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**“Free pub meals”: food, race, and security in Alexis**

**Wright’s *Grog War***

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*In the eleventh lecture of the Society Must Be Defended series, Foucault introduces the concept of security as an analytic successor to the race war he had been using to apprehend the modern nation state and the political administration of life within it. To examine the relationship between these concepts, and explore their relevance to the colonial scene, this essay uses them as an interpretive prism through which to read food’s biopolitical functions in Alexis Wright’s *Grog War*. Wright’s text chronicles Indigenous-led efforts to enhance the vitality, wealth, and wellbeing of the Northern Territory town of Tennant Creek’s population by reducing alcohol’s circulation. Building on Dinesh Wadiwel and Deirdre Tedmanson’s reading of food’s function as part of the Northern Territory Emergency Response, the essay argues that *Grog War* locates food as an important medium and site where the logics of race war and security intersect. It finds that *Grog War* locates food as an important site of raced conflict where the raced Other’s reproduction, and the boundary between life that must be made live and let die, is at stake.*

**“Free pub meals”: food, race, and security in Alexis Wright’s *Grog War***

In the collection of biopolitically themed essays, *Geographies of Race and Food: Fields, Bodies, Markets*, Dinesh Joseph Wadiwel and Deirdre Tedmanson contend that food is an important part of the discursive construct through which race is produced, performed, and embodied in the Northern Territory Emergency Response (Wadiwel & Tedmanson 2013, pp. 227-243). They highlight the quarantining of 50 per cent of social security payments for food and essential household items, identify economic and environmental factors that mediate Indigenous food access, and draw attention to the detrimental or dubious health effects the NTER is producing among the raced

population that is ostensibly its object (see Behrendt 2010; Billings 2011, pp. 175-177). Following Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2009), Wadiwel and Tedmanson deploy Foucault's concept of 'race war'—'the conquest and subjugation of one race by another'—as a way of describing the NTER's function (Foucault 2003, pp. 60, 163-164; on the NTER as race war, see also Watson 2009). They argue that imposing non-Indigenous norms of expenditure and lifestyle is a way of symbolically and, given the impediments to purchasing food that income quarantining imposes, materially denigrating the Indigenous community. Like Moreton-Robinson, they conclude that this denigration entrenches colonial occupation by construing the Indigenous population as requiring paternalistic management and thus delegitimising their claims to sovereignty and self-determination (Wadiwel & Tedmanson 2013, p. 236).

In the paper that follows, I expand on Wadiwel and Tedmanson's analysis of the technological role food plays in the relationship between race, biopower, and the modern nation state by introducing the concepts of security and circulation that Foucault describes in the *Security, Territory, Population* lecture series (2007). Where race war entails letting the raced Other die as a way of purifying and improving the population, the more sophisticated logic of security pursues an optimal equilibrium between the benefits and detriments of the raced Other's life and death. To elaborate these concepts' relevance to the colonial scene, and foreground Indigenous agency and capacity to engage in biopolitics rather than be restricted to its object, I use them to read another Australian setting that involves food, race, and attempts to optimise the population by regulating consumption: the efforts to combat excessive alcohol supply and its detrimental effects on the health and well-being of Tennant Creek residents that Alexis Wright chronicles in her 1997 text, *Grog War*.

*Grog War* documents the efforts of Julalikari ('for the people') Council Aboriginal Corporation and members of the local Indigenous community to regulate and restrict the supply of alcohol on Warumungu land in the Northern Territory town of Tennant Creek'. As the text's title suggests, Wright recognises and reproduces local Indigenous people's keen awareness that alcohol is a weapon that colonisers use against them. She records oral histories of Indigenous people's encounters with the non-Indigenous explorers John McDouall Stuart and Alfred Giles, whose expeditions carried alcohol to the region for the first time (cf Brady 1990, p. 196), and describes non-Indigenous pastoralists' and miners' coercive liquor provision and homicidal behaviour upon their arrival in the region during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Wright 1997, pp. 22-38). Shifting her focus to the near present, Wright details the Indigenous health organisation Anyinginyi Congress's efforts to reduce alcohol supply in Tennant Creek. The Congress's successful campaign to prevent local venues using graphic striptease shows to sell alcohol during the 1980s (pp. 71-76; see also Boffa, George & Tsey 1994) informs the population-wide regulatory solutions that Julalikari Council pursue during the 1990s. Wright records the Council's setbacks and progress at building local support for liquor restrictions, securing

an alcohol-free day to discuss the issue, challenging the ingrained cultural habits, vested local interests, and political discourses and institutions that reify and benefit from excessive alcohol supply, and negotiating a trial of locally devised liquor restrictions. *Grog War*'s account of this adversarial process culminates in a hearing before the Liquor Licensing Board, at which the community and its representatives present and secure support for their proposals to reduce alcohol's availability in the town: restrictions on the packaging, strength, varieties, and volume of liquor that may be sold and a weekly alcohol-free day that coincides with the distribution of welfare payments (Wright 1997, pp. 133-200). The text's final chapters recount the restrictions' and court cases' consequences and reflect on the lessons of the Indigenous community's victory (pp. 242-258).

