Whitefellas and Wadjulas: Anti-colonial Constructions of the non-Aboriginal Self.

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This thesis is submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, 2008
I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution

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Abstract

In this thesis, I argue for anti-colonial constructions of the non-Aboriginal self. I take as my starting point that members of the invader/settler society in Australia must place them/ourselves in “an embodied awareness of ‘being in Indigenous sovereignty’” (Nicholl, 2004: 17) and name them/ourselves accordingly. An anti-colonial construction of non-Aboriginality formed within the locus of Aboriginal Sovereignty undermines the potency of ‘post-colonial’ processes of identity formation, which privilege the colonialist centre, and the concomitant marginalised position of Indigenous people. Thus, an anti-colonial construction of non-Aboriginality constitutes a radical recentring for processes of identity construction within invader/settler societies.

This work responds to critical whiteness studies and post-colonial discourses of ‘belonging’. I acknowledge both whiteness studies and work on invader/settler belongings have gained traction in recent years as a means to problematise the whiteness of the settler/invader group and the legitimacy of their/our belongings. However, I argue they continue to operate within colonialist paradigms and perpetuate (neo)colonial power relations.

In this thesis, I argue anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality are constructed in dialogue with Aboriginal people. I conceive non-Aboriginality as a political identity that rejects ‘race’ and ‘colour’ as markers for identity. ‘Non-Aboriginality’ enables members of invader/settler societies to articulate support for Aboriginal Sovereignty and Aboriginal claims for social justice and human rights.
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Michelle Carey
2008
They were standin' on the shore one day, Saw the white sails in the sun
Wasn't long before they felt the sting, white man, white law, white gun
Don't tell me that it's justified, 'cause somewhere, someone lied
Yeah well someone lied, someone lied, genocide
Well someone lied.

And now you're standing on solid rock
Standing on a sacred ground
Living on borrowed time
And the winds of change are blowin' down the line
(Shane Howard and Goanna, 1982)
Protocol

“The protocol for introducing one’s self to other Indigenous people is to provide information about one’s cultural location, so that connections can be made on political, cultural and social grounds and relations established” (Moreton-Robinson, 2000: xv)\(^1\). Increasingly, non-Aboriginal people are also observing this protocol (see, for example, Curthoys, 2000: 22). While there is some concern that this observance of protocol has become perfunctory (Haggis, 2004a: 48), I argue it is a powerful indication of the growing recognition that we live in relationship with Aboriginal people on their land. It illuminates the desire non-Aboriginal people have to learn how to live on this land with respect and in accordance with the appropriate protocols. When we observe this protocol, we make a public declaration of our non-Aboriginality. When we come together with Aboriginal people and declare our non-Aboriginality we affirm that we want to forge our own inter political, social and cultural relationships. We indicate that we understand that the basis for connection is respect of Indigenous Sovereignty. This thesis is about such matters so, in this spirit, I will introduce myself.

My name is Michelle Carey. I’m a (around-about) sixth generation white Australian of mainly Irish decent. Some of my mob were from England, but like

\(^1\) Aileen Moreton Robinson is a Geonpul woman and Professor of Indigenous Studies at Queensland University of Technology. She is a leading Australian academic in critical whiteness and race studies and was the founding President of the Australian Critical Race and Whiteness Studies Association. Professor Moreton-Robinson has published in the areas of Native Title, whiteness, race and feminism in Australia and abroad. She has also worked and advocated for Indigenous rights in Australia and internationally.

\(^\ast\) Throughout this thesis, I provide short biographies of some of the scholars whose work I draw on in the development of this work. The biographies indicate the authors and scholars who are influential in the development of my thinking on this matter and inform the basis of my argument.
many of us who consider ourselves ‘Irish’ we don’t acknowledge this too often!
To the best of my knowledge, on my father’s father’s side, the Careys, came form County Cork. Out of curiosity, I did a web search on the Gaelic spelling and meaning of Carey. Apparently, it’s O’Ciardha; the O meaning descendent of, and Ciardha meaning dark. I must confess that despite my denial of Anglo ancestry that my Anglicisation is complete. I look at the word ‘Ciardha’ and wonder about the spelling. How does one sound inform the next? How do I make this configuration of letters say CAREY? It’s my name but I don’t recognise it as mine.

On my mother’s mother’s side, the McCurdies are from Derry and the Mays are from Belfast. On my Mother’s Mother’s Father’s side, the Poulters come from Sussex, England. To the best of my knowledge, my ancestors migrated here of their own free will. There are no hidden convict stains, stories of Fenian rebels or famine victims. There are no grand romantic narratives to explain the presence of my family in Australia.

I went to Ireland when I was 19, to check if I was Irish. A bus driver in Limerick set me straight. He said the Americans were tourists and Australians were guests. At first I thought he was flattering me. It soon clicked though that he thought I was only marginally higher up in the pecking order than those loud Americans who developed sudden penchants for wearing tweed caps and walking with the aid of a blackthorn stick. I was just a guest. An Australian guest.
I was born at St. George’s hospital in Kew, Melbourne on the 7th of April 1967. I am the eldest daughter of Terence Richard and Heather Maree Carey. The early years of my life were spent between my parents and my grandparent’s house in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne.

In the year that I was born, they held a referendum to see if the federal government could have constitutional jurisdiction over Aboriginal people and to see if they could be counted in the Australian census, as one of ‘us’. On May the 27th over ninety percent of white Australians said yes. A cynical response might be that it was never up to whitefellas to make such decisions about those whose land had been stolen from them in the first place. There is truth in this. But, I am thankful that I was born in optimistic times. I wish I could say the same of the times I am living in now.

Having been born in Melbourne, I was born on the land of the Wurunjeri people of the Kulin Nation. Many years later, I moved to Sydney, and lived on the land of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation. I currently live in Western Australia. As I write this now, I do so knowing I am a Wadjula living on Nyungar Boodja.
Introduction

The Thesis:

In this thesis, I argue for an anti-colonial construction of the non-Aboriginal self. I therefore take as my starting point that members of the invader/settler society must place them/ourselves in “an embodied awareness of ‘being in Indigenous sovereignty’” (Nicholl, 2004: 17) and name them/ourselves accordingly. For me, naming and claiming our non-Aboriginality necessitates an irrevocable recognition of being in Aboriginal Sovereignty and demands that invader/settler belongings are negotiated from this standpoint. I argue anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality formed within the locus of Aboriginal Sovereignty undermine the potency of ‘post-colonial’ processes of identity formation, which privilege the colonialist centre and the concomitant marginalised position of Aboriginal people. Thus, anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality constitute a radical recentring for processes of identity construction within invader/settler societies.

This work is positioned as a response to critical whiteness studies and post-colonial discourses of ‘belonging’. I acknowledge whiteness studies and work on invader settler belongings have gained traction in recent years as a means to problematise the whiteness of the settler/invader group and the legitimacy of their/our belongings. However, I argue they continue to operate within colonialist paradigms and perpetuate (neo)colonial power relations. Therefore, alternative processes of identity problematisation must be sought, and connected to this, an alternative premise to invader/settler belongings devised.

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2 Fiona Nicholl lectures at the University of Queensland. Her recent publications address whiteness and Indigenous sovereignty in Australian and the racialisation of ‘perspective’.
I argue the urgency of my position is exemplified by the present social and political milieu in Australia where there is a real denial of the particular rights of Indigenous people. At best, the diminution of Indigenous rights is a paternalistic move back to the cultural assimilation practices of the mid-to-late 20th century. At worst, it constitutes a (re)colonisation of Indigenous people and land, one that winds back the social, cultural and political successes achieved by Indigenous people towards the end of the 20th century. I argue the ideological position of the current political regime in Australia is further revealed when we consider Australia’s international alignment with the neo-colonial, foreign policy objectives of the United States. I argue there is a compelling need for members of invader/settler societies to address the (neo)colonial paradigms by which our/their identities are constituted and this begins by reconceiving identity within the locus of Indigenous Sovereignty.

**Defining Terms:**

Here I define several terms I rely on to explain contested power relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people throughout this thesis:

‘Indigenous and/or Aboriginal Sovereignty’ and ‘white sovereignty’;

‘Aboriginal’ and ‘non-Aboriginal’; and, ‘invader/settler’.

I take the terms ‘Indigenous and/or Aboriginal Sovereignty’ and ‘white sovereignty’ from Fiona Nicholl (2004). My reading of Nicholl leads me to understand white sovereignty as inextricably linked to white national identity, legitimacy and authority, and Indigenous/Aboriginal Sovereignty as the
conglomeration of rights that are inalienable to the overall goal of self-
determination for Indigenous people, and which, moreover, is denied every time
white sovereignty is asserted (Nicholl, 2004: 19). As Nicholl writes:

There is an important difference between white people knowing what
Indigenous sovereignty is, on the one hand, and knowing what white
sovereignty does to Indigenous rights, on the other...whenever...we
...deny the existence of Indigenous sovereignty, we effectively deny the

In this text, I draw broadly on Nicholl’s work on the dynamic between white
sovereignty in relationship to Indigenous Sovereignty. However, I am mindful
that while Nicholl seeks to problematise the whiteness of the settler/invader
society, I seek to problematise whiteness as a site through which the relationship
between white sovereignty and Indigenous Sovereignty is considered. My
concern is to critique discourses of whiteness, including those that seek to
deconstruct the power of whiteness, within the locus of (neo)colonial power
relations. As Larbalestier (2004: online) writes, whiteness is a “metaphor for
relations of domination”. As such, I suggest that whiteness ‘metaphorically’
speaks to the signifier of whiteness while potentially evading that which is
signified – colonisation – and the perpetuation of (neo)colonial power relations.

Therefore, I also read Nicholl’s work on white sovereignty and Indigenous
Sovereignty with Lisa Strelein’s (2002)\textsuperscript{3} analysis of Aboriginal Sovereignty,
Australian sovereignty and the Treaty making processes. This allows for a more
focused consideration of colonisation, nation building and the negation of
Aboriginal Sovereignty. Strelein argues that in legal terms, the recognition of
Aboriginal Sovereignty does not challenge the legitimacy of the State in

\textsuperscript{3} Lisa Strelein is a Research Fellow at AIATSIS, in the Native Title Research Unit. Dr Strelein
has published on Native Title, Treaty processes and Indigenous land and sea rights.
international law. However, internal, national insecurities inhibit the recognition of the inherent Sovereignty of Aboriginal people because it undermines the Imperialist assumptions underpinning the construction of the modern nation state. Indigenous sovereignty compels a recognition that processes of nation building not only failed to serve and protect the Sovereign rights of Indigenous people in the first moments of colonisation, but continues to serve the rights of individual citizens over and above the ongoing collective “political, socio-cultural, and economic aspirations [and rights] of Indigenous people” (See Strelein, 2002: 5, also see 2, 6, 9-11).

Further, I define the ways I use the terms ‘Indigenous’ and ‘Aboriginal’, and ‘non-Indigenous’ and ‘non-Aboriginal’. It is generally understood that the terms ‘Aborigine’ and ‘Aboriginal’ are colonial impositions that homogenise the multiculturalism and multilingualism of Aboriginal people, denying the complexity of Indigenous societies and negating the legitimacy of Aboriginal peoples’ connections and responsibilities to their distinct geopolitical regions (see Collard et al, 2004: 8-10). The Murri academic Eve Fesl\(^4\) confirms this when she writes:

> An examination of the history of British colonisation and slavery throughout the world reveals that one of the first acts in the process of oppression has been the de-identification of the intended victims and a replacement of their names with labels such as “indian”, “aborigine”, “native”, “black” or “nigger…. The general noun “aborigine” has been used to replace our names which the colonisers never had the courtesy to use (1993: n.p.).

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\(^4\) Eve Fesl is a Gubbi Gubbi Elder and an academic. In 1988 Dr Fesl was awarded an Order of Australia medal for her work in the ethnic community and her maintenance of Aboriginal languages. Fesl’s PhD is a sociolinguistic study on language and policy implementation. Fesl currently works in Gubbi Gubbi language preservation and maintenance.
I concede that given this historical context, proposing that we name non-Aboriginality as ‘non-Aboriginal’ is a risky task. There is a level at which such a name communicates a willingness to redeploy nomenclature that are automatically encoded with essentialised, racialised, hierarchialised and dualistic understandings of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relations. Certainly, Palmer and Groves make this point when they write:

Terms such as ‘Aboriginal,’ ‘non-Aboriginal,’ ‘white,’ ‘black,’ ‘European’ and ‘Indigenous’ all have their limitations. Settling on any fixed set of terms such as ‘Aboriginal’ or ‘non-Aboriginal’ may serve to imply an acceptance of binaries or implicate us in problematic essentialisms (2000: 21; also see Palmer, 1999: 28-32).

However, I argue we can resist the colonialist connotations associated with contemporary naming conventions if we relocate the current terminology out of colonialist knowledge paradigms and invest old terms with new meanings that are antithetical to the original ones. To elaborate this point, I refer to Moreton-Robinson’s work on Indigenous belonging, which she defines as an ontological relationship to land. She writes:

It may be argued that to suggest an ontological relationship to describe Indigenous belonging is essentialist or is a form of strategic essentialism because I am imputing an essence to belonging. From an Indigenous epistemology, what is essentialist is the premise upon which such criticism depends: the Western definition of self as not unitary or fixed. This is a form of strategic essentialism that can silence and dismiss non-Western constructions, which do not define the self in the same way. The politics of such silencing is enabled by the power of Western knowledge and its ability to be the definitive measure of what it means to be human and what does and does not constitute knowledge. Questioning the integrity and legitimacy of Indigenous ways of knowing and being has more to do with the power to be a knower and whether their knowledge is commensurate with the West’s ‘rational’ belief system. The anti-essentialist critique is commendable but it is premised on a contradiction embedded within the

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5 David Palmer is senior lecturer in sociology at Murdoch University. His research interests include community development, Aboriginalities and cultural influence, community service provision to Indigenous communities and youth studies.

6 Denise Groves is a Yinjibarndi woman and lecturer at Murdoch University in Aboriginal women’s issues, politics, popular Aboriginal culture and Indigenous film.
Western construction of essentialism; it is applied as a universal despite its epistemological recognition of difference (Moreton-Robinson, 2003: 32).

As I understand Moreton-Robinson, claiming Aboriginal belonging as an ontological relationship to land speaks to Aboriginal Sovereignty, and the status of Aboriginal people as Sovereign subjects because of their ontological relationship to land. Moreover, because Moreton-Robinson claims this ontological relationship as essential to Aboriginal belongings without being essentialist, it provides a space to articulate non-Aboriginality as a relationship to Aboriginal Sovereignty without redeploying essentialist, binary relationships between Aboriginality and non-Aboriginality as they are constructed within colonialist frameworks. That is, to be ‘non-Aboriginal’ is to acknowledge our way of being is not commensurable to Aboriginal ontological experiences, but that it is possible to construct our own ontologies that co-exist and support Indigenous ways of being. Thus, I conceive non-Aboriginality as a marker for identity that is formed in relationship to Aboriginal Sovereignty, and that stands in sharp contradistinction to white sovereignty, which, as I have already discussed, works to limit, contain and negate the legitimacy of Indigenous Sovereignty. It is in this context that I use the terms ‘Aboriginal’, ‘non-Aboriginal’ and ‘Indigenous’, ‘non-Indigenous’ within this thesis.

Finally, in this thesis I use the descriptor ‘invader/settler’ to name those Australians who do not identify with their non-Aboriginality as I have defined it above. The term invader/settler disrupts the hegemonic language of whiteness, placing the ‘whiteness’ of those who benefit from the invasion of Aboriginal land into a colonial context. The term/s ‘invader/settler’ disrupts the grand narrative
of Australian colonisation, pointing out that colonisation was not so much the
peaceful settlement of untamed lands, but the invasion of Aboriginal lands. As
the Aboriginal author Ruby Langford Ginibi7 succinctly puts it:

We are invaded people, and have been since 1788…. We have always had
to conform to the laws and standards of the invaders. Our tribal laws mean
nothing to the white man, our traditional people were classified as heathens
and vermin to be cleared off the face of the earth. Assimilate us or wipe us
out was the order of the day (c.f. Brewster, 1996: 2).

Further, the term invader/settler signals that Aboriginal people continue to
contest this invasion. While I appreciate that current generations of Australians
may not perceive themselves as either ‘invaders’ or ‘settlers’ (such is the nature
of their settledness), I argue many Australians continue to embody the beliefs
and values of the early settlers vis-à-vis their attitudes towards Aboriginal people
(Morton-Robinson, 1998: 11). Moreover, current generations of Australians
continue to benefit (socially, politically, culturally and economically) from the
fact that we live in an invaded land. Therefore, the term ‘invader/settler’ is an
appropriate one. In conjoining the terms invader and settler to produce a single
term, I simultaneously privilege the Aboriginal experience of being invaded over
the invader/settler story of settlement and reveal the tension between the two
concepts. I further explore this tension in Chapter Three with reference to Gelder
and Jacobs’ notion of the ‘uncanny’ (1998).

The Political Intent of the Thesis

The political intent of this thesis is to theorise and articulate non-Aboriginal
obligations in achieving co-existence with Aboriginal people on their land. I
situate my argument for anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality as a

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7 Ruby Langford-Ginibi is a Bundjalung woman and author of several books including her
autobiography, *Don’t Take Your Love to Town* (1988).
political engagement with the role and responsibilities of non-Aboriginal people in achieving substantive reconciliation with Aboriginal people, and as such, make this offering in the spirit of furthering the broad aims and objectives of reconciliation.

In this thesis, I conceive of substantive reconciliation as a political idea that stands in contradistinction to the current program of ‘practical reconciliation’ as it was promulgated by the Howard conservative government and builds on the original objectives of reconciliation as they were devised in the early 1990’s under the Labor Government with bipartisan support. The original objectives included achieving real social justice outcomes for Aboriginal people; producing a formal document (possibly a Treaty) of understanding between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people; and, fostering a greater understanding of Aboriginal and Australian history within the mainstream community\(^8\) (Tickner, 2001). I argue my notion of substantive reconciliation extends these objectives, and the discursive frameworks through which reconciliation is usually constructed, by asking mainstream Australians to observe and critique their commitment to white sovereignty; place non-Aboriginal identity construction processes and concomitant political responsibilities towards Aboriginal people within a history of colonisation; and, to cultivate a politicised sense of their non-Aboriginality as it exists in relationship to Aboriginal Sovereignty.

By way of elaborating my position on substantive reconciliation, I refer to the pre-eminent scholar on Australian/Aboriginal history, Henry Reynolds. In 2000,\(^8\)

\(^8\) I offer further discussion on the difference between the initial objectives of reconciliation and ‘practical reconciliation’ in Chapter Two.
he wrote that one of the advantages of the reconciliation movement was that it provided a forum for non-Aboriginal Australians to express their support for Aboriginal political, cultural and social justice objectives. Impressed by the intensity, optimism and focus of non-Aboriginal participants at reconciliation gatherings, Reynolds wrote:

It is that feeling, which I sense in audiences all around Australia, which converted me to be a supporter of reconciliation. It is a powerful social movement, and for the first time since 1967 has given white Australians a means and an instrument to get involved in the cause (2000: 55).

Indeed, this broad community support was most evident in the various ‘bridge walks’ that occurred as part of the Corroboree 2000 ceremony in May of that year, and arguably, the overwhelming support for Cathy Freeman in the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games. However, despite this support for reconciliation, there is little evidence that this mass movement culminated in a correlative shift in personal identity and self-awareness for mainstream Australians. Various texts on reconciliation produced during this time bear this out. Documentaries such as Whitey’s Like Us, White People’s Business and Michael Gordon’s book Reconciliation: A Journey (2001), reveal a commitment to learning more about Aboriginal culture, post-invasion history, apologising for the ‘mistakes’ of the past, Aboriginal disadvantage, supporting the integrity of Native Title and the High Court’s Wik decision and challenging the Howard Liberal Government’s program of ‘practical reconciliation’. They do not, however, indicate a commitment to individual and collective self-reflection and identity development in the face of this ‘new’ knowledge. In this light, the intent of this project is to redress this issue by offering a theoretical and discursive framework through which such matters might be explored.
To this end, this thesis comprises both a written text (the exegesis) and a thirty-minute radio documentary containing interviews with ‘non-Aboriginal’ people. The purpose of the documentary is to include personal stories and testimonies by non-Aboriginal people who, in the contexts of their personal and public lives, reveal an engagement with the salient themes of this thesis.

Storytelling and autobiography are well-established methodological and pedagogical conventions in critical engagements with anti-racism (Clark and O’Donnell, 1999: 6). In part, the stories offered in this project are a response to the paucity of positive stories available on meaningful intercultural and intersubjective exchange between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, from a non-Aboriginal perspective. In this sense then, I understand these stories to be political in their own right, challenging the dominant discursive convention of negating both the existence and the value of these stories. However, I also recognise that storytelling and autobiography, combined “with critical and reflective analysis” creates a pathway for raising “critical [political] consciousness” (Clarke and O’Donnell, 1999: 6). In this sense then, the theoretical work presented in this thesis, and the stories offered in the documentary, intersect to produce possibilities for articulating anti-colonial notions of non-Aboriginality both within the academy and more broadly, within ‘grass-roots’ political and cultural practice. Moreover, this approach is consistent with the dialogic relationship I seek to establish between Indigenist theory/ies and praxis and the formulation of anti-colonial constructions of non-
Aboriginality. I develop this below, in both the theoretical context for this thesis and in the methodology.

**Contextualising the Aims of the Thesis, Part One: Moving from Whiteness to non-Aboriginality.**

There are several confluent aims to this thesis. Primarily, my focus is to argue for anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality and to develop a theoretical and methodological framework that supports this objective. Secondly, my aim is to locate my argument for anti-colonial constructions of the non-Aboriginal self within the broad context of Australian Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations towards the end of the twentieth century. This includes identifying Aboriginal protests against the re-enactment of invasion in the 1988 bicentenary celebrations; the Mabo decision in 1992, which overturned the legal principle of *terra nullius*; and, the reconciliation movement throughout the 1990’s as landmark events in Australia moving towards ‘decolonisation’ and investigating the implications of these events for the invader/settler society. Thirdly, my purpose is to situate my argument as a critical response to whiteness studies and recent discourses of ‘belonging’ in Australia.

In this thesis, I acknowledge that some elements of critical whiteness studies are influential in the ways I construct my argument for anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality. During the mid-late 1990’s, critical whiteness studies was a burgeoning area of academic enquiry, and it played an important role in getting me to think about the issues raised in this thesis (see Carey, 1998; Brady and Carey, 2000). My interest in critical whiteness studies was a genuine response to
those calls by ‘women of colour’ and Aboriginal women for white identifying people to deal with their fixation with blackness and investigate their whiteness instead. I understand the proliferation of work in critical whiteness studies by other white identifying people to be similarly motivated, and I appreciate the role this corpus of work has played in producing new frameworks for thinking through ‘race’ privilege and anti-racism. However, I also argue that the request to investigate our whiteness is a dated one, and in the intervening years many Aboriginal scholars have worked to develop their own Indigenist frameworks for critical investigation. While this corpus of work began as a reaction to the colonisation of Indigenous knowledges, increasingly, it presents itself as a bold assertion of Indigenous Sovereignty (see Rigney, 1999 and Martin/Mirraboopa, 2003). As with ‘whiteness’, there are requests by Aboriginal people to investigate the implications of working within Indigenous/Indigenist frameworks. For example, Curtin University’s Centre For Aboriginal Studies

*Aboriginal Terms of Reference* document insists:

…this paper has significance for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal practitioners. This paper offers the non-Aboriginal practitioner information on principles and values that guide ethical (and appropriate) practice in an Aboriginal context and/or when interacting with and working with Aboriginal people. I would encourage non-Aboriginal practitioners to very carefully consider the matters raised in this paper and urge them to critically reflect on possible boundaries and limitations for their own practice when working in cross-cultural contexts (Oxenham, 2000: 2-3).

My concern is that there is no corresponding body of literature theorising the implications of such requests by the invader/settler community.

In advocating anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality, I demonstrate how I am able to move through ‘whiteness’ towards ‘non-Aboriginality’. An
example of what I mean here can be found in my argument for ‘naming non-Aboriginality’, which I pursue in Chapter Four. In part, this borrows from the idea that we can name whiteness in order to expose its supposed normativity and neutrality as manifestations of power. However, I also note that ‘naming’ is an Indigenist epistemological priority, and serves to assert Indigenous ways of knowing land, people, places and events. Therefore, naming non-Aboriginality serves as a counterpoint to naming whiteness, an affirmation of Indigenous knowledges as it manifests through Indigenous ontological relationships with land, and non-Indigenous responsibilities to this knowledge and ontological relationship. I also argue that legitimising the belongings of the invader/settler society is dependent on respectful observation of Indigenous knowledge and ontological relationships with land.

Beyond the broad insights I am able to bring to this thesis because of whiteness studies, I also argue contemporary discourses of whiteness and belonging continue to operate within colonialisit paradigms and they reinscribe and perpetuate pre-determined ideological structures. In general terms, I argue critical whiteness studies (re)centres whiteness because it relies on the pre-given binary relationship between white and black. Concomitant to this is the maintenance of the hierarchialised relationship between white and black. Additionally, because white and black are key signifiers within the overall discourse of race, this outdated and fallacious mode of taxonomy is kept in play. Consequently, both whiteness and blackness retain their status as signifiers for Aboriginality and non-Aboriginality respectively. This compromises recognising the cultural affiliations of Aboriginal people who are ‘cosmetically white’, their
experiences of cultural racism and Aboriginal peoples’ use of ‘strategic whiteness’. I develop this argument below, and again in Chapter Two.

In Chapter Two, I focus my critique of whiteness with reference to the American anti-whiteness movement, the New Race Abolitionists. I argue the New Race Abolitionists make a useful case study for a number of interconnected reasons. Firstly, unlike other forays into whiteness, New Race Abolitionists offer both a theorisation of, and methodology for, anti-whiteness. Secondly, Australian work in critical whiteness studies is informed by American scholarship and self-identified Abolitionists have been invited as keynote speakers at Australian whiteness conferences. For example, David Roediger, an Abolitionist, presented a keynote paper at the Whiteness and the Horizons of Race conference in Brisbane, 2005. In focusing on the New Race Abolitionists as a case study, I highlight the pitfalls of mimicking processes of academic inquiry without first scrutinising its applicability in the Australian context. I argue that while the New Race Abolitionists assert a radical, anti-whiteness agenda, their particular modus operandi produces several worrying outcomes that are antithetical to the anti-colonial objectives of this thesis. I argue New Race Abolitionism negates Aboriginal strategic interventions into whiteness; essentialises Aboriginality and non-Aboriginality as blackness and whiteness respectively; undermines the original objectives of reconciliation and in so doing supports the most punitive features of ‘practical reconciliation’; and, prevents meaningful dialogic relationships with Aboriginal people because it advocates dialogic relationships between anti-whiteness and pro-white groups.
In Chapter Three, I focus on contemporary discourses of belonging in Australia. By way of revealing the operation and function of colonialist ideologies within these discourses, I shape my discussion around a number of key texts, including Germaine Greer’s\(^9\) *Whitefella Jump Up: The Shortest Way to Nationhood* (2003); Peter Read’s\(^10\) *Belonging: Australians, Place and Aboriginal Ownership* (2000); Anthony Moran’s\(^11\) *As Australia Decolonizes: Indigenizing Settler Nationalism and the Challenges of Settler/Indigenous Relations* (2002); John Moloney’s\(^12\) *The Native Born: The First White Australians* (2000); and, David Tacey’s\(^13\) *Edge of the Sacred: Transformation in Australia* (1998a). In my exploration of these texts, I identify several recurring themes. I argue that within these texts, Aboriginality is appropriated in order to appease anxieties about settler belongings; negate the experience of colonisation by repositioning white Australians as the dispossessed and by continuing to employ colonialist constructions of Aboriginality that lock Aboriginal people into a cultural stasis, emphasizing pre-colonial primordiality.

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\(^9\) Germaine Greer is best well known for her 1970 publication *The Female Eunuch* and is regarded by some as one of the most significant feminist voices of the 20\(^{th}\) century. She is an ex-pat Australian and a retired academic. Her last academic post was as Professor in the Department of English Literature at the University of Warwick.

\(^10\) Professor Peter Read is an historian and works at the National Centre for Indigenous Studies at the Australian National University. In the 1980’s, Professor Read worked in collaboration with Coral Edwards to bring the story of the stolen generations to mainstream public attention and was instrumental in the formation of the organisation ‘Link Up’, reuniting members of the stolen generations with their families. Professor Read works extensively with oral histories, and has published widely in Australian/Aboriginal histories.

\(^11\) Anthony Moran is a Lecturer in sociology at La Trobe University. His research interests include Australian political culture, Indigenous politics, multiculturalism, ethnicity and race, and globalisation.

\(^12\) John Moloney is a former priest. He began his association with the Australian National University in 1964. He has held the Manning Clark Chair in Australian history and on his retirement in 1990, the ANU appointed Moloney as an Emeritus Professor of History. He has also held the positions of Keith Cameron Professorship of Australian History at University College, Dublin and the Foundation Research Professorship at the Australian Catholic University in Canberra.

\(^13\) David Tacey lectures at La Trobe University in Jungian and post-Jungian theory, masculinity, literature and theory concerned with the sacred and ecopsychology.
In Chapter Four, I develop my notion of ‘creating the non-Aboriginal subject’. I position this as an anti-colonial response to the discursive problems I identify within critical whiteness studies and ‘belonging’. In this chapter, I argue the creation of the non-Aboriginal self is an integrated three-part process that necessitates recognising an ontology of non-Aboriginality; naming the ontology as ‘non-Aboriginal’; and, defining non-Aboriginality as an anti-colonial process of identity formation. I argue non-Aboriginality is formed out of a profound awareness of being in Aboriginal Sovereignty and in relationship with Indigenous people as Sovereign subjects. As an anti-colonial process of identity formation, I conceive non-Aboriginality as a political identity that rejects claims to white sovereignty and white Indigeneity as a means to legitimate belonging in Australia; denies the validity of whiteness and blackness as a means to assign cultural affiliations; truthfully recognizes and responds to the dispossession and disenfranchisement of Aboriginal people; affirms Indigenous peoples’ legitimate grievances and claims to social justice and human rights; and, moreover, understands that that invader/settler Australians’ legitimate belonging is contingent on all of the above occurring.

Finally, by way of ‘giving voice’ to my understanding of anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality, I include a thirty-minute radio documentary featuring interviews with ‘non-Aboriginal’ people.
Contextualising the Aims of the Thesis, Part Two: Struggling with ‘Post-colonial’ Belonging

White Australians’ ‘belonging’ (so named after a well known book published by historian Peter Read, 2000) became a salient social and academic concern towards the end of the 20th century. Perhaps not surprisingly, contemporary manifestations of non-Aboriginal Australians’ nervousness about the status of their/our belonging began to emerge in 1988, around the bicentenary ‘celebration’ (of a nation!) and Aboriginal protests demanding recognition of the initial invasion and the depth of insult felt by its glorified re-enactment. Reinvigorated demands for the recognition of land rights and human rights by Aboriginal people was a direct response to this imperialist pageantry (see for example, Australia Daze, circa 1988; Turner, 1994: 66-92; Hodge and Mishra, 1991: ix-x, Macintyre, 2004: 93-118).

More specifically though, this nervousness coincided with the 1992 Mabo decision, which overturned the myth of terra nullius and allowed for the potential recognition of Indigenous property rights, and the issues raised for mainstream Australians within the reconciliation agenda during the 1990’s. Indeed, recognising “the unique status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the original owners and custodians of lands and waters”, which were “…settled as colonies without treaty or consent” (Australian Declaration Towards Reconciliation, 2000: online) was always going to present a profound challenge for Australians. Why wouldn’t it, when most of us grew up learning the paradoxical (if not schizophrenic) lesson that Aboriginal people were not
here/were here but died out/are here but are not real Aborigines/were and are here and are the first Australians, or any configuration thereof.

Ostensibly, ‘belonging’, as a field of inquiry explores (if not resolves) the “moral implications of recognising the depth of attachment felt by settler Australians to an invaded land” (Bonyhady and Griffiths, 2002: 9). On a psychological level, reckoning with ‘belonging’ compels ‘settler’ Australians to acknowledge the fact of violent invasion and Aboriginal dispossession. It asks us to consider the legitimacy of our occupation of land in the light of these facts, and think through their implications for co-existence with Aboriginal people.

On an emotional level, ‘belonging’ also affirms ‘settler’ Australians’ love of land. On one hand, claiming this love speaks to the very real feelings ‘settler’ Australians have for the places they/we call home (Carey, 2004: 22). To speak of loving the land asserts our belonging to the land: being in and of the land we love. However, to speak of loving the land can also constitute a way of speaking back to the primacy of Aboriginal spiritual and sacred relationships with the land, and the way this informs their respective ontologies. As Gelder14 and Jacobs15 observe, the recognition of Aboriginal property rights, alongside the recognition of their sacred belonging to the land, produces a deeply disturbing effect for many white Australians16. They write:

14 Ken Gelder teaches in the English Department at the University of Melbourne. His research interests include contemporary and colonial fiction, post-colonial studies and cultural studies.
15 Jane Jacobs is Professor of Geosciences at the University of Edinburgh. Her research interests include post-colonialism, Indigenous rights and identity, race and racism and the cultural politics of urban space.
16 While I take Gelder and Jacobs’ point, I also argue they overestimate the ‘property rights’ that accrue to Aboriginal people as a consequence of the Mabo decision. Under the Native Title Act (1993), The potential for ‘property rights’ only occurs when Aboriginal people are able to demonstrate unbroken and sacred belonging to their country in non-Aboriginal courts. Just as
when modern Aboriginal people have spiritual beliefs and property rights...a certain form of resentment materialises. Aboriginal people become the same as non-Aboriginal people in that they, too, are identified through property.... But they also have more than non-Aboriginal people in that this identification is premised upon spiritual beliefs, which secular non-Aboriginal people now lack. The entanglement of spiritual beliefs and property rights within a modern Aboriginal framework gives those property rights an intensity that secularised non-Aboriginal people simply cannot lay claim to (Gelder and Jacobs, 1998: 64).

I argue that ‘belonging’, as it is articulated in this context, is to speak of an intangible, omnipresent and immeasurable connection to ‘country’ that supposedly equates to Indigenous connections to their sacred and spiritual places. It is a way of legitimatising our relationship to land, of making our belonging as legitimate as any Indigenous claim to sacred belonging. Peter Read refers to this in his analysis of white Australian country music and belonging. He writes “the once implied and now explicit Aboriginal moral claim to the land perhaps is being answered, not by contentious or aggressive assertion, but by a statement of countering values” (2000: 117), including love of land, working the land and the masculine bonds of mateship cultivated through working the land. As Read explains:

Attachment is being born out of labour; the harder the labour, the greater is the implied right of attachment.... In contemporary country and western songs, the right to work confers, or generates, the right to belong.... (2000: 118-119).

The significance of Read’s observations is underscored in a number of ways. Firstly, it invokes the binary of settler/employed/hard working and Aboriginal/unemployed/lazy and, through this valorises the white, masculine
version of loving land over Aboriginal spiritual relationships with the land. This, in turn, places Aboriginal labour outside Australian economic development.

Secondly, Read’s analysis speaks to the primacy of a specific rural, Anglo-Australian masculinity that is the embodiment of quintessential Australian values such as mateship, a fair go and egalitarianism. In contrast, Andrew Lattas’ analysis of Redneck Thought: Racism, Guilt and Aborigines (2001) reveals that contemporary, populist notions of egalitarianism works to ‘disembody’ Aboriginal people, preventing them from expressing their Aboriginality in corporeal terms. In Australia, egalitarianism is configured to stand for sameness, as opposed to equality in difference. When Aboriginal people assert their difference through their Aboriginality, using their “bodies as the site of their identities, culture and history” (Lattas, 2001: 108), populist articulations of egalitarianism repositions Aboriginal people as racists, and as violators of the “moral norm of equality” (Lattas, 2001: 107). As such, populist notions of egalitarianism demand a denial of Aboriginality and a silencing of Aboriginal peoples’ experiences of racism and discrimination. This is the process of disembodiment. As Lattas writes:

> The moral imperative that everyone be equal before the law operates to deny specific histories, circumstances and forms of suffering. This new disembodied form of ‘racism as equality’ demands that minorities leave out the history of their suffering bodies from the field of public debate. Indeed when Aborigines dare to mention their suffering and suggest they be compensated, they are denounced as threatening to keep alive the very biological categories that have oppressed them (2001: 109).

17 While Lattas’ argument in productive in this context, I am also mindful that ‘colloquial’ expressions of reconciliation have employed the language of egalitarianism and a ‘fair go’. That is, reconciliation is conceptualised and articulated within a nationalistic discourse of egalitarianism.
In extension to Lattas, I also argue that the process of negating Aboriginal peoples’ rights to assert their Aboriginality is a way of rendering Aboriginal people un-Australian – or, non-Australian – fundamentally challenging their right to ‘belong’. In corollary then, I argue that it perpetuates the myth of *terra nullius*; supports the notion of white sovereignty; and, protects white Australian claims to Indigeneity.\(^\text{18}\)

In this sense then, ‘belonging’ does not address the moral implications of living in an invaded land. It negates these concerns by refiguring and re-centring white proprietorial-ship over land and re/claiming white Indigeneity at the expense of Aboriginal people. Thus, this critique reveals the intimate links between the power of whiteness and belonging. It indicates that white claims to belonging can be understood as claims for white sovereignty over Aboriginal Sovereignty as Aboriginal Sovereign rights continue to be displaced, rendered a marginal claim from a minority group challenging the authority of the self-appointed white indigenes. In short, it reveals the link between whiteness and belonging as a potent combination in the (re)colonisation of Aboriginal bodies and land. This critique is the cornerstone of my discussion in Chapters Two and Three.

In claiming non-Indigeneity as a marker for identity for non-Aboriginal people, I am clearly seeking to decentre the means by which non-Aboriginal people construct their epistemological and ontological relationships with Aboriginal people and their land and bring these relationships into a more equitable discursive realm. This necessarily requires working within anti-colonial

\(^{18}\) Here I am developing a point previously made in “From Whiteness to Whitefella: Challenging White Race Power in Australia” (Carey, 2004: 17).
theoretical frameworks and making critical interconnections with Indigenist epistemologies and research approaches. In the first instance, I draw on Rigney’s argument that Indigenist research is emancipatory for Indigenous people because it liberates them from colonialist ontologies and epistemologies (Rigney, 1999: 114-115). Similarly, I argue that non-Indigenous people also need to liberate our/themselves from colonialist knowledges and ways of interacting with Aboriginal people and their land and articulate a concomitant anti-colonial, non-Indigenous theory and praxis. This discussion is pursued below, in my elaboration on the broad theoretical context for this thesis.

**Theoretical Framework**

In the following section, I discuss the overarching theoretical framework for this thesis. I establish my theoretical position with a brief critique of post-colonialism and propose that Langton’s notion of anti-colonialism provides a more productive theoretical site for thinking through constructions of non-Aboriginality. I subsequently move to Lester-Irabinna Rigney’s consideration of Langton’s work on anti-colonialism and the ways this informs Indigenist research paradigms. This, I argue, provides a critical launching place for anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality because it goes to the heart of producing epistemologies that challenge colonialist constructions of identity, of both ‘Others’ and ourselves. While I acknowledge I am limited by the fact that there are no overt ‘non-Indigenist’ theoretical frameworks to draw on, the non-

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19 Lester Irabinna Rigney is an Associate Professor in Education and works for the Yunggorendi First Nation Centre for Higher Education at Flinders University in South Australia. Associate Professor Rigney is from the Ngarrindjeri Nations and his research interests include Indigenous knowledges and research methodologies, Indigenous education and languages and their relationship with reconciliation and Treaty processes.
Indigenous ‘sensibility’ evident in the work of writers such as Kathryn Trees informs the construction of my theoretical paradigm. Like Trees, …I find myself being critical of the term postcolonial particularly for its capacity to be divisive and conservative, to theorise the political but maintain a distance from political praxis, rather than being conciliatory and transformative. As might be expected the term is productive for some, particularly academics working within literary and cultural studies, and less productive and even inhibiting for others, in particular many indigenous people (Trees, 1998: 11).

Thus, I argue that in moving beyond the “divisive and conservative” limitations of post-colonial theory, we need to move into both a theoretical and political discursive realm that supports the epistemological and political aspirations of Indigenous people, and simultaneously defines the intersecting ontological, epistemological and political responsibilities of non-Indigenous people towards Indigenous people.

To begin however, I acknowledge that the existing corpus of postcolonial work is significant to this thesis in that it represents a ‘starting point’ to the dialogue in which I now participate. ‘Post-colonialism’ facilitates a move between colonial and anti-colonial theory and praxis. For example, the theoretical framework for this thesis is, in large part, informed by Edward Said’s seminal text *Orientalism* (1985). Also, Bain Attwood’s discussion on ‘Aboriginalism’, which is a tribute to Said’s *Orientalism*, and post-Aboriginalism, which gives Aboriginalism its post-colonial spin, provides an important segue into my discussion on anti-colonialism.

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20 Edward Said is regarded as a founder of post-colonial theory.
21 Bain Attwood teaches at the School of Historical Studies at Monash University. His research interests include Australian and New Zealand Indigenous history, cross-cultural history and history and memory.
Further, I also acknowledge that without the critical and imaginative work of post-colonial thinkers, moving from the colonial towards the anti-colonial would lack the creative and analytical input of both the coloniser and the colonised, and respective ways of representing their/our being in the world and theorising the power relationships between us. Literature positioned within a post-colonial paradigm provides the tools to examine the construction of Indigenous, disasporic and non-Indigenous identities as they are produced within the nexus of colonial/postcolonial theoretical, social, cultural and political movements. Indeed, the broad purview of post-colonialism identifies and affirms the tensions these complex identity formation processes produce, and speaks to the affiliated struggles for social, cultural and political power and legitimacy.

Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin argue, post-colonialism is a productive theoretical and discursive space, where Indigenous people articulate their specific interests, viewpoints and experiences vis-à-vis colonialist knowledges produced on and about them. They write:

‘… ‘post-colonial theory’ has existed for a long time before that particular name was used to describe it. Once colonised peoples had cause to reflect on and express the tension which ensued from this problematic and contested, but eventually vibrant and powerful mixture of imperial language and local experience, postcolonial ‘theory’ came into being (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffen, 1997: 1).

According to Ashcroft et al, post-colonialism is innately connected to the idea of Indigenous people ‘writing back to the empire’ and is empowering for Indigenous people because post-colonialism does not exist without the inclusion of Indigenous viewpoints and experiences. In this sense then, post-colonialism
provides a discursive space to speak back to and seek redress for the imbalances of power inherent in colonialist discourse.

Alternatively, other post-colonial texts problematise the impact of Indigenous incursions into colonialist knowledge paradigms on the formation of settler identities in colonised societies. For example, in Chapter Three of this thesis, I draw on Terry Goldie’s The Representation of the Indigene (1997); Hodge and Mishra’s notion of the ‘Bastard Complex’, developed in their 1991 text Dark Side of the Dream: Australian Literature and the Postcolonial Mind; and, Gelder and Jacobs’ Uncanny Australia: Sacredness and Identity in a Postcolonial Nation (1998). These texts provide the critical framework for my engagement with the appropriation of Aboriginality by invader/settler societies in order to appease the anxieties of invader/settler belongings.

In Chapter Four, I also work with Homi Bhabha’s post-colonial notion of the ‘third space’ to identify useful conceptual differences between his position, and that of Marcia Langton who, writing within an anti-colonial framework, identifies a third domain as a dialogic space shared by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, where anti-colonial representations of Aboriginality are produced. As I problematise my way out of Bhabha’s third space towards Langton’s third domain, I argue anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality are also produced in a dialogic space shared by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal

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22 Terry Goldie teaches comparative Indigenous literature at York University in Canada and researches in post-colonial literature, gay studies, literary theory and drama.
23 Bob Hodge is a fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities and his scholarship in cultural studies is internationally recognised. He teaches at the University of Western Sydney.
24 Professor Vijay Mishra teaches at Murdoch university in English and Comparative Literature.
25 Homi Bhabha is considered one of the world’s most influential scholars in post-colonial and cultural studies. He has written and lectured on race, gender, culture and the arts.
people. As I conclude this chapter, I draw on the work of Paul Spoonley\textsuperscript{26} and Farida Tilbury\textsuperscript{27}, both of whom situate their work in a post-colonial framework, to ‘flesh out’ my conceptualisation of anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality as a political identity.

For me, however, the broad criticisms of post-colonialism are salient ones. Some argue that post-colonial discourse is produced out of the logic of colonialist knowledge paradigms, and it therefore repeats, rather than disrupts, colonial power relations. Indeed, the presumption that post-colonialism enables Indigenous people to speak to the colonialist centre from the periphery, privileges the centredness of colonialist discourse and continues the disenfranchised position of Indigenous people and perspectives. Therefore, the observation that post-colonialism perpetuates the very epistemic violence it seeks to disavow is a pertinent one.

Also, others point out that the very notion of ‘post’-colonialism is misleading, a discursive obfuscation to the ongoing reality of colonial power relations. Imbedded in this critique is a notion that “orientating theory around the temporal axis of colonial-postcolonial makes it easier not to see and therefore harder to theorize continuities in… imbalances of power” (McLintock, cited from Delaney, 1997: 13-14).

\textsuperscript{26} Paul Spoonley teaches as Massey University in New Zealand. His research areas include neo-fascism, anti-Semitism, Pakeha identity, Maori development, racism and ethnicity.

\textsuperscript{27} Farida Tilbury lectures in sociology at Murdoch University. Her research interests include race and ethnicity, health and medicine and discourse analysis.
Indeed, Alice Nannup’s\textsuperscript{28} response to an invitation to speak at the “Postcolonial Fictions Conference” in Fremantle, Western Australia, in 1992, illustrates this point. The conference, ostensibly named to “problematise the term ‘postcolonial’”, elicited short shrift from Mrs Nannup: “My work is not fiction but perhaps postcolonialism is” (Trees, 1998: 109-110). While clever academic double entendres may appeal to those within a specific community of interest, this literal interpretation by Mrs Nannup reveals how confronting, if not insulting, misnomers like post-colonialism can be to Indigenous people. Indeed, in the unequivocal view of the Indigenous delegates who participated at the conference (both Indigenous Australian and Maori), post-colonialism is a white, academic fiction that oppresses, rather than liberates Aboriginal viewpoints and voices (Trees, 1998: 110).

In my view, post-colonial theorists’ attempts to deal with such critiques have been less than convincing. They fail to take account of the central critique offered by Indigenous people, preferring to direct their focus on reconfiguring the meaning of \textit{post} in post-colonial. For example, Gelder and Jacobs (1998) deal with post-colonialism as an expression of linear historical and political time by re-conceiving it as an exploration of specific tensions, which arise out of unequal power relations that are distinctively post-colonial. That is, they argue that Australia has passed through colonialism, and that current inequalities experienced by Indigenous people are consequently ‘postcolonial’. As such, post-colonialism does not represent a time where the inequalities of colonialism have ended, or where Indigenous responses to colonial power have ceased to be

\textsuperscript{28}Alice Nannup was born in the Pilbara region of Western Australia. One of the stolen generations, her life story, \textit{When the Pelican Laughed}, is written in conjunction with Stephen Kinnane and Lauren Marsh (2000) (first published in 1992).
necessary. Rather, post-colonialism identifies that while inequality remains, its particular causes, manifestations and expressions are unique to the particular anxieties of the times, and change to protect the interests of the dominant group. Accordingly, the challenges and strategies devised by Indigenous people to defend themselves will also change (see, for example, Gelder and Jacobs, 1998: 17 and 24; Curthoys, 2000: 32).

My point is then, while post-colonial theory ‘accommodates’ Indigenous viewpoints, it is not easily swayed by them. By absorbing Indigenous critiques of the post-colonial back into post-coloniality, post-colonialism is revealed as another colonising ideological practice, colonising the views and self-representations of Indigenous people to serve the purpose of its own redemption narrative. Is it any wonder then that some Indigenous people argue (however facetiously) that the ‘post-colonial tension’ can only be resolved once the ‘colonisers have gone home’ (see Sykes, cited in Trees 1998: 110 and Smith, 2001: 98; also see Millard, cited in Curthoys, 2000: 32).

As I understand it, Indigenous calls for the ‘colonisers to go home’ serves two purposes. On the one hand, it points to the dangers of universalising the applicability of post-colonial literature produced in and about countries where the colonisers did ‘go home’, to the Australian situation. On the other, it is a rhetorical devise that speaks to the non-Indigenous anxiety of having ‘nowhere else to go’, which of course is linked to the broader post-colonial discourse of ‘belonging’ I discussed earlier. As such, the threat of ‘exile’ (see Curthoys, 1999) is a strategic one, working to succinctly reinforce the legitimacy of
Indigenous Sovereignty and to destabilise white sovereignty claims. However, there is also a level at which this ‘speaking back’ belies the many layers of interconnectedness between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, some of which exist in the intimate and private domain of the family. As Wendy Brady\textsuperscript{29} writes:

\begin{quote}
…we are assumed to seek the removal from this country of all people who are not indigenous. Yet if this were true I would have to see my very close sister-in-law taken away from me; I would have to see some of my aunties and uncles taken away from me; I would have to see one of my grandparents removed. What an absolute joke this idea is (1999: 30).
\end{quote}

In a country where the destruction of families is understood as a treacherous mechanism of colonial control, I must confess that even the most spurious suggestion that families be further torn apart makes little sense to me. It is my view that this position (unintentionally) buys into the colonialist logic of segregation and miscegenation, and denies the reality of the many ways Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples’ lives are entwined.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith\textsuperscript{30} also makes the point that the rapid departure of the settler society does not automatically result in decolonisation:

\begin{quote}
And, even when they have left formally, the institutions and legacy of colonialism have remained. Decolonization, once viewed as the formal process of handing over the instruments of government, is now recognized as a long term process involving the bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic, and psychological divesting of colonial power (2001: 98).
\end{quote}

My point here is that it is not necessarily either the absence or the presence of the invader/settler society that determines successful anti-colonial outcomes, but

\textsuperscript{29}Professor Wendy Brady is from the Wiradjiri Nation and is the Head of School for Australian Indigenous Knowledge systems at Charles Darwin University.

\textsuperscript{30}Linda Tuhiwai Smith is Associate Professor of Maori Education and director of the International Research institute for Maori and Indigenous Studies at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. She has international standing as a leader in decolonising Indigenous knowledges.
rather the ways both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities and peoples collaborate to produce a genuinely anti-colonial outcome. Of course, this includes, but is not limited to, the ways we set about undermining the legitimacy of colonialist ideologies in informing the ways we relate to and ‘know’ each other, discarding claims to white sovereignty, affirming Indigenous Sovereignty and establishing a meaningful basis to co-existence. Indeed, as Marcia Langton\textsuperscript{31} notes with reference to the High Court’s Mabo decision (arguably a milestone achievement in terms of realising anti-colonial outcomes in Australia):

\begin{quote}
Mabo has put to rest two gross fantasies. Firstly it has put to rest the fantasy that the blacks were not and are still not here. The fantasy of terra and homo nullius. Secondly, Mabo also puts to rest the fantasy that the whites are somehow going to pack up and leave. \textit{Co-existence remains our lot} (2002: 86, emphasis added).
\end{quote}

In this light, Langton’\textquoteright s proposal that we must begin to think and act in anti-colonial ways offers an important alternative for working through strategies for dealing with the vestiges of colonialism. As Anne Hamilton writes:

\begin{quote}
While the concept of the post-colonial has become fashionable of late, Marcia Langton’s insistence on an \textit{anti-colonial} perspective changes the usual terrain. An anti-colonial stance requires above all a practical commitment to the political consequences of representation. Anti-colonialism requires a rupture and positive awareness of the way colonial representation has shaped, and misshaped, reality for coloniser and colonised alike (c.f. Langton, 1993: 5).
\end{quote}

According to Langton, the purpose of anti-colonial theory is to uncover ways to “decolonise our minds” (and institutions) and to undermine “the colonial hegemony” (Langton, 1993: 8, also see Smith, 2001: 98 and Rigney, 1999: 110-111).

\textsuperscript{31}Marcia Langton is the foundation Professor for Australian Indigenous Studies at Melbourne University and is one of Australian’s leading public intellectuals. Professor Langton has had a long career in Aboriginal Affairs and has published extensively on a range of topics including (but not limited to) agreement making with Indigenous people; Indigenous culture; media; Treaty processes; Indigenous art; and, native title and land rights.
In this spirit, Lester Irabinna Rigney, utilises anti-colonial theory to provide a critical underpinning for Indigenist knowledge production and political praxis. His primary concern is with the construction of Indigenist knowledge within the academy, and as such, focuses on the need for Indigenist research methodologies, however, he firmly locates the development and promotion of Indigenist work within broader, community based political aspirations. He explains this as follows:

The cultural assumptions throughout the dominant epistemologies in Australia are oblivious of Indigenous traditions and concerns. The research academy and its epistemologies have been constructed essentially for and by non-Indigenous Australians. Indigenous Australians have been excluded from all facets of research. The process of racialization declared that my people’s minds, intellect, knowledges, histories, and experiences were irrelevant...[therefore]...Indigenous peoples must look to new anti-colonial epistemologies and methodologies to construct, rediscover and/or reaffirm their knowledges and cultures. Such epistemologies must represent the aspirations of Indigenous Australians and carry within them the potential to strengthen the struggle for emancipation and liberation from oppression (Rigney, 1999: 113-114).  

Rigney identifies three central, interconnected elements to Indigenist research. Firstly, Indigenist epistemologies must resist colonialist knowledges on and about Indigenous people by dealing with the history of genocide, telling the story of survival, uncovering continuing forms of oppression and supporting the ongoing struggles of Indigenous individuals and communities (1999: 116-117).

Secondly, Indigenist research must have political integrity and give primacy to

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32 In broad terms, I take Rigney’s point, however, I am also mindful that Indigenous people have not been excluded from ‘all facets of research’, because Indigenous people have most certainly been the ‘objects’ of research to such an extent that it is not uncommon to hear Indigenous people say ‘we are the most researched people on Earth’. I agree though, that being an object of research does not necessarily equate to a validation of Indigenous peoples’ ‘minds, intellect, knowledge, histories, and experiences’ (Rigney, see above). I am also mindful that despite the marginalised position of Indigenous scholars within the academy there are an increasing number of Indigenous people with post-graduate qualifications, who teach in universities and have their work published within academic journals and other texts. Thus, Indigenous scholarship does pose important challenges to Western epistemologies of the Indigenous ‘Other’.

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the work produced by Indigenous researchers. Moreover, research imperatives must be grounded in, informed by and responsive to the ongoing political struggle of Indigenous people (1999: 117). Thirdly, Indigenist research must privilege Indigenous voices in a holistic sense. Not only is the research performed by Indigenous researchers, it is informed by Indigenous participants “whose goals are to serve and inform the Indigenous struggle for self-determination” (Rigney, 1999: 118).

