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VOICES FROM WITHIN: INTERPRETING AUSTRALIAN ANGLO-INDIANS' RESPONSES TO *COTTON MARY* (1999)

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ABSTRACT

This paper undertakes a critical examination of Glenn D'Cruz's short video Re-Viewing Cotton Mary (2002) through the frameworks of socioeconomic class, gender, and spatiotemporal location. Through an exploration of the reactions and responses from members of the diasporic Australian Anglo-Indian community as they 're-view' Ismail Merchant and Madhur Jaffrey's Cotton Mary (1999), the study addresses several key questions. Firstly, it seeks to understand the diversity of perspectives among the audience and delves into the reasons behind such diversity. Secondly, the paper investigates major points of concern and contention for viewers, and explores how existing scholarship on Anglo-Indians addresses these points. It probes the convergences and divergences between audience responses and the available academic and journalistic discourse on the film.

INTRODUCTION

The release of *Cotton Mary* (premiered at London Film Festival, 1999), co-directed by Ismail Merchant and Madhur Jaffrey, in India on February 25, 2000, sparked significant controversies around the representation of the Anglo-Indian community on celluloid. Set in 1954, against the backdrop of a postcolonial India, the film centers on Cotton Mary, an Anglo-Indian nurse in Cochin, Kerala. Driven by her desire for a British identity and social respectability, Mary strategically integrates herself as an *ayah* (nanny) into the British household of John Macintosh, a BBC correspondent, and his wife Lily, domiciled in Kerala. The film persistently featured in discussions condemning

the pejorative stereotypes linked to the minority and marginalized community of Anglo-Indians. Despite being widely criticized by representatives of the Anglo-Indian community who called for the film's ban (Harding, 2000; "Anglo-Indians to boycott Mary", 2000), it was released in India; however, the film failed to garner commercial success and was swiftly withdrawn from theatres. The issues surrounding *Cotton Mary* are exacerbated by the dual factors of the community's minority status and caricatural representations of it in popular culture. This amplification is noteworthy, particularly considering that Ismail Merchant, a key figure associated with the globally reputed Merchant Ivory Productions, helmed the film along with Madhur Jaffrey, who also performs the titular role in the film.

Alison Blunt (2002) notes that films such as *Cotton Mary,* which situate Anglo-Indians within a broader Raj nostalgia, "not only perpetuate an imperialist discourse of Anglo-Indians defined, and defining themselves, purely in relation to the British and an idea of Britain as home, but also consign Anglo-Indians to an imperial niche in perpetuity, rendering their lives in independent India, in the post-colonial present, both invisible and unheard" (2002, pp. 53-54). In response to the widespread criticism against the film, as reported in a BBC News UK article dated March 7, 2000, Merchant contended that the portrayal of a single character should not be construed as a representation of the entire community: "There are many eccentric characters in all religions – Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and among Parsis. So what is the big deal in her [Cotton Mary] being eccentric?" ("Merchant Ivory film outrage", 2000). During the premiere of the film in Delhi, Merchant conveyed in a pacifying statement that the film "talks about how the Anglo-Indian community at a specific point in history – 1954 – had been brainwashed into believing, like many other Indians, that British [sic] was best. There is no attempt to demonise them" (Harding, 2000).

RE-VIEWING COTTON MARY (2002)

The literary and theatre studies scholar Glenn D'Cruz's *Re-Viewing Cotton Mary* (2002) is a sixteen-minute short video in which fifteen members (both women and men) of the diasporic Australian Anglo-Indian community from the Melbourne Rangers

Club[1] gather in a cozy living space to watch and review Merchant and Jaffrey's *Cotton Mary.* Through this exercise D'Cruz documented views of members of the community regarding the depiction of Anglo-Indians on celluloid, with particular focus on *Cotton Mary*.The video initially captures the live responses of the audience as they view *Cotton Mary* and subsequently incorporates footage of their afterthoughts on the film. The video's prelude serves as a contextual introduction, setting the stage for the subsequent discussion. It reads,

> Ismail Merchant's *Cotton Mary* (1999) recycles many negative Anglo-Indian stereotypes and was harshly condemned by many members of the community, including Gillian Hart, a community leader and MP[2] in West Bengal. Hart tried to get the Indian government to ban the film, and her campaign was reported in the Australian press. Hart claimed that: "the whole film is pointless and makes a mockery of us and our women." What do Australian Anglo-Indians think of *Cotton Mary*?
>
> Rather than answer this question by presenting an academic paper, I have made a short video, which presents Anglo-Indians discussing the film, and its relationship to their lives.

