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THE WHITE POSSESSIVE

Property, Power, and Indigenous
Sovereignty

AILEEN MORETON-ROBINSON

Indigenous Americas



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As an Aboriginal girl growing up on Minjerribah (Stradbroke Island), the size of the world was hard to imagine, though glimpses of its magnitude were available in the collection of *National Geographic* magazines in the school library. The world now seems a great deal smaller, and I have been very fortunate to have met and worked with many wonderful people. I want to thank Deborah Madsen at the University of Geneva, who first encouraged me to consider publishing a collection of my work. Thanks especially to Robert Warrior at the University of Illinois for the kindness and generosity he extended to me in supporting my endeavors to make the book become a reality. His intellectual warrior-ship inspires and influences those of us fortunate enough to know him as a friend and a brother. I also would like to extend thanks to the following scholars for your friendship and collegiality: Sara Ahmed, Chris Andersen, Larissa Behrendt, Vince Diaz, Pat Dudgeon, Bronwyn Fredericks, Mishauana Goeman, David Theo Goldberg, Cheryl Harris, Daniel Heath-Justice, Brendan Hokowhitu, LeAnne Howe, Trish Lukas, Alissa Macoun, John Maynard, Mark McMillan, Toula Nicolapoulos, Fiona Nicoll, Jacki Thompson Rand, Daryle Rigney, Lester Irabinna Rigney, Audra Simpson, David Singh, Kim TallBear, Jacki Troy, and George Vasilacopoulos. All of you, in one way or another, continue to shape and stretch my thinking in productive ways.

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INTRODUCTION

White Possession and Indigenous Sovereignty
Matters

The problem with white people is they think and behave like they own everything.

—Dennis Benjamin Moreton (personal communication,
April 10, 2005)

IT SEEMS APT TO BEGIN WITH A QUOTE from my recently departed Gami (uncle) because he was a humble, kind, and wise man. Gami's words succinctly encapsulate what I am striving to reveal in this book. While writing this introduction, race as a socially constructed phenomenon is busy doing its work within Australia, measuring Aboriginality by the shade of skin color. It is as though race travels back and forth in time to show us its indeterminacy, seductively enticing us to commit ourselves to its truths. We know not its origins, as a form of exclusion, though there is some consensus that the manifestation of race, conceptualized as having biological form, emerged in the seventeenth century, occurring simultaneously with the rise of liberal democracy. Indigenous peoples did not produce this history, but the conditions under which we live shape our experiences of how well race and state operate in tandem to condition each other.¹ It takes a great deal of work to maintain Canada, the United States, Hawai'i, New Zealand, and Australia as white possessions. The regulatory mechanisms of these nation-states are extremely busy reaffirming and reproducing this possessiveness through a process of perpetual Indigenous dispossession, ranging from the refusal of Indigenous sovereignty to overregulated piecemeal concessions. However, as this book will reveal, it is not the only way the possessive logics of patriarchal white sovereignty are operationalized,

deployed, and affirmed. I use the concept “possessive logics” to denote a mode of rationalization, rather than a set of positions that produce a more or less inevitable answer, that is underpinned by an excessive desire to invest in reproducing and reaffirming the nation-state’s ownership, control, and domination. As such, white possessive logics are operationalized within discourses to circulate sets of meanings about ownership of the nation, as part of commonsense knowledge, decision making, and socially produced conventions.

Subjects embody white possessive logics. A leading Australian conservative journalist, Andrew Bolt, was found guilty in 2011 of breaching the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 on two counts, accusing “fair-skinned” Aboriginal people of only claiming their Aboriginal identity in order to gain access to social and economic benefits. The presiding judge, Justice Bromberg, found that Bolt’s articles were not written in good faith, contained factual errors, and were offensive.² Across the Pacific, in the United States, the case of Baby Veronica continues to play out in the media after the Supreme Court ruled that her Cherokee father’s parental rights, under the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), should not be privileged over those of the white adoptive parents.³ We could ask what it is that links these two seemingly unrelated cases across an expanse of ocean. Perhaps the answer lies in what is common to both. As racial signifiers the “Aborigine” and the “Cherokee” are presupposed as being “known,” and they can be used by the courts to assess the identity and parental attributes of those whose bodies are deemed to be marked by this racial knowledge. The courts operationalize a patriarchal white possessive logic through the way in which they rationalize the nonexistence of race while simultaneously deploying it through their racial signifiers “Aboriginal” and “Cherokee.”

