

# critical indigenous studies

*From Difference to Density*

CHRIS ANDERSEN

Indigenous educational empowerment is reduced to the maintenance of a traditional identity because to be educated, according to the coloniser, means that we can no longer maintain it. Buried within this assumption is the idea that we are incapable of change or developing strategies for survival that enable us to extend on the multiple subject positions we have created through kinship and community politics.<sup>1</sup>

And so we return to the 'density of our [Indigenous] being'. Once we strip away the packaging of our commodified [Indigeneity]—the surface, the skin, the viscosity, the mask—we will discover in our density a more profound complexity, greater clarity and the potential for emancipation ... if we take our density seriously ...<sup>2</sup>

In two recent articles,<sup>3</sup> American Indian studies professor Duane Champagne challenges 'Western' academic disciplines' epistemological ability to analyse contemporary Indigeneity.<sup>4</sup> Specifically, their failure to consider Indigenous collectivities' active role in colonial contexts *in terms not readily discernable in Western forms of knowledge* means these disciplines miss large elements of Indigeneity and, as such, fail to offer a plausible basis for its analysis. Champagne contends that despite its current failure to do so, American Indian studies—extrapolated here to include all Indigenous studies—should instead assume this mantle by presuming the distinctive agency of Indigenous peoples, including a focus on exploring our relations according to our distinctive epistemologies and according to the goals and mandates set by Indigenous communities. Not only will this distinguish Native studies from the rest of the academia, it will better position it to assist Indigenous peoples in righting their relationships with dominant, 'whitestream' society.<sup>5</sup>

I agree with Champagne's assertion that Indigenous studies—whether within or outside specific departments and faculties—should exist in contemporary academia and that Indigenous communities ought to constitute a central focus to this endeavour. Despite his obvious love for the discipline (a fidelity I share), however, his peculiar positioning of Indigenous studies as *different* needlessly marginalises our *density* and, in doing so, unnecessarily gives ground to disciplinary turf long claimed by older disciplines. Thus, although he usefully positions Indigenous communities as producers of complex knowledge about indigeneity, his separation of Indigenous from white society unnecessarily marginalises two elements of our density critical to this relationship: 1) the extent of Indigenous communities' knowledges about *whiteness* (a social fact which requires an expertise in 'Western' concepts); and 2) the extent to which the production of *academic* knowledge through Indigenous studies is shaped by the 'whitestream' academic relations of power, marking it in tension with other forms of knowledge (such as community knowledge). Both are unfortunate omissions. Regarding the first, the epistemological *aprioris* of whiteness are a dominant representational source through which Western societies produce and consume Indigeneity. As such, Champagne recklessly jettisons so-called Western disciplinary concepts and methodologies as immutable precisely where and when they are most necessary. Regarding the second, he dismisses the contextual importance of accounting for the academic institutional conditions under which native studies units (are allowed to) exist.

My sympathetic critique of Champagne's argument is divided into three major parts and a conclusion. Part one extrapolates his analysis of current native studies and his prescriptions for how to fix it. In this context I examine his charge that 'Western' disciplines (anthropology, history, sociology and so on) are too epistemologically constricted to properly explain Indigenous agency or communities *and* I emphasise his failure to account for the conditions of possibility under which Native American studies entered into academic history (to borrow Foucauldian phraseology).<sup>6</sup> This latter element challenges the relationships he posits between both Indigenous studies and other academic disciplines and Indigenous knowledge within and outside the academy.

Part two unpacks his tropes to reveal an epistemological and ontological essentialism which positions Indigeneity as separate from (his notion of) colonialism, such that an endogamous focus on the former obviates the need for accounting for the influence of the latter (or at least, that native studies can analyse the former in a manner which separates it from the Western academic herd). I argue that Champagne reproduces a variant strain of 'Aboriginalism'<sup>7</sup> that oversimplifies contemporary Indigeneity and overstates the immutability of concepts emanating from existing 'Western' disciplines. In doing so, he unnecessarily limits the contributions Indigenous studies is ideally positioned to make in deconstructing Aboriginalist discourses and in doing so produces an oddly parochial formulation of the discipline.

Finally, in part three I offer my own prescriptions for an Indigenous studies anchored in Indigenous *density* (rather than difference). The temporal and epistemological complexity of our relationships with whitestream society means that Indigenous studies must counter hegemonic representations of Indigeneity which marginalise or altogether ignore our density. Following in the footsteps of Geonpul scholar Moreton-Robinson's path-breaking work, I argue that Indigenous studies' study of both Indigeneity and whiteness must use *all* available epistemologies, not just those which apparently distance Western disciplines from Indigenous studies analysis.<sup>8</sup> While Champagne's formulation can possibly be stretched to examine whiteness, the epistemological strategies he proposes for analysing Indigeneity capture only specific, isolated elements of our complexity. The essay ends with a discussion of the implications of this argument.

— I

#### LOCATING (CHAMPAGNE IN) THE DISCIPLINE OF NATIVE STUDIES

Native studies 'state of the discipline' pieces often begin by differentiating our scholarship from that of longer-standing disciplines.<sup>9</sup> Though these are as often prescriptive as reflective of actual practice, such immanent analysis signals a healthy and growing discipline. American Indian scholar Clara Sue Kidwell suggests that, at least in native studies, these debates often play themselves out in a tension between two poles of analysis: *essentialism/difference* and *adaptation/assimilation*.<sup>10</sup> She suggests that the essentialism cluster is rooted in an extreme form of post-colonialism which 'implies that American Indian ways of thinking existed before colonialism and remain unknowable by anyone outside those cultures. Native American studies/American Indian studies can recover the long-suppressed values, epistemologies, and voices from colonial oppression'.<sup>11</sup> Conversely, adaptation clusters typically emphasise the agency of Indigenous collectivities in the face of whitestream colonialism. Like the essentialism cluster, however, Kidwell argues that in its extreme variant:

the idea of adaptation, or acculturation, or agency represents the ultimate disappearance of Indian identity into American society. If Indians dress like everyone else, speak like everyone else, attend public schools, are citizens of the state in which they live and citizens of the United States, how can they justify claims to a distinctive identity?<sup>12</sup>

Like others taking the essentialist position in the debate,<sup>13</sup> Champagne contends that Indigeneity and Indigenous communities are fundamentally *different* in ways which elide the epistemological premises of Western disciplines (more on this in part two). These disciplines employ data collection concepts and practices saturated with a concern for 'examining the issues, problems, and conceptualizations that confront American or Western civilization'.<sup>14</sup>