While Rigney clearly defines a broad anti-colonial Indigenist research agenda for Indigenous people, there is a danger that anti-colonial Indigenist research practices and concomitant epistemologies can be absorbed into, or conflated within a post-colonial framework. As such, Rigney’s offering would be reduced to an articulation of post-colonial tensions, rather than the emancipatory vision it purports to be. What I am suggesting here, is that post-colonial paradigms potentially contain anti-colonial visions rather than support their liberationist goals. In this light then, I argue we respond to Rigney’s charge that “[t]here is little evidence that research epistemologies and methodologies in Australia” are informed by Indigenous people and knowledges “or that it was produced from presumed equals” (1999: 113) by positioning the construction of non-Indigenous identities within our own anti-colonial paradigms. This necessitates producing our own anti-colonial epistemological frameworks; using these to inform the construction of anti-colonial identities; and, shaping our own anti-colonial political outcomes that are consistent with Aboriginal peoples’ political and cultural aspirations.
In making this proposition, I am following up on Hamilton’s observation (above) that “colonial representation [of Indigenous people] has shaped, and misshaped, reality for coloniser and colonised alike” and recognise that undermining the “colonial hegemony” requires parallel interventions from those who benefit from the power relationships produced within colonialist epistemologies. As Tilbury notes, the subversion of the colonial project necessitates “an examination of the position, privileges and identity of the dominant group and the role which they have played in the process of oppression” (2000: 77). This insight is important. It reminds us that anti-colonial dissertations require a conscious recognition of the subjectivities of the dominant group. That is, if we cannot locate our subjectivities within the theory we have little scope for developing a framework for anti-colonial praxis. Therefore, we must identify a process of identity formation that is antithetical to the processes of identity formation linked with colonisation and moreover, enables the performance of identity in ways that do not rely on racialised systems of domination/subordination. To this end, I conceive non-Aboriginality as existing in relationship with ‘Aboriginality,’ not in opposition, thus indicating the first step towards creating a disjunction between the usual paradigms that inform self/other binaries. I develop this point below.

**An Anti-Colonial Theory for Whitefellas: Making non-Aboriginality Anti-Colonial**

In this section, I extrapolate on the anti-colonial theoretical framework for this thesis to explain the formation of anti-colonial identities for non-Aboriginal people. I begin with a discussion on the self-serving function of colonialist
constructions of ‘Aboriginality’ in formulating the ‘not Aboriginal’ self and concomitant power relations. To begin this discussion, I draw broadly on the work of Edward Said, and his seminal text *Orientalism* (1985). In exploring the application of his work to the Australian context, I refer to the Australian historian, Bain Attwood, and his work on Aboriginalism and post-Aboriginalism (1992). Indeed, Attwood’s work on post-Aboriginalism provides a critical point of entry into discussing the productivity of meaningful intercultural dialogues in generating non-Aboriginal subjectivities. However, I also identify limitations in Attwood’s conceptualisation of post-Aboriginalism and argue that it reproduces the broader limitations of post-colonial theory I discussed earlier.

While post-Aboriginalism acknowledges the ‘right’ of Aboriginal incursions into colonialist (here, Aboriginalist) modes of knowledge production, it ultimately produces a conservative outcome, facilitating invader/settler claims to Indigeneity.

To expand this discussion, I also draw on Moreton-Robinson’s analysis of post-Aboriginalism, particularly her criticism that Attwood fails to identify the ‘whiteness’ of the European group (2004). Moreton-Robinson argues that unless we recognise the white race privilege of the European group, post-Aboriginalism merely reinscribes the power relations inherent in Aboriginalist modes of knowledge production and therefore offers no meaningful way forward for either

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33 In this section, where I use the term ‘not Aboriginal’, or ‘not Indigenous’, I am not referring to people, but rather pointing to the ways Aboriginality serves to create a symbolic boundary between those who may be included as either Aboriginal or not Aboriginal. Thus ‘not Aboriginal’ speaks to this boundary. I make this distinction because in this thesis I use the term ‘non-Aboriginal’ as a political mode of self-identification to be used by ‘non-Aboriginal people’ who perceive their identity in relationship with Aboriginal people as Sovereign beings.

34 Vijay Mishra first used the term ‘Aboriginalism’ in 1987. Hodge and Mishra (1990) also make use of Said’s Orientalism to describe ‘Aboriginalism’ in their working of the ‘bastard complex’. I refer to this in Chapter Three.
Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal people. On the face of it, I concur with Moreton-Robinson’s position, however, I also suggest in focusing only on whiteness, we re-centre whiteness as the pivotal site of knowledge production and enquiry. Thus, I argue that overcoming these limitations necessitates searching out an alternative premise to both undermining the power of whiteness and, in corollary, constructing anti-colonial models of non-Aboriginality. With this in mind, I turn to Indigenist knowledge producing paradigms and modes of investigation. I argue that Indigenist epistemologies not only dislodge the primacy of whiteness as a site and mode of investigation, it brings into the centre an alternative paradigm based on Indigenous epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies. Non-Aboriginality then, is a process of identity formation that is negotiated within this alternative site. Moreover, it is within this site that anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality can be envisioned.

Kathryn Trees writes “…all Australians, regardless of cultural heritage and of contact with Indigenous people, have a relationship with ‘Aboriginality’, one that has for the most part has been ignored or denied” (1998: 128). Although Trees wrote this in the 1990’s, I still argue that by-and-large, most Australian’s relationship to Aboriginality is an abstract one, filtered through the misconceptions and misrepresentations generated by other non-Aboriginal people. As Langton notes:

The most dense relationship is not between actual people, but between white Australians and the symbols created by their predecessors. Australians do not know and relate to Aboriginal people. They relate to stories told by former colonists (1993: 33).
I draw attention to this, not simply to make the banal point that racist representations and stereotypes of Aboriginal people are perpetuated on a daily basis, but rather to reiterate that these constructions of Aboriginality serve a profound ideological function, simultaneously informing notions of Aboriginality and those ‘not Aboriginal’. In the absence of ‘actual’ relationships between Aboriginal and not Aboriginal people, ‘Aboriginality’ works to bind the individuals and groups not identifying as Aboriginal. What-is-more, in the absence of ‘actual’ relationships, it is possible to ‘ignore or deny’ that this abstract relationship exists, and that it is critical to the maintenance of power between Aboriginal and invader/settler people. As Attwood further explains:

It is now generally acknowledged that…the category of the ‘self’…is fashioned through the construction of an Other, which is outside and opposite, and that the making of an identity rests upon negating, repressing or excluding things antithetical to it. By creating such binary opposition(s), the heterogeneity and difference within the former category is displaced and so the unitary self or group is manufactured. In this process there is clearly an interdependence of the two categories, that is, they only make sense in the context of each other…this interdependence is usually hierarchical, with one category prior, visible and superordinate, the other secondary, often invisible and subordinate. Hence, Europeans have forged a collective identity through a discourse which sets them apart from non-Europeans, especially ‘the Aborigines’ (1992: iii).

Two serious implications arise from Attwood’s analysis. Firstly, when members of the invader/settler society maintain an abstract relationship between Aboriginality and themselves, they are able to displace the reasons for Aboriginal disadvantage and obfuscate the reasons for their own privileges. Secondly, when members of the invader/settler society maintain an abstract relationship between Aboriginality and themselves, they perpetuate the logic of terra nullius: the fantasy of Aboriginality without the actual presence, voices, viewpoints,
knowledges and experiences of Aboriginal people. As Michael Cathcart eloquently explains:

It is often said that *terra nullius* was the principle that Aboriginal people did not exist – that this was ‘empty land’. But *terra nullius* was a more complex idea than that. In law, it stood for the principle that Aborigines did not occupy the land in a manner which constituted ownership. That is to say, it did not deny their existence, but it did deny that they were a people with a culture. It did not deny their presence, but it did deny their humanity…. It licensed a contradiction which said the Aborigines were here – but mute (2002: 213).

Thus, “*terra nullius* [is]… a moral conjuring trick” (Cathcart, 2002: 213) that allows Aboriginality to exist in the white imagination, but to deny the Sovereignty of Aboriginal people. Thus, the power relationship between Aboriginal and the invader/settler society is not only one of unequal relations. It is a power relationship predicated on the affirmation of white sovereignty over the Sovereign rights of Aboriginal people and their land. However, like Attwood, I share the view that Aboriginal incursions into colonialist constructions of Aboriginality contain enormous potential to challenge not only these constructions, but also provide the premise to developing a new “mutual becoming” (Attwood, 1992: ivx). Thus, I work with Attwood’s idea to suggest that Aboriginal incursions into Aboriginalist constructions of Aboriginality produce an awareness of being in Aboriginal Sovereignty, and command a concomitant awareness of our non-Aboriginality. I return to this point below.

Before I embark on this discussion though, it is necessary to briefly consider the theoretical work revealing the dualistic process of identity formation through self/Other binaries. Broadly speaking, this situates Australian processes of identity development within an historical and global theoretical context, and
firmly within the larger narrative of colonial identity formation and power relations. As such, Edward Said’s *Orientalism* provides critical insight here.

According to Said, the ‘Orient’ is a “European invention” (1985: 1), a profound and enduring construction of the Other that provides definition to the European/western “image, idea, personality, [and] experience” (1985: 1-2) of being superior to non-Europeans and facilitating the exercise of cultural hegemony (1985: 7).

As Said explains, Orientalism is a complex interplay of interdependent modes of knowledge frameworks, production and dissemination (or discourses), on and about the ‘Orient’, but within the Occident. Most obviously, this includes knowledge produced in the academy “through its doctrines and theses” (1985: 2) but, connected to this are the epistemological distinctions made between “the Orient” and … “the Occident” that are consistently re-imagined, re-represented and re-produced in a multitude of academic, creative, political, social (and so on) communications (1985: 2). These are filtered out “into the general culture”, producing a consensus of knowledge about the relationship between East and West and an ideological framework by which Western identity can be known and understood (1985: 6-7). As Said writes:

> Orientalism is never far from…the idea of Europe, a collective notion identifying “us” Europeans against all “those” non-Europeans, and indeed it can be argued that the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures (1985: 7).

Thus, Orientalism is not an innocently imaginative process. It culminates in producing intricate systemic power relations between East and West. Again, as
Said writes, Orientalism is “the corporate institution dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism is a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient” (1985: 3).

Critical interconnections can be made between the ideological function of Orientalism/the Orient for the Occident/West and ‘Aboriginality’ for white Australians. Indeed, Australian historian, Bain Attwood, works with the paradigm offered by Said to critique what he calls ‘Aboriginalism’. Like Orientalism, Aboriginalism is an integrated system of knowledge production (especially Aboriginal Studies), epistemological and ontological development, identity formation (designating Aboriginal people as Other in order to distinguish between ‘us’ and ‘them’) and the exercise of power over Aboriginal people (Attwood, 1992: i).

Attwood also identifies that other forms of knowledge production on and about Aboriginal people exist, ones he defines as ‘post- Aboriginalist’ (see Attwood, 1992: i and xiv). Post-Aboriginalism affirms Aboriginal peoples’ incursions into Aboriginalist modes of knowledge production and their agency as autonomous knowledge producers. Thus, post-Aboriginalism is a dialogic space, a “common ground” where “exchange of knowledge” can take place in the spirit of “speaking as well as listening” (Attwood, 1992: xiv).

Critically, post-Aboriginalism opposes the orthodox systems of knowledge production and strives to “overturn [the] Aboriginalist structures of power and knowledge that continue to operate” (Attwood, 1992: xiv). As Attwood
identifies, this necessitates a dualistic approach: shifting the status of Aboriginal people from knowable ‘object’ to knowing subject, and in corollary to this, identifying and placing the subjectivity of invader/settler peoples in relationship with Aboriginal people, with a specific view to examining and deconstructing colonialist knowledge systems and their attendant power relations. Within this new paradigm, Attwood writes:

…Aborigines are viewed as socially constructed subjects with identities which are relational and dynamic rather than oppositional (in the binary sense) and given. This challenge to essentialism and the teleological assumptions embedded in Aboriginalist scholarship involves historicising the processes that have constructed Aborigines, thus revealing how Aboriginal identity has been fluid and shifting, and above all contingent upon colonial power relations. This approach necessarily involves a new object of knowledge – Ourselves, European Australians, rather than Them, the Aborigines – and this entails a consideration of our colonising culture and the nature of our knowledge and power in relations to Aborigines…. These new praxes and knowledges radically destabilise conventional ways of establishing identity or the existential conditions of being for both Aborigines and ourselves, but they also have the potential to offer a new means for a mutual becoming (1992: xv).

Like Attwood, I am invigorated by the possibilities that arise when we challenge Aboriginalist discourse as the authoritative means for ‘knowing about’ Aboriginal people and ourselves. Identifying the interconnectedness between Aboriginal and not Aboriginal identity formation processes and bringing that relationship out of an abstract discursive realm and into one whereby not Aboriginal people must deal with actual self-representations by Aboriginal people demands a profound level of introspection and self-assessment on their/our part. However, I also argue that Attwood does not sufficiently identify what he imagines ‘ourselves’ to become. Without his interpretation of this ‘becoming’ process, it is difficult to assess whether this version of post-Aboriginalism is capable of truly challenging self-other binaries and their
inherent power relations. Indeed, I rather suspect it is not. I argue that within the version of post-Aboriginalism offered by Attwood, we risk the possibility of merely seeking redemption through the incorporation of Aboriginality into ‘ourselves’: that the new becoming is merely a conservative reformation of the European self, one whereby the European stakes their claim in being Australian through the cooption of Aboriginality. For example, Attwood writes:

As Bernard Smith suggested over a decade ago, we have a choice: we can either ‘settle for a divided culture’, or we can strive for ‘an effective cultural interchange, neither patronising or exploitative’, between Aboriginal Australians and ourselves – an interchange which would create ‘a convergent culture, with its sources in two traditions, one mainly derived from European sources, the other derived from …[Aboriginal ones]. By choosing this latter path, we could begin the journey towards an authentic Australian culture (1992: xv-xvi, parenthesis in the original).

While I appreciate the inspirational intent of Attwood’s claim, I am concerned that his position comes too close to appropriating Aboriginality in such a way that ensures the centred-ness of the European subject (articulated here as ‘Australian’). That is, ‘Aboriginality’ retains its subordinated position within colonialist knowledge production; its usefulness made clear when it contributes to the creation of an authentic Australian. Thus, authority of colonialist epistemologies and ontologies is not destabilised, rather it is re-stabilised and authenticated through the integration of Aboriginality into the invader/settler self.

Geonpul academic Aileen Morton-Robinson is also sceptical of Attwood’s analysis. Her uneasiness is that Attwood does not name and define the European subjectivities as ‘white’. Moreton-Robinson argues that although the European group’s ethnicity is identified (as European) their racialised status as white remains un-marked and un-named. For her, the category of ‘Aborigine’
however, retains its racialised marking. Thus, for Moreton-Robinson, the hierarchical relationship between European/Aboriginal remains in tact because the whiteness of the European is not located and named within the overall discourse of race. As she writes:

Race is implicit in the construct Aborigine but not identified as being implicit in the category European Australian. In contrast to whiteness, Aboriginality as a racial construct is identified with blackness and is named and attached to Aboriginalism and post-Aboriginalism because it is deemed valid discursive practice…. Aboriginalism and Post-Aboriginalism are socially constructed by whiteness as representations of what it is not. The new theoretical challenges to Aboriginalism recognise that what is required is a new object of knowledge but whiteness as an epistemological *a priori* works to assign this object on the basis of European Australian ethnicity rather than race. This ensures that race continues to belong to the Indigenous other and whiteness remains hidden, which leads me to ask the question: how is post-Aboriginalism the new means of our mutual becoming when conventional ways of deploying race have not been radically destabilised? (Moreton-Robinson, 2004: 82).

In short, Moreton-Robinson argues that because Attwood fails to identify the whiteness of the European, the logic of whiteness prevails and the positions from which one distinguishes the relationship between subject and object/knower and known, are in tact because the ‘knower’ is not *self*-knowing as white.

There is a level at which I take Moreton-Robinson’s point. I agree that it is only through a process of self-knowing that we can engage with our own epistemological systems and the ways they inform ontologies between Aboriginal people and members of the invader/settler society. However, I also query how the naming of whiteness eventuates in ameliorating the reproduction of (binary) oppositional relationships between Aboriginal people and those who are not Aboriginal. Beyond the obvious and immediate gain of identifying white race privilege, I ask, what does naming *whiteness* offer us in terms of a ‘mutual becoming’?
I appreciate that critical whiteness studies provides tools for deconstructing ‘race’ based power relations. For example, naming whiteness and positioning it with the lexicon of race relations has profoundly altered the ways race oppression and race power are theorised. It is argued that by naming whiteness we expose its supposed normativity and neutrality as products of white power. Moreover, white identifying people are challenged not to see race/racism as an external phenomenon, extraneous to everyday experience, but rather as something “inseparable from other facets of daily life” (Frankenberg, 1993: 6). As Frankenberg argues, “to speak of whiteness is…to assign everyone a place in the relations of racism” (1993: 6, emphasis in the original). While white people might say, “[r]ace has nothing to do with me, I’m not racist” but it is “more difficult for white people to say “[w]hiteness has nothing to do with me – I’m not white”” (Frankenberg, 1993: 6). It is feasible then, that because whiteness studies brings white and black into relationship within the overall discourse of race it provides the means by which white Australians’ relationship with ‘Aboriginality’ as an abstract discursive framework is fundamentally challenged.

I argue though, that the paradox of whiteness studies is while it claims whiteness as a location within the discourse of race, its ultimate aim is to discredit ‘race’ as a category of social organization, disadvantage and privilege (see for example, Garvey and Ignatiev, 1996: 9-10). That is, it is dependent upon a repudiated concept to explain itself and the paradigm within which it operates. Thus, the paradox is that while race is not a legitimate form of social organization, it
remains an a priori for investigating critical elements of social organization, disadvantage, discrimination, oppression and privilege.

On the face of it, the reasons for this are self-evident. For example, Aboriginal people utilise the language of race to strategically subvert colonialist modes of categorisation and hierarchicalisation, and form a basis for collective cultural, physical and spiritual survival in the face of ongoing racist oppression. As Ian Anderson35 writes:

…Aboriginal identities are formed within the context of colonial relations…it would be unreasonable to expect Aboriginal people to ‘re-invent’ their self-representation without any reference to the hegemonic language of race…. Otherwise we would be expecting people to form identities in the context of an ongoing experience of cultural racism, and at the same time render the impact of such an experience totally without meaning (1997: 11).

Equally, as long as the material effects of racism and race privilege persist, ‘race’ must continue to be a matter of scrutiny. Indeed, in Australia where there are “dramatic disparities in the conditions for life” between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, and statistical indicators for social wellbeing clearly demonstrate that Aboriginal people fall well below ‘other’ Australians (see Cowlishaw and Morris, 1997: 3), the case for ‘race’ is clearly a compelling one.

However, the potential consequence of keeping ‘race’ in play is that it reproduces the epistemological frameworks it seeks to disavow and in so doing, re/activates the centred-ness of whiteness (albeit, named whiteness) within the

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already understood binary relationship. That is, the naming of whiteness is
dependent upon the ongoing subordinated position of blackness, by simple virtue
of the fact that within this dualistic framework, whiteness is the dominant binary.
Therefore, rather than decentring the significance of binaries in forming and
shaping ways of knowing and relating to others, these binaries are re-centred.
Moreover, because whiteness, as the dominant binary, invokes the concept of
blackness, whiteness retains its epistemological and ontological pre-eminence.
The hierarchies of difference that we seek to deconstruct are held in place. For
example, it is frequently noted how one of the consequences of whiteness studies
is that rather than decentring whiteness, it re-centres it, potentially squandering
the time, energy and resources that have gone into other burgeoning areas of
cultural minority studies (Flores and Moon, 2000: 98). American scholars Clark
and O’Donnell also speak to this concern, alerting us to the problem of “white
fetishism” (1999: 4). They write:

Simply put, critics wonder if the surge of interest in even critical White studies by leftists genuinely committed to anti-racist struggle is but another way dialogue becomes centered and/or recentered around whiteness. Even dialogue that seriously problematizes whiteness and its social construction taken to an extreme, dominating the discourse at multicultural education conferences, in multicultural education textbooks and in the multicultural education classroom, puts Whites at the center again and again…which may be how the White left manifests its racist pathology to be at the center (Clark and O’Donnell, 1999: 4-5).

If we follow Moreton-Robinson’s advice and take the view that post-
Aboriginalism becomes a meaningful dialogic space between Aboriginal and
invader/settler people once the whiteness of the white group is named and
positioned within the overall discourse of race, we run the risk of creating a
dialogic forum monopolised by the interests of whiteness. I argue then, that with
whiteness occupying the re-centred, re-privileged ground, the dialogic space of
post-Aboriginalism runs the gauntlet of becoming the dialogic space for
determining ‘good’ and ‘bad’ articulations of whiteness. Broadly speaking, the
American scholar Becky Thompson alerted us to this in 1997 when, in
conjunction with the White Women Challenging Racism Collective, she
identified the linguistic difficulties inherent in whiteness studies:

Every time you say it is okay to be white, it sounds like the white
supremacists. Because there is no other language, we need to use the same
words they do – with opposite meanings – and figure out how to organize
among this contrast (Thompson et al, 1997: 363).

In Chapter Two, I explore the tensions Thompson identifies with reference to the
New Race Abolitionists and their position that anti-whiteness activists should
seek out strategic alliances with white race supremacist organisations. However,
it suffices to say for the moment that whiteness studies produces its own internal
and organic struggle for meaning that is still identified by notions of what it is
not (white/not black, racist/not racist), and moreover, further displaces the
potential of dialogic relationships with Aboriginal people. Alison Ravenscroft’s
analysis of the recent ‘history wars’ between Henry Reynolds and Keith
Windshuttle illustrates my point here (2004: 3). Ravenscroft writes:

…I have turned firstly to the problematic of white historical practice, in
particular of a positivist historical practice which seeks its truth, or truths,
in the archive and the written record. These problematics have assumed a
particular urgency now in Australia in the context of the new contestations
over history and its claims to truth following the so-called Windshuttle-
Reynolds debate concerning very different ‘truths’ of the ‘frontier wars’. But
we might say that in some important ways Keith Windshuttle, Henry
Reynolds and their respective supporters do not, after all, represent
opposing and exclusive positions on the history of Australian black-white
relations, but are on the same side: the side of white Australians whose
faith in the archives disavows the very ‘truths’ which they are seeking? For
the archive is of our own making, of course; it is structured by the very
same logic of black-white relations which we seek to prove, or dispute.
Perhaps, instead, the ‘truth’ of our history must be found in the logic of our
own whiteness, and the blackness it produces for its own purposes, and the
ways in which whiteness structures histories and counter histories alike (2004: 3).

Ravenscroft is clearly suggesting that we resolve this dilemma by naming and claiming the ‘white’ vested interests in the production of white histories. However, I argue that it is precisely because whiteness is produced within the logic of whiteness that we may well identify that which was previously unnamed, but that is all we have identified. Relationships with Aboriginality are still secondary or marginal to the relationships we are producing for ourselves, amongst ourselves. Indeed, Ravenscroft makes the point that whiteness produces blackness for its own purposes. The purpose here, I suggest, is to redeem whiteness, at the exclusion of Aboriginal experiences, knowledge and needs. A story shared by Wendy Brady in her paper at the Winds of Change Conference at the University of Technology, Sydney in 1998 illustrates the point I am making here. The story Wendy shared told of a massacre committed against her great-grandmother’s clan group during the killing times, and the importance of learning that written evidence of this massacre existed, documented and diarised by white people. “No longer” said Wendy, “could there be any denials of this having taken place”. Upon revealing her story at the Reconciliation Convention in Melbourne in 1997, a white historian approached Wendy. Previously, he had refuted the possibility of the massacre taking place. He enquired of Wendy the possibility of researching the matter further. Of this, Wendy writes:

How could she tell this man of their pain. It did not need to be researched. It was only necessary to hear the story and acknowledge the wrongdoings of the past (Brady, 1998: online).

Let us engage in speculation for a moment. It may be possible to suggest the white historian may well have made his enquiry in the spirit of admitting his
previous error and a genuine desire to ‘get history right’. He may also have made his enquiry in the spirit of naming and documenting white culpability in the atrocities committed against this (Wendy’s) family. He may even have a notion that he would claim his own white subjectivity, admitting how his dependence on the (white) written document had led him to make the initial mistake. However, I suggest that the redemptive function of these (good) intentions clearly serve the epistemological needs of whiteness more purposefully than the specific epistemological and emotional needs of the storyteller, Wendy Brady. In this light, Rutherford’s analysis of Freud and Lacan’s working of the structural links between morality and aggression, and ‘good’ versions of Australian whiteness is instructive here. Although Rutherford confines her analysis to Pauline Hanson’s One Nation Party and its grass roots members’ notion of Australian whiteness, I argue that the salient point, the point that at the precise moment we set out to do or be ‘good’ it manifests as an act of aggression towards Others, also applies to this scenario (see Rutherford, 2000: 9-11).

As I understand Brady’s story, the purpose in telling it is to be heard: to occupy a space in a dialogic forum where the innate emotional value of the story is self-evident, and the knowledge the story speaks is true unto itself. In this moment in time, the invader/settler position within the dialogic space is that of listener and learner. To presume that the story/knowledge is offered so that the non-Aboriginal voice becomes the ‘speaker’, again reproduces the binary of subject/knower, object/known, typical of Aboriginalist modes of knowledge production. Even though white academics may produce a ‘knowledge’ that
claims the whiteness of its purview, what inevitably remains marginalised, are
the insider knowledges, perspectives and motivations communicated in the initial
transmission of knowledge, in this instance the story. There is a level then, at
which whiteness produces its own safe ground. Obfuscating the emotional reality
of the story means we do not have to reckon with it. We do not have to deal with
the grief and distress the story conveys. What-is-more, we do not have to ask,
what does this knowledge mean for me? How do I respond in a way that affirms
and respects the subjectivity of the person who offered me the story in the first
instance?

When members of invader/settler societies enter into a dialogic, knowledge
producing space in relationship with Aboriginal people, our role as listeners is
not a passive one. It requires a holistic response that begins with the
fundamental recognition of the inalienable Sovereignty of the knowledge giver.
In this instance, the knowledge giver is the storyteller, Wendy Brady. As an
individual with Sovereign connections and obligations to the land where this
event took place, she is also a Sovereign owner of the story. As invader/settler
people, we are connected to those perpetrators of this event because of the
transgenerational benefits accrued to us because of Aboriginal dispossession and
exploitation of their land. Thus, we are also connected to this story because it
represents the denial of Aboriginal Sovereignty in protection of white
sovereignty. An active response to this is the recognition of Aboriginal
Sovereignty, and placing ourselves in a dialogic, knowledge producing
relationship where we own and name our non-Aboriginality. I argue then, that it
is at this point we begin to see a way forward for bringing ourselves out of
abstract relationships with ‘Aboriginality’ and into actual relationships with Aboriginal people. That is, we engage as non-Aboriginal subjects in relationship with Aboriginal subjects, understanding that our identities are mutually constitutive, but predicated on the knowledge and respect of Aboriginal Sovereignty. It is in this context I advocate non-Aboriginality as an anti-colonial marker for identity.

I argue that naming and claiming non-Aboriginality is a project that expands on the initiative of whiteness studies, teaching us that naming whiteness is pivotal to undermining white privilege. I also argue naming and claiming non-Aboriginality makes critical interconnections with Indigenist theoretical paradigms. The value of using Indigenist frameworks as a point of departure for constructing non-Aboriginality is that they are fundamentally grounded in alternative world views and value systems that counter the negative connotations associated with Indigeneity in colonialist discourses (see Smith, 2001: 146). By taking on the “colonial disenfranchisement of Indigenous people”, Indigenist paradigms reposition Indigenous knowledge “at the centre” (Phillips, 2003: 3, *emphasis in the original*) of knowledge production. This then necessitates a relational and concurrent repositioning of western epistemologies, especially as they relate to epistemologies of the self. I argue that reconstituting the non-Aboriginal self within this ‘new’ centre represents such a repositioning. This strategic epistemological and ontological move valorises the primacy of ‘Aboriginality’, as it is conceived within Indigenist frameworks, as the giver of meaning to non-Aboriginality, and demands non-Aboriginality exists in the profound and irrevocable recognition and affirmation of Indigenous Sovereignty.
Conclusion

In this introductory discussion, I have introduced my argument for anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality. I have argued non-Aboriginality is an anti-colonial process of identity formation because it is constituted within the locus of Aboriginal Sovereignty. The political intent of my argument is to propose a process whereby non-Aboriginal Australians engage in a process of substantive reconciliation with Aboriginal people. I have affirmed the original objectives of reconciliation, as they were determined in 1991. I have also argued that substantive reconciliation demands mainstream Australians critically engage with their commitment to white sovereignty and embark on a process of identity construction that acknowledges the history of invasion, colonisation and the dispossession of Aboriginal people. As such, substantive reconciliation stands in sharp juxtaposition to the conservative program of ‘practical reconciliation’.

Further, I have contextualised the theoretical aims of this project as a critical response to whiteness studies and contemporary scholarship on belonging. I have argued both of these discourses are mutually self-supporting, and work to validate continued commitment to white sovereignty. I have also argued for a theoretical framework through which anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality can be constructed. I have argued this framework must stand in contradistinction to both colonialist and post-colonialist problematisations of settler identity construction. To this end, I have drawn on Marcia Langton’s notion of anti-colonialism, and Lester Irabinna-Rigney’s application of anti-colonialism in Indigenist research methodologies. I have argued that the
recentring of Indigenous epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies necessitates a relational repositioning of non-Indigenous ways of self-knowing.

In the following chapter, I detail the methodology for this project.
Chapter 1:

Methodology

Introduction:
In this chapter, I discuss the methodological approach taken to write this thesis. This thesis is a qualitative research project comprising both a written exegesis and a thirty-minute radio documentary. The written text is an account of my argument for anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality. In developing this argument, I draw on a broad range of literature in the area of race and cultural theory. The documentary includes a series of interviews with non-Aboriginal people. Overall, the interviews represent a collection of personal narratives that I work with to produce a documentary that supports a meta-narrative of anti-colonial identity production, as it is expounded within the exegesis. In the following discussion, I explain the relationship between the exegesis and the documentary as part of an overall methodological approach to the project. I then move on to discuss the methodologies applied to both the documentary and the written text. Finally, I offer a brief discussion on my reasons for ‘autobiographicalising’ (Nicholl, 2000: 370) both the written text and the documentary.

My salient concern for the methodological approach taken with this project is that it supports the theoretical direction of the work. Just as I have argued that Indigenist theoretical paradigms and epistemologies inform anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality, the methodology is informed by Indigenist research approaches. From the outset, I insist that it is not my intention to
appropriate elements of ‘Indigeneity’ into my work, but rather to engage in a
dialogic relationship with Indigenist scholarship, and ask, what can we learn
from this as non-Aboriginal people pursuing our own anti-colonial subjectivities,
epistemologies and methodologies. Indeed, just as Linda Tuhiwai Smith makes
the point that Indigenist research practices are informed by both western research
approaches and a combination of Indigenous cultural practices (2001: 142-143), I
argue that it is reasonable to demonstrate a cognisance of Indigenist research
methodologies and consider how they can inform our own ethical obligations in
undertaking research and achieving best practice outcomes. In taking this
approach, I seek to reiterate my commitment to respond to Rigney’s criticism
that non-Aboriginal scholars too infrequently take seriously our obligation to
learn from Indigenous epistemologies and treat Indigenous scholarship as having
equal value to our own (see above).

The Relationship between the Exegesis and Documentary:

In this section, I explain the methodological relationship between the written text
and the radio documentary. There are several interconnected reasons for
presenting this thesis in two components, and I elaborate on these below.

Firstly, as I have already discussed at length in the Introduction, my task with
this project is to conceptualise non-Aboriginality in ways that problematise
colonialist modes of constructing both the Aboriginal Other and the
invader/settler self. My interest here is to disrupt this mode of knowledge
production and its inherent power relations by working through anti-colonial
constructions of the non-Aboriginal self. I have also discussed that I conceive
anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality as an overtly political identity formation process, feeding into the process of achieving substantive reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Throughout the written component of this project, I elaborate my thinking by constructing a theoretical basis for naming, defining and politicising the non-Aboriginal subject. I develop this in Chapter Four.

The function of the documentary in the first instance is to provide a space where a diversity of non-Aboriginal people have an ‘embodied’ presence within the production of this project because their voices are heard telling their unique stories. Trees, who recognises the capacity of storytelling to bridge the nexus between theory and praxis, informs this methodological approach. She argues that this bridge occurs because the corporeality of the storyteller is present within the theorising process (Trees, 1998: 5 and 17-18). In taking this approach, I seek to ensure that the theorising process evident in the exegesis is not detached from the substantive reality of people’s daily lives, cumulative life experiences and individual viewpoints. Thus, the documentary serves two interconnected purposes: to convey local, specific and personal knowledge and experiences (articulated through storytelling) that can be theorised into an epistemology of non-Aboriginality, and, to articulate the ‘doing’, or praxis, of non-Aboriginality.

Within the documentary, it is my intention to valorise the storytellers as knowledge producers in their own right. In this sense, the function of the documentary is to draw on the oral tradition of storytelling to impart knowledge to the listener. As Benjamin writes:
[T]he storyteller worked primarily in an oral tradition. He gave ‘counsel’ to his listeners; he was bound to place; he was corporeal; he had presence. He transmitted something ‘useful’ from which his listeners could benefit; he was wise and authorising; and spoke from a lifetime’s experience. He involved listeners – who, it is assumed, do not have what he has; who lack – in direct relationship with himself (c.f. Trees, 1998: 17-18).

In choosing a medium that provides immediate access to the stories of non-Aboriginal Australians who have close relationships with Aboriginal people, I seek to create a publicly available representation of the ways intercultural relationships enrich non-Aboriginal people’s lives, and influence the process of identity development.

Overwhelmingly, invader/settler Australians are deprived of these stories because the omnipresence of Aboriginalist/colonialist modes of knowledge production continues to inform the framework through which Aboriginal and invader/settler relationships are constructed. In my view the colonial logic that insisted befriending an Aboriginal person constituted a gross violation of acceptable behaviour amongst whites and a potential risk to white safety and well being (Markus, 1994: 51-52) still prevails.

Take, for example, the well-established connection between violence directed towards Aboriginal people and a means of maintaining law and order on the frontier (see for example, Jebb and Haebich, 1992: 34; Markus, 1994: 51-52, and for a related discussion, see Ware, 1992: 37-42). Far from being a redundant ideological tool, this recent transcript from ABC TV’s Mediawatch program (August, 2005) reveals the prevalence of this type of thinking in contemporary Perth, Western Australia. The transcript includes the program’s compare, Liz
Jackson’s narration and dialogue that went to air on the Howard Sattler show (drive-time) on 6PR, a commercial talk station. The transcript begins:

[JACKSON] Howard was co-hosting a regular talk back segment with Hughie the cabbie when David phoned in.

DAVID: Um, Yeah, I was just inquiring about your justice system right, I reckon it’s just too soft mate, you know, like I’m in a wheel chair, and back in August last year I got speared by an Aboriginal glue sniffer.

SATTLER: Goodness gracious

DAVID: …went to court on the 1st July, he got a hundred hours…

SATTLER: He didn’t go to jail at all?

DAVID: …didn’t go to jail at all, you wonder why people want to take the law into their own hands…

HUGHIE: But…David, its Hughie here mate, I bet the Defence Counsel stood up giving all the mitigating circumstances in the world as to why he did his crime.

DAVID: Oh yeah.

HUGHIE: Yep.

SATTLER: Yeah it’s not on.

DAVID: Just too soft mate, nigger nigger pull the trigger, far as I’m concerned.

(Laughter all round, and a few “oohs”)

SATTLER: He said that.

HUGHIE: I didn’t say that.

SATTLER: I know you didn’t say that.

HUGHIE: I didn’t say that.

SATTLER: He said that.

…

[JACKSON] No Howard, you didn’t say it, but you seemed to think it was pretty funny and you allowed it to go to air.

All talk back at 6PR is on a 10 second delay so that calls like that can be cut off. The next day Howard made his excuses.
SATTLER: On yesterday’s program I inadvertantly allowed on-air part of a listener’s call which on reflection could have offended members of the Aboriginal community, and that wasn’t my intention. And the views expressed by the caller were not supported by me, my studio guest or this radio station.

[JACKSON] “Inadvertent”? “Could cause offence”?

…


The significance of this transcript is that Sattler is one of the highest rating talk back presenters on one of Perth’s leading commercial talk back stations. If there were concerns that such a dialogue would cause offence to 6PR’s advertisers or target audience, this call would have been dumped. Clearly, no such concern exists, and so far from being an isolated comment from one rogue caller, this broadcast represents a broad consensus view between the radio station, the businesses that support the station and the listening audience. Thus, it is in this context that I argue that there is a continuum in the colonialist logic that informs the ways non-Aboriginal people should interact with Aboriginal people and speak about Aboriginal issues. Indeed, in a previous analysis of Sattler’s program in the early 1990’s and its overt anti-Aboriginal position and hysterical focus on Aboriginal youth crime, Steve Mickler concluded that:

In such a climate, championing prejudice can be seen not as reflecting legitimately held ‘public opinion’, but condoning, if not promoting, the genocidal pressure indigenous people have been put under since European colonisation (1998: 61).
This is not to say, however, that the pervasiveness of this logic goes unchallenged.

Take, for example, some of the stories found within Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal biographies and autobiographies. In her book *Wandering Girl* (1993), Glenyse Ward reveals the friendship between herself and Bill, the general hand, in the house where she worked as a domestic, and how important this friendship was to her emotional survival during this time. As she writes:

> With a look of mystification about his old face, he spoke in a very gentle voice and told me to go and get a cup and saucer and have a cup of tea with him. He explained to me that he would be my friend if I needed one…. We chatted on a bit more and when I told him I had to go to the old shed and get the six boxes of bottles, he offered to come and help me (Ward, 1993: 65).

More recently, Patrick Dodson’s biography tells the story of his Irish born great-grandfather, who bequeathed his property to Patrick’s Granny Liz. The Aborigines Protection Board in Western Australia intervened and prevented Patrick’s Grandmother from accessing her inheritance, consequently committing her to a life of poverty (Keeffe, 2003). In addition, Stephen Kinnane, in his book, *Shadow Lines* (2003) reveals the love between his English born grandfather, Edward Smith, and his Mirrawoong grandmother, Jessie Argyle. Despite a staggering level of intrusion and intimidation from the office of A.O Neville, their love endured a lifetime.

The significance of these biographies and autobiographies are that they provide glimpses into other relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people based on familial obligation, friendship, reciprocity and love. Thus, they provide
for more complex understandings of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relationships in the face of racism and white oppression.

In a similar vein, there are a small but growing number of accounts written by non-Aboriginal people that speak to their knowledge of Aboriginal/Australian history and close inter-personal relationships. Martin Flanagan’s, *In Sunshine or Shadow*, (2002); Duncan Graham’s (ed.), *Being Whitefella*, (1994); Sally Dingo’s, *Dingo: The Story of Our Mob* (1997); Darryl Tonkin’s, *Jackson’s Track: Memoir of a Dreamtime Place* (2000); Phil Thompson’s, *Whitefella Wandering* (2001); Mary Ellen Jordan’s, *Balanda: My Year in Arnhem Land* (2005); and, Neil Murray’s, *Sing for Me Countryman* (2003). The documentary offered as part of this project can be included as part of this genre of non-Aboriginal autobiographical accounts of intercultural and intersubjective relationships and, moreover, stands in sharp juxtaposition to the type of radio content detailed earlier. Through the immediacy of these stories included in the documentary, I seek to encourage points of connection and understandings for other Australians who do not have access to these stories or life experiences. Thus, it is my intention that these stories provide a point of entry and a means to considering the theoretical position of my thesis and the conclusions I reach.

In corollary, I make the point that while the participants in the documentary may not necessarily view or express their experiences within a discourse of anti-colonialism, the purpose of the exegesis is to theorise these types of experiences into an overtly political framework to galvanise the cultural and political possibilities which arise out of anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality.
Combined, both the exegesis and the documentary speak back to colonialist modes of knowledge production and the ways it informs relationships between Aboriginal and invader/settler people. They work in symbiosis, to create ruptures within these modes of knowledge production. They speak to the possibilities arising out of identity formation processes that are antithetical to the ones produced within traditional, conventional discourses.

**The Documentary:**

The documentary element of this project is a thirty-minute radio production, comprising a series of interviews with non-Aboriginal people who have meaningful connections and relationships with Aboriginal people. I argue that politically meaningful notions of non-Aboriginality must be nurtured within a dynamic discursive space where individual stories and experiences are as significant as the salient argument for the construction of anti-colonial definitions of non-Aboriginality. Thus, the purpose of the documentary is to present a diversity of stories by non-Aboriginal people that speaks to the multiplicity of ways non-Aboriginal Australians contemplate their identity in relationship to Aboriginal people and the knowledge of living in Aboriginal Sovereignty.

The production of a radio documentary supports the theoretical basis of this project because it draws on the Indigenist research methodologies of storytelling and testimony. Linda Tuhiwai Smith draws key distinctions between storytelling and testimony. On one hand, she argues storytelling plays a role that is internal to the cultural life and maintenance of Indigenous communities (Smith, 2001: 144). On the other hand however, testimony serves a more external function, providing
culturally appropriate methods for Indigenous people to bear “witness” to the “extremely painful…events” that have happened to them and their communities and communicate this to appropriate audiences (Smith, 2001: 144). These distinctions are useful in fleshing out the purpose and the function of the documentary as I conceive it.

As Linda Tuhiwai Smith explains, storytelling works to bind communities and provides shared identity through shared history. On a cultural level, storytelling works to maintain oral traditions and serves to share stories of land and people, significant historical events and interpersonal connections. On a political level, storytelling also works to collectivise Indigenous experiences of racism and injustice (Smith, 2001: 144-145). As a research methodology, storytelling allows for the culturally appropriate transmission of “diversities of truth” (Smith, 2001: 144) and distributes control of the research between the researchers and the storytellers. Storytelling also builds and sustains community life: “the indigenous community becomes a story that is a collection of individual stories, ever unfolding through the lives of the people who share the life of that community” (Bishop, c.f. Smith, 2001: 145).

Similarly, I argue that the value of bringing together the stories of non-Aboriginal people into a radio documentary is that it brings disparate voices and individual experiences into a ‘community’ of people who share common (although not the same) experiences, values and life experiences. Through storytelling, individuals speak to their own understandings of Australian racism and injustice towards Aboriginal people; the ways they locate themselves into
this history and contemporary reality; and, their relationships with Aboriginal people and how this affects the ways they self-identify. Although my function as both the author of the text and the producer of the documentary means I contextualise the stories within a broader theoretical framework, ultimately the views and experiences expressed within the stories belong to those of the storytellers. Indeed, by way of protecting the authority and the integrity of the interviewees’ storytelling, I provided participants with a recorded copy of their interviews, along with a copy of the documentary. This process gave them the opportunity to ensure their stories were faithfully represented. The SBS Documentary Indigenous Protocols (Johnson/SBS) and SBS Protocol and Guidelines for Film and Television on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Bostock, 1997) inform this practice. These protocols encourage participation from those consenting to be part of the production process. While both of these documents deal specifically with the production of film and television on and about Aboriginal people, I believe these guidelines can also inform non-Aboriginal ethical work practices.

In terms of representing an internal community of non-Aboriginal people, the storytelling evident in this documentary is a way of collectivising individual efforts and experiences, and promoting and sharing a commitment to meaningful co-existence with Aboriginal people. It is in the act of storytelling that participants in this documentary share political, intellectual and emotional motivations for anti-racist work and theorise strategies for continuing and improving it (for related discussions on the role of storytelling in anti-racism see, for example, Adleman and Enguidanos (ed.), c1995; Thompson and Tyagi,
1996). In addition, through telling stories, we grow anti-racist alliances and networks between members of oppressed groups and ourselves (Thompson and Tyagi, 1996: x). In an Australian context, Reconciliation Learning Circles are an example of this. In these, and similar forums, we recognise ourselves as members of a community committed to anti-racism and co-existence between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, and state our belonging to this community through sharing stories.

In this sense then, storytelling as a methodological approach to research also overlaps with ‘networking’ as an Indigenist methodological approach to research. Indeed, Linda Tuhiwai Smith identifies that networking is about building knowledge, relationships, contacts, trust and confidence between individuals and communities (Smith, 2001: 156-157). Moreover, it is as members of a community we draw strength and inspiration from each other, and this is critical to maintaining the energy to sustain our commitment. As bell hooks writes:

The social order hungers for a center (i.e. spirit, soul) that gives it identity, power and purpose…. Working within community, whether it be sharing a project with another person, or a larger group, we are able to experience joy in struggle. That joy needs to be documented. For if we only focus on the pain, the difficulties which are surely real in any process of transformation, we only show a partial picture (1994: 249).

On a macro level however, the stories evident in the documentary speak to a broader Australian community. In this sense, the stories are like ‘testimonies’, vouching for the sincerity and profundity of the relationships the participants speak to, and the ways this informs their sense of self. For Smith, testimony incorporates the process of storytelling, but it is more public and connotes the formality of saying something “under oath”. One of the important elements of
testimony is that it translates well into the written document and because of this, can be recorded for posterity (Smith, 2001: 144). Within Australia’s contemporary history, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission’s Bringing Them Home Report (Dodson and Wilson, 1997) compiled numerous testimonies from Aboriginal people who are members of the Stolen Generation. So confronting was the evidence in this testimony that the historian Robert Manne insists it has “the power to change forever the way… [we see our] country’s history (Manne, 2001: 104). Similarly, I argue just as testimony has the capacity to ‘take on’ the official narratives of national histories, and challenge the ways we constitute identities within and around these official narratives, the process of telling stories about the importance of intercultural and intersubjective relationships also provides productive examples of the ways we constitute identities outside mainstream discursive practices.

In the spirit of gathering testimony, the radio documentary serves to valorise the voice of the storyteller, to ‘re-tell’ the story in a way that its emotional integrity remains intact, and where the listeners can respond in an empathetic way. The beauty of radio documentary is that it allows room for deep human connection, between the storytellers and listeners. It is because radio is an intrinsically intimate medium it allows space for imagination and empathy. As the noted documentary producer Bill Bunbury says, “[i]f you make this distinction between cognitive and affective you certainly need to know the facts, but you need to hear them in a way that moves you” (c.f. Phillips and Lindgren, 2002: 63).
Participants:

Linda Delaney’s (1997) approach to her study on the ‘constructions, implications and negotiations of whiteness in Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations’ informs my selection process for participants for this documentary. She writes:

The main criteria for selecting participants in the study was that a direct relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians had to have occurred…. The criteria for relationships is central to the study not only as a vehicle for investigating the emergence of ‘white-selves’ within Indigenous Australian domains but also as a means for exchange of identity within and between interactive cultures. To this end this work can be perceived as both acknowledging and disrupting the self-other dynamics which construct our identities in colonial discourses (Delaney, 1997: ix).

The people I have interviewed for the documentary element of this project are the author, journalist and avowed football fan Martin Flanagan. Flanagan is originally from Tasmania and now lives and works in Melbourne. The themes and issues raised in Flanagan’s book, *In Sunshine or In Shadow* (2002) informed the basis of my interview with him. In this autobiographical text, Flanagan explores his Irish ancestry, the significance of his (and Tasmania’s) relationships with Truganini (and Aboriginality more generally), and the ways his interaction with Aboriginal people have taught him to interpret these relationships and interconnections. Christine Donaldson is a Pediatric doctor who lives with her husband and children in Kagoorlie, Western Australia. Christine’s husband is Geoffrey Stokes who is a Wongatha elder and Pastor. Christine and Geoffrey work with local communities to achieve cultural, political and social justice outcomes. One area of particular concern to them is achieving improvements in Aboriginal health in remote areas. Camilla Cowley is a former pastoralist from Queensland. Camilla gained a level of national prominence in the late 1990’s when, after the Gungarri people made a Native Title claim on areas of ‘her property’, she negotiated a co-existence agreement with them. Subsequently,
Camilla became an outspoken advocate for reconciliation and opponent of the Howard Government’s 10-point amendment plan of the High Court’s Wik decision. Christine Kerr is from Sydney. She lived for some time on Bathurst Island and has a long association, in varying capacities, with Tranby Aboriginal Co-operative College in Sydney. Harriet Ketley is from South Australia. She is a Native Title lawyer and was the instructing solicitor in the Mirrawoong Kadjerong Native Title case.

The participants who have consented to my interviewing them for the documentary all have longstanding and ongoing relationships with Aboriginal people, in their workplaces; within close personal friendships; as part of their immediate and extended families; and as members of communities. Most often, it was a combination of two or more of these factors. The participants include people from a range of occupational positions and geographic locations. This representation is important because too often white Australian responses to Aboriginal rights debates are couched in terms of the urban intellectual elite versus rural ‘rednecks’. This unhelpful and unsophisticated dichotomising does nothing to elucidate the range of complex and dynamic relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in urban, rural and remote areas.

**Questions:**

While Delaney’s study focused on the realisation of whiteness in the face of interactive encounters with Aboriginal people, I seek to develop this further by exploring the ways invader/settler Australians’ interaction with Aboriginal people produces a cognisance of their ‘non-Aboriginality’.
Because my primary interest is in gathering stories for a radio documentary (as distinct to gathering empirical data), the questions asked during the interviews followed the methods applicable to producing a radio documentary. Conventions for producing radio documentaries determine that you get the best stories when you allow the storyteller room to talk. The job of the interviewer is simply to guide, facilitate and affirm stories. As Bill Bunbury says, it is imperative to be a “good listener” (c.f. Phillips and Lindgren, 2002: 62):

[You need] to listen to stories, to try and capture what it is that people want to tell you…. Listening intently is the most important thing because you can miss so many cues if you’ve got this list of questions somewhere that you’ve got to refer to all the time. (c.f. Phillips and Lindgren, 2002: 62).

It is precisely because each story is unique that I do not ask exactly the same questions of each participant. Rather, I framed questions to facilitate the storytelling of each participant based on what I already knew and was able to research about their stories. In the instance of Martin Flanagan for example, I based the interview on his autobiography *In Sunshine or in Shadow* (2002), because it reflects many of the concerns, themes and issues with which this project deals. In other instances, I had a pre-existing relationship with some of the participants and I was able to shape my questions in accordance with my prior knowledge of their stories. Alternatively, some participants are recognised public figures in the area of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal affairs, and general information was available in the public domain (see Cowley, 1998). On other occasions, word of mouth sufficed.


**Sound:**

The overall sound of radio documentaries is constructed out of the tone and the settings of the interviews; the language and tone of the script, and the choices made vis-à-vis the music and sound effects (SFX). These choices affect the accessibility of the documentary and the ways listeners connect with the program. As Bunbury says of his own experience, “[w]hat I am trying to do as I make a documentary is to get that sense of taking a person into an experience as closely as possible. Without the distractions of a visual image, that person can actually, I think, enjoy that story more intimately because they can bring their imagination to it” (c.f. Phillips and Lindgren, 2000: 62). Thus, I seek to create a listening experience where listeners relate empathetically to the stories of ‘ordinary’ non-Aboriginal Australians who have close and ongoing relationships with Aboriginal people, and provide an opportunity to (re)think the ways our identities are constructed in relationship to each other. Ultimately, it is my goal to entice invader/settler Australians into thinking through anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality by removing the barrier of what can be perceived by some as obfuscatory, theoretical language and opening up pathways of inter-personal understanding.

**The Written Text:**

This project extrapolates on the work previously explored in my Masters thesis *Deconstructing Whiteness — Constructing non-Indigenousness: Reconceiving White Racial Identities in Invader Societies* (1998). The written text is produced by using qualitative research methods. In this dissertation, I develop my original position that white Australians must reinvent their white race identities as ‘non-
Indigenous’, and on this basis forge a meaningful co-existence with Aboriginal people on their land. Broadly, I have accessed a range of critical race, cultural, post-colonial and anti-colonial literature. Specific attention is given to critical whiteness studies, especially the American based anti-whiteness movement, the New Race Abolitionists and critiques thereof. I have also researched ‘post-colonial’ texts focusing on invader/settler ‘belonging’, which were published after the completion of my first thesis. Additionally, I have developed my argument for the creation of the non-Aboriginal subject with reference to subsequent works published in this area. Finally, I have autobiographicalised the thesis in an appreciation of Indigenist knowledge production and storytelling as a way of establishing links between the ‘self’ (myself), theory and the community with which I seek to connect.

**Autobiographicalising the Text:**

The third methodological approach taken with this project is the autobiographicalisation (Nicholl, 2000: 370) of the text. I have already explained in the ‘protocol’, that stating who I am and where I am from is a way of signalling my desire to engage in diplomatic relations with Aboriginal people in the context of their Sovereignty. It signals my awareness of living in Aboriginal Sovereignty and foregrounds my desire to negotiate my identity in relationship to this fact.

Autobiographicalising the text is consistent with the practice of declaring one’s own subject position, which emerged during the 1980-90’s ‘politics of difference’ debate within academic feminism. This practice was instigated at the
insistence of ‘women of colour’ and Aboriginal women, who wanted white women to acknowledge the epistemic violence of white women’s feminism by declaring their subject positions (see Huggins, 1994). While the declaration of one’s own subject position represented a significant shift forward in challenging the presumption of authority and neutrality by the academic authoriser and/or investigator, it is my view that in these contexts, identity was declared as a static and locatable endpoint rather than a constant ‘work in progress’ (as it were), as this extract from Catriona Elder reveals:

White historians dominate the writing of academic Aboriginal history. However, Aboriginal women and men have long been telling and writing their own history. There are implications about power and empowerment that are important in thinking about the process, that continues, of white academic historians writing Aboriginal history. In writing this paper I therefore acknowledge that I am writing one story, in a myriad of possible stories. It is a story shaped by my position in Australian society (as a white, middle-class, urban dwelling, woman) and my position in historical scholarship (as a feminist and a student). From this standpoint, I write a story about how white society and its discourses shaped the lives of Aboriginal and white women in the 1930’s (1993: 115).

While Elder’s declaration certainly underscores the importance of recognising the co-existence of a diversity of hi/stories and standpoints in the re/telling of these hi/stories she marks her identity by naming categories that are already ‘known’ to her (“white, middle-class, urban dwelling, woman” and a “feminist and a student”). Thus, there is little scope for understanding how identity formation processes might be challenged and changed in response to these disclosures, what we might subsequently ‘discover’ about our identities, and name that which was previously ‘unknown’ to us.

Thus, my purpose in autobiographicalising this text is in part, to underscore the fluidity of one’s own subject position and the ways we realise and adopt non-
Aboriginality as an anti-colonial marker for self-identity. In this light then, the function of autobiographicalising the text resonates with Frankenberg’s observation that we are remade over and over again, and that this process of remaking reveals itself in the sharing of autobiographies. As she writes:

Memory, and one’s sense of self, are continually (re)formed. Chains of events in a life are such that each moment seems both to lead to or even make the next, and to be remade by the moments that follow it. My childhood was then, if not literally relived, certainly reconceived in the context of my adult life. In this way, we can say my memories, my self are (re)formed. Thus in order to say how it was that my first steps towards self-consciousness about the racialization of my own childhood happened, not in Britain but in Santa Cruz, California, I need to say how I came to realize myself as answerable to a set of questions about racism, imperialism and my own history and identity. And in order to explain how that happened, I need to explain how I got to Santa Cruz at all (Frankenberg, 1996: 8, emphasis in the original).

In addition, autobiographicalising the text is a means of recognising and addressing the conundrum faced by many non-Aboriginal academics who do not want to speak on behalf of Aboriginal people and their culture, but do want to speak to and own white Australian history and the treatment of Aboriginal people. This extract from Brabazon’s Tracking the Jack illustrates the point I am making here:

As a white Australian, I have benefited from colonisation and dispossession. There is a sense that ‘the I’ must not write the words about indigenous culture. At times, it seems like a stylistic act of colonisation – the we writing about the they. But, by not discussing indigenous questions, the injustices, silence and oppressions of everyday life are perpetuated…. We whitefellas are part of this history, a history that we must confront and discuss…. Through this recognition, we need to grasp our role in alleviating these inequalities in the future (Brabazon, 2000: 56, emphasis in the original).

