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Globalisation and Critical Whiteness Studies: An Examination of 'White' Identity Construction in the Locus of Indigenous Sovereignty

Abstract

In this discussion, I engage with the globalisation of critical whiteness studies, and ask how it informs notions of the white self in relationship to Indigenous sovereignty. I focus my discussion on one particular 'branch' of the critical whiteness studies movement: the American-based New Race Abolitionists. The New Race Abolitionists provide an interesting case study because they purport to employ a radical methodology for social change. I argue that the Abolitionists' modus operandi functions within a particular discursive paradigm that, when translated to an Australian context, enables the denial of the epistemic and physical violence of colonisation, and the place of non-Aboriginal people within this history of colonisation.

Introduction

In this discussion, I engage with the globalisation of critical whiteness studies, and ask how it informs notions of the white self in relationship to Indigenous sovereignty. It is generally understood that the significant contribution of whiteness studies to race studies and other modes of ethnographic inquiry is that it has exposed the supposed normativity of whiteness as an expression of its power. Naming whiteness, it is said, locates 'white' within the lexicon of racialised identity and enables important analytical connections to be made between personal identity, national identity, and colonial/neo-colonial power relations (Carey 2008, pp. 47-49). Notwithstanding the importance of this contribution, the salient critique of critical whiteness studies is just that: it is the *study* of whiteness; and the nexus between anti-whiteness theory and praxis is largely unresolved (Flores & Moon 2000, p. 99).

The American-based New Race Abolitionist movement is one notable exception to this. The New Race Abolitionists maintain that the social constructedness of whiteness means it can be deconstructed (literally abolished) through individual acts

of non-compliance with the power of whiteness. It is because the Abolitionists take this unique position I use them as a case study for this discussion. It is precisely because they theorise and promote a methodology for anti-whiteness struggle that they exemplify and make vivid my concerns regarding the globalisation of critical whiteness studies. I argue that the Abolitionists' modus operandi functions within a particular discursive paradigm that, when translated to an Australian context, enables the denial of the epistemic and physical violence of colonisation, and the place of non-Aboriginal people within this history of colonisation[i].

It is my contention that, should white identifying members of the Australian settler society subscribe to the Abolitionist manifesto, they prioritise dialogue with white identifying people, thus sanctioning the primacy of white sovereignty. This is antithetical to significant anti-colonial dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples held in the locus of Indigenous sovereignty. It is my view that one important feature of dialogic relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people is that they enable non-Indigenous people to support Indigenous desires for processes of decolonisation (Carey 2008).

I begin my discussion with an overview of critical whiteness studies and the significance of some Australian scholars' contribution to this field of inquiry. Particular reference is made to the work of Geonpul academic Aileen Moreton-Robinson, and the non-Indigenous scholar Fiona Nicholl, as I explore the interconnections between whiteness, white sovereignty and Indigenous sovereignty. I then provide a précis of the New Race Abolitionist position. Specifically, I focus on the Abolitionists' notion of 'crossing over' from whiteness to blackness. This symbolic manoeuvre in political identification ostensibly obfuscates the boundaries between whiteness and blackness, and expresses political support for blackness. I also outline the New Race Abolitionist rejection of liberal anti-racism and multiculturalism, in favour of strategic political alliances with race hate and militia organisations.

I elaborate my critique of the New Race Abolitionists in three stages. First, I consider the implications of crossing over for Indigenous people. I argue crossing over is ahistoric, and keeps alive the ideological structures that justified the oppression of

Indigenous people. In corollary, I argue crossing over undermines the multifarious ways Indigenous people negotiate and mitigate the presence of whiteness in their lives. Second, I explore the implications of crossing over for non-Indigenous people. I argue crossing over promotes a process of political identification that eludes recognition of non-Indigenous peoples' place in a history of colonisation, and therefore feeds into the well-established, highly permeable discourse of denial employed by settler societies when confronted with the legacies of colonisation. By way of illustrating this point, I identify resonances between crossing over and the neo-colonial logic underpinning 'practical reconciliation', as it was promulgated by the Liberal Howard Government (1996-2007). Finally, I turn my attention to strategic alliances with race hate organisations. Drawing on Hannah McGlade's analysis of the rise of Pauline Hanson and her One Nation Party and the increase in racist violence experienced by Indigenous Australians, I argue that any such strategic alliances condone the activities of race hate organisations and their ongoing violence towards Indigenous people. Unsurprisingly, this violence is understood by Indigenous people to be within the continuum of the violence of colonisation (McGlade 2000).