Indigenous issues are merely positioned as a specific instance of more general patterns of minority oppression.<sup>15</sup> Such thinking has, he suggests, detracted intellectual energy from the more laudable Indigenous studies disciplinary goal of ‘conceptuali[s]ing, researching, and explaining patterns of American Indian individual and collective community choices and strategies when confronted with relations with the American state and society’.<sup>16</sup>

Champagne suggests that most native studies departments are multidisciplinary in character with faculty scattered in numerous disciplines teaching theories and concepts from numerous academic fields, to students as often as not from non-Aboriginal backgrounds, with a vague mandate for increasing or generating broader awareness about Indigenous history and contemporary realities.<sup>17</sup> He admits that this multidisciplinary is often advantageous in that ‘programs could be constructed from long-standing disciplines, and often seasoned scholars could be called upon to provide guidance and support’.<sup>18</sup> However, to the extent that concepts central to Western disciplines remain ‘oriented toward examining the issues, problems, and conceptualizations that confront American or Western civilization’,<sup>19</sup> these approaches effectively stifle the ability of American Indian studies to produce disciplinarily endogamous theory and methodology.

The existing Indigenous studies academic landscape is thus, Champagne explains, littered with disjointed and epistemologically scattered forays into (and about) Indigenous communities. The current inability to produce distinctive theory and method has exacerbated institutional marginality (his context is American but this is readily extrapolated more broadly): fiscal conservatism limits the likelihood that even well-meaning administrators will build-in the solid, permanent funding required for stable Native studies departments (since money made available for ‘Aboriginal issues’ is just as likely to go to more well-regarded disciplines such as anthropology, history or education); broader multicultural or diversity concerns overshadow the distinctiveness of Indigenous experiences by linking them to broader forms of ‘minority’ oppression (thus the seemingly natural fit of native studies departments within ‘ethnic studies’ faculties); and mainstream theorising and methodological thinking has shown a reluctance to ‘think outside the box’ of Western modes of analysis.<sup>20</sup> Champagne argues in a nutshell that:

the university bureaucratic environment, weak resource support, the emphasis on race and ethnic paradigms over an indigenous paradigm, and the relegation of Indian Studies to serve general diversity interests for the university will continue to constrain, and often will prevent, full development of indigenous studies departments and programs at many universities.<sup>21</sup>

Champagne’s understanding of native studies’ relationship to the academy is reminiscent of the humanism Foucault critiques in his examination of nineteenth- and twentieth-century

sexuality regulation.<sup>22</sup> Foucault takes such explanations to task for their tendency to position power repressively as an entity which prevents actions and curtails freedoms. Foucauldian notions of power instead stress its repressive *and* constitutive character. They emphasise how discursive power shapes the formation of subjectivities which, in turn, shape the conditions under which subjects 'enter into history'. Wedded to a repressive understanding of power, Champagne makes a homologous correlation between the current academic institutional marginality of Native studies and the forms of marginality Indigenous communities experience outside the academy. Thus correlated, he argues that a robust and holistic *Indigenous paradigm* can assist in rectifying this repression. For Champagne, then, academic and non-academic Indigenous knowledge are comrades-in-arms, with Indigenous studies—anchored in an Indigenous paradigm—providing the missing link.

In this guise, his Indigenous paradigm places *Indigenous communities and nations* at its centre, *instead of* colonial critique. Native studies, Champagne explains, 'cannot center on a critique of the colonial experience *but rather* must focus on the individual and community choices American Indians make to realize their culture, values, and political and economic interests within the constraints and opportunities presented by changing colonial contexts'.<sup>23</sup> While colonial critique can be useful for examining external forces relating to political, legal and market conditions, it 'exclude[s] choice and social action on the part of Native historical and cultural experience, and in effect American Indians are not analyzed as players in their own historical contexts but rather viewed as billiard balls knocked around by powerful colonial powers and forces'.<sup>24</sup> Champagne thus draws a clear distinction between, on the one hand, what he thinks Western disciplines, with their focus on colonialism, can explain about indigeneity and on the other, what makes Indigenous peoples *truly* Indigenous and, presumably, what these disciplines remain unable to explicate. Perhaps equally importantly, he assumes that such boundaries are discrete and readily discernable, such that he effectively erases the object–subject relationship within which all other academic disciplines produce knowledge.<sup>25</sup>

Champagne's ostensible focus on Indigenous communities reflects a central disciplinary trope of native studies. For example, Cook-Lynn states bluntly that 'Indian Studies as an academic discipline was meant to have as its constituencies the native tribal nations of America and its major purpose the defense of lands and resources and the sovereign right to nation-to-nation status'.<sup>26</sup> This emphasis on tribally specific knowledge is also emphasised by Muskogee scholar Craig Womack, who argues the need for 'more attention devoted to tribally specific concerns' in a literary context,<sup>27</sup> part of a larger 'literary nationalism' movement with broadly allied concerns.<sup>28</sup> Holm et al. argue even more specifically that native studies should emphasise the exploration and support of and for what they term 'peoplehood',

positioned to include language, sacred history, territory and ceremony,<sup>29</sup> while Kidwell suggests that native studies should endeavour to emphasise Indigenous relationships with land, the inclusion of Indigenous intellectual traditions, our inherent sovereignty and the importance of our Indigenous languages.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, while Champagne's focal concerns are not abnormal, his attempt to isolate Indigenous communities epistemologically from the broader social fabric of dominant, whiteman society effectively removes a large part of our arsenal for combatting the damaging representations of Indigeneity woven into larger society. Parts of his argument turn on the idea that colonialism exists external to Indigenous communities and nations, as something we are subject *to*. Thus, it isn't that we don't suffer (from) colonialism; rather, its power resides outside our communities. From this perspective, theories of colonialism are explanatory tools but are not enough in-and-of-themselves because their externality precludes their ability to fully comprehend and analyse our communities' distinctiveness. In line with the repressive formulation of power which anchors his understanding of Indigenous studies, for Champagne *colonialism = sameness/assimilation and indigeneity = difference/freedom*. I will have more to say on this below, but suffice it to say for now that his prescriptions become particularly problematic when he attempts to circumscribe the theories and methods native studies should use in analysis of/with Indigenous communities.