Read through a biopolitical lens, *Grog War* reveals the ways in which the Indigenous peoples who live in and around Tennant Creek are produced, and resist their designation, as a form of life that may be let die. It describes how Tennant Creek's regulatory environment, and local failure to observe or enforce its provisions, enabled non-Indigenous licensees to supply alcohol in frequencies and volumes that produced substantial harm to the Indigenous population. The Indigenous community's attempt to restrict alcohol supply by amending and enforcing regulatory measures may be understood as a move by the raced Other to be reconceived and reclassified as part of the population whose vitality is government's object and rationale. Julalikari Council advances what may be described as an affirmative and emancipatory biopolitics: one that effaces racial divisions by refusing proposals that would restrict alcohol's availability for Indigenous people only (Clendinnen 2004, pp. 125-126) and challenging Indigenous pathologisation by insisting that illegal and unethical liquor supply, rather than Indigenous personal and cultural deficiency, is the source of the population's suffering (Grossman 1998, p. 84). *Grog War*, which the Council commissioned Wright to produce (Brown 2000, p. 23), complements and is a component of this biopolitical strategy. It endorses Julalikari's arguments and provides a positive 'asset-based' account of the Indigenous community's amelioration of a public health problem (Carfoot 2016, p.226).

Like Wadiwel and Tedmanson's reading of the NTER, my analysis of *Grog War* draws attention to food's role in literally and metaphorically constructing the raced Other as a threat to the population's health and wellbeing. *Grog War* offers a different perspective to Wadiwel and Tedmanson's account of food's biopolitical functions as part of the NTER because it concerns Indigenous-led efforts to optimise the population and restrict alcohol's circulation within a regional town. The text centres Indigenous agency and shows how Indigenous people themselves deploy food as a technology of biopower through which they problematise the population and apprehend and elaborate raced and unracial threats to their wellbeing. This differs substantially from extant readings of food and biopolitical governance that emphasise coercive regulations of diet by governments, corporate actors, and non-

governmental organisations and attempts to resist it by the object populations (Rowse 1998; Nally 2011; Holloway & Morris 2012; Scott-Smith 2014; Kurtz 2015). In particular, regulating non-Indigenous Australians' consumption at the behest of the Indigenous population stages a significant reversal of the characteristic pattern of race relations in the colony. Foregrounding Julalikari's emphasis on population-wide biopolitical processes and tactics also differentiates the text—and this essay's reading—from Foucaultian-inspired work that conceives food as a technology of the self through which individual subjects may pursue decolonising goals by reconceiving and relating to themselves and others through their diets (see Probyn 2000, pp. 101-122; Heldke 2001).

To contextualise this food-centric reading of *Grog War*, and its pertinence to Wadiwel and Tedmanson's analysis of the NTER's attempts to regulate Indigenous alimentary conduct, the following section of the paper provides a brief overview of connections between Indigenous consumption of food and alcohol in the Australian colony.

### **Food and restrictions on Indigenous people's access to alcohol in the Australian colony**

The *Licensed Publicans Act 1838* (NSW) was the first legislation to forbid the supply of alcohol to Indigenous people in Australia. Similar laws were passed in all Australian states and territories, ostensibly to protect both Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations' health and wellbeing (see Brady 1990, p. 198; Hunter 1993, p. 90). Various links between alcohol and food in the discourse of this early period include legislative provision for pastoralists to pay Indigenous employees in rations of alcohol and a fear that intoxicated Indigenous people threatened pastoral land management (Brady 1990, pp. 197-198). Prohibition for Indigenous people was repealed between 1957 and 1972 (see Hunter 1993, p. 90); however, informal local restrictions were established in rural and remote Indigenous communities to minimise alcohol's harmful effects (Brady 1990, pp. 196,202). Many of these local regimes were subsequently formalised through legislation that facilitated alcohol's restriction and regulation as part of Alcohol Management Plans (AMPs) (see Smith, Langton, d'Abbs, Room, Chenhall & Brown 2013, p.3). In the Northern Territory, the *Liquor Act 1979* (NT) enabled communities to implement a range of localised measures, including reductions in the volume, varieties, and strength of alcoholic beverages that may be sold; injunctions on the sale of alcohol for off-premises consumption; and the complete prohibition of alcohol sale or possession (Brady 1990, pp. 207-208).

