From Population to Citizen: The Subjects of the 1939 Aboriginal New Deal in Australia's Northern Territory

In 1939, the Commonwealth of Australia formulated a new policy for 'native administration' which mapped a transition from 'native tribes' to 'citizens', staging a modernising Australia. In this article, I discuss the various processes of subjectivation at each point on the 'long march' of colonial 'progress' or settler colonial elimination. Writing a history of these linked colonial governmentalities casts light on practices of recognition, difference, and the self in the modern world.

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Introduction

In 1939 the Commonwealth of Australia announced a restructure of the government of Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory. It established a Native Affairs Branch under the leadership of EWP Chinnery, an anthropologist with experience in colonial administration in Papua and New Guinea, and provided for the employment of patrol officers and district officers. This new dispensation—the 'Aboriginal New Deal'—imagined the production and government of differentiated Aboriginal subjects, representing different stages on a road to 'civilisation.' It categorised Aboriginal people into four classes: 'Myalls or aboriginals in their native state'; 'semi-detribalised'; 'fully detribalised'; and 'Half-castes'. These categories marked out a pathway to assimilation, within which each would be governed differently. In its new policy, the Commonwealth thus set out 'not yet' citizens and dictated the path they would march towards citizenship, a path based on scientific principles implementing what its architect, the influential Sydney anthropologist AP Elkin, described as an 'understanding of the How and Why of the processes of civilization and of Australian life' which was 'necessary for progress towards and in citizenship'. (Elkin, 1944: 28)

What was new about this policy was not necessarily the differentiation of forms of Aboriginality, though it did amend previous categorisations. Just as important was their linking and the performance of progress. The crucial innovation in 1939 was the linkage of these racialised populations—from 'myalls' at one extreme to 'half-castes' at the other—in an evolutionary chain spanning savagery to civilisation: subject to citizen. I am looking at this project as one of linking governmentalities: the production of subjects, and the rationalities of power applied to each objectified subject. (Foucault, 1982: 221) This represents the second new and important element of the Aboriginal New Deal. The project of 'breeding out the colour' was one that had long involved the production of new forms of life, controlling Aboriginal reproduction to create, in four generations, what could be classified as white people out of black.[2] But, in 1939, we see codified a new technique for creating life, one that worked at the level of subjectivation rather than—or as well as—blood. This, then, is a study of one specifically colonial incarnation of a governmentalised state, divided into different components corresponding to the subjects of power and the techniques bearing upon those subjects. As well as differential modes of administration envisioned by the Aboriginal New Deal, we can also discern differing modes of governmentality and of subjectivation.

The Foucauldian study of biopower—an anatomo-politics of the body (discipline) and a biopolitics of the population (security) (Foucault, 1978:

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[2] The grammar of blood quantum organised such a project. The Australian typology of descending racialisation incorporated the 'full-blood,' 'half-caste,' 'quadroon' and 'octoroon' but, crucially, no further category of diminution. Such people were classified white.

139; 2003, 242–3)—here illuminates the workings of this phase of settler colonialism in the Northern Territory. Discipline and security, with their crucially differing subjects, were never discrete but rather always overlapping, working in conjunction in changing ways. (Foucault, 2007: 107) The Aboriginal New Deal of 1939 codified the interlinked and mutually overdetermining relationship between these different technologies of power, producing different subjects through objectifying first a 'native tribe', and finally an individual (would-be) citizen, with an at times bewildering space/time in between. This represents the linkage in a teleology of evolution of (at least) three different forms of government, each working towards the production of different subjects.

This is, then, an attempt at what David Scott described as the study of the '*political rationalities* of colonial power', or of 'those ways in which colonial power is organized as an activity designed to produce effects of rule', specifically, 'the *targets* of colonial power … and the *field* of its operation'. (Scott, 1999: 25) Crucially, these rationalities were heterogeneous and, usually, complementary. The very specific linkage of different colonial governmentalities in the Aboriginal New Deal had a modernist ideological function—the performance of the evolution of the subject—as well as a materialist logic—the ultimate elimination of Aboriginal people. But it was, at the same time, a compromise, worked out under the constraint of a colonial state with limited power to re-construct Aboriginal societies and subjectivities. This partial retreat from elimination, or at least its postponement, represents an effect of the actions of many Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory, re-constructing themselves and their communities in new and changing circumstances.

Here, as elsewhere, when Foucault's methods are translated to the study of colonial spaces they require substantial revision. Even when studying race, as in *"Society Must Be Defended"*, Foucault was incessantly and inescapably Eurocentric. (Foucault, 2003: 254–5; Stoler, 1995: 25; 2002: 146) Similarly, his account of the transformation, or governmentalisation, of the French state is historically bound to Europe, and falls apart as an historical narrative when transposed onto a study of empire. When we turn our gaze away from Europe, towards the Empire, which means, after all, following the European gaze, we find that the categories he develops—the population and the individual body— are inadequate to think government in sites like the Northern Territory. It is not, however, his history that is necessarily of importance here. Rather, the concepts of power, government and subjectivation Foucault develops are useful in developing an analysis of a colonial state. We can follow Dreyfus and Rabinow, here, in reading Foucault as proposing an analytics, rather than a theory, of power, illuminating in this case the differentiated techniques mobilised in differentiated spaces, and to racially differentiated populations, in the Aboriginal New Deal (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982: 184).

In this paper, I examine each of the diverse governmentalities that comprise this policy, regarding each as, at least in part, a technique of subjectivation. If each governmentality has its subject, how, then, were these produced? Moreover, if linked in a chronology of evolution, generally glossed as modernisation, how was this teleology to be actuated at the level of the subject? I aim to draw out the ambivalence of the supposed journey from 'traditional Aboriginal community' to alienated citizen-subject, the ways this pathway was contested by Aboriginal people at strategic points and in novel ways, and the accommodations reached through such contestation.

This trajectory, narrated by the Aboriginal New Deal, tells us the extent of the place the official mind imagined for Aboriginal people in a (becoming) modern Australia. But we can also draw from it a story of Australian modernity itself, the stories settler Australia told to itself, and to Aboriginal people, of the way spaces and subjects were made and re-made in the cause of progress and the image of civilisation. As urban, or southern, Australia industrialised in the mid-twentieth century, the pastoral or only partially invaded north, a space signifying to Euro-Australians Aboriginal presence and occupation, became encoded as anomalous, and as beseeching reform. The Aboriginal New Deal represented a response to this particular conjunction, mapping country with a script of progress, working with race at the intersection of space and subjectivity. Australia came to be suffused with a spatial configuration which told a story of becoming modern. Mapping tribes, reserves, cattle stations and towns was not, as Jeffrey Popke argues, 'only a means of defining and appropriating particular kinds of spaces, but also of managing the interpellation of particular kinds of subjects'. The spatial configuration of colonial territory specified and organised difference, narrating progress also replacement; settler land use, whether actual or merely mapped in the official mind and in documents of administration, signified a surpassed nomadism, the production of an Australian modernity *out of* Aboriginality. (Popke, 2003: 249; Noyes, 1992: 267–9; 2001)

