ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Anti-Asian Sentiment Amongst a Sample of White Australian Men on Gaydar

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Abstract Whilst the homogenizing descriptor 'gay' is often used in a singular sense to refer to 'the gay community,' research has increasingly recognized that individuals within gay communities are as diverse as they are within the broader community. Importantly, recognition of this diversity requires an acknowledgement of the fact that, just as in the broader community, discrimination occurs within gay communities. The present study sought to examine the degree to which racism occurs within gay men's online communities (in the form of anti-Asian sentiment expressed in the profiles of a small number of the 60,082 White Australian gay men living in five major Australian states whose profiles were listed on the website gaydar.com.au during October 2010), the forms that such racism takes, and whether any White gay men resisted such racism. The findings report on a thematic and subsequent rhetorical analysis of the profiles of the sub-sample of 403 White gay men who expressed anti-Asian sentiment. Such sentiment, it was found, was expressed in four distinct ways: 1) the construction of racism as 'personal preference,' 2) the construction of Asian gay men as not 'real men,' 3) the construction of Asian gay men as a 'type,' and 4) the assumption that saying 'sorry' renders anti-Asian sentiment somehow acceptable. Whilst the numbers of White gay men expressing anti-Asian sentiment were relatively small, it is suggested that the potential impact of anti-Asian sentiment upon Asian gay men who view such profiles may be considerable, and thus that this phenomenon requires ongoing examination.

Introduction

Drawing upon theories of intersectionality—as outlined below—the study reported here sought to examine how a small number of White gay Australian men whose profiles appeared on the website gaydar.com.au in October 2010 constructed their sexual object choices in ways that evoked stereotyped and marginalizing depictions of gay Asian men. The concern of the study was to explore how the instances of anti-Asian sentiment identified on the profiles drew upon highly normative understanding of masculinity that were both racialised and sexualized, and which functioned to construct gay Asian men as effeminate or as otherwise outside the category 'man.' Such constructions are considered to be clear examples of the potentially injurious nature of public speech which may impact negatively upon the identities of gay Asian men by reinforcing the racialised power differentials that exist between White and Asian gay men, as has been noted in previous research on gay Asian American men's experiences of masculinity (Phua 2007).

In terms of the theoretical framework of the present study, intersectional approaches to understanding identity have been increasingly utilized within social scientific research on sexuality (for a summary see Clarke et al. 2010). Importantly, such an approach, as initially outlined by Crenshaw (1991), is informed by two key understandings of identity that differ from the ways in which identities have traditionally been understood, namely that: 1) identities cannot be understood as 'problems of addition' where any one aspect of an individual's identity (i.e., their race or

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gender or sexuality) can be usefully separated off from the other components of their identity, and 2) identities exist in complex networks of power relations in which certain group memberships are privileged over others.

In a review of best practice for applying intersectional approaches to social scientific research, Warner (2008) suggests three further points requiring attention by researchers, namely that 1) whilst researchers may not feasibly be able to examine all identity categories in an intersectional analysis, they should be clear about why the categories they *do* examine were selected, 2) whilst intersectional analyses have often focused on marginal groups, it is equally important that such analyses examine the intersecting identities of dominant group members, and 3) identifying the effects of intersecting identities must be located within a relationship to the social practices through which such identities are sustained. To this list of criteria may be added the need to examine how the identities of one group always already exists in a relationship to the identities of other groups—particularly across power differentials—and specifically that one group's experience of privilege is always the corollary of another group's experience of disadvantage (Riggs and Choi 2006).

The research questions to be addressed in the present study (in relation to the degree and form of anti-Asian sentiment present amongst White gay Australian men on the website gaydar.com.au) thus require an intersectional approach, due to the fact that: 1) it is only possible to make sense of the statements made by White gay men on gaydar by examining the intersections of race, sexuality, and constructions of masculinity (Warner 2008), 2) examining these statements is an important way of elucidating some of the complex power relations that exist within gay communities (Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach 2008), 3) that, in this instance, race, sexuality and gender are the most salient identities to examine, 4) focusing on the statements made by White gay men adds depth to intersectional analyses of the operations of power within gay communities, 5) reading online dating as a social practice may enable us to better understand the exclusions that operate in online spaces and to what effect, and 6) all of the above allows for consideration of the relationship between White gay men's relatively privileged position within websites such as gaydar.com.au, and the power that such men hold to marginalize or exclude other groups of gay men (Phua 2007). As outlined in the following sections, the way in which racism is expressed in Australian contexts has been of ongoing concern to researchers, yet the ways in which this occurs within gay men's online communities has to date been paid very little attention, thus warranting the present study.

Racism in Australia

Given that the present study focuses upon a dominant racial group voicing discriminatory attitudes towards another,

marginalised, racial group, it would appear logical that racism would be the most significant overarching framework for this research. Of course research on racism, even if limited to the social sciences, constitutes an immense body of research (see Richards 1997, for an overview). With this point in mind, the review provided here focuses solely on literature that directly pertains to the topic under investigation and the method by which it is investigated, by focusing on Australian discursive psychological research on racism.