The work's title is significant as 'review' implies a critical examination and expression of opinions on the film *Cotton Mary*. Furthermore, the term 're-viewing' can mean that some of the audience members or interviewees might be watching *Cotton Mary* for the first time, while for others it might be a revisitation. D'Cruz characterizes his work as a "short video" rather than a documentary, possibly motivated by its brief duration and amateur technical quality. Nevertheless, he effectively integrates documentary-style interview footage of the Anglo-Indians with pertinent scenes from *Cotton Mary*. It is filmed using a handheld camera, predominantly featuring medium and close-up shots of the interviewees. Zoom-ins adeptly capture the real-time reactions of individual members as they engage with the film. There are moments in the video suggesting that some of the audience members become conscious of the camera's presence while watching the film, prompting them to abruptly cease their reactions upon sensing its focus on them. D'Cruz's strategic use of specific scenes from the film as a backdrop, occasionally accompanied by muted dialogue and with voiceovers of the interviewees, adds layers of meaning to the narrative.

[1] An Australian Anglo-Indian Club founded in 1980 by a number of Anglo-Indian couples from Calcutta taking its name from the Calcutta Rangers Club.
[2] Gillian Rosemary Hart was actually an Anglo-Indian MLA from West Bengal, not an MP (cf. also footnote 3).

The filmed responses assume an informal style, and there are no specific or discernible questions posed by the interviewer (here, D'Cruz). During their reflections on the film, the participants occasionally address the camera and D'Cruz, while some engage in direct communication with the group. This conversational approach imparts the semblance of a group discussion, marked by instances of interruptions, individual interjections, and sometimes direct challenges to the viewpoints expressed by fellow speakers. Notably, the dynamic also includes certain moments of validation from a majority of the participants, which in a way reinforces the credibility and resonance of specific arguments within the discourse among the group members.

D'Cruz's video serves as an interesting case study, given the discernible diversity in perspectives among the Anglo-Indian audience present. While some vehemently criticize the film, others find some merit in the first half. Notably, the initial segments of the film elicit smiles and laughter from the viewers. For a subset of the audience, the film is not one about Anglo-Indians; rather, it is considered the story of an individual woman who, in their view, does not accurately represent the community. Consequently, a majority of the viewers disassociate from Cotton Mary's character, whereas a minority identify her as part of their community, but often under certain intriguing conditions that will be examined in this paper.

The sequencing of responses curated by D'Cruz in the video bears significance, commencing with a medium shot capturing one of the audience members, Ian Jennings, expressing his sentiments to the former, who was positioned behind the camera: "I felt that the movie made my skin crawl." The statement is truncated with the video leading to Marilyn Goss, who shares a similar sentiment: "About one third through the movie, I really liked the movie and wondered why Gillian Hart, MP[3] in India, would be so upset by it and want to ban it. And then when the movie started going on, I found myself really getting offended by it." The culmination of the video, on the other hand, features Keith Butler, whose commentary goes: "What the director did very well was physicalize Anglo-Indian women's attraction for Britain by actually dressing Cotton Mary up in borrowed British clothes. It's a scathing attack on the pro-

[3] Cf. footnote 2.

British attitudes amongst our community. It's done very well. My only regret is that its subject is my community." He recounts a cringe-inducing moment when Mary dons Lily's frock, a scene underscored by D'Cruz's inclusion of relevant visuals from the film. The discerning editorial choices made by D'Cruz in arranging these responses effectively underscore a thematic denouement, subtly guiding the audience towards a specific concluding impression.

The categories of socioeconomic class, gender and spatiotemporal location help group the principal issues articulated by the participants in *Re-viewing Cotton Mary* (2002) in their critique of *Cotton Mary* (1999). Moreover, these frameworks are instrumental in scrutinizing the underlying rationale behind the responses, and shedding light on the diversity of perspectives expressed by the audience members. Therefore, here, the analytical frameworks of class, gender, and location facilitate a systematic unravelling of the perspectives of the diasporic Australian Anglo-Indians regarding the representation of Anglo-Indians, specifically lower-middle-class Anglo-Indian women from South India (here, Kerala), as portrayed in *Cotton Mary*. The paper also investigates major points of concern and contention for viewers, and explores how existing scholarship on Anglo-Indians addresses these points. It discerns any convergences or divergences between audience responses and the available academic and journalistic discourse on the film. Lastly, the study considers the contribution of this material to existing scholarship on Anglo-Indian life and culture, highlighting its importance and relevance in expanding our understanding of the community.