The Colonial Context of the North

Australia's north was something of a national exception in the interwar period but, as the only Territory where the Commonwealth (rather than a state) Government had control over Aboriginal people, it was subject to a national assimilation policy. At the 1937 'Conference of Commonwealth and State Aboriginal Authorities,' the assembled men resolved that 'the destiny of the natives of aboriginal origin, but not of full blood, lies in their ultimate absorption by the people of the Commonwealth, and it therefore recommends that all efforts be directed to that end'. For 'full-blood natives,' the Conference recommended a policy of segregation in the belief that such populations were dying; they would soon cease troubling the settler conscience. (Commonwealth of Australia, 1937: 3) The object of such policies was an Australia rid of Indigenous people, a structural property of settler colonialism that Patrick Wolfe has termed the 'logic of elimination'. (Wolfe, 1999)

Within Australia, though, the Northern Territory represented a differently colonised space. Many Australians at this time were beginning to see the north as a colonial order unlike the south, as a space more akin to Kenya than to Victoria, and with many of the same problems as South Africa. This imperial, or transnational, vision was set against a national white Australia policy which inevitably came up against a social and demographic contradiction in the north.

In the official mind, the Northern Territory remained a space precariously close to the other side of the frontier, and most white writers emphasised its strangeness and remoteness. Government reports on the Territory ordinarily included the obligatory complaint that 'the Northern Territory still remains to most Australians, a nebulous kind of place, a veritable unknown land', (*Payne–Fletcher Report*, 1937: 6) or that to 'most Australians the Northern Territory still remains an enigma—an unknown, semi-tropical territory, partly settled, partly arid, maligned, misunderstood and whimsically paradoxical' (L H A Giles, Typescript Copy of 'The History and Development of the Northern Territory,' 1944, NAA: CP780/2). George Buchanan, an engineer who reported on harbour works and administration across the British empire, had suggested Territory otherness in 1925, mooting the possibility of adopting 'the Crown Colony System of Government. The Federal Government would, in that case, represent the British Government, and the Minister for Home and Territories would represent the Secretary of State for the Colonies.' (Buchanan, 1925: 4) There existed for whites a tension, therefore, between the view of the Northern Territory as somehow obscure or deviant—or colonial—and its aspirational future as a normal part of the Australian nation.

What was at stake for Australian nationalists was the white north, an aspiration long made precarious by fears of the tropical climate and economic vulnerability, and that if the Territory was not developed by whites, others from further north may do so. The expert scientific opinion that white men and women could survive and work in the tropics may have been, as Warwick Anderson argues, settled by the 1930s. (Anderson, 2002: 6, 153) But both popular and administrative written sources indicate that tropical whiteness was still a matter of conjecture and anxiety throughout the 1930s and 1940s. For Wynne Williams, the former Deputy Chairman of the Territory Land Board, the 'empty spaces' of the north—in 1937 only 24 per cent of its lands were owned by whites, and occupation was another matter entirely—represented 'an irrepressible bogey which refuses to remain in the tomb of its ancestral skeletons, where it has been nailed down so often with silent, irreverent rites befitting a life of recklessness, illusion and futility'. (*Payne–Fletcher Report*, 1937: 20; Wynne Williams, 1927: 30) Could white people, many still wondered, live in the north without the assistance of black labour? Both the 1929 Bleakley Report and the 1937 Payne–Fletcher Report paid a kind of tribute to Aboriginal women, whose domestic labour had made it possible for white women, those 'expected to maintain the White Australia Policy', to survive 'the heavy and enervating duties of household management in a tropical climate not less severe than that of Rabaul'. (Bleakley, 1929: 7; *Payne–Fletcher Report*, 1937: 70–2) The census reflected these fears. Before the Commonwealth took control of the Territory in 1911, its non-Aboriginal inhabitants numbered 3301, of whom less than half—1182—were white. (Price, 1930: 32) In 1938, the Administrator CLA Abbott celebrated a nonAboriginal population peak at only 6704, of whom 3800 were European, compared with approximately 15,261 Aboriginal people. (Commonwealth of Australia, 1939: 10, 26) In such a context, what limited wealth that could be generated in the Territory was based on Aboriginal labour.

Though barely remaining afloat, beef cattle was considered the Territory's primary industry, the 'one great industry which can compete in the markets of the world'. (Price, 1930: 48) Dominated by the British companies Vesteys and Bovril, as an export industry it was a perennial failure, partly due to poor infrastructure and an unwillingness to invest. Without cheap labour, it would have been completely unfeasible.

Aboriginal station workers were provided with inadequate housing, rations containing a level of nutrition well below that needed to survive, and set to difficult work in a climate of violence.(Bleakley, 1929: 6; Wilson, 1951; Berndt and Berndt, 1987: 9) Very little was spent on providing facilities for any employees, and the Aboriginal majority were also denied wages. Aboriginal people continued to represent the overwhelming bulk of the pastoral workforce until the advent of equal wages in 1968 and were recognised, as Abbott wrote, 'as an integral and very vital part in the economy of development'. (Abbott, 1950: 138) By 1938, for example, 3520 Aboriginal people were known to be employed (many more were unofficially employed), approximately one in four of the Territory's estimated Aboriginal population. (Commonwealth of Australia, 1939: 26)

But this system was tending to crisis. This may have been a post-frontier massacre era, but the consequences of white settlement continued to be fatal for many Aboriginal communities. Station communities were systematically super-exploited and deprived of adequate housing, medical care, and the means of producing enough to subsist; producing, aside from a human disaster, a developing labour problem that came to crisis in the 1930s. Aboriginal people were dying, a result of decades of violence, impoverishment, malnutrition and lack of medical care. Aside from humanitarian concern for such destruction, the struggling cattle stations faced a dire shortage of cheap labour. (Rowley, 1971: 3–4) White pastoralists, requiring cheap black labour to work the only potentially viable industry of the north, preferred to seek new workers than to improve conditions, placing pressure on the reserves. At the same time, though, the Territory administration was revising its estimates of Aboriginal population, indicating its recognition of a limit to the black population and the need to re-calibrate the forms of intervention into Aboriginal communities and lives. (Commonwealth of Australia, 1938: 1, 25)

The colonisation of the north was also being met by Aboriginal action which could not but be interpreted as productive of crisis in the south. A series of battles over sovereignty—from the Coniston massacre in 1928 to Caledon Bay in 1932–4—ended in more or less ambiguous settler victory, but provoked a sense of sovereignty in the making. Settlement clearly remained incomplete, a function of Aboriginal people's everyday assertions of autonomy and, at times, outright revolt. Growing Aboriginal activism in the south, too, provoked changing action from government. The

overlapping and sometimes ambivalent spaces of the Northern Territory, an effect, in part, of comparatively free Aboriginal mobility came to denote a lack of control, law and (settler) sovereignty. These colonial problems suggested, in the official mind, the need to articulate a solidified spatial order, and to define and order difference; to work at the intersection of power and knowledge to ensure an industrialising, and modernising, northern Australia.