Most notably, the Australian discursive research on racism indicates that, on the whole, talk that may be termed 'racist' in Australia is often very mundane in its construction. In other words, and drawing on the 'traditional' vs 'modern' racism distinction discussed by Hopkins et al. (1997), Australian research has indicated that racist talk is often structured around liberal notions of inclusion that presume an equal playing field for all, and which thus discount the negative effects of racism (e.g., Augoustinos et al. 2005). Research suggests that such an account of liberal equality, however, fundamentally fails to recognize the ongoing effects of racialized hierarchies, in which those who are identified as White Australians stand to benefit over and above all other racialized groups simply on the basis of the fact of being identified as White in a society where racial hierarchies are made to matter (Riggs and Augoustinos 2005). In other words, treating race as a benign category that can either be discounted or made salient depending on the situation is only possible for those who occupy racially dominant social locations (Riggs 2007). For those who do not occupy such a privileged position, race as an organizing category is likely to be salient in most situations.

In addition to the enactment of racism through a liberal logic of equality, Australian discursive research on racism suggests that instances of discrimination are often discounted through an emphasis on the negative effects of political correctness. Rapley (1998) demonstrates this most clearly in terms of the debates over allegations of racism against one political candidate—Pauline Hanson—whose claims that Australia was being overrun by waves of Asian immigrants were by some identified clearly as racist, whilst for others (i.e., her supporters) accusations of racism were dismissed as instances of political correctness. In this example, then, Australian discursive research has suggested that discrimination is at times warranted by White Australians when it is constructed as a matter of personal opinion or preference, rather than as intentionally aimed at racial vilification.

Finally, Australian discursive research on racism suggests that a key rhetorical strategy in racist statements is the use of the disclaimer 'I'm not racist but…' (Rapley 2001, p. 231). Statements such as these are typically constructed in one of three ways: 1) a claim is made about a marginal group

member known to the dominant group speaker so as to 'prove' that the speaker cannot be racist (e.g., I have Black friends, so I am not racist, but…) or 2) a generalized statement is made defining what the speaker would consider racist, with the speaker's own statement being made in supposed contrast to this (e.g., Doing X would be racist, but I am doing Y') or 3) the racist statement may be prefaced or followed by an apology, so as to offset the statement (e.g., sorry to say this, but…) . These types of rhetorical strategies allow the speaker to voice a racist viewpoint whilst at the same time depicting themselves as non-racist.

As this brief summary would indicate, racism in Australia in everyday talk is often hard to identify, disguised as it can be by claims to liberal inclusivity or personal choice, or defended against via accusations of political correctness. Yet, and as an intersectional approach emphasizes, racism in Australia is not simply enacted between bodies simply marked as racialized. It is also enacted in ways that draw upon sexualized and gendered understandings of identity, amongst others. Understanding some of these enactments, and specifically as they pertain to the present paper, requires going beyond the discursive psychological research on racism and examining other Australian research on racism within gay communities.

Racism in Australian Gay Communities

Written primarily by academics working in cultural studies, there now exists a slowly growing body of research examining racism within Australian gay communities, with most of this focusing on interactions between White Australian gay men and Asian Australian men. As Boldero (2004) notes, this binary categorization of White versus Asian gay men in the context of Australia is problematic for the ways in which it collapses men who have migrated (or whose families have migrated) to Australia from across the Asia-Pacific region into one purportedly knowable category. As Boldero suggests, it is precisely this sort of reductivist thinking that allows stereotypes to proliferate. For the purpose of the present paper, however, the term 'Asian' is retained for similar reasons that it is retained in the research summarized below, namely that the category is deployed by (primarily) White men within gay communities, and it is the means by which this occurs and the effects that it produces that must firstly be examined. In other words, whilst challenging the homogenizing descriptor 'Asian' is vital, when the topic of investigation is how White gay men represent the category of men they refer to as 'Asian,' then it is this category that is under examination, not necessarily the lives of the men represented by this descriptor (though as summarized below and discussed in the conclusion to this paper, the implications for men categorized by the descriptor 'Asian' are significant).

In terms of implications, then, Ridge et al.'s (1999) research with gay Asian men in Australia suggests, and echoing research on racism in Australia in general as outlined above, that racism within gay communities is often subtle and hard to identify. Their respondents indicated that subtle discrimination occurs when Asian gay men are ignored by bar staff, or when they are given disapproving looks by White gay men. Similarly, Han (2006) also notes that subtle racism occurs when White Australian gay men assume that all gay men of Asian heritage can be simplistically grouped under the category 'Asian,' with the vast differences between Asian cultures left unrecognized, at the same time as White gay men often do not recognize themselves as members of a racial category at all (i.e., their whiteness is left unmarked or unrecognized by them).