Whiteness, white sovereignty and Indigenous sovereignty

When I speak of the 'globalisation' of critical whiteness studies, my intention is to draw attention to its epistemological origins and the pervasiveness of a theoretical framework that is primarily concerned with the relationship between 'white' and 'black'. The transportability of critical whiteness studies is that the epistemological foundation, the relationship between white and black, is able to be re-imagined and re-applied in a variety of contexts where the physical presence of whiteness and blackness exist. This is irrespective of whether we are talking about histories of slavery, non-white immigrant communities, colonisation, or relationships between settler societies and Indigenous people. Although it can be argued that these different applications and permutations of critical whiteness studies are indicative of how dynamic this field of inquiry is, I argue that these divergences are indicative of the colonising impulse manifesting within its own epistemological paradigm.

Critical whiteness studies have their origins in the United States (Moreton-Robinson 2004, pp. vii-viii). In the past, I have argued that, because of their origins, whiteness studies have predominantly focused on the relationship between white race

dominance and African-Americans. Therefore, they have not adequately problematised the relationship between whiteness/non-Indigeneity and blackness/Indigeneity (Brady & Carey 2000). In 2004, the Geonpul academic Aileen Moreton-Robinson made a similar observation:

> …the problem with American literature is that it tends to locate race and whiteness with the development of slavery and immigration, rather than the dispossession of Native Americans and colonisation. This is because there is a refusal within the American work to acknowledge America as a former colony of Britain; instead, the focus is on its independence as a nation. In the former mother country, the emerging British scholarship positions whiteness in terms of the reconfigurations of class, popular culture and non-white migration (2004, p. viii).

One of the significant contributions Australian scholars have made to the field of critical whiteness studies is the problematisation of the whiteness of settler societies in relation to Indigenous people, contextualised within a history of colonisation (see Moreton-Robinson 1998, 2000, 2004; Nicholl 2000, 2004a, 2004b). Further nuance is brought to this corpus of work with the observation that the distinction needs to be made between postcolonising societies where the colonisers have 'gone home' and those where the settler society has remained (Moreton-Robinson 2003, p. 30). Also, in an Australian context, an important and sometimes concomitant field of inquiry with critical whiteness studies is a re-burgeoning scholarly engagement with Indigenous sovereignty (Moreton-Robinson 2007).

These two coexistent conversations – critical whiteness studies and the exploration of Indigenous sovereignty – raise particular challenges for non-Indigenous scholars of whiteness. One non-Indigenous scholar, Fiona Nicholl, insists white Australians must cultivate an "embodied awareness of 'being in Indigenous sovereignty'' (2004a, p. 17). This necessitates a critical engagement with white investment in what she identifies as 'white sovereignty'. For Nicholl, white sovereignty is inextricably linked to white national identity, legitimacy and authority. Indigenous sovereignty, on the other hand, is defined as the overall conglomeration of rights that are inalienable to the overall goal of self-determination for Indigenous people, and which, moreover,

are denied every time white sovereignty is asserted (Nicholl 2004a, p.19). I agree that Nicholl's conceptualisation of white sovereignty and Indigenous sovereignty is useful, and I employ it several times throughout this discussion. However, I am mindful that while Nicholl seeks to problematise the whiteness of the Australian settler society in relationship to Indigenous sovereignty, my concern is to problematise whiteness as a site through which the relationship between white sovereignty and Indigenous sovereignty is considered. Using the New Race Abolitionists as a case study, I demonstrate that the intrinsic solipsism of whiteness is that it ultimately loops back on itself, back into white sovereignty. The corollary to this, then, is that even 'critical' whiteness works in contradistinction to Indigenous sovereignty.