Race indelibly marks the law’s possessiveness. At the turn of the twentieth century, the founding white fathers of Australia’s federation feared that nonwhite races would want to invade the country. They were concerned with white racial usurpation and dispossession and took action to ensure that Australia would be a nation controlled by and for whites. Their possessive logics were embedded in the law through the passage of the Immigration Restriction Act 1901, which the new federal government implemented in the form of the White Australia Policy. Australia was not the only nation-state to use immigration legislation as a means to regulate and keep out nonwhite populations.

The United States produced the Naturalization Act of 1790, which was designed explicitly for whites only, while Canada’s and New Zealand’s nineteenth-century Immigration Acts strongly preferred the migration of British citizens to their shores. The development of these different pieces of immigration legislation, though at different times in history, illustrates that there are inextricable connections between white possessive logics, race, and the founding of nation-states. As will become evident in this book, it is one of the ways that the logics of white possession and the disavowal of Indigenous sovereignty are materially and discursively linked.

Race matters in the lives of all peoples; for some people it confers unearned privileges, and for others it is the mark of inferiority. Daily newspapers, radio, television, and social media usually portray Indigenous peoples as a deficit model of humanity. We are overrepresented as always lacking, dysfunctional, alcoholic, violent, needy, and lazy, whether we are living in Illinois, Auckland, Honolulu, Toronto, or Brisbane. For Indigenous people, white possession is not unmarked, unnamed, or invisible; it is hypervisible. In our quotidian encounters, whether it is on the streets of Otago or Sydney, in the tourist shops in Vancouver or Waipahu, or sitting in a restaurant in New York, we experience ontologically the effects of white possession. These cities signify with every building and every street that this land is now possessed by others; signs of white possession are embedded everywhere in the landscape. The omnipresence of Indigenous sovereignties exists here too, but it is disavowed through the materiality of these significations, which are perceived as evidence of ownership by those who have taken possession. This is territory that has been marked by and through violence and race. Racism is thus inextricably tied to the theft and appropriation of Indigenous lands in the first world. In fact, its existence in the United States, Canada, Australia, Hawai’i, and New Zealand was dependent on this happening. The dehumanizing impulses of colonization are successfully acted upon because racisms in these countries are predicated on the logic of possession. Yet, from our respective standpoints, Indigenous studies scholarship has rarely interrogated the mutual constitution of the possessiveness of patriarchal white sovereignty and racialization. Perhaps to a large degree this is an outcome of the development of Indigenous studies shaped by the rights discourse that emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Indigenous Studies as Cultural Difference

Debates by Indigenous scholars over what constitutes the field of Indigenous studies began in the early 1970s and were primarily informed by the global Indigenous political movement for self-determination and sovereignty. Crow Creek Sioux scholar and elder Elizabeth Cook-Lynn argues that in the United States a concerted address about what should constitute Native American studies was made by Indian scholars at Princeton University in March 1970.⁴ Discussions were centered on the defense of Indigenous lands and nationhood, as well as Indigenous knowledges and rights. After this initial gathering, further symposiums were held and the disciplinary principles of Native American studies were developed. Native American studies would focus on the endogenous study of Indigenous cultures and history with Indigenous belief systems constituting its bases so that it differentiated itself from the traditional disciplines that pursued exogenous studies of Native American communities. Two key concepts would be epistemic drivers in developing the discipline: Indigenousness and Sovereignty. Indigenousness would encompass culture, place, and philosophy and Sovereignty would include history and law.

