancing' in the style of John Travolta in *Saturday Night Fever*. The scene is part of a retrospective look at Steve's life. Having accepted the Aussie schoolkids' classification of himself as a wog, Steve is determined to become the best wog he can. Travolta as Tony Manero is, understandably, his idol. Steve and Frank get off with Norwegian and Czechoslovak netballers. These wogs are so good that they can make it with the blond European women. This is a defining moment of wogdom. Through disco nostalgia from the mid-20th century, and after, the Anglo-Celtic Australians' fear that the wogs are here to get the Anglo-Celtic girls is defused by, first, having the girls they get as not Australian and, second, using the nostalgia of disco as a way of deflecting the feelings of anxiety for the Aussie males that this scene might otherwise conjure. Moreover, a part of the ideology of disco was the community of the dance-floor<sup>xiii</sup> - everybody could share in the same ecstatic dance experience. In this way, then, the use of disco in *The Wog Boy* helps to make Steve and Frank less threatening and allows viewers to continue to think of the film as a comedy.

Ari's tape contains one New Zealand track by Split Enz and nothing Australian. The exclusion of Australian rock suggests its Anglo-Celtic hegemonic force. The music in the film functions more obviously than the book and along similar lines to *Dogs in Space* and

*Looking for Alibrandi*. From the electronic rock of English duo Lunatic Calm's 'Leave You Far Behind' to the Saints's classic Australian punk of 'Know Your Product,' Ari's taste in music is whiter, harder and only a little more Australian than in the book. However, where in *Loaded* the music suggests Ari's uncertainties, in the film the music more clearly reproduces the discursive organisation of the multicultural order - core-periphery and skip-wog - that provides the divisive basis for his ambivalence about his Australianness.

In *Head On*, from the point of view of the Australian multicultural experience, it is significant that Ari likes African-American music. In the Greek club, Ariadne asks Ari what he would like the band to play. His response, typical of his ambivalence about his ethnic identity, is Jimmy Ruffin's 'What Becomes Of The Broken Hearted?'. Peter announces to the table: "my brother wishes he was black" (ibid: 73). Ari is upset with his brother and gets angry. Yet Peter is right: being African-American is a fantasy solution for Ari. Rather than dealing in the hybrid compromises forced on someone constructed as an Australian wog, he would, seemingly, be both a clear-cut member of a racial minority and have a distinct culture. The irony is to be found in the high number of tracks on Ari's perfect tape which are, in one sense or another, creolised and ambivalent: the rock influence in Prince's 'Little Red Corvette', the white, melodic pop influence in the Four Tops' 'Walk Away Renée,' the African-American blues influence in the Rolling Stones' 'Gimme Shelter,' and so on.

In *Head On* Ari meets Sean at a gay dance club—playing trance. Mitchell argues:

*the more than 90 per cent rate of imported dance music played at most parties turned the Australian house and dance party scene into a weightless featureless terra nullius of simulated and displaced origins. (1996: 202)*

While the Greek club he visits earlier in the night privileged his ethnic, wog identity issues, Ari's sexual identity issues are also signalled. Ari dances the *tsifteteli* with Ariadne to Markos Vamerakaris' 'Your Two Hands'. The *tsifteteli* is a belly dance

performed predominantly by women. That Ari dances it subtly suggests, perhaps, his ambivalence about his sexual interests. When Ari's crossdressing Greek-Australian friend, Toula, turns up at the club, shocking the conservative patrons and embarrassing Ari, s/he dances the *tsifteteli* on her own, thus making a spectacular statement about her sexual identity that reinforces the effect made by her transvestism. It is, though, the gay club that allows the privileging of Ari's sexual identity issues. The Greek club had a band playing Greek music—music originating from Greece—the gay club fades ethnic identity back in the mix, playing electronic dance music without vocals. This is a featureless music to be lost in, music to lose one's personal identity and, as the scene shows, couple up for anonymous sex. All are apparently equal; here in multicultural terms, sexuality and sexual taste predominate. Sean makes the mistake of taking Ari out of this environment, taking him home where the issues of his wogness, and Sean's Anglo-Celtic whiteness, reassert themselves.