One can perhaps forgive Champagne's diagnosis in this context, since it represents only part of his argument and, as I said, is a common trope of Indigenous studies. However, consider a fuller example of his positioning of colonialism:

Colonial theories emphasize external forces such as political, legal, market, and cultural constraints and hegemonies to which American Indian communities are subject. Colonial arguments are powerful tools and explain much change in American Indian communities, but the kind of change that is explained is externally enforced and often coercive. Such change is often subtly resisted and not internalized. [footnote omitted] An old Spanish saying is 'I bend my knee but not my heart'.<sup>31</sup>

While his statements might legitimately swell our hearts with pride at the ways our ancestors resisted colonialism/oppression while retaining their dignity, traditions and collective self consciousness, they nonetheless avoid questions about how the cultural power of nation-states do not merely oppress, but seduce as well.<sup>32</sup> Champagne's essentialism in effect marginalises the complex ways in which our Indigenous *habitus* (to borrow from Pierre Bourdieu) is inevitably and irrevocably constituted in and by the fields of struggle we occupy.<sup>33</sup> His colonialism thus staggers between a vulgar Marxism which stresses an autonomous subject who can/must reject (or accept) colonialism and an equally vulgar structural-functionalism

that measures Indigenous agency and collective choices against a Cartesian indigeneity which exists outside the life and reach of contemporary nation-states' cultural power.

Champagne thus appears to suggest that we can determine colonialism's reach by the extent to which Indigenous individuals act according to colonial values *or* 'the influence of culture and community both past and present'.<sup>34</sup> Acting according to the former constitutes evidence of our subjugation (since to believe otherwise destroys his division between colonial and Indigenous-inspired action), while acting according to the latter demonstrates our freedom from these constraints. And while he acknowledges that Indigenous individuals and communities must rightfully decide these issues and that their choices may vary based on how they have transformed intergenerationally,<sup>35</sup> this stance hinders rather than helps his argument since it collapses the very analytical basis of his original division. That is to say, if, as he suggests, these decisions reside in the communities themselves, surely it is only a short step to pose similarly fundamental questions about what constitutes a legitimate Indigenous community. Champagne's argument, however, doesn't allow us to ask such questions: in fact, he largely presupposes that we already know the answers. His tendency to treat Indigenous communities and nations as pre-ordained 'things' rather than, like all supposed 'facts', power-laden processes, greatly impoverishes his analysis of the conditions of possibility that produce collective meaning and, inevitably, the kinds of boundaries which are drawn.

Champagne's position, though muddled and in parts contradictory, is thus premised on the notion that concepts central to such 'Western' disciplines as anthropology, history and sociology (to name a few of the usual suspects) cannot 'offer a holistic approach that centers American Indian communities and interpretations' because such disciplines are focused on understanding American (rather than Indigenous) society.<sup>36</sup> The use of concepts like race, ethnicity or nation thus leaves Western scholars ill-equipped to produce the robust, endogenous scholarship required to do justice to the distinctiveness of our Indigeneity or Indigenous studies. This is part and parcel of his larger positioning of Indigenous studies according to a construction of power in which Western concepts repress Indigenous ones and Western disciplines marginalise Indigenous studies. The primary task of Champagne's Indigenous studies, then, is to uncover and remove the conditions of this repression, a task which, in turn, assists in restoring Indigenous nations to their rightful place in relation to dominant society. Likewise, the distinctively Indigenous theory, methods and foci used to root out the conditions of this repression will create a respected niche for Indigenous studies within the academy.

Examining Champagne's formulation with a sceptical eye, however, reveals his argument's teleological naivety. If we begin with the more complex assumption that power is both productive and repressive, enabling and constraining, the extent to which Indigenous studies

can structurally position itself to perform the tasks Champagne asks of it becomes doubtful. Indigenous studies is subject to the same conditions of possibility that enable and constrain other academic disciplines, such that important questions arise about the conditions through which Native studies gains legitimacy as an academic discipline, the kinds of qualifications Native studies faculty must possess, and the ways in which Indigenous epistemologies can be pedagogically transmitted in the academy. This is perplexing but not especially surprising given the genealogy Champagne and others attributed to the growth of Native studies in the academy.

Native American studies programs emerged on 1960's university campuses as part of the larger processes of civil rights and anti-war activism. Given the extent to which these departments and programs entered into a battleground already scarred by centuries of academic knowledge production about Indigenous peoples, the early years of Indigenous studies 'constituted more a response to established paradigms of knowledge than an intellectually coherent statement of Native ways of seeing the world'.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, early Indigenous studies faculty debated the extent to which colonial institutions like the academy, partly responsible for the latent Orientalism that shaped dominant perceptions of Indigeneity, could even constitute an effective vehicle for redressing these perceptions. Cook-Lynn suggests acerbically that 'academic situations have never been the "ivory towers" they've claimed to be, that they have always had a political agenda, one that has been in serious conflict with the interests of native populations and Native Studies'.<sup>38</sup>

Interestingly, Kidwell, Champagne and Cook-Lynn—all progenitors of North American Native studies—each position Indigenous studies' rise as hanging from the coat-tails of broader 'affirmative action', diversity and multiculturalism movements.<sup>39</sup> Champagne's critique of the current state of the Indigenous studies discipline emphasises the troubled relationship between Indigenous and ethnic studies, referring to the former as 'the intellectual and policy stepchild of the ethnic studies movement'.<sup>40</sup> American Indian inclusion as part of the larger inclusion of ethnic minorities has become particularly problematic from a disciplinary standpoint, he argues, because the ethnic studies' disciplinary models of 'assimilation, inclusion, or perhaps renationalization' stand in stark contrast to the Indigenous community's stance apart from US society (or at least, who wish to negotiate to dominant American society on their own cultural terms). For example, Champagne suggests that '[o]ften an Indigenous studies approach has little in common with ethnic studies theory, methods, and policy, and therefore makes substantive research and teaching in common with ethnic studies very difficult, and disorienting for students who want to study Indigenous studies approaches'.<sup>41</sup>

Though I argue in part three that these issues are complex and require an acknowledgement of the deeply complex relations between Indigenous communities and whitestream



society, in part two I explore the *apriori* logic which buttresses Champagne's answer(s) to these questions. In particular, I demonstrate how his analytical tack produces an emphasis on Indigenous *difference* which vastly oversimplifies the complex set of relations within and through which contemporary Indigenous collectivities and their histories are represented.