Across the Pacific Ocean, and writing a year earlier, Māori scholar Mason Durie gave an overview of the development of Māori studies in New Zealand universities. He noted that the field was uncomfortably constituted by "being an area of study in its own right, an academic discipline, and a potential component of every other area of study."⁵ While acknowledging that Māori studies has been "enriched by the several disciplines of law, science, linguistics, anthropology, philosophy, history, education and sociology," Durie argued that Māori philosophies, worldviews, language, and methods formed the basis of Māori studies within the academy.⁶ It is a Māori-centered approach to producing knowledge that is neither exclusively traditional nor Western in orientation. He noted that "a greater emphasis on whānau (family models) group learning, and peer support as well as the observation of some customary practices . . . tend to distinguish Māori studies" as it is taught by Māori scholars. This Indigenous focus on an endogenous approach to history, language, politics, culture, literature, and traditions is also reflected in the development of Native studies in Canada, Kanaka Maoli studies in Hawai'i, and, to a lesser degree, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies in Australia.

The Indigenous endogenous approach to Indigenous studies discursively centers the Indigenous world as the object of study. The corpus of knowledge that Indigenous scholars have produced over the past four decades has been primarily concerned with expressing and theorizing the specificities of our cultural differences in multiple forms in order to stake our claim in the production of knowledge about us. This early scholarship is extremely important, but it has developed alongside, not through, a rigorous engagement with the traditional disciplines that have shaped Indigenous scholarship. In making this point, I am not condemning Indigenous scholarship to a state of existential oblivion, nor am I denying that ethnographic refusal exists in the production of this knowledge.⁷ What I am arguing is that an unintended consequence of the Indigenous endogenous approach to knowledge production is the reification of cultural difference. We compel "culture" to function discursively as a category of analysis in the process of differentiation, while the exogenous disciplinary knowledges that have been produced about us operationalize "race" as the marker of our difference, even when defining Indigenous "cultures."

Moving Indigenous Studies beyond Cultural Difference: Whiteness and Race

In recent years new Indigenous scholarship has emerged within Indigenous studies to challenge the epistemic fixation with our cultural differences. In Métis scholar Chris Andersen's critique of Native American Duane Champagne's articulation of Indigenous studies as a discipline marked by cultural difference, he argues that it is our density rather than our difference from Western disciplines that should be integral to Indigenous studies.⁸ Andersen explains that our density is constituted through our lived subject positions within modernity. Thus we exist within and outside the Orientalist discourses producing Indigenous cultural difference. The complexity of our density consists of more than the knowledge that has been produced about us. For example, being Indigenous includes the complexity of the life we live in webs of kinship as mothers, daughters, teachers, healers, performers, and professors. Andersen acknowledges that an important part of our analyses should continue to be the focus on Indigenous communities, but he explains that the "temporal and epistemological complexity of our relationships with 'whitestream' society means that Indigenous studies

must counter hegemonic representations of Indigeneity, which marginalize or altogether ignore our density." This will require an interdisciplinary approach to Indigenous studies, one that requires an engagement with the epistemic complexity of our communities. A similar point is made by Torres Strait Islander scholar Martin Nakata, who argues that what is required is scholarship that engages with the traditional disciplines in order to demonstrate how this knowledge is limited in its ability to understand us.⁹ Nakata opines that at this point in our history we need more Indigenous scholars to undertake this kind of intellectual labor to move beyond Indigenous endogenous objectification.

Andersen explicates that when we restrict the scope of our analyses to "the continuity of land, community, self-government and culture," Indigenous studies is misreading the conditions of its possibility. That is, Indigenous studies for Andersen "must focus on Indigenous communities as a critique of colonial society." He calls into question Champagne's rejection of concepts such as ethnicity, race, and nation, arguing that this negation naively fails to grasp that these are concepts through which we understand ourselves. Andersen argues that Champagne's focus on cultural difference precludes any sustained analysis of "our knowledge about whiteness . . . which requires expertise in the very 'Western' disciplinary concepts he dismisses." Hence Andersen proposes that the critique of whiteness must also be a central element in any Indigenous studies discipline. Concepts such as nation, race, and ethnicity (and, I would add, gender) form part of our density, and as Indigenous peoples we operationalize them in our daily struggles.