From the point of view of Ari's wog-Australian identity issues one of the most evocative scenes takes place early on in the night, before he has left his parents' house. In *Loaded* Ari tells us that his mother is second generation, that she was born in Australia. His father is a first generation migrant. Ari's mother puts on a vinyl record, the Kevin Borich song, 'Gonna See My Baby Tonight', which was a hit for the La De Das in 1971. It reminds her of her youth. She dances what, Maria Papas describes as "a kind of lazy version of the *tsifteteli*"<sup>xiv</sup>. Ari's mother is merging her Greek heritage with her Australian origin in a way that Ari finds difficult to do—after all, the Australian multicultural policy that evolved when Ari's mother was an adult, seeks to partition ethnic cultures from Anglo-Celtic culture on the grounds of keeping the 'purity' of each. Ari's father comes into the kitchen and is upset with what he sees. He takes off the La De Das and says that if you're going to dance a *tsifteteli* you should play *tsifteteli* music, by which he means that Greek dances should be performed to Greek music. Ari's father is here not so much observing the organisation of Australian multiculturalism as affirming his cultural heritage. He puts on 'Mi Mou Thimonis Matia Mou' ('Don't Be Angry With Me My Darling') and starts to perform a different dance, the *hasapiko* (butcher's dance), with his daughter. He then coaxes Ari to join him. Ari dances the *zembekiko*, a male dance. Indeed, Ari shows that he doesn't just know how to do this dance but can effectively inhabit it. He obviously knows

and loves his Greek heritage but at the same time despises himself as an Australian wog and doesn't like to show his cultural knowledge.

### **Ethnicising Music**

In order to understand how non-Anglo music functions in the films I am examining we need to appreciate how non-Anglo music is positioned in the popular music landscape of Australian multiculturalism. Mitchell observes:

*many local 'ethnic' music groups [remain] trapped in local community 'ghettos' partly caused by the rather solemn and tokenistic image inherent in the concept of Australian multiculturalism. (1996: 191)*

As we have seen earlier, music and dancing designated as ethnic are acceptable as an exemplification of heritage. They are, then, acceptable as something to be displayed but are not considered to be an element in the composition of Australian culture itself. This, as we have seen, is thought of hegemonically as synonymous with Anglo-Celtic Australian culture. Since the advent of the discourse of 'world music' in the 1980s, ethnic music is now put into this category, as a cursory look at the racks in almost any general CD store will show<sup>xv</sup>.

The consequence of the way Greek-originated and Italian-originated, indeed all non-Anglo-American commercialised musics, are constructed in the multicultural order is that they are considered legitimate only as minority music, as heritage music, and it is only in this way that they can function in Australian society. This makes all the more remarkable Joe Dolce's 1981 hit 'Shuddup You Face'. Dolce is a second generation Italian-American who migrated to Australia in the 1970s. 'Shuddup You Face' has a jaunty, Anglo-pop styling. Its Italianness comes from the pronunciation style and 'broken' English the protagonist uses which mark her, voiced by Dolce, as a first generation Italian migrant. Still the biggest selling Australian single, it is also still the only popular

Australian song to acknowledge Non-English-Speaking migration to Australia. Dolce tells an intriguing story. In October 1981 he received a radio 3XY silver chart award:

*I attended the awards ceremony dressed as the 'serious' artist, Joe Dolce, with [partner] Lin Van Hecke, accompanying me as my bespectacled secretary. As I took the podium I declined to accept the award as a protest against the way ethnic people have been treated in Australia, did a short speech, and very haughtily, we both walked off. There is a stunned silence. Backstage, I quickly changed into my Italian hat, grabbed my mandolin, and a grovelling 'Giuseppe' quickly ran back on to grab the award apologising for his 'serious' alter-ego.<sup>xvi</sup>*

It is the requirement that, in Australia, Giuseppe grovel that has made Ari and many other wogs so angry.