Of course it is not only subtle forms of racism on the part of White gay men that operate to exclude Asian gay men within Australian gay communities. Research (e.g., Caluya 2006; Han 2006) has identified other, more explicit, forms of discrimination, which are typically reliant upon racialized, gendered, and sexualized stereotypes about Asian gay men. These include the assumption that all Asian gay men 1) are effeminate, 2) have small penises, 3) are passive partners in terms of anal sex, 4) are 'clean' in terms of sexually transmitted diseases, and 5) are akin to the racist stereotype of the mail order bride in their search for a White partner who will care for and support them (see also Boldero 2004). Clearly, then, these stereotypes are not simply racist, but they rely upon conjunctions of race, gender, and sexuality in order to function. In other words, the presumptions that inform these stereotypes appear to treat Asian gay men as not really men (i.e., as effeminate and as having small penises), and thus by extension, as not really gay men. These stereotypes thus serve to bolster the normative assumption that the category of 'real men' is one constituted by well endowed, hypermasculine men who always assume the role of the insertive partner.

Examples of these explicit stereotypes appear in Ridge et al.'s (1999) research, where their Asian Australian participants report the perception that White Australian men believe that "Asians have small dicks, are passive, and want older, rich men as partners" (p. 50), and that "There's a general attitudes that Asian men are not desirable. Either because people do not find them sexually attractive or because they are racist towards them" (p. 58). Similarly, Drummond's (2005) research with gay Asian men in Australia reports one participant as stating "Asians are probably perceived as more feminine than anything else. A typical thing that you might see, if you're on the gay scene, is, say, an older White guy and a younger Asian guy. The White guy is assumed to be more dominant and the Asian guy would be more passive" (p. 295).

These points from previous Australian research on the experiences of Asian gay men's interactions with White gay

men in Australia indicate the importance not only of an intersectional analysis, but moreover of an analysis of how Asian gay men are engaged with, and represented by, White gay men. One particular place in which this occurs, as the following section elaborates, is via online dating sites such as gaydar.com.

Gay Men and Online Spaces

As online technologies develop and diversify, so comes with this an ever-growing number of ways in which communities of people can connect with one another. Whilst the internet was once heralded as a place where people might connect in ways that exceed the identitarian demands of face-to-face contact (e.g., Turkle 1995), research on the ways in which people use the internet to connect has continued to find that many of the rules which govern interaction in the 'real world' carry across into online spaces (as outlined below). Unfortunately, discrimination is one of these sets of rules that appears to play out equally online as it does offline.

Yet despite the existence of discriminatory practices across a range of identities within online spaces, research to date has almost exclusively focused on discrimination in regards to bodily aesthetics and forms when it comes to gay dating sites. Mowlabocus' (2010) recent book-length examination of what he terms 'gaydar culture' is an example of this. Mowlabocus provides an in-depth reading of gay men's use of websites such as gaydar, and emphasizes how regulatory norms relating to body type, 'cruising' practices, and 'risky' sexual practices are negotiated by gay men via online dating sites and other online spaces. Perhaps surprisingly, however, Mowlabocus provides no attention to issues relating to race within the book.

The same can be said for other recent examinations of the website gaydar.com, such as the work of Light et al. (2008), which examines in close detail how the site functions to produce a particularly narrow range of identities for gay men who utilize it. Again, this research provides no focus on the role that discourses of race play in the production of desire and identity on gaydar.com. Campbell's (2004) examination of gay men's online practices *does* consider how gay men account for or enquire about race when engaging with other men, but again nowhere in the entire book does Campbell examine how racially marginalized gay men potentially experience racism from other gay men within online spaces.

There are, however, a small number of notable exceptions to this lack of focus upon race within gay dating sites. The first of these is provided by Fraser (2009), who examines the gay youth dating website mogenic.com, and identifies some of the subtle ways in which racialized hierarchies play out on the website. These include the use of images that feature almost exclusively White youth, the requirement of

racial categorization as an aspect of the sign up process (and where all non-White racial categories are listed sequentially after the category 'White'), and on the profiles of users themselves (who comment upon racial preferences). Fraser's work thus highlights the operations of racial categories in online spaces, and the salience with which these are treated by users.

The second example is provided by Raj (2011) who, following Han (2006) and Caluya (2006), explores in the first person the experience of being a South East Asian man utilizing the iphone application *Grindr*. Raj highlights the ways in which his body is positioned via the profiles of White men who either refer to South East Asian bodies as undesirable, or as only desirable as fetishised objects. As Raj suggests, this results in an injunction upon him to perform a particular (narrow) form of identity in order to be rendered acceptable to the White gay men who access his profile.

