

*Review of Australia's New
Migrants. International Stu-
dents' History of Affective
Encounters with the Border
by Maria Elena Indelicato. Lon-
don and New York: Routledge,
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As noted in the introduction to Maria Elena Indelicato's book, which is based on her doctoral dissertation earned in the field of gender and cultural studies, this work was to a large extent informed by the author's personal experience as an international student in Australia. Motivation to turn her research focus to the problematisation of international students in Australia was additionally boosted by an event which, for a while, kept Australia's educational industry, as well as the country's race relations, in the focus of international attention. The event in question refers to a series of violent attacks in Melbourne against Indian international students, which

were followed by their public protests in 2009 and 2010 (Chapter 3 and 4). Whereas the students claimed that the attacks were racially motivated, governmental response signified them as opportunistic instances of urban violence. Indian media, in turn, identified racism as the primary motivation behind the attacks. To a great extent, then, Indelicato's research presented in this book is an attempt to understand which discourses were historically mobilised to maintain the long-standing racism surfacing behind current Australia's politics and policies towards international students. As the book reveals, Indelicato's research enabled her to identify discursive continuities, and rhetorical rearticulations, linking the colonial period with post-Second World era in Australia. In placing colonialism and its (dis)continuity at the heart of her affective discussion of racism, Indelicato has made an important contribution to the body of critical postcolonial studies.

Indelicato's argument is developed through five main chapters, each one of which offers a rounded debate of the themes around which she organised her research into historical, disciplinary, methodological and analytical (dis)connections between migration and international education in the geopolitics of postcolonial racism. All chapters follow their internal debating logics and elaborate on separate aspects of the main argument, each displaying an independent reading unit. This allows Indelicato to afford not only a sense of the comprehensive

flow of her argument, but also reach stylistic mastery in presenting her argument gradually. Starting from developing a theoretical framework, literature review and meticulous archival research discussed in chapters 1 and 2—but also interspersed through other chapters—the author shifts to discourse analysis of the paradigmatic case studies in chapters 3, 4 and 5. Methodological versatility displayed throughout her book bestows her writing with an almost fiction-like excitement.

Indelicato approaches the study of international students in Australia as subjects of both educational and migration policies, who have traditionally been depicted as “emotionally distressed subjects” (2). Hers is a Foucauldian quest of the historical ways in which the feelings of international students were deployed as a means to construe them as simultaneously belonging to sovereign post-colonies while being treated as prospective national subjects, i.e. migrants, within Australia as their educational host.

On the one hand, this methodology enables the author to look across disciplinary field in which international students and their histories within societies informing former imperial, settler nation as Australia, have traditionally been problematised. For instance, in Chapter 1, she identifies the concept of “culture contact” as crucial for the hegemonic hermeneutics of difference arising from the presence of overseas students in Australia.

This concept allows her to include anthropology as an important field behind the historicised representation of international students as “emotionally distressed subjects” which has characterised the discourses on overseas students in Australia since the end of the Second World War. Going a step further, in a genealogical quest behind the stereotypical label of “Asian student” as objects of national threat, she makes a discursive connection between the overseas study scheme known as the Colombo Plan (1951), mid-19th- and early 20th-century Australian migration policies for the Chinese, “white Australia” migration policy abolished in 1974, and neo-liberal transformation of education into a major export industry since 1980s. In tracing down the history of the representation of international students as “emotionally distressed subjects,” Indelicato has uncovered a connection with similarly-labeled migrants in the early 20th-century United States, then traditionally studied within the field of medical health science.

On the other hand, Indelicato’s approach to the emotional renditions of international students in Australia in her search for the socio-political effects of such rendition firmly grounds her work in the body of critical feminist study of affect. For instance, in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 she analyses the socio-political role which emotions related to international students play in (both local and Indian) discourses related to 2008-2009 attacks against Indian international students in Australia. As noted ear-

lier, while the Indian international students protested against what they saw as racially structured violence, the authorities dismissed those claims as accusation of racism insisting the attacks were examples of urban violence. In Chapter 4 the author “examines the response of the state and federal representatives to the accusation of racism to show how the solution envisioned to protect international students’ safety functioned as a new pedagogy of racial concealment and mobility constriction” (92). When approached as urban crime, “the violence that Indian students suffered could be generalised as a risk threatening the whole of the urban population of Australia, making racism irrelevant as a result” (98). In 2010 Victoria Police inaugurated a social media campaign with the aim of educating international students on matters related to their personal safety, titled *Are You Feeling Lucky? Think Before You Travel* (110-121). Indelicato’s analysis of the campaign reveals that its message is articulated in line with what she termed as “the new pedagogy of racial concealment”. This pedagogy relies on the historicised affective representation of international students as “passive” and “easily impressionable”—in other words, feminised—subjects, in contrast to “Australian white-male subjectivity [...] established as the site of both bodily and intellectual superiority thanks to the self-assigned capacities to be active instead of passive, to impress upon others instead of being impressed” (120).

Chapter 5 offers a discussion of what is termed as Australia’s “interpretive denial” in relation to the signifi-

cation of attacks as racist in nature. While the Indian media insisted that the attacks were racist, Australian media accused their Indian counterparts as acting out of hysteria. Relying on the feminist scholarship on anger as emotional response to racism, Indelicato shows that “the Australian authorities’ and media’s interpretation of their Indian counterparts’ expressions of anger as hysteria worked as a technology of affective dismissal that aimed to protect Australia’s moral authority in the Asia-Pacific area more broadly” (127) against the perceived “erosion” of the country’s “geo-political influence to the emergence of economic powers such as India” (149).

In theoretical terms, this book makes a valuable contribution to the feminist theory of affect and its deployment within critical race studies with a confident conceptualisation of racism through politicised deployment of emotions. Emotions do the labour of race in allowing the international students to be construed as inherently different and inferior to domestic students in Australia. In other words, affective discourses about international students on studies in Australia have racist effect despite the lack of the deployment of the concept of race in such discourses. In methodological terms, Indelicato’s meticulous historical and archival exploration sheds new light on the role of educational policies in the shaping of the Asia Pacific region in postcolonial period. As such, it will be of much interest to scholars of international

relations and area studies, as well as historians of Asia (Pacific) in general.

Although Indelicato's critique of displacement of race from the heuristics of international education could be taken to refer to all, or most, liberal democracies and former imperial powers, her study is contextualised within the country where she earned her Ph.D. as the basis of her book, i.e. Australia. With its critique of Australia's multiculturalism as the alleged solution to the problem of managing national diversity, this book will also interest all scholars who work in the field of critical political philosophy, as well as those with the expertise in critical race and ethnic studies.