Food sufficiency recurs as the rationale for reducing alcohol's circulation in several accounts of these localised liquor management regimes. A review of Indigenous-led efforts to restrict alcohol's circulation among Anangu people at Yalata, South Australia, cites a local woman imploring '[h]ow many times you see *tjitji* [children] wandering around here, no *mai* [food], no camp, no tucker' (Brady,

Byrne & Henderson 2003, p. 68). Indigenous women from Alice Springs make similar claims when challenging a proposal to establish an Indigenous-owned drinking club, which, they argue, 'would cause more money to be spent on alcohol, rather than on food for families' (Rowse 1994, p. 23). These assessments correlate with Maggie Brady's collection of Indigenous accounts of drinking and its consequences, which records many instances of people going without food after spending their wages or welfare payments on alcohol (Brady 1995, pp. 63-64,67,72,130) or being otherwise unable or unwilling to procure food due to excessive drinking (pp. 90, 92,138).

The testimony cited above suggests an inverse relationship between food's and alcohol's circulation; however, not all researchers who document Indigenous Australian people's experiences of local liquor restrictions record specific references to food (see Clough et al 2017; Robertson, Fitts & Clough 2017; Senior, Chenhall, Ivory & Stevenson 2009). Brady's recent study of Indigenous Australian temperance movements notes efforts to discourage excessive drinking by offering desirable meals (Brady 2017, pp. 35,188-189,238-239). This associates food provision with alcohol while attenuating the inverse relationship between them. Similar links between food and alcohol were construed as a way of reducing the harm caused by excessive drinking in Tennant Creek during the 1990s (Gray, Saggars, Atkinson, Sputore & Bourbon 2000, p. 39); however, as *Grog War* describes, the practice was manipulated to maintain Indigenous consumption levels and ensure alcohol's continuing circulation rather than reducing it.

The alcohol restrictions imposed as part of the Federal Government's Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) and subsequent Stronger Futures policies link them explicitly with food<sup>ii</sup>. The NTER was launched on 21 June 2007 following the publication of *Ampe Akelyememane Meke Mekarle*. The report foregrounds the risk factors for child sexual abuse in Indigenous communities. It notes community members' concerns about children's welfare, including food insecurity and insufficiency, which it attributes to excessive alcohol consumption and gambling (Wild & Anderson 2007, pp. 163, 189-190, 201)<sup>iii</sup>. The report recommends establishing 'a universal meals program for Aboriginal students (breakfast, morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea)' and exploring the possibility of substituting food vouchers for welfare payments (Wild & Anderson 2007, pp. 156, 171).

The Federal Australian Government responded to the report by unilaterally announcing a program of 37 initiatives that include banning alcohol and pornography, imposing direct income management of welfare recipients, and licensing food stores across approximately 500 Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory (Yu, Duncan & Gray 2008, p. 9). Income management quarantines 50 per cent of fortnightly welfare payments for expenditure on 'essential' items such as food, clothing, rent, and utilities. The income managed portion of welfare payments—and 100 per cent of any lump sums received—are delivered by way of a 'Basics Card' that cannot be used to purchase

alcohol, pornography, or tobacco products. Parents and guardians subject to income management are obliged to demonstrate how they will provide for their children's wellbeing. Federal Government agencies may compel the expenditure of quarantined funds on 'essentials', including school or community-centre based programs to feed children (Bray, Gray, Hand & Katz 2014, p. 121). In addition, a licensing regime that requires food stores in remote communities to offer a reliable supply of healthy, high quality, and affordable food serves as a further 'food security measure'<sup>iv</sup>.

The political rhetoric used to support the NTER/Stronger Futures initiatives asserts an inverse relationship between the Indigenous population's food security and alcohol's circulation. Although alcohol was already prohibited in most Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory (Brady 2007, p. 60), the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Mal Brough MP, contended that the NTER would 'make sure money paid to parents and carers by the government for feeding children is not used for buying grog or for gambling' (Brough 2007, p. 11). His successor, Jenny Macklin MP, and some Indigenous groups and commentators, repeated these claims (Macklin & Snowdon 2010; NPY Women's Council 2010).

Evaluations of the NTER and Stronger Futures income management programs explicitly examined their effects on Indigenous diet and food security (Bray et al 2014, pp. 119-192). They reveal little or no success in improving the Northern Territory Indigenous population's food security and increasing the proportion of income spent on food. The final evaluation found that nearly 40% of Indigenous people subject to income management had run out of money for food in the preceding month (Bray et al 2014, p. 178). It reported that '[t]here was no evidence of changes in spending patterns, including food and alcohol sales' (Bray et al 2014, p. xxi).