The 1939 reforms were designed, in this context, to organise the development of the Northern Territory in conjunction with reforms to the pastoral industry, at the same time pursuing the national policy of assimilation. They would ensure the continuity of labour supply, and incorporate the varied forms of government on Aboriginal reserves, on pastoral stations, and in towns into the one plan. This was declared a 'positive policy' and was heavily influenced by Elkin, the University of Sydney anthropologist who was instrumental in its drafting, in conjunction with its ostensible author, the Minister for the Interior JA McEwen. (McEwen, 1938: 10; Department of the Interior, 1939: 12; Elkin, 1957: 30) It set out a 'final objective' of government:

the raising of their status so as to entitle them by right and by qualification to the ordinary rights of citizenship and enable them and help them to share with us the opportunities that are available in their own native land. To this end I have envisaged a long range policy realising that to transform people from a nomadic tribal state to take their place in a civilised community will certainly take not only many years, but many generations. A commencement must be made, however, and every step in the routine must be deliberately and consciously directed to the ultimate goal. (Department of the Interior, 1939: 1–2)

Such steps would take place at once, applied to different subjects, performing a narrative of progress across the Territory. McEwen divided Aboriginal people into four forms of population, all of which would come under the administration of the new Branch of Native Affairs.

The different classes of Aboriginal person were determined by a conjunction of location and subjectivity, from 'myalls' on reserves, 'detribalised' Aboriginal people on pastoral stations or around rural towns, and 'half-castes' being mostly removed to the institutions of Darwin or Alice Springs. The text of the policy spoke of 'the long march towards … citizenship', using purposeful movement in space as metaphor for the plan of reconstruction of Aboriginal subjectivities. (Department of the Interior, 1939: 12) From reserve to station camp, and on to the town or city, the spatial

demarcation of the Territory was inflected with a temporal story of progress towards civilisation. This was a performance—at this stage on paper—of the elimination of Aboriginal autonomy and sovereignty. We see, in the policy, a representation of a long march of individuals out of ambivalently sovereign societies towards atomised subjects of citizenship. This was, as much as anything else, a performance of shifting subjectivity, from a subjection within a tribe to the care of the self, a self-subjection thought as autonomy and freedom: each denoting, finally, whiteness.

The 'Native State'

The process began in the reserves, imagining such spaces as practical wilderness areas, containing untouched Aboriginal tribes and Aboriginal people whose sociality was constitutive. Filled with what administrators came to describe as wandering 'myalls or aboriginals in their native state', a term used interchangeably with 'natives in their tribal state,' the reserves comprised those small spaces that the New Deal harnessed to the far end of the process of assimilation. (Department of the Interior, 1939: 2, 5) These were tribal spaces, and could be governed only by tribal organisation. There were only a few reserves in the Northern Territory, including smaller spaces at Oenpelli (2000 sq miles) and Daly River (3300 sq miles), as well as the substantial Lake Amadeus Reserve in the south-west corner of the Territory (21,875 sq miles), which formed part of the greater reserve also covering parts of South Australia and Western Australia. The large Arnhem Land reserve in the north-east was declared in 1931. (Northern Territory of Australia, 1920: 19; Bleakley, 1929: 34)

Reserves were not imagined as entirely empty spaces comprising assimilable individuals, but rather as containing communities with specifically tribal organisation that needed to form a part of any plan of government. This tribal organisation, in the official mind, differed from colonised communities elsewhere, not appearing as a formal state structure. Reflecting the anthropological and administrative consensus that emerged in the late 1930s, Ronald Berndt later distinguished between the presence of centralised political authority and the presence of law. A 'stateless' or acephalous society could thus have a sophisticated system of law. In the Aboriginal case (and here he generalised for practically the whole continent), law 'speaks, for the most part, through religion'. (Berndt, 1965: 201) To leave a cultural or religious space was the same therefore as leaving a space for law. Reserves were thus not lawless places beseeching domination, requiring settler intervention to bring order, but were

themselves set out as Aboriginal domains, spaces of law which, if respected, could be relied upon as part of an ordered colony. Reserves, then, were narrated as containing the 'structure and function of primitive society [which] would serve as an organic administrative apparatus'. (Povinelli, 2002: 125–6)

The government of these reserves was a very particular form of indirect rule, where the settler state recognised an 'Aboriginal' Law, one that would be crucial in the production of native subjects. What the settler colonial state would mobilise in the reserves, then, was the local matrices of power, (neo-)traditional hierarchies and practices of government and of the self, in the production of thoroughly 'tribal' subjects. These were, it was imagined by administrators and confirmed by anthropological science, authentically native and untouched, or uncontaminated, by the otherwise pervasive force and influence of the settler state. Such claims represented an imaginary pristine culture, where Aboriginal people apparently roamed through wilderness as they always had done. Placing Aboriginality—conceived only as 'tribal'—at a remove from the exigencies of history rendered any change as fundamentally detribalising, and instantiated Aboriginal subjectivities as an effect of constitution prior to the state.

Undoubtedly there were, of course, Aboriginal societies which were productive of certain kinds of subjects. One can read the many anthropological accounts produced in the 1930s and 1940s regarding the communities of the Northern Territory, some of which focused specifically on forms of law and political action. (Warner, 1937; Elkin, 1938; Kaberry, 1939; Thomson, 1949) This corpus of colonising texts sought to render such practices entirely knowable; to purport to capture these processes here would be to recuperate such a colonising practice. It is sufficient, for this article, to understand that the techniques of the settler state in this sphere were loosely based on an understanding of Aboriginal society principally derived from the work of AR Radcliffe-Brown. The inaugural Chair of Anthropology at the University of Sydney (1925–31), Radcliffe-Brown's model of the Aboriginal 'horde' represented Aboriginal society as an organic body, an almost faceless collective. His Australian horde, or the Aboriginal tribe as it came to be represented in administrative discourse, had to be governed at the level of the social organism. Intervention in social institutions could take place but, if destruction was to be avoided, only in a regulatory manner. (Radcliffe-Brown, 1930)

Indeed, for all the pretence to a penetrating anthropological knowledge, what went on in the reserves remained something of a mystery to the administrators of the Northern Territory. The colonial state's interventions, here, represented a post-panopticon technology of power, preferring to regulate what were objectified as elements of nature than to perform an exhaustive surveillance of each individual body. (Foucault, 2007: 49, 66) The Aboriginal tribe here marked a limit to sovereign power, in the same way that the boundaries of a reserve marked the limits of jurisdiction. It represented a population not as a set of individual subjects with relationships to the sovereign but rather as a 'set of elements' (social or customary institutions) 'with regard to which we can identify a number of modifiable variables on which it depends'. What we see here is a state regulation purely in the form of security, claiming never to operate in a disciplinary manner. (Foucault, 2007: 340) Central to this technology of security was the tribe, contained in reserves and understood as the social objects of knowledge and power. That is, the subjects of government in the reserves were tribal bodies. As I have discussed above, the development of the Northern Territory required the reserves to contain an 'active, contented, healthy and increasing group of people, a potential reservoir to keep the [pastoral] industry going'. (Berndt and Berndt, 1987: 31) Technologies of security, acting on Aboriginal reserve tribes, were thus mobilised in an attempt to achieve some stability.