CLASS

This study leverages class as the primary critical framework to analyze the responses of diasporic Anglo-Indians in D'Cruz's *Re-Viewing Cotton Mary.* In the video, Anglo-Indian viewers, attuned to the historical and contemporary realities of their community's socioeconomic standing, scrutinize the film's depiction of class and deliberate on the repercussions of such representations in popular culture. The protagonist of the film, Cotton Mary (portrayed by Madhur Jaffrey), belongs to the lower-middle economic stratum. When the film opens, she serves as a nurse in a hospital in Cochin, previously a British military hospital and presently under the administration of the regional state government. Her niece, Rosie (played by Sakina

Jaffrey), also serves as a nurse within the same hospital. However, Mary subsequently becomes an *ayah* within the Macintosh household, incorporating herself into the domestic setting.

The other Anglo-Indian women depicted in the film are portrayed as inhabitants of an almshouse. The almshouse was once a vital part of the Anglican church and formerly the residents received housing and health care, and regular visits from British memsahibs and their children, according to these women. However, as the British departed from India, these residents find themselves neglected and anticipate the arrival of Mary's employer, Lily, the sole remaining British woman they know of through Mary, for companionship. Moreover, as Mary's sister, Blossom (played by Neena Gupta), who is a wet nurse, breastfeeds and revives Lily's ailing child upon Mary's request, the inhabitants, particularly Blossom, assert a perceived entitlement to a visit from the "Madam." Another Anglo-Indian character in the film is the inebriated relative of Mary who assumes the responsibilities previously held by Abraham, the domestic help, within the British household. The economic status of the community is hence portrayed as relatively modest.

One of the viewers in *Re-Viewing Cotton Mary*, Marilyn Goss, expresses her disappointment, which is not solely derived from her viewing of *Cotton Mary*. She perceives a systemic pattern of marginalization, disparagement, and denigration targeted at Anglo-Indians based on class as, "[r]ight through we have only ever seen Anglo-Indians depicted in a [voice in the background: subservient class] lower socioeconomic class through literature, especially through the media film which is a very impacting media…[Y]ou only see the Anglo-Indians depicted through *Cotton Mary*, through *Bhowani Junction*." Another viewer, Ian Jennings, expresses his perception of profound patronization in the film, describing his reaction as one of revulsion. According to him,

> [the film's] depiction of Anglo-Indians, particularly if it's about in the 1950s, was nothing at all like it was. It depicted an Anglo-Indian, the lead actress in the movie as an *ayah* and Anglo-Indians from my understanding, certainly from the time, were nothing like that. Anglo-Indians were the equal of the British in terms of how they conducted themselves. And I can't remember too many Anglo-Indian *ayahs* in my time.

It is crucial to highlight that, in the film, Cotton Mary does not originally hold the profession of an *ayah*. Instead, she transforms from being a nurse to assume the role of an *ayah* as part of her strategy to infiltrate the British household. S. Muthiah, in his co-authored work with Harry MacLure titled *The Anglo-Indians: A 500-Year History* (2014), reflects on his own nanny, Mrs. Smith from Madras, and on Indian society of the 1930s when "affluent Indian families demonstrated their Westernization or their affinity to the Raj by having their children brought up or taught by British, European or Anglo-Indian governesses" (2014, p. xiii). Academic scholarship also points to Anglo-Indians being tutors to children of royal families, and nannies or governesses in the European and upper-class Indian families. Brian Brooks, in viewing the film, initially remarks that, "[t]here weren't any Anglo-Indian *ayahs*[4] that [he] knew of in the fifties." However, Brooks' later assertion regarding Anglo-Indian women in Pakistan during the 1950s, specifically those "who worked for very rich Muslim families," contributes to this ongoing discourse. There is a notable absence of objections to this statement from the audience members.