The New Race Abolitionists

The founders of the Abolitionist movement are John Garvey and Noel Ignatiev. The New Race Abolitionists are variously described as Marxist/neo-Marxist (Flores & Moon 2000, p. 100) and libertarian anarchist (Alcoff 1998, p. 14); certainly, they embrace philosophies that are more typical of the far right, such as the right to bear arms and the valorisation of American "lawlessness" (Garvey & Ignatiev 1996b, p. 95). The New Race Abolitionist journal, *Race Traitor*, is read by "academics, grassroots activists, rightwing militia types, prisoners, students and others" (Flores & Moon 2000, p. 101). It is clear the Abolitionists have achieved some level of mainstream credibility, with an anthology of articles published in *Race Traitor* winning the American Book Award in 1997. In Australia, Abolitionists are invited to give keynote papers at critical whiteness studies conferences (Roediger 2005).

The New Race Abolitionist movement is an anti-white movement as distinct from 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,

> [t]heir 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, p. 102)

New Race Abolitionists dismiss those who attempt to mediate the worst excesses and demonstrations of white power (such as the KKK) 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 & Ignatiev, 1996c, p. 179, *emphasis added*). 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 & Moon, 2002, pp. 192-93; Garvey & Ignatiev, 1996c, p. 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. 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, cited in Winant 1997, p. 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 & Ignatiev, 1996a, p. 11). One example of non-compliance is their urging of "so-called whites" (Flores & Moon 2000, p. 104) to stop identifying as 'white', and re-identify as 'black' (Flores & Moon 2000, 2002). This crossing-over from whiteness to blackness is represented as an act of political solidarity insofar as it signifies a rejection of white race privilege and a recognition of the oppression of black people because of 'whiteness'.

The New Race Abolitionists also advocate armed insurrection against the white State. The imperative for "direct action" (Flores & Moon 2002, p. 194) means the Abolitionists seek out strategic military alliances with others who promote the demise of the State, including anarchists and neo-fascist organisations. Garvey and Ignatiev (1996b, p. 94) argue that the "conventional left" has lost its revolutionary impetus, and conspire to provide intelligence reports on the activities of militia groups to law and order agencies. They argue that 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" (Garvey & Ignatiev 1996b, p. 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:

> [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. … 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. ... Abolitionists must draw a line between themselves and the "loyal opposition". If they fail to do so, they will not be heard. (Garvey & Ignatiev 1996b, p. 95)

An 'abolition' of identity: 'crossing over' from whiteness to blackness

The first issue I want to address is the way the New Race Abolitionists' engagement with whiteness reinforces race-based hierarchies. It is my concern that by virtue of their own discursive dynamic, critical whiteness studies support the very dualistic relationship between white and black they seek to undermine. In this relationship, whiteness retains its epistemological pre-eminence, which is evidenced by the fact that within the relationship between white and black, whiteness is the dominant binary and blackness retains its subordinated position to whiteness. Abolitionists' attempts to subvert this dynamic by 'crossing over' from whiteness to blackness are counter-productive. Simply put, the Abolitionists determine that if they reverse the binary relationship between white and black, and imbue blackness with good attributes ('humane', 'authentic', 'natural', 'defiant') (Flores & Moon 2000, pp. 108-109; 2002,

p. 191) and assign bad human attributes to whiteness ('deranged', 'privilege of greed and domination', 'anti-Christ') the power relationship between whiteness and blackness is rendered inoperable (Flores & Moon 2000, p. 102). Flores and Moon counter this reasoning:

> 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, p. 198)

As a corollary to Flores and Moon, I argue that this essentialisation of blackness has particular implications in the Australian context. Essentialising Indigenous people as 'blackness' is an ahistoric, disconnected projection of Indigenous identity that locks Indigenous people into pre-colonial times by denying the forcible 'crossing over' – from blackness to whiteness – inflicted on Indigenous people. It also works against the many ways Indigenous people negotiate the presence of whiteness in their lives. In part, this is evidenced by those who negotiate their 'cosmetic whiteness' when blackness is required as proof of their Indigenous Identity. The Wiradjiri scholar Wendy Brady captures this tension:

> 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 … [relations] … then I am understood to be part of that other dangerous group. (1999, p. 28)

Equally, 'crossing over' negates the experiences of those who deploy strategic whiteness as a means of negotiating the pressure to assimilate. The Koori academic Dennis McDermott explains strategic whiteness as a range of self-modifying behaviours that place Aboriginal people in dialogue with whiteness without having to comply with the imperative for sameness through assimilation. To develop his point, McDermott draws on the work of Trinh Minh-ha, and her notion of 'appropriate', 'inappropriate' and 'inappropriate/d' behaviour:

> 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, pp. 36-37).

Juxtaposed against the Abolitionists' notion of crossing over, McDermott's argument resists the power of whiteness and the imperative for compliance, whilst simultaneously recognizing that whiteness is contended with, and negotiated by, Aboriginal people daily. Therefore, I argue, uncritical acceptance of the Abolitionists' model supports a unidirectional understanding of crossing over, where both whiteness and blackness are accessible to whites, and Indigenous people are locked into blackness in order that it is available to those who seek to appropriate it. Aboriginal peoples' blackness – once seen as undesirable and to be 'bred out' – is now held as the object of desire and positioned as necessary in order to express white political solidarity. The disingenuity of this claim is that it fails to recognise that it exists in continuum with the presumed right of 'whiteness' to invade Indigenous peoples' sovereign self-hood and colonise their 'blackness'.

Crossing over, ahistoricity and practical reconciliation

Further, I argue the ahistoricity of 'crossing-over' is compounded because it enables non-Indigenous people to disassociate with the history of colonisation of Indigenous people, to disconnect present-day Indigenous disadvantage from this history, and to disengage with the intergenerational benefits that accrue to non-Indigenous people because of the dispossession of Indigenous people. I argue this feeds into and supports the logic of the Practical Reconciliation movement, which, I have argued elsewhere, is its own neo-colonial movement (Carey 2008).

In part, my position is informed by Linda 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:

> 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, p. 8)

Within recent political discourse, 'reconciliation' is conceived as two competing models: 'symbolic reconciliation' and 'practical reconciliation'. Symbolic reconciliation is attributed to Paul Keating's Labor government (1991-1996), 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 that was used by the Howard Liberal government to diminish the reconciliation process and its potential to set Australia on a path towards decolonisation.

When the Reconciliation Bill was passed through the Australian Parliament in 1991 (with bipartisan support), it had three main objectives. It identified the importance of meeting the social justice needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; the necessity of some sort of formal document – possibly a Treaty – between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people; and the need to increase mainstream awareness of the

history of colonisation and dispossession of Indigenous people (Tickner 2001, p. 29). In contrast, the Liberal Howard Government (elected in 1996) promoted 'practical reconciliation', which focused on the 'practical' matters of improving Aboriginal health, housing, education and employment (Altman & Hunter 2003, p. 2). The so-called symbolic features of reconciliation, such as a Treaty and increasing non-Indigenous understanding of our shared history, were absent from this government's purview.

In its original conception, reconciliation was a 'top-down' political process, but it was understood that it would not succeed without broad community support. This involved extensive consultation with Aboriginal communities, and provisioning mainstream Australians with education on our colonial past. To this extent, reconciliation was driven by an acute moral imperative to unite non-Aboriginal Australians with Aboriginal people in articulating a vision for the future of the nation, and our respective places within it.

In contrast, practical reconciliation was a neo-colonial movement, a defensive counterpoint to the decolonising potential of the Reconciliation movement as it was originally conceived. Despite its claim to practicality, practical reconciliation has overseen a quantifiable diminution in Indigenous peoples' well-being and rights (Altman & Hunter 2003). In large part, this was enabled by the denial and dehistoricisation of the reasons for Aboriginal disadvantage, and the willingness of many white Australians to go along with reactionary versions of Australian history and punitive measures against Indigenous people (Altman & Hunter 2003). While there is copious evidence of this occurring in mainstream political and policy arenas – including but not limited to the vociferous denial of, and the refusal to apologise to, the Stolen Generations; the dismantling of ATSIC; and the introduction of 'Shared Responsibility Agreements' in order for Indigenous communities to access basic infrastructure and resources[ii] – there was also increased anti-Aboriginal sentiment amongst fringe political groups and organisations.