In the logic of the Aboriginal New Deal, these Aboriginal people would essentially be left alone, 'preserve[d] as far as possible … in [their] … tribal state'. A practice of *laisser faire*, indispensable to the apparatus of security, characterised the 1939 policy for the settler government of the reserves. (Foucault, 2007:45) Aboriginal people in these reserves, imagined as uncivilised and ungovernable by a modern state, would be subjects of their tribes, ruled by a tribal order of traditional law and custom. The settler state would govern them, then, as a mass of individuals organically inseparable from the whole. This was representative of a common colonial trope of Indigenous social subjugation, translated into the practice of governmentality. What was demanded from Aboriginal people in the reserves, was an almost complete subjection. Such subjects could only speak from a position of compulsion, producing what Elizabeth Povinelli has termed 'unfree forms of determination'. (Povinelli, 2005: 161) Any individuation towards determining subjectivities came to be seen as denoting a move off the reserve, away from an 'authentic' Aboriginality.

The Mid-Point of the March: Degrees of 'detribalisation'

Beyond the Northern Territory's reserves lay a space of ambiguity, a contact or frontier zone in which change was occurring in ways that continued to elude control. Colonial knowledge was stretched to its limits in its attempts to account for this change. The Aboriginal New Deal was uncertain of its aims between the reserve and the town. Where it was sure was in the status of these subjects: they were to be works in progress, moving towards citizenship. A 'noble savage' may have figured in the political narrative of the time, but this was not a status to aspire to. In a 1939 speech, McEwen expressed regret that some Aboriginal people were being driven to 'ancient ways' rather than 'progressing' towards integration. He hoped that the Native Affairs Branch would remedy this situation, leaving such ways in the past. (DeMaria, 1986: 28)

As pastoralists were well aware, the station and stock camps contained many people entirely comfortable with moving between the station and the bush. They sought to ensure that, however comfortable that constant motion may be, there would be a general tendency away from the bush and towards a sedentary life; from the reserve into the town, via the station. Progress, here, would be driven by purposeful movement off the reserve and into the station camp. Work was an important element of Aboriginal people's progress from savagery to civilisation. It was labour that was central to the Aboriginal New Deal, and which, in settler eyes, would push Aboriginal people along the long march to assimilation. In the transition from a timeless and unchanging nomadism the discipline of labour was central. This transition would, however, take generations, as Aboriginal people were only to be partially and temporarily committed to labour.

The government of 'detribalised natives' was, then, premised on their progress. These were people who had left the reserve and lived around pastoral stations and rural towns, drawn in by a lack of economic options elsewhere, and coercive labour recruitment practices. The very term 'detribalised' suggests, as Frederick Cooper has argued in the African context, colonial officials' inability to come to terms with 'native' workers. (Cooper, 1996) Many could not comprehend a working, let alone wage-earning, Indigenous person; the existence of such people could only be explained by describing what they were not, irrespective of the ways such people considered themselves. Their proximity to and participation in labour, outside an Indigenous mode of production,

indicated movement and progress, but also the danger of degeneration.

The importance of work to the Aboriginal New Deal is shown in its architect Elkin's alignment of anthropology, administration and pastoral capitalism in his advice to two students as they commenced their fieldwork in the Territory in 1944:

The General Manager [of Vestey's] is just as aware as I am that the future of the Pastoral Industry in the North depends on the aborigines, on their welfare and contentment, and on their continuing to exist. … You should endeavour to keep up the supply of stockmen and other station employees. If aborigines were not forthcoming, you should study the sociological and psychological reasons and advise the General Manager or Managers on ways of improving the conditions and attitudes. If the population seemed to be dying out, you should also study the causes and suggest cures. … What we are aiming at is to build up a contented aboriginal community in the regions to which they are accustomed, and around the Pastoral Industry which they like. A wealthy firm like Vestey's gives us that opportunity. (Elkin to Berndt and Berndt, 30 May 1944, quoted in Berndt and Berndt, 1987: 32)

Here Elkin linked Aboriginal survival with labouring Aboriginal people. The focus of native administration would, therefore, be on developing Aboriginal communities as labour reservoirs, willing (and exploitable) labour forces for pastoral firms, in this case the British Vesteys company. This would, most importantly, ensure the pastoral development of the north. But it would also constitute the mechanism by which Aboriginal people would move forwards along the march to civilisation.

The pastoral station was thus a key 'locus of colonial power'. (Anthony, 2003: 298) It was also, as the anthropologist Ursula McConnell noted in 1936, a space of ambiguity: 'Backyards of cattle stations,' she wrote, 'dovetailed into the front gardens of the primitive hunting-areas'. (McConnell, 1936: 12) Indeed the work tasks themselves on cattle stations were tailored to specifically Aboriginal working subjects. In the absence of enforced lease conditions mandating land improvements, the northern cattle industry was established on the 'open range' system of extensive rather than intensive grazing. Large holdings were operated with limited investment in fencing, water supply and housing. This meant that the work was not dissimilar from the foraging, gathering and hunting that many Aboriginal people continued to do. Bill Harney, who worked at this time on various stations around the Territory, wrote that the 'cow and calf muster' was a time when the 'station blacks … enjoyed

a life similar to that which they once knew in tribal days'. (Harney, 1958: 40)Ann McGrath also notes that Aboriginal people in the Territory 'use the same terminology when referring to the hunting of native game and cattle management: "chasem round", "huntem down", "roundem up"'. (McGrath, 1987: 45)

This is not to say that Aboriginal workers slipped easily into the pastoral industry, continuing to perform tasks they had performed prior to invasion. the transfer of practices and skills from one mode of production to another did not render them identical. Workers remembered a regime of continual coercion and punishment: 'people being chained up; people being whipped for hand-pumping the well too slow, for getting in the way of the cattle when the cattle came to drink; thing like that. That was punishable by physical force, and most of the station owners practiced that.' (Kunoth-Monks, 1988: 4–5) One Territory resident of the 1930s wrote that:

I … can certify that a lot of unnecessary ill-treatment and cruelty is meted out to the natives and immoral use is made of the native women by white men. But I also maintain that natives need rather harsh and drastic treatment to keep them under control … (C Graham to *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 March 1932, NAA: A1, 1937/3013)

This 'treatment' was 'unnecessary' only when it was linked to extracting labour. But, this writer argued, it was necessary to establish and maintain white 'control'. When we see such extremes necessary for 'control,' we might expect to find a precarious basis of colonial power. Indeed, the pastoral station is best seen as a liminal space where settler authority was constantly disrupted by Aboriginal counter-conduct; refusals to become 'modern' on the terms demanded by whiteness, to 'progress' away from the 'tribe' and towards citizenship.

The pastoral station, and the rural town, represented an interstitial zone inscribed in the 'Aboriginal New Deal' as a point between the reserve and the town. That is, 'detribalisation' was made a temporary status on the march between the 'native state' and 'citizenship'. It was not, and this was a key point of contention, conceived as producing lasting subjects. It was to be no more and no less than an ambivalent interregnum on the passage to modernity. Aboriginal people neither confined in urban institutions nor on the reserves were thus the subjects of struggles over subjectivation within a discourse of inexorable development.