In the final example—and the only one that pertains directly to the present study—Payne (2007) suggests that on websites such a gaydar a racial hierarchy exists in which White gay men on their profiles frequently depict Asian gay men as being at the bottom of such a hierarchy (i.e., the least desirable). Typically, Payne suggests (using direct quotations from gaydar), this construction of a hierarchy occurs through purportedly banal statements such as "No asians or Black guys… No offence, just not my thing" (p. 3) or through the construction of a list of 'undesirable' groups in the format such as "No fats, fems or GAMs [gay Asian males]" (p. 3). Finally, Payne suggests that gay Asian men are often explicitly constructed on White gay men's profiles as outside of a normative image of gay masculinity, in the format of "'U [sic] must be nice to good looking, well kept body, sense of humour and under 40' followed directly by 'no fatties or asians'" (p. 4).

Given the ubiquitous nature of racism within Australian society (albeit racism that is typically enacted in more subtle ways than in the past), and given the existence of racism within gay communities (especially towards Asian gay men), it would appear important to examine further how this occurs within online spaces. Moreover, it would appear important to consider how online spaces, far from being neutral in their representation of identity categories, may well be complicit in the production of identity categories that perpetuate racial marginalization.

Research Questions

The present research sought to consider the following two questions derived from the previous literature cited above, namely: 1) Do White Australian gay men with profiles on the website gaydar.com.au state racial preferences in terms of Asian gay men and to what extent does this occur, and 2)

In the cases where anti-Asian sentiment does appear to exist, what forms does this take (i.e., what specific rhetorical strategies are utilized by White gay men to state anti-Asian sentiment, and what are the implications of this for the constructions of gay Asian masculinities). A third research question was designed to identify any alternate ways in which gay Asian men were referred to by White gay men, by investigating if there were any exceptions to possible incidences of racism (i.e., do some White gay men resist anti-Asian sentiment)?

Method

Participants

The data for this project were profiles listed on the website gaydar.com.au. The focus of the project was on Australian profiles, and this was further limited by focusing upon the five Australian states with the largest number of profiles listed (New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia), and specifically upon profiles that listed as their location the capital city of each state (Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide, Melbourne and Perth). On the 11th of October 2010 a snapshot was taken of all of the 60,082 profiles listed within these five cities, with information of interest to the project recorded; namely racial identity, number of men in each racial category, number of profiles containing anti-Asian sentiment, and the details of each such instance of anti-Asian sentiment.

Whilst ethical approval was not obtained from individual users, the gaydar privacy policy states that by signing up for the website users acknowledges that the information contained in their profile may be accessed from anyone throughout the world, and that the user thus consents to this upon signing up for membership.

Materials

The website gaydar.com.au is promoted as a safe space in which men can meet other men. Included in the gaydar terms and conditions is the clause that members must be aged over 18 years, and that offensive language is prohibited on the site, including racist language. The site is widely used, with a visit to the site indicating on the front page that somewhere in the vicinity of 170,000 Australian men are registered with the site at any given time.

User profiles contain a range of information including some demographics about the user (such as their race, in which users can select from the options of 'Arab,' 'Asian,' 'South Asian,' Black,' 'Caucasian,' 'Hispanic,' 'Middle Eastern,' 'Mixed Race,' or 'Other'), their preferences and interests (both sexual and non-sexual), a brief description of the user, and a brief description of what they are looking for in a potential partner. The final description was the focus of analysis for potential instances of anti-Asian sentiment.

Procedure

Access to gaydar.com.au is free, however the basic membership that this provides only allows for the viewing of a limited number of profiles per day and a limited number of search parameters. To facilitate the analysis, a 3-day full membership was purchased by the author.

On the date indicated above the author retrieved information on the numbers of men in each of the states, and the number of men who nominated themselves in each of the categories 'Caucasian' and 'Asian', as well as the numbers of men who nominated themselves as members of other racial minorities. A 'power search' was then conducted utilizing the key term 'Asians' in each of the capital cities identified as targets for the present study, and the profiles identified containing this term were then examined (to ensure they were the profiles of White men) and the relevant sentence extracted.

Analytic Approach

The total number of men per city was calculated, as well as the numbers of men in each of the target racial groups (White/Caucasian or Asian) and the remaining men of other racial minorities within each city. As the focus of the paper was on White and Asian gay men, all other racial groupings (including South Asian men, a category that in the context of gaydar.com.au typically refers to Indian men, who were not the focus of the present study) were combined into one category. Instances of anti-Asian sentiment (voiced by men listed as Caucasian) were then calculated as percentages of the total number of Caucasian profiles.

The data set was initially examined utilizing a deductive approach to thematic analysis. In other words, the data set was compared against the categories indicated by the previous research summarized above. Whilst thematic analysis most typically adopts an inductive approach, Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that a deductive approach may be appropriate when there already exist previous studies that indicate the likelihood of certain categories predominating. This was confirmed by a preliminary content analysis of the data utilizing the NVIVO software programme. All of the instances of anti-Asian sentiment were entered into NVIVO and a word frequency search was performed. The terms 'preference,' 'feminine/fem/femmy/effeminate,' 'type' and 'sorry' were identified as the most frequently used descriptive words (other than, of course, the word 'Asians'). The

frequency with which these words appeared thus confirmed the utility of adopting a deductive approach.