## — II

### THE ANALYTICAL POVERTY OF WESTERN ACADEMIA—INDIGENEITY AS *different*

Champagne's abstraction, imprecision and internal contradictions make it difficult to produce definitive conclusions about his work. However, *Indigeneity-as-different* constitutes a major staple of his argument and even a sympathetic reading requires some agility to avoid the essentialism which grounds it. My point is this: Champagne's argument that the 'continued emphasis on how race and ethnic identity in mainstream institutions tends to overshadow the less well understood perspectives of an Indigenous paradigm grounded in the cultures, sovereignty, identities, land, and nation building of indigenous peoples'<sup>42</sup> loses its relevance if it fails to include a precise explanation of what the latter terms mean *and how they differ* from 'race' and 'ethnic identity'. His repeated failure to delineate them leaves little analytical purchase to deal with the complexities of being Indigenous in modern, Western societies, either with respect to how we identify ourselves, how we critique dominant, whitestream representations or how we employ Western discursive authorities in our daily struggles. For example, Champagne proposes that '[i]mproving existing theories or categorizations [of Western disciplines] will involve significant revision, and it is doubtful that existing theories can conceptualize or explain the cultural, land, self-government, and colonial histories of Indigenous nations';<sup>43</sup> and further, that 'most current theories do not provide powerful enough tools for explaining the Indigenous experience'.<sup>44</sup> One of many questions which arise from such statements, of course, is the extent to which Indigenous studies—which must necessarily place itself within the same academic relations of power that shape 'Western' disciplines—can under *any* circumstances cash the kind of cheque Champagne is writing on its behalf (more on this in part three).

Of more immediate concern: given that Native studies must operate within the forms of power and associated conditions of possibility that characterise other academic disciplines, what allows it to step outside in ways the other disciplines cannot? For Champagne, it is our valorisation of *Indigenous epistemologies*. Given the centrality of his criticism of Western concepts, his positioning of their central terms deserves to be quoted in their full length, precisely because they explicate the conceptual bases from which he launches his critique of Western disciplines:

*race*: 'Race and critical race theories focus on marginalization of socially conceived racial groups and provide critiques of dominant group methods of oppression and control ... the focus of race and critical race theories tends to assume achievement of equality and inclusion into US society as a primary goal. Such goals of social equality are taken up by some American Indians, but race and critical race theories do not conceptualize or center collective American Indian goals such as preservation of land, self-government, and reclaiming culture';<sup>45</sup>

*class*: 'while helpful, class theory provides little conceptual or explanatory power for understanding American Indian emphases on reclaiming culture and collective tribal forms of economic organization';<sup>46</sup>

*ethnicity*: 'Theories of ethnicity focus on group organization and culture but do not include issues such as collective land retention and institutions of self-government';<sup>47</sup>

*nation*: "'Nation" is a term often used in Indian country today partly because the expression makes sense in English and in American culture for a political grouping, but its meaning may have powerful cultural meanings for many American Indian communities that are not implied in the English expression';<sup>48</sup>

*post-modernism/post-colonialism*: 'are imbued with the deep social epistemologies of Western society. There is much emphasis on marginalization, generally in materialistic forms, and on emancipation and liberation from oppression. Such arguments make sense given the economic and colonial conditions under which indigenous peoples often live, but the goals of the theories should not be imputed to be the goals and values of many indigenous peoples and communities'.<sup>49</sup>

Given the apparent inadequacy of these concepts in Champagne's argument and his stated focus on Indigenous communities and nations, what is he left with in his pursuit of an academic basis for Indigenous studies? His looming but largely unacknowledged essentialism leaves him—as essentialism usually does—with an emphasis on Indigenous *difference*. Champagne repeatedly stresses elements which supposedly render Indigenous communities and cultures different from settler society and its communities: for example, our collective forms of governance, collective land retention and institutions of self government, the centrality of non-human powers and the importance of balance between human and non-human powers, all sit outside the ability of Western disciplines to analyse.<sup>50</sup> Thus, the epistemological (and, one assumes, ontological) commitment of concepts of race, class, ethnicity, nation and culture to Western society—to assimilation or renationalisation—precludes the 'deep cultural or institutional perspective of American Indians or center American Indian history or individual, group, or cultural experiences'.<sup>51</sup> They fail, for example, to

'emphasize ways of life that seek spiritual or moral balance with the human and non-human forces of the world'.<sup>52</sup> Perhaps equally importantly, (Champagne's) American Indian communities are, he tells us, likely to find such concepts troubling insofar as they rely on 'epistemological assumptions usually alien to those made in American Indian communities and traditions'.<sup>53</sup>

Few Native studies practitioners would quarrel with Champagne's argument that Indigenous communities differ in fundamental ways from dominant, whitestream society. This acknowledgement, however, is accompanied by two rubs. First, in the specific context of the academy, in his failure to explain *specifically* why Indigenous studies as a discipline should hold a privileged place in the academy to render pronouncements regarding the authenticity of this difference. Second and relatedly, Champagne unproblematically conflates community Indigeneity with its academic manifestation and in doing so reproduces the very same epistemological power of whiteness (at the heart of all academic disciplines) he critiques in his original formulation. What epistemological distances exist between academic and community knowledge? Where can we place Native studies in this continuum? Champagne doesn't answer these questions because for him, the latter question is, in an ideal world, a solution to the former: Native studies is Indigenous knowledge in the academy.

Champagne's failure to account for the constitutive character of power which shapes 'academic Indigeneity' pushes his argument unnecessarily and uncomfortably close to an 'Aboriginalist' logic which locates Indigeneity by precisely what, apparently, it is not: *white/capitalist/secular/modern*. Certainly, his intentions differ from those of colonial administrators who sought to destroy our distinctiveness, disregard our complexity and produce representations which apparently reaffirm(ed) their superiority over us. Nonetheless, his essentialism effectively marginalises 'dynamic, kinetic, and unfolding [Indigenous] voice[s]'<sup>54</sup> at a time when many (including Champagne himself) have laboured so intensively to interrogate and denaturalise such static representations. Perhaps equally importantly, his analytical lens remains focused solely in the direction of Indigenous communities and in so doing handcuffs our ability to undertake an immanent deconstruction of Indigenous representations produced in and by white society.

Champagne's argument is clearly dedicated to clearing intellectual space for an Indigenous studies willing to do the heavy lifting involved in exploring and analysing what 'the Western gaze rarely acknowledges' (see below) by using distinctive theoretical and methodological tools apparently unavailable to Western disciplines. We might, then, merely (if generously) read Champagne's argument as advocating that a proper study of contemporary Indigeneity requires both Indigenous *and* Western epistemologies. This strand of his argument, though abruptly anti-essentialist and almost wholly at odds with his earlier discussion, appears

reasonably to suggest that Indigenous communities are not so different after all, and certainly allows him to avoid his articles' more essentialist moments.