Attempts to identity forms of Aboriginal population tended to work at the intersections of subjectivity and location. But, the ontological categories of colonialism suffered from a conceptual inadequacy, never able to come to terms with Aboriginal people and the novel adaptations they were able to craft. This inadequacy was a point of anxiety. The categories of colonial knowledge foundered when they encountered instances of both Aboriginal otherness and articulation. Settler colonial discourse, then, failed to capture the new subjectivities developed in this settler colonial context, and under extreme conditions, by Aboriginal people. The grammar of race provided one such manner of representing these new subjects.

The 'half-caste': Symbolics of blood
In the interwar ideological context of racial codification, the figure of the 'half-caste' came to represent the anxieties of articulation. From the early 1930s, Cecil Cook, the Chief Medical Officer and Chief Protector of Aboriginals in the Northern Territory, was warning of the rapid increase of 'half-caste' populations in the Territory. He devoted much of his 1931–2 annual report as Chief Medical Officer to the 'problem'. In that year, the non-Aboriginal population (which was certainly not exclusively white) of the Northern Territory was 4549, including 2950 Europeans and a 'half-caste' population (considered in the census as non-Aboriginal) of 730. But the annual rate of increase per 1000 for the white population was only 0.3, compared with an increase of 16.2 per 1000 for 'half-castes'. At this rate, it would be only 13 years before the 'white race' was 'submerged'. Commonwealth of Australia, 1933: 3, 28; 1937: 14) Their remedies for this fear were the total institutions discussed below. (Department of the Interior, 1939: 9–10) As Patrick Wolfe has observed, the 'half-caste' was, in Australian settler discourse, crucially 'neither white nor black *nor* neither'. (Wolfe, 1999: 180) This represented an acknowledgement of the new subjects being brought into being in this specific conjuncture.

Such subjects are best understood not as retaining elements of a pre-colonial subjectivity, but rather as articulating Aboriginal and settler colonial social worlds in ways that generated new subjectivities that were rooted in both. Through a combination of the various disciplines and practices of the self, many Aboriginal people could make sense of their historical situation and maintain a newly Aboriginal process of subjectivation in changing circumstances and amidst new relationships and forces of power. Articulation, then, produced a subject that was at once colonial and Indigenous, marking a social change that was not totalising but rather constitutive of accommodation and

survival. (Hall, 1996) [3] The establishment of the Half-Caste Progress Association in Darwin in the 1930s marked one such incarnation of a new political subject, one that was troubling to the many white administrators who sought the biological and cultural assimilation of those they described as 'half-castes'. (Stanton, 1993) The articulation of different socialities was inscribed in the disciplinary apparatus of the state, limiting the efficacy of these technologies in a context of overlapping processes of subjectivation.

The problem, for the logic of the settler state, was this production of something new in a manner that suggested permanence. In much the same way as the 'half-caste menace' threatened the production of whiteness out of blackness, Aboriginal people's creation of a middle ground of shifting subjectivities— apparently between tribalism and citizenship but not seeming to move towards one or the other—was cause for profound unease. It is noticeable that in many instances the state responded to issues of liminality with attempts to instantiate secure categories.

These newly articulated Aboriginal subjectivities were so constantly threatening to the Aboriginal New Deal because they signalled the potential of failure. Unable to take Aboriginal people on their own terms, hybridity raised the spectre of atavism, of the impossibility of elimination. For all the narrations of a march from reserve to city, or tribe to citizen, there were no guarantees that this would occur. In this middle ground, the future was insecure, and settlers thus sought to transform this space from middle ground to frontier zone, mapping an imperialist teleology which overdetermined the resolution of contests in the domination of colonising interests. (Evans, 2001) But that they would have the final word was never certain, as Aboriginal people and communities continued to embody the irresolveable contradictions of post-frontier settler colonialism. This appears in the texts of the settler state as what Homi Bhabha has described as the ambivalence of colonialism in its discourse of mimicry: re-formed Indigenous people represented 'the Other *as*

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[3] This is a process that goes beyond what Foucault might term a resistance as an effect of power, or the 'unconscious resistance to a normalizing injunction' that Judith Butler draws from psychoanalysis, rather signalling a contestation of norms and a resistance that articulates different terms by which subjects are constituted. That is to say, the failure of settler colonial techniques of government to produce their subjects is an effect of not just a psychic residue of alienated narcissism, but also of a counter-conduct rooted in the norms and socialities of Indigenous communities. (Foucault, 1978: 94–6; Butler, 1997: 88–9)

a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite'. (Bhabha, 1994: 122) But it also suggests to us that the contest between settlers and Indigenous people over subjectivation was resolved at this time through a vulnerable articulation. It was in the towns, those urban spaces where government aspired to the greatest order and where, therefore, the sharing of space seemed most incongruous, that the greatest concentration on re-making this articulation and creating new citizen-subjects can be found. This was the finishing touch on detribalisation, a more subtly racialised mode of whitening Aboriginal subjectivities.

Urban Institutionalisation

In institutions like the Bagot Compound in Darwin, or the 'Half-Caste Bungalow' in Alice Springs—those urban institutions housing Aboriginal people—the new regime instituted in 1939 maintained much of the previous policy developed by Cook. Cook had been displaced by the new Branch of Native Affairs, partly because of his lack of attention to the reserves. But in his role as Chief Protector of Aboriginals from 1927–39 he did make a substantial imprint on the policing of race in urban settings, and his institutional regimes were largely carried on unamended. These institutions were the site of an unashamed assimilation, where Aboriginal people would be rendered white, in Cook's formulation, or citizens, in the terms of the 'Aboriginal New Deal'. This shift in the signifier of modernity, or assimilation, made the project clear. It would transform the subjectivity of Aboriginal people, producing citizens by breaking the link between them and their tribally bound 'predecessors'; those who were, in fact, often closely related family living nearby. Authority was, then, a crucial element in this transformation. These institutions sought to instantiate the settler state, embodied in its Matron or Superintendent, as the Law; that which hails its subject. This was, then, a process of replacement, supplanting Aboriginal communities' capacity to hail subjects.

The institutions themselves were often controversial spaces of confinement. The notorious Alice Springs Bungalow had been located in what was in 1933 a town of approximately 500 (non-Aboriginal) people. Situated across the road from a police station and behind the Stuart Hotel, near its urinals, the Bungalow provided little protection for its inmates from the white men of Central Australia, many of whom were implicated in the growing number of Aboriginal children with white fathers. Though moved ultimately to an old telegraph station three kilometres out of town, few conditions were improved. Indeed, the 'protectors' themselves were inevitably compromised: in 1934 the

Superintendent GK Freeman was convicted of sexually assaulting several of the young girls then in his care. The institution held Aboriginal children who had a white parent, those labelled 'half-caste' or, in the language of classificatory racial arithmetic, 'quadroons' or 'octoroons.' Inmates, numbering approximately 130 in 1935, had been rounded up by police or protectors and taken as wards of the state to the Bungalow, where they were available to work for white employers in town. Such employment was set out in policy as primarily educative: employers were selected if they would 'take a personal interest in the moral and physical welfare of the employee and … [would] so order their relations to the employee as to promote the latter's elevation to white standards of morality and general outlook'. (Cecil Cook, 'Duties of Matron, Half Caste Institution, Alice Springs,' c.1933, NAA: A1, 1935/643)