As a matter of principle, I support the general thrust of Brabazon’s position. However, I suggest that the dilemma she identifies between writing about Indigenous culture and writing about her understanding of her place in Australian
history and contemporary society is made all the more problematic because she conflates Indigenous culture with white/Aboriginal history. While I do not mean to suggest that Indigenous cultures are not informed by the history of colonisation and relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, I do suggest there is a clear distinction between speaking for Indigenous culture and speaking to the ways identities are produced out of this history. Autobiographicalising the text is one means by which we can articulate recognition of our accountability in the face of this.

Further, the autobiographicalisation of the text is a response to my obligation to observe Aboriginal protocols in storytelling. As Wendy Brady has written in reply to the non-Aboriginal propensity to authorise and editorialise Aboriginal peoples’ stories, “[w]hen I speak of sharing our stories or finding common ground through them this does not mean that it becomes the opportunity for non-Indigenous academics to colonise our storytelling. The ideal response would be to acknowledge the gift of the story through reciprocity which means giving a story in return” (Brady, 1998: online). Thus, this observance of protocol recognises and affirms my place within Indigenous Sovereignty and a preparedness to operate within the rules and obligations this recognition necessitates.

I have already noted the importance of storytelling and testimony as critical Indigenist methodological and epistemological priorities. Indeed, numerous published autobiographies by Aboriginal people and biographies co-authored with non-Aboriginal people continue to play a crucial role in representing the
diversity of Aboriginal experiences in negotiating the impact of colonisation and ongoing racism; evidencing cultural survival; challenging the white Australian mythologies of *terra nullius* and peaceful settlement; witnessing the devastation of the stolen generations and other human rights abuses; celebrating the achievements of political and community leaders and other important role models; and documenting the contribution of Aboriginal people to mainstream Australian life. Examples of this include Sally Morgan’s *My Place* (1988); Margaret Tucker’s *If Everyone Cared* (1977); Boori Pryor’s *Maybe Tomorrow* (1998); Langford-Ginibi’s *Don’t Take Your Love to Town* (1988); Rita and Jackie Huggins’ *Auntie Rita* (1996); Glenyse Ward’s *Wandering Girl* (1993); Kinnane, Marsh and Nannup’s *When the Pelican Laughed* (2000), Stephen Kinnane’s *Shadow Lines* (2003), Keeffe’s *Paddy’s Road* (2003); Eric Hayward’s *No Free Kicks* (2006), and Sean Gorman’s *Brother Boys* (2005)\(^{37}\). Each one of these texts (and many more) challenges the dominant, hegemonic narrative of white Australian history, culture and national identity, and exposes the silences the dominant narrative strives to protect.

My point here is, however, that the responsibility to tell these stories, and perform the political and cultural work of these stories, lies disproportionately with Aboriginal people. As a result, non-Aboriginal people are largely unburdened by the emotional responsibilities and consequences for telling these stories, as this interview extract with Ruby Langford-Ginibi attests:

> Well, it took me four and a half years plus one near nervous breakdown from writing up all the hurt and the death. I was writing about the death of my kids, and I was recovering from major surgery on my stomach. They

\(^{37}\) It is worth noting here that the non-Aboriginal co-authors referenced here all have ongoing personal and professional relationships with Aboriginal people.
pulled the guts out of me literally, you might say, but I was real stressed out, that’s how I came to be here at Allawah Hostel. At the time I used to live in Henderson Road, Alexandria, and it got so bad I had to go and see someone to talk to, a psychologist, but I was telling him what was wrong with me. I knew what was wrong with me. He said, “Look, it’s only just stress that you’re suffering. It will get better, in time it will, you really know what’s wrong with you.” I was sitting down and crying and telling him while I was crying that I was suffering, mourning for my kids all over because of writing this book, and he said, “Well, it will get better, it’s only just stress. When I got to this hostel here, I had nothing, not like you see today. This is my seventh year here and ah, jeez you can accumulate some stuff, aye?” (Little, 1994: 101-102).

I argue that non-Aboriginal people also have a responsibility to tell our stories; both when they are hard to tell and because they are hard to tell. I argue that this observance of protocol signals a genuine desire to engage with Aboriginal people in an inter-personal, empathetic and emotionally appropriate way. In a sense then, storytelling is not just about the cultivation of knowledge in the ‘objective’ academic sense; it is also about nurturing and sustaining substantive, meaningful, intercultural relationships.

Finally, the autobiographicalisation of this text works to meet my ethical responsibility to step out from behind the veil of academic, ‘racial’ and cultural neutrality and declare my subjectivity as a non-Aboriginal person. Here, I am borrowing from Nicholl’s concept of the ‘autobiographicalisation’ of texts and voices (2000: 370), and her “coming out” as a white woman (2000: 380). Nicholl contends that the “autobiographicalisation of difference” occurs when the work of Indigenous and NESB (non-English speaking background) writers is
juxtaposed against the dominant group’s “‘universal’ narrative forms that are unmarked by corporeal or cultural specificity” (2000: 270).

In contrast to Nicholl, I argue it is precisely the unmarked voice of the dominant group that gives it corporeal and cultural specificity. As Rebecca Aanerud notes with reference to whiteness in literature, “…all readers…until very recently and regardless of the race of the author, have been positioned as white…[and]…unless told otherwise, the reader, positioned as white, assumes the characters are white. (Un)marked whiteness is, of course, a type of marking”. We know when characters are white “because no body says so”. Moreover, this marking is made clear by the visibility of the boundary that contains the white group; “the overt racial marking of the non-white characters” (Aanerud, 1997: 37).

Despite this small difference of opinion, I take the salient point of Nicholl’s thesis when she writes that the formal, passive voice of academic writing maintains authority because it is positioned as the official arbiter of competing or contested ‘perspectives’. Contrasted with this then, the active voices of Indigenous writers who speak in terms of the first person can only constitute a perspective. That is, a perspective to be mediated and moderated by the ‘neutral’, detached voice of the white, academic authoriser (2000: 371).

Nicholl seeks to undermine her white authority by telling of her struggle to “come out” (2000: 282) from the protection of the passive voice and declare her

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38 It is, of course, important to note that some Australian non-Aboriginal academics writing in the area of Indigenous studies recognised the importance of autobiographicalising their work. Two examples include Saunders, Huggins and Tarago (2000, pp 39-58), and Sean Gorman (2005).
subjectivity as a white woman. Although she does not say as much, by making overt statements about her whiteness, rather than just leaving it up to imagination of her readers and audiences, she is in fact, autobiographicalising her difference as a white woman. And, what’s more, she’s empowered by it.

The relief I experienced in coming out…was linked to the realisation that my whiteness was something that Indigenous people had always known about me. Finally the mental gymnastics of unconscious whiteness could cease…. The upside of coming out is that I no longer have to be good and have found a community of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people where I can speak in the first person…and be listened to (Nicholl, 2000: 282).

Beyond the grammatical devise of writing in the active voice, the insertion of my stories into this work is the autobiographicalisation of this thesis. They are my coming out as a non-Aboriginal person. It is my hope that these stories will personalise my academic voice: that they will explain, entertain, amuse and dismay. I also join my stories with those of other whitefellas. In sharing these stories, I claim my belonging to a community of non-Aboriginal/Indigenous people.
My name is Sol Belear and I’ve been a good friend of Ted's and the St Vincent’s Church for quite some time. But I must say here early this morning I seen all these white men in white robes and crucifixes. The last time we had that down here is when the Klu [sic] Klux Clan was here. (laughter).\(^3^9\) (Compass transcript, April, 2006, accessed 27.09.2007)

\(^3^9\) From the Eulogy given at Father Ted Kennedy’s funeral, 2006. Father Ted Kennedy was a Catholic Priest who ministered to the Aboriginal community in Redfern, an inner city suburb of Sydney.
Chapter 2:

The Reassertion of Colonialism through the Abolition of Whiteness

Introduction:

The purpose of this chapter is to contextualise my argument for the creation of the non-Aboriginal subject as a response to critical whiteness studies. I argue that there are significant limitations within critical whiteness studies allowing the resuscitation and continuation of colonialist ideologies informing relations between Aboriginal people and the invader/settler society. Further, I argue, the limitations within critical whiteness studies curtail the potential for anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality. In order to advance my argument, I provide a case study of the New Race Abolitionists.

The New Race Abolitionists make an important case study for this chapter for a number of inter-dependent reasons. Firstly, providing New Race Abolitionism as a case study allows for a closer examination of the general concerns I raised with regard to critical whiteness studies in the Introduction. Secondly, by focusing on the New Race Abolitionists, I provide myself with a forum for contextualising the political intent of the autobiographies featured within this thesis.

In this chapter, I begin by outlining the intersecting relationship between my ‘whiteness’, my political beliefs and some of the ways I conceive my ‘belongings’. I acknowledge there may appear to be a synergy between the ‘left’ agenda of the New Race Abolitionists and my own left-wing political viewpoints. However, as will become clear, any possible collusion in political
direction is superficial. The storytelling included in this chapter enables me to provide a personal framework for my critique of the New Race Abolitionists. Further to this, the storytelling included in this chapter foregrounds subsequent stories included in this thesis and the broader political and theoretical direction of my argument.

Thirdly, despite the influence of American scholarship in whiteness studies on Australian work, to date there is very little engagement with the New Race Abolitionist movement from an Australian perspective. Some notable exceptions include a feature article published in the ‘Spectrum’ section of the *Sydney Morning Herald* in February 2000 by Debra Jopson; Jane Haggis’ critique of Vron Ware’s advocacy of abolishing whiteness through hybridity (2004a and 2004b); Bob Pease’s reference to Abolitionism in his 2004 article *Decentring White Men: Critical Reflections on Masculinity and White Studies*; and, a passing reference in the Introduction to Ghassan Hage’s text *Against Paranoid Nationalism* (2003: 5). Thus, I argue that we are currently without a substantive analysis of the efficacy of the New Race Abolitionists in undermining the colonialist hegemony in invader societies such as ours. I offer

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40 Here Hage promotes the idea of ‘Race Traitor’ as an opportunity for non-Indigenous Australians to ‘cross over’ into Indigeneity (2003: 5). While I explain the significance of ‘race traitor’ and ‘crossing over’ later in this chapter, for Hage, “becoming Indigenous” (2003: 5) provides a means to explore the nexus between dominant versions of remembering Australian national history and Aboriginal remembrances and acknowledging they may not be commensurable to white remembering. Becoming Indigenous is, according to Hage, “a symbolic tipping of the balance between the coloniser and the colonised” (2003: 4-5). As I argue in the following chapter, the idea of non-Indigenous people appropriating an Indigenous identity is not a new one. For over a century, the construction of white Indigeneity has been profoundly linked to the Indigenisation of white national identity, establishing national legitimacy. Ultimately, this manoeuvre works to uphold the power of white sovereignty. However, Hage’s reference to Race Traitor marks a new discursive framework by which constructions of white Indigeneity are mooted.
my engagement with New Race Abolitionism as a means to articulate a specific Australian response and in the spirit of dialogue with this corpus of work.

Fourth, the New Race Abolitionists make a useful case study because of the focus they give to problematising the nexus between theorising whiteness, and promoting anti-white activism. As such, they occupy a unique position amongst those investigating whiteness. Indeed, as Flores and Moon argue, one of the prevailing concerns with whiteness studies is that it has failed to deliver a “compelling vision of a liberatory whiteness” (2000: 99) that motivates white identifying people to mobilise against white power. However, I argue the activist methods promoted by New Race Abolitionists are counter-productive when applied in the Australian context. There are a number of reasons for this.

New Race Abolitionists propose that disassociating with the inherent evil of whiteness necessitates ‘crossing over’ to the intrinsic goodness of blackness. In broad terms, I argue ‘crossing over’ validates the appropriation of another’s identity as an expression of political solidarity, without sufficient understanding that this appropriation is in and of itself an act of power. I have already pointed to this with reference to Ghassan Hage and his suggestion that white Australians should appropriate Indigeneity (see above). Given that I develop issues relating to the appropriation of Indigenous identity in the following chapter, I do not pursue this argument here.

In this chapter, I argue ‘crossing over’ constitutes a simplistic reversal in the attribution of human qualities according to one’s skin colour. This reversal does
little to challenge the validity of colour as a system of social organisation, reinscribes the binary relationship between white and black, and ultimately ensures the epistemological centredness of whiteness. I argue the epistemological centredness of whiteness is protected because it maintains the power to universalise the definitions of whiteness as both a physical descriptor for skin colour and as a metaphor for a system of social organisation and power.

Take, for example, this definition offered by Thompson et al. They write:

…whiteness identifies those who are light skinned, with Western European physical features…. The experience of whiteness…is one of unearned privileges which all white people receive in various ways due to racism. A light skinned “white” person who experiences race privileges may or may not buy into the ideology of whiteness as a system of exploitation based on white supremacy. However, that person cannot separate her/himself from the experience of being white, since we live and breathe the privileges every day (Thompson et al, 1997: 357, emphasis in the original).

Consequently, all light skinned people are assumed to share in the power and prestige of whiteness equally. This negates the experience of cultural racism experienced by cosmically ‘white’ Aboriginal people and undermines the significance of Aboriginal cultural knowledge, affiliations, kinship connections and insider knowledge produced by colonised peoples as primary modes of self-identification. Moreover, universalising the experience of whiteness as one of ‘unearned privileges’ compromises recognising Aboriginal incursions into whiteness as ‘strategic whiteness’ (a mode of engagement with the ideology of whiteness that protects cultural difference), and assumes an affirmation of cultural assimilation.

I also argue ‘crossing over’ into blackness encourages a mode of political identification that disassociates whiteness from historical memory and context.
(Alcoff, 1998: 8). In Australia, this is antithetical to the original goals of reconciliation which sought to bring greater awareness of Aboriginal dispossession and disenfranchisement to the white Australian community, proposed a formal document or Treaty and pledged to address the chronic social disadvantage experienced by most Aboriginal people because of colonisation. Thus, this ahistoricity works to support the punitive, neo-colonial objectives of ‘practical reconciliation’, which refuses an affirmation of Aboriginal Sovereignty by rejecting the importance of a Treaty, undermines the importance of a broad acceptance of Australia’s history within the broader community and makes improvements in Aboriginal peoples’ quality of life contingent upon assimilation.

Finally, I argue that the New Race Abolitionists’ advocacy for strategic alliances between anti-whiteness and pro-white activists is intensely problematic. In the first instance, I argue such alliances are at odds with Australia’s international treaty obligations, specifically the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racism (ICERD). More specifically though, I argue such alliances ask anti-whiteness/anti-racist/pro-reconciliation Australians to forge strategic alliances with pro-white organisations at the expense of developing relationships with Aboriginal people. I argue that in an Australian context, to focus on such alliances negates the imperative for members of the invader/settler society to engage in meaningful, intercultural, intersubjective dialogues with Aboriginal people. Indeed, I suggest it fundamentally shifts our focus away from being in Aboriginal Sovereignty and towards being in the sovereignty of those who would see violence committed against Aboriginal people in pursuit of their own
political agenda. With regard to the New Race Abolitionists, the political agenda is driven by a desire to destroy the white, American, capitalist state.

The following discussion on New Race Abolitionism contextualises my argument for anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality because it is a revealing counterpoint to the model I propose. As I argue in Chapter Four, anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality are formed out of meaningful dialogic relationships with Aboriginal people, in full cognisance of Aboriginal peoples’ status as Sovereign subjects. I also argue, non-Aboriginality is a political process of identity formation that opposes the appropriation of Indigeneity by members of the invader/settler society; rejects ‘race’ and its commonly accepted signifiers as means of categorising and stratifying human beings; is not dependent upon ‘colour’ in order to determine cultural or political affiliation; is historically located within the dispossession and disenfranchisement of Aboriginal people; and, is committed to developing a politically useful praxis that supports human rights, social justice and the self-determination objectives of Aboriginal people. Moreover, anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality recognise the legitimacy of invader/settler peoples’ belongings is contingent upon all of the above occurring.

**Chapter Overview:**

The following discussion is broken into three parts. In the first section, I introduce two of the New Race Abolitionists’ principal proponents, John Garvey and Noel Ignatiev. I also outline the broad political philosophy and ideological
influences informing the Abolitionist manifesto and provide an overview of their theoretical framework and their methodology for social change.

Following this introductory overview, I foreground my analysis of the New Race Abolitionists with an autobiographical account that situates both my political beliefs and my whiteness within this thesis. In so doing, I seek to reveal the personal and political framework through which I problematise my whiteness and my belongings. In this instance, my whiteness is articulated through paternal kinship line, and is made manifest in my relationship to my Grandfather’s second wife, Val, who was from India. However, it also turns out that my paternal kinship lines provides a site through which I forge my political belongings insofar as my Grandfather’s political activism (he was a committed communist and trade union activist) provides a ‘lineage’ to my own left-wing political beliefs. Moreover, this story reveals that both my whiteness and politics constitute intersecting modes of belonging that further provide the means through which I negotiate my sense of place within broader political, social and institutional milieus. The examples I provide include a progressive left-wing radio station in Melbourne, 3CR, where I worked for a number of years as a volunteer and paid employee, and Sydney University (an Australian sandstone university), where I undertook my Masters degree. In providing this account, I contextualise my response to the New Race Abolitionists on a personal and political level. On face value, it would appear that because of my political beliefs I would find substance in what the New Race Abolitionists have to offer: another political belonging if you will. However, as will become clear throughout the course of this thesis, this personal explanation is part of a bigger
narrative trajectory, one that reveals the theoretical and methodological
limitations of the New Race Abolitionists (and, more generally, other white race
deconstruction theories) when it comes to negotiating whiteness and belonging in
the locus of Indigenous Sovereignty.

In the final section, I provide my critique of New Race Abolitionism. I focus my
analysis on key elements of the New Race Abolitionist program. This includes a
critical engagement with the notion of race traitors ‘crossing over’ from
whiteness into blackness and a condemnation of the New Race Abolitionists’
insistence that anti-whiteness activism necessitates forming strategic alliances
with white-race supremacist and militia organisations.

The New Race Abolitionists: An Overview

New Race Abolitionism is an academic and activist movement, generated in the
United States, which purports a radical methodology for social change. The New
Race Abolitionists’ journal, Race Traitor, is promoted (by Abolitionists) as the
movement’s “intellectual center”, encouraging debate and supporting practical
anti-whiteness measures (Garvey and Ignatiev, 1996: 10). Race Traitor attracts
interest amongst “academics, grassroots activists, rightwing militia types,
prisoners, students and others” (Flores and Moon, 2000: 101). As such, it is
credited with promoting a ‘class inclusiveness…rarely found in leftist journals”
(Alcoff, 1998: 14). Race Traitor is available on the internet, and you do not need
a subscription to access it (see http://www.racetraitor.org ). Additionally, Race
Traitor articles are regularly reprinted or referred to in anarchist journals and
‘zines (Alcoff, 1998: 14). By way of gauging Race Traitor’s acceptance within
academic and literary circles, it is worth noting that numerous prominent scholars have contributed articles to the journal. In addition, an anthology of articles published in *Race Traitor* in 1996 won the 1997 American Book Award (Garvey and Ignatiev, 1996).

Both of *Race Traitor*’s founding editors, John Garvey and Noel Ignatiev, have backgrounds in grass-roots activism and currently hold academic positions. Noel Ignatiev, who assumes a more public role in promoting the Abolitionist credo, worked in the labour movement in Chicago for decades. His PhD dissertation, *How the Irish Became White*, describes “the process of Americanization as an accommodation to “whiteness” – how immigrants became American by distancing themselves from Blacks, thereby achieving the privileges that accrue to the white skin” (West, circa 1998: 178). Despite being a member of the academy, Ignatiev’s commitment is to ‘abolish’ whiteness rather than ‘study’ it (West, circa 1998: 178).

There are several important points to make about the New Race Abolitionists’ political philosophy. Variously described as “libertarian anarchist” (Alcoff, 1998: 14) and “Marxist/neo-Marxist” (Flores and Moon, 2000: 100), Garvey and Ignatiev are avowed anti-capitalists who argue ‘whiteness’ is an oppressive ideological tool “used by the wealthy and powerful” to prevent the white proletariat from recognising their shared class interests with working blacks (Alcoff, 1998: 14). As Ignatiev argues:

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41 No biography is available for John Garvey.
42 Noel Ignatiev is Professor of History at Massachusetts College of Art. Prior to this he was Professor of History at Harvard University. He completed his PhD at Harvard in 1995.
Although I talk about “white privilege,” I do not deny that poor whites have been exploited. After all, the United States, like every modern society, is composed largely of masters and slaves. The problem is that many of the slaves think they are part of the master class, simply because they partake of the privileges of the white skin. The fact is, whiteness has not brought freedom and dignity to the majority of European Americans in this country; whiteness has been a substitute of freedom and dignity. It does not exempt people from exploitation; it reconciles them to it. It is for those who have nothing else (circa 1998: 199-200).

However, despite its apparent leftist agenda, the New Race Abolitionists also embrace philosophies that are more typical of the far right, such as the right to bear arms and the valorisation of American ‘lawlessness’ (Garvey and Ignatiev, 1996: 95).

The New Race Abolitionist movement is an anti-white movement as distinct to an anti-racist one. Abolitionists reject anti-racism and the views of those who promote inter-racial harmony. This, they argue, represents an adherence to the fallacious category of race, which in turn enables the myth of the ‘white race’ and thus, white power. For the New Race Abolitionists, the abolition of the white State is critical to the abolition of whiteness. As Flores and Moon observe:

Their critique of the State and its institutions also extends to liberal efforts to reform the system which they see as un reformable. In their view, efforts to eradicate white supremacy that do not include opposition to the State only reinforce the authority of the state, which they position as the most important agency in maintaining racial oppression (2000: 102).

New Race Abolitionists dismiss those who attempt to mediate the worst excesses and demonstrations of white power (such as the KKK⁴³) as liberal reactionaries. “Race”, they insist, “is not the work of racists”, but is made and remade by social institutions on a daily basis (Garvey and Ignatiev, 1996: 179, emphasis added).

⁴³ Ku Klux Klan, an American based white race supremacy organisation.
They argue that social workers, the education system, welfare workers, the labour market, the media and the criminal justice system all have vested interests in preserving the status-quo, and are therefore part of the problem, not the solution (see Flores and Moon, 2002: 192-193; Garvey and Ignatiev, 1996: 180).

New Race Abolitionists hold the abolition of whiteness as pivotal to the elimination of white (race) privilege and racism. For them, the successful abolition of whiteness is contingent upon the recognition that ‘white’ is not a legitimate racial or ethnic identity; it is simply constructed as such in order to disguise that it is a marker for power. As the self-proclaimed Abolitionist David Roediger writes, “[i]t is not merely that whiteness is oppressive and false; it is that whiteness is nothing but oppressive and false….it is the empty and terrifying attempt to build an identity on what one isn’t and on whom one can hold back” (Roediger, 1994, c.f. Winant, 1997: 47).

Abolitionists believe that because whiteness is socially constructed it can be deconstructed through repeated acts of non-compliance with the power of whiteness. Because New Race Abolitionism is a subversive political movement, it does not require unanimous support from white identifying people. Rather, the abolition of whiteness requires that enough people work to obfuscate the meaning of whiteness (through acts of non-compliance) to the point where it can no longer work as a system of social organisation (Garvey and Ignatiev, 1996: 11).

One example of non-compliance is the call for white Abolitionists to ‘cross over’ from whiteness into blackness. Crossing over is represented as an act of political
solidarity with blacks insofar as it signifies a rejection of white race privilege and recognition of the oppression of black people because of whiteness. One Abolitionist writer, Phil Rubio, provides a discussion on representations of ‘crossing over’ in American popular culture. Rubio distinguishes those who poorly mimic black culture (as in minstrelsy) (Rubio, 1996:151), and those whose crossing over represents white cultural subversion and “a political defection from the white race” (Rubio, 1996: 161). Rubio provides a range of examples from music (the white Jazz Clarinetist Milton Mezzrow self-identified as a “voluntary Negro”) (Rubio, 1996: 152); sport (he attributes the white basketball player Bobby Hurley as a purveyor of the “black basket ball aesthetic”) (Rubio, 1996: 160); and film. With reference to the films the Blues Brothers and The Commitments Rubio writes:

There is a serious message in all this comedy. Spiritual expressions of musical inspiration are not new or uniquely African. What’s unique here is the use of African-American culture by whites to find the spirit, and hence the humanity, they feel they’ve lost. Besides just having a good time, these characters, like earlier generations of abolitionists and civil rights workers, see themselves on a “mission from God,” to free so-called white people from a culture of guilt and shame. White supremacist culture has created the conditions for its opposite to arise and destroy it (1996: 156).

Another example of non-compliance is the Cop Watch Program. The Cop Watch Program ‘watches’ cops for evidence of corruption, racism and discrepancies in the treatment of black and white citizens. Ostensibly, when white people ‘watch cops’ it signifies a forfeiture of the favourable treatment white people receive from the police simply because they are white. As Garvey and Ignatiev point out, “…if enough of those who looked white broke the rules of the [white] club to make the cops doubt their ability to recognize a white person merely by looking at him or her, how would this effect the cops behaviour? (1996: 13).
As a tactical devise, the Cop Watch Program serves two strategic purposes. Firstly, it offers a mechanism for personal agency in non-compliance with whiteness; a process by which one might ‘cross over’ into blackness. Secondly, it provides the means by which Abolitionists can mount insurgency against the white state. The police, as agents in the maintenance and administration of white power on behalf of the State are an obvious target. Undermining the authority of the police, and their capacity to enforce whiteness, undermines the capacity of the State to govern in the name of whiteness. Further to this, the New Race Abolitionists also advocate “treason”, calling Abolitionists to rise in armed insurrection against the white State. The imperative for “direct action” (Flores and Moon, 2002: 194) means the New Race Abolitionists seek out strategic military alliances with others who promote the demise of the State, including anarchists and neo-fascist organisations (Flores and Moon, 2002: 194-196).

Garvey and Ignatiev argue that the “conventional left” has lost its revolutionary impetus, and are in cahoots with the State, conspiring to provide intelligence reports on the activities of militia groups to law and order agencies. One such example of this is the Southern Poverty Law Centre, which claims to have “the most extensive computerised files on militias and hate groups in existence” (1996: 94). Complicity with such surveillance activities, argue Garvey and Ignatiev, render leftist organisations mere agents of the State, colluding in the oppression of its citizens. In juxtaposition, the militia groups provide the only genuinely radical voice in a conservative and reactionary society. They write:

[T]he militia movement is a rebellion against the massive, faceless, soul-destroying system that is sucking the life out of ordinary people in this country and around the world. Of course it carries with it danger as well as a promise. Insofar as it has a vision for the future, it is not ours. We do not underestimate the importance of this difference. But it has done more to shatter the image of government invulnerability than any other
development of recent times. That the “left” fails to see the potentials it reveals and does less than nothing to develop its own challenge to power is an index of its irrelevance…. From its first issue, Race Traitor has insisted that only the vision of a new world can compete with the fascists for the loyalty of those angry whites who think that nothing less…is worth fighting for. Abolitionists must draw a line between themselves and the “loyal opposition”. If they fail to do so, they will not be heard (Garvey and Ignatiev, 1996: 95).

Like all Revolutionary movements, New Race Abolitionists require martyrs. Throughout the literature, New Race Abolitionists evoke the story of Mark Twain’s fictional character, Huckleberry Finn, and the slavery abolitionist and leader of the Harper’s Ferry Rebellion (1859), John Brown, as inspirations for their cause. Indeed, both have entire editions of Race Traitor dedicated to them. Twain’s Huckleberry teaches that whites can break from “sivilization”, befriend black people, and “realize [their] inherent humanity” (Flores and Moon, 2000: 104). The story of John Brown teaches whites the value of violence in ending oppression and how to “organize and carry out the anti-whiteness revolution” (Flores and Moon, 2000: 105).

More recently, others such as Timothy McVeigh (otherwise know as the Unibomber after his bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City) are hailed as heroes to the Race Traitor cause. As John Garvey elaborates, McVeigh was an “American man at war with America” (2001: online). He targeted the federal building in Oklahoma City because it “housed agencies of the American Government that had been responsible for crimes against Americans (specifically, the incineration of Branch Davidians at Waco, Texas and the assault on the Weaver family in Ruby Ridge, Idaho)” such as the FBI and the ATF (2001: online).
In one *Race Traitor* article, Garvey paints a sympathetic picture of McVeigh, portraying him as man who has ultimately been denied the privileges his whiteness promised him. As Garvey explains, McVeigh was born in 1968 “and grew up in the suburbs of Buffalo”. By the time he was a young man he was unable to get a job at the factory where both his grandfather and father had worked, due to economic downturn. Facing the prospect of unemployment he joined the army and gained a reputation as an “excellent soldier” (Garvey, 2001: online). He saw service in Iraq and it is here he had his first experiences of killing people and was apparently traumatised by it. Garvey reports McVeigh as saying:

> [w]hat made me feel bad was, number one, I didn’t kill them in self-defense…. When I took a human life, it taught me these were human beings, even though they speak a different language and have different customs. The truth is, we all have the same dreams, the same desires, the same care for our children and family. These people were humans, like me, at the core” (2001: online).

More than this though, it seems McVeigh was “bothered” by being “part of a war that involved no direct threat to the United States” and he suspected that he was co-opted by a United Nations force that had a broader plan to “take over the world” (Garvey, 2001: online).

By the time McVeigh returned from the war he was “a different person…close to breaking down” (Garvey, 2001). After leaving the army, McVeigh drifted between States and jobs, working for a time at Burger King, “a salesman at a gun shop and gun shows” and a security guard (Garvey, 2001: online). Garvey sums up the significance of McVeigh’s story to the Race Traitor cause, writing:
Timothy McVeigh never claimed to be a race traitor but he does not appear to have been a white supremacist. He did not start a race war. He did not start a race riot. He did not participate in a lynching. He did not bomb a black church. He did not plant a white bomb. He killed people considered by the conventions of our time to be black and white. He probably never thought about it but he might not even have considered himself white. He lived and died at a time when whiteness had been splintered but had not yet been replaced by an anti-whiteness that could serve as the groundwork for a renewed American civilization. From the moment Timothy McVeigh set out from Buffalo to the moment he arrived in that same Oklahoma, he never had the benefit of sustained contact with the Jims of our day. Had he had it, he might have done something different from what he did. He might even have become the John Brown of our day. It’s a shame he didn’t. We all bear some of the responsibility (2001: online).

As for those innocent people who lost their lives at the hand of McVeigh in Oklahoma City, Garvey dismisses them as mere collateral damage; even the children who had been dropped off at the crèche on the ground floor of the Federal Building by parents on their way to work that day. In praise of McVeigh’s one-man-stand against the State Garvey writes:

That’s what happens in war. They all pay – even those whom no one believes should pay. Soldiers die and so do a lot of other people, including children, who play no active role in war making. Timothy McVeigh wanted a body count – the higher the better. The federal government he reasoned, had unlimited amounts of cash to replace buildings, but the lives of federal employees could not be replaced. He needed to deliver a quantity of causalities the federal government would never forget. It was the same tactic the federal government used in armed international conflicts, when it wanted to send a message to tyrants and despots. It was the United States government that had ushered in this new anything-goes mentality. McVeigh believed, and he intended to show the world what it would be like to fight a war under these new rules, right in the federal government’s own backyard (2001: online).

It is perhaps interesting to note that the convicted murderer Martin Bryant is championed as a cause celebre within some race hate organisations and gun rights lobbyists in Australia and comparisons have been made between him and Timothy McVeigh (Lateline transcript, May, 1999, accessed 23.1.2008).
Bryant’s ‘claim to fame’ is that he massacred innocent people in a brutal attack at Port Arthur in Tasmania.

A Story about Political Identity and Activism:

I begin this account with a story about one of my earliest memories of my Grandfather, my Dad’s dad. My story starts with Dad and I catching the bus to Grandpa’s house, on Cyril Street in Box Hill. I must have been little because I was in the pusher. The house Grandpa lived in was a housing commission house, built in the post-WW2 housing boom. This night Grandpa and a few of his union mates were sitting around sharing ‘longneck bottles’ of Melbourne bitter by tipping them into vegemite jars that had been recycled into drinking glasses.

Grandpa was a strange character, he was as ‘deaf as a post’ and lived in his own world of revolution and change, circulating in and amongst Carlton’s left community and plotting ways to overthrow the exploitative, capitalist state. For his troubles, he held a unique position within the family, somewhere between ridicule and admiration. Grandpa loved mankind but hated Catholics (he can be credited with teaching me the bigoted rhyme, “Mickey dog, Mickey dog, sitting on the Mickey log”). Years later I discovered that ‘Micks’ had the same rhyme for us, only they substituted the word ‘Proddie’ for ‘Mickey’). He marched alongside women’s liberationists in the 1970’s for equal pay and legalised abortion, but was an appalling misogynist. He said he believed in the equality of all people, but the first time I ever heard a racist verbal attack being committed was when he called Val, his second wife, who was from India, “A fuckin’ black cunt”.

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No one denied Grandpa’s bigotry. Instead, we accommodated it by valorising his commitment to working class struggle. The family joke was that Grandpa wouldn’t die until the revolution had arrived. We all ‘knew’ that if he didn’t get to build at least one barricade in the street then he would die an unhappy man. Robbie, Grandpa’s youngest daughter and the auntie closest to me in age and temperament captured this valorisation in a poem she wrote for Grandpa after he died.

Our Father

My brother told me
That when he and Nanette were kids
Our father would swim from the Mentone to Mordialloc pier
While the kids sat on the beach with icecreams in their hands
And the dog stole licks from each unguarded cone
That was years before the time when I was born
On the crest of my mother’s fortieth year
And far from the sea where we walked
My brother holding a case of ashes in his hands
All that remained of our father

I thought of him standing in the chill air
Under the clocks
Selling papers to the early workers
Agitating he called it
And wandering home with him to the tiny flat
To the rotting carpet, the coffee stained chipped cups
He never seemed to notice
And having another fight with him
Over the state of things
And going on the usual hunt for his damn hearing aid
I could hear whistling feebly beneath a pile of party room letters
While my batteries ran down with the weight of futility and

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44 This story reminds me of Mao swimming across the Yangtze River to prove his revolutionary fitness! I hasten to add though, Grandpa was no Maoist!
45 ‘The clocks’ are the clocks at the entrance of Flinders Street Station in Melbourne. Part of the original structure of the building, they are a Melbourne landmark and popular meeting place for people. As such, ‘the clocks’ is a Melbourne colloquialism. If I were to say, “meet you under the clocks at ten” I’d be meeting you at Flinders Street at ten o’clock. Grandpa used to sell the socialist newspaper *The Tribune* under the clocks.
Helplessness

And there on the beach with Terry, Julie, Nanette
The grandkids played in the shallows
My brother walked out
With the ashes
The ashes to send floating to sea
Ashes to float to Mordialloc pier
Under a satin shroud of twilight sky
And gold lined clouds
And one faint diamond star
And gazing up
At the whole grand pink gaudy insolent blaze
Of God’s great opulence
God’s own bloody flag
Said aloud
Too late you bastard
Too late.

I read this poem as a tribute to Grandpa’s political convictions and a lament for the loss of a man who could never really be the father my auntie wanted him to be. There are many reasons for this, and not-the-least was Grandpa’s preoccupation with politics. I know that when she passed this poem on to me that she had just recently obtained papers through freedom of information that ASIO had kept on him. I wonder if those papers weren’t some way of trying to access the heart and soul of a man she needed to understand as her dad.

My relationship with Grandpa wasn’t close, and my contact within him was intermittent. On the whole, the memories I have of him are refracted through the stories of others. It is telling, I think, that one of the last times I saw Grandpa was at Easter in 1985. I disembarked from the train at Flinders Street on my way to work. An old man came rushing up to me with a batch of fliers advertising the Palm Sunday Peace Rally. He was yelling, “give ya kids a future”. Tired and grumpy, (travelling down from the country to the city, I used to sleep on the
train) I was just about to yell back “what bloody kids?” when I realised it was Grandpa. In an uncanny way, this story serves as confirmation of those I have had passed on to me, and as an epitaph to the man I know primarily through stories.

I have always been a trade unionist, and my politics can be described as ‘left’. For want of a better alternative, I attribute Grandpa as the provenience of my political beliefs. In so doing, I give an important part of who I am and what I believe a genealogy (an essentialism if you will). I also give my self a connection to a man I barely knew.

I don’t know how Grandpa met Val, or why they decided to marry. There is some talk in the family that Val needed a husband to stay in the county. As for Grandpa, I suspect he was in need of company and a cook. Whatever the case, when Val married into the family in the mid 1970’s she entered a white Australian world where Grandmothers’ expertise was measured in terms of their ability to roast legs of lamb and bake bread and butter puddings. When new babies came along, they applied themselves to the mass consumption of Patons 3 ply ‘Feathersoft Wool’ and number 10 knitting needles and began producing knitted booties, bonnets and matinee jackets. Prior to the birth of the new infant, everything would be white or pastel lemon. Subsequently, and upon knowing the baby’s sex, a final knitting frenzy resulted in complementary pastel pink or blue coordinating outfits. Where buttons were required, they were always tiny faux-pearl shanks and ribbons were soft and silky-satin (and inevitably became
knotted and frayed when teething babies began to suck on them at about 6 months!).

Val apparently didn’t know any of this, and it seems that Grandpa omitted bringing her up to speed. So, on those rare occasions when we were at Cyril Street, (the exterior of which had, by now, been painted bright green and red; Val’s exotic Indian influence we thought) Dad, the only son, was fed an enormous bowl of curried chicken and rice, which had been bulked up with these revolting fibrous pulses called lentils. This of course was a radical departure from the obligatory mashed potatoes that accompanied every meal at home. My sister and I were spared this foray into international cuisine – curry being too hot for kids – so we got mince on toast instead. But, for dessert, we would all be treated to coconut tapioca jelly that had the colour and texture of ‘dissected brains’ (as my sister and I used to call it). On the way home, we’d laugh and ridicule Val’s cooking. Poor woman, what was she thinking? We’d reason that in India she’d been married to a bloke who was “high up” in the army, had probably had servants and hadn’t learnt how to cook. “Poor thing”, we’d muse. Then, the laughter would start again with the umpteenth retelling of the time she got confused in a supermarket and fed Grandpa curried cat food for a week!

The first baby in the family who Val knitted for was my youngest sister, Hannah. Hannah was born in 1978 at a time when baby wear was changing from traditional pastels to brighter, more ‘stimulating’ colours. Apart from making some minor fashion statement for the up-and-coming toddler, the modern penchant for bright colours was apparently part of some claim that they would
teach babies to focus their eyes sooner. Well, the vivid green dress Val knitted
Hannah was positively dazzling! Constructed out of scratchy polyester yarn
from Fossey’s, if it didn’t teach her to focus it would most certainly blind her!
Val was thanked and the dress was promptly deposited into Hannah’s wardrobe.
To the best of my knowledge, Hannah never wore the dress, although I saw the
odd teddy bear in it years later.

Like Val’s curries, the story of the knitted dress was one that circulated in our
family from time to time. On the surface, they were funny stories; the type
families tell as part of characterising the distinctive idiosyncrasies of its
members. Equally, funny stories are a way of teasing family members, of
causing mild embarrassment to induce conformity: a way of signaling to a
recalcitrant individual that you have deviated too far and it’s time to ‘pull ya
head in’. But, it is my belief that the stories about Val had a bit more depth to
them than that. Like a pool where you can’t quite see the bottom, I think, that the
stories and laughter were a surreptitious form of humiliation where we’d separate
Val’s differentness from our sameness. Far from conspiring to induce her
conformity they reinforced our belief that she could never conform and therefore
she could never really belong. Val could never really be the same as one of the
Grandmothers because she wasn’t white enough and she never would be because
she couldn’t cook white or knit white.

It took many years for me to understand that our family’s attitudes towards Val
were racist. Previously, I had failed to even recognise that there was an ‘attitude’
at all. Sometime during the mid 1990’s when I first began accessing critical
whiteness studies as part of my Masters degree in Gender Studies, I was introduced to Vron Ware’s work, *The White Woman’s Burden* (1992). In a subsequent piece of writing, *Island Racism: Gender, Place and White Power* (1997), Ware explores contemporary manifestations of racism in post-colonial England, and focuses on the ways white women’s racism manifests. Ware argues that expressions of racism are gendered and as such, it is:

…important to go beyond the idea of women being drawn into actively or passively supporting racism as an aspect of their subordination to men…[and that] it might be more productive to analyze gender and racism in relation to a particular place and time in order to demonstrate the intricacies of social relations that give rise to white supremacist activity (1997: 307).

Not surprisingly, Ware identifies the domestic sphere as an important site for white women to express their racism. Frequently, white women complained about the smells of food coming from their Asian neighbours’ homes and made spurious accusations about low levels of hygiene. Ware writes, “most of the intolerable habits involve domestic space; smells, spitting, cockroaches, and the bringing in of disease all represent threats to the home” (Ware, 1997: 300). In this instance, threats to the home are analogous to threats to the nation and the nation’s whiteness. Perhaps it is useful to remember when Val became a member of our family, Australia was in the dying days of the White Australia Policy and multiculturalism was becoming acceptable.

In addition to Ware’s analysis, I argue that not only are expressions of racism gendered, the targets for racist expression are also gendered so that the racism can be essentialised with greater ‘precision’. Gendering racism creates the

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46 Remembering here that ‘Asian’ in a British context often means Indian or Pakistani.
illusion of accuracy, and lends an apparent credibility to racist thoughts, words and actions. Also, gendering racism creates parallel sites for the objectification of those who are being positioned in opposition to the white self. For example, attacks on food and knitting are a way of gendering racism and this serves as a way of de-feminising women through their ‘race’. As such, women are not only deprived of their racial or cultural identity, they are deprived of their gendered identity as well. By identifying Val through her Indian cooking and sense of colour and aesthetics, we isolated her from her role as Grandmother, thus her role as a senior woman within the family. Far from being able to separate the racism and sexism Val experienced, the oppressions we subjected her to were interlocking and interconnected. Remember, my Grandfather had called her a fuckin’ black cunt.

What makes this especially sad in my mind is that Val never had children of her own. We could have been her chance to be a Grandmother if we had opened our hearts to her and understood the gigantic meals as her hunger to nurture, and the bright green baby’s dress as a luminous expression of love.

I was introduced to Vron Ware in the first year of my Masters in Women’s Studies degree at Sydney University. If memory serves me correctly, this was week three of our ‘Introduction to Feminist Studies’ core unit. It was the same week I was introduced to the work of bell hooks and Jackie Huggins. My introduction to feminism and feminist activism had come earlier than this though, and is a bit harder to put a date on. However, I can isolate my time working at the progressive, left wing community radio station in Melbourne as being formative
in my feminist instruction. At 3CR, I worked with strong women who had ‘been there in the ‘70’s’ and had a wealth of experience in collectivising and consensus building. Here I learnt to articulate feminist demands. We have a right to equal pay and industrial equity, the right to say no (to sex), the right to say yes (to sex), the right to free and safe contraception and abortion, and the right to freedom from male violence. I found my feminist voice and in so doing I found a natural home at 3CR. Here I could be a politicised, feminist, working class woman and be empowered in those identities. Little did I know, I could also be white. It was Jackie Huggins’ essays critiquing the colonising impulse of white women’s feminism that compelled greater self-reflection on my part. Huggins argued that the liberationist vision of white women’s feminism privileged the universal category of ‘woman’ and their oppression under patriarchy and in so doing negated the racist oppression experienced by Aboriginal women. Further, Huggins said the emphasis on patriarchal oppression was a convenient displacement of white women’s role in the colonisation and oppression of Aboriginal women. She argued as long as white women set the agenda for liberationist politics they would be blind to the fact that although the types of oppression endured by Aboriginal women were gender specific, Aboriginal women’s political priorities could not be separated from Aboriginal men’s and were a direct response to the legacy of colonisation and racism. Huggins claimed that as long as white women remained oblivious to these facts then our feminism was not only racist, it was another colonising ideology, negating the lived experiences and world views of Aboriginal women. In part, it is the ‘logic’ of Huggins’ argument that informs my critique of the New Race Abolitionists.

47 It is also important to note that 3CR provided airtime to other minority broadcast groups including ‘ethnic’ (as they were referred to) and Aboriginal broadcasters. However, the community I identified and associated with at 3CR was the women’s/feminist community.
insofar as I argue that many ‘white’ people are blind to the neo-colonial
tendencies of their own anti-whiteness, ostensibly liberationist theories (Huggins, 1994).

I had moved to Sydney in 1993 to work at 2SER-FM, a major metropolitan
community radio station, allegedly with leftist politics and an activist agenda. Thinking that I’d moved to the Sydney equivalent of 3CR, I was disillusioned when I found I had in fact come upon a ‘groovy’ inner-city life-style station that catered more to urban/e subcultures than it did to pressing and profound social justice objectives.

However, 2SER-FM did open a door for me that possibly would not have been opened had I stayed in Melbourne. In 1996, we started working with a group of media students from Tranby Aboriginal College. This was my first experience in working closely with Kooris, and in not-so-straight-forward ways led to the development of friendships with some Kooris and Murris living in Sydney. Later in 1996, I spent a month living in Alice Springs, working at CAAMA (Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association) as a radio trainer/mentor. It was because of these experiences that I began to make a range of other life choices, including choices about my academic direction and growth. Alongside this came new ways of perceiving and conceiving my identity, both within and outside of the academy. But wait, I am getting ahead of myself here. I pick up this part of the story in Chapter Four, when I talk not so much about the importance of seeing my whiteness, but about my non-Aboriginality. For now, I want to turn my attention back to the New Race Abolitionists.
**An ‘Abolition’ of Identity:**

In this section, I critically engage with the limitations of the New Race Abolitionists’ methodology for anti-white activism. I argue the theoretical and methodological framework offered by Abolitionists serves to reinscribe the epistemological centredness of whiteness and in an Australian context this translates into the perpetuation of colonialist ideologies that continue to inform power relations between Aboriginal people and members of the invader/settler society. My discussion focuses on three inter-connected elements, including the political value of ‘crossing over’ from whiteness into blackness; a critique of the ahistoricity of identifying as a race traitor vis-à-vis practical reconciliation; and, the proposition that anti-white activists should activate strategic alliances between themselves and race hate organisations.

In the initial stages of my discussion, I draw on critiques offered by the American scholars Linda Martin Alcoff\(^48\) (1998), and Lisa Flores\(^49\) and Dreama Moon\(^50\) (2000 and 2002). In so doing, I acknowledge the role their work plays in informing the general direction of my analysis. However, given the purpose of my discussion is to offer an Australian critique of the New Race Abolitionists, I also draw on a range of literature from both Indigenous and other Australian writers. These include Wendy Holland\(^51\) (1996), Lynette Rodriguez\(^52\) (2004),

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\(^48\) Professor Linda Martin Alcoff teaches in the Political Science faculty at the Maxwell School, Syracuse University. Her primary research interests are continental philosophy, epistemology, feminist theory and philosophy of race.

\(^49\) Associate Professor Lisa Flores teaches in communication at the University of Utah. Her research interests include gender studies and feminist theory, masculinity, critical race theory and whiteness studies.

\(^50\) Dreama Moon teaches as California State University, San Marco in the College of Arts and Sciences/Communication.

\(^51\) Wendy Holland teaches in the School of Social Sciences, at the University of Western Sydney. Her areas of expertise include cultural heritage and tourism and Indigenous Australian cultural studies.
Wendy Brady (1999), Dennis McDermott\(^3\) (2004) and Hannah McGlade\(^4\) (2000). I also draw on speeches made by Australian political leaders pertaining to reconciliation. In my discussion on practical reconciliation I draw on work by Robert Manne\(^5\) (2001), Jon Altman\(^6\) and Boyd Hunter\(^7\) (2003) Ian Anderson (2006) and Ruth McCausland\(^8\) (2005). While these writers and sources are not concerned with New Race Abolitionism, evidence provided in their work raises a number of salient points that go towards an explication of my critique.

The first point I make in my critique of New Race Abolitionism relates to the political efficacy of ‘crossing over’ from whiteness into blackness. As I have already discussed, crossing over is one means by which Abolitionists highlight the social constructedness of whiteness; register their non-compliance with the ideology, practice and privileges of whiteness; and, signify their political unanimity with oppressed peoples. Abolitionists articulate this process as ‘treason to the white race’ and politicise their anti-white selves by co-opting a ‘race traitor’ identity. While I recognise the value in appropriating a political identity that stands in contradistinction to whiteness, in the following discussion I argue there are a number of limitations integral to the Abolitionists’ approach

\(^5\) Lynette Rodriguez is Associate Professor for Aboriginal Studies at Notre Dame University (Australia), Broome Campus.
\(^6\) Dennis McDermott is a Koori psychologist, academic and poet. He is conjoint Professor in Indigenous Health at the University of New South Wales.
\(^7\) Hannah McGlade is a Nyungar Woman and human rights lawyer.
\(^8\) Robert Manne is a Professor of Politics at La Trobe University and one of Australia’s leading public intellectuals.
\(^9\) Professor Jon Altman is the Director of the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) at the Australian National University and his research interests include sustainable economic development and associated policy issues for Indigenous Australians, the Indigenous customary economy, Native Title and Indigenous land management.
\(^10\) Dr Boyd Hunter is a fellow at CAEPR. His research interests include labour market analysis, social economics and poverty research.
\(^11\) Ruth McCausland is a Senior Research Fellow at the Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning, University of Technology, Sydney. Her research interests include Indigenous policy, human rights and Indigenous peoples, international social justice and criminal justice issues.
that serve to reinscribe the epistemological centredness of whiteness. In the first instance, I draw on Flores and Moon (2000 and 2002) to argue the New Race Abolitionists apply a simplistic reversal of the essentialised qualities ascribed to skin colour so that whiteness becomes inherently ‘evil’ and blackness becomes essentially ‘good’. Consequently, colour is legitimised as a means to ascribe characteristics and personal (racialised) qualities to groups of human beings; essentialise (political) identities; and, maintain binary relationships between whiteness and blackness. Extrapolating on Flores and Moon, I further argue that crossing over essentialises ‘blackness’ as a marker for Aboriginality. This obscures the multifarious ways Aboriginal people experience racism, non-the-least of which includes the negation of Aboriginality when ‘blackness’ is not physically evident. Finally, crossing over assumes that white-looking people can actually surrender their whiteness in favour of blackness. As Kinloch and Steinberg argue, this is an absurdity, which only serves to highlight the very privilege of whiteness. They write:

Whites alone can opt out of their racial identity, can proclaimed [sic] themselves nonracial. Yet no matter how vociferously they may renounce their whiteness, white people do not lose the power associated with being white. Such a reality renders many white renunciations disingenuous (c.f. Flores and Moon, 2000: 107).

By way of extending Kinloch and Steinberg’s observation, I draw on Linda Martin Alcoff’s (1998) argument that ‘crossing over’ implies the right to control the black Other by co-opting their political autonomy. Further, I argue that because ‘crossing over’ insists on unidirectional movement between whiteness and blackness, it definitionally excludes Aboriginal peoples’ experiences and deployment of strategic whiteness as a means to intercede in the power of whiteness in their lives. Therefore, crossing over controls the right of access to
whiteness by non-white people, thereby preserving the power and privileges of whiteness for ‘white only’ use.

**Crossing Over**

It is not hard to understand the subversive appeal of the New Race Abolitionists. New Race Abolitionists provide a new political language for white people seeking ways to self-identify that are not dependent on whiteness to describe social, cultural and political locations and affiliation. As one Race Traitor has observed, “[y]ou’ve given me a new term for myself – RACE TRAITOR – and have forced me to think about issues which I haven’t touched in a long time” (Flores and Moon, 2002: 197).

Race Traitors purport to disengage from their whiteness in pursuit of a ‘cross over’ into blackness. Crossing over requires a convoluted process of *disidentification with whiteness; identification as a race traitor, followed by a reidentification as black*. Imbedded within these processes are a number of contradictions. Firstly, a commitment to the social construction of race is critical to the disidentification of whiteness. By way of signalling their disidentification from whiteness, race traitors begin to refer to themselves as “so called” whites” (Flores and Moon, 2000: 104). While this disassociation from whiteness signifies a ‘race traitor’ identity, it is clear that naming whiteness is necessary in locating their white selves within the lexicon of race. Moreover, Race Traitors keep the language of race in play because they seek to transcend whiteness in favour of blackness. This requires a re-inscription of human qualities through skin colour, which is enabled through a simplistic reversal of traditional binaries where all
‘good’ (‘humane’, ‘authentic’, ‘natural’, ‘defiant’) human attributes are assigned to ‘blackness’ (Flores and Moon, 2000: 108-109; Flores and Moon, 2002: 191) and ‘bad’ (‘tricked by the devil’, deranged’, ‘privilege of greed and domination’, anti-Christ’) human attributes are assigned to whiteness (Flores and Moon 2000: 102). Thus, at the precise moment Race Traitors seek to abolish whiteness through the appropriation of blackness, the discursive arrangements through which they pursue this abolition ensures the very fact of whiteness exists. As Flores and Moon write:

Too often race traitors reinscribe racial essentialisms and retain hierarchies based on superiority/inferiority and domination/subordination. Such entanglements are most vivid in Race Traitor’s reliance on the black/white binary….when race traitors reduce whiteness to a monolithic evil and simultaneously glorify a pure and humane blackness, they reinforce binary and relational notions of race. All that we know of whiteness and white experiences, as well of race and of Blackness comes through the juxtaposition of whiteness with blackness. So long as white is defined in relation to Black, the move to abolish whiteness through the “taking in of a little blackness” is made impossible. Blackness and whiteness still only exist in and through each other. Each, as the opposite of the other, is only understood in contrast. And while race traitors seek to escape skin color definition, that option is not available to Blacks. Instead, Blacks retain their essence, albeit a different one. More natural, more humane, Blacks remain colored; they are their skin. The main difference between the Race Traitor argument and traditional discussions of race is the inversion of power positions. Race Traitor, at least at the explicit level, promotes Blacks. However, latent power positions are not actually disrupted (2002: 198).

Within the discursive framework used by Race Traitors, monolithic notions of whiteness and blackness work to essentialise ‘blackness’ as the signifier for oppression. While this may serve the ideological purposes of white people seeking an alternative, anti-white site for political identification, it sheds little light on the multifarious ways Aboriginal people negotiate whiteness, blackness, Aboriginality and racism in their lives. I argue, essentialised understandings of
blackness as oppression universalises Aboriginality as blackness. This both
negates the experiences of ‘cosmetically white’ Aboriginal people, and absorbs
Aboriginal peoples’ engagement with ‘strategic whiteness’ into a victorious
claim for assimilation.

Connected to this argument are problems of universalising our understanding of
whiteness. The assumption that all ‘white looking’ people share in the power of
their whiteness equally (see Thompson et al, 1997: above) normalises the
definition of whiteness to the exclusion of those whose experiences of their
‘cosmetic’ whiteness represents anything but empowerment and privilege. I
argue totalising definitions of whiteness conceal the various ways racism is
performed in societies where whiteness is understood to constitute the human
norm. Therefore, as Wendy Holland argues:

The collapsing of the binary opposition – through which many of us have
come to view the relationship between murri and non-murri people as
simply a relationship black and white australians – is necessary in order to
facilitate a broader understanding of racism (1996: 98).