Ethnic music in Australia serves as a signifier of migrant origin. Thus, later musical developments are not discursively acceptable. There is no Greek techno, or Greek rock for that matter, in *Head On*, certainly none in *The Wog Boy*, and no recent Italian popular music in *Looking for Alibrandi*. There is no Greek-Australian or Italo-Australian music in these films. Australian compositions that utilise a language other than English, or musical forms drawn from other cultures are considered a peculiarity in Australia and lacking in worth, being neither properly Australian nor Greek/Italian and having no other possible status. As we shall see in a moment, the only exception to this rule is the use of 'ethnic' music from within the dominant, Anglo-Celtic Australian, order and music identified as 'world' music<sup>xvii</sup>, this classification also being made by that dominant order.

Ari has two Greek songs on his perfect tape, Sotiria Bellou's version of 'Sinnefiasmeni Kiriaki' ('Cloudy Sunday') and Manos Loizos' 'O Thromos' ('The Road'). Both songs are heard in *Head On*. 'Sinnefiasmeni Kiriaki' is sung by the woman in the toilet at the Greek club and 'The Road' is played by the Turkish taxi driver who picks up Toula and Ari. This song, as the taxi driver explains, is overly political, about youth and the struggle for freedom from dictatorship. In *Head On* Ari's nihilistic self-loathing is

privileged and he is dismissive of the lyrics' politics. Both are significant items of popular music from the post-Second World War era. 'Sinnefiasmeni Kiriaki' was written by Vassilis Tsitsanis during the German-occupation and recorded by Bellou, a renowned singer of the post-war period shortly after the end of the war. Like Vamirakaris, Tsitsanis and Bellou worked in the Greek musical style known as *rebetiko*. *Rebetiko*, which makes use of Turkish and other eastern melodies, was associated with the Greek working class, and with anarchism and communism. It was the music played by the *Rebetes*, people who considered themselves outsiders to the social order. Both the *zembekiko* and the *tsifteteli* are closely associated with *rebetiko*. There is, then, a density of signification in the use of this music in *Loaded* and *Head On*.

In the Greek club all the music played by the band, the real-life band the haBiBis, is, I am assured, to the knowledgeable Greek ear:

*very classic and traditional. None of these songs have been modernised or westernised. They are all very authentic sounding village songs—the type of songs our parents [first generation] might have listened to.*<sup>xviii</sup>

That Ari, Ariadne and the other Greek wogs in *Loaded* and *Head On* identify with *rebetiko* helps to understand how these characters use their own cultural heritage to produce an assertive personal identity in an Australian multicultural society where they are constructed as wogs and excluded from the dominant culture.

At the same time, from the point of view of the dominant, Anglo-Celtic Australians, this music would be regarded as world music. Mitchell describes a 1989 album by Sirocco called *Port of Call* that appropriates instruments and musical forms from many cultures and also includes a section which “simulates musically the journey of the tall ships from London to Australia” (1996: 191-2). Mitchell writes that:

*It is difficult to interpret this musical representation of the British invasion of Australia as anything other than a celebration of colonialism, and one which*

*places all the other exotic and multicultural musics Sirocco appropriates in a similarly colonialist context. (ibid: 193)*

Constructing Ari's musical heritage as world music has a similar colonialist effect.

Within this general context we can think about the music, which frames *Looking for Alibrandi*, the music played on Tomato Day or, as Josie calls it, National Wog Day, at the beginning and end of the film. Josie's mother, grandmother and friends are all working in the yard making tomato puree while listening to 'Tintarella di Luna' ('Moon Tan'). Rejecting her heritage, Josie attempts to take off the record and put on some heavy rock. She is howled down and made to put the record on again. 'Tintarella di Luna' was a hit in Italy in 1959/60 for the well-known singer, Mina<sup>xix</sup>. It is an Italian pop song influenced by American popular music of the time. In other words, it is, itself, a creolised cultural object which, in *Looking for Alibrandi*, works within the discourse of Australian multiculturalism, and thus is used as the legitimating signifier for the origin and heritage of the film's Italo-Australians. In other words, this piece of Italian popular music is ethnicised. At this point we can make a distinction between the kind of deliberate hybridisation that treats all non-Anglo musical themes and instruments as elements from which a new piece of music, usually framed by a characteristically Anglo musical form, such as that which Mitchell describes in *Port of Call* and music that has evolved relatively spontaneously out of the mixing of cultural forms. While it could be argued that 'Tintarella di Luna' shows the effects of American cultural colonialism, it cannot, itself, be considered a colonialist enterprise.