The Darwin Compound primarily housed Larrakiah people, the Indigenous people of the area, who were segregated outside the white city but were required to be kept close for labour. The Compound was originally located at Kahlin Beach, and was moved further out of town to the Bagot reserve in 1938 when the growth of Darwin, with a population of approximately 5000, expanded to incorporate the land on which the original compound was located. Inmates were subject to a strict regime of curfews (it was illegal for Aboriginal people to be on the streets of Darwin after sunset) and at times brutal punishment for disobedience, and seem universally to remember inadequate food and hunger. They slept on the floor, with no mattress or sheets, and women and girls were expected to clean each morning, sweeping the entire grounds in what must have been a repetitive pedagogical exercise in futility. By the 1930s, Aboriginal residents of the compound performed most of the domestic and manual labour required by Darwin, as well as maintaining the compound themselves. (Anderson, 1982; Buckle, 1990; Muir, 1979; Wells, 2000)

In studying such regimes, it may come as no surprise to note that Cook held the dual roles of Chief Medical Officer for the Northern Territory and Chief Protector of Aboriginals. Following his former mentor Raphael Cilento of the Australian Institute for Tropical Medicine, Cook conceived of Aboriginal people as the carriers of leprosy, hookworm, malaria, venereal disease and tuberculosis. 'All medical officers are agreed', he thus wrote, 'that the Medical Service must have full and undisputed control of natives if it is to pretend to perform this function of safeguarding the health of the white people.' (C E Cook to the Minister of the Interior, 2 September 1938, NAA: A452, 1952/541) Discipline of
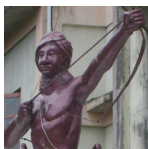
one segment of the population then translated into the care of the whole population or, rather, that segment on whose behalf government was conducted. The transformation of the Aboriginal population from a 'reservoir' of disease into something that could assist a healthy *white* race settling the north would necessitate a series of initiatives targeted at the Aboriginal body. (Cook, 1949) Imagining bodies in terms of sanitation and hygiene, as detailed in the plan discussed below, marked an important shift from the tropicalised anxiety over the ability of the white race to survive in Australia's north. This rendered the problems of white settlement eminently fixable: rather than seemingly immutable racial determinism, tropical difficulties became questions of Aboriginal sanitation (forms of segregation) and hygiene (practices of the self). Aboriginal bodies thus became the controllable sites of the colonial struggle: control and subjectivation would become the means towards white settlement. In the absence of the generalised capillary power Foucault described in *Discipline and Punish*, access to these bodies, and their production as the objects of a racialised medical practice, was best achieved in a series of concentrated, variably segregated, institutions.[4]

At the heart of institutionalisation was the attempted breakdown of collective subjects through individualisation. Institutions would codify and regularise a relation of power understood as 'a mode of action which does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead it acts upon their actions: an action upon an action, on existing actions or on those that might arise in the present or the future'. (Foucault, 1982: 220) Where technologies of security act on a population, discipline, on the other hand, acts on individuals as a 'a multiplicity of organisms, of bodies capable of performances, and of required performances'. (Foucault, 2007: 21) Discipline, that is, constitutes 'the individual as effect and object of power, as effect and object of knowledge'. (Foucault, 1977: 192; 2003: 29–30) It does not preclude the workings of the biopolitics of the population—they are different projects, but certainly not incompatible ones—but what we see in the interwar and post-war institutions of the Northern Territory is an emphasis on the discipline of individuated Aboriginal subjects, working to erase Aboriginality in such urban spaces.

In the Northern Territory, individual subjectivation, Cook had explained, could be achieved through a programme of education. His crucial educational task was to inculcate a 'knowledge of the significance of time and the value of money', to 'recognise the significance of contract', 'a high appreciation of the principles of hygiene and personal cleanliness' and eradicate any nomadic sentiment. This was a plan of disciplining new subjects, converting 'the detribalised aboriginal in town districts from a social incubus to a civil unit of economic value'. (Cook to Weddell, 7 October 1935, NAA: F1, 1938/46; Cook to Weddell, 8 July 1936, NAA: A1, 1937/70; 'Welfare of Aboriginals. New Settlement at Darwin,' Statement for Press, Department of the Interior, 29 June 1937, NAA: A1, 1937/70) These elements—time, money, contract and hygiene—constituted knowledge that, as Foucault has written in a different context, 'enables the subject not only to act as he ought, but also to be as he ought to be'. (Foucault, 2005: 318–19) These represented knowledge and practices that not only, and not principally, remedied an ignorance, but were conceived as fundamentally transforming.

The emphasis on total control was not, therefore, confined to the management of physical reproduction, also extending to social (re)production.[5] The invocation of a 'proper' understanding of time, money, contract and hygiene marked out the bounds of the modern, individuated subject to which Aboriginal people should, in this assimilationist plan, aspire. Money, here, was the key referent. In a long-lasting colonial discourse of Indigenous dispossession, it was not only a lack of property in land that signified a lack of civilisation, but the use of money, money constituting the basis of property and accumulation. Assertions that Aboriginal people could not appreciate the value of money therefore suggested they had no conception of property: they did not own the land being taken from them, and need not be paid for their labour.

In 1929, Bleakley reported that '[v]ery few natives understand the use of money or values of articles … The simple people of the Territories want more education before they can be safely trusted to handle even a part of the earnings in cash without benevolent

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[4] The discipline mobilised by the settler state was not spread throughout the Aboriginal communities of the Northern Territory; unlike the generalised panopticism Foucault describes as taking hold in nineteenth century France, here institutions were necessary exceptional sites. (Foucault, 1977: 198, 205)

[5] The interwar Australian state exercised an extraordinary control over Aboriginal reproduction. Criminalising certain couplings, and holding the power to refuse or arrange marriages, the Northern Territory administration participated in the macabre Australian project of 'breeding out the colour,' a project involving the abduction of children and the control of Aboriginal sexualities.

supervision.' Bleakley, 1929: 8) Similarly, JW Allen, spokesman for the Northern Territory Pastoral Lessees' Association, was of the opinion that without 'preparation' for money, payment of wages would cause 'more harm than good': 'In justice to themselves and the community they should be gradually led to the appreciation of money. Moreover money is too valuable in Australia to-day to permit of any unnecessary waste of it.' (J W Allen to Arthur Blakely, Minister for Home Affairs, 3 July 1930, NAA: A1, 1938/329) The institutions would provide training enabling Aboriginal people to work for wages, a necessary element of individuation and consequent citizenship. Money, in the settler imagination, represented an objectified and impersonal measure of value, constituted by alienation from the objects of one's labour; work for money was abstract, disinterested work, performed by commodified bodies and producing congealed value that could be appropriated by others.