There is a small but growing body of autobiographical and scholarly literature
produced by Aboriginal writers exploring the relationship with their ‘physical’
whiteness, Aboriginality and blackness and the ways these elements combined
impact on their interface with whiteness/white Australia. While these accounts
are uniquely personal, Aboriginal autobiographies are necessarily positioned
within and share a history of colonisation and speak back to the tensions between
whiteness, the validation of Aboriginality through blackness, and Aboriginal
cultural belongings as they are determined by family, community and country. In
so doing, these autobiographies highlight the hypocrisy of colonialist ideology
where Aboriginality (as blackness) was once deemed undesirable and to be ‘bred out’, and is now required (by many) as validation of an Aboriginal identity.

Wendy Brady captures this tension when she writes:

> When I look at you, I look at you with a face that actually represents a history of colonisation. Loss of ownership of land, loss of human rights, and for some of us, the loss of our colour but not the loss of our culture. I can walk down the street and not necessarily be seen to be who I am. But if I walk down the street with my cousins, or my aunties or my uncles, or my father, then I am understood to be part of that other dangerous group (1999: 28).

In her essay/autobiography, *But Who Are You ‘Really’?* (2004), Lynette Rodriguez tells of the way her whiteness mystifies and defies the white imperative for easy classification. She tells how, as a child and young adult she recognised her physical difference from her siblings and cousins (who are darker than her), but at the same time she writes, “[m]any times I have looked at my skin and while I knew I was looking at the colour white, I saw black” (2004: 98). Equally, those who she observed as ‘white’ were “alien beings from another world” (2004: 98). The white people who came into contact with Lynette and her family saw it as their prerogative to evaluate, quantify and elevate her ‘whiteness’. This is an abridged version of part of her story:

> I was in Grade 6, and each Aboriginal student had to meet a man, who I now assume was from either the Education Department or the Native Welfare Department (it was about 1968-9). I walked in and sat in front of a youngish man with black hair and a white shirt…. He looked at me for a long time and I remember him saying ‘what shall I put you down as?? One sixteenth?? I now realise that he was trying to work out what percentage of Aboriginal blood I had…. A few months ago I was talking to Mum and she said that in the sixties she went to the Native Welfare Office and was told by one of the officers interviewing her that, ‘Well, we have good news. Finally, your children can be classified as white, but unfortunately you can’t because you fall just below the mark’…. No one asked Mum or thought of the fact they were technically dividing a mother and her children. It made no difference to us children who always thought of ourselves as totally Aboriginal. At the time, this ‘mark’ meant nothing to
Mum and our life continued as it always had been. So much for that (Rodriguez, 2004: 104-105).

Wendy Holland also shares her account of negotiating whiteness in the essay *Mis/taken Identity* (1996). Holland writes, “[l]iving in a white body and identifying as a murri means that my experience of racism has always been different to that of a murri living in a black body” (1996: 97). For Holland, her Murri identity is negotiated between multiple and intersecting sites of resistance and racism. She recounts the story of being rejected by her father’s white extended family because she is Aboriginal (as distinct to ‘black’). She also tells of the pressure on her family to be “respectable – quiet and hard working”, to be “cleaner than clean, better than best” (1996: 101) to avoid drawing attention to their Aboriginality. By the same token, Wendy finds her Aboriginality (as cultural difference) ignored by her white peers and those she comes into contact with in the education system because she is ‘white’. As for negotiating whiteness/Aboriginality in the Murri community, Wendy is also critical of the essentialising impulse that sometimes informs Murris’ understanding of ‘Aboriginality’. This she says, “only works to reinforce the racism of the dominant culture” (1996: 105). For Holland, the overlapping sites of Aboriginality and whiteness are simultaneously, and paradoxically, sites of empowerment and disempowerment. In an account that also serves as an interesting ‘answering’ story to the Race Traitor ‘cop watch’ program, she tells of her experience bearing whiteness to police harassment of a ‘black youth’. She writes (and I quote at length):

I was making my way home through the back streets of an inner-city suburb one night when I happened to notice two police offers standing over a black youth. They had the youth pinned against a wall, with a torch shining in his face. As I drove by I felt really uncomfortable about the
situation and wasn’t sure what to do. By the time I had driven around the block, I had made up my mind that I would idle my car so the headlights were shining right on the police.

Less than a minute after I turned up, the police officers turned off the torch, a couple of minutes later, they let the youth go. It was obvious that they started to get a bit nervous about being watched. I continued to sit in my car while the youth walked away. I made a point of watching the police as well, and they knew it too. While I am not sure what the youth had been up to for the police to take the action that they did, I was convinced that he didn’t deserve the treatment that he received.

Now what was interesting was what went through my mind at the time of the incident. I re/member feeling really angry and ready to jump out of my car in order to take on the police in relation to the way they were treating the youth. However, I knew that if I did, I probably would have ended up being abusive toward the police…creating even more trouble. I also recognised that it was safer to be in my car, rather than on the street, given my gender. At the same time I distinctly re/member recognising the power I had in the situation as I sat within my car.

Looking white was to my advantage in this particular situation, and I knew it! I also knew that if I were questioned by the police I could use my position within my workplace as well as support from other members of staff to challenge such racism. This is not the first time that I have been placed in such a situation and it probably won’t be the last. Racism is alive and well in australia today, and I know only too well what it is like to be on the receiving end of it (Holland, 1996: 109-110).

The point that I am making here is that definitions of Aboriginality that rely on the physical presence of blackness reduces us to conceiving whiteness, blackness and Aboriginality according to physical determinants, and marks a return to the days when Aboriginality was quantified according to a bogus biological formulae. This then, negates the importance of kinship connections and cultural belongings in identifying as Aboriginal, and is out of step with contemporary ‘social’ definitions of Aboriginality that include a person’s self-identification as Indigenous and acceptance by the community to whom he or she belongs59 (Brady and Carey, 2000: 274, also see Langton, 1993: 29). Further,

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59 I also take Brady’s point that for bureaucratic, employment and other purposes, self-identification as Aboriginal requires a process of authentication and documentation from Aboriginal community organisations. This is not an imposition that is placed on white people.
essentialising Aboriginality as blackness erases the impact of colonisation on both the ‘colour’ and cultural expression of Aboriginal people. This ahistoricity enables ‘whiteness’ to discursively resist the ways Aboriginal people employ whiteness as a site of resistance against the power of whiteness and its intrusion into their lives. Crossing-over then, places significant constraints on the ways Aboriginal people express an independent consciousness vis-à-vis their experience of whiteness. As Linda Martin Alcoff argues, crossing over is a way of incorporating the political and cultural autonomy of oppressed peoples, with a view to containing their independence.

Alcoff’s argument is, informed by Sartre’s work on “the Look and its role in social relations” (Alcoff, 1998: 20). Alcoff argues it is:

> in the Look of the Other we perceive the Other’s subjective consciousness – that is, the Other’s interior life as similar to our own. We also perceive our being-for-others, or the value and meanings we have in the eyes of the Other” (1998: 20).

On one level, Alcoff argues, “white racism is generally predicated on the need and desire of whites to deflect the Look of the Black Other, a Look that will reveal guilt, accusation and moral deficiency” (Alcoff, 1998: 20). In this instance, deflecting the Black gaze is a discountenancing of the subjectivity of the Black Other and disallows recognition of the human experience of racism that results from the Othering process. Moreover, a refusal on the part of whites to meet the returned gaze enables the continued objectification of those who are positioned as Other from the purview of the dominant, Othering gaze (Alcoff, 1998: 20-21).
However, Alcoff extends her analysis to argue that unlike processes of deflection that perpetuate the objectification of the Other, cross-overs also represent a recognition of the Other’s subjectivity and the means by which that subjectivity is integrated into the subjectivities of those in control of the Othering processes in order to render the Other safe, manageable and ‘in sight’. This process of incorporation then, negates the difference of the Other, producing a sameness that neutralises the potency and meaning of their returned gaze. It maintains dominance by controlling the right to ‘Look’. Alcoff explains, “the desire to incorporate the Other’s freedom within me, such that my needs and desires are still at the center and the Other exists only as a portion of my arranged world without real autonomy” (Alcoff, 1998: 20, emphasis in the original).

Following from Alcoff, I argue when ‘whites’ pre-arranged world is informed by easy categories of white and black (albeit ‘evil white’ and ‘good black’) there exists the means to obscure the ways oppressed people utilise and engage with the oppressors’ whiteness to their own advantage. Therefore, containing the freedom of the ‘black Other’ (in this instance, Aboriginal people) necessitates restricting access to the privileges of whiteness, even when access to the oppressors’ whiteness provisions oppressed people with the means to mitigate the effects of whiteness and retain cultural integrity. To develop this point, I refer to Dennis McDermott, and his analysis on Aboriginal peoples’ use of ‘strategic whiteness’.

The purpose of McDermott’s discussion is to problematise the impact of strategic whiteness on the emotional, psychological and physical health outcomes of
Aboriginal people. He positions his discussion within a broader, post-colonial framework. Borrowing from Franz Fanon’s metaphor “linking colonialism and disease” (2004: 39), McDermott acknowledges the impact of “settlement and dispossession” and the Othering of Aboriginal peoples’ lives that “flows” from these practices (2004: 39-40). He also draws on research and clinical studies on the psychological health of Aboriginal people struggling with “identity and belonging” (2004: 39). McDermott acknowledges that evidence shows psychological and related physical health outcomes improve for Aboriginal people when they are “clear about who...[they] are and...[feel] strong in...identity” (2004: 38). However, he also argues that strategic whiteness may have positive health effects, empowering Aboriginal people to negotiate and deflect the Othering gaze and the experiences of social isolation and alienation that come from this.

For McDermott, strategic whiteness manifests through a range of ‘self-modifying’ behaviours (2004: 36) and places Aboriginal people in dialogue with whiteness (2004: 40). He argues strategic whiteness provides the “interstice” through which Aboriginality as difference can be negotiated without having to comply with the imperative for sameness through whiteness. Here McDermott draws on the work of Trinh Minh-ha, and her notion of ‘appropriate’, ‘inappropriate’ and ‘inappropriate/d’ behaviour to develop his point. He writes:

Trinh’s work suggests that strategic Whiteness may also play out in less direct, sometimes seemingly paradoxical ways. People may confound expectations: crucially, they may defy expected behaviour and in so doing may act, not only in an inappropriate, but in an ‘inappropriate/d’, fashion. Trinh notes a linkage between acting inappropriately and refusing appropriation. In her analysis there may exist a conscious or non-conscious strategy of becoming an ‘inappropriate/d other (McDermott, 2004: 36-37).
For McDermott, strategic, or inappropriate/d whiteness, confounds, or ‘tricks’, the usual ‘taxon’ of different-ness and sameness/Aboriginality and whiteness by disabling whiteness’s imperative for easy categorisation. Strategic whiteness displaces and obscures the Othering gaze. It is a way of saying “[y]ou can’t even pin me down…let alone negate me!” (2004: 37). Thus, with strategic whiteness, Aboriginal difference is inserted into the broader discursive arrangements of whiteness and Aboriginal people create their niche for social inclusion without having to ‘appropriate’ whiteness or bow to the pressures of assimilation.

I argue McDermott’s analysis represents a dynamic way of negotiating Aboriginality vis-à-vis whiteness that acknowledges the social constructedness of racialised identities, resists essentialisms and allows for cultural and political integrity. Juxtaposed against the New Race Abolitionists’ notion of crossing over, McDermott’s argument resists the power of whiteness and the imperative for compliance (assimilation), whilst simultaneously recognising that whiteness is contended with and negotiated by Aboriginal people on a daily basis. Thus, I argue, uncritical acceptance of the new Race Abolitionists’ model would see us accept a unidirectional understanding of crossing over at the expense of recognising the multiple and complex ways the interstices between whiteness and blackness are negotiated by those whose positionality to whiteness differs from white (dis)identifying people. Therefore, in the absence of this understanding, crossing over from whiteness into blackness simply serves as a hegemonic paradigm, insisting that the only way to resist whiteness is to be ‘black’. The disingenuity of this claim is that the physical absence or presence of ‘blackness’ turns out to be the basis of Aboriginal peoples’ experience of racism.
The second point I make in my critique of New Race Abolitionism is that crossing over promotes a mode of political identification that is characterised by its ahistoricity and discontinuity. As such, I argue crossing over is at odds with the foundational principles of reconciliation that are predicated on an affirmation and restoration of the special rights that accrue to Aboriginal people because they are first nation’s peoples, and a full and frank acknowledgment of the dispossession of Aboriginal people because of colonisation. Because of this, I argue crossing over plays into the hands of contemporary, neo-conservative expressions of ‘practical reconciliation’, which seeks to redeem the national story; the reputation of Australian people through a denial of atrocities committed against Aboriginal people; and, seeks to assimilate Aboriginal people into whiteness through an explicit negation of their rights as Aboriginal people.

In part, my argument is informed by Linda Martin Alcoff, who, writing from a North American perspective, wonders at the value of political mobilisation that is not grounded in a sense of community and shared history, and is unified by a profound, morally charged, common purpose. She writes:

> Every individual, I would argue, needs to feel a connection to community, to a history, and to a human project larger than his or her own life. Without this connection, we are bereft of a concern for the future or an investment in the fate of our community…. If this analysis is correct…what are North American whites to do…. Should they become, as Noel Ignatiev and John Garvey argue, race traitors who disavow all claims or ties to whiteness?… Can a deracialized individualism provide the sense of historical continuity that moral action seems to require? (Alcoff, 1998: 8).

Within contemporary political discourse, ‘reconciliation’ is conceived as two competing models: ‘symbolic reconciliation’ and ‘practical reconciliation’. Symbolic reconciliation is attributed to Paul Keating’s Labor government
although it is important to note that Keating did not refer to reconciliation as ‘symbolic’. Rather, I argue, the term ‘symbolic’ is a politically motivated phrase, used by the Howard Liberal government to diminish the reconciliation process and its potential to set Australia on a path towards decolonisation. In contrast, Howard promotes ‘practical reconciliation’, which focuses on the ‘practical’ matters of improving Aboriginal health, housing, education and employment (Altman and Hunter, 2003: 2).

Altman and Hunter (2003) identify key ideological differences between symbolic and practical reconciliation. They argue Keating’s symbolic reconciliation is associated with “Indigenous rights, stolen generations, deaths in custody and the invalid alienation of land and resources” (Altman and Hunter, 2003: 2), whereas practical reconciliation denies the validity of according Indigenous people their unique status as first nation’s peoples and the specific rights that accrue to them because of this (Altman and Hunter, 2003: 13).

I take Altman and Hunter’s point, however, I also argue there are limitations to this definition because it confines the ideological differences between the two models of reconciliation to achieving specific outcomes for Indigenous people. I argue ‘symbolic’ reconciliation is a much bigger project, and necessarily incorporates the important task of rescripting the national narrative in order to include the story of colonisation and Aboriginal dispossession, which hitherto was largely ignored in mainstream Australian forums and institutions. Although reconciliation was a ‘top-down’ process of political and cultural change, it was understood that it would not succeed without broad community support. This
involved a two pronged approach: extensive consultation with Aboriginal communities to ascertain their aspirations for reconciliation and provisioning mainstream Australians with consciousness raising education on our colonial past. To this extent, reconciliation was necessarily inclusive of members of the invader/settler society and was bound by an acute awareness of the need to provide education on the moral imperative for reconciliation and to unite us/them with Aboriginal people in articulating a vision for the future of the nation, and our respective places within it. Therefore, I argue the tension between symbolic and practical reconciliation is not merely a tension between achieving symbolic and practical outcomes for Indigenous people. Fundamentally, and paradoxically, it is a tension produced out of a struggle for ownership of the symbolic space, the way the national story will be told, what place Indigenous people have within the narrative structure of this story, and the responsibilities and moral obligations of members of the invader/settler society towards Aboriginal people. As Simeon Moran writes:

…perceiving the nation as a contested symbol opens the space for an understanding of nationalisms as having multiple meanings, competed over by ‘different groups manoeuvring to capture the symbol’s definition and its legitimising effects’. Recognising this symbolic aspect of the nation also allows us to see national and governmental rhetorics as ‘elements in larger contests to define meaning of national symbols and to define the [nation] symbol itself (2003: 183, *parenthesis in the original*).

I argue practical reconciliation is its own symbolic domain: one that denies its symbolic power through the rhetoric of ‘practicality’. This rhetoric conceals the symbiotic relationship between the containment of Indigenous rights and the rescripting of the national story so that it protects white sovereignty. Therefore, I argue within symbolic reconciliation and practical reconciliation, there is a tension between Australia’s attempts to decolonise and its obvious, defensive
counter point, the need to resist decolonisation through a re-colonisation of Aboriginal people and their land. It is in this light that I argue practical reconciliation is essentially underpinned by a neo-colonial impulse. In the following discussion, I elaborate this argument with reference to the role of history in marking out the parameters of the reconciliation debate, with specific reference to Robert Manne’s analysis of the politicisation of the stolen generations and the Bringing Them Home report (1997). I then turn my attention to an examination of practical reconciliation and its ability to deliver social justice outcomes to Aboriginal people. In the first instance, I refer to Altman and Hunter’s quantitative analysis of reconciliation outcomes for Aboriginal people from 1991-2001. Following this, I discuss the ‘post-reconciliation’ era and the abolition of ATSIC, the mainstreaming of Indigenous affairs and the implementation of Shared Responsibility Agreements (SRAs).

In 1991, the Reconciliation Bill was passed through the Australian Federal parliament with bipartisan support. Broadly, the Bill had three objectives: to meet the social justice and human rights needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; to formulate a formal document, possibly a Treaty, between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people; and, to increase mainstream awareness of the history of dispossession of Aboriginal people (Tickner, 2001: 29). Thus, claiming history was identified as one of the critical, central tenants of bringing about a reconciled Australia. In 1992, in his historic Redfern Address commemorating the United Nations International Year of Indigenous People, the then Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating declared:

It begins, I think, with the act of recognition. Recognition that it was we who did the dispossessing. We took the traditional lands and smashed the
traditional way of life. We brought the disasters. The alcohol. We committed the murders. We took the children from their mothers. We practiced the discrimination and exclusion. It was our ignorance and our prejudice. And our failure to imagine these things being done to us. With some noble exceptions, we failed to make the most basic human response and enter into their hearts and minds. We failed to ask – how would I feel if this were done to me? As a consequence, we failed to see that what we were doing degraded all of us (c.f. Grattan, 2000: 61).

In 1996, with the election of the Federal Liberal Party, national history and memory became politically fraught. In late 1996, Prime Minister John Howard invoked Geoffrey Blainey’s phrase ‘black armband view’ of history to rail against ‘political correctness’ and revisionist versions of Australian history that included accounts of Aboriginal dispossession (Macintyre, 2004: 136-137). Subsequently, the term ‘black armband’ has worked its way into the Australian vernacular as a way of eschewing Australian/Aboriginal history. Arguably, the most notable example of this political contestation is the Federal Government’s response to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission’s (HREOC) Bringing Them Home Report (1997). The report was the result of an Inquiry into the Stolen Generations headed up by the then President of HREOC, Sir Ronald Wilson and the then Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commissioner (HREOC), Michael Dodson. Initiated in 1995 under the Keating government, the Inquiry gathered evidence from “Indigenous organisations and individuals, State and Territory Government Representatives, other non-government agencies, former mission and government employees, and individual members of the

60Geoffrey Blainey first invoked the metaphor ‘black armband’ in 1993 when he delivered the John Latham Memorial lecture. The expression was used as a juxtaposition to the “three cheers” (Macintyre, 2004: 131) version of Australian history. Blainey has explained that he intended the phrase to refer to the black armband worn by footballers as a sign of respect when someone important has passed away. Historian Stuart Macintyre notes that this explanation is “strained” (2004: 131). The phrase was subsequently picked up and used by John Howard in 1996 when speaking to the Federal Parliament and it has since become part of the discourse surrounding Australian/Aboriginal history (Macintyre, 2004: 3).
community” (Dodson and Wilson, 1997: 19). Testimony was also taken from 535 Aboriginal witnesses around Australia, all of whom revealed the devastating impact of various States’ and Territories’ child removal policies during the 20th century (Dodson and Wilson, 1997: 21). The report concluded that child removal policies were genocidal and made 54 recommendations to the Federal Government (Dodson and Wilson, 1997: 651-665). Amongst these recommendations, the Federal Government was urged to make an apology, on behalf of the nation to Aboriginal people (Dodson and Wilson, 1997: 651). The Federal Government has staunchly refused to offer this apology, and the former Prime Minister Howard did little more than state his ‘regret’.

In 1997, the Liberal Federal Government outlined its policy for ‘practical reconciliation’, which flagged a radical departure from the model proposed earlier by the Labor Party. At the 1997 Reconciliation Convention in Melbourne, Prime Minister John Howard opined:

Reconciliation will not work if it puts a higher value on symbolic gestures and overblown promises rather than the practical needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in areas like health, housing, education and employment. It will not work if it is premised solely on a sense of national guilt and shame. Rather, we should acknowledge past injustices and focus our energies on addressing root causes of current and future disadvantage among our indigenous people (1997: online).

The plan for practical reconciliation was reiterated at Corroboree 2000, the ceremony to commemorate the end of the official reconciliation period. Again, Howard’s vision obfuscated the importance of engaging with the nation’s history. He declared:

…I do not believe it is accurate or fair to portray Australia’s history since 1788 as little more than a disgraceful record of imperialism, exploitation and racism. Such a portrayal is a gross distortion and deliberately neglects
the overall story of great Australian achievement that is there in our history to be told. Australians of this generation should not be required to accept guilt and blame for past actions and policies over which they had no control (c.f. Gratton, 2000: 90).

Notwithstanding the critical need for improvements in Aboriginal health, housing and education, Howard’s new plan reduced reconciliation to four objectives most Australians regard as axiomatic rights, accruing to us because we are citizens of this country. Gone (for the time being at least) is the possibility of a Treaty and the powerful and important work of recovering our shared history is significantly undermined. Indeed, an entire neo-conservative ‘industry’, comprised of conservative think-tanks, public intellectuals, some academics, journalists, lawyers, former public servants and politicians, has dedicated itself to waging an ideological war on reconciliation by denying the violence of colonisation and its ongoing repercussions for Aboriginal people.

For example, Robert Manne’s *In denial* (2001) details the machinations of the denialist industry\(^{61}\) *vis-à-vis* the Stolen Generations and the *Bringing Them Home Report* (1997)\(^{62}\). In his essay, Manne reveals the level of collusion amongst some of Australia’s most powerful political conservatives in suppressing and vilifying the report’s findings. He writes:

Gradually critics of *Bringing them home* emerged. Some of the criticism came from former administrators of Aboriginal affairs; some former patrol officers; some from conservative journalists; some from right-wing think-tanks and magazines. It was the magazine *Quadrant*, however, under the editorship of Padraic McGuinness, that marshalled the troops and galvanised the disparate voices of opposition to *Bringing them home* into what amounted to a serious and effective political campaign (2001: 6).

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\(^{61}\) For further discussion see Stuart Macintyre’s, *The History Wars* (2003), especially Chapter Eight.

\(^{62}\) In *In Denial*, Manne also touches on his critique of Keith Windshuttle and his repudiation of frontier violence and massacres against Aboriginal people. For further discussion on this see Robert Manne’s (ed) *Witewash: On Keith Windshuttle’s Fabrication of Aboriginal History* (2003).
As Manne explains, the anthropologist Ron Brunton, from the private think-tank, ‘The Institute of Public Affairs’, fired the first salvo against *Bringing Them Home* with his “backgrounder”, *Betraying the Victims* published in 1998 (Manne, 2001: 31 and 107). Here, Brunton speculates that positive accounts of child removal had been deliberately stricken from the record; that welfare agencies had legitimate reason for removing neglected children; and, the authors did not exercise sufficient emotional restraint in their writing of the report. Brunton also argued witnesses evidence (that is, Aboriginal witnesses who gave evidence to the Inquiry) was not tested against other, government documentary evidence and the Inquiry did not include the experiences of non-Aboriginal children removed from their families (a spurious charge as this was beyond the Inquiry’s terms of reference as they were determined by the Federal Government). Brunton also condemned the report’s charge that Aboriginal child removal was genocidal in its intent (Manne, 2001: 31 - 42).

It was Padraic McGuinness, editor of the conservative *Quadrant* magazine and columnist for the Sydney broadsheet newspaper the *Sydney Morning Herald* who spearheaded the denialist campaign. As Manne explains, McGuinness became editor of *Quadrant* in 1997, and by 2000 he had “moved from the promise of “genuine debate” on Aboriginal policy to the reality of atrocity denial in the David Irving mode” (2001: 59). Regular contributors to *Quadrant*, such as Frank Devine, Christopher Pearson, Andrew Bolt, Piers Akerman and Michael Duffy were columnists for *The Australian*, *Australian Financial Review*, the *Herald Sun* in Melbourne and the *Sydney Daily Telegraph* respectively. Each played
their role in propagating myths about the stolen generations, variously claiming that ‘half-caste’ children had been ‘rescued’; that children had only been removed when their neglect had been proved in court; and, the Stolen Generations were the result of “basic social welfare interventions” (2001: 69) and had nothing to do with race. Sir Ronald Wilson, one of the report’s co-authors was vilified and the report itself was called “a Big Lie” (2001: 70-71). ‘Sorry Day’ was lampooned as a “celebration of guilt” (2001: 72) and Australians who supported the event were positioned as elites who used the stolen generations “to entrench their own “status and power”” (2001: 72). This ironic view reveals an astonishing lack of self-awareness by those who truly do occupy an elite position in Australian political life and their capacity to influence public opinion away from Aboriginal concerns. Additionally, particular attention was paid to Jewish intellectuals who made links between “Australian history” and “the Nazi Holocaust” (2001: 73). Urban dwelling Aboriginal people were cast as greedy and motivated only by the compensation dollar (2001: 74).

Manne argues that between 1997 and 1999 there is some difficulty in determining how close the Federal Government was to the denialist movement. However, he also asserts that on the 1st of March 1999, the day Douglas Meagher QC made his opening address in the Gunner and Cabillo trial in the Northern Territory on behalf of the Commonwealth, “the Howard government openly joined the anti-stolen generations campaign” (2001: 77). In part, this claim is evidenced by the fact that Meagher was speaking on behalf of the Commonwealth because he was acting for them in this trial. However, in April

63 The 26th of May is designated as a day of remembrance for the Stolen Generations.
2000 the Federal Government made its submission to the *Bringing Them Home* Senate Inquiry. Here, the Federal Government challenged the use of the word ‘stolen’, and nitpicked over the number of children removed, alleging that the number of children removed hardly constituted a ‘generation’. In short, the submission argued that the stolen generations were a “‘myth” (Manne, 2001: 82).

As Manne writes:

> Beyond the arithmetic and pedantry, the Senate submission proceeded down [familiar] paths…. It repeated many of the methodological criticisms of the Wilson-Dodson inquiry pioneered by Ron Brunton; treated Colin McLeod’s thin and jejune memoir as an authoritative account of removal policy; and quoted uncritically the simplistic and erroneous “half-caste as outcast” theories of Reginald Marsh. More seriously, the government submission followed Douglas Meagher and the Commonwealth’s legal team in its assessment of Aboriginal child removal policy – simultaneously sentimentalising the attitude of administrators as one of “care, concern, compassion and humanity”, while altogether bleaching out of the picture the fundamental racism involved, the determination to rescue part-whites from the degradation of an Aboriginal life. Most seriously of all, as with all contributions to the anti-stolen generations campaign, it did not even bother to discuss that evidence which revealed the racial engineering, eugenic basis of Aboriginal child removal policy and practice in both the Northern Territory and Western Australia. This evidence is, or course, at the heart of the discussion about genocide and the stolen generations (2001: 84)

From 1997-2000, the Stolen Generations ‘debate’ became the discursive paradigm through which reconciliation was discussed in Australia. The notion of an apology, or more specifically, the word ‘sorry’, came to symbolise reconciliation itself. In large part this is because the then Federal Government’s incapacity to say ‘sorry’ signified its refusal to engage with the history of colonisation and to heed the calls of those thousands of Australians who needed to hear the apology in order to ‘move on’ from our shared history.

Following 2000, and the formal conclusion of the reconciliation ‘era’, public

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64 While the former Howard Federal Government steadfastly refused to apologise, every State Government in Australia has offered its own formal apology.
pressure for the government to apologise began to decrease; a tacit
acknowledgement that the government would not yield to this requirement of
reconciliation. Indeed, it is arguable that the Federal Government has won this
round of the ‘history wars’. Many of the arguments put against recognition of
the stolen generations have garnered the force of a hegemonic discourse;
becoming part of mainstream Australian language and ‘common sense’
understandings of Aboriginal/Australian relations. I argue this has serious and
ongoing implications for the way reconciliation has been cast in the 21st century.

That there is an important moral link between an apology and substantive
improvement for Indigenous peoples’ lives is illustrated in Govier and
Verwoerd’s discussion on the *Promise and Pitfalls of Apology* (2002). As
Govier and Verwoerd explain, an apology has “three main dimensions” (2002:
69):

First, the wrongdoer is acknowledging *wrongdoing* by himself or the group
or institution he represents. In expressing moral regret for a particular act,
he is in effect admitting that the act was wrong, and that he (or the group he
represents) was responsible for it. This admission will be addressed to the
victim or victims of the wrongdoing, and to others as well, in the case of a
public apology. Second, in apologizing, the offender is acknowledging the
*moral status of the victim(s), the primary person(s) to whom he apologizes.*
The act was wrong, and in doing it, the offender (or those he represents)
*injured* the victims or victims, who did not merit or deserve this ill-
treatment. Third, the offender is acknowledging the legitimacy of feelings
of resentment and anger that the victims may feel in response to being
wronged. The act or acts in question were wrong, and they really did hurt
the victims, who did not deserve to be wronged. Thus, resentment and
related feelings would be justified (2002: 69).

*Govier and Verwoerd frame their argument with reference to South Africa’s Truth and
Reconciliation processes. It is interesting to note that one of the Keynote speakers at the
Australian Reconciliation Convention in 1997 was Dr Alexander Boraine, the Vice Chairperson
of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In his address, he also made the
important connection between practical and moral amends so that reconciliation can be achieved.*
Further, Govier and Verwoerd argue “moral amends” need to be reinforced with “practical” and “material” amends. Material amends refers to reparations of some kind, whereas practical amends may include both material amends and efforts to improve attitudes and relationships between people (2002: 73). Thus, Govier and Verwoerd assert that without practical and material amends, the moral apology can perpetuate the original injury (2002: 73). They write:

For potential reconciliation between the parties, and for good evidence of sincerity on the part of perpetrators, a full-fledged moral apology should include a commitment to practical amends (Govier and Verwoerd, 2002: 73).

In the Australian context, attacks on symbolic reconciliation (symbolised through the apology) in the name of practical reconciliation are conjoined with attacks on Indigenous peoples’ rights. In the absence of contextualising reconciliation within history, the root causes of problems faced by Aboriginal people and communities are denied. Moreover, by denying the legitimacy of Aboriginal claims, which are based in a history of colonisation, the specific rights that accrue to Aboriginal people because of this historic fact are denied. Consequently, the gains made by Aboriginal people in the early years of reconciliation are diminished, both in ‘symbolic’ and ‘practical’ terms.

Altman and Hunter’s analysis reviews the successes and failures of both governments, but focus their evaluation on practical reconciliation. The key variables used in their analysis include employment, income, housing, education and health (Altman and Hunter, 2003: 3-5). These variables closely match the identified target areas under Howard’s practical reconciliation program. Their analysis includes figures for both absolute change in socioeconomic outcomes for Aboriginal people and relative change compared to other Australians. As Altman and Hunter note, an analysis of relative change is important because “practical reconciliation is as much about reducing relative disparities as about absolutes” (2003: 12).

Altman and Hunter find that between 1991-1996 absolute wellbeing for Indigenous people improved in six areas including labour force participation in full time jobs; home ownership; household size; university attendance; post-school qualifications and population over the age of fifty-five (2003: 11). It also found that overall labour force participation declined and the median income for families and adults (two different sets of figures) declined. Male life expectancy at birth remained the same. Between 1996-2001, Altman and Hunter found absolute improvements in median and family income (two different sets of figures); home ownership; household size; university qualifications and post-school qualifications; and, population over fifty-five. They also found that there had been an absolute decline in labour force participation; participation in full time jobs. Male life expectancy at birth remained the same. In other words, the
socioeconomic status for Indigenous people in absolute terms reveals an even “scorecard” for both governments (Altman and Hunter, 2003: 12).

An analysis of the relative outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians for the years 1991-1996 and 1996-2001 reveals a considerable decline in the second part of the decade under practical reconciliation. Altman and Hunter find that between 1991-1996 there were relative improvements in fulltime employment; family median income; home ownership; household size; and, post-school qualifications. They also find a relative decline in adult median income; male life expectancy at birth and population over fifty-five.

Alternatively, between 1996-2001, there were relative improvements in median family income; home ownership; household size; and, post-school qualifications. Relative declines occurred in labour force participation, full-time jobs, adult median income; university attendance; male life expectancy and population over fifty-five years (Altman and Hunter, 2003: 11). Altman and Hunter summarise their finding thus:

In the period 1996-2001 relative wellbeing improved in four variables and declined in six, a poor scorecard that suggests that Indigenous people have not shared in the national economic growth to the same extent as other Australians. Over the entire reconciliation decade 1991-2001, there was absolute improvement for six variables, a decline in three and no change in one. However, in relative terms the story has been a little different. In the period 1991-2001, there was a relative improvement in five variables, and a relative decline in five variables. Of particular concern was relative decline over the period in educational and health status. In terms of reconciliation, if this is interpreted in relative and practical and socioeconomic terms, there is less reconciliation in 2001 that in 1996. It is equally worrying that areas of improvement evident in 1996 have been eroded over the period 1996-2001 (2003: 12).

In their critique, Altman and Hunter argue practical reconciliation “implies that it is relatively straightforward to address Indigenous disadvantage. However, the
multifaceted and historically ingrained nature of this disadvantage means that deficits in particular social indicators might not be amenable to easy solutions” (2003: 12). Further, they argue, there is an arbitrary distinction between the ‘symbolic’ and the ‘practical’. For example, when the Federal Government deny the impact and the extent of the stolen generations they ignore the interconnections between positive parenting outcomes, high incarceration rates and the impact this has on employment and education. Also, failure to affirm Indigenous peoples’ land rights ignores that Aboriginal “economic problems have their genesis long ago with the alienation of land and resource rights” (2003: 13). Thus, Altman and Hunter conclude:

Despite the policy rhetoric of the first two Howard Governments 1996-2001, there is no statistical evidence from census information that their policies and programs are delivering better outcomes for Indigenous Australians, at the national level, than those of their political predecessors. This intractability is worrying in part because it is evident during a time when the Australian economy is growing rapidly. This suggests, in turn, that problems are deeply entrenched – it is not just a matter of governments choosing between practical and symbolic reconciliation. There are other pressing issues – the levels of investment to address historical legacies and contemporary shortfalls, the targeting of resources to the most needy, and the delivery of program support in whole-of-governments ways that will make a difference. A major problem for both Indigenous Australians and the nation is that other research…suggests that the situation described…is likely to get worse66, rather than better, over the next decade (2003: 14).

66 Reference to current Aboriginal health statistics demonstrates that Altman and Hunter’s concerns were prescient. In their recent report Close the Gap: Solutions to the Indigenous Health Crisis Facing Australia (2007), Oxfam Australia detail a litany of failure in achieving positive health outcomes for Aboriginal people. The report asserts Aboriginal peoples’ life expectancy is twenty years less than that of other Australians. In contrast, in the USA, Canada and New Zealand, the differential between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people is put at about seven years. In Australia, the infant mortality rate of Aboriginal children is three times greater than that of other Australian children. This is fifty percent higher than Indigenous children in Canada and New Zealand (Oxfam Australia, 2007: 3). Indeed, in 2003, the United Nations Human Development Report stated that “the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians expected to live to age 65 is lower than underdeveloped nations like Bangladesh and Nigeria” (Oxfam Australia, 2007: 5). Oxfam Australia estimate that an expenditure increase of $350-500 million is required to Aboriginal health outcomes in Australia (Oxfam Australia, 2007: 3). While they acknowledge that “spending on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health has increased, it hasn’t done so any faster than for the rest of the population so the expenditure gap hasn’t narrowed” (Oxfam Australia, 2007: 8). In fact, “the Federal Government, through programs under its direct control (i.e. Medical Benefits Scheme/Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, OATSIH, aged care but excluding transfer payments to the states) spends approximately 70c per
In the years subsequent to Altman and Hunter’s analysis, the former Howard government ‘refined’ its practical reconciliation agenda. In 2004, the Federal Government disbanded the official elected representative body for Aboriginal people, ATSIC\(^67\). A new committee, the National Indigenous Consultative Committee, was handpicked by the government to advise on policy matters, and funding responsibilities for Aboriginal service provision was transferred to mainstream government departments. The Federal Government also implemented a new ‘mutual responsibility’ program for Aboriginal communities and organisations. In a perverse twisting of fate, Aboriginal people are rendered ‘responsible’ to the white nation and must observe the protocols of white sovereignty. These new “shared responsibility agreements” (SRAs) connect the provision of funding and infrastructure with Aboriginal communities’ obligations to “commit to specific behavioural changes or other actions” (McCausland, 2005: online). For example, in 2004 the Federal Government negotiated the Mulan agreement. Here, the community was granted petrol bowsers in return for a twice-a-day face-washing program for school children, in order to control trachoma (McCausland, 2005: online). Another SRA, signed between the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training, and the New

\[\text{capita on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for every $1 spent on the rest of the population} \] (Oxfam Australia, 2007: 8). There are no set national benchmarks or targets to monitor and assess improvements in Aboriginal health outcomes (Oxfam Australia, 2007: 4 and 9). Equally, there has been no co-ordinated effort on the part of Federal, State and Territory governments to ameliorate the contributing factors to poor health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. For further discussion on the human rights implications of Indigenous health outcomes and the implementation of SRAs see the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner’s 2005 Social Justice Report (HREOC)\(^67\). Shortly after the Howard Government’s election in 1996, the government launched an extensive audit of 1122 ATSIC funded organisations. This was part of an ongoing campaign to discredit the organisation through allegations of corruption and nepotism. Only five percent of these organisations were found to be in breach of legal and accounting requirements, however these were mainly technical breaches such as late reporting. In fact, the federal court of Australia “actually determined that audit was beyond the Minister’s powers under the ATSIC Act. Allegations of corruption nevertheless continued” (Anderson, 2007).
South Wales State Department of Education and Training links the funding and installation of air-conditioning in up to 200 community owned houses with improved living conditions, increased school attendance and a decrease in family violence (McCausland, 2005: online). More recently, new housing has been provisioned to some families in remote communities. Four families in the small town of Wudapuli in the Northern Territory (near Wadeye) have just ‘received’ new houses on the proviso children attend school regularly and the families maintain rental payments. After two years, the families will be eligible to buy the houses from the Commonwealth (Graham, 2007: online).

Critics of SRAs argue that mainstreaming Indigenous infrastructure and service provision is a radical shift away from Indigenous self-determination (Anderson, 2006: online) and is assimilationist in its intent (McCausland, 2005: online). It is also argued that SRAs are racially discriminatory because conditions are imposed on Aboriginal people that are not imposed on other Australians for the same infrastructure and services; are paternalistic; coercive; and, make illogical connections between Indigenous communities immediate needs and broader, more profound social problems that are historically rooted. Further, it is argued that SRAs work on a ‘blame the victim’ basis; provide no discernable measurable outcomes; and, negotiating positions between Aboriginal people and governments are fundamentally unequal (McCausland, 2005: online). As Ruth McCausland writes:

Under the Government’s new arrangements, SRAs have emerged as a kind of quasi-contractual arrangement that imply two parties – Indigenous communities and governments – are entering into them by choice, with both parties having equal responsibility for and benefit from the agreement. However, in reality there is an enormous power imbalance embodied in such agreements. They make responsibilities for the provision of basic
services and infrastructure – which governments have to all citizens – conditional on specified behaviour change in Indigenous communities. They shift perceptions of responsibility for existing problems and lack of progress to Indigenous communities themselves (2005: online).

In shifting the blame from governments to Aboriginal communities, governments are freed from having to make holistic assessments of the problems Indigenous communities face, and implementing integrated, multifaceted responses. Of the housing project in Wudapuli, where children are required to attend school, Chris Graham of the National Indigenous Times asks:

And just what school will “the children” be sent? Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (OLSH) Wadeye, which last year had over 600 enrolments at the start of the year, but was given funding and teachers for less than 220 students at a school that can house around 300. It’s worth noting the same number of enrolments turned up in 2007, and so did the same amount of funding (2007: online).

Also, in the absence of broad, mainstream community awareness of the measures Aboriginal communities take in order to address social problems, the government is able to skew the results of SRAs, falsely proclaiming their achievements. For example, eighteen months before the SRA negotiations began in Mulan, the school had already commenced a face-washing program and incidents of trachoma had decreased to 16% in children aged sixteen years and under.

However, when Brendan Nelson, the then Federal Minister for Education, Science and Training justified the agreement he cited pre-program figures, thus claiming the community’s success as the Government’s. With reference to this McCausland argues:

This raises significant questions about whether the Federal Government’s policy approach, endorsed by state and territory governments who are often party to such SRAs, is genuinely about improving the health and welfare of Indigenous people through community-driven negotiations that respond to local priorities, or about imposing a top-down framework to prove an ideological point (2005: online).
Finally, I argue that the implementation of SRAs fractures the ability of Aboriginal people to make broader, nationally based representations to governments. The former Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Mal Brough, is on record as saying SRAs enable governments to engage in community consultation and respond to specific community need. In other words, the government is able to couch the implementation of SRAs in language usually associated with Aboriginal self-determination. However, while the Minister rhetorically appeals to self-determination, dealing with small communities in isolation disables their ability to frame their needs within a broader context of historical disadvantage and speak to the unique rights that accrue to them because they are first nations’ peoples who share the common experience of colonisation. Further, subsequent to the abolition of ATSIC and the mainstreaming of Aboriginal services there is no identifiable peak Aboriginal political body\(^{68}\) to represent specific Aboriginal needs to government. Consequently, political representations of ‘pan-Aboriginal’ interests are significantly thwarted and challenges to the legitimacy of white sovereignty are suppressed.

‘Practical reconciliation’ has undermined the potency of the reconciliation movement, both in symbolic and (perversely) practical terms. It has done this in two ways. Firstly, it has undermined the notion of reconciliation as a ‘peoples’ movement’, galvanised by a morally defined common purpose to understand our shared history, bring about social justice for Aboriginal people and negotiate a formal document between Aboriginal and other Australians. Secondly, practical

\(^{68}\) Although there was a board of Indigenous people with whom the former government consulted on Indigenous matters.
reconciliation has engineered a quantifiable diminution of rights and standard of living for Aboriginal people. I argue that in broad terms, practical reconciliation shares many of the characteristics of crossing-over as the New Race Abolitionists advocate. I make this claim because crossing over promotes an ahistorical mode of personal identification and eschews the importance of community based, morally defined, political action. Because of this, I argue that while crossing over may be presented as a radical, anti-racist gesture, the very nature of its ahistoricity means that it plays into the hands of denialists whose primary concern rests with protecting and redeeming Australia’s national integrity and supporting the former government’s program of attenuating Aboriginal rights, assimilating Aboriginality into whiteness, all in the name of white sovereignty.

The final point I make in my critique of the New Race Abolitionists relates to the political efficacy of aligning anti-whiteness activism with white race supremacist organisations in Australia. Although I have had a passing acquaintance with the theoretical position of the New Race Abolitionists for over ten years, my understanding of their willingness to form coalitions with pro-white, neo-nazi groups and individuals is more recent and came about by chance when I read Flores and Moon’s 2002 article, *Rethinking Race, Revealing Dilemmas: Imagining a New Racial Subject in Race Traitor*. Although Flores and Moon make reference to this element of the Race Traitor doctrine in their article, they do not offer a specific comment upon it, either in the affirmative or the negative.

In contrast, I overtly reject the notion of forming strategic alliances with race hate organisations. By way of focusing my response within the Australian
context, I make specific reference to research undertaken by the Nyungar human rights lawyer, Hannah McGlade, and her article, *The International Prohibition of Racist Organisations: An Australian Perspective* (2000). The purpose of McGlade’s research is to explore the implications of Australia’s failure to comply with Article 4 (b) of the United Nation’s International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racism (ICERD) in the light of the rise of Pauline Hanson’s One Nation Party in the 1990’s. Article 4 (b) commands that signatory nations to the ICERD outlaw race hate organisations and participation in them. McGlade argues that Australia’s lack of compliance with the ICERD has led to the mainstream legitimisation of minority parties who advocate discriminatory practices against Aboriginal people. This, in turn, has led to an increase in the activities of race hate organisations in Australia (including, but not limited to the American based KKK), which is accompanied by an increase in racist violence towards Aboriginal people.

In focusing on McGlade’s discussion, I seek to draw attention to one Aboriginal woman’s analysis of the proliferation of race-based violence towards Aboriginal people during the late 1990’s. Following from McGlade, I argue that should anti-white activists support strategic alliances with race-hate organisations they also support Australia’s continued violation of the ICERD. Moreover, I argue that to ignore the evidence compiled by McGlade and the violence committed against Aboriginal people in favour of a political manoeuvre allegedly aimed at ending white race supremacy is disingenuous and takes us out of dialogue with Aboriginal people (including both the author of this article and those to whom
she refers to as victims of racist violence), negates recognition of their Sovereignty and supports the sovereignty of neo-colonial power relations.

**Strategic Relationships with Race Hate Organisations**

Australia has been a signatory to the ICERD since 1966 and our obligations under the ICERD were ratified in 1975 “following the implementation of the Commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act (1975)” (McGlade, 2000: online).

The obligations for signatory nations to the ICERD, Article 4 are clear:

- States parties condemn all propaganda and organizations which are based on ideas or theories of superiority of one race or group of persons of one colour or ethnic origin, or which attempt to justify or promote racial hatred and discrimination in any form, and undertake to adopt immediate and positive measures designed to eradicate all incitement to, or acts of, such discrimination and, to this end, with due regard to the principles embodied in the universal [sic] Declaration of Human rights and expressly set forth in article 5 of this convention, inter alia;
  (a) Shall declare an offence punishable by law all dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority and hatred, incitement to racial discrimination, as well as acts of violence or incitement to such acts against any group of persons of another colour or ethnic origin, an [sic] also the provision of any assistance to racist activities, including the financing thereof;
  (b) Shall declare illegal and prohibit organizations, and also organized and all other propaganda activities, which promote and incite racial discrimination, and shall recognise participation in such organizations and such activities as an offence punishable by law;
  (c) Shall not permit public authorities or public institutions, national or local, to promote or incite racial discrimination (c.f. McGlade, 2000).

The intention of Article 4 of the ICERD is to prevent the establishment of race hate organisations. While Australia has taken steps to criminalise the activities of members of racist organisations, it has failed to ban race hate organisations *per se*. In 1991 Australia’s Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) Inquiry into Racist Violence explicitly recommended that “the Australian government…take steps to remove any qualification placed upon its
ratification of CERD and accept all obligations arising under it” (c.f. McGlade, 2000: online).

With reference to the HREOC Inquiry, McGlade points out that racist organisations have existed in Australia for about 60 years. The League of Rights was established in the 1940’s; National Action was established in the 1980’s and its splinter group, the Australian National Movement, was established in Perth, Western Australia, in 1984. While the Australian National Movement has not been declared illegal in Western Australia, some of its leaders have been prosecuted under “general provisions of the State Criminal Code” (McGlade, 2000: online). Although the Inquiry found that the KKK did not seem to exist at an organisational level in Australia, Aboriginal people from the Northern Territory, Queensland, Western Australia and New South Wales reported “acts of racist violence and intimidation seemingly carried out by the KKK” (McGlade, 2000: online). Notably, since HREOC’s 1991 Inquiry, it has been confirmed that the KKK has established branches in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia (McGlade, 2000: online). In 2002, Oakley, a journalist for the Adelaide Advertiser reported there were two branches of the KKK in South Australia: the Australian Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (K-KKK) and the Imperial Klans of America - Realm of Australia (IKA). The latter provides a post office box address in the suburb of Welland. Also, the World Church of the Creator, a race based religion provides a post office box address in the suburb of Unley (Oakley, 2002: online). There are also numerous reports of KKK style racist violence in Townsville, Far-North Queensland (McGregor, 2003: online). While the presence of hate based organisations has been established, it is difficult to
ascertain the total number of Australian members to such organisations because it is possible to join American based Klans and pay dues over the internet (Oakley, 2002: online).

McGlade argues the electoral success of Pauline Hanson in 1996 precipitated an increase in levels of racist violence against Aboriginal people. As McGlade explains, Pauline Hanson was elected as an independent to the House of Representatives in the Australian Federal Parliament in 1996, partly on an ‘anti-Aboriginal’ platform. Following the formation of the One Nation Party in 1997, Pauline Hanson published The Truth, where she claimed Aboriginal people are cannibals. Other anti-Aboriginal assertions included the spurious claim that Native Title was an Aboriginal ‘land grab’ and that Aboriginal people would own up to 80% of Australia; that the Stolen Generations was a conspiracy invented to guilt Australians into compensating Aboriginal people; and, that ATSIC was a corrupt, fraudulent organisation. Hanson also accused Aboriginal people of gunrunning and having links with terrorists. In fact, McGlade finds that One Nation “have courted disaffected gun owners, whose members are affiliated with private militia, and who have armed themselves with ‘truckfulls’ of weapons for ‘when the time comes’” (McGlade, 2000: online). In 1999, Peter Coleman, a founding member of Pauline Hanson’s One Nation Party, was revealed as the Australian leader of the Ku Klux Klan (Allum, 1999: online). Coleman’s anti-Aboriginal views are on the public record: “I am happy to shout it from the rooftops”. “Our aim is for a white Australia, a fair Australia”. Australia’s Aborigines, he said, were “beyond help…the worst of the whites mixed in with the black” (c.f. BBC news, June 2, 1999: online). Coleman was
subsequently expelled from One Nation. In response to Coleman’s expulsion, the then Chairperson of ATSIC Gatjil Djerrkurra said:

One Nation officials can talk until they are blue in the face about expelling people…but they know and we know they are responsible for giving them [the KKK] legitimacy (c.f. Allum, 1999: online).

McGlade reports that subsequent to the electoral success of Pauline Hanson and her One Nation Party there were increases in the levels of racist violence committed against Aboriginal people. In Perth 1997, the Nyungar Circle of Elders complained to the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission of increased levels of racism in doctor’s surgeries and hospitals, of people being chased down the street and of young people being frightened to use public transport. In June 1998, 17 kilograms of explosives were left of the doorstep of the Perth Aboriginal Medical Service. Later that day, the Medical Service received a fax, apparently from the Western Australian division of One Nation. Clearly, the aim of the fax was to harass and intimidate Aboriginal people. It stated:

Perhaps we should have a National Sorry Day for Aboriginal people to apologize to the rest of the Australian community, for all the muggings, robberies, home invasions, car thefts, murders, child-rapes done by Aborigines over the years. Apologize for Paris Way and all other trashed state housing. Apologize for the millions of taxpayers money poured down the drain in booze etc. Apologize for terrorizing the trains and train station and making the train unusable at night. When we come to power you will have something to be ‘sorry’ about if you don’t learn how to behave decently (c.f. McGlade, 2000: online).

Similar levels of violence directed towards Aboriginal people were also reported in Queensland and the Northern Territory. For the Aboriginal Christian leader, Peter Walker, the climate of fear in Queensland was reminiscent of the times when “they (non-Aboriginals) went out shooting Aboriginals early in the century” (c.f. McGlade, 2000: online). The Aboriginal Elder, Joe McGuinness
from the Northern Territory, likened the rise of racist violence in Australia to German fascism, “The system that we’re governed under allows this sort of thing…and some of those people (One Nation supporters) could be students of Hitler, you know? We fought a war over Nazism in Germany, and this is how I see Australia at the moment” (c.f. McGlade, 2000: online).

McGlade concludes her discussion with the observation that “Australia, like most state signatories, is not observing its obligations, although it is legally bound to do so” (McGlade, 2000: online). She also writes:

> There are organisations in Australia which do promote and incite racial discrimination, some more directly and explicitly than others, against the Aboriginal people. Thus far, these organisations and their members have been largely immune from the law (McGlade, 2000: online).

Following from McGlade’s analysis, I argue that the New Race Abolitionists’ position that anti-whiteness activists seek strategic alliances with race hate organisations exacerbates Australia’s failure to comply with Article 4 of the ICERD and legitimises the ongoing violence experienced by Aboriginal people at the hands of race hate organisations.

Further, as we have seen from McGlade’s discussion, incidents of race-hate based violence against Aboriginal people increase when the political right have their anti-Aboriginal views validated (electorally and ideologically) in the mainstream. We also know that the new right gained momentum during the 1990’s (both nationally and internationally) because of a perceived demise in the power of whiteness. With regard to this I have previously written (and I quote at length):
Various observers have already sought to explain how the perceived loss of class, gender and other identity markers has led to the resurgence of white pride and/or white supremacism. It is argued that, as women, people of colour, gays and lesbians and other minority groups have gained a greater degree of social, political and economic power, there has been a growing perception of disadvantage amongst members of the mainstream white group. Rapid social, political, technological and economic change over the last twenty years is also said to compound this. Resorting to white racial identity as a pivotal marker for self-identity is understood to offer a sense of certainty and stability in a time of turmoil. It is also a reclamation of power in the face of a perceived erosion of power.

This analysis is useful because it locates the value of white race identity within a broader political, social and economic framework. In addition, it offers a crucial insight into the social and political ramifications of the dominant group experiencing an ontological and epistemological crisis. The deconstruction of identity provokes a defensive reflex. The reconstruction of identity inevitably involves a reclamation of power at the expense of those who are genuinely disempowered. In Australia, the phenomenon of Pauline Hanson and her One Nation party firmly illustrates this point. Overwhelmingly, Hanson’s supporters take pride in their Australianness, which translates into a pride in their whiteness (Brady and Carey, 2000: 279).

I argue that to suggest anti-white activism can thrive when Aboriginal people live in fear of violence and intimidation is disingenuous and serves only to make those committed to anti-whiteness complicit in acts of brutality against Aboriginal people.

I argue that should anti-whiteness activists pursue political coalitions with right-wing race hate organisations, the dialogic relationship that would be entered into would be between groups of ‘white’ people, variously positioned as pro-white and anti-white, at the exclusion of Aboriginal people, thus removing the dialogic forum away from Aboriginal Sovereignty and (re)positioning it within white sovereignty. Moreover, while the dialogic agenda may be rhetorically defined as ‘anti-white’, ultimately, its focus is on the demise of the American State. Thus, that which presents itself as a liberationist, anti-whiteness gesture is ultimately
revealed as a negation of the interests and concerns of Aboriginal people in pursuit of self-defined and self-interested political objectives. By way of underscoring the neo-colonial impulse implicit in the New Race Abolitionist agenda, it is worth remembering that at this particular political moment in time, Australia aligns its foreign policy objectives with those of the United States, the notable case in point being Australia’s involvement in the Iraq war. My point here is that both political phenomenon turns out to be opposite sides of the same coin.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have contextualised my argument for the creation of the non-Aboriginal subject as a response to critical whiteness studies. To focus my discussion, I have provided an analysis of the New Race Abolitionists. I presented this case study for a number of reasons. Firstly, focusing on the New Race Abolitionists allowed for a closer examination of the general concerns I have with critical whiteness studies, insofar as it represents another discursive regime that perpetuates colonialist ideologies and their influence on relations between Aboriginal people and members of the invader/settler society. I also argued New Race Abolitionists provide a forum whereby I could contextualise the personal narratives included in this thesis and which demonstrate movement between familial and political belongings, class identity and whiteness. The purpose here is to speak to the ‘movement’ between these markers for identity and non-Aboriginality, which I explore further in Chapter Four. Thirdly, my focus on New Race Abolitionism represents a specific, Australian engagement with this corpus of work, which hitherto has been lacking in Australian work on
critical whiteness studies. Finally, I explained New Race Abolitionists are unique in that they problematise the nexus between anti-white theory and activism. As such, my critique engaged with both elements of their manifesto.