Given the prevalence of the four terms identified above and their connection to the previous literature, the presence of one of these terms within any given instance of anti-Asian sentiment was taken as indicative of one of the following four categories: 1) Anti-Asian sentiment constructed as personal preference (i.e., as indicated by the term 'preference' when making marginalizing statements about Asian gay men), 2) Asian men depicted as not 'real men' (i.e., as indicated in the terms 'feminine/fem/femmy/effiminate' in association with Asian gay men), 3) Asian gay men referred to as a 'type' (i.e., as indicated by the term 'type' appearing alongside a list of identity categories including 'Asian'), and 4) the word 'sorry' being treated as though it made marginalizing statements acceptable (i.e., as indicated by the term 'sorry' appearing before or after an instance of anti-Asian sentiment).

The majority of instances of anti-Asian sentiment (85.85%) included only one of the four terms outlined above. Even so, each instance of anti-Asian sentiment (for those containing only one of the four terms) was examined by two independent raters (the author and a colleague). Each such instance of anti-Asian sentiment was compared against the definition of the four categories outlined above in order to confirm that each instance was indeed representative of the category itself. Cohen's kappa for assessing interrater reliability was calculated for each category where a response of 'yes' or 'no' was recorded against whether or not each instance matched with the category it was presumed to represent on the basis of the inclusion of the key word representing that category. Kappa scores for the rating of each category were high, as indicated in Table 1 below.

Any disagreements between raters were discussed and a conclusion reached as to the most appropriate category via comparing the individual instance with the definition of each of the possible categories that could apply to the disputed instance. The final categorization of each instance of anti-Asian sentiment containing only one key term was thus in full agreement between raters.

The 57 instances that included more than one of the four words were then examined by the same two raters in order to determine which individual category was most representative (all of these instances included only two of the key words). This occurred by each rater identifying what they considered to be the primary 'message' of each instance of anti-Asian sentiment that included more than one of the key words. In other words, where an instance included more than one of the key words, each rater compared the instance to the examples of each category that had been validated as described above, and assessed which category best represented the overall message of the instance involving more than one key word. It was the case that one word represented each instance much more clearly than did the second word. Agreement on this apportioning method was near perfect, with the three instances for which there was disagreement discussed and a consensus reached.

Once all of the instances of anti-Asian sentiment were grouped into one of the four categories, a selection of clearest examples from each category were then selected for closer examination of the particular rhetorical strategies that they appeared to employ. Due to the fact that the data were not conversational in nature (as is normally the case in discursive research), and additionally on the basis of the fact that each instance of anti-Asian sentiment was typically very brief, the discursive analysis undertaken was highly limited to what in essence is 'feature spotting:': identifying and naming each rhetorical strategy and indicating what it achieves in the context of the profiles that adopted it.

In the results reported below, the first research question is examined by reporting the percentages for the instances of anti-Asian sentiment within each city. The second research question is then examined through the reporting of each of the categoriess identified above, the number of instances within each category, and a rhetorical analysis of a representative sample of instances within each category. Finally, the third research question is examined via a brief consideration of the 11 instances where the word 'Asians' appeared in a profile but did not express anti-Asian sentiment.

Results and Discussion

Table 2 presents the distribution of men within each city according to self-nominated racial identity and the number of White men per city who expressed anti-Asian sentiment in their profile. As the Table indicates, the number of White men expressing anti-Asian sentiment was relatively low, with the highest number of instances coming from Adelaide, South Australia, and the lowest number coming from Sydney, New South Wales.

Table 3 presents the frequency with which each of the categories of anti-Asian sentiment reported below appeared in the profiles of White gay men on gaydar.com.au.

Table 1 Kappa scores for each category prior to final agreement

Category	Kappa value
Personal preference	$\varkappa=.82$, $p<.001$
Asian men are not 'real men'	$\varkappa=.79$, $p<.001$
Asian gay men are a 'type'	$\varkappa=.85$, $p<.001$
Sorry makes it OK	$\varkappa=.74$, $p<.001$

Categories are described in depth in the method section

Table 2 Racial groupings of men and instances of anti-Asian sentiment by city *N*=60,082

City	Total *N*	*N* Caucasian (% Total *N*)	*N* Asian (% Total *N*)	*N* Other[a] (% Total *N*)	*N* anti-Asian (% of *N* Caucasian)
Sydney	21,197	17,975 (85%)	1,501 (7%)	1,721 (8%)	48 (.82%)
Brisbane	8,839	7,922 (90%)	394 (4%)	523 (6%)	75 (.95%)
Adelaide	4,005	3,652 (91%)	181 (5%)	172 (4%)	60 (1.6%)
Melbourne	16,832	14,615 (87%)	1,064 (7%)	1,153 (6%)	143 (.98%)
Perth	9,209	8,558 (92%)	319 (4%)	332 (4%)	76 (.90%)

[a]Other includes all racial groups other than Caucasian or Asian. Only the instances of anti-Asian sentiment are the focus of analysis

Personal Preference

The 110 statements located within this category tended to attempt to minimize what were, in many instances, quite discriminatory statements, by suggesting that racialized desire was just a personal preference (rather than something potentially driven by racialized stereotypes or hierarchies). Example of this included:

> Not into asians, nothing personal just my preference.