However, this move paints Champagne into another, equally tricky corner. If Indigenous communities are not essentially *different*, on what epistemological basis can Indigenous studies stake a theoretical or methodological claim separate from those of other disciplines? With all due respect to Champagne, we can no longer base such a claim around an ability to ask questions about Indigeneity in ways Western disciplines cannot, since that ship sailed when he cracked open his positioning of Indigeneity to all epistemological corners. Likewise, he has a larger problem which, perhaps ironically, stems from this same stated centring of Indigenous communities. Though in placing our communities front and centre he rightfully positions us as knowledgeable, agentic subjects, his argument narrows this knowledge to what we know about *ourselves* and presents no sustained analysis of our equally important knowledge about *whiteness*. This latter task requires expertise in the very 'Western' disciplinary concepts he dismisses. In doing so, Champagne places us outside of the regimes of power which accord these concepts their currency. In a phrase, Champagne has valorised our *difference* at the expense of our *density*. The third and final part of the paper will address these issues.

### — III

#### INDIGENOUS STUDIES AS INTERROGATING WHITENESS: AN APPEAL FOR DENSITY

In the paper's previous section I argued that Champagne's argument relies on a humanist conception of power to spot-weld together an uncharitable and undertheorised analysis of 'Western' concepts with an unfortunate and dated emphasis on Indigenous *difference*. Roughly hewn as it is, his argument nonetheless eludes easy analysis since its lesser strands appear to recognise the contingency of Indigeneity/difference in relation to its interaction with settler society. Still, his stressing of our difference marginalises the extent to which Indigenous peoples and our communities—central to his configuration of Native studies—are knowers not just of Indigeneity, but of whiteness as well. In this way—Champagne's criticisms notwithstanding—Indigenous studies' location in the very same regimes of power as 'Western' academia requires that its practitioners avail ourselves of the symbolic power of, and launch part of our critique using, a vast array of knowledges, virtually all of which he dismisses.<sup>55</sup> This complexity is a central element of our collective *density*, a term I explain with more specificity next.

In an elegant analysis of a conceptual artist's series of drawings dedicated to what he terms the 'the continual dissipation of dense black being',<sup>56</sup> the noted African American studies scholar Robin Kelley remarks that:

The drawing is a close-up or cross section of struggle—not just political struggle but the struggles of everyday life. Their gestures range across the gamut: fighting, dancing, begging, cajoling, teaching, thinking, loving. And these are the human gestures that tend to lie beneath the surface of our dense black being, the sources of our creativity and desire that the Western gaze rarely acknowledges.<sup>57</sup>

Kelley's conception of density allows him to step *outside* the Orientalist discourses which comprise and circumscribe (American) blackness—'the desire that the Western gaze rarely acknowledges'. This density is constituted through the numerous subject positions which blackness occupies in its modernity. It harkens to a blackness which eclipses staid tropes to come to terms with a more serious and infinitely less schematic *livedness* which defies easy (academic) description. This more recent thinking echoes his earlier, celebrated text on black authenticity in the US, where Kelley suggested that 1970s social scientists reduced blackness to ghetto culture, which in turn was ordered according to more or less tacit social disorganisation theses which perceived it either as a manifestation of individual pathologies (drugs or sexualised behaviour) or as a reaction to and means of enduring poverty and racism.<sup>58</sup> Like blackness, Indigeneity is far more complex than revealed through a discussion of our difference.

Certainly, dangers exist in qualifying Indigenous experiences in terms of the forms of oppression impacting other racialised entities, like African-Americans. Indeed, Champagne's point is precisely that Western disciplines' failure to understand Indigeneity results in part from the fact that they position Indigeneity as though it were merely a specific instance of more general sets of structural imperatives (whether ethnic, racial or national). Nonetheless, whitestream representations of blackness operate along epistemological and ontological taxonomies familiar to those ordering Indigeneity, making my comparison a danger worth risking. Like blackness, Indigeneity is often (still) positioned in opposition to white/colonial identity along a series of binary oppositions which labour to reaffirm the supposed superiority of the latter over the apparent primitiveness of the former. And like blackness, Indigenous complexity has been reductively fixed in time and space through apparently objective, logical markers used to bear the discursive weight of our authenticity and legitimacy.<sup>59</sup>

According to Geonpul scholar Aileen Moreton-Robinson, these images and representations hold in common a marked similarity within a larger, colonially inscribed regime of whiteness.<sup>60</sup> She posits the 'unnamedness' of whiteness as a means through which dominant representations of Indigeneity are positioned as authentic, objective and 'true' at the expense of Indigenous knowledge production, either about ourselves or about others. In colonial nation-states, such fundamentally *partial* normativity is nonetheless positioned as a natural and universal entity through which whites are positioned as 'knowing subjects' about—and in

juxtaposition to—Indigenous people. This universality is (unconsciously) invested in by whites, and in its guise ‘racial superiority becomes part of one’s ontology ... and informs the white subject’s knowledge production’.<sup>61</sup> This presumptive superiority anchors and shapes white recognition of the normative, social and legal boundaries of class, race, gender, and, ultimately, citizenship.

Two related elements of Moreton-Robinson’s argument about the unacknowledged power of whiteness are of particular salience in problematising Champagne’s formulation of Indigenous studies. First is her notion that Indigenous peoples are situated as objects rather than subjects or ‘knowers’ of knowledge about Indigeneity *or* whiteness. Since, as Moreton-Robinson notes, whiteness was universalised to represent humanity as a whole, it produced with it divisions regarding not only how valid knowledge is produced but who can produce it. Second, she argues that the looming overdetermination of whiteness circumscribes even well-meaning attempts to come to grips with it, such that Indigenous intellectuals are often positioned as outside the existing disciplinary regime which produces white academics. This limits the ways in which we can engage in critique as *Indigenous* scholars. Traces of each of these logics are present in Champagne’s formulation of Indigeneity and Indigenous studies and these would, I argue, unnecessarily limit its place in academia.

Regarding situating ‘Indigenous peoples as knowers’, Champagne’s argument takes us part of the way. As Indigenous people we are likely to know things about our Indigeneity which sit outside the ability of Western disciplines to discover or analyse with proper complexity (though my use of ‘we’ is obviously complicated). Couched in a fairly straightforward standpoint epistemology, Champagne thus maintains that Indigenous studies should earn its disciplinary stripes by making this ontosociological point the centerpiece of its theoretical and methodological trajectories. I think he is wrong to assume that Indigenous studies can undertake this task in ways precluded by the epistemological limitations of ‘Western’ disciplines, but his heart is in the right place, so to speak. However, his emphasis on the distinctiveness of Indigenous knowledge doesn’t go far enough in that he doesn’t consider the ways in which Indigenous knowledge about *whiteness* can be used to ‘disrupt its claims to normativity and universality’.<sup>62</sup>