Over the film end credits we get another version of 'Tintarella di Luna'. This one is by the Australian rock band, Happyland. Happyland is a side project for Janet English of Spiderbait and Quan Yeomans of Regurgitator. Available on the soundtrack album for the film, we have another intriguing exception to the rule partitioning Anglo-Celtic Australian culture from Non-English-Speaking cultural influence. In Happyland's updated, punked-up version we have a very small beginning for the ethnic creolisation of Australian culture. Happyland's involvement in this project may have been influenced by

Yeomans himself being the second-generation son of a (north) Vietnamese-born mother and an Anglo-Australian father.

Before leaving this discussion we should note that the lyrics of 'Tintarella di Luna' make it an interesting choice for the film. The song tells of a girl who moon-bakes, getting a tan the colour of milk. When there is a full moon she becomes completely white. And her white skin makes her the most beautiful woman of all.<sup>xx</sup> In the Australian context the song can be read as a comment on the wog's impossible desire for whiteness, for acceptance within the Anglo-Celtic Australian hegemony.

*Looking for Alibrandi* ends on Tomato Day a year later. Dean Martin's 'Volare,' a hit for him in the United States in 1958, is on the record player. Here, we have another example of successful American creolised assimilation. Martin, a second generation Italo-American born Dino Crocetti, sings a Neapolitan song in English.<sup>xxi</sup> Josie takes the record off, putting on, instead, 'Tintarella di Luna', thus suggesting that, through her year of travail she has come to an acceptance of her Italian heritage. But the scene gets more semiotically complicated as she takes her grandmother and begins to do the twist, an African-American dance popularised by Chubby Checker (whose track, 'The Twist,' was released in 1960). Immediately the others stop work and start twisting. Thus, in the scene where authentic Italianness is signified by the music regardless of its complex provenance, these Italians demonstrate the incorporation of American culture into Italian everyday life by performing an American dance—one which is also well-known in Australia as a consequence of the post-war spread of American youth culture.

### **Rap, or the Lack of It**

Music constructed as ethnic is accepted within the multicultural order as an aspect of the identification of wogs as opposed to skips or Aussies. In the multicultural musical landscape the music which is understood to be threatening - if not to the order itself then within that order - to white, Anglo-Celt Australia is rap. Here we have a history in which rap has taken over this role from reggae. John Castles explains that Bob Marley's 1979

concert in Adelaide “became the inspiration for No Fixed Address and a generation of CASM [Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music] bands” (1998: 16). In Australia, reggae was picked up by indigenous people who felt that the music gave them a connection with other oppressed Black people. As Castles remarks:

*By embracing reggae as an expression of solidarity with black people everywhere, NFA [No Fixed Address] presented its Aboriginal audience with the possibility of a way out from under this oppression. (ibid)*

To position this development we should remember that 1979 was a year after the presentation of the Galbally Report.

Until the advent of multicultural policy, the societal divide in Australia was understood to be between the indigenous people and a unified, apparently homogeneous, Australian population. In multiculturalism, as we have seen, the divisions based on claims of race and ethnicity have become more complex. With the waning of reggae in Australia as an oppositional musical force its place has been taken by rap. Rap started to gain an importance as an Australian musical form in the early 1990s. In 1992, Sounds Unlimited released *A Postcard from the Edge of the Underside* and the following year Def Wish Cast released *Knights of the Underground Table*. Rap is not identified solely with Aboriginal oppression. Both Sounds Unlimited and Def Wish Cast came from the Western suburbs of Sydney. As Mitchell writes:

*The Western suburbs have continued to provide the main historic centre of hip hop in Sydney, partly owing to the strong concentration of non-Anglo migrant communities such as Greeks, Italians, Lebanese and Vietnamese, whose youth have been attracted by the oppositional features of African-American hip hop and adopted its signs and forms as markers of their own otherness. (1996: 194)<sup>xxii</sup>*

In Australia rap remains the music of oppression, its makers and consumers characterised as refusing to comply with the organisation of Australian multiculturalism. Of the groups

most usually associated with Australian rap the Lebanese, felt by many to be the most oppressed of the wog migrants, the group least able to make inroads into the Anglo-Celtic institutional core of multiculturalism, are the ones most tightly identified with the music.

In the discourse of the multicultural order, rap has become the music of the angry wog, relegated, according to Mitchell, to “an ‘underground’ subculture” of the mainstream music industry (ibid: 193). However it is still hardly present in Australian film. There is no rap in the angriest of the films I have been looking at, *Head On*, and only a brief, joke rap by Giannopoulos in *The Wog Boy*. The recent film where one would be most likely to find rap is *Fat Pizza*, the film made to capitalise on the success of the comedy series of the same name that screened on SBS through 2002/3<sup>xxiii</sup>. *Fat Pizza* is not politically correct. Its characters don't want to be 'good ethnics' or to assimilate. The guiding light of *Fat Pizza* is Paul Fenech, a second-generation Maltese-Australian. In the series, as in the film, Fenech, going by the name Paul Falzoni, works as a pizza delivery boy for Bobo (Johnny Boxer), a forty year old Italo-Australian virgin who lives with his mother and runs a pizza shop, Fat Pizza. Working with Falzoni is Sleek The Elite (played by Paul Nakad).

*Fat Pizza* adheres to the conventions about the use of music that I have been identifying, albeit with a seemingly knowing awareness—that is, in this film the common filmic technique of using music to help identify particular groupings of people is taken to a self-conscious, almost parodic, extreme<sup>xxiv</sup>. The bikies are given hard rock music, Bobo always has Neapolitan crooning as his music-over in the shop, the dance sequences have house, trance and thrash punk specifically dependant on the club's clientele.

Now, Sleek The Elite is also the name Nakad uses as a professional rapper<sup>xxv</sup>. Nakad is of Lebanese descent. In Australia Lebanese-Australians are members of one of the most stigmatised and alienated groups in Australian society. Anglo-Celt Australians tend to think of stories about 'Lebanese gangs' in Western Sydney's Bankstown, and the 2000 series of gang rapes by young men of Lebanese extraction which are now used to give credence to these stories. Chris Johnson describes Sleek's work this way: “Sleek the Elite, particularly, raps proudly of inner-city life, multiculturalism and racism in a thick,

Lebanese-Australian accent.” In the television series, Sleek regularly raps in his pizza delivery car, adding to the sense of subversion in a show that pillories sacred cows indiscriminately and mercilessly. Sleek’s use of rap suggests his defiance in face of dominant attitudes to people of his background. However, in the film, Sleek’s rapping is reduced to an early cameo when we first meet him. Elsewhere in the film the rap used as music-over is so soft as to merge with the disco/house music forming the general backdrop. In other words, it would seem that rap has moved back underground. This makes the film more palatable, less confrontational and threatening, for an audience that might be larger than for the SBS series, specifically, an audience with more Anglo-Celts.

Since the advent of multicultural policy, there has developed a clear organisation of popular music in Australia. Rock is identified as white, as Anglo-Celtic, and also as the hegemonic ‘typically Australian’ musical form. Music from outside the British-American-Australian rock nexus, the music from the non-English-speaking world, is constructed as world music and, more specifically, as the heritage music of Australian NESB migrants. The core-periphery structure of Australian multiculturalism keeps a strict partition between ‘Anglo-Celtic’ and ‘migrant’ cultures. The consequence is that Australian popular music does not incorporate elements from the musics of Australia’s NESB population. This strict division is reproduced and naturalised in films which portray Anglo-Celtic and migrant, skip-wog, relations. Australian rap, which has become the angry music of refusal of this ordering of multicultural Australia, is as yet hardly to be found in Australian films, something which may be a consequence of the attempt to find Australian films a mainstream, Anglo-Celtic audience.