> NO!! Asians, nothing against you but you're not my cup of tea/preference.

The first example functions rhetorically to construct as impossible the potential that the statement 'not into asians' *could* be taken personally. Similarly in the second example, the innocuous metaphor of 'not my cup of tea' stands in direct contrast to the capitalized 'NO,' with the claim to preference being treated as irrefutable when given in the face of the statement 'nothing against you.'

Whilst the above examples are couched in terms of simple preference, the following examples make recourse to notions of 'respect' to warrant the claim to having a 'preference':

> Asians do not do it for me. Please respect my preferences and I will respect yours.

> No asians or indians please. Please respect my preference.

These two examples are interesting for the two sentences that each involve. The first sentence in each ostensibly does not speak to Asian (or Indian) men directly—Asian and Indian men are very much constructed as 'things' that are unwanted by the users. In contrast, the second sentence in each example

speaks directly to the presumed-to-be Asian (or Indian) viewer of the profiles, who is implored to 'respect' the 'preferences' of the White user. This notion of respect is problematic for three reasons; 1) it constructs 'preference' and identity categories (i.e., Asian) as equitable, which ignores the fact that gay Asian men do not choose their Asian identity, 2) it constructs respect as though the speaker and recipient were on equal terms (which in the context of racialized hierarchies, they are not), and following from this, 3) the assumption of equality allows for the demand for respect to be treated as a shared demand (as though an Asian gay man forcing himself upon a White gay man—by not 'respecting' his desire not to be contacted—would wield the same power). That the second extract presents it as necessary to repeat the word 'please' would appear to further exacerbate this construction of Asian (or Indian) men as somehow demanding of White gay men.

The final two examples in this category actually name racism (even if only to deny it):

> Guys who are asian or indian just do not do anything for me—so save my time and yours (not racist just not my preference)

> I'm not at all racist, but just not into asians, it's just a preference.

The first of these examples makes interesting use of a pragmatic claim to time management in order to suggest that stating anti-Asian (or anti-Indian) sentiment is not racism. Whilst this example is notable as one of the relatively few examples of Asian men being named as 'guys' (rather than as a homogenous group—'Asians'), it nonetheless closes by stating, in essence, that 'Guys who are asian or Indian [are] … just not my thing,' with the last word 'thing' serving to again reduce gay Asian men to the category of an object. The final example does this even more clearly, by stating 'just not into asians,' thus problematising the claim 'I'm not at all racist' (when one component of racism is precisely the homogenization of non-White cultures). What constitutes racism for these men, it would appear, are explicitly and intentionally racist statements, not simply a lack of desire for Asian men (and the voicing of it).

In this category, then, claims to personal preference may be seen to mask quite complex enactments of racial

Table 3 Frequency of each category (Total *N*=403)

Category	N of Total N	Percentage of Total N
Personal preference	110	27.29
Asian men are not 'real men'	123	30.52
Asian gay men are a 'type'	70	17.36
Sorry makes it OK	100	24.81

Categories are described in depth in the method section

stereotyping that involve positing an equal playing field, treating Asian gay men as a homogenous group and denying the fact that anti-Asian sentiment could be experienced as a personal attack. In these varied ways, the first six examples clearly bear traces of the typical ways in which racist talk occurs amongst White Australians. In the following category, however, the examples more clearly orientate to specific stereotypes about Asian gay men.

Asian Men are not 'Real Men'

Within this second category, the 123 instances of anti-Asian sentiment typically emphasized a stereotypical understanding of gay Asian men as somehow not quite men, or potentially not even as people. In the first three examples, this latter form of discrimination appeared evident:

> No specific type as such, not to sound rude but NO ASIANS or INDIANS thanks—don't like effeminate men.

> Looking for anything…but no Asians/fems

> I dont have a preference though I'm not into asians /fems

> Any nationality (but no femmyasians—sorry!)

Here the examples suggest 'no specific type,' 'looking for anything,' 'I don't have a preference' and 'any nationality,' yet all then go on to say 'no Asians/fems.' In so doing, and taking at face value the claim to be after the general rather than the specific, Asian men become not simply an undesired preference (as per the first category), but rather something outside even the realms of preferences (i.e., there are types, and things, and nationalities, of which these four men claim to have no specific preference, and then there are 'Asians'). The message this potentially gives to Asian gay men who view these types of profiles, then, is that they are not simply undesirable or the bottom of the barrel, but rather not even in the barrel at all.

The following examples even more explicitly state that Asian gay men are not within the category of 'men':

> Sorry, no feminine type of guy/Asians. I like men to be men.