In my critique of the New Race Abolitionists, I have argued against the notion of ‘crossing over’ from whiteness into blackness. I argued this validates a simplistic reversal of black and white binaries and this ensures skin colour is maintained as a means of attributing human qualities to different groups of people. Moreover, it legitimises the appropriation of blackness as a mode of political identification with oppressed peoples; universalises blackness as a signifier of oppression; and, in corollary, universalises blackness as a key signifier for Aboriginality. Further, it normalises whiteness as a signifier of the oppressor. Combined, this negates the experiences of cultural racism endured by cosmically ‘white’ Aboriginal people and invalidates Aboriginal resistance to whiteness through strategic whiteness.

I also argued that ‘crossing over’ (dis)places modes of political identification and activity out of historical context. In so doing, it diminishes the importance of the original goals of reconciliation and plays into the hands of neo-conservative articulations of ‘practical reconciliation’. As I have argued, this eschews the importance of members of the invader/settler society cultivating an awareness of our shared history. Further, it is associated with the diminution of Aboriginal rights and has seen a quantifiable decline in the social indicators for Aboriginal wellbeing.
Finally, I argued against the New Race Abolitionist’s proposal that anti-whiteness activists form strategic alliances with pro-white, race hate based organisations. In the first instance, I argued this places Australia in direct contravention of our international obligations under the ICERD. My primary concern however, resides with the fact that entering into strategic relationships with pro-white groups takes us out of dialogue with Aboriginal people, which as I argue in Chapter Four, is essential to anti-colonial constructions of the non-Aboriginal self. Rather, these strategic alliances place us in dialogue with those who would see violence committed against Aboriginal people. Because of this, I argue such alliances take us further away from being in Aboriginal Sovereignty and protects and upholds the interests of white sovereignty.

As a postscript to this chapter it is worth reminding ourselves of the obscene desecration of Eddie Koiki Mabo’s grave with red swastikas and racist slogans the day after the time for the official mourning for his passing had concluded (see Graham, 1997). Eddie Koiki Mabo was the man behind the ‘Mabo decision’, the Australian High Court decision that overturned the doctrine of terra nullius, the foundation principle for white sovereignty in Australia. Although the High Court stopped short of recognising Aboriginal Sovereignty, there is no doubt the impact of this decision on white Australia was profound. Indeed, the violation committed against Mabo’s final resting place (and the surviving members of his family) symbolises the hysteria and insecurity the Mabo decision induced in invader/settler Australians. The Mabo decision shook the very foundations of white sovereignty, and in so doing, the foundations of white ‘belonging’ in Australia. Since 1992, the challenge for white Australia has been to renegotiate
the basis for our legitimate belonging in Aboriginal land. I turn my attention to this matter in the following chapter.
In 1975 I received a letter from Nancy. It said: ‘I have one wonderful memory of your mother…. We went to Molly’s home, as you describe, for a meal. Your mother was there. She was sitting in a straight-backed chair surrounded by children, dogs, noise and general family bric-a-brac. When we came in we went up to her and she said, ‘Welcome to my home and my land.’ She said it with such power and simplicity…. She was a queen sitting there on her chair, and no one in Australia had even said “Welcome to my country” to us before. It made a deep impression on me (personal correspondence from Nancy (a non-Aboriginal friend) to Margaret Tucker, cited from Tucker, 1994: 190, emphasis in the original).
Chapter 3:

The Invader/Settler ‘Goes Native’: Appropriations of Aboriginality and the Indigenisation of White Australian Identity

Introduction

In this chapter, I examine the ways appropriations of Indigeneity and/or Aboriginality work to construct invader/settler peoples’ relationship with Australian national identity. I do so with specific reference to Germaine Greer’s *Whitefella Jump Up: The Shortest Way to Nationhood* (2003), which advocates the Aboriginalisation of white Australians’ identities. I draw parallels between this work and another published a year earlier by Anthony Moran, *As Australia Decolonizes: Indigenizing Settler Nationalism and the Challenges of Settler Indigenous Relations* (2002), which, in a similar vein, advocates the Indigenisation of white Australian national identity.

In my exploration of these texts, I survey other recent works investigating settler belongings such as Peter Read’s *Belonging: Australians, Place and Aboriginal Ownership* (2000); David Tacey’s *Edge of the Sacred: Transformation in Australia* (1998); John Moloney’s *The Native Born: The First White Australians* (2000), and various, subsequent critiques of these texts.

My purpose here is threefold: In the first instance, my concern is with the way in which these examples of post-colonial literature appropriate Aboriginality/Indigeneity in order to appease the insecurities of invader/settler belongings. Secondly, I highlight the circular nature of the literature proposing
the appropriation of Aboriginality/Indigeneity to achieve a post-colonial national identity, and those counter critiques warning that such appropriations constitute a re-colonisation of Aboriginal peoples’ identities so that invader/settler ‘belongings’ may be achieved. I argue these polarised positions mark out the scope of this debate, but they do not offer productive ways through the issues the debate raises. Following from Probyn\(^69\) (2002), I argue this impasse is attributable to the positing of Aboriginal people as the impediment to settler belongings. As she writes:

> Acknowledging the risk of appropriation is a means of registering complicity with imperialism – which is itself simultaneously presented as an obstacle to settler belonging (if not the obstacle), and at the same time the very reason why “belonging” is being sought after in the first place. To take on settler belonging is taking on the imperial, colonial and postcolonial history of Australia and the discursive arrangements by which such ethical and moral questions of “belonging” have been asserted. Consequently, the question of settler belonging must be situated within the epistemic violence that gives rise to it, or else it is in danger of becoming a sentiment which rejects imperialism as its obstacle and replaces it with Indigenous people themselves (Probyn, 2002: 76).

Thus, I argue that positioning Aboriginal people as the impediment to invader/settler belongings constitutes a disingenuous refocusing away from the violence of invasion and the ongoing colonisation of Aboriginal people. In short, this becomes one of the many discursive mechanisms available to invader/settler peoples to refute the fact of colonisation. Just as the refusal to apologise to the stolen generations are part of the Australian discourse of denial, so too, are discourses of belonging that position Aboriginal people as obstructing invader/settler belongings. In fact, the overwhelming obstruction is that members of the invader/settler society fail to fully account for the initial invasion and the ongoing dispossession of Aboriginal people.

\(^69\)Fiona Probyn (- Rapsey) lectures in the Department of Gender and Cultural Studies at the University of Sydney. She researches and teaches in post-colonial feminism, transnationalism, critical whiteness studies and Australian literature and film.
This then, brings me to my third point. I argue the appropriation of Aboriginality by non-Aboriginal people includes the appropriation of Aboriginal dispossession, thereby repositioning invader/settler peoples as ‘the dispossessed’. This inverts the story of colonisation to reposition Aboriginal people as dispossessors of the invaders. This is consistent with the discourse of denial. As Colin Tatz writes, “denialism takes several forms…[including]…the bizarre counterview that whites have been the victims” (Tatz, 2001: 29). Colonialist representations of Aboriginality invoked within post-colonial works advocating the appropriation of Aboriginality testify to this. Invariably, these representations rely on images of the primordial, traditional ‘native’. These images have the effect of concealing the physical and epistemic violence committed against Aboriginal people as part of the ongoing process of colonisation. Moreover, it works to identify an ancient peoples, trapped in pre-colonial time and culturally available to the exploitation of a dynamic and fluid dominant culture in order to substantiate and legitimate white sovereignty.

My engagement with this discussion is not just to ‘add’ to this debate by taking the side of those arguing against appropriations of Aboriginality/Indigeneity. Rather, I argue that this debate contextualises my advocacy for anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality. I argue that my position constitutes an alternative paradigm for identity construction processes and a way out of the ‘post-colonial’ conundrum I referred to in my introduction. I argue my position enables a process of identity formation where settler identities and belongings are “translated as, and translated through, the terms of epistemic violence which give rise to” (Probyn, 2002: 76) these issues in the first instance and to galvanise non-Aboriginality as a political identity for members of the invader/settler society.
Chapter Overview:

In the following discussion, I begin by offering a synopsis of both Greer and Moran’s respective theses, and contextualise them within a broader discussion on the appropriation of Aboriginality/Indigeneity as part of the ongoing process of Australian nation building. I argue that appropriations of Aboriginality occur within multiple and overlapping discursive realms including the academy, spirituality, geography, art, literature, marketing and ‘street’, or popular culture. As such, the notion that members of the invader/settler society must ‘Indigenise’ has a certain ‘common-sense’ value that continues to perpetuate itself, in spite of protestations that this constitutes the ongoing exploitation of Aboriginality for personal gain. Indeed, if we draw a line between the ‘killing-times’ and the acquisition of Aboriginal land economic benefit and colonial expansion, and the appropriation of ‘Aboriginality’ in order to appease anxieties about the status of invader/settler ‘belonging’ to this land, the veracity of this argument is self-evident. It demonstrates that ultimately, Aboriginal people, and their Aboriginality, are expendable in the pursuit and maintenance of white sovereignty. Indigenous lawyer and scholar Irene Watson makes a similar point in her article, *Settled and Unsettled Spaces: Are we Free to Roam?* (2005). She writes:

> We can trace a history from the appropriation of our Aboriginal lands, our displacement and movement onto reserve mission stations, and into prisons, to a displaced Aboriginal identity resisting absorption. In the process of absorption we are to be consumed by the state and its citizens and in their consumption of us, they are to become us. They anticipate coming into their own state of lawfulness through the consuming of our sovereign

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70 Dr Irene Watson is from the Tanganekald and Meintangk peoples of the Coorong and southeast region of South Australia. Dr Watson is a post-doctoral research fellow at the University of Sydney, in The Sydney Law School. She has worked as a legal practitioner and academic. Her research interests include, legal theory, Aboriginal peoples and the law, gender and the law, International law and Environmental Heritage and the Law and has published extensively in these areas.
Aboriginality. In this colonising process of us becoming white and white becoming Indigenous, white settlement deems itself as coming into its own legitimacy, as whites come into the space of our freedom to roam as Aboriginal peoples all over our Aboriginal places and spaces (Watson, 2005: 41).

Compounding the problem of ongoing colonisation, I further argue that those constructions of Aboriginality produced within colonialist discursive domains are critical to this process because they provide imagined versions of Aboriginality that are desired by the invader/settler nation and are able to be incorporated by the invader/settler self.

In the first instance, I take the theoretical framework for my discussion from the Canadian scholar, Terry Goldie and his thesis on The Representation of the Indigene (1997). Here, Goldie argues that Indigeneity must be ‘affirmed and denied’ by settler nationals who simultaneously require the existence of Indigeneity in order to conjure that which they seek to appropriate; and deny because the existence of actual Indigenous people disrupts the security of settler belongings. I extrapolate on Goldie’s position by turning to Hodge and Mishra’s (1990) post bicentenary working of the ‘bastard complex’; a conceptualisation that speaks to the illegitimacy of non-Aboriginal occupation of Aboriginal land. Like Goldie, Hodge and Mishra identify a dynamic between the affirmation and denial of Aboriginal existence, arguing that anthropological constructions of Aboriginality present Aboriginal people as being ahistorical ‘dreamtime’ people, unable to intervene, or speak back to the violence of ongoing colonisation. Finally, I turn to Gelder and Jacobs’s 1998 text Uncanny Australia: Sacredness and Identity in a Post Colonial Nation. Here, Gelder and Jacobs engage with Freud’s notion of the ‘uncanny’ in order to problematise the discomposing effect
of the 1992 Mabo decision on the invader/settler society. While I expand on Gelder and Jacobs use of the uncanny below, it is enough to say for the moment that the ‘uncanny’ describes the state of being where one is simultaneously ‘at home’ and ‘not at home’ in Australia. Essentially, the uncanny describes the coincident experience of homeliness and alienation by identifying the ways the binary relationship between the two concepts collapses on itself to produce the ‘uncanny’ effect of not knowing whether you are at home, or not (Gelder and Jacobs, 1998: 23; also see below).

In her critique of *Uncanny Australia*, Moreton-Robinson takes Gelder and Jacobs to task, arguing that in reality “the majority of Indigenous people in Australia do not have land-rights nor do they have legal ownership of their sacred sites” (Moreton-Robinson, 2003: 30). While I take Moreton-Robinson’s point, I also argue that Gelder and Jacobs’ analysis marks a temporal location from which we can decipher the significance of current claims to Indigeneity. That is, at the precise moment claims to Aboriginal Sovereignty appear to gain ‘mainstream’ legitimacy (and make the illegitimacy of claims to white sovereignty all the more obvious); there is a concomitant need to step up claims for white sovereignty. Thus, I argue that the resurgent desire for Indigeneity by invader/settler peoples can be read as a longing to reinstate the binary relationship between being *at home* and *not at home* by ensuring that we are, indeed, at *home* because we are ‘Indigenous’. Therefore, once we are Indigenous, our claims to being *at home* are unequivocal and irrevocable.
However, in addition, I argue that Goldie and Hodge and Mishra’s analysis of the appropriation of Indigeneity through the process of recognition and denial enables the uncanny appropriation of Aboriginal dispossession to ensure invader/settler possession of both Aboriginality and, therefore, Aboriginal Sovereignty. Representations of Aboriginality as pre-colonial, primordial and very often male facilitate this. As I demonstrate in my discussion below, this dynamic is evident in all of the texts explored in this chapter. However, to briefly illustrate my point it is worth diverting to Greer’s *Whitefella Jump Up* to see this dynamic in play.

Germaine Greer is an expatriate Australian living in England. She has long held the position that she will not return to live in Australia unless invited to do so by Aboriginal people. Indeed, in the past she has even insisted on a delegation of Aboriginal people meeting her at the airport when she returns home for a visit (see Moreton-Robinson, 2000: xvii; also Moreton-Robinson, 2007 pers. comm.)71. Given the parochial defensiveness of some Australian commentators, it was perhaps not surprising some took umbrage at Greer writing *Whitefella Jump Up* from the purview of an ex-pat. However, other observations were more discerning. In her response to Greer’s thesis, Faye Zwicky writes:

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71 On this occasion, Moreton-Robinson did meet Greer at the airport. It would seem there was considerable pressure placed on her to do so. She tells the story thus: “In Australia, in the 1990s, I was situated in three particular contexts in feminism as an embodied Indigenous subject…. The third experience came as a result of being asked by a university (with one day’s notice) to be part of a welcoming committee to meet a white feminist professor at the international airport at 5.30am. The professor had been invited to receive an honorary doctorate from the university, but she threatened not to come to Australia unless she was met and welcomed by Indigenous women. This seemingly noble but colonial gesture by the professor was soon eroded by her questioning us on what we were going to do at the Sydney Olympics about the denial of Indigenous rights in this country. She offered her unsolicited advice about what we should do and wanted us to advise her about what we might want her to do. Finally I responded by asking her to tell us what the limits were to what she would do. She did not answer my question – instead she changed the subject” (Moreton-Robinson, 2000: xvi-xvii).
“Greer has rarely embarked on a project without energetic recourse to private demons and their exorcism.” In her customary cat-among-the-pigeons style, speaking out of the usual anxiety of exile, she again goes looking for a place of belonging, an authentic home to return to in order to reckon with what has made her (2003: 75).

In identifying Greer’s expatriatism as ‘exile’, Zwicky’s insight enables us to deconstruct the dynamic of invader/settler dispossession/possession as it is enacted in Greer’s text. By virtue of the fact that Greer will not return to live in Australia unless invited to do so, it appears that she imagines her exile (dispossession) as an expression of solidarity with Aboriginal people. It is also a protest against those who dispossess Aboriginal people, of whom (apparently) she is not one. Therefore, like Aboriginal people, Greer is dispossessed by white Australians who, unlike her, do not recognise that this is Aboriginal land. Thus, it is only Aboriginal people who can ‘claim’ her back to Australia (as we subsequently see with her seeking adoption by her Kulin sisters and being given a skin name) all of which works to make Greer ‘Aboriginal’. However, the Aboriginality Greer seeks is a sanitised, romantic version constructed within a colonialist framework and ultimately amenable to her western sensibilities. As Greer writes:

Though I can claim no drop of Aboriginal blood, twenty years ago Kulin women from Fitzroy adopted me…when I asked about the possibility of assuming Aboriginality, the Kulin women said at once, “We’ll adopt you.” “How do you do that?” I asked, hoping I wouldn’t be required to camp in some bleak spot for a month or two, and be painted or smoked or cut about. “That’s it,” they said. “It’s done. We’ve adopted you”. Since then I have sat on the ground with black women and been assigned a skin and taught how to hunt and cook shellfish and witchetty grubs, with no worse punishment for getting it wrong than being laughed at (2003: 23).

Furthermore, the new Australian nation Greer imagines is a hunter-gather nation: the Aboriginal nation that will enable her to return ‘home’. Confusingly, this
Aboriginal nation operates under a legal system informed by British common law, and with a parliamentary system not dissimilar to the one we have now. The role of Aboriginal people is mooted by Greer as advisory, (through a counsel of elders), ceremonial and educational (see Greer, 2003: 73-78). My concern here is that as Greer invokes this traditional, tribal version of Aboriginality, she does not take account of the multifarious ways colonisation affects Aboriginal people. Indeed, in Greer’s scenario, it is as though colonisation never happened. I argue this very basic omission is critical to refiguring her ‘exile’ as ‘dispossession’ and, moreover, is what enables the unproblematic possession of Aboriginal land through the taking on of Aboriginality.

As I extrapolate this element of my thesis in the body of this chapter, I do so with specific reference to Read’s Belonging (2000) and subsequent critiques by Fiona Probyn (2002) and Ken Gelder (2000). I utilise this extended discussion to demonstrate how similar dynamics operate in Moloney’s Native Born (2000) and Moran’s Indigenizing Settler Nationalism (2002). Each of these texts is distinctly different in their subject matter, discipline approach and primary source material. However, they all serve to demonstrate that invader/settler ‘dispossession’ emerges as a common theme and works as a strategic devise to conceal the actual dispossession of Aboriginal people and simultaneously justify invader/settler possession of Aboriginal land. As I have just argued with reference to Greer’s work, the possession of Aboriginality is critical to this process.
Following this, I argue the type of Aboriginality invader/settler people seek to possess relies on colonialist constructions of the primordial man. A clear example of this is found in David Tacey’s *Edge of the Sacred: Transformation in Australia* (1998). As a Jungian philosopher, Tacey claims that Australians must ‘invoke the archetypal aboriginal within’ in order to fulfil a spiritual relationship with the land. In exploring the implications of Tacey’s thesis, I draw on Mitchell Rolls’ critique of *Edge of the Sacred*, published in the 1998 and 1999 editions of the *Melbourne Journal of Politics*, and Cowlishaw and Morris’ (1997) analysis of ‘cultural racism’. Through this, I argue that although much contemporary ‘post-colonial’ literature relies on cultural (as opposed to biological, racialised) notions of Aboriginality, the logic of ‘race’ persists. Aboriginality is rendered inert, while the dynamism of the dominant culture allows it to harvest imagined elements of Aboriginality for its own purposes, namely to construct a post-colonial version of the ‘white’ aborigine, and legitimate the white, post-colonial nation.

**An Overview of Greer and Moran**

Greer’s essay was first published in the journal *Quarterly Essay* (Issue 11, 2003). A broad précis of her thesis reveals her commitment to cease the historical problematisation of Aboriginal people and reposition them as the solution to whitefella problems (2003: 2). ‘Aboriginality’, argues Greer, is the panacea that can cure white Australia’s hatred of country, spiritual dislocation, alcoholism, racial segregation, racism, endemic environmental degradation, and materialistic individualism. She argues the co-option of Aboriginality will secure a sense of place, or belonging, in Australia for invader/settler Australians, and offers the
means to envision a new republican national identity. Look in the mirror, she
implores, and tell yourself you live on Aboriginal land. Then tell yourself
“therefore I must be considered Aboriginal” (Greer, 2003: 14-15). The ‘anti-
colonial’ (not that she uses this term and I use it here with deliberate facetious
intent) position of Greer’s thesis is that she imagines that on this basis Aboriginal
and other Australians can collectively forge an Aboriginal hunter-gatherer nation
with international allegiances to other hunter-gatherer societies and finally
dissolve colonial ties with Britain (Greer, 2003: 73-78).

Given the high public exposure of Greer’s thesis, it invited a range of responses
within intellectual and literary circles. The subsequent edition of Quarterly
Essay (Issue 12, 2003) published a range of correspondence that both criticise
and defend Greer’s position. Some, such as Lillian Holt72, affirm her vision,
lauding her creativity, imagination and capacity to “dream big” (Holt, 2003: 70).
Holt rapturously approves of Greer’s willingness to refocus attention away from
Aboriginal people and her capacity to say, “I don’t know” (Holt, 2003: 69) to
things for which she has no answers. While I appreciate Holt is responding to a
propensity to ‘know all’ about Aboriginal people, and speak on their behalf, I am
equally concerned that Greer’s capacity to say “I don’t know” extends to
articulating an actualisation of her own thesis.

72 Lillian Holt is an Aboriginal educator and public speaker on ethnicity and race relations in
Australia. Currently, Holt is the Vice Chancellor’s Fellow at Melbourne University. Previously,
she was the Director of the Centre for Indigenous Education at the University of Melbourne. Her
research interests include Australian culture, civil society and Reconciliation. Holt is currently
writing a PhD on Aboriginal humour at Melbourne University
Similarly, Tony Birch\textsuperscript{73} reishes the ‘madness’ of Greer’s vision. Although concerned with the generality of Greer’s argument, he sees the value of her thesis being published “at a political moment when the status of indigenous communities in Australia has been pushed to the margins once more, led by a federal government determined to recolonise the Indigenous body within a nominally post-colonial nation” (2003: 85). While Birch does not seriously imagine that white Australians will look in the mirror and call themselves ‘Aboriginal’, he advocates the need for greater “self-examination” (2003: 85) on their part. To this he writes:

I imagine that many people will want to dismiss Greer because they do not want to look in the mirror. And while a lot of them may not want to be “considered” Aboriginal in the true sense, they will find it discomforting to consider more closely their own identity and its complicity in the effort to dispossess indigenous people…. If the white Australian tries to find his Aboriginal face in the mirror, he may come to see his own face as the face of the oppressor (Birch, 2003: 86-87).

Conversely, Marcia Langton took issue with Greer, criticising the ‘disconnected’ nature of her argument. Langton’s analysis highlights Greer’s apparent obliviousness to other “big picture” post-colonial visions for Australia at the end of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century and the success of neo-conservative resistance to these visions. Further, Langton addresses Greer’s lack of engagement with contemporary literature on national identity, nationhood, and ‘belonging’; her ahistorical analysis of the impact of Aboriginal languages and culture on the (white) Australian accent and culture; and her lack of awareness on inter-generational shifts in the intersubjective and intercultural exchange between Aboriginal and members of the invader/settler society. Significantly, Langton

\textsuperscript{73}Tony Birch is a Koori man and teaches creative writing at Melbourne University. He is a widely published author including poetry, fiction and academic articles. Dr Birch’s PhD is in Urban Cultures and Histories
also identifies Greer’s uncritical redeployment of ‘race’ as a means to defining
national identity (Langton, 2003: 77). As Langton writes:

Essentialist ideas about identity – for instance that a person’s or nation’s
identity is shaped by “race” – have permeated Australian life since the idea
of an Australian nation was invented in the late nineteenth century. Simply
to flip the foundation of the nation from a fundamentally White identity to a
Black one is to remain trapped by the racism on which the nation was

With this said, however, Langton concludes with the diplomatic concession that
at least Greer’s vision is one “that does not spring from hate” (2003: 82). “Even
if her essential idea is flawed with a romantic notion of race” writes Langton,
“Dr Greer’s contribution throws into stark relief some of the myths that underpin
the difficulty of overcoming the inherited frontier hatred that continues to drive
racist discourse in Australian public life” (2003: 82).

Similarly, Mary Ellen Jordan74 argues the basic premise to Greer’s argument
does not “hang together” (2003: 88). Jordan condemns Greer’s cynical
appropriation of Aboriginality, a specific case in point being the “offensive”
claim that “Aboriginality” can cure non-Aboriginal alcoholism when alcohol
abuse tears so many Aboriginal communities and families apart. Jordan also
criticises Greer’s generic use of the word ‘Aborigine’ and her glossing over of
cultural differences between groups of Aboriginal people; and, her inattention to
the different ways colonisation has impacted on various Aboriginal people.
Equally problematic is her romanticisation and over-simplification of cultural
similarities between Aboriginal and invader/settler peoples at the expense of
identifying the very real differences between us all. By way of illustrating her

74 Mary Ellen Jordan is a writer, reviewer and editor. She is widely published including in Peter
Craven’s 2001 Best Australian Essays. Balanda is her first book.
point, Jordan reflects on some of those white Australians she encountered while living in the Aboriginal community Maningrida. She writes:

Of course, even if you could quantify “culture”, you’d find equal amounts of it on both sides. But, it’s harder to see your own culture, and easy to see the exotic and unfamiliar. This romanticism often extended to the perception of all Aboriginal people as inherently good, and most non-Aboriginal people as of less value. I came to think of this as “positive racism”. It involves judging people by their race, just as the old fashioned pejorative, excluding kind of racism does, but in reverse. Most importantly, positive racism forms its own obstacles to intercultural sharing and understanding (Jordan, 2003: 91).

Following from Jordan, I pursue many of these issues in my discussion below. However, before this, I turn to Moran’s *As Australia Decolonizes: Indigenizing Settler Nationalism and the Challenges of Settler/Indigenous Relations* (2002).

In this text, Moran traces the peculiarities of Australian settler-colonialism and the role of ‘Indigeneity’ in constructing white Australian national identity. In part, Moran’s thesis is in keeping with those post-colonial theorists who argue that the presence of Aboriginal people provokes a deeply ‘unsettled’ feeling for invader/settler Australians (2002: 1025). However, unlike those who argue against members of the invader/settler society people mediating this unsettledness through the appropriation of Indigeneity, Moran advocates the incorporation of ‘the Indigenous’ as an integral element of post-colonial nation building. He argues that subsequent to the reconciliation movement and the 1992 Mabo judgement, Aboriginal people occupy a special place at the centre of national identity construction in a way that is unique amongst settler nations. He writes:

75 Specifically, Moran draws on Terry Goldie (1997) and Hodge and Mishra, (1991) to make this point, I return to these authors below.
Today, the incorporation of indigeneity means the incorporation of the indigenous people themselves as present-day bearers of the oldest living culture known to humanity. This entails the need for the indigenous, rather than non-indigenous caretakers, to represent their indigeneity themselves. To some extent Aboriginality is honoured by the public culture: by politicians, by the mass media, by the art world, and by at least some sections of the broader settler Australian populace. While there is a strong humanitarian impulse, an anti-racism and a commitment to the acceptance of cultural diversity standing behind this phenomenon, settler nationalists also seek, through an embrace of the indigenous, to resolve the ambiguity of their national connection with the Australian land: through kinship with the indigenous, through sharing their wisdom and their culture, and through drawing them into a broader concept of the Australian nation…it is a form of nationalism that creates a specific place for the indigenous at the heart of the nation (Moran, 2002: 1033).

Importantly, Moran acknowledges that the process of Indigenising settler nationalism in Australia “involves a mournful orientation…a full confrontation…with the shame involved in Aboriginal dispossession…a full disclosure that might clear the way for the future” (2002: 1034). He also argues that the consequential benefits to Indigenising settler nationalism include recognising and accommodating Indigenous peoples’ spiritual relationship with the land, and through this, provide frameworks and discourses through which invader/settler belongings can be articulated. Rather than Aboriginality ‘unsettling’, or destabilising settler belongings, it can stabilise connections with the land (2002: 1030). Therefore, he argues, Indigenising settler nationalism can generate a process of “national renewal” (2002: 1031) and invigorate a new ‘post-colonial’ notion of nationhood.

Thus, there are important distinctions between Greer and Moran’s arguments. Firstly, where Greer explicitly advocates ‘Aboriginality’ for white Australians, Moran’s case is for a specific veneration of ‘Indigeneity’ in the construction of national identity. On face value then, Moran’s position is a more mature
acknowledgement of the place of Aboriginal people in the nation and ostensibly offers a model for national identity building that does not hold the denial of the treatment of Aboriginal people post-1788 at the core of its modus operandi. However, I also argue that on closer reading, this turns out to be a semantic difference. In both cases, the authors posit Aboriginal peoples’ ‘Aboriginality’ as the means by which invader/settler ‘Aboriginality’ or ‘Indigeneity’ is to be achieved. As such, both proposals require the consumption of the others’ alterity in order to be articulated and fulfilled. Therefore, they constitute a continuation of the epistemic violence committed against Aboriginal people as part of the ongoing process of colonisation.

Contextualising Greer and Moran: A Brief Historical Overview

In focusing on these recent works, I do not mean to suggest appropriations of ‘Aboriginality’ are anything ‘new’. Indeed, it is critical to locate these proposals within a broader historical context. Various manifestations of Indigenising Australian identity can be traced prior to federation and must be understood as integral to the process of creating a unique Australian identity. Scholars of Australian settler-colonialism and nationalism generally agree that the first generations of white people born in Australia mobilised their ‘nativity’ in order to forge a unique white Australian identity (see McLean, 1998; Moloney, 2000: 52, 54&55, 65). This is captured in a poem by Henry Lawson, The Southern Scout (also titled The Natives of the Land) written in 1892. In the final stanza Lawson writes:

“It’s live or die!” you’ll hear ‘em sing, “so let the war begin For the rights of man and woman, and the land we’re living in. It’s right or wrong,” you’ll hear ‘em sing, “we’ll test it once again Ere greed shall rob the gardens where our mothers worked like men.”
And Eastward shall the army come with eyes all flashing grand
When Freedom’s marching orders reach the Natives of the Land –
Of the land we’re living in,
The Natives of the land.
They’ll sing a rebel chorus yet and play it on a band,
For the spirit of the country moves the Natives of the Land (c.f. Roderick, 1967: 224).

In a footnote to this poem, published in the Bulletin in 1892, Lawson wrote:

The writer wishes to state, for the benefit of the majority of the English people, that Australians born of Europeans have been called ‘natives’ for many years. Also that Australians are not all black, or even brown, neither are they red. Likewise, that the progeny of Marster ‘Jarge’ or ‘Willum’ as went ‘abroad’ and come to Australia, are not necessarily little savages, unless, indeed, the Master Jarge or Willum aforesaid happens to live with a black gin (c.f. Roderick, 1967: 443).

According to John Moloney, before the 1840’s, the term ‘native’ applied equally to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people born in Australia. However, overtime, the distinction between the white ‘native born’ and ‘Aboriginal natives’ worked to discern between Aboriginal people and invader/settler people born in Australia and separate the citizenships rights and entitlements of both groups. As Clark and Galligan write:

The British tradition had been to refer to its indigenous populations as ‘natives’…the terms ‘aboriginal’ and ‘aborigine’ became useful as international generic words for the European powers to employ when discussing each other’s indigenous inhabitants. Australian usage at the turn of the last century, however, was quite different. The two terms, ‘aboriginal’ and ‘native,’ when used individually, meant quite different things. The first was used to refer to race, often described in terms of ‘blood’, and the second to place of birth…. The term ‘native’ was imbued with the idea of nativity and meant birth in a particular place. ‘Aboriginal’, on the other hand, had a related meaning but was given a different slant in early Australian usage. Like the British ‘native’, ‘aboriginal’ meant the original inhabitants or descendents thereof. When finally defined, ‘aboriginal native’ was deemed a composite term meaning a descendent of the original race of a particular region who was also born in that place. Thus, an ‘aboriginal native of Australia’ was a black indigenous person, whereas a ‘native’ referred to an Australian-born white person (1995: 524-525).
Subsequent appropriations of nativity continued into the 20th century, with literary movements such as the Jindyworobaks76 incorporating Aboriginal words, concepts and ‘spirituality’ into their writings. Indeed, a brief survey of the glossary in *The Jindyworobaks: Portable Australian Authors* (Elliot, 1979) reveals the homogenised application of ‘Aboriginal’ words for the dreamtime, sacred ceremonial artefacts and sites, food, the stars, animals, law and order and people (see Elliot, 1979: 317-318). Similarly, artists such as Margaret Preston incorporated Aboriginal designs and motifs into their artwork.

Far from niche artistic and creative movements, these Indigenising projects were taken up within intellectual and scholarly circles. For example, in 1940 the literary journal *Meanjin* was established, deliberately taking on an Aboriginal word as its name to describe “the Australian-ness of its criticism and writing” (Mclean, 1998: online). Also, between 1925-1941 Margaret Preston contributed four articles to *Art and Australia* “urging that Aboriginal art become the foundation and inspiration of a modern, national Australian art” (Mclean, 1998: online). She was also an active member of the Anthropological Society of NSW and the prominent anthropologist A. P. Elkin supported Preston’s position. Together they played an important role in promoting Aboriginal art in the 1940’s and 1950’s. In what was a mutually beneficial relationship, anthropology lent “credibility” to the burgeoning Aboriginal art movement, and art supported the changing philosophical paradigms in anthropological scholarship, which was rejecting “evolutionism” for “cultural paradigms” that were sympathetic to Aboriginal people and culture (McLean, 1998: online). However, I make the

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76 The Jindyworobaks was an Australian poetry movement, mainly between 1930-1940.
point that these ‘sympathies’ underpinned the ideological regime that ushered in the shift from biological absorption to cultural assimilation policies and compelled Aboriginal people to take on the cultural whiteness of their oppressors.

Additionally, outside of these creative and scholarly circles, moves to Indigenise Australian national identity were evident in numerous areas of popular culture. Aboriginal characters and native animals were incorporated into children’s stories (Collins-Gearing, 2003); Indigenous foods were incorporated to create a distinctively ‘Australian’ cuisine (Craw, 2005); and, Indigenous words were also used to name homes, suburbs and streets (Birch, 1997: 18; Furphy, 2002). Tony Birch argues that appropriating Aboriginal place names “represents imperial possession and the quaintness of the ‘native’”. He further writes:

For the colonisers to attach a ‘native’ name to a place does not represent or recognise an indigenous history, and therefore possible indigenous ownership…. Imperial history cannot recognise the existence of indigenous histories…. An attempt to recognise the history of indigenous people creates insecurity, paranoia, even hysteria. It ‘wipes out over 150 years of (British) history’ and ‘takes away that heritage’ (Birch, 1997: 18).

Rather, as Sam Furphy observes, appropriating Indigenous place names points to the ways Aboriginal words have been coopted as “Australian words” enabling the cultivation of “a distinct national feeling” and an important “element in our national culture” (Furphy, 2002: 65 & 68). He continues:

This superficial appropriation of Aboriginal words and place names is a symptom of white Australia’s simplified and idealised understanding of Aboriginal culture. It exemplifies how Aboriginal culture can be shallowly employed to indigenise Australian national identity (Furphy, 2002: 68).

Contemporary appropriations of Aboriginality for the purpose of national identity building continue into the 21st century. However, unlike those
appropriations predicated on the doomed race theory, contemporary forms of appropriation incorporate Aboriginality into a national redemption narrative, “where Australian can reaffirm its most cherished beliefs about itself; that, as a fair minded, just and compassionate global citizen” (Batty, 1998: online).

However, the transition has not always been a smooth one. As Phillip Batty writes with reference to the closing ceremony of the Atlanta Olympic games in 1996:

…the organisers chose to represent ‘Australia’, through a pageant of the ‘indigenous’, heavily laced with associated signs of the, ‘primordial’ and the ‘natural’. Rising up in the centre of…a mass of flames…a group of painted Aboriginal musicians blew into their amplified didgeridoos…cyclists carrying blow up plastic kangaroos on their backs (decorated with the dots and lines of Australian Aboriginal art), also appeared. Towards the end…in an awkward glance back to the days when Australia was secure in its modernity…a plastic replica…of the Sydney Opera House rose up in the background (1998: online).

It is also worth noting that some of the ‘Aboriginal’ performers were white people, ‘blacked up’ to ‘look’ Aboriginal (Trees, 2006: pers. comm.).

By the Sydney Olympics in 2000, the Boomerang was incorporated into the official logo (see Curthoys, 1997), and the opening ceremony featured a corroboree performed by 1,150 Indigenous people from Numbulwar, Yirrkala, Lalynhapuy, Ramingining, Maningrida, the Central Desert, Torres Strait Islands, NAISDA, The Aboriginal Dance Theatre in Redfern, Doonah Dance Company, and Bangarra Dance Theatre (Tenenbaum, 2000: online; Connell, 2000: online).

As a symbol of reconciliation, the Aboriginal songman Djakapuura Munyarrayan and the young white girl, Nicki Webster walked off together, hand in hand, towards a perfectly harmonious post-colonial future. The champion Aboriginal

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77 In accordance with Olympic protocol, Australia, the next host country for the Olympic games to be held in Sydney in 2000, was an important part of the Atlanta Olympic games closing ceremony.
athlete, Cathy Freeman had the honour of lighting the Olympic Flame, and her
gold medal win in the 400 metre race has been heralded as a critical moment for
reconciliation (Tenenbaum, 2000: online). It must be noted, however, that the
New South Wales State government also “brought in a range of law and order
policies, in part to mitigate the negative effects of Aboriginal protest on our
international reputation” (Carey, 2004: 17). As I have previously written with
regard to this:

This highlights how white Australia tolerates Aboriginal people taking their
culture and politics to the world in ‘white approved’ ways – so in this
sense, its not literally taking Aboriginal culture to the world, it is about
promoting a version of white Australian culture that is uniquely and
identifiably Australian: connected with the land, ongoing and dynamic,
tolerant, fair and just (2004: 17).

It also makes good business sense. Where Aboriginality is used to brand
international events, it also effectively works to ‘brand’ the nation with a unique
‘Indigenous’, Australian identity that is very lucrative. With reference to this,
Elazar Barkan writes:

In the meantime the new Australianess seems to have been fully accepted
as a business proposition. It includes everything from the strategy using
Aboriginal paintings to help lobby for the Olympic games to the Aboriginal
design “Wunala (kangaroo) Dreaming” painted on Qantas 747s; from the
name change of a national park into traditional Aborigine to the marketing
of the Northern Territory as an “exotic escape” decorated with Aboriginal
designs and music (not withstanding the state’s [sic] rabid anti-Aboriginal
policies). This is not only a restitution of identity, which is long overdue, it
is also a profitable marketing decision (2000: 236).

Indeed, it is worth noting that the promotion of Aboriginal culture is significant
in attracting overseas tourists to Australia, and Aboriginal art is estimated to be

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78 For further discussion on the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games opening ceremony see Michelle
Hanna (1999), Reconciliation in Olympism: Indigenous Culture in the Sydney Olympiad; Robin
worth between $100-400 million dollars a year to the Australian economy\textsuperscript{79} (Northern Territory Government, circa 2006: online; also see Barstow, 2005: 2).

Within scholarly circles, claims to Indigeneity are also asserted by some academics. For example, as George Seddon writes in his 2002 article \textit{It's Only Words}:

Forty thousand years is a long time, but it still does not make them literally indigenous as a people, although the term is in common use. It is also a contested one: the Aboriginal view is that they are not immigrants but arose from the land. \textit{At the level of the individual, of course, anyone who was born in Australia, as I was, is indigenous} (2002: 249, emphasis added).

Additionally, Gelder and Jacobs provide this example, originally reported in \textit{The Age} Newspaper in October 1996, of a white Australian attempting to use Native Title provisions to have his Native Title established over Dare Island in Bass Strait. They write:

…William Hollier, a man of non-Aboriginal descent, was planning to lodge a claim for Deal Island in Bass Strait under the Native Title Act. Hollier is an environmental scientist who has lived on the island with his family, as the sole occupants, for the past four years – not long in the Aboriginal scheme of things. Nevertheless, with no prior evidence of Aboriginal occupation of the island, Hollier felt enabled enough, or indigenous enough, to make a claim for its possession. Was he simply appropriating Native Title provisions for his own interests? Or was this an entirely unexpected example of convergence, drawing otherwise discrete groups together? Hollier, naturally enough saw things in the latter terms, telling

\footnote{\textsuperscript{79} It is difficult to get a more accurate figure. The Northern Territory Government suggest four possible reasons for this variation:  
1. The difference in the original sale price from the artist in relation to interstate and international market prices;  
2. The variation between the low-end tourism market and high-end designer goods;  
3. The number of fake, forged or counterfeit goods in the market place;  
4. The difficulty in calculating the induced effect on the tourism industry and those seeking the ‘indigenous experience’ (Northern Territory Government, circa 2006: 9).}

Currently, there is a Senate Inquiry into the Indigenous Visual Arts and Craft Sector. It is due to report in March 2007. The Inquiry’s terms of reference include (but are not limited to):  
1. The current size and scale of Australia’s Indigenous visual arts and crafts sector;  
2. The economic, social and cultural benefits of the sector;  
3. The overall financial, cultural and artistic sustainability of the sector. (Parliament of Australia, Senate Committee, Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts References Committee, circa 2006: online). One would assume the report will provide a more accurate figure.
the reporter: ‘I am not trying to reduce the effectiveness of native title, I am trying to enhance it’. The boundaries between minority provisions and majority access are certainly confused here. The newspaper headline ran the following appropriate pun: ‘Scientist appeals for fair Deal’. This man wanted to authorise his occupation of Deal Island through the uncanny procedure whereby it was impossible to tell whether he was ‘Aboriginalising’ his whiteness, or whitening legislation which is specifically Aboriginal (Gelder and Jacobs, 1998: xv).

On a smaller scale, local appropriations of Aboriginality are similarly easy to identify. The following example is one sourced within my local community. It is a real estate advertisement for L.J. Hooker, found in the *Fremantle Herald* on Saturday the 19th of February 2005 (page 32). Advertising a two-bedroom apartment with Indian Ocean and Swan River views, the slogan reads, “Swan River Dreaming”. While the injudicious use of the word ‘dreaming’ is obvious, it also needs to be noted that the mouth of the river is also an important site for Nyungar creation stories and this is reasonably well known in Perth because of the Swan Brewery/Sacred Site dispute. Thus, the desire (dream) to have such well located property also translates into the capacity to own a ‘dreaming’, a spiritual connection to the place one desires. Thus, not only can one own the property in ‘proprietorial’ sense, one can belong to the property in an ‘Indigenous’ sense.

Thus, I argue that these multiple, overlapping sites of cultural identity production produce a “semiosphere” that has, at the core of its ideological purpose, the capacity to interpolate invader/settler Australians into Indigeneity (see Hartley and McKee, 2000) through the appropriation of Indigenous motifs, symbols and

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80 The *Fremantle Herald* is a local, independently owned newspaper, distributed around Fremantle (Western Australia) and surrounding suburbs.

81 An account of the Swan Brewery dispute can be found in, Martha Ansara’s, *Always Was, Always Will Be: The Sacred Grounds of the Waugal, Kings Park, Perth, WA: The Old Swan Brewery Dispute* (1990).
images. However, as I argue in the following section, the dynamic of identity appropriation is not a straightforward one. In his analysis on the function of ‘representations of the indigene’ in settler nations, the Canadian academic Terry Goldie argues settler societies such as Canada, New Zealand and Australia “have a clear agenda to erase this separation of belonging” (1997: 234; also see Probyn, 2002: 77) caused by the presence of Indigenous peoples. This, he argues, is achieved through the paradoxical recognition and denial of the existence of Indigenous people in order to engage in their own process of “indigenisation” (see Goldie, 1997: 234; also see Brady and Carey, 2000: 277). That is, symbols of Indigeneity are recognised and incorporated by the settler population while, simultaneously, the existence of the Indigenous population is denied.

I have already pointed to the ways words, place names, artefacts, notions of Indigenous spirituality and the very notion of Indigeneity or nativity itself are ‘incorporated’ by invader people. Denial, can manifest in various ways including the physical denial of Aboriginal peoples’ presence and the denial of an independent Indigenous consciousness and perspective on historical events that profoundly impact on their lives and cultural survival. Other examples include (but are not limited to) the ‘discovery’ of Aboriginal lands and artefacts by settler colonists/nationals; the persistent belief in ‘traditional’ Aboriginality in order to deny the Aboriginality of those who have survived regimes of biological

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82 Michael Hatt’s (1997) article *Ghost Dancing in the Red Indian Salon* also provides a lucid example of this dynamic in the United States.

83 I am also mindful of interventions by Aboriginal people into renaming/reclaiming place names. Here, the dynamic in play is one of Aboriginal people speaking back to the presumption of invader/settler peoples to claim and name land in the image of empire. Restating pre-existing place names represents a fundamental challenge to the logic of *terra nullius*. That is, it makes a statement about the survival of Indigenous people, culture and knowledge and an assertion of Indigenous sovereignty in the face of white sovereignty.
absorption and cultural assimilation; the exclusion of Indigenous people from national histories of economic development and modernisation; and, the active disremembering of atrocities committed against Indigenous peoples. Thus, the dynamic of recognition and denial enables a process whereby the existence of the Indigenous population is made ambiguous and subsequently, the threat they pose to settler belongings is mitigated. This is the process of erasing the ‘separation of belonging’, and it is through this that the status of the settler population “as the ‘real’ Indigenous population is assured” (Brady and Carey, 2000: 277).

**Putting Greer and Moran in a ‘Post-Colonial’ Context:**

Following from Goldie, but closer to home, I am also mindful of those Australian engagements theorising the relationship between invader/settler and Indigenous societies. In their post-bicentenary, pre-Mabo publication *Dark Side of the Dream: Australian Literature and the Post-Colonial Mind* (1991), Hodge and Mishra challenge the legitimacy of white Australians’ occupation of Aboriginal land through a concept they call the ‘Bastard Complex’ (1991: 23-49). As the authors explain, there is a particular Australian usage of the word ‘bastard’, one that connotes mateship, solidarity and quintessential Australian-ness. Indeed, this usage is “definitionally Australian: only the true Australian can call his ‘mate’ a ‘bastard’” (Hodge and Mishra, 1991: 23). However, beyond the particular quirks of Australian colloquialisms, Hodge and Mishra point out that this shared Australian understanding of bastardry speaks to the illegitimacy of white Australian occupation of Aboriginal land. Thus, it also serves the paradoxical ideological function of pointing to the “anxiety about legitimacy in the national psyche” while also affirming “illegitimacy in order to evade anxiety
about origins” (1991: 23). That is, national Australian identity is forged out of a shared recognition of illegitimacy. There is also a shared understanding that the anxieties produced by illegitimacy must be circumvented through the appropriation of illegitimacy in order to evade the real causes of illegitimacy in the first instance.

Within this schema, argue Hodge and Mishra, Aboriginal people occupy a “contradictory and ambiguous” (1991: 23) place in the construction of an Australian identity. In a position not dissimilar to Goldie’s, they argue that the presence of Aboriginality is affirmed and denied through a “discursive regime” (1991: 26) that simultaneously suppresses Aboriginal speakers and viewpoints from “dominant” discursive “domains” and allows permissible representations of Aboriginality which over-rely on “anthropological” constructions of the “dreamtime”. This situates Aboriginal people without “historical consciousness”, or capacity to “comprehend linear history in the European mode” (Hodge and Mishra, 1991: 27-28). As such, Aboriginal people are denied the “ability…to establish an alternative account of the foundation event and its aftermath, an account that might refuse to contain the violence and illegalities within the moments of innocence” (Hodge and Mishra, 1991: 28). Ultimately, this serves to conceal the illegitimacy of the self confessed bastards and enable the ‘schizophrenic’ (Hodge and Mishra, 1991: xiv-xv) valorisation of illegitimacy as a source of national identity and pride.

Further, in their post-Mabo thesis Uncanny Australia: Sacredness and Identity in a Post-Colonial Nation, Gelder and Jacobs (1998) problematise the instabilities
of settler belongings with Freud’s notion of the ‘uncanny’. As Gelder and Jacobs explain, the uncanny expresses the relationship between heimlich (that which is homely, familiar and accessible) and unheimlich (that which is unhomely, unfamiliar, strange and inaccessible). Specifically, Freud’s working of the uncanny says these two concepts are coexistent because the binary relationship between homely and unhomely/familiar and strange collapses on itself to produce the uncanny. Thus, the uncanny is not merely an expression of the unfamiliar. It is an expression of the familiar and unfamiliar simultaneously, “of being in place and ‘out of place’” at the same time (Gelder and Jacobs, 1998: 23). In connecting the uncanny to post-Mabo Australia, Gelder and Jacobs write “[i]n this moment of decolonisation, what is ‘ours’ is also potentially, or even always already, ‘theirs’: the one is becoming the other, the familiar becoming strange (1998: 23). Thus Gelder and Jacobs, argue that the value of the uncanny is:

…it refuses the usual binary structure upon which much commentary on Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relations is based. We often speak of Australia as a ‘settler’ nation, but the ‘uncanny’ can remind us that a condition of unsettledness folds into this taken-for-granted mode of occupation (1998: 24).

Following from this, and in an observation that is resonant with Hodge and Mishra’s ‘bastard complex’, Gelder and Jacobs argue that the uncanny also problematises white Australian’s relationship with ‘guilt and innocence’. That, is whether white Australians are free (innocent) from implication with the processes of colonisation, or, inherently guilty by virtue of the fact we/they live in Australia and continue to share in the benefits of Aboriginal dispossession. Thus, they write:
In postcolonial Australia, however, it may well be that both of these positions are inhabited at the same time: one is innocent (‘out of place’) and guilty (‘in place’) simultaneously. And this is entirely consistent with postcoloniality as a contemporary moment, where one remains within the structures of colonialism even as one is somehow located beyond or ‘after’ them (Gelder and Jacobs, 1998: 24).

In drawing attention to the chronology of Goldie’s, Hodge and Mishra’s and Gelder and Jacobs respective theses, I seek to situate Greer and Moran’s work – and others of this genre – within a specific temporal location. In the first instance, it is important to note the broader social and political milieu of the time and the enmity of those opposed to apparent gains made by Aboriginal people in the legal recognition of their land rights through Mabo 2, the Native Title Act (1993) and the High Court’s Wik decision. As Curthoys argues in her article Expulsion, Exodus and Exile in White Australian Historical Mythology (1999), white Australians responded to these gains through the ‘memory’ of originally having been made ‘homeless’ from England (that is, living in exile from the original home), and seeing the formalisation of Aboriginal land rights as a threat to being made ‘homeless’ again. According to Curthoys, it was Pauline Hanson\(^\text{84}\) “who lead the public expression of hostility to Aboriginal claims to land” (Curthoys, 1999: 17). Indeed, in her maiden speech to parliament in September that year, Hanson said:

> I am fed up with being told “This is our land”. Well, where the hell do I go? I was born here and so were my parents and children…I draw the line when told I must pay and continue paying for something that happened over 200 years ago. Like most Australians, I worked hard for my land; no one gave it to me (c.f. Curthoys, 1999: 17-18).

\(^{84}\) As mentioned in the previous chapter, Pauline Hanson was elected as an independent to the seat of Oxley in Queensland in the 1996 federal elections.
As an aside, I am concerned that Curthoys’ analysis disengages with the rabidity of the Liberal-National Coalition government’s and industry lobbyists such the National Farmers Federation and the Australian Mining Industry Council\textsuperscript{85} opposition to Aboriginal peoples’ Sovereign rights during this time. Equally, I also suggest that she fails to recognise and give agency to those other Australians who protested against the racist claims of conservative politicians and their supporters.

Indeed, in Curthoys’ narrative, there is no room for the actions of those individuals, such as pastoralist Camilla Cowley, (interviewed in the documentary element of this project) who actively sought out ways to actualise a vision for coexistence with Aboriginal people through processes of cooperation and mutual understanding. In Camilla’s case, negotiations with the Gunjerri people of southwest Queensland to share the land on ‘her’ property, Yancho, was a landmark event. Subsequently, Camilla became a prominent spokesperson, protesting the Liberal-National government’s 10-point plan that sought to diminish the High Court’s Wik findings. For many reasons, including the fact that Camilla was a pastoralist and the timing of the event, I suggest that her address at an anti 10-point plan /pro Wik rally on the steps of parliament house in Canberra in 1997 is as historically important as Hanson’s maiden speech to parliament. Certainly, it is the more generous and aspirational of the two.

However, I acknowledge that Curthoys’ argument speaks to a particular pathology within the broader Australian community at the end of the 20\textsuperscript{th}

\textsuperscript{85} Now the Minerals Council of Australia.
century; one which continues to persist. This pathology inverts the role of invader/settler people as the dispossessors of Aboriginal people and repositions Aboriginal people as those who have the power to dispossess ‘us’. As Curthoys writes:

Hanson articulates widespread non-Aboriginal fears of a direct loss of land, that Aboriginal land claims may somehow affect their own land holdings, whether rural farm or urban home. Equally strong is the fear of a symbolic loss, of the legitimacy and permanency of the non-Aboriginal Australian’s sense of home. In this phenomenology, if we fully recognise Indigenous claims to the land, if we have a sense of living in someone else’s country, we are, in a metaphorical if not a literal sense, perhaps in danger of homelessness again, of having to suffer yet again the original expulsion (1999: 18).

As such, I argue that Greer and Moran’s work (and the work of others to which I refer below) cannot be lifted out of, or separated from, this broader social and political milieu. As such, this work constitutes a specific response to both these public debates and these earlier post-colonial problematisations of settler belongings; a response that ultimately serves to ‘settle’ settler anxieties through the (re)appropriation of Aboriginality/Indigeneity (back) into the settler self. Thus, I argue, these responses re-enact the colonial desire to “erase this separation of belonging” (Goldie, 1997: see above) through the (re)statement of invader/settler Indigeneity. Moreover, this is achieved through the dynamic of affirmation and denial (of Aboriginality), as is identified by both Goldie and Hodge and Mishra. Colonialist discursive regimes affirm the existence of ‘Aboriginality’, but situate Aboriginal people as pre-colonial, ‘dreamtime’ ‘natives’. Through this, the impact of colonisation on Aboriginal people is eluded, and it is possible to appropriate those elements of Indigeneity desired by invader/settler people and incorporate them into the settler self. This includes
acquiring Aboriginal dispossession as our own dispossession so that ‘possession’ can take place. I pursue this discussion below.

Following from Probyn (2002), I argue that a clear illustration of what I mean can be found in Peter Read’s Belonging (2000). I focus here on the interplay between three key passages in his Introduction, Chapter One and Conclusion. In the first instance, he explains his personal response to post-colonial problematisations of Australia’s colonial history, with specific reference to revisionist histories accounting for the dispossession of Aboriginal people from their land. Secondly, he speaks to his reasons for wanting to write the book, which as he explains, is a response to wanting to feel ‘at home’ in Australia while the presence of prior Aboriginal existence forces him to question his homeliness (the dynamic of the uncanny). Thirdly, we see a resolution to the problems of the uncanny in the Conclusion when Read invokes the language of 19th century nationalists and refers to himself as the ‘native born’. The first extract to which I refer reads:

Confrontation with the role of the British in the dispossession brought not only a long overdue restraint and reflection to our national history, but to many of us, including myself, self-doubt and potential paralysis. Some of us took on the burden of guilt so earnestly that we half believed ourselves unworthy even to be here…. Everyone I have quoted so far, so far as I know, is like me: university-educated, urban, middle-class and Anglo-Celtic. Perhaps it is only this group which feels itself to be trapped. May it be that other Australians…may not perceive the problem as they do?… They may not apprehend what I am presenting to be a problem at all (Read, 2000: 4-5).