Andersen's argument for an epistemic shift in Indigenous studies from difference to density resonates in the work of Andrea Smith, though from a different theoretical and methodological orientation. Smith argues that queer theory offers Native studies the most enabling strategy out of the ethnographic entrapment from which it suffers. Smith explains that in our quest to demonstrate our humanity we subscribe to colonial logics that require us to be objects waiting to be found.¹⁰ Drawing on the work of Denise Ferreira da Silva, Smith further argues that nativeness is the other of a Western subject that is already racialized, a subject that requires an affectable racialized other as the measure of its difference. Smith maintains that queer theory's "more thorough resistance to regimes of the normal" and its method of subjectless critique "disallows any positing of a proper subject of or object for the field, which has no fixed political referent," and centers a

"wide field of normalization as the site of social violence."¹¹ Smith explicates that embracing a subjectless critique enables Native studies to challenge the "normalizing logics of academia" beyond the articulation of an Indigenous inclusive politics. By operationalizing subjectless critique, Native studies can move beyond identity concerns to develop and expand its mode of inquiry to a range of intellectual projects that "structure inquiry around the logics of race, colonialism, capitalism, gender and sexuality."¹² I concur with Smith's proposal to use a different mode of critique, one that opens up the field of Indigenous studies to become a site of knowledge production that is exogenous in approach, and one that requires configurations of normalizing power to be studied. However, I remain unconvinced that there can ever be a subjectless critique, because queer theory discursively constructs normalization as both object and subject of inquiry. That is, normalization becomes object and subject through queer theory's discursive negation of it within analysis.

Smith advocates that Native studies should expand its intellectual repertoire of inquiry to "race, colonialism, capitalism, gender and sexuality" as a way out of our ethnographic entrapment. She further argues that Indigenous scholars work to explain our cultural differences in order to counter how we are "known" by outsiders; in doing so, we believe that if we can bring understanding to white subjects about our cultures, then things will improve. Smith's insightful analysis leads me to ask the following questions: Has the intellectual investment in defining our cultural differences resulted in the valuing of our knowledges? Has the academy become a more enlightened place in which to work, and, more important, in what ways have our communities benefited? These are somewhat rhetorical questions, but they are posed for us to consider how we as Indigenous peoples have been sociohistorically constructed through first world Western knowledge systems that are ontologically and epistemologically grounded in differentiation. Patriarchal white nation-states and universities insist on producing cultural difference in order to manage the existence and claims of Indigenous people. In this way the production of knowledge about cultural specificity is complicit with state requirements for manageable forms of difference that are racially configured through whiteness.

Andersen's, Smith's, and Nakata's work signals an epistemological shift away from designating Indigenous people as the objects of study to analyzing both the conditions of our existence and the disciplinary

knowledge that shape and produce Indigeneity. They call for operationalizing our respective standpoints as Indigenous scholars in order that we may strategically develop and define our intellectual projects, theories, and methodologies. Andersen and Smith both identify that "whiteness" is an important category of analysis; other Indigenous scholars such as Circe Sturm, Kim TallBear, and Brendan Hokowhitu demonstrate that race matters in our lives, but their scholarship is more the exception than the rule.¹³ Additionally, Tiya Miles's work on Cherokee slaveholding complicates how race and whiteness operate in tandem through a socially constructed racial hierarchy.¹⁴

My claim to the apparent race blindness of Indigenous studies is further supported by the dearth of papers presented on race and racism at the annual Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA) conference. An audit of NAISA's programs from 2009 to 2011 reveals that race is addressed in around fifteen papers per year out of an average of seven hundred papers. The relative paucity of intellectual interest in operationalizing race and whiteness as categories of analysis indicates that "culture" continues to be the epistemological a priori of our analyses, so confirming Andersen's concern with our preoccupation with difference. In doing so, we have foreclosed the possibility of theorizing how racialization works to produce Indigeneity through whiteness.