Many linked, as did Cook, an inability to appreciate money to a failure in appreciating value in general. The popular view, as expressed by the Territory carrier Charles Chewings in 1936, was that Aboriginal people 'have no sense of value'; they thus 'squander' money and are unable to 'reflect and to think along lines we are used to'. (Chewings, 1936: 18, 119, 48) This was linked an inability to 'understand' time, or rather to quantify it in terms of valuable units to be spent. Valuing time would mean that one was occupied at all hours; in this discourse an appreciation of the importance of time would inculcate a work ethic of regularity. It would 'establish rhythms, impose particular occupations, regulate the cycle of repetition', thus ordering time in a way that conduced to individuals whose responsibilities were to this external, and supposedly objective, order rather than to their communities. (Foucault, 1977: 149)

Most importantly, such an appreciation of time would enable progress. 'The black,' asserted WH Grant of the Northern Territory Pastoral Lessees' Association, 'has no idea of saving up for tomorrow. If he has anything he must spend it.' (WH Grant in Notes on Conference regarding the payment of Halfcastes and Aboriginals in Country Districts, 1930, p 50, NAA: A1, 1938/329) In place of this apparent inability to understand the passage of time would be a mode that conceived time as moving forward. This not only imagined a distinct past, present and future, but oriented the subject as facing away from the past and towards the future; a very modern mode of progress. Individual wages for individual work would constitute a key element, representing free labour, a relationship of contract,

rather than the compulsion of individual subjection within a regime of status. The freely fabricated relations of contract relied upon the congruence of the unencumbered individual as the embodiment of freedom. This was subjectivation as replacement: together, money, time and contractual relations would establish an alienated objectivity as the repository of value, entirely replacing Aboriginal moral and philosophical worlds.

Such a system, based on measurable and hence commodified time and money, would imagine the commodification of labour. The image of the self as rational, atomised subject 'underlay the possibility that individuals could separate from the rest of their being, and sell, their labor'. Commodity production, involving the transfer of labour power from worker to capitalist, required standard measures to govern the exchange. (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1991: 64) Quantity of effort (time) and medium of remuneration (money), were thus both linked to the transformation of the subject into one able to alienate abstract labour. The administration thus moved to instantiate a process of subjectivation conducive to both the labour extraction of a slowly developing industrial capitalism, and the erasure of Indigenous presence on the land, this latter representing a counter-claim to white sovereignty.

The institution here sought to govern Aboriginal people as modern subjects, rendering settler colonial knowledge of Aboriginality as Aboriginal self-knowledge. We need, though, to recall, as Gyan Prakash has reminded us, that colonial government was reliant on what Partha Chatterjee has described as the 'rule of colonial difference'. (Chatterjee, 1993: 18) With such a reliance on coercion as a crucial element of alien rule, Prakash argued, colonial governmentality could never instantiate colonial knowledge as (native) self-knowledge, thus rendering moot colonial difference. Colonial governmentality was rather forced 'to occupy two positions at once': settler and native. (Prakash, 1999: 126–7, 260ff) This does not mean, however, that such transformation was not a goal of the state. The erasure of Indigeneity, which would then erase colonial difference, was the explicit logic settler colonialism. It manifested differently in the Northern Territory, when compared with the Australian south-east, but the contradiction appeared differently resolvable in Australia than in colonies like British India. Writing colonialisms into the history and histories of governmentality illuminates the manner in which sovereignty and biopower were mutually imbricated, manifesting differently in various social formations. In this particular context, the contradictory

workings of difference were productive of the ambivalence that appears in the settler colonial context as the trace of race in the discourse of citizenship.

The urban institutions discussed here represented the final stop on the long march to its end of citizenship. The nexus between civilisation and citizenship—the end point of the new policy—is both etymological and reiterated through the assimilationist imaginary. (McGrath, 1993: 100) As both Alistair Davidson and David Dutton have recently pointed out, prior to 1948 Aboriginal people were entitled to citizenship on the basis of the rule that made birthplace determining: *jus soli* meant that those born within Australia were conferred with citizenship, irrespective of parentage. (Davidson, 1997: 190; Dutton, 2002: 11) Chinnery agreed, writing in 1942 that '[t]he aboriginals are Australian citizens, entitled to the fullest possible consideration.' (Chinnery to Carrodus, 21 May 1942, NAA: F1, 1942/406)[6] This status was mediated by the legislative exclusion of all 'aboriginal natives' from any of the rights of citizenship, including the right to vote or to receive social security. Whatever the formal, legal status of Aboriginal people, it is clear that they were not substantive rights-bearing citizens. Rather, Indigenous people in this era represented the 'key boundary marker' of Australian citizenship. (Clarke and Galligan, 1995: 536; Chesterman and Galligan) Citizenship here was a trope representing on the one hand an expression of allegiance, and on the other a form of civic subjectivity or political, as distinct from pre-political, action.

This was a time when citizenship was, many white Australians believed, coming to be an entitlement dependent on level of civilisation. In 1938, the white activist Mary Bennett wrote to the Commissioner for Native Affairs in Western Australia, AO Neville, complaining that:

At this time when the whole world is revising interracial legislation, and there is noticeably throughout Australia a growing spirit of goodwill and fair play towards the native race, it is most unfortunate that Western Australia is discredited by legislation undertaken at the instance of the Commissioner for Native Affairs, making 'colour' and not 'civilization' the basis of citizenship – contrary both to the spirit and letter of our laws. (M M Bennett to A O Neville, 14 February 1938, Charles Duguid Papers, National Library of Australia, MS 5068/11/2)

It was not, for Bennett, a noted campaigner for Aboriginal uplift, that Aboriginal people were to be racially barred from citizenship. Rather, theirs was a question of qualification by level of civilisation. When Aboriginal people of the south-east claimed citizenship, then, they were challenging this notion of their inferiority. At the 1938 Aboriginal Day of Mourning marking the sesquicentenary of invasion, for example, a resolution was passed calling for 'a new policy which will raise our people to full citizen status and equality within the community'. Bill Ferguson, the Chair, rejected the need for training before attaining this goal: 'I ask you to support the resolution [to abolish the NSW Board of Protection], and not to worry too much about the stepping stone, that will take care of itself, when we have full citizen rights.' (Horner, 1974: 66) This was a political claim for rights, sidestepping issues of civilisation and subjectivation. But in official discourse, citizenship figured differently.

Citizenship, denoting a free relation to the state, necessitated not only a simple legal reform but the creation of new, *individuated* political subjects. 'Individuality', as Michael Clifford has argued, represents 'without doubt the principle and privileged register of political subjectivity in modern political philosophy'. The nexus between citizenship and modernity registers the *nation* as the privileged site for the enunciation of this new political subjectivity, the nation here counterposed to and superseding the 'tribe' or 'horde'. (Clifford, 2001: 5, 58) The disaggregation of Aboriginal communities into so many individual subjects represented the replacement of a supposedly archaic form of political subjectivity with modern subjection, thought as freedom.

