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Biological Absorption and Genocide: A Comparison of Indigenous Assimilation Policies in the United States and Australia

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This article examines biological absorption (the imagined process by which indigenous identity would disappear through interracial sexual liaisons) and its relationship to the assimilation policies of the United States and Australia. In the debates about whether or not indigenous assimilation policies constituted genocide, biological absorption has often been pointed to as a particularly salient example of genocidal thinking. US and Australian historians, however, have mostly seen biological absorption as only a minor aspect of assimilation. This article argues that biological absorption should be recognized as a pervasive construct underlying many aspects of Australia's and the United States' dealings with Aborigines and Native Americans, respectively. Acknowledging its pervasiveness blurs the boundaries between ethnocide and genocide, demonstrating that strict definitions are not always useful for historians attempting to understand the actions of settler societies.

Keywords: indigenous peoples, genocide, biological absorption, assimilation policies

The statistics of all attempts to civilise and convert the savage show that the savage dies out sooner through civilisation and conversion than by the more straightforward method of lead and rum. Only the master-races of the world are fit material for the ordeal of civilisation. (*[Sydney] Bulletin*, 9 June 1883, 6)

Since at least the 1970s, historians in Australia and the United States have been assessing the morality of their nations' origins, prompted by what Antoinette Burton has termed "the imperial turn"—the increasing attention paid by scholars to the impact of colonialism and imperialism in the wake of "decolonization, pre-and post-1968 racial struggle and feminism in the last quarter century."¹ In the 1990s this scholarly preoccupation was channeled into public debate. In Australia in 1997 the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) released its report, titled *Bringing Them Home*, on the Australian government's practice of removing Aboriginal children from their parents. The report argued that this practice was a form of genocide under the definition given in the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide (UNCG) of 1948, which includes the "forcible removal of children" as one of its five subsections.² This claim prompted much public controversy at the time, and it was closely followed by "history wars" in which conservatives and liberals debated the extent of Aboriginal massacres on the frontier. Whether or not genocide took place in Australia has since been deliberated on by a number of Australian scholars, who have published explorations of the issue of

genocide in Australian history.³ In the early 1990s in the United States a similar public discussion centered around the 1992 quincentenary of Christopher Columbus's arrival on the North American continent. This event prompted an enormous outpouring of scholarship and public discussion about the implications of the United States' beginnings as a nation, one strand of which was the condemnation of the decline of Native American populations since 1492 and the invocation of the crime of genocide by scholars whom US historian James Axtell condescendingly described as having "itchy fingers [on] the trigger of moral outrage."⁴

Few would deny the value of the project of recognizing the high price paid by the original owners of the lands on which these settler societies imposed themselves. However, the use of the word "genocide"—used most often to refer to the Holocaust perpetrated by Nazi Germany during World War II—complicated and politicized the issue. Many Australians and Americans were uncomfortable conflating this event with frontier "wars," population loss due to disease, or the removal of indigenous children, not wishing, perhaps, to undermine the uniqueness of the Holocaust experience.⁵ This discomfort has, in some ways, infected the debate about whether or not the crime of genocide was committed against the indigenous peoples of North America and Australia, despite the fact that many cogent arguments have been put, not least by the HREOC report itself, that what occurred did fit with the UNCG's definition.⁶ "Historians," writes Laurence M. Hauptman of the US context, "have a responsibility to use words such as *genocide*, *holocaust*, *concentration camp*, or, more recently, *ethnic cleansing* in a careful manner."⁷ "If the word is to retain any meaning or moral impact at all," Axtell argues, "we must not apply it wholesale to every Indian death in the colonial period. To do so is to dilute our moral vocabulary to insipidity and to squander its intellectual and emotional force."⁸ Australian historian Inga Clendinnen believes that the use of the word "genocide" has unhelpfully generated "outrage . . . accompanied by the slamming-shut of minds."⁹ Henry Reynolds, who has written a book-length investigation of the issue in Australian history, has written of his hesitation to speak of the subject of genocide, which he believes is

destined to be tossed on a sea of controversy, likely to be battered from all sides—by those who are hostile to the mere suggestion that such an "outrageous word" could be applied to Australia and by their opponents, who feel that no other term is powerful enough to capture their anger.¹⁰

The issue is so fiercely debated, Reynolds writes, that "neither side appears to welcome a careful and reasonably dispassionate investigation of the topic."¹¹

The issue of whether or not indigenous peoples were the victims of genocide has been further complicated by the assimilationist policies under which they suffered—and the question of whether the removal of culture through education, Christianization, institutions, child removal, and the breaking up of families was as genocidal as the actual physical destruction of human bodies. Indeed, a common tendency is to use linguistic subcategories such as "ethnocide" or "cultural genocide" to describe what happened to indigenous peoples in settler societies. This article focuses on one particular aspect of US and Australian assimilation policies—the phenomenon of biological absorption. Biological absorption was a discernible strategy in both countries during the assimilation period and is of particular relevance to the question of the applicability of genocide to indigenous peoples. This is because its basic premise—that, through interracial relationships, indigenous people would biologically disappear, or be "bred out"—blurs the boundaries between cultural removal and the physical destruction of a people. In this discussion my aim has been to move beyond

concepts of “national guilt” and debates over the legal meanings of the UNCG definition—and to some extent the conservative/liberal political battle into which the issue is so easily swept (it is worth noting that the vast majority of the participants in the debates over indigenous genocide in Australia are not indigenous themselves)—and into the realm of further historical understanding generated by the perspectives that can be gained from comparative history. Ann Curthoys has argued for historians to be less “national” and more “transnational” in their reassessments of national histories in the light of indigenous issues, and asks whether such an approach might make it “possible to participate more . . . in worldwide historiographical conversations.”¹² Most comparative studies of genocide that look at indigenous peoples compare them with non-indigenous groups, most often the Jewish Holocaust.¹³ But comparing the genocidal treatment of indigenous populations in different colonial contexts is particularly helpful in assessing whether, as Robert Hitchcock and Tara Twedt have discussed, the word “genocide” can in fact be applied to indigenous people.¹⁴ It is my contention that a better understanding of biological absorption in the United States and Australia helps us to assess the particularities of indigenous genocide. The histories of indigenous assimilation in the United States and Australia make a revealing comparison, both in terms of the policies themselves and also in terms of the ways in which scholars have understood them.

The first section of this article describes the particular directions that scholarship on biological absorption and genocide has taken. The second traces and compares the histories of biological absorption in Australia and the United States in the twentieth century, in an effort to gain a better understanding of the application of the concept of genocide to the dealings of settler societies with the indigenous people they displaced.