Moreton-Robinson’s point is precisely that as Indigenous peoples we are well aware of and deeply steeped in knowledge about whiteness—how it operates, what it takes for granted and the gaps, silences and illogicalities of its presumptive truths. She argues that despite the fact that the ‘knowledges we have developed are often dismissed as being implausible, subjective and lacking in epistemological integrity ... colonial experiences have meant that Indigenous people have been among the nation’s most conscientious students of whiteness and racialisation’.<sup>63</sup> Fiona Nicoll argues similarly that the ‘fact that it is possible for Indigenous and/or non-white people to know [whites] demonstrates that epistemologies do

exist outside the scopic regimes of Western modernity'.<sup>64</sup> Although critiquing whiteness according to Indigenous epistemologies accords with the general logic of Champagne's argument, he spends little time pointing his analytical lens in that direction. Both Moreton-Robinson and Nicoll flesh out the implications of this argument to demonstrate that Indigenous studies cannot be solely concerned with 'focusing on the continuity of land, community, self-government, and culture, present[ing] a new and alternative way to understand social groups' if those social groups are *only* 'indigenous peoples, and their struggles in the contemporary context of nation-states'.<sup>65</sup>

Thus, teaching about whiteness, how whiteness frames Indigeneity and how Indigenous people know whiteness should stand as a central component of the discipline of Indigenous studies. In offering Indigenous studies the option of focusing on Indigenous communities *or* on a critique of colonial society, Champagne thus offers us a false choice. A sophisticated Indigenous studies discipline must focus on Indigenous communities *as a critique of colonial society*. Champagne's separation of Indigenous and colonial, assimilation and difference, oppression and freedom, does little to contextualise the conditions of possibility within which Indigenous academics are allowed to be both Indigenous and academic (let alone the complicated issues which arise from non-Indigenous academics doing Indigenous studies scholarship). And, by intimating that Western concepts stand in contrast to Indigeneity, he denies Indigenous studies academics the level playing field so crucial to our launching of critiques.

Moreton-Robinson thus hits the nail on the head when, in challenging a review of one of her books, she questions the reviewer's criticism of her use of conventional academic rhetoric as appearing to argue that 'Aborigines only speak with a colloquial flavour and, by implication, when we use conventional and or academic language we become less Aboriginal'.<sup>66</sup> Torres Strait Islander scholar Martin Nakata argues similarly that the 'issue for Indigenous scholars is one of how to speak back to the knowledges that have formed around what is perceived to be the Indigenous positions in the Western "order of things"'.<sup>67</sup> It makes no sense to argue, as Champagne does, that terms like ethnicity, race, nation or post-modernism are doomed by their institutional genealogies. Not only should Indigenous studies practitioners and students understand such terms and their impact on the study of Indigenous communities, these terms and the social relations encapsulated in them comprise an important part of the *density* of contemporary Indigeneity. *They are part of what makes us Indigenous*. Writing off these concepts as less useful than other (unnamed) concepts, as Champagne does, is the analytical equivalent of burying our heads in the sand. *Aprioris* don't simply evaporate when we fail to problematise them; rather, they niggle their way further into the foundations of discursive representations, insulating themselves from critique. This is the power of whiteness. Although Champagne appears to presume that we can step outside its power, it doesn't necessarily make it so.

— CONCLUSION

By way of conclusion, let me offer some thoughts on where my removal of *difference*—a central pillar of Champagne's Native studies—leaves us with respect to fashioning a discipline which can honour our past complexity while accounting for its contemporary and future manifestations.<sup>68</sup> Champagne spends much of his analytical time arguing that Western concepts and disciplines are of only limited use to Indigenous studies because they fail to account for the distinctive needs, aspirations and epistemologies of Indigenous communities. A proper Indigenous studies discipline must thus produce:

points of view and conceptualizations drawing on the everyday strategies and conceptions of American Indian communities that require mainstream academics and policy makers to rethink and extend the views of indigenous groups, as a means to include their views and socio-cultural actions outside the use of class, ethnicity, race, and even nationality. Native American Studies, and more generally indigenous studies, calls for conceptualizations and strategies that encompass issues, rights, and strategies of political, cultural, and territorial survival.<sup>69</sup>

He thus positions Native studies (a position familiar to Native studies practitioners) as a dog on the leash for Indigenous communities and nations. Such a position offers little in the way of analysis about the complexity of academic/community relations but it certainly *feels* good to say. He doesn't appear to realise the extent to which analysing such a relationship necessarily requires sliding into disciplinary territory long claimed by other disciplines. If his point is that as Indigenous studies practitioners we need to claim this territory as our own, I am in full agreement. My point is merely that staking such a claim requires *none* of the epistemological baggage he wants to pack for the journey, and indeed raises troubling issues that require us to carefully *unpack* what he proposes to bring. Two of these are worth unpacking here.

First, the community/academic relationship which appears to anchor Champagne's formulation is problematic in that it ignores the ways that whiteness in the academy shapes the boundaries of its knowledge production in ways which do not necessarily subscribe to the regimes under which community knowledges are produced: Moreton-Robinson contends quite rightly that such representations 'may not reflect the same knowledges about authenticity that are created and deployed within and by Indigenous communities and as such they may not be acceptable'.<sup>70</sup> In ignoring this complexity, how on earth is Champagne to deal with the conflicts that inevitably arise? It does little good to acquiesce to one discourse or the other (though more often than not academic representations are given the nod), nor can we pretend that such differences are always reconcilable. These conflicts



arise in situations pertaining to fundamentally *irreconcilable* positions on precisely the relationships between humans and nature (as Champagne points to) but they can also arise in more mundane situations, such as how to provide honorariums for elders involved in research projects in ways which don't claw back from their monthly social assistance cheques.

Second, even (or especially) if Indigenous studies is a dog on the leash for Indigenous communities and nations, why does this necessarily require an entirely new set of theoretical or methodological precepts that differ from those of mainstream disciplines? I agree with the broad strokes of Champagne's argument about constructing a specific niche for ourselves in the academic, as do many other Native studies practitioners. But many of us have been involved in situations in which an Indigenous community has approached our department to ask for research assistance for mundane issues about collecting data on telephone or internet use in their community; proper application of census documents to produce the robust statistical profiles through which they interface with government funders; water purity samples to make determinations of water safety; or even archival documents to assist them in legal battles over hunting, fishing and other resource extraction questions. Although the disciplines of sociology, biological sciences, history or anthropology could and have undertaken this assistance, so can many existing Indigenous studies departments. It seems inherently strange to call for a theoretical and methodological orientation—and thus, according to Champagne, a discipline—which possessed none of this capability. His model presupposes the *difference* of Indigenous communities and in doing so slams the shutters closed on forms of expertise which might nonetheless prove of central concern to the communities.