The 'native' or 'tribal state' was conceived here as one of complete subjection to law or, rather, to custom. Custom, as Nicholas Dirks has argued in a different context, was a common colonial trope for such subjection; it worked by discursively 'creating a world in which agency and individuals did not exist', a 'society which was outside of history and devoid of individuals'. (Dirks, 1997: 201, 3) This state was counterposed to the citizen who, in modern political discourse, makes as well as follows the law. In Étienne Balibar's terms:

Formally speaking, that man ceases to be a *subjectus*, a subject, and therefore his relationship to the *Law* (and the idea of law) is radically inverted: he is no longer the man *called before the Law*, or to whom an inner voice dictates the Law, or tells him that he should recognize and obey the Law; he is rather the

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[6] Formally, there were no Australian citizens, rather British subjects, before the passage of the *Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948* (Cth).

man who, at least virtually, 'makes the Law', i.e. constitutes it, or *declares* it to be valid. (Balibar, 1994: 11)

In practice, however, race constituted a barrier between the subject and this inversion of the relationship to the law. In May 1939, the Australian cabinet considered and approved the standard set out by Chinnery, at the direction of McEwen, for qualification for citizenship. There would be, Chinnery estimated, 'probably not more than ten or twelve … aboriginals who would be entitled to citizen rights' in 'the whole of Australia'. (EWP Chinnery, 'Qualities Which Should be Held by any Aboriginal Requiring the Privileges of a European,' 5 April 1939, Chinnery Papers, MS 766/8/14; Department of the Interior, Cabinet Submission, 'Citizen Rights to Aboriginals,' 4 May 1939, NAA: A461, N382/1/1) But '[n]o responsible authority,' the Chief Electoral Officer for the Commonwealth reported in 1941, 'would seriously advocate the grant of all political and other rights, powers and privileges, with their concomitant obligations and liabilities, to aboriginals generally. To do so could only result in utter chaos and the opening of the way to extensive abuses.' (Chief Electoral Officer for the Commonwealth to Carrodus, 6 November 1941, NAA: A431, 1949/822) In the final instance, the creation of new Aboriginal subjectivities would not transcend race in the logic of the settler state.

Perhaps, though, this was merely indicative of the continuing inability of settler colonialism to completely reconstruct Aboriginal political subjectivities. The colonial state in the Northern Territory had long pursued what was, overwhelmingly, a project of replacement. [7] The Matron of the Bungalow's instructions were clear:

The Matron shall exercise a general moral supervision over all Half-Caste children detained in the Institution, and all Half-Caste girls employed in the Town of Stuart [renamed

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[7] '[S]ettler-colonialization is at base a winner-take-all project whose dominant feature is not exploitation but replacement'. (Wolfe, 1999: 163) The importance of citizenship here is exemplary. In a settler colonial formation, far from being a mark of decolonisation, citizenship is, as Ward Churchill has argued, conducive to the erasure of native sovereignty. (Churchill, 1985) In a colony like India, on the other hand:
Making up 'individuals' was an important agenda of nineteenth-century liberalism, but liberalism in the colonial context did not seek to create the citizen-individual, i.e., the individual as bearer of rights, but an individual who by being forced into a new sphere of commercial exchange would become the *Homo economicus* of the market economy.
(Kalpagam, 2000: 420) Such crucially different governmentalities are suggestive of the difference in modes of production and extraction of value in different colonial formations.

Alice Springs in 1933], and in particular is required to endeavour to elevate the Half-Caste to white standards of morality and general outlook taking the necessary steps to suppress smoking, bad language and the use of pidgeon [sic] English. …
No Aboriginal influence can be permitted to bear upon the inmates of the Half-Caste Home and the Matron is responsible for ensuring that children in the Institution have no association with Aboriginals. (Cecil Cook, 'Duties of Matron, Half Caste Institution, Alice Springs,' c.1933, NAA: A1, 1935/643)

In such a context, any contact with, or acknowledgement of links to, Aboriginal communities constituted resistance to the settler colonial project of eradicating Aboriginal subjectivities. And Aboriginal inmates did continue to have contact with their communities. Clarence Smith, who grew up in the Bungalow, remembered that:

We used to talk to these old people and they used to advise us not to be frightened of any Aboriginal whatsoever; that we were safe and we belonged to them; they wanted us to just live quietly and be one of them; not to be frightened of them 'cause they'll never ever hurt us. So that gave us a lot of confidence amongst the Aboriginal people. (Smith, 1988: 10)

There are many similar stories of inmates at Kahlin or Bagot maintaining contact with residents of Darwin's town camps. For some, this contact enabled a life outside the control of the institution and the articulation of Aboriginal subjectivities.

Moreover, it enabled the articulation of new Aboriginal subjectivities that carried more than simply a historical trace of Aboriginal communal belonging. In 1940, the *Northern Standard* reported that a number of 'half-caste' men and women entitled to vote had announced that they intended to vote informally or not to vote at all, apparently to protest 'their lack of full Australian citizen rights'. ('Treatment of Half-Castes,' *Northern Standard*, 20 August 1940, NAA: F1, 1940/807) This was read by Chinnery and Abbott as a rejection of modernity, of Aboriginal people's allegiance to others, however assimilated (white) they may have appeared in the logic of the state. It represents the politics of counter-conduct, pursuing the generation of novel modes of subjectivation against conditions of erasure, and the production of ever more elusive modes of Indigeneity despite all efforts of the state. (Chinnery to CLA Abbott, 26 August 1940, Chinnery Papers, MS 766/8/20; Foucault, 2007: 201–2, 17n, 31n)

Some Conclusions
Aboriginal counter-conduct thus disrupted the linear narrative of progress that the Aboriginal New Deal
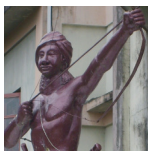
sought to instantiate both spatially and temporally across the Northern Territory. This collision of socialities was productive of new and ever-changing subjectivities. My account has followed different stages in processes of subjectivation, tracing the trajectory of this New Deal. Though I have told this story in a linear form, adopting the terms of the settler state in order to interrogate them, a more complete account might be told from a different perspective. Epeli Hau'ofa has suggested the model of the spiral to analyse the historical processes of change that are brought about by and within colonialism, connoting both cyclic and lineal movements and evoking the process of making futures through returns to, and glimpses of, pasts. (Hau'ofa, 2000) Such an account could better place Aboriginal action at the centre of its narrative.

But this study of the 1939 Aboriginal New Deal, in light of the varied processes of subjectivation it mobilised through technologies of government, represents an analysis of the particularities of the settler colonial state, of its 'art of government' in a specific place and time. The Northern Territory of the 1930s and 1940s represented a limit case for Australian assimilation, where the elimination of Aboriginal people could only be counterposed to development and where Aboriginal people were able to carve out spaces of autonomy in a national territory. As a space of ambivalence, the Northern Territory was likened at times to India or South Africa more than it was to Australia's south.

When looked at in this light, we do find the governmentalisation of the state, but in the form of a distinct colonial governmentality that recognised (racialised) difference in order to erase it. The settler state sought to supplant Aboriginal authority, if not immediately then at some stage in the future. It mobilised varied configurations of power in a teleological manner to produce this state, a modernity signalled by whiteness. New configurations would bring new technologies of government, creating new subjects who were the same, though not quite, as the white people whose presence signified to the official mind the coming of modernity to Australia's north. But as subjectivation formed a crucial element of the terrain of political struggle, the settler state could only achieve an articulation. What we find then, is a multiplicity of states, or authorities, and newly articulated subjectivities. However much the forces of settler colonialism sought to control this articulation, it remained always beyond its control.

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