Making the Indigenous Visible in Whiteness Studies

In the way that I have read and understood the African American scholarship on whiteness, I have noted that it is theorized conceptually as a form of power, as supremacy, as hegemony, as ideology, as epistemology and ontology. Rarely, however, are the theoretical focuses drawn to the social constructions of white identity. As Knadler notes, "In contrast to whites who have traditionally located racism in 'colour consciousness and find its absence in colour blindness' peoples of colour have emphasized more how racism involves 'institutionalized systems of power' and racialised practices that are part of everyday experience."¹⁵ This literature, with its focus on structural forces and conditions that shape racist praxis in everyday life, is valuable because it provides numerous ways to operationalize race as a category of analysis. However, when we complicate this theorizing by bringing into the mix Indigenous sovereignty and the United States's former status as a

colony, a different picture of analysis emerges. The existence of white supremacy as hegemony, ideology, epistemology, and ontology requires the possession of Indigenous lands as its proprietary anchor within capitalist economies such as the United States. This point is rarely addressed in the African American whiteness studies literature, despite its focus on structural conditions and institutionalized forms of power. One of the few African American scholars to connect the formation of whiteness to the appropriation of Indigenous lands is Cheryl Harris in her seminal work on how whiteness is a form of property in law.¹⁶ She argues that whiteness operates proprietarily both tangibly and intangibly. White propriety rights were cemented in law through the appropriation of Native American lands and the subsequent enslavement of Africans. Harris's theoretical framework opens the door for an Indigenous reading of how white property rights are connected to the international territoriality of patriarchal white sovereignty in the form of the nation-state. As a form of property, whiteness accumulates capital and social appreciation as white people are recognized within the law primarily as property-owning subjects. As such, they are heavily invested in the nation being a white possession. Several of the chapters in this book illustrate how white possession and power in its discursive and material forms operate in tandem through identity, institutions, and practices in everyday life.

The invisibility of Indigeneity within the early whiteness studies literature produced by white scholars is also clearly evident. The work of Theodore Allen, David Roediger, George Lipsitz, Ruth Frankenberg, and Karen Brodtkin on the acquisition and formation of white identity is discursively grounded in migration, slavery, and the logic of capital.¹⁷ Yet when their work is read through an Indigenous lens, the logic of white possession is apparent; for it is clear that white identity has cultural and social purchase, and as a possession it enhances one's life chances as configured through the logic of capital. Some of the most recent whiteness studies literature does engage with Native Americans, arguing that white supremacy operates through a racial logic of dispossession and that within the racial hierarchy that was imposed, Native Americans could be whitened.¹⁸

Despite this new work, the constitutive absence within the American literature on whiteness is how the presumption of patriarchal white sovereignty enables the historically contingent formation of white identity through dispossession, slavery, and migration. That is, the conceptualizing

of whiteness disavows colonization where the first racialized colonial encounters and warfare are tied to the appropriation of Native American lands, as demonstrated, for instance, in Jean O'Brien's ethnohistory of New England.¹⁹ The focus on how people achieve white identity and white race privilege precludes analyses of the roots of racialized knowledge production, processes of racialization, and the formation of racial states.²⁰ As I have argued elsewhere in relation to Indigenous peoples, "The specificities of our cultural densities have not been the dominant way we are known by those who took our lands. Instead, it has been the race lens by which most of their looking and knowing has been and continues to be done."²¹