Scholarly Discussions of Biological Absorption

Scholarly discussions of biological absorption have taken very different tacks in Australia and the United States. In Australia, debates have raged (prompted by the HREOC report) about whether the assimilation policies of the twentieth century, especially biological absorption, were a form of genocide. In the United States, discussions of assimilation as genocide have not become so central either in the public sphere or in scholarship. In part, this is a result of the very different ways in which Australia and the United States set out to assimilate indigenous people in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. As I have explored in depth elsewhere, the United States, influenced by a humanitarian movement that moved from the cause of abolishing slavery to the “Indian problem,” put in place legislation and policies that focused on cultural assimilation. The 1887 Dawes Act divided reservations into individual allotments on which Indians were expected to become self-supporting farmers, and funding was dedicated to educational institutions designed to help them acculturate. In Australia, “protection” legislation offered few avenues for cultural acculturation. Instead, it segregated Aborigines onto reserves where those of full descent were expected to succumb to the “doomed race theory,” while those of mixed descent were expected to “absorb” biologically, through interracial relationships, into the white population. Some public servants and commentators openly articulated absorptionist ideas, although such ideas always remained somewhat controversial. By contrast, in the United States, where the issue of miscegenation was made particularly salient by the taboos surrounding sex between white and African-American populations, assimilationists rarely discussed interracial relationships as

an aspect of Indian assimilation. Thus, some scholars have argued that biological absorption was not part of US assimilation policies.¹⁵ These arguments are, as I will demonstrate, based on too narrow a view of the extent of biological absorption in the United States and Australia. Rather, as I argue, biological absorption permeated the assimilation policies of both Australia and the United States, a phenomenon that ought to be taken into account in any scholarly assessment of genocide and indigenous peoples in these settler societies.

Despite hesitation to publicly discuss biological absorption as an assimilative policy in the United States, some scholars have discerned what M. Annette Jaimes has termed a “strategy of elimination” in the use of blood quanta to define who was or was not an “Indian.” “If the government could not repeal its obligations to Indians,” Jaimes argues,

it could at least act to limit their number, thereby diminishing the cost associated with underwriting their entitlements on a per capita basis. . . . Much of the original impetus towards the federal preemption of the sovereign Indian prerogative of defining “who’s Indian,” and the standardization of the racist degree-of-blood method of Indian identification, derived from the budgetary considerations of a federal government anxious to avoid paying its bills.¹⁶

Patricia Limerick has also perceived an eliminationist logic behind the policies put in place by nineteenth-century white Americans, who, she argues, planned to

set the blood quantum at one quarter, hold to it as a rigid definition of Indianness, let intermarriage proceed as it had for centuries, and eventually Indians will be defined out of existence. When that happens, the federal government will finally be freed from its persistent “Indian problem.”¹⁷

Controversial historian and activist Ward Churchill has similarly noted the financial benefits behind the way in which Native American identity was configured, arguing that “reductions in the number of Indians at large in North America corresponded directly to diminishment of the cloud surrounding the dominant society’s claims of clear title to, and jurisdictional rights over, its purported land base.”¹⁸ Churchill invokes the racial ideologies that made blood quanta a compelling logic. “Endowed as they were with staunchly racist perspectives,” he argues, “it was predictable that [assimilationists] would rely heavily upon the sort of blood quantum standards already evident in treaty language.”¹⁹

As early as 1976, Ronald Trosper noted the dilemma facing American Indian nations as a result of intermarriage with whites. “Rights to land and services originally based upon treaty commitments depend in fact upon stereotypes for survival,” he argued. “Should Indians appear to be like whites, valuable rights could be taken away by Congress in response to an argument that all American citizens are the ‘same.’”²⁰

Melissa Meyer explicitly sees genocidal intent in the laws that regulated Indian identity. “Few scholars would argue that all of United States Indian policy amounted to genocide,” she argues, “but long-term demographic trends certainly point to a holocaust. Genocide has ideological as well as demographic consequences; defending and celebrating race is probably among them. In their purest form, blood quantum requirements amount to a celebration of race.”²¹

Indeed, scholarly discussions of miscegenation, strategies of elimination, and Indians are often found not in discussions of genocide but in debates about Indian identity. Bonita Lawrence argues that the history of government manipulation of Indian identity in Canada and the United States ought not to be forgotten in

discussions of urban mixed-blood Native identity. “The question of who is an Indian,” she writes,

which lurks beneath the surface of many of the issues that contemporary Native communities are struggling with, is much larger than that of personal or even group identity—it goes directly to the heart of the colonization process and to the genocidal policies of the settler governments across the Americas toward Indigenous peoples.²²

David Hollinger notes that the history of elimination through designation has led to a recent tendency for Americans with Indian heritage to “reclassify”: “In the twenty years between 1970 and 1990, the federal census reported an increase of 259 per cent in the American Indian population despite a very low birthrate.”²³

Native American “strategies of elimination” are also discussed in scholarship that attempts to understand the broader racial landscape in the United States and its effect on discourses about miscegenation. Churchill notes that since African Americans “were considered to be property, yielding value not only in their labor but as commodities which could be bought and sold, it was profitable not only to employ but to breed them in ever larger numbers.” By contrast, he writes,

Native people . . . were legally understood to own property—mainly land, and minerals within that land—coveted by whites. It followed then, as it still does, that . . . any racial admixture at all, especially with blacks, was often deemed sufficient to warrant individuals, and sometimes entire groups, being legally classified as non-Indians.²⁴

Patrick Wolfe has similarly compared the racial discourses surrounding Indians and African Americans; he describes the

difference between one group of people who had survived a centuries-long genocidal catastrophe with correspondingly depleted numbers and another group who, as commodities, had been preserved, their reproduction constituting a singularly primitive form of accumulation for their owners.²⁵

Hollinger argues that the particular racial landscape in the United States made the discourses surrounding miscegenation and Indians unique, noting that “the Indian case was sufficiently different from both the African-American case and that of the European immigrants to stand somewhat outside the miscegenation conversation and the melting pot conversation.”²⁶

The “strategy of elimination” argument is not without its critics. Alexandra Harmon and Circe Sturm have both, for different reasons, challenged the assumption made by Jaimes, Limerick, and others that blood quanta were introduced by the federal government in a cynical effort to reduce Indian numbers. Harmon calls their arguments “largely speculative generalizations” and contends that a further investigation is required to “provide a sounder foundation for conclusions about the influence of U.S. law and racial ideology on the composition of tribes.”²⁷ She argues that tribes themselves played a crucial and active role in allowing blood quanta to define their identities. Circe Sturm points out the importance of the deeply ingrained racial discourses that created blood quanta:

Blood quantum was widely embraced by nineteenth-century scientific thought as a rational measure of racial identity and racial “purity” . . . In fact, blood quantum could just as easily been introduced by naively well-meaning bureaucrats and liberal supporters who wanted to help “deserving Indians” but had no effective way of identifying them except through the crude contours of genealogy.²⁸

John LaVelle questions the historical accuracy of Jaimes’s and Churchill’s claims.²⁹

In the second half of this article, I hope to find at least part of a way beyond these scholarly quandaries about a “strategy of elimination” by giving a broader view of biological absorption in the United States and an argument about its previously unrecognized centrality to US assimilation policy. Harmon is right that further scholarly investigation reveals that a “strategy of elimination” can be found to permeate many other aspects of assimilation policy than are covered in the literature outlined above, and the racial discourses that Sturm, Hollinger, and Wolfe ask us to examine can be seen to have a clear absorptionist thread that is particularly revealed in a comparative study. This perspective also enables us to get beyond discussions of the way “blood” was a seductive means of understanding racial identity for both Indian and white people (even those who were not necessarily engaged in reducing the Indian population) and to understand how it operated as a method of reducing Native American numbers.