As I engage in this discussion, I wish to make it clear that although I have deep reservations about this specific text, I also acknowledge and respect that Peter Read (alongside others) has played a critical role in bringing the history of the Stolen Generations to mainstream Australians.
The first point to be made here is that Read seems to want to negotiate the uncanny relationship between guilt and innocence in order to mitigate the effects of his ‘paralysis’. As such, there is a need to redeploy, or reinstate the binary relationship between the two concepts, and it is the way that he does this that is interesting. Reinstating the initial binary relationship between guilt and innocence necessitates reinstating the binary relationship between the *heimlich* and *unheimlich*. Firstly, he acknowledges Aboriginal dispossession, then he appropriates this dispossession as his own and then; finally, he claims possession through the appropriation (in this case, ‘discovery’) of Aboriginality and declaring himself one of the ‘native born’. However, as we shall see, this is not straightforward, and therefore requires a number of convoluted strategic moves.

Firstly, as Probyn identifies, Read displaces the causes of being ‘unsettled’ away from Aboriginal people and locates post-colonial historians as the source of his anxieties. Effectively, Read repositions the ‘Othering’ process away from Aboriginal people, towards post-colonial scholars (Probyn, 2002: 80-81). Seemingly, Read does this in order to state his allegiance with other white Australians who do not perceive a problem (those who are, effectively, innocent). However, what becomes clear is that Read, despite his protestations that invader/settler belongings should not be predicated on Aboriginal belongings (see Read, 2000: 15), is actually aligning himself with Aboriginal people. In the first instance, this occurs through positioning himself as dispossessed (“we half believed ourselves unworthy even to be here”). Thus, what he has ‘in common’ with, or makes him ‘like’, Aboriginal people is dispossession. As Probyn (2002: 81) and Gelder (2000: online) note, this is a critical tactical move because his
dispossession is a necessary pre-requisite to claiming ‘possession’, or ‘belonging’.

Additionally though, Read must also ‘affirm and deny’ the presence of Aboriginal people in order to claim his own ‘Aboriginality’. Affirm because it is precisely the presence of Aboriginal people that enables Read to speak to the ‘depth’ of belonging he desires, and deny because the living presence of Aboriginal people stands in the way of his ‘belonging’, which ultimately must manifest as his ‘Aboriginality’. It is here that the passage in Chapter One of *Belonging* is instructive. I pick the story up, part of the way through its telling:

I scrambled about a kilometre up the steep slope and there, half an hour after leaving the boat, in a silent and deserted clearing which looked as though it hadn’t been visited for a century, I made a discovery that haunts me yet. Under a ledge of rock less than a metre high was a little pile of clam shells. By their remote position, the low shelf, and the finely discernible layer of dust in this serene and silent site, they were clearly Aboriginal, maybe 150 years old. The rocky ledge and its silent contents gave me a shiver of excitement that I still carry…. My discovery revived in me all the problems of wanting to belong in this breathtaking country of deepest personal and family memory [this area is a place of significance for Read’s family]. The hushed shell-pile reminds me that Cowan Creek is deep Aboriginal country also. I ask myself: Do I have a right to belong in this soul-country? Do Aboriginals belong in some deeper way that the rest of us, even though none as yet lays a Native Title claim to it? Would such a pre-emptive claim of belonging – if that is what a Native Title claim is – reduce or disqualify my own sense? If so, must it always? Considering those questions, and how non-Aboriginal Australians are grappling with them, is the subject of this book (Read, 2000: 9; also see Probyn, 2002: 77).

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87 Indeed, Gelder elaborates this position by contextualising Read’s *Belonging* with his 1996 publication *Returning to Nothing: The Meaning of Lost Places*. Here, Gelder writes that Read’s earlier book “enacts a particularly disturbing strategy in relation to all this – as a first step on the road to settler paradise. Here, he looks at what he calls ‘place deprivation’ for non-Aboriginal Australians – the experience of loss through a range of events, some spectacular…and some bureaucratic… What is interesting is that Read expresses the settler experience of ‘place deprivation’ in exactly the same way that one might account for the Aboriginal experience of dispossession…. settler and Aboriginal people, through this strange mirror effect, have dispossession in common. Dispossession is in fact necessary in order for such belonging to occur, which explains why this book came first and *Belonging* came afterwards” (Gelder, 2000).
At this point of the analysis, it is useful to bear in mind Hodge and Mishra’s definition of ‘affirmation and denial’ and its dependency on situating Aboriginal people as fixed in the dreamtime, unable to understand “linear history in the European mode” (Hodge and Mishra, 1991: 27). I argue this is exactly the process we see being enacted in the above passage and this enables Read to claim his Aboriginality. This is his ‘belonging’: his being ‘at home’.

Firstly, according to Read, no Native Title claim has been made on the area so there is no ‘contemporary’ or ‘documentary’ evidence (rather, that which would count as evidence in this scenario) of this place being occupied by, or being important to, Aboriginal people. Secondly, the shell middens Read discovers are 150 years old, no one has been here for a century, they are silent and hushed, unable to speak for themselves until Read, the discoverer, finds them and speaks their history and longevity for them. Thirdly, Read introduces the relationship between Aboriginality and ‘deep-time’88 (“deepest personal and family memory”, “do Aboriginals belong in some deeper way…?”), which, as Probyn argues, also conflates with dreamtime (Probyn, 2002: 79; also see Griffiths, 2000); a spiritual connection to his “soul-country”. The point I make here is that Aboriginality is present through the invocation of ‘deep’, or ‘dream’ time, yet it is denied because being in the dreamtime also makes Aboriginal people absent. However, if dreamtime ‘Aboriginality’ conflates with ‘deep’ and if Read’s attachments are also ‘deep’ then he is, by discursive sleight of hand, also positioning himself as ‘Aboriginal’, with a spiritual connection to place that is something like a ‘dreaming’: a mystical experience that continues to ‘haunt’ him.

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88 The relationship between Aboriginality, deep-time (‘dreamtime’) and true belonging recurs frequently throughout Read’s book.
Thus, in this passage, Read’s discovery of the shell middens becomes, his
discovery of his own Indigeneity.

Indeed, by the final passages of Read’s text, his claim to Indigeneity is an
explicit one. He writes:

During this chapter I’ve used for the first time the phrase ‘native-born’
about myself…. I’ve engaged with my fellow Australians, who have
convinced me that, although there are many ways to belong to this land and
to this nation, none should be taken for granted…. We need the metaphors,
the connections, the songs and the art. I need the Gai-mariagal stories, I
need to believe that the voices in the river will never be silent, that the land
bears our mark now as well as theirs…. My sense of the native-born has
come – is coming. It comes through listening but with discernment;
through thinking but not asserting; through good times with my Aboriginal
friends but not through wanting to be the same as them; through
understanding our history but being enriched by our sites of past evil as
well as good. It comes from believing that belonging means sharing and
sharing demands equal partnership (Read, 2000: 222 - 223).

Of course, this is the disingenuity of the crisis of settler belonging. Ultimately,
the desire to share and offer equal partnership only comes from the belief that
this is ‘ours’ to share. As Gelder and Jacobs argue, the uncanny reminds us that
“what is ‘ours’ is also potentially, or even always already ‘theirs’” (see Gelder
and Jacobs, 1998: 23; also see above). Claims to “sharing” and “equal
partnership” are, in this context, the final move in reinstating the binary between
‘ours’ and ‘theirs’ by making ‘theirs’, ‘ours’. What looks like a divestment of
power then, is ultimately the very expression of power, and ultimately, white
sovereignty. As Probyn writes in response to Read:

Read doesn’t have to negotiate a sense of belonging through a different set
of cultural beliefs, he doesn’t have to deal with a legal system that is
incommensurable to his own, he doesn’t have to negotiate his belonging to
a specific place… and he doesn’t have to foreground his indebtedness to the
experience of Aboriginal dispossession. It is no surprise, therefore, that the
book ends up with a feeling of success and a rehearsal of common aims:
“belonging means sharing and sharing demands equal partnership” (223).
This is uncontroversial precisely in the sense that it doesn’t really go anywhere – and it doesn’t go anywhere because the author has not had the opportunity to experience the dispossession that he uses as an existential prop for articulating a sense of “belonging” (2002: 79-80).

Aileen Moreton-Robinson succinctly echoes this point when she writes, “there can be no equal partnership while there is illegal dispossession” (2003: 27) of Aboriginal people from their land. Sharing may be a worthwhile sentiment, but sentiment is all it can be while the Sovereign rights of Indigenous people are not validated. In the absence of this, ‘sharing’ and ‘equal partnership’ can only work to corroborate and legitimise white sovereignty.

Further to this, I argue Read’s self-reference to the ‘native born’ marks a return to the nationalist sentiment that first underpinned the term in the 19th and early 20th century. Indeed, closer examination of John Moloney’s text *The Native Born: The First White Australians* (2000) supports this view. In the following discussion, I explore how the re-invocation of this terminology enables a conflation of Indigenous and invader/settler identities, again, through the paradigm of invader/settler dispossession and obtaining possession through the appropriation of Aboriginality, with the ultimate objective of valorising the white nation.

John Moloney’s *Native Born: The First White Australians* (2000) is a (self-confessed) ‘idealised’ (Moloney, 2000: 10) historical study of the native-born white Australians, born in New South Wales before 1850. It is an examination of the birth of Australian national identity; the social, educational, economic and religious boundaries placed around the lives of the native-born, and their relationships with those who had power and influence over their lives. It is also a
discussion about their relationship with the land, and by implication, Aboriginal people (see Moloney, 2000: 1-10)\textsuperscript{89}.

Moloney argues that the first generations of the Australian native born had a unique and special relationship with the land, which underpinned their growing sense of Australian national identity. While this is not a particularly unique observation in itself, Moloney goes on to interpret this relationship as being equivalent to Aboriginal peoples’ relationship with the land. Moreover, like Aboriginal people, colonial officials and free settlers also dispossessed the white native-born from the possibility of owning land. As Moloney writes:

Consequently, although they did not suffer the same deprivation as the Aborigines who lost almost all, the growth of a relationship with the land, or one of belonging to it, could only come about in other ways than by land ownership among most of the native-born. For them, that relationship had perforce to stem fundamentally from the original fact of their nationality based on birth. In effect, they could, and did, claim to be Australians because they were born here. What the vast majority of them could not claim was to possess any part of the land. Nevertheless, they sensed their oneness with the land in its physical manifestation in sea, coast, mountain, river and plain, in its fauna and flora, its abundance, vulnerability and scarcity, in its tender welcome or harsh rejection. All this was as natural to the majority of the white native-born as it was to the Aborigines. Like them, the native-born did not need to possess the land though individual and private ownership. Its spirit was their birthright (2000: 4; also see 66).

Thus, in the first few pages of the book, Moloney makes a similar strategic move to Read, in that he identifies the native-borns’ connection with the land as spiritual (“oneness with the land”, “all this was as natural to the majority of the native born as it was to the Aborigines”, “its spirit was their birthright”). This is

\textsuperscript{89} John Moloney chaired the history taskforce on the Bicentennial History Program and was author of \textit{The Penguin Bicentennial History of Australia} (1988). Of this text Stuart Macintyre writes: “Moloney took to his brief ‘to write of the land and its white peopling’ and said little about Aboriginal history – other than an apologetic ‘sorry mate’ – on the grounds that I am not one of them and therefore could not tell their story” (Macintyre, 2004: 113).
integral to the Indigenising process. As we have seen, so too is identifying invader/settler people as dispossessed from the land (“what the vast majority of them could not claim to was to possess any part of the land”, “the native born did not need to possess the land through individual and private ownership”). Additionally, by way of underscoring the similar dispossession experienced by both Aboriginal people and the native born, Moloney is at pains to point out that the native born were, in no way, responsible for the dispossession of Aboriginal people. He writes in his introduction to the book:

The native-born, because they held so little land in proportion to their number, were never significant as land owners or, subsequently as squatters. Therefore, they were much less involved in the process of land alienation from the Aborigines and not motivated in the same way to use violent means to drive them from it. Furthermore, stemming from their own innate sense of birth in the same land, many of the native-born…generally had much more humane and precious relations with the Aborigines than did the convicts, emancipists and free immigrants. Added to the factors of birth and landlessness was a common sense of inferiority. To the degree that the Aborigines were regarded as partaking of the lot of common humanity, they were seen, and put, on the lowest step of the ladder of the human race in early Australia. One rung above them stood the native-born…it is not the first white Australians, the native-born, that they ought to hold responsible for the initial act of white invasion and its later consequences (Moloney, 2000: 4-5).

Indeed, Moloney is so committed to this idea that he repeats it on the final page of his book, writing, “[i]t is unquestionable that the first generations of the native-born were rarely numbered among the dispossessors and the decimators of the Aborigines, as is the fact of widespread wrongdoing” (2000: 213).

In part, this can be read as simple denialism. A refusal to account for the fact that current generations of invader/settler Australians continue to benefit from Aboriginal dispossession on a daily basis. However, the conclusion of Moloney’s book serves another strategic function: releasing contemporary white (‘native
born’) Australians from feelings of guilt for the dispossession of Aboriginal people. In his final redemption of the native born, Moloney argues, “the decedents of the native-born, by blood or adoption, know that no act of repentance for the wrongs of the past are too great. They know also that, without that act, all else on the path to reconciliation becomes a mockery and a sham because true reality has not been faced” (Moloney, 2000: 213). Thus, Moloney’s conclusion makes an unequivocal statement about the intrinsic moral worth of native-born Australians, and this, I argue, can be interpreted as making a claim for the intrinsic moral worth of the contemporary white Australian nation. Indeed, as Tatz points out, morality and Australian-ness are often cast as mutually inclusive terms. He argues “[a] curious national belief is that simply being Australian is sufficient inoculation against deviation from moral and righteous behaviour” (2001: 17), thus suggesting that one cannot behave immorally by virtue of the fact that we are Australian. Thus, not only are we ‘not guilty’, we are, more importantly, ‘innocent’ and, in spite of our innocence, we are able to take responsibility for that for which we are not responsible. I argue this allows us to justify possession of Aboriginal land. Thus, not only does this reinstate the binary relationship between guilt and innocence, it restores the relationship between home and alienation, heimlich and unheimlich, as well. This is possible because we are all, effectively, Indigenous. As Gelder writes, in freeing the native-born from the burden of the dispossession of Aboriginal people, Moloney contrives the ‘native born’ as a “a kind of a meta category – under which Aboriginal people are duly subsumed” (Gelder, 2000: online). “By taking the ‘non’- from ‘non- Aboriginal’, [Moloney wants]… settler Australians
not only to become indigenous but to *supplant Aboriginal people in the process*” (Gelder, 2000: online, *emphasis in the original*). He continues:

What looks like an innocent tribute to an apparently neglected class of people becomes in effect a ghastly return to some kind of ‘white Australia’ policy – or perhaps to give it a postcolonial spin, we should say: a ‘white (Aboriginal) Australia’ policy (Gelder, 2000: online).

Indeed, by the conclusion of Moloney’s text, this is practically a *fait accompli*, with the dispossession of Aboriginal people resulting in their final effacement from the Australian landscape and populace. As Moloney writes in his epilogue:

No epilogue on the native-born could conclude without turning to the first native-born of this continent whose origin is hidden in the sweep of millennia…. It was inevitable that dispossession would result in the decimation of the black people because, without their land and, in many cases deprived of their children, they were nothing. In large measure they became as mere shadows and remnants of a people flitting from place to place across what had been one with their very being (2000: 212–213).

Thus, the concluding paragraphs of Moloney’s book achieve three things. Firstly, it maintains Aboriginality as a subset of the native born so that it symbolically stands for the ‘white Aborigines’ continuity with place; their Indigeneity (“no epilogue on the native-born could conclude without turning to the first native born”). Secondly, it invokes the message of the ‘doomed race theory’ (“whose origin is hidden in the sweep of millennia”, “decimation”, “they were nothing”, “shadows”, “remnants”), thereby reinstating the fiction of *terra nullius* and the ideological preconditions upon which white Australia claimed ‘nativity’ in the nineteenth century. Therefore, as it did then, this provides a space for invader/settler people to become the ‘white Aborigines’. Finally, it privileges white sovereignty at the expense of acknowledging Aboriginal Sovereignty. The final lines of Moloney’s text read:
That the decedents of the native-born should stand with those others who have become Australians and share the same nationality of place and people with the Aborigines is vital. Without that unity no independent Australia is possible. To strive for other than such an Australia is to mock the native-born, both black and white (2000: 213).

Thus, what at first glance looks like a progressive and inclusive vision for Australian nationalism in the 21st century turns out to be a vision that is not so very different to that of 100 years ago.

These processes of dispossession/possession are also evident in Moran’s *Indigenizing Settler Nationalism* (2002). Unlike Read’s work where these processes are evident within his personal narrative, or Moloney’s where they are revealed in the ways history accounts for the contemporary, post-colonial dilemma of settler belongings. Evidence of this dynamic at work in Moran’s thesis is apparent in the theoretical framework of his text.

The significant contribution of Moran’s work to post-colonial theory is his analysis of the differences between settler and non-settler colonies/nations and the impact of Indigeneity in constructing colonial and national identities (see Moran, 2002: 1013-1014). As he writes:

Settler colonialism, and in particular settler nationalism, have been neglected in the study of colonialism and imperialism. The post-colonial theorists who, since the 1980’s, have taken up the lead of writers like Fanon and Memmi have been predominantly concerned with non-settler colonies, often adopting in the process a monolithic colonial category that has served to subsume settler colonialism and its specific structures and forms (Moran, 2002: 1013-1014).

However, while Moran’s claims that settler colonialism and settler nationalism “have been neglected in the study of colonialism and imperialism”, he draws on
the work of Goldie (1989) and Hodge and Mishra (1990) – authors who specifically engage with settler colonialism and nationalism – to make the claim that the presence of Indigenous peoples ‘unsettles’ the settler populace (2002: 1025; also see above).

Even with this acknowledgment, Moran subsequently neglects the ‘other part’ of Goldie and Hodge and Mishra’s respective theses, which, as we have seen, highlights the ways settler communities affirm and deny the existence of Indigenous communities in order to produce an ‘Aboriginality’ that stands for, or represents, their own Indigeneity. I suggest that it is because of this oversight that Moran produces an unproblematic claim for the Indigenisation of the white Australian settler nation. Thus, I argue that despite the fact that Moran makes the important distinction that settler and non-settler colonialism/nationalism need to be problematised differently, it is, paradoxically, precisely the identification of settler colonialism/nationalism (dispossession from the original homeland) that produces the pre-conditions for desiring possession of the national territory through Indigeneity.

Therefore, in corollary to Moran’s position that we must problematise the monolithic category of colonialism, I argue that this problematisation must include an analysis of the ways invader/settler political and national interests work to limit, or contain, the potency of Aboriginal political and cultural gains. For instance, where Moran argues that Aboriginality “is honoured by the public culture: by politicians, by the mass media, by the art world, and at least by some sections of the Australian populace” (2002: 1033; also see above) we must also
acknowledge that it was conservative politicians who withdrew funding and finally dissolved ATSIC\(^{90}\) in 2004, who refuse to apologise for the Stolen Generations and continue to oversee the violation of Aboriginal human rights\(^{91}\). Moreover, the mass media continues to allow anti-Aboriginal racial vilification to be broadcast and published\(^{92}\). Further, we must acknowledge that unscrupulous art collectors, dealers and galleries trading in forgeries and second-rate works openly take advantage of Aboriginal art and artists for considerable financial gain. In addition to undermining the income of Aboriginal people, this exploitation also has the capacity to undermine Aboriginal people and their culture in the eyes of the broader Australian populace. As the art collector Colin

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\(^{90}\) ATSIC (Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Commission) came into existence in March 1990 with Lois O’Donoghue as the chairperson. ATSIC was intended to provide official, elected political representation to Aboriginal people. In her critique of ATSIC, Irene Watson writes: “Over recent years we have been deemed culturally deficient and poor managers of our own affairs; this has been ‘proven’ and is illustrated in our alleged maladministration of ATSIC. The federal government [Liberal Government under Howard] has been largely successful in its discrediting of the ATSIC structure, through a public media campaign waged against ATSIC, and also the appropriation of an Aboriginal critique of ATSIC. The blame for the failings of ATSIC was laid at the feet of Aboriginal peoples. The gaze was not once turned upon the state, the state which in any event held power to determine a different course for ATSIC, in terms of it being a failure or success. Aboriginal peoples are not in a position of power to question the state’s motive in initially implementing ATSIC, or of its defunding, and the erosion of the power and duties of ATSIC. How could a structure like ATSIC, based as it was upon hierarchy, patriarchy, and entrenched colonialism, serve the Aboriginal community?…That’s what we got with ATSIC, a white, patriarchal model of political representation….We never got to a place of empowering community to share equally. ATSIC was not an Aboriginal model; it was a colonialist model that served to entrench white values and ways of being. Aboriginal ways of sharing never surfaced, and Aboriginal poverty and disadvantage remained the dominant discourse. Aboriginal peoples were given an under-resourced white model to perform the impossible task of caring for Aboriginal Australia. From the beginning, the ATSIC project was doomed and set up to fail, and when it did, white racism laid the blame in black hands” (Watson, 2005: 45).

\(^{91}\) I note here that Moran’s thesis, although published in 2002, over-relies on documentation of political events prior to the election of the Liberal National Federal Government in 1996. For example, as evidence to the ‘political honouring’ of Aboriginal rights, Moran cites the former Labor Prime Minister, Paul Keating’s Redfern Address. This was delivered in 1992, some ten years earlier than the publication of this article.

\(^{92}\) See for example, the transcript from 6PR’s broadcast, cited in the methodology. For a related discussion also see Hannah McGlade (2000), especially pages 198-201. Here McGlade tells of her attempts to seek redress for racist comments made by Ross Lightfoot, then a member of the West Australian Parliament, and published in the West Australian (Western Australia’s only daily newspaper). McGlade lodged a racial vilification complaint with the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. The commissioner hearing McGlade’s case dismissed it under section 25x of the racial vilification act, “which allows the commission to dismiss complaints it considers ‘frivolous, vexatious, misconceived or lacking in substance’” (McGlade, 2000: 200).
Laverty, told Nicholas Rothwell in a recent interview for the *Weekend Australian*:

So far, art has been the key way that Australia at large has come to understand and learn about and have respect for Aboriginal people, and there’s been tremendous respect for the achievements of the artists. So it’s not just the monetary value that’s at risk here. If the art is seen as being without cultural authenticity, and it can’t be sold, there could be a lessening effect for Aboriginal people through that effect (Rothwell, 2006: 22).

My point here is that it is important to not simply identify the incorporation of ‘Aboriginality’ into the Australian public domain and utilise this to make uncritical statements about the maturation or moral virtue of the nation. Rather, I argue, that we need to understand these celebrations as contested sites of cultural and national identity where Aboriginal people intervene and make strategic representations for their Sovereign claims in the face of ongoing angst over the legitimacy of invader/settler occupation of their land. Moreover, where these public representations of Aboriginality are genuine expressions of cross-cultural collaboration and learning, we must affirm the success of the cross-cultural educational strategies utilised by Indigenous people. Anything less constitutes not only a disingenuous appropriation of Aboriginality, it represents a refusal to acknowledge the generosity of those Aboriginal people who share their culture in mainstream public forums as part of cross-cultural education, and a denial of the multifarious ways Indigenous people engage with the notion of ‘nation’ in order to stimulate public awareness on their Sovereign claims.

This leads me to my second point; that the problematisation of settler colonialism must also be responsive to, and inclusive of, the political strategies of Indigenous peoples. For instance, in Australia, the very notion of a ‘settler’ nation is challenged by Aboriginal people with the re-casting of the ‘settler’ as the
‘invader’\textsuperscript{93}, and the legitimacy of the white nation is disputed through claiming Aboriginal country/ies as ‘nations’. Both of these strategies underscore the point that possession was taken of Aboriginal land ‘without treaty or consent’. Thus, many in the Aboriginal community know Australia day as ‘Invasion Day’ and/or ‘Shame Day’ (see Langford-Ginibi, 1992: 106-111). Indeed, on Australia Day in 1988 the Aboriginal activist Burnum Burnum played out an audacious parody of the invasion of Aboriginal lands by planting an Aboriginal flag on British soil and declaring that he, “a nobleman of ancient Australia do hereby take possession of England for Aboriginal people” (See Norst, 1999: n.p.)\textsuperscript{94}. Thus to return to Gelder and Jacobs’ observation that the uncanny challenges the presumption of white Australia as a settler nation\textsuperscript{95}, I argue that Moran’s commitment to Australian settlement – as opposed to invasion – is a commitment to unfolding the uncanny relationship between settlement and invasion, and on behalf of the national story, reinstating the legitimacy of the story of settlement.

Moreover, the legitimacy of the nation state is called into question with the positioning of Aboriginal groups as ‘nations’, meaning that nations (Indigenous Sovereignty) continue to exist within the settler nation and that the presumption of sovereignty by the nation state does not negate the Sovereignty of Aboriginal

\textsuperscript{93} Also see the Introduction.

\textsuperscript{94} Taken from the ‘Burnum Burnum Declaration’. In this declaration, Burnum Burnum promised to bring no harm to the British natives, to teach Pitjantjarjara to British people and to teach them how to have a spiritual relationship with the Earth. He also promised not to desecrate the remains of people, to poison their food and water supplies, or to quarry the earth. He promised to preserve the Caucasian race “as an interest to antiquity” and at the “end of two hundred years we will make a Treaty to validate occupation by peaceful means and not by conquest”. He promised to “unite peoples, communities, religions and notions in a common, productive and peaceful purpose” (see Norst, 1999: n.p.)

\textsuperscript{95} “We often speak of Australia as a settler nation, but the uncanny can remind us that a condition of unsettledness folds into this taken for granted mode of occupation” (1998: 24, also see above).
people. In an earlier publication (published in 1998) Anthony Moran engages with this point, asking:

Are indigenous communities nations? Not, perhaps, according to the concept as it emerged in Europe. But the claim to nationhood is also a political statement, not simply an intellectual argument concerned with conceptual niceties. Indigenous people have claimed that they belonged to sovereign nations at the time of invasion, and that they belong to a unified Aboriginal nation today (Moran, 1998: online).

However, Moran continues to suggest that we should “discard the term ‘nation’…and use instead ‘political community’” (1998) to distinguish between “the indigenous” and other ethnic groups who comprise the settler nation and identify the unique political status of Indigenous people within the settler nation (1998). While this distinction is at least more useful than the claim for Indigenizing settler nationalism that he makes in his subsequent article (and where the political interests of Indigenous people are saved as a qualifying statement in his conclusion), we can see that claims for Indigenous Sovereignty continue to be subsumed by the sovereign status of the settler nation.

Recognising the political rights of Aboriginal people is not equal to recognising Aboriginal Sovereignty. This is evident when the former Prime Minister, John Howard, responded to renewed calls for a Treaty with Aboriginal people by saying a nation cannot make a Treaty with itself, but acknowledges the need for ‘practical reconciliation’ (see the Introduction and Chapter Two). This is the manifestation of recognising Indigenous communities’ political interests, but denying their Sovereignty. Therefore, I argue a more useful application of Moran’s notion of ‘political community’ is to those ‘non-Aboriginal’ Australians
who question legitimacy of the white nation in support of Aboriginal Sovereignty. I elaborate this point in the following chapter.

However, before I move on to this element of my discussion, I turn to the ways Indigeneity is represented within texts such as Greer’s *Whitefella Jump Up*, and Moran’s *Indigenizing Settler Nationalism*. Firstly, I argue ‘Aboriginality’ is constructed within the paradigm of colonialist naming conventions and these carry concomitant colonialist meanings. However, in identifying the impositions of these naming conventions as one aspect of the ongoing violence of colonisation, I also argue that they support the illusion that colonisation never happened. In developing this point, I also refer to David Tacey’s *Edge of the Sacred*. Thus, I argue there is a paradoxical relationship between the discursive mode through which Aboriginality is known, and the function of this discourse. On one hand, it fundamentally speaks to the process of colonisation because the very terms ‘Aborigine’ and ‘Indigenous’ are colonial constructions. On the other, it denies the fact of colonisation because these naming conventions invoke romantic images of the pre-colonial, primordial ‘native’. The violence of colonisation is absent from this picture. I argue the affect of those texts advocating invader/settler Indigeneity is to perpetuate colonial power relations while positioning relations between Aboriginal people and other Australians as ‘post-colonial’, thereby offering a redemption narrative for the white nation.

**Desiring Aboriginality: Which one shall we choose?**

In the Introduction of this thesis, I noted the etymology of the word ‘Aborigine’, and the way words such as ‘Aborigine’, Indigenous’, ‘native’ and ‘black’ serve
as containers for pejorative, colonialist constructions of Aboriginality and enforce the hierarchialised relationship between ourselves and Aboriginal ‘Others’. I also noted how such labels demean and diminish Aboriginal ways of self-knowing. As Collard, Harben and van den Berg write, “to describe Koori, Nyungar, Mulba, Murri, Nunga, Pallawah, Wongi and Wyba as Aborigines or Indigenous Australians denies us our own diversity and identity within our own theoretical and applied epistemology” (2004: 11). The authors argue that while the etymology of the word ‘Aborigine’ may serve to validate Aboriginal peoples’ status as Australia’s first nations’ peoples, it says nothing about the “richness of each of our own cultural, language and geopolitical systems”. Rather, “It simply tells us we are the original peoples of Australia” (2004: 10-12).

I also argued it is possible to make interventions into the constraints of colonialist naming practices. With reference to Moreton-Robinson’s notion of Aboriginality as an ontological relationship to land, I argued it is possible to ‘reinvest’ colonialist naming conventions with meanings that support Aboriginal Sovereignty. Indeed, it is in this context that I use such labels in this thesis.

However, I make the point that the writers referred to in this chapter do not demonstrate an equivalent or appropriate critique of the language they are using. For example, I take issue with Anthony Moran’s designation of Indigenous people as “the indigenous”; a term he uses repeatedly throughout his text (2002). I argue the constant reference to “the indigenous” works to displace Aboriginal people from their country and renders ‘Indigeneity’ an abstract concept in

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96 I provide further discussion on this in the following chapter, with reference to the ways invader/settlers peoples can make similar, anti-colonial interventions into naming practices we choose for ourselves.
relation to place. The effects of this are twofold. Firstly, just as the name
‘Aborigine’ homogenises the multiculturalism and multilingualism of Aboriginal
people and denies the complexity of discrete Aboriginal societies and their
relationship to country, “the indigenous” fails to acknowledge the humanity of
the Indigenous people to which he refers and the places where they belong.

Jordan makes a similar point in response to Greer’s use of ‘Aboriginal’ in
Whitefella Jump Up. She writes:

After all, what is Aboriginality? Greer acknowledges that this concept
wasn’t even thought of before colonisation, when Aboriginal groups were
distinct from each other and had no need to think of themselves
collectively. In fact, in places like Arnhem Land, the concept of
Aboriginality remain meaningless to those it identifies, with people
identifying themselves by their tribe or language group, not with a
collective “Aboriginal” group. But, the collective concept is at the heart of
Greer’s essay, because the idea is that white Australians would be absorbed
into this imagined community, and we will all be Aboriginal. White
Australians are still learning that each Aboriginal group is distinct, with its
own language; that there is no such thing as one Aboriginal group or one
Aboriginal culture. Greer simultaneously exhorts non-Aboriginal people to
learn about this diversity while amalgamating Aboriginal people into a
collective identity at the heart of her argument (Jordan, 2003: 90).

This then begs the question, what is this ‘Aboriginality’ so desired by white
settlers? As I have argued, the primary function of ‘Aboriginality’ in settler
discourses of belonging is to “‘erase” the “separation of belonging”’” (Goldie,
1997: see above) experienced by settler nationals and to symbolically stand for
the continuity and permanency of the nation. Thus, the Aboriginality that is
invoked by settler nationals within these discourses rely on stereotypical
representations of the primordial, traditional man, such as those produced within
the discourse of race. As I have already shown in the beginning of this chapter,
this is exactly the type of Aboriginality Greer invokes in her advocacy of a
hunter-gather nation (Greer, 2003: 73-78; also see above).
Parallel ideas of Aboriginality are also found in David Tacey’s *Edge of the Sacred: Transformation in Australia* (1998a). Tacey is a Jungian philosopher and his central thesis is that secular Australian society must undergo a process of resacralisation in order to redress the “*disenchantment*” (Tacey, 1998a: 2, *emphasis in the original*) that besets the modern era. Resacralisation, argues Tacey, necessitates forging a spiritual connection to land through conjuring the archetypal aborigine within. According to Tacey, Australians are privileged in this endeavour. He writes that because of our “historical and geographical conditions” we are “close to primordial reality by default” (1998a: 5).

Tacey identifies similar benefits to Aboriginalising ourselves as Greer. He argues it can break down the secular defensiveness and cynicism of contemporary Australian society. It can also cure alcohol and drug abuse and violence in both Aboriginal and white communities; produce a new ecological awareness and facilitate reconciliation between “black and white” Australians (see Tacey, 1998a: 8-11). However, Tacey argues that “no true reconciliation is possible until white Australians have first reconciled themselves to the indigenous, mythically oriented person in their own souls” (1998a: 11).

Ostensibly mindful of the pitfalls of identity appropriation, Tacey maintains there is a distinction between sourcing the archetypal aborigine within and appropriating Aboriginality (1998a: 129-133). Thus, he distinguishes between (small ‘a’) archetypal aboriginality and the (capital A) Aboriginality of Indigenous people (also see Rolls, 1998: online). Moreover, Tacey insists that when he refers to archetypal aboriginality it equally refers to one’s own
European indigeneity (for example, Celtic indigeneity). He explains this with reference to Rodney Hall’s novel *The Second Bridegroom*, writing that:

Hall indicates that the politically responsible way for psychic renewal is the remythologising of *one’s own* spiritual heritage. In the case of European-descended Australians, this means digging deep, deeper than even our Judeo-Christian tradition, which may be too dried out, too conscious or institutionalised, to foster spiritual renewal. Activating the indigenous archetype…may mean activating the lost or repressed ‘indigenous’ elements within the European traditions. But the challenge is to stimulate the mythic possibilities in one’s own psyche, rather than to parasitically draw on others (Tacey, 1998a: 174; also see 173 and 137).

However, it is also clear from Tacey’s text that the aboriginality he has in mind for his ‘archetype’ is the Australian Aboriginal person. For instance, the aboriginality Tacey requires is ‘Black’ (see for example, page 8 of Tacey’s Introduction and Chapter Seven, *Black and White Australia*); and is 50,000 years old, which approximates, “the time that scientists believe that Aborigines have been in Australia” (Rolls, 1998: online). Thus, as Mitchell Rolls points out, “there is no doubt that the people he is locating in the non-Aboriginal psyche are Aborigines, not merely some hidden aspect of ourselves” (Rolls, 1998: online).

Moreover, the aboriginal archetype to which Tacey refers is able to provide invader/settler Australians with a ‘dreaming’. Taken at face value, what Tacey is referring to here is the Jungian belief that dreams reveal archetypal processes. He argues that many invader/settler people have dreams that include Aboriginal people and ceremonial activities and this is part of the process of being “aboriginalised from within” (See Tacey, 1998a: 135-136). However, it is also clear that Tacey calls upon the western discursive arrangements by which Aboriginal spirituality is described in order to add an ‘Indigenous’ authenticity to
the proposal that we should aboriginalise (see for example, the title to chapter 8, *Toward a New Dreaming*, 148-176). The critical misunderstanding in this conflation of terms and concepts is evident in this response by ‘one Aborigine’ (unnamed in the text) to the question “Is English a very adequate sort of tool to describe Aboriginal Dreamings and lifestyles and that sort of thing?” in an ABC radio interview in 1990. The interviewee answered:

…I think that the word dreaming in English is sleeping—you know, sleeping what you dream about. But for us it’s got nothing to do with that whatsoever (Bowden and Bunbury, c.f. Hodge and Mishra, 1991: 28).97

Thus, I argue Tacey’s notion of ‘Dreaming’ has very little to do with genuinely learning about Aboriginal cosmology. Rather, it works to lend a (so called) spiritual innateness to white occupation of Aboriginal land. As such, it is but one example of the way Tacey is able to infuse his Jungian purview with colonialist ideology and vice versa.98

In addition, I also argue that this dynamic is evident in the ways in which Tacey situates archetypal aboriginality as ‘black’ (reducible to colour); 50,000 years old and out of the dreamtime (pre-colonial and innately spiritual); and archetypal (static). I argue that he clearly demonstrates an over reliance on biologically determined, raced understandings of Aboriginality that are intrinsically

97 In her Report for the Western Australian Law Reform Commission’s Inquiry into Customary Law Kathryn Trees (2005) notes the inadequacy of the English language to speak to customary law and the ‘dreamtime’. She writes: “To understand customary law it is necessary to appreciate the relationship between the inadequate concepts of ‘dreamtime’ and ‘law’. These terms are both impositions on Aboriginal cultures. Both the use of English and needing to speak to people outside of their language groups has required Aboriginal people to use such terms (or variations of them). ‘Law’ and ‘customary law’ are inadequate because they cannot be free of the western concepts and power ascribed to the word law and the status of law as somehow above or separate from other aspects of our daily lives. ‘Dreamtime’ is a derisory and simplistic term for an ancient belief system. It is necessary to have the information in both of these concepts, and a sense of spirituality, to understand customary law, because they are indistinguishable” (Trees, 2006: 218).

98 For more on the debate between Mitchell Rolls and David Tacey see Rolls 1998 and 1999, and Tacey 1998b.
colonialist in structure and definition. Thus, it should come as no surprise that these constructions of Aboriginality continue to support the power relationships inherent in these discourses.

By way of explaining this further it is useful to look at the ways the commonly shared view that ‘raced’ understandings of Aboriginality have given way to ‘cultural’ definitions. However, it is also conceded that notions of race permeate the new, more palatable cultural ones. Thus, while Aboriginal people may not be biologically determined, they remain culturally determined. What is more, these determining features have been foregrounded in the earlier discourses of race.

As Cowlishaw\textsuperscript{99} and Morris\textsuperscript{100} put it:

The current appeal to ‘culture’ in defining Aboriginality turns out to be not so different from the explicitly racial definitions of an earlier era. It is participation in fixed pre-colonial forms of Aboriginal sociality [and] ‘native custom’…‘Aboriginal culture’ is itself seen as fixed and ahistorical, not something moulded out of shared historical experiences such as [colonisation] (1997: 6).

In addition to this, I also argue that the movement away from understanding Aboriginality as biologically determined, and towards being culturally determined, has other specific benefits for invader/settler people. The focus on ‘culture’ also enables notions of fluidity within the invader/settler cultural location. In this context then, culture takes on a different meaning. Here it refers to personal agency and a “chosen way of life, or ‘lifestyle’, as expressed in aesthetic forms and in voluntary social practices” (see Cowlishaw and Morris,\textsuperscript{99,100})

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Therefore, while Aboriginal people remain ‘trapped’ in culture, invader/settler people have the cultural freedom, sophistication and sufficient personal autonomy to ‘pick and choose’ from those elements of Aboriginality most highly prized by members of the invader/settler group: that which connects invader/settler people to ‘country’ and provides a language to speak to history, longevity and place. Indeed, Greer, who clearly covets the ‘mysteries’ of Aboriginal belonging, and seeks to attain a similar level of insider knowledge attained by some non-Aboriginal men writes:

Aboriginality is not a matter of blood or genes; Aborigines themselves have to learn Aboriginality. They have to master knowledge of their own country, and of their relationships with neighbouring peoples, and the languages appropriate to trade, negotiation and celebration. Who may learn what is dictated primarily by willingness, evinced in readiness to undergo ordeal in order to be admitted to the deepest secrets, and has nothing to do with colour. It follows that whitefellas can achieve a measure of Aboriginality and historically they have done. Full-blood white men have been initiated and instructed in the law, and have played their part in the clans (Greer, 2003: 15).

Thus, I argue the logic of race further reveals itself by virtue of the fact that it continues to hierarchialise the relationship between Aboriginal and invader/settler culture. That which is fluid is able to consume that which is static. It does this by situating invader/settler people as without culture (as in, non-raced) while over-determining the (racialised) cultural attributes of those who are positioned as our exotic others, with cultural qualities we desire for ourselves so that we may substantiate occupation of their geopolitical territories in the name of white sovereignty.

Secondly, Cowlishaw and Morris’ analysis of Aboriginality as culturally determined speaks to an ahistoricity and a refusal to engage with the ways the
violence of colonialism shapes Aboriginal identity. Thus, there is a profound level at which the discursive arrangements by which Aboriginality is ‘known’ is vital to the discursive regime that conceals the fact of colonisation and its effects.

I note, for example that those who make such proposals never summon images of third world living conditions, grinding poverty and acute welfare dependency. Nor do they covet the brutal realities of extraordinarily high infant mortality rates, shorter life expectancy, poor educational and employment outcomes for themselves and their children, disproportionate incarceration rates, appalling substance abuse that, in some dire instances, causes communities to implode, or the daily violence of endemic racism. They do not longingly search for the opportunity to fight for cultural survival in the face of a dominant culture that is largely hostile to their own.

Equally, they do not seek to internalise the Aboriginality of community leaders, magistrates and legal practitioners, academics and scholars; those with the capacity, eloquence and the authority (as it is defined by non-Aboriginal people) to use educated, formal, mainstream English to challenge the colonialist discursive paradigms that constructs their Aboriginality as benign, romantic and safe to consume. Thus, I argue that the failure to recognise the ‘post-colonial’ havoc wrought on Aboriginal people and communities in these constructions of Aboriginality not only represents a denial of the very fact of colonisation, it also represents a refusal to acknowledge the ongoing benefits that accrue to invader/settler peoples by virtue of the fact that colonisation did take place. Finally, it represents a rejection on the part of invader/settler people to
investigate the hegemonic power of colonialist constructions of the self and
Other, or a concomitant unwillingness to undermine this hegemony. Ultimately,
this is because the discursive arrangements by which white Indigeneity is
configured is critical to the processes of national history making and the
legitimacy of the nation. It is critical to the support of white sovereignty over
and above Aboriginal Sovereignty.

Conclusion:
In this chapter, I have argued recent texts problematising invader/settler
belongings validate the appropriation of Aboriginality/Indigeneity as a process of
identity formation that substantiates occupation of Aboriginal land and
legitimizes white sovereignty.

I have formulated my argument with an analysis of five key texts published over
an eight-year span during and shortly after the official end of the reconciliation
period. Particular reference was given to Germaine Greer’s Whitefella Jump Up
(2003) and Anthony Moran’s As Australia Decolonizes (2002). However, Peter
Read’s Belonging (2000); John Moloney’s The Native Born (2000); and, David
Tacey’s Edge of the Sacred (1998a) were also considered. Within these texts, I
identified several ideological and paradigmatic confluences underpinning each
author’s respective theses. I argued these texts similarly operated within
colonialist frameworks because the Aboriginality/Indigeneity they desire is
positioned as pre-colonial, primordial and ‘traditional’, thus erasing the violence
of colonisation and Aboriginal peoples’ survival. Simultaneously, and
paradoxically (paradoxically because dispossession is a consequence of the
colonisation that is actively disremembered in the previous construction),
Aboriginal people are positioned as dispossessed, thereby enabling
invader/settler peoples to appropriate dispossession as their own and constructing
claims to Aboriginal land as rightful possession.

In my problematisation of these texts, I drew on theoretical work by Terry Goldie
(1997); Hodge and Mishra (1991). I acknowledged similarities in Goldie’s and
Hodge and Mishra’s positions, arguing they both recognise the dynamic between
the ‘affirmation and denial’ of Aboriginal existence. Further, I argued Gelder
and Jacob’s use of the ‘uncanny’ provided a useful post-Mabo appropriation of
Indigeneity by invader/settler Australians. I argued contemporary claims to
Indigeneity by invader/settler peoples serve to settle the problem of the uncanny
by reinstating the binary relationship between ‘home’ and ‘alienation’ by
ensuring we are at home because we are Indigenous. While I appreciate the
insights this theoretical work makes available, I am also mindful it does not
provide ways forward or through the issues these insights raise. To this end, I
argue for alternative, anti-colonial considerations of settler identity and
concomitant belongings. I turn my attention to this in the following chapter,
*Transformation and Transcendence: Creating the Non-Aboriginal Subject.*
If it is true that consciousness is a process of transcendence, we have to see too that this transcendence is haunted by the problems of love and understanding. Man is a *yes* that vibrates to cosmic harmonies. Uprooted, pursued, baffled, doomed to watch the dissolution of the truths that he has worked out for himself one after another, he has to give up projecting onto the world an antinomy that coexists with him (Fanon, 1967: 8, *emphasis in the original*).
Chapter 4:

Transformation and Transcendence: Creating the Non-Aboriginal Subject.

Introduction:

In this chapter, I develop my argument for creating the non-Aboriginal self. I argue that this is an integrated three-part process that includes recognising an ontology of non-Aboriginality; naming the ontological experience as ‘non-Aboriginal’; and, defining non-Aboriginality as a political identity constructed in commitment to achieving an anti-colonial process of identity formation. In making this argument, I propose a strategy whereby invader/settler peoples can articulate a political identity, formed out of a profound and irrevocable understanding of being in Indigenous Sovereignty, and in relationship with Indigenous people as Sovereign subjects.

In the first instance, I argue ‘non-Aboriginality’, as an anti-colonial process of identity formation, is a critical response to those who propose the abolition of whiteness. In Chapter Two, I argued the theoretical and practical frameworks of the New Race Abolitionists reinscribe colonialisit ideologies. In my discussion, I focused on ‘crossing over’ from whiteness into blackness, and the proposition that anti-whiteness activists form strategic alliances with white race-hate groups. In my critique I argued ‘crossing over’ enables the epistemological (re)centring of whiteness in relationship to blackness. Consequently, this ensures that colour retains its status as an \textit{a priori}, in social organisation and in problematising the effects of this phenomenon. Moreover, whiteness and blackness can only be known through their binary relationship to each other. This ensures that
Aboriginality can only be known as blackness. Thus, the importance of culture, kinship, the insider knowledge of what it means to be colonised and the strategic interventions Aboriginal people make into whiteness, are absent from the purview of whiteness. I also argued that ‘crossing over’ from whiteness into blackness disconnects whiteness from historical memory and context and undermines the original goals of reconciliation and supports conservative ambitions for ‘practical reconciliation’. Therefore, as a political methodology, crossing over stands in contradiction to my argument for ‘substantive reconciliation’. Finally, I addressed the idea that anti-whiteness activists should enter into political partnerships with white race supremacist organisations. I argued such allegiances move us away from being in Indigenous Sovereignty and undermine the importance of intersubjective dialogic relationships with Aboriginal people as Sovereign subjects.

Secondly, I argue that ‘non-Aboriginality’, as an anti-colonial process of identity formation, represents a radical departure from those processes of identity formation discussed in Chapter Three, where the white self is constructed in relationship with the white nation, which in turn co-opts ‘Aboriginality’ as a means to fulfilling its own Indigenising objectives. I argue in this context, non-Aboriginality rejects colonialist constructions of Aboriginality and the function it plays in Indigenising non-Aboriginal people. Further, it rejects those discursive frameworks that deny Aboriginal dispossession and co-opts this as our own dispossession. Finally, it rejects the presumption of white (aboriginal) sovereignty and demands the construction of non-Aboriginality within the context of Aboriginal Sovereignty.
The anti-colonial intent of my argument is to provide both a discursive and theoretical framework that articulates the significance of meaningful intercultural and intersubjective relationships between Aboriginal and invader/settler peoples in producing non-Aboriginal subjectivities. I argue that such relationships play a pivotal role in bringing non-Aboriginal people into relationship with Aboriginal Sovereignty. Therefore, the purpose of this discussion is also to undermine the continuing colonialist logic that silences, ignores, denies or forbids the existence, and importance of these relationships in bringing invader/settler peoples into Aboriginal Sovereignty, and in corollary, non-Aboriginal subjectivities into being.

With this said however, I must offer this important caveat. On a practical level, it is unreasonable; indeed, impossible to ask Aboriginal people, who constitute a mere 2.5-3% of the Australian population, to take responsibility for the identity development processes of ‘non-Aboriginal’ people. Thus, the ongoing purpose of this discussion, and my role as a self-identified non-Aboriginal woman within this discussion, is to speak to these ideas in the hope that they provide a language and theoretical framework with which other non-Aboriginal people can engage. This point is further underscored in my bringing together the different and diverse stories of other non-Aboriginal people in the documentary element of this project.

**Chapter Overview:**

In this chapter, I begin my discussion by developing a process I call ‘an ontology of non-Aboriginality’. I position my discussion as an elaboration of Marcia
Langton’s notion of the third domain\(^{101}\) as an anti-colonial dialogic space shared by both Aboriginal and invader/settler peoples. Although Langton’s concern primarily rests with the ways anti-colonial constructions of Aboriginality are produced within the third domain, my analysis extends her work to focus on anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality. By way of differentiating the dynamics of Langton’s theoretical framework from other ‘post-colonial’ theories, I contrast Langton’s third domain with Homi Bhabha’s third space. This part of my discussion is informed by the work of Yinjibarndi academic, Denise Groves, who identifies similarities in the two concepts. While there are elements of concurrence between Groves’ view and my position, I also argue that there are critical differences between the third domain and the third space.

Bhabha’s third space prioritises the problematisation of migrant and diasporic identity in relation to the colonial centre, thus producing hybrid identities, whereas, Langton’s third domain allows for situating the construction of non-Aboriginality within the locus of Aboriginal Sovereignty. In developing my critique of the third space I make specific reference to Ian Anderson’s rejection of hybridity as the re-colonisation of Aboriginal bodies, and Moreton-Robinson’s explication of Aboriginal ontological relationships with land. I take both as an assertion of Indigenous Sovereignty, and argue that non-Aboriginality is an ontological experience born out of a profound recognition of being in Indigenous

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\(^{101}\) Langton does not actually use the word ‘domain’, preferring instead the word ‘category’ (see Langton, 1993, 34-35). I take the word ‘domain’ from Palmer and Groves (2000: 22), who use this term in their own discussion on Langton’s thesis. I note however, that they also inter-change the term ‘domain’ and ‘space’. I suggest this is because they see similarities between Langton’s third domain and Homi Bhabha’s ‘third space’ (see Palmer and Groves, 2000: 23). In my own discussion I use the term ‘domain’ to distinguish between Langton’s argument and Bhabha’s notion of the ‘third space’.
Sovereignty, as distinct to an ontological experience informed by a relationship with the colonial centre.

As I progress my discussion, I argue that recognising the ontological experience of non-Aboriginality brings with it ethical obligations to work towards developing a discourse that both articulates our non-Aboriginality and non-Aboriginal peoples’ political responsibilities towards Aboriginal Sovereignty. I position this as a counter-hegemonic discourse to those discursive paradigms that privilege constructions of self within colonialist frameworks. I do this in two ways. Firstly, continuing with my commitment to autobiographicalise this text, I relate a personal account of how I have come to understand my non-Aboriginality. In so doing, I provide just one specific example of the ways I position my own subjectivity within a broader historical and political context. I conclude with reference to Levinas’ (1999) Alterity and Transcendence thesis and argue that recognising an ontology of non-Aboriginality is a process of ‘transforming’ the white Australian self into a non-Aboriginal person, and this necessitates an affirmation of our alterity to Aboriginal people as Sovereign subjects.

Secondly, returning to an academic discursive mode, I make a case for ‘naming’ our non-Aboriginality as a subject position within Aboriginal Sovereignty, and defining non-Aboriginality as an overtly political identity. I argue non-Aboriginality is innately political because it exists in juxtaposition to those versions of Australian-ness that co-opt Aboriginality as part of our own

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102 Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995) was a influential philosopher concerned with ethics.
Indigenising processes and in affirmation of the Sovereign status of Aboriginal people. By way of illustrating my point, I make reference to some of the interventions Aboriginal people make into colonialist naming conventions as an assertion of their Sovereignty. I argue that we too can make critical anti-colonial interventions into our self-naming conventions. Further to this, I draw on and theorise the anti-colonial possibilities that arise out of autobiographies by self-declared whitefellas in Duncan Graham’s compendium of essays Being Whitefella (1994). My political problematisation of the views and experiences expressed in these essays is informed by some of the work published in Aotearoa/New Zealand on politicising Pakeha identity. While I note critical historical, political and cultural differences between Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand, Paul Spoonley’s (1991 and 1995) exploration of a politicised Pakeha identity existing in negotiation with Maori political and sovereign interests is instructive. Finally, by way of forging a connection with Spoonley’s thesis and my own, I turn to the work of Farida Tilbury (2000). Tilbury utilises Spoonley’s ideas to formulate a politicised ‘Wadjula’ identity in the context of Nyungar Sovereignty. Then, by way of bringing the threads of my argument together I extrapolate on Aboriginal constructions of pan-Aboriginality and Tilbury’s problematisation of Wadjula identity to argue for pan-non-Aboriginality existing in dialogue with Aboriginal people in the context of their Sovereignty.

**Developing an Ontology of non-Aboriginality:**

In this section, I explain a process I call ‘developing an ontology of non-Aboriginality’. I argue that recognising one’s own non-Aboriginality is an ontological experience born out of meaningful intersubjective and intercultural
exchange between Aboriginal and invader/settler peoples within the context of Aboriginal Sovereignty. Importantly, I do not claim that all intersubjective, intercultural encounters between Aboriginal and invader/settler peoples lead to the recognition of an ontology of non-Aboriginality. Indeed, as I develop my argument, I am mindful of not falling into the trap of bestowing upon Aboriginal people ‘mystical’ qualities that magically induce a state of non-Aboriginality in the invader/settlers. Simplistic reversals of propositions mooted by writers such as David Tacey (see previous chapter) similarly rely on notions of colonialist constructions of Aboriginality. Nor do I claim that every invader/settler person who engages with Aboriginal people buys into this ontological experience. Such is the potency of colonialist ideologies that all too often, entrenched ways of inter-relating confirm rather than dispel the validity of those very ideological paradigms. However, I do claim that where this ontological experience is evident, it occurs in relationship with Aboriginal people and in recognition of their status as Sovereign subjects (see Tilbury, 2000: 80-81).

In making this case, I build on the position articulated by Marcia Langton in her 1993 essay, Well I Heard it on the Radio and I saw it on the Television. Here, Langton argues that productive, anti-colonial, filmic representations of Aboriginality occur when Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people engage in intercultural, intersubjective, dialogic relationships with each other. The significance of Langton’s thesis is that it paved a path whereby creative, collaborative partnerships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people could be negotiated. Following its publication, some mainstream media producers and funding bodies have implemented Protocols and Codes of Practice relating to the
production of media content representing Aboriginal people and culture\textsuperscript{103} (see, for example, Bostock, 1997; Johnson: n.d; ABC Cultural Protocols for Indigenous Reporting in the Media: n.d.). Typically, these documents insist on consultation in every stage of the production process and provide guidelines on the portrayal of land, people, events and stories in an effort to ensure that representations do not merely reproduce caricatures of Aboriginality fashioned out of colonialist modes of knowledge production. Moreover, these Protocols and Codes of Practice highlight the importance of Aboriginal peoples’ substantive input in not only producing anti-colonial representations of Aboriginality, but also ensuring that the production process itself, follows anti-colonial practice.