The lack of rap music in Australian films that represent multiculturalism suggests the extent to which these films, even those made by non-Anglo-Celtic directors, have accepted and reproduced the dominant understandings of multiculturalism—the understandings which reinforce Anglo-Celtic hegemony. It is clear that, to a significant extent, this has been driven by commercial constraints informed by a conservative view of Australian film audiences as dominated by the Anglo-Celtic majority. With certain honourable exceptions, such as the Greek music used in *Head On*, the songs used in most Australian films are ones that a young, and early middle-aged, Anglo-Celtic audience can

easily leave the cinema humming. However, even a cursory examination of the websites which allow feedback on *Fat Pizza* suggests a large, youthful and ethnic audience looking for films which reflect their frustration, and indeed anger, at the ways that non-Anglo-Celts continue to be minoritised in Australian multicultural culture.

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*Moving Out* (1983) Dir. Michael Pattinson; music composer Danny Beckermann,

*The Wog Boy* (1999) Dir. Aleksis Vellis; music composer Cezary Skubiszewski.

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<sup>i</sup> Tim Groves, in his article about *Dogs in Space* in the online film journal *Senses of Cinema* (2003), tells us that "The film is even shot in the same Richmond house shared by [Richard] Lowenstein [the director] and Sejavka [then lead singer with Beargarden and the person on whom Sam, played by Michael Hutchence, is based]" (2003: online)

<sup>ii</sup> The term 'Italo-Australian,' like other terms such as 'Greek-Australian,' can be used to mean a number of quite different things, for example, that the person so described has come from Italy and is now resident in Australia, or that they have Italian parentage and were born in Australia, or that one of their parents is Italian, or of Italian heritage, and the other is Anglo-Celtic Australian. In this chapter, for the sake of space, I will use the term accepting these slippages, the consequent vagueness and the ideological work that the slippages perform.

<sup>iii</sup> Compared to the United States there is still little published work on the construction of whiteness in Australia but see, for example, Hage (1998), and Stratton (1999). An overview of discussions of whiteness in Australia can be found in Ganley (2003).

<sup>iv</sup> Ollie Olsen was musical consultant for *Dogs in Space* and played in the '70s Melbourne punk band Whirlywird, and was also musical consultant for *Head On*.

<sup>v</sup> There is an instructive website for Australian wogs, called Woglife, started in July, 2000, at <<http://www.wog.com.au/default.asp>>

<sup>vi</sup> For Megalogenis: 'There are three phases of wogdom: cowed, cocky, and connected' (*Faultlines* 7). Megalogenis makes it sound as if how the individual feels about their wogness is up to them, rather than the culture that has constructed the person as a 'wog.' He writes that:

The third phase of wogdom occurs when you are happily Australian. However, not everyone wants to get there. *The Wog Boy*, a box-office hit in 2000, was not a bad film. But it wasn't a good one either. ... The

movie missed the point because it celebrated the second phase of wogdom. It was a dated indicator that we had already surpassed. (11)

<sup>vii</sup> Sean is an Irish name. This is not the place to discuss the history of the incorporation of the Irish into Australian whiteness. However, the use of an Irish name suggests a subtle unsettling as the Irish, while now generally accepted as white were once not acceptable (for a history of the whitening of the Irish see Stratton 2004b).

<sup>viii</sup> Melina Marchetta's book, *Looking for Alibrandi* (1992), the basis for the film, uses much older musical reference points such as Janis Ian's 'At Seventeen' which was released in 1975. Marchetta has Josie inform the reader: "My name by the way, is Josephine Alibrandi and I turned seventeen a few months ago. (The seventeen that Janis Ian sang about where one learns the truth)" (4-5). Also, Marchetta's musical references are not Australian: Elton John's 'Crocodile Rock' (1972/73) and 'a slow Elvis song' are played at the School Dance (54); Josie listens to the Irish U2, 'to the words written by, perhaps, a modern-day poet' (260).