In Australia, by contrast, the 1997 HREOC report, *Bringing Them Home*, prompted forthright discussion of biological absorption as genocide. Many commentators decided that child removal was not genocide but concluded that genocide had indeed taken place in Australia during the interwar period in the Northern Territory and Western Australia, under the policies of chief protectors A.O. Neville and Cecil Cook. Both Neville and Cook were open about their belief that ongoing interracial relationships would solve the problem of the growing population of Aborigines of mixed descent by seeing them absorbed into the white population generation by generation. Meanwhile, Aborigines of full descent would, thanks to the Darwinian notion of “survival of the fittest,” slowly die out (indeed, as Colin Tatz has argued, a “major underpinning, almost an article of faith, of Australian race-relations history has been a Social Darwinist notion that the unfittest don’t survive”).³⁰ Thus, Australia’s “Aboriginal problem” would be solved. Although other states/colonies were not as blatant in their absorptionist policies, the same notion was expressed at a national level during the oft-quoted 1937 Aboriginal Welfare conference, at which it was resolved that “ultimate absorption by the people of the Commonwealth” was the future of Australia’s mixed-descent population.³¹

Many of the scholars who have discussed the interwar absorptionist theories of Neville and Cook resist the applicability of genocide to any other policy in Australia’s history. Russell McGregor has argued that Aboriginal assimilation policies in Australia in the post-war period “cannot be comprehended within the conceptual framework of genocide” but believes that “interwar absorption did seek to engineer [the effacement of one of the groups involved].”³² Paul Bartrop also states that “it is impossible to conclude otherwise that Australia in the 1930s was possessed of an administrative culture that in reality practiced genocide.”³³ Robert Manne reluctantly concludes that “because of the fantastical nature of the absorption policy, ‘genocidal thoughts’ and ‘genocidal plans’ are more adequate descriptors of what they were implicated in than ‘genocidal crimes.’”³⁴ Early in the debate, Raimond Gaita observed that the absorptionist program’s “arrogant belief that some peoples may eliminate from the earth peoples they hold in contempt” was crucial to the designation of Aboriginal assimilation policies as genocide.³⁵ Manne has also argued that the 1937 conference was a moment when “genocidal thought and administrative practice touched.”³⁶ “If a case is to be made that genocide was committed,” he contends, “it can only be made with regard to a particular policy plan, biological assimilation; at a particular time, the 1930s; and in particular places, the Northern Territory and Western Australia.”³⁷ In his discussion of forced assimilation, Tatz similarly

focuses on the absorptionist policies of A.O. Neville, J.W. Bleakley, and Cecil Cook, concluding that

no matter what spin is put on the mindset of these men, the intent was as repugnant then as it would be now: to await the “natural” death of the “full-blood” peoples and to socially engineer the disappearance, forever, of all those “natives of Aboriginal origin.” They were, indeed, progenitors of group disappearance. They were, beyond doubt, complicit. They did conspire and they did attempt to commit genocide, that is, ensure the elimination, in whole or in part, of a racial group (of “half-castes”).³⁸

This focus on the 1930s in discussions of Aboriginal genocide and biological absorption is problematic. As Manne has pointed out, such a focus is necessarily limiting, as the “administrative will to pursue [absorption] did not survive Cook’s virtual removal from his post in 1939 and Neville’s retirement one year later.”³⁹ These arguments also ignore the insidious nature of biological absorption, the many guises in which it appeared, and the vast machinery that made up Aboriginal assimilation policy. As Andrew Markus has argued,

the debate that has erupted over the removal of children has diverted attention from an issue of central importance. Policies of child removal should not be seen in isolation, as they often are—child removal was but one of the integral components of a clearly articulated government policy in the first two-thirds of the twentieth century.⁴⁰

We need to acknowledge biological absorption beyond Neville and Cook. Absorption, in fact, deeply underpinned Australian assimilation policy and dealings with Aborigines both before and beyond the interwar period.

Biological Absorption in Australia and the United States

What, then, might a broader history of biological absorption in Australia and the United States look like? As an Australian historian, I take my starting point for understanding the phenomenon of biological absorption from the work of Russell McGregor, Warwick Anderson, and Patrick Wolfe, who have defined the concept in their work on Aboriginal policy and racial discourses in the twentieth century.⁴¹ It is my contention that biological absorption should be understood as even more pervasive than the excellent work of these historians suggests. The notion of biological absorption can be found in the written and spoken words of those who commented on the future of colonial societies and in the way they imagined what interracial sexual relationships might do to the future of indigenous cultures. It can be found baldly stated in the rationales behind government policies (at least in Australia). The idea that indigenous people would disappear through interracial relationships can be discerned in the use of blood quanta to identify Native Americans, in the decisions made as to who would be put on tribal rolls, and in who was declared competent and therefore exempt from federal controls and protections. But it also emerges in less obvious, more understated ways. It can be found, for example, in the removal of indigenous children from their communities, and in the ways their futures were imagined. It can also be recognized in the *laissez-faire* attitude of the Australian government, which expected it to solve the “Aboriginal problem” in only a few generations, and in the assumptions underlying the granting of certificates of exemption from protection legislation. It can be discerned as an undeclared outcome of the efforts to culturally assimilate indigenous people—in how white people imagined acculturated Indians might interact with society, blend in, and eventually intermarry. In some contexts it was expressed as boundary maintenance, whereby anxieties about

interracial mixing led to efforts to categorize people of mixed descent in a certain way that did not threaten the status quo. In other places, it took the form of simply turning a blind eye to the rape or sexual oppression of Aboriginal women. And it is visible in the fact that people of mixed descent were deemed inauthentic, or not properly “indigenous,” and in the way “mixedness” could be used to undermine tribal sovereignty.

Thus, in order to fully understand biological absorption, we need to both broaden our focus and recognize the pervasiveness of this concept in many aspects of indigenous assimilation policy. Indeed, an acknowledgment of the centrality of biological absorptionist imaginings to settler colonial societies might help to realign and extend the discussion about indigenous assimilation and genocide. In the following paragraphs I locate biological absorption in three different aspects of the culture, legislation, and assimilation policies of Australia and the United States. Lacking the space for an all-encompassing discussion of the many guises of biological absorption, I have focused on three aspects of assimilation policy in which absorption remained an unspoken conspirator: the blind eye turned on the rape of indigenous women, the absorptionist assumptions behind efforts at cultural assimilation of indigenous people, and the destabilizing of indigenous identity through laws and the imposition of artificial ideas of cultural authenticity.

As countless historians of colonial societies have noted, the rape of indigenous women paralleled the possession of their land. Ann McGrath has argued that from the moment of the first settlement at Port Jackson in the late eighteenth century Aboriginal women were being raped. She notes that as early as 1796, prostitution involving Aboriginal women had become “commonplace” and there were regular reports of convicts and sailors sexually “interfering” with Aboriginal women.⁴² Raymond Evans has argued the centrality of violent interracial sexual contact to both “frontier and post-frontier existence.”⁴³ In the American colonies, the mythical union of John Rolfe and Pocahontas, an Algonquian woman, in the earliest years of the colony of Virginia became, as Gary Nash, has argued, “the embryo of a mestizo United States.”⁴⁴ This consecrated but ill-fated union lent some form of legitimacy and romance to the sexual oppression of Indian women by white men that took place as Europeans overtook the continent. As Andrea Smith has further argued in the US context, the “project of colonial sexual violence establishes the ideology that Native bodies are inherently violable—and by extension, that Native lands are also inherently violable.” Drawing from her experience as a rape crisis counselor, Smith explicitly names this phenomenon as genocide: “Native peoples,” she writes, “internalize the genocidal project through self-destruction. . . . It was not a surprise to me that Indians who have survived sexual abuse would often say that they no longer wish to be Indian.”⁴⁵