As I develop my argument, I seek to extend Langton’s analysis beyond that which applies to film and television. I argue that the theoretical position offered in her thesis, and the methodologies promoted in Protocols and Codes of Practice not only provide frameworks for best practice in producing anti-colonial representations of Aboriginality within film and television. They also speak to new paradigms of engagement whereby invader/settler peoples must work and reckon with Aboriginal people in the context of their Sovereignty. Thus, my task here is twofold. Firstly, to build on Langton’s argument, and theorise the ways in which intersubjective and intercultural dialogues between Aboriginal and invader/settler peoples situate invader/settlers in the context of Aboriginal Sovereignty and in so doing, provide the social, cultural and political milieu

\textsuperscript{103} Langton’s thesis is also cited by Aboriginal writers concerned with constructions of Aboriginal identity. See, for example, Michael Dodson’s Wentworth Lecture \textit{In the End the Beginning: Re/(de)finding Aboriginality} (1994) and Darlene Oxenham \textit{et al}, \textit{A Dialogue on Indigenous Identity: Warts ‘n’ All} (1999).
necessary to produce anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality. Secondly, I expand Langton’s thesis by arguing that not only do intercultural encounters between Aboriginal and invader/settlers produce new ways of representing and constructing Aboriginality, they also produce new ways of constructing ‘non-Aboriginality’. As I make this case, I seek to underscore the point that processes of identity construction are not one way. If non-Aboriginal interventions into constructions of Aboriginality produce new ways of representing Aboriginality, then equally, Aboriginal intervention impacts on and affirms new constructions and representations of non-Aboriginality. That is, not only do invader/settler peoples have agency in producing Aboriginal identities, Aboriginal people have agency in producing non-Aboriginal identities.

As I develop my discussion, I provide an overview of the three separate domains of identity development for Aboriginal people as Langton defines them. Then, drawing on the work of Denise Groves (Palmer and Groves, 2000), I point to some of the similarities between Langton’s ‘third domain’ and Homi Bhabha’s ‘third space’, identifying each concept as critical sites of identity negotiation. However, I argue that while Bhabha’s notion of the third space enables a problematisation of identity construction between migrant and diasporic communities in relationship to the colonial centre, its ability to advance a problematisation of migrant and diasporic communities in relationship to Indigenous Sovereignty is limited. As I develop this element of my argument, I provide a synopsis of Bhabha’s theorisation of the third space, including the valorisation of difference over diversity, cultural translation and hybridity (1990). In part, I argue that the value of Bhabha’s thesis lies in its focus on
identity formation processes for migrant and diasporic peoples. Although his intention is to problematise these identity formation processes in terms of migration away from colonised countries and back to ‘the metropolis’, I argue the very focus on migration and diaspora compel a recognition of non-Aboriginal peoples’ migrant and/or diasporic status. Following from this, I suggest that Bhabha’s analysis of the fragmentation of identity for migrant and diasporic peoples and his discouragement of notions of the sovereign self facilitates ways for invader/settler Australians to critique (and relinquish) their investment in white sovereignty. My reasons for this are twofold. Firstly, I argue that Bhabha’s focus on difference over diversity enables invader/settler peoples to position themselves as Other to Aboriginal people as sovereign subjects. Secondly, I argue that processes of cultural translation also position non-Aboriginal people as Other to invader/settler Australians in pursuit of their own Indigenisation. With this said though, I argue that the limitation of Bhabha’s thesis is revealed in his declaration that the third space is a ‘hybrid’ space (Bhabha, 1990: 211). I argue that the redeployment of hybridity in the context of invader societies such as Australia produces a position that is antithetical to that which Bhabha proposes. I argue that this is because the locus of identity construction is positioned within the sovereignty of the colonial centre, which, in turn negates the legitimacy of Indigenous Sovereignty. Moreover, through the negation of Indigenous Sovereignty, hybridity produces a homogenising effect, compelling Indigenous people to ‘fragment’ their identities through the co-optation of whiteness. In other words, there is a continuum between those processes of identity construction that are endemic to the colonisation of Indigenous people and those processes that are purported to represent ‘post-colonial’ identity. As I
develop this point, I draw firstly on the work of Ian Anderson (1994 and 1997) to argue that hybridity rejects ‘difference’ in favour of sameness through whiteness and as such, represents the re-colonisation of Aboriginal bodies. This profoundly impinges on the right of Aboriginal people to exist as their own Sovereign beings. Secondly, drawing on the work of Aileen Moreton-Robinson I argue that the process of cultural translation, when applied to Aboriginal people, works to weaken Aboriginal peoples’ claim to Sovereignty through undermining essential processes of identity development formed through ontological relationships with land (see Introduction). Therefore, in contradistinction to Groves, I argue that there is a critical difference between Bhabha’s notion of the third – or hybrid – space, and Langton’s third domain. I argue Bhabha’s third space diminishes Indigenous peoples’ claim to Sovereignty, whilst Langton’s third domain centres Indigenous Sovereignty and positions it as a critical dialogic junction between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. I argue, this reveals the political potential of the third domain as a space where non-Aboriginality is constructed in relationship with Aboriginal people as Sovereign subjects, and in the context of their Sovereignty as it is configured in terms of their ontological relationship with land.

In *Well I Heard it on the Radio and I saw it on the Television* (1993), Langton argues that ‘Aboriginality’ is a socially produced process of identity formation in a constant state of reinvention and rearticulation through three separate, yet interconnected sites. Firstly, there are the modes of self-representation that, although not completely closed to outside intervention, are internal and private to Aboriginal people and their communities (Langton, 1993: 33-34). Secondly,
there are the notions of Aboriginality I referred to in my Introduction, the misrepresentations of Aboriginality produced and perpetuated by invader/settler peoples operating within colonialist knowledge production conventions. As I have already noted, these constructions are ideologically driven, and are best characterised by their reliance on myth and stereotypes, and the absence of actual Aboriginal input and intervention (Langton, 1993: 35). Thirdly, (and most importantly for the purposes of this discussion) there are other models of representation; those that are “generated when Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people engage in actual dialogue” (Langton, 1993: 35, emphasis added).

Langton argues that in these instances of exchange:

...individuals involved will test imagined models of the other, repeatedly adjusting the models as the responses are processed, to find some satisfactory way of comprehending the other. It is in these dialogues...that working models of ‘Aboriginality’ are constructed as ways of seeing Aboriginal people, but both the Aboriginal subject and the non-Aboriginal subject are participating (1993: 35).

In her engagement with Langton, Denise Groves offers a timely reminder that dialogic relationships between Aboriginal and invader/settler peoples are not straightforward ones and can carry with them the legacy and dynamic of colonial power relations. However, Groves also identifies resemblances between Langton’s third domain and Homi Bhabha’s “notion of the third space, a space where identity is a process of negotiation” (Palmer and Groves, 2000: 22-23). The example Groves uses to illustrate her point is an interesting one. In dialogue with her colleague David Palmer, she tells of her efforts to ‘disrupt’ her non-Aboriginal students’ assumptions that only she, as an Aboriginal woman, should lecture on ‘Aboriginal women’. She does this by inviting David, a male, non-Aboriginal academic to do a guest lecture. At the same time though, she
strategically engages with his ‘authority’ to speak on behalf of Aboriginal women from the privileged purview of a white man. Groves explains her reasoning thus:

I employed this strategy, asking you to do the lecture on “Aboriginal Women,” to further disrupt people's thinking. Sometimes I get the feeling that people are slipping into a comfort zone and creating simple theories to understand relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. This is when I like to employ strategies like this.

…

Don’t forget Dave that I was there at the lecture in the same way Indigenous people are always here. I was there and was able to throw in my challenges, ask questions and find ways to make you and the group uncomfortable. I would not have let you off the hook. We must never forget that Indigenous people are active players who have a long and extended history of being sly and calling the coloniser into account (Palmer and Groves, 2000: 35-37).

In identifying a correlation between Langton’s third domain and Bhabha’s third space, Groves points to the intrinsically political nature of identity reproduction and representation; the importance of strategic interventions into representations that are typical of the second domain, and the radical potential of engaging in identity negotiation; “of calling the coloniser into account”. However, I suggest that the anti-colonial possibilities that arise from Groves’ methods lay not so much in her deployment of Bhabha’s third space in order to explain the dynamic of Langton’s third domain. Rather, I suggest that an alternative reading of the text reveals the ways in which Groves asserts her Sovereignty as an Aboriginal woman (“I was there at the lecture in the same way Indigenous people are always here”) to challenge the authority of post-colonialism and its relevancy to the (self)representational processes of Aboriginal people.
To explain this further, I argue that we must be mindful that the purpose of Bhabha’s third space is to problematise the ways in which patterns of migration from former colonies back to the metropolis inform the identity development processes of diasporic communities in relationship to the metropolis; the centre of colonial power. Bhabha seeks to explore the political possibilities that arise from the dislocation and fragmentation of identity through migration, and the potential of conceiving identities as multiply constituted. As Aileen Moreton-Robinson elaborates, the third space explains processes of displacement for migrant and diasporic communities and the ways new, “multiple and hybrid identities” emerge as diasporic subjects negotiate experiences of dislocation and disruption of prior cultural traditions from the original homeland and experiences of “subordination and oppression in the new country” (2003: 28).

It is also Bhabha’s intention to problematise the influence of these new ‘post-colonial’ processes of identity development in disrupting the grand narratives that comprise and reinforce the authority of the metropolis. As Bhabha writes with reference to the “return of post-colonial people to the metropolis” (1990: 218):

> Their very presence there changes the politics of the metropolis, its cultural ideologies and its intellectual traditions, because they – as a people who have been recipients of a colonial cultural experience – displace some of the great metropolitan narratives of progress and law and order, and question the authority and authenticity of those narratives. The other point I’m trying to make is not only that the history of colonialism is the history of the West but also that the history of colonialism is a counter-history to the normative, traditional history of the West (1990: 218, emphasis in the original).

However, the important distinction to make here is that in Australia, unlike post-colonial nations such as Algeria, Malaysia and India, the colonisers have not
‘gone home’ (see Moreton-Robinson, 2003: 30). The dominant community in Australia continues to be the invader/settler society whose primary point of cultural and political identification continues to be with the colonial centre. Thus, the disruptions to the grand narratives of colonisation in the Australian context come not so much from invader/settler Australians, but from Indigenous people who, speaking from the context of their Sovereignty, position all others as migrants. Moreover, this positioning reveals that we cling to the grand narratives of colonisation in order to resist fragmentation, maintain the discursive paradigms that give our identities coherency and integrate our processes of identity construction within the locus of colonial power. As Moreton-Robinson writes:

In postcolonizing settler societies Indigenous people cannot forget the nature of migrancy and we position all non-Indigenous people as migrants and diasporic. Our ontological relationship to land, the ways that country is constitutive of us, and therefore the inalienable nature of our relation to land, marks a radical, indeed incommensurable, difference between us and the non-Indigenous. This ontological relation to land constitutes a subject position that we do not share, and cannot be shared, with the postcolonial subject whose sense of belonging in this place is tied to migrancy…. This

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104 Also see Anthony Moran’s argument in the previous chapter.
105 I am mindful that the shift from the White Australia Policy to Multiculturalism can be interpreted as an example of mainstream Australians attempting to disrupt the paradigm to which I refer here. However, in Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society Ghassan Hage (1998) identifies the presumed prerogative of whites to manage the (white) national space as a key element of white nationalism within a multicultural society. The former Prime Minister justifies draconian and inhumane refugee policies by asserting “every nation has the right to effectively control its borders and decide who comes here and under what circumstances” (Kingston, Sydney Morning Herald, 2001). Further, the former Federal Government’s recent implementation of Australian Values and English language tests as part of a Citizenship Test is regarded by some as a return to the White Australia Policy (see WISHIN, 2006) and a breach of Australia’s human rights obligations (see van Vliet, 2006). Certainly, it is illustrative of Hage’s thesis that whites presume to control the national space through the admission and control of those it designates as its others. In contrast, it is worth noting that representatives from the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra have offered political asylum to refugees detained in Australian detention centres. In a formal press release, Tent Embassy representatives said “Although the embassy has offered asylum to a number of individuals…this is the first time in 60,000 years that representatives of Aboriginal Australia have offered formal sanctuary to any peoples who have entered our shores” (c.f. Elder, Ellis and Pratt, 2004: 218). With regard to this offer of asylum, Elder, Ellis and Pratt write, “The Tent Embassy’s invitation offered a direct challenge to the assumptions upon which the legitimacy of the White nation-state is based. In doing so it exposed the contradictions that are at the heart of discursive configurations of White Australian Nationhood” (2004: 219).
subject position cannot be erased by colonizing processes which seek to position the Indigenous as object, inferior, other and its origins not tied to migration (2003: 31).  

Thus, to return to Groves, the point I make here is that she is not speaking from the position of a post-colonial migrant who is re-contextualising her identity in relationship with the metropolis. Rather, Groves is speaking as a Sovereign subject within the context of colonial power relations and revealing the ways the colonisers’ identity/ies is impacted within the context of her Sovereignty. I therefore argue Groves’ refusal to let us “off the hook” radically displaces processes of identification and representation out of the sovereignty of the coloniser and into the Sovereignty of the colonised. I develop this point below, beginning with an overview of Bhabha’s working of the third space. I then elaborate my critique of the third space with reference to Ian Anderson and Aileen Moreton-Robinson’s analysis of hybridity.

The Third Space meets the Third Domain: From the Metropolis to Aboriginal Sovereignty.

Bhabha explains that there are two key components to understanding the third space. Firstly, Bhabha considers that the ‘third space’ is a response to the West’s

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106 It is worth noting that occasionally invader/settler Australians do insert a recognition of our migrant and diasporic status into the mainstream public domain. Usually this recognition is a satirical comment upon white Australians’ paranoia of being ‘invaded’ by people from countries that do not have Anglo-Saxon origins. Examples of this include cartoons published in the mid 1980’s when there was a large influx of refugees following the Vietnam War (see Hutchinson. 1984: 190-191). More recently, a community based organisation called ‘We are all Boat People’ formed to protest the former Federal Government’s policy on refugees and asylum seekers. With regard to this organisation, Elder, Ellis and Pratt write, “the central tenet of this campaign is the circulation of an image of the British colonisers invading Australia accompanied by the caption ‘Boat People’. According to the campaign’s website (We Are All Boat People, nd), the image is ‘our way of providing a simple, clear and powerful message that expressed the feelings and concerns’ of many ‘ordinary Australians’, aimed at reminding the government and people everywhere that ‘all (non-indigenous) Australians are in fact, “Boat People” (2004: 220; also see www.boat-people.org).
predilection towards accommodating cultural diversity (most often expressed in terms of multiculturalism), whilst containing cultural difference. Bhabha argues that the West’s valorisation of diversity over difference may well represent an ‘appreciation’ of other cultures, but it also ensures the authority of the “host society or dominant culture” (1990: 209) by maintaining the “universalist and normative stance from which it constructs its cultural and political judgments” (1990: 209). From this, the dominant culture compels ‘sameness’ from divergent cultures and their cultural practices. This is the way cultural difference is limited or controlled. For Bhabha, the value of difference (vis-à-vis diversity) is that it allows for recognition of the incommensurability of cultures and cultural practices, and provides a space whereby one can position themselves in relation to different cultures “in the spirit of alterity or otherness” (1990: 209).

The second element to Bhabha’s notion of the third space is one of “cultural translation” (1990: 209). Bhabha argues that if we understand all cultures as processes of translation between the “signifier and the signified” (1990: 210) then we also understand that what enables cultures to relate to each other across difference is not dependent on the “familiarity or similarity” (1990: 210) of cultural content. Rather, it is the similarity in the ways cultures are reproduced and represented within the symbolic realm, and the ways subjects are constituted by, and interpellated into cultural practices and meanings via the process of signification (1990: 210). In corollary, Bhabha argues that because all cultures are processes of translation, there is a level at which all subjects are alienated from the “prior” or “originary” culture in and by the very act of translation (1990: 210). As he explains, the process of making meaning out of signs and
signifiers (translating the “icons and symbols, the myths and metaphors” 1990: 210) necessitates objectifying those very signs in order to comprehend their significance and deduce meaning from them. For Bhabha, identifying this process of alienation or displacement is a critical element in subverting the authority of the notion of original, authentic or essential representation of culture. This, in turn, opens up a space whereby it is possible to articulate a position that is Other internal to a culture, and from this, produce “different… incommensurable cultural practices and priorities” (1990: 210-211) that are not dependent on notions of the sovereign self. As he writes, “[i]t is only by losing the sovereignty of the self that you can gain the freedom of a politics that is open to the non-assimilationist claims of cultural difference (1990: 213).

From these processes, Bhabha argues, a new process of cultural identification emerges, a process he identifies as cultural hybridity. The political significance of hybridity is that it “denies the essentialism of a prior given original or originary culture” (1990: 211), affirms that all cultures undergo dynamic processes of change, both in ways that are internal to that culture, and in relation to each other. However, argues Bhabha, the real political potency of hybridity lies not in tracing the “two original moments from which the third emerges” (1990: 211) but rather identifying that hybridity is the “‘third space’ which enables other positions to emerge” (1990: 211). As he writes:

This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through the received wisdom…. The process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognisable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation (Bhabha, 1990: 211).
In broad terms, Bhabha’s analysis offers a productive way through developing the dynamics of Langton’s third domain as it relates to invader/settler peoples. This is possible because he speaks primarily to the processes of identification for migrant and diasporic people, which as I have already discussed with reference to Moreton-Robinson, is the way we/they are positioned by Indigenous people. For example, his discussion on difference vis-à-vis diversity goes some way to articulating a principle of engagement within the dialogic forum for members of the invader/settler society. It serves as a reminder that invader/settlers must negotiate their own cultural standpoints as different from, and Other to, Aboriginal people. This reversal in the Othering process subverts those processes that are typically in play within colonialist paradigms, those articulated in Langton’s second domain. Moreover, the focus on difference as distinct to diversity does not presuppose consensus, sameness, or an unproblematic co-existence as desirable outcomes of intercultural and intersubjective exchange between Aboriginal and invader/settler peoples. Rather, it embraces intercultural negotiation as intrinsically political: encompassing ideas and dynamics that are subversive, transgressive and potentially revolutionary (Bhabha, 1990: 216). Indeed, the very notion of difference as an articulation of the non-sovereign self marks out a new discursive terrain that undermines the authority of white sovereignty and the radical potential of repositioning the white self in the context of Indigenous Sovereignty.

The significance of such a repositioning is underscored by the fact that in order for invader/settler peoples to position ourselves as Other to Aboriginal people, we must also position ourselves as Other to those constructions of self that are
produced within our own cultural modes of signification. This necessitates positioning ourselves as Other to those white Australians who valorise whiteness whilst coopting Aboriginality as an expression of their identity. Thus, I argue that in this instance, the radical potential of the third space is that it allows scope for Aboriginal political expression that repositions white, Australian identities as non-Aboriginal. However, this then begs the question: is this new marker of identity for non-Aboriginal people best expressed as a ‘hybrid’ identity? How easily do notions of difference over diversity capture the place of Indigenous people in Australian history and contemporary society, and how adequately does the process of cultural translation speak to Indigenous peoples’ internal reproduction of culture and their relationship to colonial power?

I argue that if the purpose of the third-space is to displace “the histories that constitute it”, set up “new structures of authority”, and “new political initiatives”, (Bhabha, 1990: 211, also see above), then conceiving it as a ‘hybrid’ space is counter-productive in the Australian context. Not only does hybridity not displace histories, it ensures they are re-enacted through the redeployment of old terminology and ideologies that have, at the core of their purpose, the intention of erasing Aboriginal difference through an assimilation into sameness through whiteness. Indeed, the Pallawah scholar Ian Anderson argues the notion of hybridity, when it applies to Aboriginal people, simply describes the colonial or anthropological fixation with the need to locate the position of those designated ‘mixed blood’, ‘urban’ and ‘non-traditional’ (see Anderson, 1997: 13; Anderson, 1994: 117) within “the colonial order” (Anderson, 1997: 6). ‘Hybridity’, in this context, names those who are deemed to be neither white nor black and who are,
consequently living in what was described by the anthropologist A.P. Elkin as a “cultural hiatus” (Anderson, 1997: 7; Anderson, 1994:117). Anderson writes:

Unlike those connotations associated with the word hybrid that allude to the creative and constructive potential of the fusion of distinctive beings, the ‘hybrid’ in the context of Australian colonial discourse is both (self-) destructive and sterile. As a being without history or culture, the ‘hybrid’ can only resolve the paradox of its own existence by transforming itself (or being transformed). According to [the historian] Plomley, the descendents of ‘mixed race’ unions are precluded from having cultural expression or a historical consciousness. So Plomley denied my mob some of the most fundamental qualities of human subjectivity. And his solution? ‘If they wish to obtain a history, they must wholly identify themselves with the culture of one or other of the parents. If they do not wish to do so they must follow a pathway of independence from both, one adapted to their own needs’ (1977: 66). The fate of the ‘hybrid’ is to assimilate completely with either part of their heritage, or remain forever dislocated in a socio-historical void. Yet, at the same time, a return to the realm of Aboriginal ‘authenticity’ was either impossible or, alternatively, it was made undesirable. Consequently, the ‘hybrid’ could only be productively transformed one way: white (1997: 7-8).

Anderson’s resistance to being transformed into ‘white’ is clear. He appropriates that which cosmically ‘appears’ as whiteness while unequivocally claims this as evidence to his Aboriginality. This is underscored through the observance of protocol; kinship connection; the shared history of colonisation; and, the shared experience of negotiating the effects of colonisation within contemporary Australia (Anderson, 1997: 4-8). As he writes:

As I am an Aborigine, I inhabit an Aboriginal body, and not a combination of features which may or may not cancel each other. Whatever language I speak, I speak an Aboriginal language, because a lot of Aboriginal people I know speak like me. How I speak, act and how I look, are outcomes of a colonial history, and not a particular combination of traits from either side of the frontier…. In the transforming experiences through which Aboriginal people grow, those qualities which constitute our identities are constantly reforming as we engage and re-engage our world. This is one experience which coheres us, despite all ambiguities and contradictions (Anderson, 1994: 121-122).

Recently, there have been some attempts to recast Anderson’s rejection of hybridity as evidence of a hybrid identity specific to the Australian location. His
refusal to claim a hybrid status is interpreted as a rejection of ‘happy hybridity’ (hybridity that produces sameness) and presented as politically mobilised ‘anti-anti-essential’ identity negotiated in hybrid space between essentialist notions of Aboriginality (those produced within colonialist ideological paradigms) and post-colonial Aboriginality (see Ang, 2001, c.f., Haggis, 2004a: 53-54 and 2004b).

However, Jane Haggis draws on Moreton-Robinson’s notion of Aboriginal ontological relationships, to land and her critique of the essentialism/strategic essentialism debate, to produce a counterview. Haggis argues that Anderson’s is a claim to a continuous identity which is articulated through a “history and memory” of Australian colonisation. This, she argues, enables his claim to an ‘essential’ identity which both resists notions of “fixity or authenticity” and the Western compulsion to conceive a sense of self that is alienated, displaced, fractured (Haggis, 2004a: 54 and 2004b, also see Moreton Robinson, 2003: 32).

Indeed, Moreton-Robinson writes that given Aboriginal peoples’ ontological relationship with land, hybridity offers little to elucidate the place of Indigenous identity in ‘post-colonising’ societies such as Australia. Rather, processes of Indigenous ‘cultural translation’ do not so much fracture Indigenous identity, but ensure the continuance of identity and protocol in the face of colonisation. In her elaboration of this she writes:

We are not migrants in the sense that we have moved from one nation state to another, but the policies of removal transferred different indigenous peoples from their specific country to another’s. This dislocation in effect means that Indigenous people can be out of place in another’s country but through cultural protocols and the commonality of our ontological relationship to country we can be in place but away from our home country. This is a different experience of migrancy to that of a postcolonial subject. It is not a hybridity derived from a third space; a kind of menagerie of fluid diasporic subjects. Instead there is an incommensurable doubleness superimposed by marginality and centring. Marginality is the result of
Moreton-Robinson argues that because hybridity is dependent on the “metaphor of migrancy” (2003: 28; also see Bhabha, 1990: 212), it privileges the experience of displacement through migration over the experience of dispossession through colonisation, which in the Australian context is enabled through ongoing processes of migrancy and settlement. Following from Moreton-Robinson, I argue hybridity contains a tendency to conflate the experiences of diasporic displacement and Indigenous dispossession and theorize both phenomenon through a discursive framework designed to problematise the relationship between diasporic communities and the dominant culture within the locus of the dominant culture. This renders Indigenous dispossession as a marginal – if not invisible – experience within the discourse of migrant and diasporic displacement. The consequences of this are threefold: Firstly, it obfuscates the ways migration and diaspora are integral to the colonising process, and facilitates the mythology of Australia as a settler nation as distinct to an invaded one. Secondly, conflating the experiences of Indigenous dispossession with diasporic displacement precludes Indigenous experiences of dispossession from the very counter histories that are said to destabilise the dominant narratives of colonisation. I argue this reinstates the authority of colonialist discourses and perpetuates the discursive arrangements that dispossess Indigenous people of the right to speak to their own dispossession. Thus, rather than destabilising the dominant narratives of colonial power, they are restabilised through this act of marginalising Indigenous experiences. Thirdly, it privileges the relationship between diasporic communities and the dominant culture whilst excluding the
experiences and relationships between diasporic communities and Indigenous people. I argue that this forecloses on any possibility of radically undermining the authority of colonialist discourse in shaping the identities of migrant and diasporic communities. I argue that in invader societies such as Australia, a truly radical displacement of the authority of the colonialist discourse in constituting the identities of migrant and diasporic communities and individuals requires repositioning the locus of identity formation within the context of Aboriginal Sovereignty.

Thus, to return to Langton, I argue there are critical differences between her conceptualisation of the third domain, and Bhabha’s third space. His is the space where diasporic and migrant communities meet the metropolis, whilst hers is the space where Indigenous and invader/settler peoples meet in the context of Indigenous Sovereignty and which contains the potential to reveal non-Aboriginal subjectivities. In elaborating on Langton’s argument, I suggest that intercultural and intersubjective relationships between Aboriginal and invader/settler peoples provisions invader/settler people with the opportunity to access knowledges and representations of Aboriginality that are produced within the first site of identity production to which she refers. With reference to Moreton-Robinson, this necessitates a fundamental recognition of the ways ontological relationships with land and ongoing dialogic relationships with colonial processes of identity formation constitute Aboriginalities. From this, I argue the third domain provides a space whereby invader/settler peoples have access to understandings of Aboriginality that are more complex, compelling and multi-dimensional than those which invader/settler peoples usually come into contact with: that is, those produced within Langton’s second site, informed by
colonialist modes of knowledge production. The political potential of this reveals itself when we consider the ways invader/settler peoples construct ourselves in relationship to models of Aboriginality that are usually produced within the second domain. Therefore, I argue that the political value of intersubjective, intercultural relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people radically destabilises the prior informational and ideological tools by which we usually construct self-identity. This is revealed most clearly by this informant (a community worker) to Palmer’s study, when they say:

You come in as one person, or at least with some ideas about Aboriginal people – and you very quickly have this challenged…. So the person you were is not the person you become (Palmer, 1999: 323, ellipses in the original).

Moreover, these informational and ideological tools typical of the second domain are further destabilised when invader/settler peoples come into contact with the knowledges that are produced about us/them by Aboriginal people within the first domain. This contact brings about the realisation that just as Aboriginalities are historically and socially constructed by invader/settler peoples, so too, are our identities by Aboriginal people. The knowledge that Aboriginal people make psychoanalytical readings of us; communicate histories about us and our predecessors; pass on intelligence about us; tell jokes and stories about us; mimic us in an effort to diffuse the pressure of our presence in their lives; strategically deploy whiteness to their own advantage; use unflattering names for us; intervene in the bureaucratic regimes that impact on their lives; critique the exercise of power in their lives; invent theories about us in order to deconstruct some of the culturally incomprehensible things we do – and so on – is confronting for those of us who have internalised the mythology of Aboriginal
passivity and compliance (see Morris 1994; Langton, 1993; Arthur, 1996). These mythologies keep ‘Aboriginality’ at a safe distance from white sovereignty and ultimately support the terra nullius of the imagination.

However, I argue that intersubjective and intercultural relationships between Aboriginal and invader/settler peoples provide new informational and ideological tools that undermine the sustainability of white sovereignty. Moreover, I argue that it is the proven capacity of the invader/settler subject to reflect upon, negotiate and mediate their own investments in their white sovereignty that builds trust between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and enhances the creative potential of the third domain. Learning and abiding by the protocols of the third domain, and engaging with Aboriginal people as Sovereign subjects is the manifestation of our non-Aboriginality. It is a new ‘way of being’ that is irrevocably situated within Aboriginal Sovereignty.

However, I argue that this ‘way of being’ is by-and-large, without a discursive framework through which it can be articulated. The reminder of this chapter is dedicated to addressing this. I argue that non-Aboriginal people have an ethical obligation to name their non-Aboriginality as a political identity within the context of Aboriginal Sovereignty, and to imbue our non-Aboriginal status with overt political meaning that supports Aboriginal peoples’ sovereign claims. I argue this builds on, yet distinguishes itself, from the discourse of reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people because it affirms Aboriginal peoples’ Sovereign claims in the face of ongoing attempts by white Australians to preserve white sovereignty and negate Aboriginal Sovereignty.
A Story about non-Aboriginality

To explain this further, I will share with you a story – or rather a pastiche of events that combine to tell a story – of how I came to recognise the ontology of non-Aboriginality for myself. I acknowledge that in the working through of this story that I unfortunately lose some of the discrete, but poignant, events that also contribute to this realisation. However, despite the fact that I am ‘skimming the surface’, I hope that I offer a coherent narrative that resonates with others’ experiences and provides some productive insights for those seeking to identify their own non-Aboriginal, ontological experience. Where possible, I will also refer to other non-Aboriginal peoples’ stories to elaborate my discussion.

As I work through this narrative, I move towards a pivotal moment when I first had the ‘language’ to describe what I think happens when people come to realise their non-Aboriginality. The word was ‘transformation’ and I first heard it used by Jackie Huggins in 1998 at the Women, Citizenship and Human Rights Conference at Melbourne University. Although I return to this below, it suffices to say for now that this moment was so profound I concluded the final chapter of my Masters thesis writing:

Undergoing such a transformation requires an intrinsic emotional shift in the non-Indigenous person’s sense of self…. In affirming their non-Indigenous-ness, non-Indigenous people must simultaneously affirm Indigenous people and their knowledge of and relationship with the land. Through this mutual affirmation both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people can be unified under the knowledge that while Indigenous people are the sovereign owners of the land we share a duel responsibility towards it (Brady and Carey, 1998: 3). It is this duel responsibility that forms the basis for our mutual inclusion as inhabitants of this land now called Australia (Carey, 1998: 80-81).
The notion of transformation remains pivotal to my discussion, and, I argue, integral to the process of recognising the ontology of non-Aboriginality. Within the following discussion, I locate the significance of the word ‘transformation’ within the broader discursive framework for reconciliation, specifically the notion of spiritual healing and growth. In order to link the concept of transformation back to the importance of intersubjective exchange in producing anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality, I draw on Emmanuel Levinas’ *Alurity and Transcendence* thesis (1999). Through Levinas’ reworking of the notion of transcendence from one associated with the sacred to one that is intimately connected with the “birth of subjectivity” (Hyat, c.f. Levinas, 1999: ix-x), I am able to bridge-the-gap between notions of the spiritual back to actual relationships between people. From this, I am further able to argue that the transformative (transcendent) process is fundamentally connected to the recognition of ‘our’ alterity to Aboriginal people (as opposed to the colonialist assumption of Aboriginal people’s alterity to ‘us’) and consequently locates us within Indigenous Sovereignty.

In November 1996, I deferred from my Master’s degree at Sydney University, took a months leave from my job at a Sydney radio station and went to work at CAAMA (Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association). My job was to train and mentor the young woman who was staffing the newsroom. Although I had had some limited experience working with Kooris in Sydney at Tranby Aboriginal Co-operative College, I had neither been to the desert nor worked in a really sustained way with Aboriginal people before. Given the point of this story is to highlight my own cross-cultural illiteracy, I probably don’t really need to
point out that notwithstanding my radio training skills, on a whole range of levels I was ill equipped and under skilled for the job. But, the truth is, I was: embarrassingly so.

When I got to Alice Springs, a woman from CAAMA had come to pick me up from the airport. As we headed back into town she pointed out a few of the local landmarks: The Alice Springs race track, the Todd River and the site at The Gap where CAAMA got started. I also got the drum on the demographics of Alice Springs. “Most of the whitefellas live on the eastern side of town” she said. “The whitefellas who don’t mind living with the blackfellas live on the western side of town”. “I live on the west, down Larapinta Drive”, she said.

We stopped for coffee in a café in Todd Mall and chatted on a bit more. Then we headed to the supermarket to pick up a few of the necessaries (in my case, tea bags, coffee and milk). Her tip – buy lots of bottled water: If you’re not used to the local stuff that comes out of the tap, you’ll need it, she said. I tried to follow this advice, but with all the arrogance of any other city interloper, I slacked off after the first three days. The gastro lasted for over a week.

Before I left Sydney, I had the idea that I would work during the week and use the weekends for sight seeing. However, because of the heat, my feet had swollen up to spongy size nine-and-a-half balloons. Then, because the air was so much drier than I was used to, I was getting daily nosebleeds. Add the lingering wonky tummy to this and it was clear that I was staying close to home. So, I’d
pass the time loitering in the air conditioned comfort of Ford Plaza, just off the main drag, and occasionally, the cinema.

When you’re by yourself, you unconsciously find yourself eavesdropping on other people’s conversations. It’s not that you’re wanting to be rude, it’s that people talk about different things in different ways, and you take notice of this when you’re away from home. Listening for the differences in syntax is one of the ways of ‘sussing’ the nuances and inter-personal dynamics of being in a different place. The ‘realisation’ that something ‘unusual’ was happening to me occurred when I was sitting in Todd Mall and I consciously recognised that I was surrounded by Australian languages that were not English. And along with this, I recognised, for the first time, my language was different, and foreign to this place. Indeed, the exact words that went through my head were “my language is not from here”. Along with this, then, came the recognition that I am not from here. What a thing to discover when you’re sitting on a park bench in the middle of a shopping mall with swollen feet, a bloody nose and a belly ache!

I am at a loss to explain why this specific experience proved to be such an epiphany. Could it be that it resonated with a similar experience ten years earlier in Ireland? I had been approached by ‘native’ Gaelic speakers who did not realise I could only speak English until I told them so. Could it be a metaphor? Did my inability to understand language also signify my inability to comprehend my own and their cultural difference in a profound and productive way? In truth, I cannot provide any substantive answers to these questions. However, through this experience I learnt something Indigenous teachers already know: the
capacity of language to teach whitefellas a lesson in the existence of an
independent Indigenous consciousness, ontology(ies) and epistemology(ies). As
David Palmer and Denise Groves write of one of their colleagues:

He, as an Aboriginal academic, represents everything the architects of
assimilation and integration policy regimes would have wanted. He is
articulate, formally educated and is the head of a university programme.
Having talked to his students I know that when they first meet him many
have their ideas confirmed. One might say that he provides substance to
the idea that Indigenous people who live in urban settings have lost their
culture and become modernists. However, sometimes when he is
presenting a lecture he will begin by talking Nyungar. He may continue for
ten minutes and it is always interesting to watch the students respond. This
immediately flips on its head people’s ideas that Nyungar culture is dead
that his Aboriginality is somehow lost (2000: 34).

When I got back to Sydney, I had the lingering feeling that something inside me
had shifted, I needed to find ways to articulate the questions that were forming in
my mind and hopefully, get some tools to answer them. When the 1997
academic year commenced, I had decided that the units available in the Master of
Gender Studies course I was doing were not going to help me. Without really
knowing what I was asking for, I rang the Koori Centre at the university and was
put through to Dr. Wendy Brady. Wendy agreed to supervise a reading course
with me, which ostensibly would have seen me through to the end of my degree.
Later, I asked her if she’d supervise me if I upgraded my degree. I am eternally
grateful that she said yes. The thesis, *Deconstructing Whiteness – Constructing
non-Indigenousness: Reconceiving White Racial Identities in Invader Societies*
(1998) is the genesis to the work I am engaging with now.

In addition to talking about the readings I was working with, and what I was
writing, Wendy and I spent a lot of time yarning. In part, this process of
intersubjective and intercultural exchange is an example of what I referred to in
my Introduction as ‘storytelling as a methodological and pedagogical approach
to learning anti-racism’. However, in broad colloquial terms, ‘yarning’ allows
me to capture some of the more ‘human’ dynamics of this ‘methodological
process’. Like all good yarns, we meandered, got off the point, got back to the
point and, together, shared some of the stories of our lives. I also uncovered in
myself attributes many of us share when we are learning how to participate in
meaningful cross-cultural communication and exchange. I was naive, ‘well
intentioned’, occasionally defensive, vulnerable to simplistic conflations of life
experiences between Aboriginal and invader/settler people and, too easily
influenced by my own cultural and political frameworks.

My storytelling allowed me to reveal these things to myself, and Wendy’s
storytelling gave me a point of reflection and self-assessment whilst never really
telling me I was wrong. Because of this, I had the luxury of working through
how I could engage with the issues we were dealing with, without being
embarrassed in the process. Yarning gave me an alternative model: new ways of
thinking about myself as a working-class, white, Australian woman. It gave me
new ways to place myself in my world. I placed myself as a non-Indigenous
person. It also revealed a ‘new’ world to me – a world that pre-existed the
arrival of my ancestors from England and Ireland – a world of Aboriginal
Sovereignty.

In the intervening years, I have come to understand that there is another point to
make about ‘yarning’. Yarning not only describes conversation between people.
In my experience, in Aboriginal English, yarning can also describe doing ‘business’, or talking about and doing political and cultural work. “We’ll have a yarn about that”, often means there is ‘business’ to be done. I make this point because I want to emphasise that this yarning was a ‘business’ transaction. Wendy was doing the political and cultural work of getting me to understand that I was in Aboriginal Sovereignty. Specifically, in her presence, I was in her Sovereignty as a Wiradjiri woman, and as an educator and academic within the Koori Centre at Sydney University. While my ‘white sovereignty (we didn’t actually use those words) was brought into question, I was never actually disempowered (in the pejorative sense of the word). Rather, I was re-contextualised within this specific milieu. This process of learning gave me a new context, a new framework for positioning myself in other dialogic or yarning transactions with Aboriginal people. It has given me some skills, confidence, and new ways of engaging with and interpreting intercultural and intersubjective relations. Because of this experience, I now recognise, that in a multitude of personal and professional relationships, and, depending on whose country I am on, I am re-contextualised and remade within the site of Aboriginal Sovereignty on a daily basis.

In 1998, Wendy and I co-presented a paper at the *Women Citizenship and Human Rights Conference* at Melbourne University. We decided to share our experiences of storytelling in a paper called *The Role of Storytelling in*

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107 The Oxford Aboriginal English Dictionary describes ‘business’ as “Aboriginal ceremony and ritual” (Arthur, 1996:17). The examples they provide include, “business camp”, “men’s business”, “women’s business” and “sorry business” (1996: 17-18). I take from these examples that they mean business as it relates to ‘traditional’ activities. However, the context in which I usually come across this word means ‘cultural work’. The dictionary does not contain a definition for ‘yarning’ and I have defined it according to the ways I usually hear it said.
Overcoming Racism. It was an opportunity for us to speak to the role of storytelling in affirming to each other our respective subject positions as Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women. In the presentation, Wendy shared a personal story of her own, and I told the story of how the inscription in a family bible provided the link between my Australian identity and, connected to this, my non-Aboriginality.

The Bible to which I refer was a gift to my great, great, great, great grandmother from her sister when she left England for Australia in 1832. My great, great grandmother passed it on to my Nan in 1932. Nan used to keep the Bible in the third drawer down in her wardrobe, and when I was a kid I’d love to hear her read the scrawled, cursive inscription to me…

Martha Poulter
Cowhinge
Suffolk
1832
Read this with prayerful attention and it will make you wise unto salvation.

And then on the next page:

Martha my Dear, may this blessed volume prove
A faithful guide as still you onward move.
Receive it as a snap by Jesus given
And it will lead you to his feet in heaven
Heaven did I say. Yes, that blessed region where questions and doubts forever
Banished are united there with all the ... throng. Aloud may we their blissful theme
Prolong nor fear those perfect joys will we decay
Throughout one cloudless everlasting day.

After my Nan passed away in 2001, I went to the third drawer in her wardrobe and claimed the Bible as my own. Shortly after, I left Melbourne, the city she had lived in all of her life, and moved west. I now keep it in my wardrobe, in my
house, in Fremantle, Western Australia. As I see it, the story of this Bible is that it is part of a mystical, continuous thread that crosses generations, continents and oceans. The immediate parable here is that it tells the story of two sisters who experience a profound and physical separation, but assuage their grief and remain united through the belief that they will meet again, some day in heaven. However, the story is a bigger one than that, as this simple inscription links me to an ancestral line that takes me beyond my home in Fremantle, beyond this place we now call Australia, to a place to which some of us are Indigenous. This bible brings past and present, home and dislocation, together in a truly ‘uncanny’ way.

At the same conference, Indigenous academics Jackie Huggins and Isabel Tarrago and their non-Indigenous colleague, Kaye Saunders also presented a joint paper; *Reconciling Our Mother’s Lives*. In it, they charted the lives of three women, who, by virtue of race and class led such different lives (also see Huggins, Tarrago, Saunders, 2000). More than this though, through the act of storytelling, the mother’s daughters revealed a basis for building mutually respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. In her reflection on this paper Wendy Brady has written:

The responsibility for revelation was shared and each learnt from the other and the listeners were able to learn from all three women. This coalition of women sharing their stories gave me a brief glimpse of what might be possible in a world where power was relinquished and shared. Mutual respect and honouring underscored their words. In life we occasionally have the opportunity to participate in or be witness to an event where hope in the future reignites and where we can imagine that the generations to come may have a better world in which to live. That was such a moment (1998: online).
However, for me, the most profound moment occurred during question time. In response to a question that was put to her, Jackie Huggins\textsuperscript{108} said “Non-Aboriginal people are \textit{transformed} when they meet Aboriginal people…”\textsuperscript{109}

Although I cannot swear to know exactly what Huggins meant, I knew on an intuitive level that this word, this concept, resonated for me. I felt that over the preceding couple of years I had undergone a ‘transformation’, a life changing experience from which I would never turn back. Nevertheless, identifying the constituent elements of this transformation is a much more complex task. When I try to form mental lists it seems perfunctory, as if I am describing an action, but not what motivates or inspires it. Transformations, because of their magnitude, touch every area of your life. As Palmer found in his study, when non-Aboriginal people share rich intercultural lives with Aboriginal people, their “language …[is] …enriched, their attitudes to family changed, their epistemological frameworks expanded, their work practices improved, their professional values challenged, their friendships augmented, their self-assessment illuminated, and their cultural lives extended” (1999: 324).

By way of seeking confirmation of my experience, I seek out the ways other non-Aboriginal writers engage with their own ‘transformations’. Fiona Nicholl, for example, refers to an experience she calls “falling out of perspective”; a notion

\textsuperscript{108} Jackie Huggins AM is of the Bidjara and Birri-Gubba Juru peoples. She is the Deputy Director of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit at the University of Queensland. Amongst her many public offices, Huggins is co-chair of Reconciliation Australia. She is also (co) author of her mother’s biography \textit{Auntie Rita} (1994).

\textsuperscript{109} I cannot vouch that this quote is verbatim because I am calling on an 8 year old memory as I write this. However, I do believe it is close to what was said.
that describes falling out of white sovereignty when we come to face to face with Indigenous Sovereignty. As she explains:

In my experience, white people are as unlikely to voluntarily ‘fall’ from perspective as we are to ‘give’ space to others or to ‘unlearn’ our privileges. Rather, the existence and agency of Indigenous sovereignty are evident in the fact that, when any of these things do happen, it is in response to particular challenges to white sovereignty (Nicholl, 2004: 29, emphasis in the original).

Alternatively, Martin Flanagan describes something close to transformation when he writes, “…I never approached Aboriginal people without something happening, a preconception being overturned, a door of perception opening” (2002: 105). When I interviewed Martin for the documentary part of this project, we explored this further. With reference to what he had learned in his experiences with Aboriginal people he said, “once you’re on the path you can’t get off it” (July, 2004). In addition, in her biography/autobiography, *Dingo: The Story of Our Mob* Sally Dingo (who is a non-Indigenous Australian) sums up her experience of living with and learning from her Aboriginal extended family. The final sentence of her book concludes, “I had learned so much more than I had ever dreamed for myself” (Dingo, 1997: 229).

Upon reflection, I wonder if the reason Huggins’ use of the word ‘transformation’ rang true for me is because it resonated more broadly with the language of reconciliation. By the mid-to-late1990’s, reconciliation had been cast as a ‘spiritual journey’ with an urgent and profound ‘higher purpose’ that was ultimately linked to the recognition of Aboriginal people’s status as first nations’ people and the need for mainstream Australians to own the past and engage in a process of national healing.
The challenge remains, however, to anchor these ideas and experiences to actual relationships between people. Indeed, while the words ‘spirit’, ‘spiritual’, and ‘spirituality’ spoke to the political, social and cultural profundity of reconciliation, there was (and is) a danger that somehow it could represent an appropriation of Aboriginal spirituality, or imagined, colonialist notion of ‘spiritual Aboriginality’, that ultimately compromises the integrity of anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality.

For me, Emmanuel Levinas’ *Alterity and Transcendence* thesis (1999) provides the way forward to consider this issue and hook it back into the significance of intercultural and intersubjective relationships discussed in the theoretical overview for this chapter. For Levinas, the advent of western philosophy required the reconfiguration of transcendence from an ephemeral experience mediated through the sacred, to a cognitive experience that “accompanies the birth of human subjectivity” (Hyat, c.f. Levinas, 1999: ix-x). For Levinas, transcendence occurs at the precise moment we come face-to-face with the other. Our first impulse is to seek ourselves in the face of the other and have our own subjectivity confirmed by their existence. When this fails, we are driven by our own narcissistic desire to resolve the other into ourselves and make them the same as ‘us’. When this inevitably fails, we experience a crisis in our own subjectivity. What Levinas teaches us is that this crisis is resolvable through the recognition of *our own* alterity to the other, and the honouring of the Others’ alterity to us.
In broad terms, I suggest Levinas’ insights speak to, or resonate with, the dynamic of Aboriginal and invader/settler relations throughout the 20th century. For example, seeking to confirm our own subjectivity through the existence of others, lies in the appropriation of ‘native’ identities as a means of national cohesion and legitimacy. Further, biological absorption and cultural assimilation policies speak to the desire to make Aboriginal people the ‘same as us’. The monumental failure of these programs in social engineering has caused incalculable cultural dislocation, pain and sorrow for Aboriginal people. As evidence of this has made its way into the mainstream Australian consciousness, this has induced a ‘crisis’ in the moral and political legitimacy and challenged the national identity processes of many Australians. In its early days, the reconciliation movement was an earnest attempt to resolve this crisis (see Keating, c.f. Gratton, 2000: 60-61). However, I argue current programs of practical reconciliation, which seek to compel the (re)assimilation of Aboriginal people, and concurrent attempts to (re)appropriate Aboriginal identity exacerbate and perpetuate this crisis. Therefore, I argue, the only meaningful way out of this crisis is to engage in a process of substantive reconciliation, which necessitates ‘transforming’ (or, in Levinas’ terms, transcending) into a ‘non-Aboriginal’ person.

For Levinas, ‘transcendence’ occurs with the realisation that we are unable to absorb the other into ourselves and the mutual and unique subjectivities of the I and the other are confirmed. Upon this confirmation, a recognition of our responsibility to the Others’ humanity is also born. As Levinas writes:

Thus there emerges, from that fear of the other man, an unlimited responsibility, one that we are never discharged of…. A responsibility that
harbors the secret of sociality, the total gratuitousness of which, though it be ultimately in vain, is called the love of one’s neighbour, love without concupiscence, but as irrefrangible as death (1999: 30).

For Levinas, transcendence compels a pluralistic understanding of intersubjective relations (Hyat, c.f. Levinas, 1999: xiv-xv). From this, I argue that it brings into focus a basis for thinking through the ‘transformative’ (or transcendent) impact of intersubjective relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people for non-Aboriginal people. Moreover, because Levinas is concerned with exploring the imperative for ethical relations between individuals, he provides a basis for thinking through and cultivating non-Aboriginal peoples’ ethical obligations towards Aboriginal people, as we engage in intersubjective and intercultural dialogues. Once we come face-to-face with the other and recognise their alterity as subject (rather than object) we are compelled to affirm their status as first nations’ peoples and, in the face of this, name, define and affirm our alterity as non-Indigenous peoples. It is because Levinas recognises that face-to-face, intersubjective exchange brings into reality the possibility of loving those previously feared or hated, we are presented with an antithetical position for relating to, or connecting with the Other. Love of the Others’ alterity is antithetical to race hatred. Love of the Others’ alterity induces an affirmation of our own. We can substantiate this affirmation by naming our alterity as non-Aboriginal. I continue this discussion below.

**Naming non-Aboriginality:**

In this section, I explore ‘naming’ as a political strategy. I argue we are able to invest non-Aboriginality with overt anti-colonial meaning when we situate it within the locus of Aboriginal Sovereignty. The political advantages of my
proposal are threefold. Firstly, it extends the logic of white race deconstruction theory, which posits that naming whiteness is a critical first step in destabilising the power whiteness assumes through its supposed normativity and neutrality. I argue we must look beyond the deconstruction of white power and toward the construction of an identity formed within an antithetical space to whiteness; that is, the space of Aboriginal Sovereignty. I argue any attempts to name identities with a view to undermining various manifestations of power must be directly responsive to the nature and causes of that power, otherwise, we risk perpetuating the very power we seek to undermine. In this context then, naming non-Aboriginality situates non-Aboriginal identities within the dynamic of ongoing (neo)-colonial power relations and articulates a refusal to comply with them.

Secondly, naming non-Aboriginality within Aboriginal Sovereignty extends the notion that ‘naming’, as a political strategy, identifies the dialectic relationship between oppressed and dominant groups. It does this by identifying the ways oppressed groups speak back to the centre by reappropriating names previously used in a pejorative sense, or devising new ones that challenge their legitimacy. Naming, in this context, asserts self-defined labels as examples of “self-determination, strength, progress and control” (Martin, Krizek, Nakayama and Bradford, 1996: online). I argue that this definition resonates with the logic of post-colonialism, and that it is necessary to reinterpret this analysis of self-naming by oppressed groups as an assertion of their Sovereignty. Thus, while naming does speak back to the dominant group, it is also a profound declaration of a different centre: a centre that pre-exists that which is imposed by the
dominant group and which can inform the ways members of the dominant group self-name.

Thirdly, naming non-Aboriginality also takes its impetus from ‘naming’ as an Indigenist epistemological priority. ‘Naming’, in this context, refers to (re)claiming names that declare Indigenous Sovereignty, as it relates to being Sovereign owners of a specific territory and Sovereign Subjects within that territory. Reinstating Indigenous names for children, the landscape and sites of significance are all examples of this (see Smith, 2001: 157). So too, are those moves to diminish the potency of colonialist labels such as Aborigine, Indigenous, native, Black and so on by investing them with anti-colonial meaning. I argue that naming non-Aboriginality within this paradigm similarly indicates an affirmation of Indigenous Sovereignty. In other words, when members of an invader society declare their non-Aboriginality they not only declare their affiliation and support for Indigenous Sovereign claims, they articulate a political identity that is distinct from those who do not share this affiliation or offer this support.

In the following discussion, I provide an overview of some of the critical interventions Aboriginal people make into colonialist naming conventions which continue to be in common usage. I argue that such interventions are ‘anti-colonial’ because they re-appropriate the names constructed through colonial discourses and subvert them by investing old terms with new meanings that are self-empowering and signal their commitment to self-determination. In this discussion, I draw specifically on the work of Jackie Huggins (1993), Wendy
Brady (Brady and Carey, 2000) and Eve Fesl (1993). In developing the case that such interventions are declarations of Aboriginal peoples’ status as Sovereign subjects I then refer to the work of Collard, Harben and van den Berg (2004), who write specifically from their Nyungar perspective, and Karen Martin/Booran Mirraboopa (2003), who, in turn, writes from her position as a Quandamooka woman.

My purpose for pursuing this discussion is to highlight the ways invader/settler peoples can learn from such interventions. I argue that Aboriginal people can make critical intercessions into our own self-naming and similarly position ‘non-Aboriginal’ as an anti-colonial naming convention. In elaborating my argument, I seek to define non-Aboriginality as a political strategy that identifies non-Aboriginal peoples’ relationship with Aboriginal Sovereignty in a dialogic relationship with Aboriginal people and their political aspirations. Thus, naming non-Aboriginality also positions those who actively self identify as non-Aboriginal in political contradistinction from those who continue to identify as ‘white’ Australian.

In elaborating this part of my argument, I firstly turn to the book Being Whitefella, a compendium of essays published in 1994 and edited by Duncan Graham. Specifically, I draw on contributions by Veronica Brady, Myrna Tonkinson and Ted Egan. Working from these texts, I argue that anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality must extend beyond the simple descriptors of black and white, thereby disrupting the discursive arrangements through which Aboriginality and non-Aboriginality are usually defined. I also argue that non-
Aboriginal belongings must be predicated on a knowledge of the unique relationship Aboriginal people have with their country. I caution that this knowledge should not be presumed to constitute evidence of our Indigenisation. Thus, I argue that anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality must be self-consciously located within a history of invasion and colonisation; identify the original ‘immigrant’ status of those who are the decedents of the initial invaders and also those who continue to share in the benefits of the original acts of colonisation and the ongoing dispossession of Aboriginal people.

As I progress my argument for anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality, I turn towards some of the literature produced by self-identifying Pakeha New Zealanders, specifically, the work of Michael King and Paul Spoonley. This literature is instructive because the debates around self-naming conventions for members of the colonising society in Aotearoa/New Zealand are more advanced than they are locally, and have played a significant role in influencing the limited literature produced in Australia (see for example, Duncan, 1994: 17-19; Tilbury, 2000). Although I only refer to King’s work in passing, it is important to recognise that his autobiographical text *Being Pakeha: An Encounter with New Zealand and Maori Resistance* (1985) is a seminal text in the field. With this acknowledgement given though, I note that my concern with King’s work lies in the fact he conceives ‘Pakeha’ as a new type of Indigenous identity (King, 1991: 19). Thus, his theoretical objectives are different to my own. Therefore, the theoretical thrust of my argument is informed by the work of Paul Spoonley, who configures Pakeha as a political identity that exists in relationship to Maori Sovereignty. By way of applying Spoonley’s analysis to the Australian context, I
draw on the work of Farida Tilbury, who, following from Spoonley, theorises Wadjula as a political identity in relationship with Nyungar Sovereignty. I then extrapolate on Tilbury’s argument to configure non-Aboriginality as a political identity, which, like pan-Aboriginality, collectivises the political identities of those non-Aboriginal Australians who affirm Aboriginal Sovereignty and construct their identities accordingly.