> Not into small or average cock/skinny bodies/Asians/ fem … all the usual stuff.

> Looking to make mates blokes who are blokes, not into or fems/queens/Asians

> Not into Asians. I like well toned non-fem guys who know how to take charge

In these four examples Asian gay men are treated as synonymous with 'feminine' guys, men with 'small or average cock/skinny bodies/fem,' *not* being 'blokes who are blokes' and *not* being 'well toned non-fem guys who know how to take charge.' In essence, these examples conform to all of the stereotypes about Asian gay men noted by Caluya (2006) and Han (2006). This is achieved in all bar one of the examples via the use of the back slash to indicate that Asian gay men are *the same as*, for example, 'skinny bodies,' 'fems,' or 'queens.' The second quote provided above takes this one step further in the assertion that the presumed sameness of 'small or average cock/skinny bodies/Asians/ fem' is axiomatic (i.e., 'all the usual stuff').

The examples in this category present perhaps the most negative and stereotypical views of Asian gay men, and in so doing provide clear examples of statements that, it may be suggested, violate the conditions of use outlined by gaydar. com.au (i.e., that they evoke racist speech). The examples in the following category, however, take this category and add an interesting twist to it, thus making it again harder to clearly label them as racist (even if they are, by their very nature, racialist).

Asian Gay Men are a 'Type'

The 70 statements in this third category present two bookends to the same formulation, namely one in which being an Asian gay man is not depicted as a cultural identity or a racial identity or any other concept that would associate 'Asia' or 'Asianess' with a set of traditions or values (however diverse Asian cultures may be). Rather, these examples depict Asian gay men as just one type in a laundry list of gay stereotypes:

> I'm not attracted to asian/feminine blokes/Indians/ transvests/cross-dresser types

> Not into bear/twink/asian/anything kinky types, just good old fashion sex.

In these first two examples here the users provide a list of types they are not into. The first list includes transvestites along with Asian men, whilst the second includes 'anything kinky' along with Asian men. Here, then, being Asian is treated as just another type or preference or 'kink' that can be adopted or cast aside at will. Given that, of course, Asian men do not have a choice about being positioned as such (i.e., whilst many Asian gay men may not specifically identify with a form of Asian culture, they will likely still be readable by non-Asian people as Asian), the message these types of examples give is that unlike the types listed here (which, to varying degrees can be altered), there is something fundamentally undesirable about them as a type.

By contrast, in the second two examples below Asian gay men are treated as a desirable 'type':

> I'm looking for younger sons or muscle dads. especially like asians and tv/ts or those types

> Types: Asians and trannies a bonus turn on

Whilst of course welcoming of Asian gay men, these examples are not any more positive than the previous two examples as they again treat being Asian as a fetishized object of desire that only has a purpose as such for the White gay viewer—the Asian gay man himself comes with no subjectivity or cultural identity of his own that would exceed his 'Asianess' as a source of typecast desire, a point noted by Raj (2011) in his discussion of the ways in which he is positioned as a South East Asian man on the iphone application *Grindr*.

Sorry Makes it OK

This final category is largely self-explanatory: the 100 statements, which were relatively diverse in their content, all either opened or closed with the word 'sorry,' as though this made the preceding or proceeding comment acceptable or non-racially motivated. Examples include:

> Sorry not to be rude but not into asians!

> Sorry not interested in Asians

> Im not really into asians or indians or anyone over 25 sorry

> Sorry guys not really into asians/indians.

Similar to the point made about the first two extracts included in the first theme above, this evocation of an apology fails to acknowledge that the statement 'not into asians' may still be experienced as rude or as an act of discrimination. Further, the addition of the word 'sorry' appears to function as if it renders the entire sentence benign, which thus ignores the fact that it is not comparable to other sentences in which the word could be used (e.g., 'sorry, out of messages' or 'sorry, I am not online very often so may not reply quickly'). In other words, sorry as a platitude doesn't easily apply to racialized statements, nor indeed is it a productive way to state a lack of cross-racial desire (presuming, of course, that expressing this could ever be productive). Instead, the use of the word 'sorry' in these statements functions disingenuously to rhetorically circumvent an accusation of racism.

Deviant Cases

In regards to the final research question, there were a very small number of White gay men who used the word 'Asians' in their profile in order to resist racism. A total of 11 men made statements such as 'if you have something like "not into Asians" in your profile it is unlikely I will be interested in you' and 'Asians are hotter than racists.' Whilst these types of comments were of note in that they appeared to be actively engaged with the very material that has been analysed in this paper, they were in the definite minority within the overall sample of profiles that included the word 'Asians.'