The rape of indigenous women in US and Australian history was not part of a deliberate strategy of biological absorption (that is, the rapists did not have absorption as their prime motivation). Can we assume, however, that the blind eye that was turned on it in both settler societies was in some ways part of an appreciation of the long-term consequences of interracial mixing for indigenous peoples? There was little effort in either country to prevent or deter white men from having access to indigenous women. In the United States, the rape and mutilation of Indian women’s bodies was often an aspect of massacres and warfare perpetrated by the army.⁴⁶ Later, in the assimilation period, concerns about “squaw men” were raised only when their relationships with Indian women appeared to be giving them access to land.⁴⁷

Tellingly, men in relationships with Indian women were also seen by some as an “element of civilization.”⁴⁸ Benjamin S. Coppock told the Lake Mohonk Conference in 1893 that the

army, the trading-posts, the missionary, the written language, the “squaw-man,” the half-breed children, the frontiersman, the lack of game, the ingress of railroads, the training of children in school, have all helped to modify the practical question of Indians being longer Indians among us.⁴⁹

When a 1904 Royal Commission into Aboriginal conditions in Western Australia found alarming evidence of the abuse of Aboriginal women, its leader, Dr. Walter Roth, came in for some vociferous criticism from various members of Parliament who believed that this was a natural, expected part of colonialism. “What good has Dr. Roth done in holding up this immorality?” asked one member.

He has only made this place stink in the nostrils of other places, and has done no good to the natives. Do members mean to say they are ignorant of all this? Surely anyone knowing the history of Western Australia knows this sort of thing is going on, and as far as my reading or knowledge goes it seems to me that wherever races are mixed it has been the same ever since the dawn of history.⁵⁰

While men who engaged in sexual relationships with Aboriginal women were often castigated for their immorality, the worst disdain seems to have been reserved for men whose relationships were long term, and therefore more likely to be based on affection. In 1936, the Hon. J. Nicholson told the Western Australian parliament that he was

decidedly against the man who cohabits, or habitually lives, with a black woman. I do not think that practice is in accord with nature of the proper scheme of things... When the offence is of a casual nature, it is different.⁵¹

In Australia, we can see a flow-on effect of the overlooking of the sexual exploitation of Aboriginal women. An unspoken reliance on biological absorption as a solution can also be discerned, as Pat O’Malley has termed it, in the “ungovernment” of Western Australian Aboriginal people in the 1930s and 1940s. O’Malley argues that the policies set in place by A.O. Neville led the government to employ a strategy of isolation and neglect of Aborigines in the Central Reserve, as Neville waited for interracial relationships and high rates of poverty and disease to take care of the population there: “In a sense, it was government at a distance, in which the indigenous culture preserved by Neville’s policies would produce the eugenic effects he sought.”⁵² This idea might be applied more widely. In neither country were serious attempts made to prevent the access of white men to indigenous women—white men were rarely prosecuted, and received only light sentences, for raping indigenous women⁵³—and, as I will show in my forthcoming discussion of legal indigenous identity, governments wrote legislation that responded to this problem rather than addressing it. As Neville chillingly told the 1937 conference, speaking about girls and women of mixed descent sent into domestic service,

Our policy is to send them out into the white community, and if a girl comes back pregnant our rule is to keep her for two years. The child is then taken away from the mother and sometimes never sees her again. Thus these children grow up as whites, knowing nothing of their own environment. At the expiration of the period of two years the mother goes back into service so it really does not matter if she has half a dozen children.⁵⁴

Thus we see biological absorption working as an offshoot of colonial contact, taking advantage of a behind-the-scenes activity that helped to destabilize indigenous communities by diluting (from the colonists' perspective) their identity.

A second veiled expression of absorptionist ideas is found in the cultural assimilation policies practiced by the Australian and US governments. These, of course, ostensibly focused on transforming indigenous people—not biologically, but culturally—into people who spoke English; practiced Christianity; and embraced European gender roles, land ownership, and capitalism. Nonetheless, on closer examination, a perceivable if undeclared byproduct of these policies was very often the idea that acculturated indigenous people would make potential marriage partners for whites. In Australia, for example, the removal of indigenous children from their families has been recognized as an absorptionist policy, most notably by the HREOC report *Bringing Them Home*, which notes that it was most often children with lighter skins who were taken from their parents.⁵⁵ As Robert van Krieken has argued, absorption and child removal were in fact linked:

[The] primary and overarching concern was to “solve” the “half-caste problem” by breeding out colour of both body and mind through this programme of social engineering, and in this sense the removal of Aboriginal children meshed with the first strategy of controlling sexual relations and reproduction among adult Aborigines.⁵⁶

This racial targeting reveals the child removals' absorptionist underpinnings. These children were not simply being removed to be educated and acculturated into the ways of white Australia; they were, in fact, being removed because they were prime candidates for sexual relationships or marriage with whites. Although this logic was rarely articulated, there are certainly examples expressed by prominent Australians. In the debates surrounding Queensland's Aboriginals Protection and Preservation Act of 1939, one parliamentarian noted that on a recent visit to Fantome Island, he had been

astounded to see what I thought was a little curly-haired white kiddy running about the beach playing with the piccanninies. When I asked who she was I was told that she was the child of the half-caste cook at the hospital... I think that perhaps we could persuade these mothers to lease their children to others to be educated, and to go out to work amongst the white population. Then these girls would probably marry, and no-one would be any wiser about their parentage. They could be readily absorbed into the white population instead of having to return to the gunyah life.⁵⁷

Quentin Beresford and Paul Omaji have pointed out that Sister Kate Clutterbuck's home for removed Aboriginal children in Perth's southern suburbs in the 1940s had a clear racial-engineering purpose, which encouraged girls to marry white men.⁵⁸ Victoria Haskins notes that in New South Wales, where Aboriginal girls were particularly targeted for removal and were sent into domestic service, the NSW Aboriginal Welfare Board's records for the 1920s and 1930s show “a remarkably high rate of pregnancy for girls indentured to service, especially those sent to the cities.”⁵⁹

In the United States there is no evidence that pale-skinned Indian children were targeted in the same way,⁶⁰ but in some of the boarding schools to which Indian girls were sent there was a culture of assimilation that implicitly encouraged or led to marriages of acculturated graduates with white men. Devon Mihesuah's study of the Cherokee Female Seminary in Oklahoma reveals that most graduates “married white men or men who had a smaller amount of Cherokee blood than they had.”⁶¹ In my own

work on Carlisle Indian School I found that the school placed great importance on who students married, and created an environment in which significant numbers of alumni married white partners.⁶² Making indigenous people live and act as though they were white, and preparing them for a life away from their own communities—indeed, teaching them that their own communities were not the places in which they should envision their own futures—was not an openly absorptionist policy, but it was a policy with an easily imagined consequence: relationships with white people, no doubt based in many cases on love and respect, but intermarriages nevertheless.