The process of surveying Aboriginal interventions into colonialist naming conventions is not straightforward. The epistemological violence colonialist naming conventions inflict on Aboriginal people, and their ways of self-knowing and articulation is such that it can be easier to identify discontinuity, rather than continuity, in the ways Aboriginal people respond to the imposition of these names. Given what we know about the etymology and application of names such as ‘Aborigine’, it is easy to agree with Brabazon when she writes “[t]he very terms ‘Aboriginal’ and ‘Aborigine’ are, in a way racist” because they constitute “[a] singular Aboriginal identity [that] was invented by European colonisers to control, define and dispossess a people” (2000: 54). However, I have also heard an old man demand to be referred to as an ‘Aborigine’ because, for him, it was preferable to the number, that people running the mission where he lived when he was young, used to identify him. Similarly, despite the increasing trend to refer to Aboriginal people as ‘Indigenous’, there are those who reject this new imposition. For example, the authors of Binaŋ Goonj: Bridging Cultures in Aboriginal Health explain:

Some will argue that the term ‘Aboriginal’ is ‘outdated’ and should be replaced with ‘Indigenous’. The Aboriginal co-authors of this text do not agree. They consider themselves Aboriginal people who are descendents of specific Aboriginal nations. They do not identify with the generic term
‘Indigenous’, although they recognise that it describes people across the world, who have strong ties with their land, were colonised and continue to follow cultural traditions different from those of the colonisers. Consequently, in Binay Goonj, the term ‘Aboriginal’ will continue to be used to identify the traditional owners of this country (Eckermann et al, 2006: ix).

In conversation, I have also heard others staunchly refuse the term ‘Indigenous’, insisting they are ‘not a tree’. Indigenous, in this context, represents a return to the bad old days of Aboriginal people being designated as part of the flora and fauna and must be resisted because of this. I have also heard similar arguments made about the term ‘native’. David Palmer also writes that in his experience, ‘Indigenous’ is a legalistic and bureaucratic term. Therefore, he uses the name ‘Aboriginal’ and other regionally specific names, because this is the way he hears Aboriginal people refer to themselves (1999: 31).

The purpose of the following discussion is not to suggest uniformity or consensus amongst Aboriginal people in the ways they make interventions into colonialist naming conventions. Rather, my purpose is to alert invader/settler peoples to conversations and processing of ideas and life experiences between and amongst Aboriginal people. In the following outline of this dialogue, I represent a chronology of ideas as they have been represented by Aboriginal people in some scholarly works. The examples I draw on highlight the shifting focus from critiques of those naming conventions as they are contrived and imposed through colonialist discourses, towards those more recent interventions that stand as overt statements of Aboriginal Sovereignty. The aim of this discussion is to provide a point of departure that underscores the comparative lack of dialogue between and amongst invader/settler peoples about making
equivalent interventions into our own self-naming conventions. Further to this, in drawing attention to those examples that speak to Aboriginal Sovereignty I seek to provide clear examples of the basis from which we can formulate and define our non-Aboriginality.

I begin this discussion with reference to the ways Jackie Huggins plays with the syntax of the word ‘Aborigine’, in her 1993 article, *Pretty Deadly Tidda Business*. Here, she makes the discretionary decision to use the word as both an adjective and a noun. She writes:

> My political statement and preference is for the term ‘Aboriginal’ as both noun and adjective. While it is grammatically correct to use ‘Aborigines’ as a noun these are playing to white people’s rules – the good Queen’s English. Are we therefore playing ‘their’ games to define ourselves? Is it better to be grammatically or politically correct? (Huggins, 1993: 71).

Underscoring her point, Huggins also writes Aboriginal and Black with a capital ‘A’ and ‘B’ respectively, while making the corresponding decision to spell Australian, European and white with a lower case ‘a’, ‘e’, and ‘w’ (as in australian, european and white). In explaining this decision, Huggins writes:

> I note that the Black American activist, Audre Lorde, has a distinctive consistent style in her spelling of america; ‘for to survive in the mouth of this dragon we call america we have to learn this first and most vital lesson – that we were never meant to survive’ (Sister Outsider, 42). This establishes a principle that while the oppressed are still the oppressed, the country in which they live has been nullified by the small ‘a’, thus rendering it less significant. This empowers the writer and in many, if not all, of my future works, I will be adopting her style as a political statement (1993: 70-71).

Similarly, Wendy Brady has employed Destiny Deacon’s notion of *Blak*, to subvert both the pejorative connotations associated with Blackness, as it is
constructed within colonialist paradigms, and essentialised notions of Aboriginality that rely on blackness for authenticity. As Brady writes:

Blak and Blakness denote specifically indigenous Bla(c)kness; you could say that Blakness is contextual – to do with being Black in Australia – Aboriginality plus history (Brady and Carey, 2000: 280).

Thus, it is my understanding that Blakness describes Aboriginality without describing ‘blackness’: The colour of one’s skin does not denote Aboriginality or Aboriginal culture, although it will inform the relationship Aboriginal people have with white Australia. Blakness then, as a self-referent, is a way of speaking back to this relationship. It is a way of claiming Blakness in defiance of the ways both blackness and whiteness are shaped and informed in colonialist discourses.

Others also work to subvert the homogenising effect of words such as ‘Aborigine’ by recasting it to represent ‘pan-Aboriginal’ interests. In an Australian context, the construction of pan-Aboriginality is an identity formation process that gained momentum during the 1970’s. The construction of pan-Aboriginality recognised that despite the regional, cultural and linguistic differences between Aboriginal people, it was possible and desirable to construct a political identity that galvanised the commonly shared experiences of colonisation and dispossession and demand social justice and land rights with a unified voice. Thus, pan-Aboriginality represents the mediation of personal and political identities that are products of pre-invasion and post-invasion cultures, the evolving nature of culture and its capacity for change in order to survive.

Simply, pan-Aboriginality, as it is articulated in this context, inverts the
colonisers’ labelling process to produce a powerful, unified political voice<sup>110</sup>. Similarly, pan-Aboriginality and/or Indigeneity collectivises first nations’ peoples political interests on a global level.

During the late 1980’s and early 1990’s there were local attempts to take the logic of pan-Aboriginality a step further by seeking out an Aboriginal word that collectively named Aboriginal people and distinguished them from other, non-Indigenous Australians. For example, Eve Fesl used the word, ‘Koorie’. Like the notion of ‘pan-Aboriginality’, Fesl intended ‘Koorie’ to express the collective interests of Indigenous peoples while still accommodating regional, geo-political names and modes of self-representation. Fesl explains this in her 1993 publication, *Conned!*

At the national level I see myself as a Koorie (which means “our people”), and I shall use Koorie in this national sense throughout this book to replace the label [Aborigine/Aboriginal]. When speaking of a specific group of Koorie people I shall use their name. (When speaking of the general area from which I come, I refer to myself as a Murrie; when I am with my father’s people I am a Gangulu; and I am Gubbi Gubbi when with my mother’s kin.) (1993: n.p.).

However, it seems that many Aboriginal people deemed a naming convention from the south-eastern parts of Australia as inappropriate and inaccurate and resisted this movement (see, for example, Egan, 1994: 77). Thus, it was short lived. It is more likely that Aboriginal people generally refer to themselves as Aboriginal or Indigenous or through their geo-political names. Most certainly, when many Aboriginal people make themselves known to each other they do so through their respective kinship groups and country.

<sup>110</sup> I would like to thank Denise Groves for her input into this understanding.
Indeed, these continuing naming practices (re)connect Indigenous people and communities to place, and in so doing, work to (re)state Indigenous realities, cosmologies, epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies as they are connected to the land and communicated by and through the people belonging to the land. For example, Collard et al (2004) use the notion of a ‘Nyungar Trilogy’ to explain the intricate relationship between boodjar (land), moort (family) and katitjin (knowledge) for Nyungar people. Further, the authors rely primarily on stories on and about Nyungar country as they are told by Nyungar elders and keepers of the stories and Nyungar language is also privileged over English. Although the authors note that colonial intervention in Nyungar language makes it difficult to represent the language variations amongst different Nyungar groups (2004: 12), the fact remains that privileging of Nyungar language enables them to retain as much control as possible over the meaning of their work. Indeed, as Linda Tuhiwai Smith writes, “for communities there are realities which can only be found in the indigenous language; the concepts which are self-evident in the indigenous language which can never be captured by another language” (2001: 157-158).

In a similar vein, Karen Martin/Booran Mirrabooka explains the connections between Quandamooka ways of knowing, being and doing as they are informed by her relationship to country, respect for her elders and commitment to cultural survival. She writes:

Our Ways of Doing are a synthesis and articulation of our Ways of Knowing and our Ways of Being. These are seen in our languages, art, imagery, technology, traditions and ceremonies, land management practices, social organisation and social control. Again, these are life stage, gender and role specific…Our Ways of Doing express our individual and group identities, and our individual and group roles. Our behaviour and
actions are a matter of our subsequent evolution and growth in our individual Ways of Knowing and Ways of Being. We become tangible proof of our ontology and its construction of our Ways of Being and Ways of Knowing. That is, we are able to show (Do), respectfully and rightfully (Being) what we know (Knowing). Although our worlds are now historically, socially and politically imbued with features of western worldviews and constructs, we never relinquished, nor lost the essence of, our ways of Knowing and ways of Being and this is reflected in our Ways of Doing (Martin/Mirrabooopa, 2003: 210-211).

A post-colonial analysis of Collard et al and Martin/Mirrabooopa encourages us to interpret Indigenous forms of self naming and knowing as examples of Indigenous people speaking 'back to the centre'; politicising Aboriginal existence, identity, needs and aspirations to the invader/settler group whose knowledge on and about Aboriginal people is otherwise informed by colonialist knowledge paradigms. Indeed, there is some truth in this. Such declarations challenge the presumption of white sovereignty by identifying Indigenous people as Sovereign people with Sovereign relationships with the land, which, in turn, comprises their ways of self-knowing, self-articulation and subject-hood.

However, I argue that an anti-colonial reading of such texts enables us to extend this analysis because it refuses compliance with the belief that colonialist knowledges constitute the centre. The impact of this is twofold: firstly, it enables a more profound understanding of the fact that Indigenous forms of self-knowing and naming are innate to the needs of Indigenous individuals and communities, and therefore serve a cultural function that is internal unto itself. Secondly, and in corollary to this, this radical displacing of that which constitutes the centre of knowledge production not only challenges colonialist knowledge paradigms, it fundamentally destabilises them by subverting the presumption that they should occupy the centred position. Karen Martin/Booran Mirrabooopa
alerts us to this when she argues that her Quandamooka forms of self-knowing informs her work practice in such a way that it constitutes more than just resistance to dominant modes of knowing. She writes:

My belief as an Aboriginal researcher is that I actively use the strength of my Aboriginal heritage and do not position myself in a reactive stance of resisting or opposing western research frameworks or ideologies. Therefore, I research from the strength and position of being Aboriginal and viewing anything western as ‘other’, alongside and among western worldviews and realities (Martin/Mirrabooopa, 2003: 205).

Thus, I argue that it is this recognition of ourselves, and our worldviews as Other in the context of Indigenous Sovereignty that underpins the reasons for naming ourselves non-Aboriginal. I argue that naming non-Aboriginality represents non-Aboriginal people speaking back to our own centre from a newly defined centre, that of Aboriginal Sovereignty. It is a naming process that distinguishes ‘us’ from ‘those’ other invader/settlers who do not claim their non-Aboriginal status.

In this sense then, non-Aboriginality problematises the initial us/them binary, forcing realignment between those living in Indigenous Sovereignty, and those who do not. As such, I argue that non-Aboriginal anti-colonial naming practices provide a way for members of the dominant group to define their political identity in such a way that it distinguishes them from the ideological affiliations of others within the dominant group. It communicates their critical engagement with, if not defiance of, dominant, white, nationalist, ideology and identity construction and realigns their political and ideological objectives with Aboriginal peoples’ political aspirations.
Defining the non-Aboriginal Subject:

Coming to think of yourself as a non-Aboriginal person is not a new idea, but it is an underdeveloped one. In 1994, Duncan Graham\textsuperscript{111} brought together 16 eminent Australians to discuss their self-conception and realisation as ‘whitefellas’ in a series of autobiographical essays. Inspired by Michael King’s work on \textit{Being Pakeha} (1985) and \textit{Pakeha Now} (1991), Graham asked the essayists to consider, amongst other things, their use of land; the self-naming of non-Aboriginal people; whitefella relations with Aboriginal people; and, whitefella representations of Aboriginal people and Aboriginality (1994: 21-22).

The generosity of the authors’ essays reflects the optimism and the political priorities of the early days of the reconciliation movement and a genuine desire for equitable relations between Aboriginal people and other Australians. Farida Tilbury’s analysis of the text also shares this understanding:

\begin{quote}
The book has an explicit agenda to promote understanding and reconciliation. It contains a recognition that what makes us distinctly Australian is our relationship with Indigenous people, and that other aspects of Australian identity which in the past have been more important, such as the myths of Gallipoli, mateship, the outback, our colonial and convict origins, and more recently, multiculturalism, are giving way to this more binary relational identity (2000: 81).
\end{quote}

The essays in \textit{Being Whitefella} are aspirational. They indicate a moment in time in the early 1990’s when some non-Aboriginal people were beginning to publicly ‘own’ white Australia’s history of the dispossession of Aboriginal people and make the first tentative steps to situate white Australian identity within this context. As such, the definitions given to being a whitefella reflected this.

Duncan Graham, in his Introduction to the text, defines whitefellas as “outsiders” and “alien” to Australia: our presence generating caution because “whitefellas

\textsuperscript{111} Duncan Graham is an Australian award-winning journalist.
too often mean trouble” (Graham, 1994: 23). One of the contributors, Veronica Brady\textsuperscript{112}, also makes the point that building a healthy, coexistent society means moving beyond “denial”, “guilt” and “confrontation” for the “offences of the past”, and moving to a place where non-Aboriginal Australians accept “culpability” and take responsibility for our shared history (Brady, 1994: 141-142). This, she argues, will enable us to envision a new place where identity is structured differently. She writes:

…the question of relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians is a matter of our recovering our sense of a world beyond ourselves. It means shifting out of the narrow confines of merely utilitarian values and a worldview based on struggle and survival, and moving into a larger sense of reality. The walls between us are real but they are not necessarily permanent (Brady, 1994: 144).

Myrna Tonkinson’s\textsuperscript{113} contribution takes a different tack. She alerts us to the fact that relationships between Aboriginal and invader/settlers are not merely relationships between black and white. An anthropologist of Afro-Caribbean decent, Tonkinson remembers with surprise her first experience working in Jigalong in 1974 (the Pilbara region of Western Australia) and being referred to by an angry Mardu man as a ‘Walyabala’ (whitefella) (Tonkinson, 1994: 162). In being designated as a walyabala, Tonkinson suggests that she was not so much having her colour observed by Mardu people (1994: 166), but rather her lack of cultural knowledge and the presumed privileges she had access to because she is not Aboriginal. As she explains:

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\textsuperscript{113} Myrna Tonkinson is an Honorary Research Fellow in Anthropology in the School of Social and Cultural Studies at the University of Western Australia. Her current research focuses on social trauma and its effects on identity, worldview, risk-taking and other aspects of the lives of Indigenous Australians. Tonkinson has worked among Indigenous people in the Western Desert since 1974.
Apart from such obvious differences in material conditions, being a ‘whitefella’ has other meanings. For the Jigalong Mardu, it implies a lack of cultural knowledge which renders most persons in that category unequipped to deal appropriately with certain situations. Being whitefella in Jigalong meant being protected, because of assumed ignorance, from the consequences of some actions and from many kinship obligations. It also excluded most outsiders from participation in the supremely important ritual life in the community. Those in the whitefella category were often assumed to have limitless access to resources and expected to be available at anytime to provide certain services such as medical assistance or dealing with the dead (Tonkinson, 1994: 167).

Unlike Graham, Tonkinson does not seem to experience the same sense of being an ‘outsider’, or being ‘alien’ to the Mardu people with whom she lived. While she acknowledges cultural difference, she, along with her husband (who had worked in Jigalong previously and has been given a place in the Mardu social structure) is welcomed and invited to share stories about her own country and her people. Indeed, this sharing of information is critical to developing meaningful diplomatic relationships between individuals and communities. What is more, when Tonkinson does, her stories are met with curiosity, compassion, generosity and empathy. As she writes:

…I was never able to persuade them that my skin colour signified any special link with them, although on other grounds, I developed many close relationships. One elderly man was visibly moved after my account of how my ancestors had been taken from Africa as slaves, forced to relinquish their language and traditions and work under brutal conditions. He concluded that I had suffered a great loss and should be taught as much as possible about his people’s culture as a kind of a compensation. However, I had no inkling of any shared oppression on his part (Tonkinson, 1994: 166).

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114 See page one of my Introduction.
115 As an aside, this account makes a useful juxtaposition to Greer’s story of being adopted by her Kulin sisters, being given a skin name and being taught how to hunt and so on. Greer capitalises on this generosity to substantiate her thesis that we should all become ‘Aboriginal’. In other words, her exploitation of this generosity is unashamedly and unreflectively self-serving. However, Tonkinson’s experience reminds me of the importance of Aboriginal networks of obligation and reciprocity and the efforts taken to incorporate and teach invader/settler peoples so that we may conduct ourselves in culturally appropriate ways in our relationships with Aboriginal people and in respect of their Sovereignty. These processes of intercultural learning are not so much evidence of white ‘aboriginalisation’, but rather, lessons in actualising our non-Aboriginality in culturally and politically useful ways.
Observations such as those offered by Graham, Brady and Tonkinson are important, and provide critical substance to what it means to be non-Aboriginal. In particular, Tonkinson’s analysis reminds us that meaningful relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people must be inclusive of those who are not decedents of the early invaders/settlers and therefore must transcend the usual boundaries demarcated by black and white. Dipesh Chakrabarty makes a similar point with reference to the reconciliation movement. He argues that too often reconciliation is cast “in terms of a black white conquest” and this dichotomy locks immigrants, or those who are “not the conquerors” out of reconciliation processes (2001: 7). Thus, he writes:

We now live in an Australia in which the Aboriginal, the descendent of the European settler, and the post-war immigrant are all present. Reconciliation – the acknowledgment of the special rights and situations of the First People – has to involve us all (Chakrabarty, 2001: 13).

However, I also argue that they do not go to the heart of thinking through self-naming practices as an opportunity to undermine the power relationships as they manifest between Aboriginal and the invader/settler community. This is revealed most clearly in Ted Egan’s contribution to Being Whitefella when he writes:

And what do we call ourselves? It’s a bit stupid referring to people other than Aboriginal people as ‘non-Aboriginal people’. I certainly don’t feel non-Aboriginal. Or ‘European’. I suppose ‘Aboriginal people and other Australians’ is okay. We don’t have any nationally accepted terms like Maori and Pakeha, and attempts in some quarters to impose words like ‘Koori’ on a national level are already bringing stern opposition from various Yolngu, Anangu, Wongais, Nungas, Noongars and Murrisol around the country who say, ‘Hang on, don’t call us Kooris’. Similarly the word to describe non-Aboriginal people is hard to achieve. We get called gubs, gubbas, murantawi and balanda, with gadiya being about the widest-spread

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term for whitefellas, but again, away from the particular regions where the terms apply, we can’t expect national acceptance…. Officially we can be referred to as Australians and they as Aboriginal Australians. Despite its colonial overtones, I just love the old New Guinea term whereby old hands were dubbed ‘Befores’ (1994: 77, emphasis added).

I suggest here that Egan’s response to non-Aboriginal self-naming practices typifies the post-colonial conundrum of validating Indigenous forms of self-knowing and naming and recognising, in corollary, that Indigenous people know and name us. The rub is, however, that while he is able to identify the ‘colonial overtones’ of New Guinea naming practices, he shows less insight when it comes to identifying and claiming the colonial overtones in our own self-naming practices, and indeed suggests that non-Aboriginality is a ‘stupid’ idea, unable to substantiate the feeling that presumably the name ‘Australian’ provides for him.

Taken at face value, I understand Egan’s point because a literal reading of the word ‘non’ communicates a deficiency in personal, cultural and national identity. Indeed, this is the view taken by New Zealand author and scholar, Michael King. In his contemplation on *Being Pakeha* (1991: 9-22) he writes:

> To me…[Pakeha] is the obvious word to describe…[us]. ‘New Zealand’ is too general a term, because there is not a single coherent culture that gives all New Zealanders a shared vision of themselves and their place in the world. ‘European’ is inadequate because…many of the things called Pakeha are several generations removed from Europe. ‘Caucasian’ is inaccurate and inappropriate. ‘Tauwiwi’ means a strange tribe or foreign race, aliens, a truly offensive term for people who have been here for over one hundred and fifty years. And ‘non-Maori’ is a negative definition, indicating what something is not, rather than what it is (King, 1991: 16, emphasis in the original).

However, I suggest that there are two critical problems associated with perceiving non-Aboriginality as a marker for cultural deficiency. Firstly, it establishes the preconditions necessary for justifying the appropriation of
Aboriginality, such as those discussed in the previous chapter. That is, it enables a logic whereby we imbue our ‘non’-Aboriginality with Aboriginality in order to provide our identity with cultural content.

Secondly, and notwithstanding the fact that in Australia we do not have an equivalent, nationally accepted term like ‘Pakeha’\textsuperscript{117}, I suggest that conceiving non-Aboriginality as lacking meaningful cultural content bears some similarity with broader understandings of whiteness as being culturally neutral. According to critical whiteness studies theorists, not only is white not culturally neutral, the presumption of neutrality is critically linked to the maintenance of power. That is, it is argued, if whiteness is neutral, then it must stand as a human norm to which others must comply, and the imperative to comply with whiteness is the articulation of white power. As Marcia Langton notes:

\begin{quote}
[t]here is no more powerful position than that of being ‘just’ human. The claim to power is the claim to speak for the commonality of humanity. Raced people can’t do that – they can only speak for their race. But non-raced people can, for they do not represent the interests of race (2001: online).
\end{quote}

Similarly, in Australia, there is no more powerful position than that of being ‘just Australian’. This is evidenced by the proliferation of hyperbolic references to ‘un-Australian-ness’, which have infiltrated Australian public discourse in recent times (McKay, 2005: online). Those who employ this discourse purport to defend the social, economic and moral interests of the nation. Consequently,

\begin{footnote}
\textsuperscript{117} One might assume however, that Graham’s use of the word ‘whitefella’ is an attempt to work within a distinctly Australian colloquial framework to forge a nationally accepted term for non-Aboriginal people. As to the etymology of the word, it is interesting to note that whitefella is not listed in the Australian Macquarie Dictionary Book of Slang (www.macquariedictionary.com.au accessed, 26.9.2005), nor is it listed in The Macquarie Concise Dictionary: Third Edition (1998). However, Eve Fesl notes that historically, the word whitefella was used by Koories (Aboriginal people) “who had no previous contact with European people” (1993: 21-22), but still had learnt enough of the English language and of the British to need a word to describe them.
\end{footnote}
those who find that their identities are not represented within the accepted construction of Australianness are estranged from its purview. One particular manifestation of the tension this produces amongst differently positioned migrant Australians are the Cronulla riots, In December, 2005. Wendy Brady writes with regard to this event:

At the end of 2005 there were race riots in Sydney in which mostly young men laid siege to beachside suburbs. It was a battle between the descendents of European colonisers proclaiming ‘Aussie rights’ and men of Arabic descent over who were the ‘real’ Australians. What saddened me most is that both groups are part of the Australian nation and neither could lay claim to being the first nations of this country. I know what it is to be an Aboriginal Australian and know that my ancestry goes back thousands of years, and they cannot see that they are part of an inheritance that dates back less than 220 years. This is a result of that common denial by the dominant society about what the history of British imperialism gave birth to: a nation founded by peoples without a common identity other than that of belonging to that make-believe state of being Australian (2006: 226).

In my early attempts to describe non-Aboriginality I defined “non-Indigenous/Aboriginal people as those belonging to the group of people who have migrated, or who are descendents of anyone who has migrated to Australia since 1788 and does not identify as Indigenous. The term non-Indigenous is not exclusive to white looking people. Rather the term refers to the millions of people who have benefited and continue to benefit (although some disproportionately to others) from the fact that we live in an invaded land.

I argue that identifying and claiming this ‘immigrant’ status is the first step to constructing anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality. Fundamentally, this necessitates constituting our Australian identities within the context of colonisation and the violent dispossession of Aboriginal people from their land. We are not, as our national mythology tells us, either ‘Aboriginal’ or ‘Native’ to
Australia. Moreover, non-Aboriginality does not rely on the physical presence of blackness and whiteness or need to be physically discernable. The term non-Aboriginal is therefore (and also) inclusive of those non-Aboriginal people whose ethnic and cultural origins are not ‘white’.

Thus, I argue that non-Aboriginality as a marker for identity is historically located within an understanding of colonial power relations and a profound awareness of their contemporary manifestations and implications for both Aboriginal people and ourselves. It is formed in relationship with Aboriginal people, in fulsome acknowledgment of their status as first nations’ peoples, and in support of their cultural and political objectives including formal and ongoing recognition of their Sovereignty. Non-Aboriginality is a political identity that recognises that non-Aboriginal people’s legitimate belonging in this country is necessarily conjoined with Aboriginal people achieving substantive human rights, land rights and social justice. It is through claiming our non-Aboriginality that the belongings of those who are decedents of the original invaders and settlers, and those who have arrived more recently and share in the benefits of the original invasion, may be negotiated.

In developing the case for non-Aboriginality as a political identity for non-Aboriginal Australians, I refer firstly to the work of Paul Spoonley, a Pakeha New Zealander scholar who problematises the politicisation of Pakeha identity in relationship with Maori New Zealanders. I then turn to the work of Farida Tilbury, who, inspired by Spoonley, configures Wadjula identity as a political identity in relationship with Nyungar people and land in the south-western region of Western Australia.
Before I begin this discussion however, I must note that both Spoonley and Tilbury situate their respective analyses within post-colonial frameworks. For Spoonley, the name ‘Pakeha’ signifies the dialectic relationship between Pakeha as the colonisers and Maori as the colonised. Thus, it represents a critical intervention by those “who have been the agents of colonialism and, who, once colonialism has lost its legitimacy, find themselves without strong ethical and ideological support” (1995: 97). In this ‘post-colonial’ context, Pakeha articulates the formation of an identity within new ethical and ideological frameworks; in relationship with Maori influences; and, which, holds at its core or its political commitment “a continuous engagement with the effects of colonial occupation” (1995: 97). Similarly, Tilbury writes the term post-colonial “is not necessarily an assertion that the colonial project is over”, but rather, “involves attempts to subvert that project by resisting hegemonic structures and ideologies which continue to oppress Indigenous peoples” (2000: 77). Naming the ‘Australian’ self as Wadjula constitutes such a subversion.

I have already offered my critique of post-colonialism in the Introduction, so I will not repeat it here. Suffice it to say that I regard Spoonley and Tilbury’s respective theses as complimentary to the broader anti-colonial intent of this project and incorporate their thinking into my work in this light. Indeed, I venture to say that both Spoonley and Tilbury’s work has more in common with anti-colonial frameworks as I have outlined them in my Introduction than they do to post-colonial paradigms as I understand them. I take this position because they both reveal a commitment to situating the subjectivities of the colonising group within Indigenous Sovereignty; undermining the hegemony of colonialist
ideology and the ways this informs relationships between Indigenous peoples and
ourselves; and acknowledge the importance of dialogic intersubjective and
intercultural relationships in reconstituting identities. Moreover, they both speak
to a vision whereby the settler ‘nation’, as it is constructed in continuum with
colonialist ideologies, is re-imagined within aspirations for its eventual
decolonisation.118

With this in mind, I must make one more caveat before I embark on this
discussion. That is, conversations involving the relationship between Pakeha and
Maori people in Aotearoa/New Zealand take place within a political context
where the ongoing recognition of the Treaty of Waitangi (signed between the
British and Maori in 1834) supports and informs an official policy of
biculturalism. While there continues to be some disputation between Maori and
Pakeha on how to interpret the Treaty, in principle it underpins a public and
political culture where matters of Sovereignty are discussed and the negotiation
partners within this dialogue are identified and named. It is necessary to refrain
from idealising the outcomes biculturalism produces for Maori people, but
notionally, the success of biculturalism depends “on the powerful giving up some
authority” (Brabazon, 2000: 52). Conversely, in Australia, there is no Treaty
between Aboriginal and the invader/settler community. While the High Court’s
1992 Mabo decision overturned the myth of terra nullius, arguably this has not
been converted into a general public awareness that Aboriginal people have not

118 I appreciate that Langton argues that actual decolonisation is unobtainable and my comments
on aspirations for decolonisation can be read as either a misunderstanding or an idealisation of
Langton’s position. However, I also note the optimism in Langton’s argument that “we can try
to find ways to undermine the colonial hegemony” (Langton, 1993: 8). It is my position that we
undertake this challenge because we ‘aspire’ to ‘decolonisation’, however unobtainable it may
actually be.
ceded Sovereignty or offered consent for invader/settler occupation of their lands. Moreover, in Australia, the official policy of multiculturalism valorises the diversity of Australia’s migrant communities and yet excludes awareness of Aboriginal peoples’ needs and agendas (see Vasta, 1996: 50-52; Hage, 1998: 24, Curthoys, 2000). Consequentially, some, such as Duncan Graham, query whether Australia should consider being “bicultural before becoming multicultural” (1994: 21). However, I argue that this question oversimplifies multifaceted issues. As Brabazon argues with reference to the New Zealand experience, biculturalism delineates complex social, cultural and political issues in terms of black and white, which, as I have already argued is a return to colonialist modes of identification. Further, she argues, that biculturalism “suggests that two monocultural societies are resident in a single, geographical entity” (2000: 52). Not only does this assume Maori unity in issues relating to Maori issues, it also means that New Zealand has been under-equipped to negotiate the cultural and social needs of newly arrived migrants and other disempowered groups within the New Zealand community (Brabazon, 2000: 63). However, Brabazon also concedes that to imbue biculturalism with multicultural sensibilities potentially undermines the unique status of Maori people, rendering them but another minority group within Aotearoa/New Zealand and deflecting “attention away from their claims to justice” (2000: 63).

Indeed, this is presumably what Graham is alluding to when he asks, “[c]an Aboriginal culture survive in a multicultural society?” (1994: 21). In response, I argue that the central problem with this question is its premise. What it fails to acknowledge is that Australia was a ‘multi-cultural country’ long before
multiculturalism became a policy devised to manage the diversity of migrant groups living in Australia. Thus, I argue that the resolution to this conundrum lies not in debating the various merits of one system of political, social and cultural administration over another, but acknowledging the fundamental fact of Aboriginal Sovereignty and constituting the identities of those who are not Aboriginal accordingly. One of the possible advantages to this is that it promotes the position from which non-Aboriginal people will negotiate a Treaty with Aboriginal people and devise the terms for our co-existence with them on their lands.

According to Spoonley, Pakeha is a contemporary process of identity formation, born out of the specific social and political milieu of 1980’s New Zealand. In part, adopting the name ‘Pakeha’ reflects the needs of those New Zealanders wanting to forge a unique, post-colonial identity that is neither British nor European, and acknowledges Maori influences. It is also a response by socially liberal, middle-class New Zealanders to the nationalist and “populist authoritarianism” of the Muldoon era, and is consistent with the socially progressive politics of the anti-war and green movements of the 1980’s. Finally, it is a political counter-point to the new politics of Maori identity that emerged at the time. Pakeha, as a political identity recognises, that in the politics of biculturalism, it is necessary to name a cultural and political identity that speaks to and galvanises the cultural and political objectives of those who seek to negotiate genuine post-colonial relations with Maori people.
As a naming convention, ‘Pakeha’ relocates processes of identity development in two key ways. Firstly, it insists that post-colonial identities be discursively positioned away from old colonialist/New Zealand paradigms and within Maori/Aotearoa paradigms. Thus, it is significant that Pakeha is a Maori word\footnote{Pakeha is a Maori term, however its precise meaning is unknown (King, 1991: 15-16).}. Drawing on Yeatman, Spoonley argues:

It [Pakeha] is the term of the colonized for the colonizers. Thus its reclamation by the postcolonial colonizers is indeed a political act…reclamation signals the decision of members of the dominant/oppressor group to give ethical and political support to the postcolonial struggles of the colonized Maori. When members of a dominant group accept that they are racially and ethnically specified within a specific context of relations they are demonstrating that preparedness to give up privilege as the unmarked term. Of course, this positions them in opposition to their fellows who do no want to give up this privilege (Yeatman, c.f. Spoonley, 1995: 98).

Secondly, Spoonley argues, naming Pakeha identity responds to the post-modern imperative to centre and deconstruct traditional processes of identity formation (such as class and ethnicity), by insisting on the construction and recentring of identity politics within a new post-colonial discursive paradigm. I argue that this observation resonates with one of my salient concerns with whiteness studies. While the deconstruction of whiteness enables the dissection of various manifestations of power, it offers little for those who seek to recast their identities in ways that are politically and syncretically co-existent with the political identities and objectives of others; in this case, first nations’ peoples. Thus, as Spoonley argues, innovative processes of identity development, such as Pakeha, open up new political spaces for exploration.
For Spoonley, the political advantages to naming oneself Pakeha are threefold: In the first instance, self-identification as Pakeha inspires greater self-reflection and examination of personal agency in transforming the pre-existing social, economic and political order. Secondly, it creates a new political space for mutual recognition amongst self-identifying Pakeha and the basis for political collectivisation and action. Thirdly, this collective political action is critically interconnected with Maori political objectives. As Spoonley writes:

[Pakeha is] a contemporary identity that has been formed by interaction with iwi and a sympathy for their aspirations. It is an identity informed by an understanding of both iwi histories and a self-aware and self-critical appreciation of the ethnic history of Pakeha. The significance of this position is that it affirms the centrality of biculturalism and the ambition of tino rangatiratanga for iwi…. Pakeha, in their affirmation of Maori autonomy and the critical nature of such autonomy for a reordering of national priorities, can help transform the political agenda and culture of Aotearoa. It serves to emphasise the interconnectedness of Maori/iwi and Pakeha as well as constitute a basis for an equitable system (1995: 105 and 111).


By way of explanation, it is firstly worth noting that the word ‘Wadjula’ is a Nyungar transliteration of the word ‘whitefella’ and is the name by which Nyungar people (the Sovereign people of south-west Western Australia) know white people. As Tilbury explains, there are a small but growing number of people in this region who actively self-identify as Wadjula. Usually, those who do have inter-personal relationships with Nyungar people and share a

As a political statement, declaring oneself as Wadjula works on a number of critically interdependent levels. Firstly, it locates the construction and naming of identity squarely within Nyungar Sovereignty. On one hand, this signals an active disengagement with colonialist naming conventions and their propensity to homogenise discrete groups of Aboriginal people. Being Wadjula identifies a relationship with Nyungar people as Wadjulas as opposed to a relationship with ‘Aborigines’ as Australians. Thus, just as Pakeha demarcates a relationship with Maori in Aotearoa, Wadjula asserts non-Aboriginal peoples’ “interdependence with Indigenous people” within this specific region (Tilbury, 2000: 80).

Secondly, being Wadjula disrupts uncritical belief in white nationalism and the colonialist knowledge paradigms and mythologies that maintain them. Critical to this is a profound commitment to undermine the prevailing logic of terra nullius. In this context, being Wadjula means “[t]erra nullius becomes terra Nyungar, and we become Wadjula in relation to this land and those people” (Tilbury, 2000: 87, emphasis in the original). Thus, in corollary, being Wadjula locates the formation of white Australian identity within a history of Aboriginal dispossession and ongoing physical, epistemological and ontological violence. Moreover, it signals personal non-compliance with the nationalist imperative to dis-remember that violence and makes a clear distinction between those who choose to persist in the active denial that this violence exists (which is, of course, a critical element of the ongoing violence committed against Aboriginal people).
In short, it designates a group of people “with a particular politics and vision for the future of race relations in this country” (Tilbury, 2000: 85) that is radically different from what we currently have.

Thirdly, the name ‘Wadjula’ valorises Nyungar language and epistemologies of the Wadjula Other over and above the colonialist knowledges of the Self and Other we produce within our own “imperial language” and ideological paradigms, for our own purposes. This demonstrates a cognisance that the ‘gaze is returned’ from Nyungar people towards Wadjulas. Implied in this is a recognition of Aboriginal people as Sovereign subjects (as opposed to colonised ‘objects’), and it is within this intersubjective and intercultural relationship that Wadjula is constructed. This radical decentring of the ways non-Aboriginality is conceived is consistent with the anti-colonial paradigm for identity construction that I advocate.

Finally, because Wadjula is a political identity constructed within a “set of beliefs and practices in relation to the Indigenous people” (Tilbury, 2000: 85), it is not dependent on whiteness, “bloodlines”, ethnicity or cultural identity in order to have political substance. Rather, it serves as a basis upon which Wadjulas can mutually identify and collectivise. Through this, Wadjulas can “convince others of the importance of recognising Indigenous claims and…play a crucial role in transforming the political agenda” (Tilbury, 2000: 85).

Tilbury’s understanding of Wadjula self-naming illuminates my conceptualisation of non-Aboriginality in that it clearly places the construction of
non-Aboriginality within Indigenous Sovereignty, and in dialogue with
Aboriginal people’s cultural and political objectives. Indeed, I must concede that
to some extent she extends my analysis, because she identifies the significance of
naming non-Aboriginal identities within specific geo-political regions as they are
known and named by Aboriginal (in this case, Nyungar) people. In so doing, she
subverts both the political and discursive dynamic that is in play when we refer
to ourselves as ‘Australians’ and Indigenous people as ‘Aborigines’ or
‘Indigenous’. As she writes, “The move from Australian to Wadjula identity is
one from pan-nation/state identity, an identity which leaves out Indigenous
people entirely, to naming ourselves in relation not just to ‘Aborigine’ as ‘other’,
but to the particular language group on whose land we reside” (2000: 86). The
radical recentering of the process of identity formation for non-Aboriginal people
is anti-colonial because it unequivocally rejects the colonialist logic of terra
nullius and affirms the construction of non-Aboriginal identities within the locus
of this specific geo-political Aboriginal group: Nyungars.

I also argue, however, that Tilbury’s argument does not mitigate the anti-colonial
possibilities that arise out of self-identifying as non-Aboriginal. As we have
seen, Aboriginal people problematise the use, meaning, syntax, spelling and
applicability of words such as ‘Aborigine’ and ‘Indigenous’ all the time. Even
though these problematisations are not overtly cast as anti-colonial, they are
‘anti-colonial’ in the sense that they do not subscribe to, or offer consent for, the
original colonial meanings. Rather, they work as collective nouns demarcating
shared historical and contemporary experiences, worldviews and political
interests that are not white Australian. They have spoken, and continue to speak, against the ongoing exercise of colonial power relations in Australia.

By stark contrast, equivalent non-Aboriginal engagement with non-Aboriginality is practically non-existent. In everyday terms, ‘non-Aboriginal’ passively denotes one who is not Aboriginal. It is in this context that I argue that we make our own critical interventions and recast our non-Aboriginality as an overtly political, anti-colonial marker for identity.

Therefore, I argue that just as pan-Aboriginality does not negate regional, geopolitical Aboriginal identities, pan-non-Aboriginality provides an umbrella discourse for multiple expressions of anti-colonial non-Aboriginality on a national level. It is a way of unifying non-Aboriginalities as they stand in relationship with distinct geopolitical Aboriginal groups and in contradistinction to notions of the white Australian. Just as there is political value in pan-Aboriginality, there is political value in pan-non-Aboriginality. To put it simply, there is strength in numbers.

**Conclusion:**

In this chapter, I have argued creating the non-Aboriginal subject is an integrated three part process involving recognising an ontology of non-Aboriginality; naming the non-Aboriginal self as ‘non-Aboriginal’; and, defining non-Aboriginality as political identity formed in the locus of Aboriginal Sovereignty.
In making a case for recognising an ontology of non-Aboriginal, I contrasted Homi Bhabha’s third space with Marcia Langton’s third domain. While I argued Bhabha’s working of the third space alerts us to the importance of recognising difference over diversity and conceding our investment in the ‘sovereign self’, I also argued application of the third space in the Australian context is limited because of its commitment to hybridity and because it privileges the migrant experience vis-à-vis the colonial centre. In contradistinction, Langton’s third domain promotes dialogic relationships between Aboriginal people and members of the invader/settler community. Therefore, the third domain also enables identity formation processes in the locus of Aboriginal Sovereignty.

By way of elaborating my understanding of an ontology of non-Aboriginality I also provided an autobiographical account of how I came to learn my own non-Aboriginality.

In developing my argument for naming non-Aboriginality, I provided examples of some of the interventions Aboriginal people have made into colonial naming practices. I argued a post-colonial analysis suggests Aboriginal interventions into these naming conventions are a marginal claim for self-identity vis-à-vis the colonial centre. However, an anti-colonial analysis enables Aboriginal self-naming to be understood as a declaration of Sovereign subjecthood. Naming non-Aboriginality in this context constitutes an affirmation of this declaration and a relational repositioning of invader/settler naming conventions that support the authority of the colonial centre. The name ‘white’ is one example of this.
Finally, in order to define non-Aboriginality, I drew on the work of Paul Spoonley who problematises Pakeha identity in relationship to Maori Sovereignty, and Farida Tilbury who works with Wadjula identity in relationship to Nyungar Sovereignty. I argued non-Aboriginality is a political identity, formed in dialogue with Aboriginal people and rejects other nomenclature for identity such as race and colour. I argued non-Aboriginality is constituted within a history of colonisation and speaks to the responsibilities invader/settler Australians have to Aboriginal people. Non-Aboriginality articulates support for Aboriginal sovereign claims, social justice and self-determination. As the Mirrawoong author and scholar, Stephen Kinnane reminds us:

[we] are asking non-Indigenous peoples to do no less than we do everyday, consider where we are from, who we belong to, what is our history, how…we negotiate our pasts into our future, and always, to recognise who speaks for which country. Just as there are Indigenous countries in the civic state of Australia, there are desires that a more just and meaningful relationship between the older and newer structures be negotiated (Kinnane, 2002: n.p).
Conclusion

On the 19th of September 2006, the Nyungar people of Western Australia won recognition of their Native Title in Perth. Justice Wilcox handed down the decision in the Australian Federal Court. Although the recognition of Nyungar Native Title cannot be confused with the recognition of Nyungar Sovereignty, Nyungar people are the first Native Title claimants to have their Native Title recognised in an Australian metropolis.

The Nyungar peoples’ success brought about the predictable hyperbolic backlash from many Australians. Both the Western Australian and Federal Governments seek to appeal Justice Wilcox’s decision in the Australian High Court. Despite Justice Wilcox’s assurances that no one would ‘lose their backyards’ (a familiar refrain amongst Australians whenever Aboriginal people have their Native Title acknowledged), media outlets queried the impact of the decision on property values in Perth (the Perth real estate market has experienced unprecedented growth over the last couple of years because of the mining boom). Various media outlets gave credence to the specious claim, put forward by politicians from both political parties, that West Australians would have to pay for access to public spaces such as parks and beaches. In fact, section 212 (2) of the Native Title Act gives provision for State Governments to make laws protecting public access to public areas. In the 1990’s, the Western Australian State Government “enacted legislation which specifically guaranteed public access to beaches, parks, open spaces, river banks” (Insight transcript, October, 2006, accessed 20.12. 2006).
On the 31st of October, SBS’s *Insight* program, a discussion based current affairs show, broadcast a special on the Nyungar peoples’ victory. The program gathered a forum of interested parties including Nyungar Native Title claimants (Ted and Richard Wilkes and Dolcie Donaldson amongst others); the Federal Attorney General, Philip Ruddock; Graeme Neate, President of the National Native Title Tribunal; the Nyungar human rights lawyer, Hannah McGlade; Warren Mundine, the Federal President of the Australian Labor party; Eric Ripper, the Deputy Premier of Western Australia; Ross Lightfoot, Liberal Senator for Western Australia; Laura Longley; and, Glen Kelly and Ted Hart from the South-West Land and Sea Council in Western Australia.

Representatives for the Yugambeh people (Queensland) who are claiming Native Title in Surfers Paradise and the Gold Coast were also present.

The ensuing conversation was wide ranging. The program’s host, Jenny Brockie, sought clarification on the difference between Native Title and land-rights; the emotional and political significance of Native Title to Nyungar people; the impact of Native Title recognition for mainstream Australia; the imperative for State and Federal Governments to negotiate with Nyungar people; the significance of the Yorta Yorta\(^\text{120}\) case in interpreting Justice Wilcox’s decision and Native Title generally; the dynamism of Nyungar culture; Nyungar resistance to white invasion/settlement since 1829; the bearing Justice Wilcox’s decision will have on the Yugambeh peoples’ claim in Queensland; the impact of Native Title on economic development in areas such as mining and tourism;

\(^{120}\) The Yorta Yorta people were unable to achieve recognition of their Native Title because it was determined that the impact of colonisation was such they were unable to satisfy the criteria that they had ongoing connection to the land. Subsequent to this Native Title ruling, the Yorta Yorta people have negotiated with the Victorian State Government to have their Native Title recognised under the *Victorian Heritage Act*. 

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financial compensation to Aboriginal people for loss of land; the expediency of exploiting mainstream anti-Aboriginal sentiment for political gain; and the relationship between universal citizenship rights and Aboriginal peoples’ Native Title rights. In the course of the discussion, one non-Aboriginal woman (unnamed), towards the back row, spoke up. She said:

I am a Wadjula\textsuperscript{121} woman like the woman who’s been speaking there who fears her citizenship. I want to live in a country and be a citizen in a country that’s really fair and just. I was not fearful with the native title claim. I was delighted because I felt for a chance now Noongar people can negotiate in an equal way. So I have no fear. And I actually also think that given the richness I have got from the dispossession of Aboriginal people, if there is a compensation claim then I am willing for that to happen as well \textit{(Insight transcript, October, 2006, accessed 20.12. 2006)}.

I draw attention to this quote to make the point that declaring one’s own non-Aboriginal (Wadjula) identity may not be a mainstream idea, but occasionally it is an idea that makes its way into the mainstream. This woman’s declaration, in the context of this forum discussion, serves to distinguish her identity and political priorities away from those other Australians who resist and deny Aboriginal claims to justice. Rather, declaring a Wadjula (non-Aboriginal) identity works to support Nyungar (Aboriginal) political interests and social justice objectives in the face of mainstream antipathy and hostility. While this woman articulated a minority opinion and occupied a small amount of time in the overall discussion, she never the less revealed an important third alternative to the anticipated, dichotomised positions between Aboriginal and invader/settler people.

\textsuperscript{121} In the SBS transcript of this program, ellipses appear where the woman says ‘Wadjula’. It is possible that the person doing the transcription was not familiar with the word or it’s spelling. However, I have watched this program and the woman clearly says ‘Wadjula’.
In this thesis, I have argued that claiming non-Aboriginality is a process of identity development formed in profound recognition of being in Indigenous Sovereignty. Identifying as non-Aboriginal is an innately political act. Claiming non-Aboriginality forces a distinction between Australians who continue to invest in the power of their white sovereignty and those who seek an alternative path. I have argued that claiming non-Aboriginality is integral to achieving substantive reconciliation between Aboriginal and invader/settler peoples.

In this thesis, I have situated my argument for non-Aboriginality as a response to recent work in critical whiteness studies and post-colonial ‘belongings’ in invader/settler societies. I have drawn a connection between these two fields of scholarship to underscore the importance of whiteness to achieving belonging in Australia. I have argued both fields of scholarship continue to operate within, and support colonialist paradigms, and this in turn, perpetuates the relationship between whiteness and belonging in Australia.

In Chapter Two, I oriented my critique of critical whiteness studies around New Race Abolitionism, specifically the work of John Garvey and Noel Ignatiev. I argued hitherto there has been little critical engagement with the New Race Abolitionists from an Australian perspective, and given the influence of American scholarship (including New Race Abolitionism) in Australia, substantive critical engagement was necessary. In my discussion, I identified one of the strengths of Abolitionism is that it makes critical interconnections between the study of whiteness and anti-whiteness activism. In acknowledging this unique feature of Abolitionism I was able to place my political position and subjectivity
within the framework of this thesis. I recognise the personal (and political) reasons New Race Abolitionism might appeal to those of us who define our political positions as ‘left’ of centre, and find their radical methodology for social change seductive. However, in my analysis, I identified serious limitations with the Abolitionist doctrine. I have argued against the New Race Abolitionists proposal that whites should ‘cross over’ into blackness, claiming this misguided expression of political solidarity is an act of power; a (re)colonisation of the black body that keeps the epistemological centredness of whiteness in play. The means by which this occurs are through universalising the definition of whiteness, thus conflating the exercise of ‘strategic whiteness’ with the successful assimilation of Aboriginal people and concealing the effects of cultural racism on ‘cosmetically white’ Aboriginal people. Further, I have argued that crossing over from whiteness into blackness dissociates whiteness from historical memory and context. I argued this ahistoricity is at odds with the foundational objectives of reconciliation and my proposal for substantive reconciliation. Moreover, it supports the neo-colonial objectives of ‘practical reconciliation’. Finally, I argued against the proposal that Abolitionists should form strategic alliances with pro-whiteness and race hate organisations, asserting this is at odds with the anti-colonial intent of this thesis. I argued such alliances profoundly jeopardise intersubjective and intercultural dialogues between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and shifts the locus of political activism and identity formation away from Aboriginal Sovereignty towards those who would see violence committed against Aboriginal people for their own political gain.
In Chapter Three, I focused my discussion on belonging with reference to five pivotal texts. They were, Germaine Greer’s *Whitefella jump Up: The Shortest Way to Nationhood* (2003); Anthony Moran’s *As Australia Decolonizes: Indigenizing Settler Nationalism and the Challenges of Settler Indigenous Relations* (2002); David Tacey’s *Edge of the Sacred: Transformations in Australia* (1998a); and, John Moloney’s *The Native Born: The First White Australians* (2000). In this chapter, my primary concern was to deconstruct the ways Indigeneity and/or Aboriginality are appropriated into white Australian national identity formation processes. In developing my argument, I argued there are polarised positions between those who advocate an ‘Aboriginalisation’ of white Australian identity, and those who warn against the (re)colonisation of Aboriginal identity so that settler belongings can be assured. In the ‘cut and thrust’ of this debate, Aboriginal people are positioned as pre-colonial, traditional and primordial beings. They have also been positioned as the barrier to settler belongings. I argued such positionings of Aboriginal people function as a discursive mechanism through which invader/settler Australians deny the violence of colonisation and dispossession of Aboriginal people. Further, I argued this denial is made possible by the appropriation of Aboriginality which in turn enables the appropriation of Aboriginal dispossession by invader/settler Australians. In a gross inversion of colonial history, this then positions Aboriginal people as the dispossessors of the invaders. Moreover, this substantiates the need for settler belongings and validates the allegorical co-option of the primordial native as a means to legitimise invader/settler belongings through original, permanent and ongoing connection to place.
My argument for anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality constitutes a disruption to the relationship between whiteness and belonging, and suggests that non-Aboriginal belongings must be predicated on alternative, anti-colonial criteria that are formed and operate in dialogue with Aboriginal people as Sovereign peoples and simultaneously undermines the colonialist imperative for ‘white sovereignty’. As an anti-colonial process of identity development, non-Aboriginality works to support the cultural, social justice and human rights objectives of Aboriginal people.

In this thesis, I have cast my argument for the creation of the non-Aboriginal subject within an anti-colonial framework. In so doing, I have made specific reference to Marcia Langton’s (1993) argument that anti-colonial representations of Aboriginality in film and television are constructed out of meaningful dialogic relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. I have extrapolated on Langton’s position to argue that anti-colonial constructions of non-Aboriginality are similarly created out of dialogic relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, in the context of Aboriginal Sovereignty.

My preference for anti-colonialism is offered in juxtaposition to post-colonial theorisations of Indigenous and invader/settler relations and processes of identity development. Throughout this project I have acknowledged the importance of some post-colonial work to the development of this thesis. In my Introduction Edward Said’s (1985) seminal text *Orientalism*, forms the backdrop to the direction of my argument, and leads to my critique of Bain Attwood’s (1992) Aboriginalism/post-Aboriginalism. In Chapter Three, Terry Goldie’s (1997)

In broad terms I have argued that post-colonialism is conservative and divisive and alienates many Aboriginal people who reject the idea that Australia can be described as a post-colonial nation. I have also argued the paradigmatic structure of post-colonialism insists that Aboriginal people speak from the periphery, thereby maintaining the centredness of colonialisit epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies. Thus, I argue the solipsism of post-colonialism is that while it professes to embrace the challenge Indigenous worldviews and life experiences pose, it simultaneously works to hold these challenges at bay. Therefore, my preference for anti-colonialism is that it positions Indigenous views, knowledge and experiences at the centre of epistemological, ontological and axiological development (Rigney, 1999). I have argued this in turn repositions non-Indigenous epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies in relationship to this (newly) defined centre. Non-Aboriginality then, is a mode of self-identification born out of this (new) site of identity construction, in dialogue with Aboriginal people as Sovereign subjects.

I developed my argument for the construction of non-Aboriginality in Chapter Four. Here, I argued the creation of the non-Aboriginal subject is an integrated
three-part process, including recognising an ontology of non-Aboriginality; naming the ontological experience as ‘non-Aboriginal’; and defining non-Aboriginality as a political identity constructed in commitment to achieving an anti-colonial process of identity development. The first part of my discussion drew a distinction between Homi Bhabha’s ‘third space’ and Marcia Langton’s ‘third domain’. I argued Bhabha’s third space focuses on the relationship migrant and diasporic communities have with the colonial centre, whilst Langton’s third domain allows for situating the construction of non-Aboriginality within the locus of Aboriginal Sovereignty. I supported this claim with reference to Ian Anderson’s critique of hybridity and Aileen Moreton-Robinson’s working on Aboriginal belongings as an ontological relationship with land. I also argued recognising an ontology of non-Aboriginality brings with it ethical obligations to work towards developing a discourse of non-Aboriginality and non-Aboriginal peoples’ relationship with Aboriginal Sovereignty. In elaborating this point, I provided an autobiographical account of how I came to understand my own non-Aboriginality, and connected the idea of ‘transformation’ with Levinas’ notion of ‘transcendence’. I argued ‘non-Aboriginality’ identifies the alterity of the non-Aboriginal subject in relationship to Aboriginal people as Sovereign subjects.

Finally, in making my case for naming and defining non-Aboriginality, I drew on examples of Aboriginal interventions into colonialist naming practices and argued similar interventions were required from other Australians. In defining non-Aboriginality as a political identity, I drew on examples from Aotearoa/New Zealand, where there is a corpus of work problematising Pakeha identity in relationship to Maori identity. Paul Spoonley’s work was particularly instructive
here, as was Farida Tilbury’s, which draws on Spoonley, to theorise Wadjula
identity in relationship with Nyungar Sovereignty. In positioning non-
Aboriginality as a political identity I have rejected colonialist modes of
identification that are dependent on false taxonomies such as black and white. I
have also argued that just as ‘Aboriginality’ is historically constituted, ‘non-
Aboriginality’ acknowledges both the ‘immigrant’ status of non-Aboriginal
people and the dispossession of Aboriginal people through invasion of their lands
and the colonisation of their bodies. Non-Aboriginality affirms our ethical
obligations in establishing the terms of our co-existence with Aboriginal people
in dialogue with them, and that our legitimate belonging is contingent upon all of
the above occurring.

The coda to this project is the documentary Whitefellas and Wadjulas. In the
spirit of ‘yarning’ I offer this documentary as an example of some of the ways a
group of non-Aboriginal people talk about the importance of being whitefellas.
The documentary is a contribution to a dialogue I hope more whitefellas take part
in, both between ourselves, and importantly, with Aboriginal people.
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**The Documentary**

**Interviews:**

Camilla Cowley, Brisbane, November 2005
Christine Donaldson, Perth, 2005

**Music**

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**Sound Effects**