This book is a collection of my work over the past decade, though it is informed by a lifetime of experiencing and witnessing racism in its many forms. To this end, I have tried to find answers to two questions: How did Aboriginal people come to be known as racialized subjects, and is this "knowing" implicated in a structure of white subjectivity that is tied ontologically to the possession of Aboriginal lands and Aboriginal people? While these questions arise out of the Australian context, they can also be asked where Indigenous peoples have been colonized by the British, or their descendants, as in the United States, Canada, Hawai'i, and New Zealand. White possession is the common denominator we all share, even though its specificities and manifestations vary. We are no longer the sole possessors of our ancestral lands taken by conquest, cessation, or as *terra nullius* (land belonging to no one). These lands are appropriated in the name of the Crown, signifying the rule of the king and the masculine capacity to possess property and to bear arms. Furthermore, these masculine attributes are embodied in nation-states, as the representation of patriarchal white sovereignty, and displayed in bodily form as the police, the army, and the judiciary. Though the concept of possession in modernity is usually associated with tangible and intangible property within the law, it is much more, and its roots predate capitalism. For centuries humans have produced things and named things.

An aim of this book is to reveal how racialization is the process by which whiteness operates possessively to define and construct itself as the pinnacle of its own racial hierarchy. The thread that weaves the chapters together is the intersubstantive relations between white possession and Aboriginal sovereignty. In particular, I will focus on demonstrating how white possession disavows Aboriginal sovereignty through

rust techniques, conventions, laws, and knowledges, each shaping and affecting the lives of Aboriginal people. Thus the conceptual framework that structures each chapter concerns the inextricable link between white possession and Aboriginal sovereignty and its articulation through the possessive logics of patriarchal white sovereignty. Each chapter has been written independently of the other, but together they form a thematic body of work, which I have divided into three parts: "Owning Property," "Becoming Propertyless," and "Being Property."

Part One: Owning Property

In chapter 1, "I Still Call Australia Home: Indigenous Belonging and Place in a Postcolonizing Society," I examine the ways in which national belonging for Indigenous and white Australians is configured differently. I argue that Indigenous ontological relations to land are incommensurate with those developed through capitalism, and they continue to unsettle white Australia's sense of belonging, which is inextricably tied to white possession and power configured through the logic of capital and profound individual attachment. In chapter 2, "The House That Jack Built: Britishness and White Possession," I explain how the core values of Australian national identity continue to have their roots in Britishness and colonization. I argue that Australian national identity is built on the disavowal of Indigenous sovereignty because the nation is socially and culturally constructed as a white possession. In chapter 3, "Bodies That Matter on the Beach," I discuss how the beach functions as a site of Indigenous dispossession and white possession. I argue that as a border the beach is a site of ontological, epistemological, and axiological violence that erases Indigenous sovereignty through the performative acts of possession that ontologically and socially anchor white male bodies as surfers, lifesavers, soldiers, and "concerned citizens" as the embodiment of the nation. Shifting to the United States in chapter 4, I analyze how white possession functions within whiteness studies literature. In "Writing Off Treaties: Possession in the U.S. Critical Whiteness Literature," I illustrate how blackness functions as a white epistemological tool servicing the social construction of whiteness in its multiple and possessive forms, displacing Indigenous sovereignties and rendering them invisible through a civil rights discourse. This chapter highlights an epistemological and ontological a priori within whiteness studies literature: the unequivocal acceptance that the United States is a white possession.

Part Two: Becoming Propertyless

In chapter 5, "Nullifying Native Title: A Possessive Investment in Whiteness," I argue that patriarchal whiteness, as a form of property and an organizing principle shaping social relations and economic development, denies Indigenous people opportunities to generate wealth. I demonstrate this by showing how through legal discourse the Australian government affirmed and prioritized its possessive investment in sovereignty through circumscribing native title rights and privileging the interests of pastoralists and mining companies. In chapter 6, "The High Court and the *Yorta Yorta* Decision," I argue that the possessive logic is a mode of rationalization based on an excessive desire to invest in the reproduction and maintenance of the Australian nation-state's sovereignty, control, and domination. I argue that this racialized possessive logic is deployed to circulate meanings in commonsense knowledge, social conventions, and decision-making bodies about white possession of the nation and is omnipresent, invisible, and unnamed within legal discourse. In chapter 7, "Leesa's Story: White Possession in the Work-place," I demonstrate how white possession functions subjectively through the ascription of racial inferiority, exclusion, and collusion within the work environment by examining the affidavits presented in a racial discrimination case involving an Aboriginal nurse and her white coworkers at a major metropolitan hospital. I argue that these daily intersubjective relations are the mechanisms by which Indigenous people experience white possession as racist acts. In chapter 8, "The Legacy of Cook's Choice," I focus on the origins of white possession by analyzing Captain James Cook's reasoning not to follow instructions to make a treaty with the natives, instead declaring that the land was uninhabited. I argue that white possession as configured through the logic of capital functions sociodiscursively to inform and shape subjectivity and the law. Cook, as the embodiment of patriarchal white sovereignty, willed away the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples by placing them in and of nature as propertyless subjects to claim the land as *terra nullius*.