A third area in which biological absorption can be discerned as an unspoken aspect of colonialism is the legislative attempt to regulate indigenous identity and related ideas about “authentic” and “inauthentic” indigeneity that are common to both Australia and the United States. On closer examination, an acknowledgment of the absorptionist outcomes of these policies has much to contribute to the historiography on biological absorption in both countries. In both nations, legislation passed by settler governments attempted to decide who was and was not an indigenous person. This legislation was rarely inclusive and often gave people of mixed descent an uncertain legal status. As Paul Havemann has argued, the “power to confer the status of citizenship is the pivotal technique used by modern states to distinguish the ‘belonging’—non-waste—from the ‘excluded’—the waste.”⁶³

In many Australian states, legislation defined people of mixed descent as Aboriginal only if they associated with Aboriginal people of full descent or were of a certain age. The 1886 Aborigines Protection Amendment Act in Victoria, for example, assigned Aboriginal status only to those people of mixed descent “habitually associating and living with an aboriginal,” women of mixed descent who were “married to an aboriginal” prior to the act’s coming into force, infants, and persons over thirty-four years of age.⁶⁴ If not defined as Aborigines, these people occupied an ill-defined legal status somewhere between white and indigenous, in a society that judged them very much on the color of their skin.

Another legal method existed by which government officials could remove Aboriginal status. Exemption certificates were awarded in New South Wales, Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland, and the Northern Territory. Although these certificates ostensibly freed acculturated Aboriginal people from the controls of protection legislation, there is some evidence that certificates were awarded not just on the basis of acculturation but also based on perceived ideas about skin color. In Queensland, there was a racial requirement: “only half-castes who are civilized and have no intercourse with aboriginals can obtain them and then only on satisfying the Department of their ability to manage their own affairs.”⁶⁵ All people of mixed descent would be declared exempt, unless they lived “as an aboriginal with full-blooded aboriginals,” in which case “[they] will be treated as . . . aboriginal.” This was not just a protective measure. The secretary for health and home affairs, who introduced the bill, thought that those people of mixed descent who were “inclined to look at matters too loosely soon complied with conditions when they found that they were likely to be brought under the control of the Aborigines Department and treated as Aborigines.”⁶⁶ In other states, certificates were not awarded according to racial background, but assumptions about skin color and the potential to blend in with the white community made people of mixed descent prime candidates. It should be noted that exemption certificates and legal controls over who was officially an Aborigine both predated and lasted well beyond the interwar period during which most scholars locate biological absorption.⁶⁷ Thus, discussions of biological absorption and genocide would

be enhanced by taking into account the broad absorptionist underpinning of much of Aboriginal legislation in the twentieth century.

In the United States, the notion of the blood quantum was introduced in nineteenth-century legislation and used mostly inconsistently in federal Indian law.⁶⁸ At certain points in US history, however, blood quanta were clearly used to separate people of mixed descent and to deny them Indian identity or the special rights that came with it. The 1887 Dawes Act required Indian tribes to finalize tribal rolls in order for lands to be divided equitably among their members. This process was soon hurried along by the federal government, which sent enrollment commissions out to reservations to enumerate Indian nations. The resulting administrative confusion and strict deadlines left many people of mixed descent, whose connections to the tribe were sometimes more fragile, off tribal rolls. In 1912, for example, the Dawes Commission summarized its work in Oklahoma as follows: "Applications were made for the enrollment of over 200,000 persons, of which number 101,221 were enrolled and found entitled to allotments."⁶⁹ In addition, a prevalent view of the time was that many of the people applying to be placed on tribal rolls were white or "practically white" people trying to get their share of Indian lands. Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas Morgan used the Osage Nation as an example of white people's claiming Indian ancestry in order to be allotted land:

Some of the applicants for tribal rights have but the slightest trace, if any, of Indian blood; and, in some instances, they have lived among and affiliated exclusively with white people. Indeed, applications have been made to this office for participation in tribal benefits by United States citizens whose sole title thereto rested upon their claim of having aboriginal blood in their veins by descent from Powhatan through Pocahontas.⁷⁰

In April 1917, Indians of mixed descent were targeted in a different way. Commissioner of Indian Affairs Cato Sells issued his "Declaration of Policy," which immediately declared all Indians with less than one-half Indian "blood" to be automatically "competent" and therefore exempt from the special rights and protections that came with Indian status. Previously, competency had been a tool whereby acculturated Indian people might become exempt from the twenty-five year trust period that prevented their allotted lands from being sold or mortgaged, and had to be applied for on the basis of acculturation and business acumen. Land-hungry settlers soon realized that it was in their interests for as many Indians as possible to be declared competent, culminating in Sells's policy basing competency on racial background. Finally, the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act contained a section that defined as "Indian" all people recognized by an Indian tribe, and of the rest, only those that were "of one-half or more Indian blood."⁷¹ Such a definition immediately statistically absorbed all those Indians of mixed descent who were not on tribal rolls.

In states with large African-American populations, biological absorption of Indians took a slightly different tack, operating as a kind of boundary maintenance. The saliency of black/white miscegenation in Virginia, for example, created an environment in which a form of Indian biological absorption was openly advocated and sanctioned, most prominently by the head of the Bureau of Vital Statistics, Walter A. Plecker, and imposed upon the native peoples of that state by legislation that allowed them to be called "colored" rather than Indian. This unusual and extreme focus on Indians' being absorbed into the African-American population rather than the white population stemmed from the arrogant assumption made by some white Virginians that segregation had been achieved with stringent application of the "one-drop rule,"

Jim Crow laws, and anti-miscegenation legislation; Indian people were a messy third category that blurred their neatly dichotomized state.⁷² Recent scholarship has begun to explore how white America's focus on intermarriages between Indians and African Americans has been used to declare Indian nations inauthentic. Tiya Miles reports that

recently when I was speaking in a public forum about black and American Indian relations in colonial and early America, a respected Indian elder from a Great Plains tribe impressed on me her strong desire that I cease speaking about this topic. Her fear, as she expressed it, was that documenting the intermarriage of black and Indian people would give the U.S. government just one more reason to declare Native people inauthentic and soluble and then to seize their remaining lands any vestiges of political autonomy.⁷³

These brief examples of how federal and state governments in the United States used divisions based on blood quantum or race to reduce the numbers of Indians support the idea of a “strategy of elimination” advocated by scholars such as M. Annette Jaimes. Biological absorption may not have been an explicit policy in the United States, but there is no doubt that simply being of mixed descent prevented an individual from attaining full, unquestioned Indian status (at least in the settler governments' view). By itself, being of mixed descent did not necessarily separate a person out from a tribe or nation, but in conjunction with other factors it could weaken his or her claim on indigenous identity. Patrick Wolfe's notion of *repressive authenticity*—the romantic view of only full-descent, “traditional” Indians as “real” Indians—is useful here. Wolfe argues that this stereotyping “eliminates large numbers of empirical natives from official reckonings and, as such, is often concomitant with genocidal practice.”⁷⁴ Repressive authenticity has persisted to the present day. As Andrea Smith reports,

In 1990, Illinois governor Jim Thompson echoed these sentiments when he refused to close down an open Indian burial mound in the town of Dixon. The State of Illinois had built a museum around this mound to publicly display Indian remains. Thompson argued that he was as much Indian as current Indians, and consequently, he had as much right as they to determine the fate of Indian remains. The remains were “his.” The Chicago press similarly attempted to challenge the identity of Indian people protesting his decision by asserting that they were either only “part” Indian, or merely claiming to be Indian.⁷⁵

The use of blood quanta by many Indian nations is now controversial. As Theda Perdue has argued,

it drives a wedge between the members of a Native community by using “blood” to privilege some individuals, to discredit others, and ultimately to racialize Native societies in ways that are foreign to Native cultural traditions.⁷⁶

Linking blood quanta to “strategies of elimination” to genocide reveals the historical foundations of, and the absorptionist thinking that lies behind, this kind of racialized categorization.