Another critique articulated by Jennings towards *Cotton Mary* pertains to the scene where Mary forsakes the use of cutlery and begins eating rice and curry with her hands. Jennings conveys his disbelief at this moment, expressing a complete loss of composure. Laughter ensues in the background, and another voice echoes a similar sentiment, stating, "I thought I was disgusted by it." Cerina Stibbard presents a divergent perspective and interrogates Jennings regarding the basis of his perceived offense at the sight of someone eating with their hands. The resulting conversation goes,

> Ian: If they were Indians that was fine.
>
> Cerina: But that's where we've come from!
>
> Ian: No, I understand that. But we don't do that, is what I'm saying.
>
> Cerina: Probably your great grandparents did that.
>
> Other audience members: No, I don't think so, don't think so.

Here, there seems to be a majority consensus among the participants regarding their food preferences and eating habits. Carolyn and Glenn D'Cruz (2007) reminisce about

[4] In colonial India, a nanny was referred to as *ayah* after the Portuguese term *aia* meaning mother, tutor, nurse, governess.

their paternal grandfather who would do the same thing as Mary. They write, “[w]hile he would publicly deride Indian food, and sing the praises of the British roast, he would be caught relishing leftover chicken curry and rice when he thought no-one was looking…Like Mary and our grandfather, we too were once afraid of being contaminated by our culinary heritage” (2007, p.115).

The question of class divisions within Anglo-Indians comes up in several instances in the video. At all times, there is an attempt made by the respondents to attach the behavioral traits of Anglo-Indians in the film to be those of people belonging to a certain class. And comments were passed to infer that only people from a certain class are capable of such actions. Here, the stereotypes attached to Anglo-Indians are, in a way, justified because they are presented as representing the supposedly “poor Anglo-Indians.” For instance, according to Brian Brooks, during his time in India/Pakistan, “there were some poor Anglo-Indians who were very subservient to the Europeans. Not just the British, the Europeans especially the British [sic]. But that’s really not offensive to me. Cause that’s not about an Anglo-Indian culture. That’s just one woman.” An attempt is made here to define Anglo-Indian culture, demarcating it from the culture associated with the “poor” members of the community. Comments such as this, when made in the context of the video, become crucial for gaining insights into the lived realities of the community. It helps to unravel the nature of ‘culture,’ its definitional parameters, and the entities empowered to establish classifications within the specific framework of Anglo-Indians. The prevailing norms, evidently dictated by the affluent class, introduce a discourse on the expectations, acceptability of behaviours, and the prescribed ideals. Hence, the disassociation from Cotton Mary, in this context, is primarily triggered by her class status.

GENDER

The gender perspective is pivotal to this study, particularly in light of the primary objection raised by Gillian Hart, the Anglo-Indian MLA from West Bengal at the time of the film’s screening, as indicated in the video’s prelude. Hart argued, as reported by *BBC*, that “the whole film is pointless and makes a mockery of us and our women” (“Merchant Ivory film outrage,” 2000). She asserted the necessity of banning the film, contending that it depicted Anglo-Indian women as excessively fixated on Britain and white men. The protests against *Cotton Mary* primarily highlighted concerns related to

the film's sexual content, portrayal of interracial relationships, and its depiction of Anglo-Indians as both promiscuous and materialistic.

Anglo-Indian women have been the subject of constant derision and pigeonholing in popular culture due to the supposedly illegitimate nature of their relationships with Europeans which sired the Anglo-Indian community (Caplan, 2000, p. 878; Younger, 1987, p. 139). The Anglo-Indian women who were involved with Europeans in India hence were tagged as sexually promiscuous and morally bankrupt: "In many imperial histories and novels, images of Anglo-Indian women as morally lax and more licentious than other European and Indian women invoke assumptions about past inter-racial sex and its illegitimate progeny" (qtd. in Blunt, 2002, p.54). In effect, women belonging to the Anglo-Indian community had to carry the brunt of societal marginalization and contempt, more so than the men of the community. In the portrayal of Anglo-Indians, there exists a discernible thematic emphasis on women, perpetuating established stock character types. Similar dynamics manifest in *Cotton Mary* as the women of the community occupy centre-stage in the film, be it Cotton Mary, her niece Rosie, her sister Blossom or the rest of the women living in the almshouse. The representation of Anglo-Indian men in the film is limited to Mary's drunken relative who takes over from Abraham, who held the position of household help in the British household. Additionally, an appearance is made by a male Anglo-Indian character who plays the guitar and participates in singing alongside the women within the almshouse, albeit for a fleeting moment on screen.

