

The Department of English with Cultural Studies University of Melbourne presents

Mongrels, Half-Castes and Pariahs: Colonialism and Mixed-Race Identity Production

*A one-day
Conference*

THURSDAY

30 SEPTEMBER

**5th floor Common Room
John Medley Building
University of Melbourne**

Speakers will include:

Patrick Wolfe
(Victoria University of Technology)

Joost Cote & Loes Westerbeek
(Deakin University)

Tony Birch
(University of Melbourne)

Glenn D'cruz
(University of Melbourne)

Keith Butler
(Billanook College)

**Mongrels, Half-Castes and Pariahs:
Colonialism and Mixed-Race
Identity Production**

Conference Rubric

While postcolonialism has addressed issues connected with 'colonial desire' (Robert Young) and cultural hybridity (Homi Bhabha), there is a relative paucity of commentary on the 'mixed race' progeny of colonial encounters.

However, a number of recent publications indicate that questions addressing the construction and political status of mixed-race identities have been posed within several academic disciplines and various geo-political sites. For example, works like Jon Michael Spencer's controversial condemnation of the nascent 'mixed-race' movement in the USA, *The New Coloured People: The Mixed-Race Movement in America* (1997) and Kathleen Odell Korgen's rejoinder, *From Black to Biracial* (1998), have placed the issue of mixed-race at the forefront of American studies.

Jayne O. Ifekwunigwe's book, *Scattered Belongings: Cultural Paradoxes of Race, Nation and Gender* (1998), addresses similar issues in the UK from a sociological standpoint. Ann Stoler's work on the *Indische* (the human legacy of Dutch colonialism) in her book, *Race and the Education of Desire* (1995) and Christopher Hawes' study of the Anglo-Indians, *Poor Relations* (1996) confirm the differential status of mixed race people in various parts of the world.

In Australia, the recent work of the conference participants demonstrates that local historians and cultural critics are undertaking substantial research into 'mixed race' identities.

It is probably too early to assess whether this interest in 'mixed-race' represents a momentary trend within postcolonial scholarship, or a distinct sub-discipline. Nonetheless, a critical interrogation of recent 'mixed race' scholarship is timely.

This interdisciplinary conference will bring together researchers and cultural producers to discuss the relationships between colonialism, globalisation and 'mixed-race' identities. The conference will address the following questions:

How have specific administrative policies, and racial nomenclature impacted on 'mixed race' identities in different colonial theatres?

How are 'mixed race' groups represented in colonial and postcolonial cultural production?

What are the political implications of claiming a 'mixed-race' identity today? What are the transgressive and transformative possibilities of 'racial' convergences?

There will be no registration charge for this event.

For further information contact Glenn D'Cruz, conference convenor.

Telephone: 9344 5483

Facsimile: 93445494

Email: glenn@pgrad.unimelb.edu.au

1999