<sup>ix</sup> From this point of view the finalists in the 2003 Australian Idol competition assume great importance. On the one hand there was Shannon Noll, the Anglo boy from the New South Wales bush whose vocal phrasings were clearly pub-rock originated—he even covered Jimmy Barnes' 'Working Class Man'. On the other hand there was Guy Sebastian, inheritor of a mix of Portuguese, Sri Lankan (this probably means Sinhalese) and Indian ancestry and born in Malaysia, whose musical influence was mainly African-American gospel and R'n'B. The division between core and periphery Australia, the old and the new, could not have been more clearly delineated. In the end Guy, clearly the better singer, won the popular vote.

<sup>x</sup> Thank you, Kristen Philips, for recognising this song.

<sup>xi</sup> Carlos Santana was born in 1947 in Autlan, Mexico. His father was a mariachi violinist. In 1955 the family moved to Tijuana, near the American border. In 1961 Carlos moved to San Francisco, with his family following the next year. Santana learnt to play the blues on guitar, but he plays with Latin influences.

<sup>xii</sup> See, for example, the history of disco in Brewster and Broughton (2000: chaps 6 and 7) and Haslam (2001: chap 3). Andriote (2001: 23) tells us that disco was often called 'the gay sound' in its early days and that: "Even at disco's peak, *Billboard* estimated that at least 50 percent of the [United States] nation's dance clubs were gay" (84).

<sup>xiii</sup> Andriote reiterates this idea when he writes that: "From the beginning, disco music and discotheques themselves united like-minded people in a shared experience of physical exuberance." (2001: 79)

<sup>xiv</sup> I would like to thank Maria Papas for her help with my understanding of the Greek music and dancing in *Head On*. The unattributed quotations in the text come from Maria's emails. I could not have written about *Head On* here without her contributions.

<sup>xv</sup> On the development of the discourse of world music see, among others, Feld (1994: 257-289) and, more generally, Taylor (1997).

<sup>xvi</sup> This story comes from Joe Dolce's web site at <<http://www.starnet.com.au/dwomen/SYFStory.html>>

<sup>xvii</sup> This discursive situation is what caused such problems for the classification, and consumption, of Not Drowning Waving's *Tabaran* album on which the band worked with musicians from Rabaul, Papua New Guinea. See, most importantly, Hayward (1998).

<sup>xviii</sup> See the haBiBis's home page at <<http://www.sprint.net.au/~jomal/habibis/>>. Indicating how they are positioned in Australian music, the band tells us that they "are regularly heard at the major folk and world music festivals around Australia."

<sup>xix</sup> For some reason, perhaps because of copyright, the version used in *Looking for Alibrandi* is a replication of the original by the Italo-Australian artist Gina Zoia.

<sup>xx</sup> My thanks to Amanda Third for translating the lyrics for me.

<sup>xxi</sup> 'Volare' is the English version of a song written by Domenico Modugno called 'Nel Blu, Dipinto Di Blu' which won the San Remo song contest in 1958. Modugno is credited with modernising Neapolitan song.

<sup>xxii</sup> See also Maxwell (2001). For a rather different take on Australian hip hop see, Iveson (1997).

<sup>xxiii</sup> SBS is the shorthand used to refer to the television channel of the Special Broadcasting Service. This was set up as an outcome of one of the recommendations of the Galbally Report. It started broadcasting in 1980.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Fenech is quoted in the Sydney Morning Herald as saying: "With stereotypes there's an element of truth in them ... as long as you have fun with them and aren't nasty then it's okay."  
<<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/03/31/1048962698529.html?from=storyrhs>>

<sup>xxv</sup> Sleek The Elite's official website can be accessed at <<http://www.sleektheelite.com.au/bio.htm>>