It is in this context that it becomes interesting to study the audience responses to *Cotton Mary* in D'Cruz's short video through the lens of gender. As mentioned earlier, it throws light on what the members within the community think of the depiction of Anglo-Indian women on screen. Fascinatingly enough, the responses throw open an entirely different perspective on such supposedly stereotypical portrayals of Anglo-Indian women. For instance, female promiscuity, which is generally perceived as a stereotype among Anglo-Indians, and decried as such, is in a way reaffirmed in *Re-viewing Cotton Mary* through the remarks of an audience member, Brian Brooks. For instance, he brings up the case of the Anglo-Indian women in Pakistan he knew of in the 1950s, "who worked for very rich Muslim families." He goes on to add that,

> Anglo-Indian girls who came from poor families could not wait to jump into bed with the foreigners: Germans, English, Americans. [His dialogue here becomes a voiceover for the scene in which Rosie sleeps with John in her attic room]. We had the Americans there. I feel that half of them are in America now, all divorced. But it was like a passport to get out of the country.

And someone in the audience reaffirms, “to get out, yeah!”

The video then jumps to another interviewee, so one does not get to see any responses or reactions to the statement made by Brooks. This is particularly interesting given that none of the audience other than Brooks claims an Anglo-Pakistani identity. And possibly because of this, no one comments on Brook’s declaration. But one other person reiterates this view that Anglo-Indian women’s relationships with the Europeans or Americans were a means to get out of the country, to America or Europe. The absence of a counter narrative from the audience here is noteworthy. This leads one to infer that there is a general consensus among this Anglo-Indian audience that the portrayal of the women of the community, in this case Rosie, as sexually profligate, is in a way, justified. An intersection of class and gender is observable in this context, wherein the demographic identified as ‘poor Anglo-Indian women’ is supposedly susceptible to such deviant behaviours.

While most of the complaints about *Cotton Mary* were made against the representation of Anglo-Indian women (such as Rosie in this instance) as simply an object of desire, *Re-Viewing Cotton Mary* underplays this aspect and has very limited or no commentary on this. In fact, even though Keith Butler brings up the prominence of female breasts in *Cotton Mary*, he limits it to the aspect of nurture and breastfeeding and focuses on Blossom’s and Lily’s breasts. Blossom is a wet nurse who feeds Lily’s ailing child and revives it, as Lily is initially unable to, but later succeeds in, breastfeeding her child. A rather romanticized version of the female body which aligns it with ‘Mother India’ and the aspect of nurture is the sole focus of this issue in *Re-viewing Cotton Mary*. The apparent display and sexualization of Rosie’s breasts is overlooked.

In another instance captured in the video, Butler, while discussing breastfeeding and the nurturing aspect in the film, elicited laughter and a comment from a male audience

member: “Get your mind off Rosie!” Butler responds with a smile and continues to articulate his perspective. This somewhat salacious comment underscores the film’s adherence to the male gaze, revealing that even members of the community are not exempt from it. Despite several representatives of their community vehemently opposing the portrayal of Anglo-Indian women as licentious and wanton in the film, Rosie yet again becomes just another seductive female body and the subject of a jest. This superficiality might lead one to speculate whether their responses are indicative of a somewhat token or performative allyship.

LOCATION

The framework of spatiotemporal location serves as a fitting lens to analyse the responses of the audience members in terms of where and when the film, *Cotton Mary*, is set, where the respondents were raised and where and when they are currently viewing it. They are viewing *Cotton Mary* in the early 2000s in Australia, one of the most favoured locations for Anglo-Indians to migrate post Indian independence, when they felt that the conditions in India weren’t favourable to them. Mass migrations of Anglo-Indians to the UK, Australia, Canada and New Zealand were a common phenomenon in post-colonial India (Blunt, 2005). A substantial number of audience members claim to have lived in India or Pakistan during the 1950s, the period depicted in *Cotton Mary*, and decry the inauthenticity of its portrayal: “The pictures were fifties. All wrong [“All wrong,” in the background]. Definitely wrong.” In their assessment, the film fails to authentically depict the socioeconomic and cultural dynamics of the community as perceived in its purported 1950s setting.