Thus, a comparison of indigenous assimilation policies in Australia and the United States helps us to understand the many guises biological absorption can take. Australian ideas about the long-term effects of ongoing interracial relationships certainly had parallels in the US context. Indeed, a closer look at US Indian policies prompts us to look beyond the rhetoric of cultural assimilation for absorptionist strategies hidden in the legal definitions of indigenous identity. In turn, this is a

valuable lesson for the Australian context, where scholars have focused on biological absorption only when it was an outspoken policy.

So where does this broader view of biological absorption leave us with respect to the debates over genocide and indigenous peoples in Australia and the United States? At first glance, thinking of interracial marriages and their production of offspring as genocide is counterintuitive; interracial relationships were a phenomenon that *created* life, not ended it. Nevertheless, the doctrine of biological absorption rested on the idea of the eventual disappearance of a distinct group of people. But should we perhaps consider the linguistic device of using terms such as “ethnocide” or “cultural genocide” to refer to absorption? Does it have more relevance to these sub-definitions of genocide that scholars have invented to refer to attempts to destroy culture rather than the people?

Andrew Markus offers useful definitions of ethnocide and genocide. He defines ethnocide as “the attempt to bring about the disappearance of an ethnic or racial group by suppression of its culture, language, and religion, but stopping short of physical destruction” and genocide as “the attempt to bring about the disappearance of an ethnic or racial group by deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its partial physical destruction and including selective mass killing.”⁷⁷ Given these definitions, a broader acknowledgment of how biological absorption operated in Australia and the United States in fact blurs the boundaries between ethnocide and genocide: absorption led to births, not to deaths, but these births were supposed to be (although they often were not) a conduit of culture loss—a gradual disconnecting from culture, language, and religion over the generations. Thus, if we view biological absorption as ethnocide, we must take into account its biological aspects—its reliance on blood, sex, and bodies. As R. Charli Carpenter puts it, pregnancy can have a “unique role in corroding the victimized culture.”⁷⁸ If we view biological absorption as genocide, we must acknowledge that it was not a method of mass killing; but it was still certainly a “condition of life calculated to bring about [a group’s] partial physical destruction”: it was a policy about changing skin color and physical markers of identity as well as internal connections to culture and family.

However, although the application of the concept of genocide to the assimilation of indigenous peoples in Australia and United States has received much scholarly attention, I believe we need to move away from hard-and-fast legal definitions in order to be able to assess these nation’s histories more clearly. As Wolfe points out, there is a danger in using sub-definitions of genocide, such as ethnocide or cultural genocide, because such usage

confuses definition with degree... In particular, in an elementary category error, “either/or” can be substituted for “both/and,” from which genocide emerges as either biological (read “the real thing”) or cultural—and thus, it follows, not real.⁷⁹

“The apparently insurmountable problem with the qualified genocides [‘cultural genocide,’ ‘ethnocide,’ ‘politicide,’ etc.],” Wolfe writes,

is that, in their very defensiveness, they threaten to undo themselves. They are never quite the real thing... The term “structural genocide” avoids the questions of degree—and, and therefore, of hierarchy among victims—that are entailed in qualified genocides.⁸⁰

Moving away from discussions of the strict definitions of genocide goes some way toward recognizing the most important aspect of this debate—its implications for indigenous communities themselves. As Seena Kohl has argued, the biggest difference

between ethnocide and genocide is the tenacity of cultures that have undergone the former.⁸¹ The fact that indigenous peoples have so successfully resisted attempts to remove their culture and identity does not mean that we should underestimate the persistence with which colonial societies attempted to erase them by bickering over legal definitions.

We must also pay careful attention to how these debates over definition actually assist indigenous peoples in negotiating the inequalities that still exist in settler societies. As Dirk Moses points out,

who will gainsay the point of Indigenous jurist Larissa Behrendt that “the political posturing and semantic debates do nothing to dispel the feeling Indigenous people have that this is the word that adequately describes our experience as colonized people”?⁸²

When historians focus our discussions on the subsections of a legal definition, we undermine the promise and potential of the historical profession. It is not our job to decide legal accountability: it is our task to document the complexity of the past, with all its variations and its troubling, difficult-to-define people and beliefs. Thinking about whether biological absorption was genocidal according to the term itself obscures the myriad ways in which absorptionist thinking underlay legislation even when it was not openly discussed. There are good political reasons for indigenous peoples to characterize their experiences as genocide and to use the language of accountability. In our investigations into the past, we can help them best by trying to understand colonialism and by exploring its powerful, still-present assumptions about the world. I hope I have shown in this paper, for example, that there is an irony in applying a strict definition from the 1948 UNCG to the equally stringent definitions of indigenous identity from the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Australia and the United States.

We must also think hard about how this aspect of Australia’s history affects present-day ideas about indigenous identity. As Darlene Johnson argues,

genocide must also be understood in terms of the historical effects on a people of institutional colonialism. It is still being written and read off our bodies. The policies of control, segregation, incarceration—the abuses of power, the separation of families and the gaoling of people—have effects on bodies and have inscribed cultural memories on them.⁸³

One of the outcomes of acknowledging the links between miscegenation, assimilation policies, and genocide is a contribution to the angst-ridden debates about Aboriginal and Indian identity, an acknowledgment of the underlying biological, physical, bloody aspects of assimilation policies that demonstrate the terrifying resolve of settler governments to rid themselves of the Aboriginal or Indian problem one way or another.

Notes

1. Antoinette Burton, “Introduction: On the Inadequacy and the Indispensability of the Nation,” in *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking with and through the Nation*, ed. Antoinette Burton, 1–23 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press 2003), 2.
2. Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission [HREOC], *Bringing Them Home: A Guide to the Findings and Recommendations of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families* (Sydney: HREOC, 1997), http://www.hreoc.gov.au/Social_Justice/stolen_children/index.html (accessed 19 December 2008). The HREOC used the following definition of genocide, drawn from the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, 9

December 1948, 78 U.N.T.S. 277, http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/p_genoci.htm (accessed 19 December 2008), art. 2:

Any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, any national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) killing members of the group
 - (b) causing serious bodily harm to members of the group
 - (c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
 - (d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; and
 - (e) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.
3. See, in particular, A. Dirk Moses, "An Antipodean Genocide? The Origins of the Genocidal Moment in the Colonization of Australia," *Journal of Genocide Research* 2 (2000): 89–106; A. Dirk Moses, ed., *Genocide and Settler Society: Frontier Violence and Stolen Indigenous Children in Australian History* (New York: Berghan Books, 2004); Robert Manne, *The Way We Live Now: The Controversies of the Nineties* (Melbourne: Text Publishing, 1998), 15–44; Henry Reynolds, *An Indelible Stain: The Question of Genocide in Australia's History* (Ringwood, Australia: Viking, 2001); Alison Palmer, *Colonial Genocide* (Adelaide, Australia: Crawford House, 2000); Colin Tatz, "Genocide in Australia," *Journal of Genocide Research* 1 (1999): 315–52; "Genocide?": Australian Aboriginal History in International Perspective," special section of *Aboriginal History* 25 (2001): 1–172. On the "history wars" see Robert Manne, ed., *Whitewash: On Keith Windschuttle's Fabrication of Aboriginal History* (Melbourne: Black, 2003); Stuart Macintyre and Anna Clarke, *The History Wars* (Carlton, Australia: Melbourne University Publishing, 2003). For a sociological analysis of the effects of the discussion of "indigenous issues" in the media in the 1990s see Martha Augoustinos, Keith Tuffin, and Mark Rapley, "Genocide or a Failure to Gel? Racism, History and Nationalism in Australian Talk," *Discourse and Society* 10 (1999): 351–78. On 24 May 2007, Lowitja O'Donoghue, a prominent Pitjantjatjara activist, marked the tenth anniversary of the release of *Bringing Them Home* with a speech pointing out that most of the report's recommendations had not been followed by the federal government. Annabel Stafford, "Abbott Scorned as He Backs Stance on Stolen Generations," *Age*, 25 May 2007, <http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2007/05/24/1179601576391.htm> (accessed 26 May 2007).
 4. James Axtell, *Beyond 1492: Encounters in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 224. For a substantive review of this outpouring of literature see James Axtell, "Columbian Encounters: 1992–1995," *William and Mary Quarterly* 52 (October 1995): 649–96. For a comprehensive discussion of the conservative political denial of genocide in Australia see Ben Kiernan, "Cover-Up and Denial of Genocide: Australia, the USA, East Timor, and the Aborigines," *Critical Asian Studies* 34 (2002): 163–92.
 5. Lilian Friedberg, "Dare to Compare: Americanizing the Holocaust," *American Indian Quarterly* 24 (2000): 353–80. For a comprehensive argument against comparing the Holocaust to other genocides see Steven T. Katz, "Quantity and Interpretation: Issues in the Comparative Historical Analysis of the Holocaust," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 4 (1989): 127–48.
 6. See, in particular, Stuart Bradfield, "From Empires to Genocide Chic: Coming to Terms with the Stolen Generations in Australia," in *Genocide Perspectives II: Essays on Holocaust and Genocide*, 243–66 (Sydney: Brandl and Schlesinger / Australian Institute for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, 2003); Manne, *The Way We Live Now*.
 7. Laurence M. Hauptman, *Tribes and Tribulations: Misconceptions about American Indians and Their Histories* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 4–5 (original emphasis).
 8. Axtell, *Beyond 1492*, 261.
 9. Inga Clendinnen, "First Contact," *The Australian's Review of Books*, 9 May 2001, B6.

10. Reynolds, *An Indelible Stain*, 1–2.
11. *Ibid.*, 3.
12. Ann Curthoys, “Cultural History and the Nation,” in *Cultural History in Australia*, ed. Hsu-Ming Teo and Richard White, 22–37 (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2003), 23.
13. See, e.g., Friedberg, “Dare to Compare”; Ward Churchill, *A Little Matter of Genocide: Holocaust and Denial in the Americas 1492 to the Present* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1997). Simone Gigliotti, “Unspeakable Pasts as Limit Events: The Holocaust, Genocide, and the Stolen Generations,” *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 49 (2003): 164–81; Bruce Wilshire, *Get’ Em All! Kill’ Em!: Genocide, Terrorism and Righteous Communities* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005), 15–32; Jürgen Zimmerer, “Colonialism and the Holocaust: Towards an Archeology of Genocide,” in *Genocide and Settler Society: Frontier Violence and Stolen Indigenous Children in Australian History*, ed. A. Dirk Moses, 49–76 (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004). For the problems associated with making such a comparison see Neil Levi, “‘No Sensible Comparison?’: The Place of the Holocaust in Australia’s History Wars,” *History and Memory* 19 (2007): 124–56. There are some excellent studies comparing the genocidal treatment of indigenous peoples in more than one settler society. See, in particular, Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 8 (2006): 387–409; Patrick Wolfe, “Structure and Event: Settler Colonialism, Time, and the Question of Genocide,” in *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History*, ed. A. Dirk Moses, 102–32 (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2008). See also Norbert Finzsch, “‘It is scarcely possible to conceive that human beings could be so hideous and loathsome’: Discourses of Genocide in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century America and Australia,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 39 (2005): 97–115.
14. Robert K. Hitchcock and Tara M. Twedt, “Physical and Cultural Genocide of Various Indigenous Peoples,” in *Century of Genocide: Eyewitness Accounts and Critical Views*, ed. Samuel Totten, William S. Parsons, and Israel W. Charny, 372–407 (New York: Garland Publishing, 1997), 378.
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17. Patricia Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1987), 338.
18. Ward Churchill, “The Crucible of American Indian Identity: Native Tradition versus Colonial Imposition in Postconquest North America,” in *Contemporary Native American Cultural Issues*, ed. Duane Champagne, 39–67 (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1999), 46.
19. *Ibid.*, 50. Churchill also discerns “statistical extermination” in the consistent underestimates of pre-contact Indian populations. Churchill, *A Little Matter of Genocide*, 131–37.

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21. Melissa L. Meyer, "American Indian Blood Quantum Requirements: Blood is Thicker than Family," in *Over the Edge: Remapping the American West*, ed. Valerie J. Matsumoto and Blake Allmendinger, 231–50 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 241.
22. Bonita Lawrence, "Real" Indians and Others: *Mixed-Blood Urban Native Peoples and Indigenous Nationhood* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 16.
23. David A. Hollinger, "Amalgamation and Hypodescent: The Question of Ethnoracial Mixture in the History of the United States," *American Historical Review* 108 (2003): 1363–90, 1368. R. David Edmunds has also argued that the popularity of claiming Indian ancestry needs to be studied further. R. David Edmunds, "Native Americans, New Voices: American Indian History, 1895–1995," *American Historical Review* 100 (1995): 717–40, 734.
24. Churchill, "The Crucible of American Indian Identity," 46.
25. Patrick Wolfe, "Land, Labor and Difference: Elementary Structures of Race," *American Historical Review* 106 (2001): 866–905, 881.
26. Hollinger, "Amalgamation and Hypodescent," 1367.
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28. Circe Sturm, *Blood Politics: Race, Culture, and Identity in the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 80–81.
29. John P. LaVelle, "The General Allotment Act 'Eligibility' Hoax: Distortions of Law, Policy, and History in Derogation of Indian Tribes," *Wicazo Sa Review* 14 (1999): 251–302.
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31. Commonwealth of Australia, *Aboriginal Welfare: Initial Conference of Commonwealth and State Aboriginal Authorities held at Canberra, 21st to 23rd April, 1937* (Canberra: L.F. Johnston, Commonwealth Government Printer, 1937).
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33. Paul R. Bartrop, "The Holocaust, the Aborigines, and the Bureaucracy of Destruction: An Australian Dimension of Genocide," *Journal of Genocide Research* 3 (2001): 75–87, 83.
34. Robert Manne, "Aboriginal Child Removal and the Question of Genocide, 1900–1940," in *Genocide and Settler Society: Frontier Violence and Stolen Indigenous Children in Australian History*, ed. A. Dirk Moses, 217–42 (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), 238.
35. Raimond Gaita, "Genocide: The Holocaust and the Aborigines," *Quadrant* 41, 11 (1997): 17–22, 20.
36. Robert Manne, "In Denial: The Stolen Generations and the Right," *Quarterly Essay* 1 (2001): 1–113, 40.
37. Manne, *The Way We Live Now*, 40–41.
38. Tatz, "Genocide in Australia," 333.
39. Manne, "Aboriginal Child Removal," 238–9.
40. Andrew Markus, "Genocide in Australia," *Aboriginal History* 25 (2001): 57–69, 64.
41. Warwick Anderson, *The Cultivation of Whiteness: Science, Health and Racial Destiny in Australia* (Carlton South: Melbourne University Press, 2002), 216–43; Quentin Beresford and Paul Omaji, *Our State of Mind: Racial Planning and the Stolen Generations* (Fremantle, Australia: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1998); Russell McGregor, *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory, 1880–1939* (Carlton South: Melbourne University Press, 1997), ch. 4; Russell McGregor, "'Breed Out the Colour' or the Importance of Being White," *Australian Historical Studies* 33 (2002): 286–302; Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (London: Cassell, 1999), 175–76; Manne, *The Way We Live Now*, 15–41.