Part Three: Being Property

Chapter 9 draws on Foucault's sovereignty, race, and biopower thesis to propose a new research agenda for Critical Indigenous studies. In "Toward a New Research Agenda: Foucault, Whiteness, and Sovereignty,"

I demonstrate that we need to investigate how white possession functions through a discourse of rights within the disciplines of law, political science, history, and anthropology. Critical analysis of the role of these disciplines and regulatory mechanisms in reinforcing the prerogatives of white possession should provide a significant new perspective on the politics of sovereignty in Australia. In chapter 10, "Writing Off Sovereignty: The Discourse of Security and Patriarchal White Sovereignty," I argue that patriarchal white sovereignty, as a regime of power, operates ideologically, materially, and discursively to reproduce and maintain its investment in the nation as a white possession through a discourse of security. The central elements of this discourse are economic, military, and cultural protection, which are assumed as justified responses because of the threat posed to the nation's security by Indigenous people and asylum seekers. White colonial paranoia is inextricably tied to an anxiety about being dispossessed by racial others. In chapter 11, "Imagining the Good Indigenous Citizen: Race War and the Pathology of White Sovereignty," I examine the federal government's military and police intervention into the lives and communities of Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory on the fictional basis of the rampant sexual abuse of children. I argue that patriarchal white sovereignty operationalized a discourse of pathology to legitimize its subjugation and disciplining of Indigenous subjects while acting pathologically within a race war whereby Indigenous counterclaims challenge its possession. In chapter 12, "Virtuous Racial States: White Sovereignty and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples," I examine the logic of the declaration's initial rejection and subsequent endorsement by Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. I argue that the declaration created an ontological disturbance within the patriarchal white sovereignties of these nation-states, and in response they used moral force to disavow Indigenous rights claims. In this way white virtue functioned discursively to dispossess Indigenous peoples from the grounds of moral rectitude, thus enabling racism to be practiced with the best of intentions.

Conclusion

Read together, these chapters reveal that from the sixteenth century onward race and gender divided humans into three categories: owning property, becoming propertyless, and being property. These three

categories of proprietaryness are born of the episteme of Western culture, which has made manifest the existence of order functioning through the logic of possession. Consider the conceptual schemata constituted by and of racialized discourse: "Classification, order, value and hierarchy; differentiation and identity, discrimination and identification; exclusion, domination, subjection, and subjugation as well as entitlement and restriction."²² Knowledge and power are produced in and through these concepts in relation to possession. You cannot dominate without seeking to possess the dominated. You cannot exclude unless you assume you already own. Classification therefore ascribes value and identification, which manifest in racial markers like blood quantum and skin color. Thus white possession is a discursive predisposition servicing the conditions, practices, implications, and racialized discourses that are embedded within and central to white first world patriarchal nation-states.

As I close this introduction, it is my hope that this book makes a contribution to Critical Indigenous studies by invigorating debate and discussion about race and whiteness. In particular, I hope it ignites and inspires scholarship about Indigenous sovereignty, race, and racism in the first world because of the mortifying impact that the logics of white possession have on Indigenous sovereignty.

I. Owning Property