Implications of Findings

The findings presented within this paper shed much needed light on the existence and enactment of racial marginalization within Australian gay communities in the context of the website gaydar.com.au. In regards to the research questions, and whilst the numbers of men who voiced anti-Asian sentiment were few, this does not mitigate against their potential impact. Both Han (2006) and Caluya (2006), writing as Asian gay Australian men, note singular examples in which their racial marginalization within gay communities was enough to affect their sense of place and belonging within such communities. As such, it would appear immaterial whether or not the numbers of White gay men making anti-Asian statements are few or many: the important point is the possibility that such statements may impact upon Asian men who view such profiles. Furthermore, and given that the website gaydar.com.au actively monitors and prohibits racist speech, it is quite possible that the actual numbers of White gay men who might express anti-Asian sentiment were they not prohibited from doing so could well be considerably higher than identified in the present study. Again, this highlights the importance of further research that examines the prevalence and impact of anti-Asian sentiment upon Asian gay men, both in Australia and abroad.

In regards to the second research question, the rhetorical analysis clearly identifies a range of complex rhetorical strategies deployed by White gay men on gaydar.com.au to warrant anti-Asian sentiment. Many of these echo previous Australian discursive research on racism, such as the rhetorical statement 'Sorry, I'm not racist', but…' (Rapley 2001, p. 231) and the claim that discrimination is simply a personal preference. Further, the rhetorical strategies also encompassed the racial stereotypes identified by Han (2006) in regards to Asian gay men, thus highlighting the fact that whilst gaydar.com.au may monitor racist speech, there are still instances of this that remain undetected. Interview research that follows up the findings presented here could usefully examine further how White gay men talk about Asian gay men, and whether the examples of anti-Asian sentiment identified here also occur in everyday conversations.

In terms of the third research question, there were indeed a small number of White gay men on gaydar.com.au who challenged statements such as 'not into Asians,' and in so doing highlight the importance of the present study. In other words, the fact that some White gay men who use gaydar.com.au recognize the offensive nature of the anti-Asian sentiment analysed here would suggest that these are issues not simply limited to academic writing, but are also of concern to at least some users of gaydar.com.au. Future research may explore how White gay men understand

racism within gay communities, and how they attempt to challenge it in real life situations.

The findings presented here are of course limited by the static nature of the user profiles on gaydar.com.au, which do not allow the opportunity to explore with individual users the meanings behind their words. Yet from the perspective of discursive psychology, this is perhaps not of as greater importance as it may seem: discursive research does not seek to impute meaning to intra-psychic processes, and instead focuses on the ways in which particular phrases, words, or concepts are deployed, and to what effect. In this sense, the analysis presented here adheres closely to a discursive approach, and thus need not require any claims as to the facticity of the interpretation provided as it relates to the 'actual opinions' of White gay men on gaydar. Indeed, the point made here is that, just like the author, Asian gay men only have the words they see in front of them. If the words are perceived as racially discriminatory, then the actual intent of White gay men is largely irrelevant.

It must also be noted that the findings presented here are limited by the lack of statistical analyses conducted on the quantified data. Future research could usefully examine how a sample of White gay men responds to measures of racism or stereotyped attitudes, and to ascertain whether this differs statistically across Australian states. Further, it would be interesting for future research to explore not only gaydar profiles in other countries, but also gaydar profiles within rural areas in Australia. The analysis reported in this paper only examined profiles located within five major Australian cities. Whilst this represents a considerable proportion of Australian gaydar uses, there remains a large proportion of users who live outside these five urban centres. Given that Australian research suggests that racism is even more ubiquitous in rural settings (e.g., Cowlishaw 1999), examining incidences of racism amongst rural White gay Australian men may be of considerable interest. Finally in terms of limitations, it must be noted that for two of the codes, prior to agreement being reached the kappa scores were lower than may be generally considered desirable. This may reflect the fact that codes were developed from a content analysis of individual words, which in some instances may not straightforwardly reflected the usage of the word in its given context. However given that all of the discrepancies were resolved via discussion, it is suggested that the differences between raters were relatively minimal in terms of the veracity of the interpretation, and in no way undermine the fact that the instances coded were all anti-Asian in sentiment, hence qualifying for analysis in this paper.

To conclude, and despite the limitations identified above, the findings presented here clearly highlight the existence of anti-Asian sentiment on gaydar.com.au amongst a small sub-sample of White Australian gay men. That the intersectional analysis allowed for a close examination of not simply the racialized nature of the statements identified, but also the gendered aspects (in terms of the depiction of gay Asian masculinities), demonstrates the merits of applying intersectional approaches. Further, the findings support the supposition that there is always a relationship between racial privilege and racial marginalization. In other words, by occupying both a numerical and racially dominant position within gaydar.com.au, White gay men are provided with opportunities to take advantage of this, to the potential detriment of Asian gay men. It should suffice to close by saying that whilst Asian gay men may ignore the statements identified here, such statements nonetheless reduce the pool of men with whom Asian users of gaydar.com.au may make contact (in addition to potentially contributing to a sense of negative self-concept amongst Asian men). In contrast, White gay men have nothing to lose, it would appear, by making anti-Asian statements. This imbalance in power on gaydar.com.au (amongst other forms of gay community) thus requires ongoing attention.

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