Race hate organisations
The Practical reconciliation era coincided with the political rise of Pauline Hanson and her One Nation Party. It was reported by Indigenous community and political

leaders that the rise of Pauline Hanson and One Nation corresponded with an increase in the activities of race hate groups and levels of racist violence committed against Indigenous people (McGlade 2000).

As the Nyungar human rights lawyer Hannah McGlade (2000) writes, Pauline Hanson was elected as an independent to the Australian parliament in 1996 in large part on an anti-Aboriginal platform. McGlade notes that anti-Aboriginal activities increased following the formation of the One Nation Party in 1997. For example, Hanson published *The Truth*, where she claimed Aboriginal people were cannibals and in other fora Hanson claimed that Native Title was an Aboriginal 'land grab', that the stolen generations was an Aboriginal conspiracy designed to extort compensation, and that ATSIC was a corrupt fraudulent organisation. Hanson also accused Aboriginal people of gunrunning and having links with terrorists. McGlade challenges this assertion, finding that One Nation "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). In 1999, Peter Coleman, a founding member of the One Nation Party, was revealed as the Australian leader of the Ku Klux Klan (Allum 1999). Coleman was subsequently expelled from One Nation. In response to Coleman's expulsion, the then Chairperson of ATSIC, Gatjil Djerrkurra said: "One Nation 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" (Allum 1999).

Hannah McGlade (2000) reports that, in Perth in 1997, the Nyungar Circle of Elders complained to the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission of increased levels of racism in doctors' 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:

> 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. (McGlade 2000)

Similar levels of violence directed towards Aboriginal people were also reported in Queensland and the Northern Territory. The Aboriginal Elder Joe McGuiness 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" (McGlade 2000). 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" (McGlade 2000).

It is not surprising that Aboriginal people should interpret the violence of race hate organisations as a continuum of the violence of colonisation. What, then, might we expect Indigenous people to make of an anti-whiteness movement that advocates strategic alliances with those organisations that perpetuate this violence?

Conclusion

The radical rhetoric of the New Race Abolitionists is alluring. But, the New Race Abolitionists are an American-based anti-whiteness movement concerned with abolition of whiteness. I have argued that, upon deeper investigation, the particular political modus operandi of the New Race Abolitionists exacerbates the ongoing epistemic and physical violence of colonisation.

In this discussion, I have contextualised concerns relating to the New Race Abolitionists within a broader critique of critical whiteness studies. Ostensibly, the raison d'etre for critical whiteness studies is underpinned by a desire to investigate and deconstruct manifestations of race-based power. In Australia, this body of work has been used to problematise the whiteness of the settler society and its relationship with Indigenous people. In turn, the Australian contribution to critical whiteness studies is to contextualise 'whiteness' within a history of colonisation, and to

juxtapose white sovereignty with Indigenous sovereignty. However, as I have argued, the epistemological foundation for critical whiteness studies is the relationship between white and black, as distinct from the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous. Because of this, Indigenous sovereignty is an adjunct to critical whiteness studies. Undermining whiteness (figuratively and literally) necessitates repositioning the epistemological foundation to a relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous. If we do not do so, we continue to privilege the sovereignty of whiteness over Indigenous sovereignty.

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[i] To date, there is very little engagement with the New Race Abolitionist movement from an Australian perspective. Some exceptions include a feature article published in '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, 2004b); Bob Pease's reference to Abolitionism in his 2004 article, *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, p. 5). This article is offered as part of this introductory Australian engagement with the new Race Abolitionists.
[ii] A detailed account of this is beyond the scope of this paper. For further discussion see Manne 2001, McCausland 2005 and Anderson 2006.

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