Champagne contends that 'the issues confronting indigenous peoples are not reducible to race, class, ethnicity or other common analytical dimensions in use within mainstream disciplines'.<sup>71</sup> The problem, from an epistemological standpoint, is that no issues of *any* peoples can be reduced to these factors. Concepts—all concepts—are by definition schematic and as such are laughably simplistic in the face of the enormous complexity of human life. This complexity requires us to acknowledge that Indigenous communities are—and have been for centuries—more than the 'holistic, institutionally nondifferentiated' entities in which 'knowledge is inherently integrated with community, culture, and political and economic relations'<sup>72</sup> painted by Champagne. Thus, although not fully captured by terms like race, ethnicity or class, such terms nonetheless assist greatly in reflecting upon the relationships between our communities and the various nation-states, and not only because they possess symbolic power in dominant society.

The real irony of Champagne's model of Indigenous studies is that his choices of *analytical* focus require none of the theoretical or methodological prescriptions he begs of them. For

example, his most prominent critique of Indigenous studies—that a ‘cacophony’ of theoretical and methodological tools will ‘doom’ it to institutional marginality<sup>73</sup>—is usually emphasised as a disciplinary strength. Thus, Indigenous studies scholar Jace Weaver writes that:

in dealing with the totalizing systems that we know as Native cultures, each view from traditional disciplines is limited and partial, NAS must draw together the various disciplines and their methods in order to achieve something approaching a complete picture of Natives, their cultures and experiences.<sup>74</sup>

This isn’t an issue for Champagne, apparently, since his positioning of Indigenous communities strips them of any of the epistemological complexity that would require us to intrude on others’ disciplinary turf. He sees this as his model’s strength but in fact it becomes its Achilles heel. By beginning with the assumption that Indigenous communities are epistemologically *dense* (rather than just *different*), however, Weaver’s appeal for interdisciplinarity becomes vital. Indeed, failure to account, interdisciplinarily, for this density elevates the danger of producing a naive, substantialist and ultimately parochial Indigenous studies.

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CHRIS ANDERSEN is Michif (Métis) from western Canada. He is an associate professor in the Faculty of Native Studies, University of Alberta. His work revolves around the (il)logics of race buttressing state/administrative constructions of the category ‘Métis’, particularly in the juridical and census fields.

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1. See Aileen Moreton-Robinson ‘Whiteness, Epistemology and Indigenous Representation’, Aileen Moreton-Robinson (ed.), *Whitening Race: Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism*. Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2004, p. 87.
2. This is a respectful abuse of noted African-American Studies scholar Robin Kelley’s original quote: ‘And so we return to the “density of our black being”. Once we strip away the packaging of our commodified blackness—the surface, the skin, the viscosity, the mask—we will discover in our density a more profound complexity, greater clarity and the potential for emancipation produced by our good death. If we take our density seriously ...’, Robin Kelley, ‘On the Density of Black Being’, in Christine Kim (ed.), *Scratch*, Studio Museum of Harlem, New York, 2005, p. 10.
3. Duane Champagne, ‘In Search of Theory and Method in American Indian Studies’, *American Indian Quarterly*, vol. 31, no. 3, 2007, pp. 353–72, and ‘The Rise and Fall of Native American Studies in the United States’ in George Horse Capture, Duane Champagne, and Chandler Jackson (eds), *American Indian Nations: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*, Alta Mira Press, New York, 2007, pp. 129–47.
4. This paper uses the terms ‘Native studies’ and ‘Indigenous studies’ interchangeably. The discipline is also known as ‘Native American studies’, ‘American Indian studies’ and, more narrowly, ‘First Nations studies’.
5. ‘Whitestream’ is used to mark the extent to which Canadian society, though enormously multicultural in its cultural and demographic make up, remains ordered principally according

- to European, 'white' taxonomies. See Claude Denis, *We Are Not You: First Nations and Canadian Modernity*, Broadview Press, Peterborough, Ontario, 1997, p. 13.
6. I explain further below that Foucauldians position power not simply as repressive but constitutive as well. Thus, the academy does not simply repress a 'real' Native studies but rather, shapes the conditions under which it is allowed to exist in the academy. See Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Volume 1: *An Introduction*. Pantheon, New York, 1978, for an extended discussion of constitutive notions of power.
  7. See Bain Attwood, 'Introduction', in *Power, Knowledge and Aborigines*, *Journal of Australian Studies*, eds B. Attwood and J. Arnold, La Trobe University Press, Melbourne, pp. i-xvi. Attwood's argument is heavily indebted to Edward Said's generative account of 'Orientalism': see Edward Said, *Orientalism*, Penguin, London, 1978. For a North American-based account see Ward Churchill, *From a Native Son: Selected Essays on Indigenism, 1985-1995*, South End Press, Boston, 1996.
  8. Aileen Moreton-Robinson 'Whiteness, Epistemology and Indigenous Representation'.
  9. See for example, Champagne; Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, 'American Indian Studies: An Overview. Keynote Address at the Native Studies Conferences, Yale University, February 5, 1998,' *Wicazo Sa Review*, vol. 14, no. 2, pp. 14-24; Jace Weaver, 'More Heat than Light: The Current State of Native American Studies', *American Indian Quarterly*, vol. 31, no. 2, 2007, pp. 233-55; Clara Sue Kidwell, 'American Indian Studies: Intellectual Navel-Gazing or Academic Discipline?', *American Indian Quarterly*, vol. 33, no. 1, 2009, pp. 1-18.
  10. More specifically Kidwell argues that Native Studies debates are characterised by discussions of internal and external identification. The essentialism/adaptation formulations are mustered in the former discussions.
  11. Kidwell, p. 6.
  12. Kidwell, p. 6.
  13. See for example Devon Mihesuah and Angela Cavender Wilson, eds, *Indigenizing the Academy: Transforming Scholarship and Empowering Communities*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 2004.
  14. Champagne, 'In Search of Theory and Method', p. 355.
  15. Champagne, 'In Search of Theory and Method', p. 354.
  16. Champagne, 'In Search of Theory and Method', p. 353.
  17. Champagne, 'In Search of Theory and Method', p. 355.
  18. Champagne, 'The Rise and Fall of Native American Studies', p. 137.
  19. Champagne, 'In Search of Theory and Method', p. 356.
  20. Champagne, 'In Search of Theory and Method', pp. 356-7; also see Champagne, 'The Rise and Fall of Native American Studies', pp. 137-9. Arguments can be made on both sides for whether Indigenous studies requires specific departments or whether it can function in more programmatic form. Though departmentally specific disciplines possess obvious advantages (some of which I listed), 'area studies' fields like cultural studies have produced strong scholarship and disciplinary respect without the wholesale use of departments.
  21. Champagne, 'The Rise and Fall of Native American Studies', p. 142.
  22. Foucault.
  23. Champagne, 'In Search of Theory and Method', p. 360, emphasis added.
  24. Champagne, 'In Search of Theory and Method', p. 360.
  25. See Jonathan Gayles, 'Anthropology, Afrocentricity, and African American Studies: Toward a Sincere Discipline' *Transforming Anthropology*, vol. 16, no. 2, 2008, pp. 147-159.
  26. Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, *Anti-Indianism in Modern America: A Voice from Tatekeya's Earth*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago, p. 153.
  27. Craig Womack, *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1999.
  28. Jace Weaver, Robert Warrior and Craig Womack, *American Indian Literary Nationalism*, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 2007.
  29. See Holm et al., p. 13 for a diagrammatic representation of this matrix.
  30. See for example Kidwell, p. 4.
  31. Champagne, 'In Search of Theory and Method', p. 359-60.
  32. For a general discussion regarding Canadian colonialism as seductive *as well as* oppressive, see Richard Day, *Multiculturalism and the History of Canadian Diversity*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 2000.
  33. For a general discussion of *habitus* see Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1984, pp. 169-225. Also see Pierre Bourdieu, *An Invitation to a Reflexive Sociology*, University of Chicago Press,