Cotton Mary is set in the Malabar coast of southern India, in Cochin, Kerala in 1954. Kerala has been home to Eurasians since the arrival of Vasco da Gama in 1498 and many could be found mainly in the areas of Cochin, Quilon, Kannur, Alleppey, and Trivandrum (“In Kerala Anglo-Indians are 100,000 strong, not minuscule 124!”, 2019). Ismail Merchant writes about the choice of Cochin as the location for *Cotton Mary*:

> It is probably India’s most cosmopolitan region. Phoenicians, Arabs, Jews, Chinese and Europeans, particularly the Portuguese and Dutch, have all staked a claim there and left something of their culture and their religion behind…What an ideal place… to suggest the confused identity of the Anglo-Indians in the story. (Merchant, 2002, p. 135)

The audience responses in *Reviewing Cotton Mary* indicate a discernible trend, that of the majority of participants being from the northern regions of India or Pakistan during the 1950s. Keith Butler, in an extreme close-up shot, issues a disclaimer before articulating his perspective on the film that, he "can't speak about the scene because we're all from the North, you know." This highlights a discernible gap between the northern and southern factions of Anglo-Indians, a divide that extends beyond geographical differences. For instance, Muthiah and MacLure write about a colour divide within the community itself, explaining that: "those descended from the Portuguese and from mothers from the coasts south of the Vindhyas or from the East Indian coast are likely to be considerably darker than those descended from Anglo-Celtic and similar European stock and mothers from North India" (2017, p. 9). According to them, a colour divide was also evident at the leadership level of the North Indian group "which often tended to consider the darker Anglo-Indians as not belonging to the community, particularly if they spoke in the mother's tongue—Konkani, Malayalam, Tamil or Bengali" (Ibid.). However, Muthiah and MacLure believe that this distinction within the community based on fairness of the skin has been resolved to a great degree in the post-independence years: "colour consciousness is now no different from what most Indians exhibit, perhaps even less with a greater bonding in a diminishing community" (Ibid.).

The Anglo-Indians in *Cotton Mary* speak in English and Mary claims a British patrilineal heritage from her father who was an officer in the British regiment. The South Indian Anglo-Indian associations have a historical discord with the All-India Anglo-Indian Association, marked by numerous disputes related to membership and the inclusion of Anglo-Indians from the southern region, primarily due to distinctions in language. English as mother tongue is not according to the Indian Constitution a requirement for being an Anglo-Indian. However, it is alleged that Stephen Padua, one of the early founders of the Anglo-Indian federation in South India led the Travancore-Cochin revolt against Frank Anthony, the then head of the All India Anglo-Indian Association, who held that Feringhis[5] were not Anglo-Indians (Muthiah and MacLure, 2017, p. 42). The discernible north-south divide is evident in the attitudes and responses of the audience members towards the portrayal of South-Indian Anglo-Indians in *Cotton*

[5] Malayalam speaking Anglo-Indians of Portuguese lineage in Kerala.

Mary. For instance, Michael Ludgrove opines in *Reviewing Cotton Mary*: “I thought there were elements of recognition right through the film. I thought it was pretty authentic as far as South Indian Anglo-Indians are concerned. The accents, the vocabulary, the way they spoke to each other… I could see elements that I recognized in nearly every character among the Anglo-Indians anyway.” So, while Butler disclaims authority to comment on South Indian Anglo-Indians, Ludgrove asserts that the portrayal of Anglo-Indians in *Cotton Mary* is accurate. He notes that the depiction resonated with him, as far as the faction of Anglo-Indians represented in *Cotton Mary* is of South Indian origin.

CONCLUSION

This article has undertaken a critical examination of Glenn D’Cruz’s *Re-Viewing Cotton Mary* (2002), employing the analytical frameworks of class, gender, and spatiotemporal location to understand the intriguing conditions under which a majority of the viewers disassociate from Cotton Mary’s character, whereas a minority identify her as part of their community. It has elucidated complex perspectives on *Cotton Mary* and the rationale behind the diversity in perspectives, within members of the diasporic Australian Anglo-Indian community. The nuanced examination of reactions and responses to *Cotton Mary* in *Re-Viewing Cotton Mary* provides valuable insights into the complexities of identity, representation, and cultural interpretation. This exploration serves to enhance our understanding of the Anglo-Indian community and its multifaceted engagement with cinematic narratives. Ultimately, *Re-Viewing Cotton Mary* emerges as a valuable resource for rethinking and expanding the existing scholarship on Anglo-Indians, offering a crucial window into their diverse experiences and viewpoints.

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