A further Federal Government-commissioned evaluation of the NTER's Stronger Futures iteration confirmed these findings (Commonwealth of Australia 2016, pp. 5-18), as did an independent evaluation of income management's impact on Indigenous people's shopping practices and the dietary quality of purchased food and drinks across ten Northern Territory communities (Brimblecombe et al. 2010). The statistics recorded in the *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2016* (SCRGSP 2016) show that the NTER and Stronger Futures initiatives have failed to produce discernible improvements in the Northern Territory Indigenous population's health, wealth, or wellbeing<sup>v</sup>.

Despite the failure to improve food security or optimise the Indigenous population by reducing alcohol's circulation and consumption, food does perform biopolitical technological functions as part of the discourse that the NTER and Stronger Futures generate. Food's prominence as a rationale and a metric for evaluation demonstrates that it is problematising life in ways that render it administrable. As a

focal point of income management, food is an important site of administration through which the NTER attempts to achieve its goal of producing what may be described as 'a newly oriented 'normalised' Aboriginal population' (Hinkson 2007, p. 66). Food is central to the intensified and quotidian surveillance of the lives of Indigenous people subject to income management (see Dee 2013). The surveillance's specificity is such that the final evaluation is able to report, 'within Basics Card spending on fruit and vegetables the major item purchased were bananas (18.5 per cent of sales). These were followed by frozen green vegetables, and then three pre-packaged items identified as: fruit packs; salad packs; and vegetable packs' (Bray et al 2014, p. 141).

Income management generates affective and material empirical effects: many Indigenous people describe the shaming, loss of cultural integrity, and subsequent mental health effects that being subjected to income management and alcohol restrictions causes (see Cox 2011, pp. 40-41; Senior et al 2009, p. 161). Some find that the Basics Card prevents them obtaining inexpensive food from markets and small producers, who only accept cash, which makes satisfying their need for sustenance more difficult and expensive (Bray et al 2014, pp. 137-138; Equality Rights Alliance 2011, pp. 21-22). Given that few programs and services to reduce demand for alcohol and manage addiction have been provided in communities subject to the NTER, the increasingly punitive fines, and the high price of illicit liquor, can also mean some Indigenous families may have less money to spend on food than before the regime was imposed (Clough et al 2016, p. 72). Some women report that a fear of being subjected to income management discourages them from approaching Centrelink for support and welfare payments to which they are entitled (Equality Rights Alliance 2011, p. 6); conversely, income management may be argued to reduce Indigenous people's capacity to manage money and increase Indigenous dependence on welfare and paternal government practices, as allocations to school nutrition programs, rent, and utilities is done on their behalf (Bray et al 2014, p. xxi; Concerned Australians 2012, p. 63; Cox 2011, p. 40). The cumulative effect is to diminish the Indigenous population's health, wealth, wellbeing, and capacity for self-governance through a food-centric program ostensibly intended to optimise them and the broader population. The NTER and its consequences may be understood as 'one more step in a continuum of attacks on Aboriginal individuals and families by the racist Australian settler colonial state' (Grieves 2017, p. 87). They manifest biopower's thanaticism and the race war through which Foucault proposes the contemporary nation state may be understood. As noted in the introduction above, Wadiwel and Tedmanson (2013) invoke and extend Foucaultian race war in their biopolitical reading of the NTER's regulation of food and alcohol. They identify food as both a weapon of race war used to pathologise and race Indigenous people and one of 'the spoils of war'—a medium through which victory in race war is performed, sovereignty asserted, and domination reproduced (2013, pp. 227-231, 240-241). They argue that the sovereign—manifested in this setting as the dominant class of the colonisers—derives pleasure from controlling the raced Other's consumption. This pleasure incentivises the population's

administration, which deploys biopolitical discourse to facilitate and legitimate the exercise of power while disguising its impetus (p. 229).

While Wadiwel and Tedmanson apply a Foucaultian understanding of (bio)power, they limit their analysis to coercive colonial applications of power rather than agonistic relations. They do not consider the ways in which Indigenous people themselves may deploy food as a weapon of race war and technology of biopower. To address these issues, and extend Wadiwel and Tedmanson's analysis, the reading of *Grog War* below examines how food functions as a weapon of race war in a situation where *refusing* to control Indigenous access to pleasures such as alcohol generates thanatic effects. It augments this by considering how the logic of security, described in the following section, intersects with and reinforces the biopolitical relations that *Grog War* describes food and alcohol generating. It shows that food is a weapon of race war that both sides of the conflict may use as part of efforts to optimise the population by restricting *or maintaining* alcohol's circulation.