- Chicago, 1992, pp. 115–139. For an accessible yet sophisticated overview of Bourdieu's general oeuvre, see David Swartz, *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1997.
34. Champagne, 'In Search of Theory and Method', p. 361.
  35. Champagne, 'In Search of Theory and Method', p. 363–4.
  36. Champagne, 'In Search of Theory and Method', p. 357.
  37. Kidwell, p. 2.
  38. Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, 'American Indian Studies: An Overview', in *Anti-Indianism in Modern America: A Voice from Tatekeya's Earth*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 2001, p. 173.
  39. Kidwell, p. 1–4.
  40. Champagne, 'The Rise and Fall of Native American Studies', p. 130.
  41. Champagne, 'The Rise and Fall of Native American Studies', p. 140.
  42. Champagne, 'The Rise and Fall of Native American Studies', p. 141.
  43. Champagne, 'In Search of Theory and Method', p. 365. Ironically, although Champagne critiques 'nation' as one of the apparently Western configurations, he has no trouble co-opting this terminology towards his own ends. Moreover, his use of 'community', itself a hotly contested term with numerous sub-fields, is also unproblematically employed.
  44. Champagne, 'In Search of Theory and Method', p. 365–6. A more extreme variant of this thinking is expressed by Cree scholar Neil McLeod when he argues that 'Unless Indigenous Studies adopts Indigenous paradigms and uses Indigenous languages, it will become nothing more than a vehicle to assimilate Indigenous people', Neil McLeod, 'Indigenous Studies: Negotiating the Space Between Tribal Communities and Academia', in Ron Laliberte, Priscilla Settee, James Waldram, Robert Innes, Brenda Macdougall, Leslie McBain and Laurie Barron (eds), *Expressions in Canadian Native Studies*, University of Saskatchewan Press, Saskatoon, p. 28.
  45. Champagne, 'In Search of Theory and Method', p. 357.
  46. Champagne, 'In Search of Theory and Method', p. 357–8.
  47. Champagne, 'In Search of Theory and Method', p. 358.
  48. Champagne, 'In Search of Theory and Method', p. 358.
  49. Champagne, 'In Search of Theory and Method', p. 358.
  50. Champagne, 'In Search of Theory and Method', p. 358.
  51. Champagne, 'In Search of Theory and Method', p. 359.
  52. Champagne, 'In Search of Theory and Method', p. 358.
  53. Champagne, 'In Search of Theory and Method', p. 359.
  54. Gayles, p. 155.
  55. See Moreton-Robinson, 'Whiteness, Epistemology and Indigenous Representation', p. 82–3.
  56. Kelley, 'On the Density of Black Being', p. 10.
  57. Kelley, 'On the Density of Black Being', pp. 9–10.
  58. Robin Kelley, *Yo' Mama's Dysfunktional: Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1997, p. 17. Also see Loic Wacquant, 'Three Pernicious Premises in the Study of the American Ghetto', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol. 20, June 1997, pp. 341–53.
  59. See for example Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*, Vintage Books, New York, 1993.
  60. I say similar in their apparent difference from whitestream normality but I am certainly not conflating their subject positions. Moreton-Robinson argues elsewhere in a feminist context that the very prestige and privilege through which white, middle-class women are able to articulate their oppressions vis-à-vis their position in patriarchal societies as a universal experience is made possible by the unacknowledged dispossession of Indigenous territory. Aileen Moreton-Robinson, *Talkin' up to the White Woman: Indigenous Women and Feminism*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 2000.
  61. Moreton-Robinson, 'Whiteness, Epistemology and Indigenous Representation', p. 78.
  62. Moreton-Robinson, 'Whiteness, Epistemology and Indigenous Representation', p. 87.
  63. Moreton-Robinson, 'Whiteness, Epistemology and Indigenous Representation', p. 85.
  64. Fiona Nicoll, 'Reconciliation In and Out of Perspective: White Knowing, Seeing, Curating and Being at Home In and Against Indigenous Sovereignty', in Aileen Moreton-Robinson (ed.), *Whitening Race: Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2004.
  65. Champagne, 'The Rise and Fall of Native American Studies', p. 129.
  66. Aileen Moreton-Robinson, 'Whiteness Matters', *Australian Feminist Studies*, vol. 21, no. 50, p. 249.
  67. Martin Nakata, 'Anthropological Texts and Indigenous Standpoints', *Australian Aboriginal Studies*, vol. 2, 1998, p. 5.

68. I borrow this logic from Gayles, pp. 154–5, who argues that ‘Within Critical Africentricity, we see the promise of an approach that does not privilege a collective past at the expense of a dynamic understanding of and response to current realities. Such an approach better enables us to actively and organically respond to the world as it is, is becoming, and will be’.
69. Champagne, ‘The Rise and Fall of Native American Studies’, pp. 130–1.
70. Moreton-Robinson, ‘Whiteness, Epistemology and Indigenous Representation’, p. 86.
71. Champagne, ‘The Rise and Fall of Native American Studies’, p. 143.
72. Champagne, ‘The Rise and Fall of Native American Studies’, p. 143.
73. Champagne, ‘The Rise and Fall of Native American Studies’, p. 137.
74. Jace Weaver, ‘More Light than Heat: The Current State of Native American Studies’, *American Indian Quarterly*, vol. 31, no. 2, 2007, p. 235.