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43. Raymond Evans, "'Don't You Remember Black Alice, Sam Holt?' Aboriginal Women in Queensland History," *Hecate* 7, 2 (1982): 6-21, 12.
44. Gary B. Nash, "The Hidden History of Mestizo America," in *Sex, Love, Race: Crossing Boundaries in North American History*, ed. Martha Hodes, 10-34 (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 10.
45. Andrea Smith, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2005), 12-13.
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47. See the discussions surrounding the 1888 Act (and its reversal in 1897), which prevented white men from becoming entitled to "any tribal property, privilege, or interest" and forced every Native American woman who married a white man, except those belonging to the so-called Five Civilized Tribes, to become an American citizen upon her marriage. US House, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 50th Cong., 2d sess., 1888, 940; *Fifteenth Annual Report of the Indian Rights Association, 1897* (Philadelphia: Office of the Indian Rights Association, 1898), 28.
48. Lake Mohonk Conference, *Proceedings of the Eighth Annual Meeting of the Lake Mohonk Conference of Friends of the Indian, 1890* (Philadelphia: Lake Mohonk Conference, 1890), 142.
49. Lake Mohonk Conference, *Proceedings of the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the Lake Mohonk Conference of the Friends of the Indian, 1893* (Philadelphia: Lake Mohonk Conference, 1893), 106.
50. *Western Australian Parliamentary Debates* 28 (1905), 424.
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54. Commonwealth of Australia, *Aboriginal Welfare*, 12.
55. HREOC, *Bringing Them Home*, ch. 9.
56. Robert van Krieken, "The Barbarism of Civilization: Cultural Genocide and the 'Stolen Generations,'" *British Journal of Sociology* 50 (1999): 297-315, 307.
57. *Queensland Parliamentary Debates* 174 (1939), 459.
58. Beresford and Omaji, *Our State of Mind*, 44.
59. Victoria Haskins, "On the Doorstep: Aboriginal Domestic Service as a 'Contact Zone,'" *Australian Feminist Studies* 16, 34 (2001): 13-25, 18.
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61. Devon Abbott Mihesuah, *Indigenous American Women: Decolonization, Empowerment, Activism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 77.
62. Ellinghaus, *Taking Assimilation to Heart*, 25-40.
63. Paul Havemann, "Denial, Modernity and Exclusion: Indigenous Placelessness in Australia," *Macquarie Law Journal* 5 (2005): 57-80, 60.
64. *Aborigines Protection Amendment Act, 1886* (Victoria). Similar clauses are found in the *Aborigines Ordinance, 1918* (Northern Territory); the *Aborigines Act, 1911* (South Australia); the *Aborigines Act, 1905* (Western Australia); and the *Aborigines Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act, 1897* (Queensland).

65. "Annual Report of the Chief Protector of Aboriginals for the Year 1909," *Queensland Parliamentary Papers* 3 (1910), 12.
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68. Paul Spruhan, "A Legal History of Blood Quantum in Federal Indian Law to 1935," *South Dakota Law Review* 51 (2006): 1–50, 9.
69. *Report of the Commissioner to the Five Civilized Tribes to the Secretary of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30 1912* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1912), 6.
70. "Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs T.J. Morgan, September 5, 1890," quoted in Wilcomb E. Washburn, *The American Indian and the United States: A Documentary History* (New York: Random House, 1973), 465.
71. Felix S. Cohen, *Handbook of Federal Indian Law* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1945), 5.
72. See, e.g., J. Douglas Smith, *Managing White Supremacy: Race, Politics, and Citizenship in Jim Crow Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Richard B. Sherman, "'The Last Stand': The Fight for Racial Integrity in Virginia in the 1920s," *Journal of Southern History* 54 (1988): 69–82; Peter Wallenstein, *Tell The Court I Love My Wife: Race, Marriage, and the Law—An American History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 137–41; Lisa Lindquist Dorr, "Arm in Arm: Gender, Eugenics, and Virginia's Racial Integrity Acts of the 1920s," *Journal of Women's History* 11 (1999): 143–66. The most comprehensive exploration is Helen C. Rountree, *Pocahontas's People: The Powhatan Indians of Virginia through Four Centuries* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 219–68.
73. Tiya Miles, *Ties that Bind: The Story of An Afro-Cherokee Family in Slavery and Freedom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), xv.
74. Wolfe, "Structure and Event," 120.
75. Smith, *Conquest*, 11. For a similar discussion in the Australian context see Ian Anderson, "I, the 'Hybrid' Aborigine: Film and Representation," *Australian Aboriginal Studies* 1 (1997): 4–14.
76. Theda Perdue, *"Mixed Blood" Indians: Racial Construction in the Early South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2003), x.
77. Markus, "Genocide in Australia," 58. It should be noted that Alison Palmer does not include biological absorption in her definition of ethnocide. By her definition, ethnocide can mean the loss of ecosystem that forms the basis of a social and cultural system; being forced into new forms of economic activity; the undermining of traditional forms of political organization; that languages and cultural practices are forbidden and not taught to the next generation; that Christianity replaces traditional religions; that cultural identities are simply denied; that state policies remove people from their communities through migration or child removal; or that expressions of a culture are forbidden or destroyed. Alison Palmer, "Ethnocide," in *Genocide in Our Time: An Annotated Bibliography with Analytical Introductions*, ed. Michael N. Dobkowski and Isidor Walliman, 2–4 (Ann Arbor, MI: Pierlan Press, 1992).
78. R. Charli Carpenter, "Surfacing Children: Limitations of Genocidal Rape Discourse," *Human Rights Quarterly* 22 (2000): 428–77, 429. And of course, as Carpenter points out, we must be very careful about how we connect the experiences of such children with any discussion of genocide: in Australia, notably, children of mixed descent were fully fledged members of the community into which they were born.
79. Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," 398–9.
80. *Ibid.*, 402–3.
81. Seena B. Kohl, "Ethnocide and Ethnogenesis: A Case Study of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw, a Genocide Avoided," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 1 (1986): 91–100.

82. A. Dirk Moses, "Genocide and Settler Society in Australian History," in *Genocide and Settler Society: Frontier Violence and Stolen Indigenous Children in Australian History*, ed. A. Dirk Moses, 3–48 (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), 17.
83. Darlene Johnson, "Ab/originality: Playing and Passing versus Assimilation," *The Olive Pink Society Bulletin* 5, 2 (1993): 19–23, 19.