### **Race war, security, and circulation**

In the lectures of 1975-1976, Foucault proposes that 'the war that undermines our society and divides it in a binary mode is, basically, a race war ... the conquest and subjugation of one race by another' (2003, pp. 59-60). He suggests the population is divided into a super-race and sub-race linked by a 'biological-type relationship' according to which 'the death of the other, the death of the bad race, of the inferior race (or the degenerate, or the abnormal) is something that will make life in general healthier: healthier and purer' (pp. 60-61, 255). The relationship distinguishes those who must be made live from those that may be let die and incentivises the former to eradicate the latter (pp. 254-255). Such eradication, or at least letting die, Foucault observes, 'do[es] not mean simply murder as such, but also every form of indirect murder: the fact of exposing someone to death, increasing the risk of death for some people, or, quite simply, political death, expulsion, rejection, and so on' (p. 256).

The lecture series positions race and racism as necessary to the modern nation state and biopower's operation. Foucault comments that racism is 'a mechanism that allows biopower to work' (p. 258) and that 'the modern State can scarcely function without becoming involved with racism at some point, within certain limits and subject to certain conditions' (p. 254)<sup>vi</sup>. Despite the war-like nature of the relationship between the races, the raced Other does not become extinct but is continually and necessarily reproduced as part of the process of optimising the population. The racing process, and, consequently, the existence of a raced Other that simultaneously threatens and serves to optimise the population, may be understood as endemic to the modern nation state. As Foucault points out, racism is thus something 'that society will direct against itself, against its own elements and its own products' (p. 62). He summarises the paradox underpinning the

biopolitically ordered nation: '[w]e have to defend society against all the biological threats posed by the other race, the subrace, the counterrace that we are, despite ourselves, bringing into existence' (pp. 61-62).

During the course's final lecture, Foucault introduces a new concept, security, which will provide a starting point for his following year's research. In its initial guise, security pertains to the biopolitical theme and rationale of protecting the species from internal dangers by intervening through processes that operate at the level of the population (pp. 246-247, 249). Foucault moots a security 'mechanism' that serves to minimise the unpredictable and harmful elements and events that diminish the population's vitality and wellbeing—to predict the probability of those events (by modifying [them], if necessary), or at least to compensate for their effects ... [to] achiev[e] an overall equilibrium that protects the security of the whole from internal dangers' (p. 249). While this retains biopower's emphasis upon optimising the population, the sense of *compensating* for harm and achieving equilibrium, rather than seeking to eradicate internal threats, is an important shift in Foucault's thinking about biopower's contemporary logic.

Throughout the first four lectures of 1977-78, Foucault develops his thinking about the biopolitically ordered nation state and efforts to administer and optimise the population through security mechanisms (Senellart 2007, pp. 477-478). Where biopower and biopolitics are described in the *History* and the previous year's lecture series as problematising the population primarily through vital statistics—birth rate, mortality, and life-expectancy, among others—here, Foucault foregrounds an economic dimension in his account of the security mechanism's biopolitical administration: '[b]asically, the fundamental question [security asks] is economics and the economic relation between the cost of repression and the cost of delinquency' (2007, p. 22). This economic dimension allows for a more sophisticated reading of biopower's *raison d'être*, such that 'population is no longer a matter of numbers, a pure quantity or the greatest number possible, but a substance whose optimum size varies according to the evolution of wages, employment and prices' (Donzelot 2008, p. 121). Throughout the lecture series, Foucault's interest in economics opens onto wide-ranging enquiries concerning liberalism and the role of the market in providing a new source of natural order through which rule may be rationalised and government expansion curtailed. For the purposes of this paper, however, the most pertinent aspect is the use of an economic metric through which the population's health and wellbeing may be determined; as will be shown in the reading of *Grog War* that follows, the economic benefits and costs of raced life are important to non-Indigenous calculations of the population's wellbeing (see Wright p. 83).

As Foucault had foreshadowed the previous year, the lectures contend that the security mechanism describes a form of biopolitical administration that, in contrast to race war's eliminatory logic, seeks an

equilibrium point at which further minimisation of threats is no longer economically or practically efficient. Consequently, Foucault argues, the kind of problem that security engages is 'how to keep a type of criminality, theft for instance, within socially and economically acceptable limits and around an average that will be considered as optimal for a given social functioning' (p. 20). The result, he observes, is to blur the boundary between permission and prohibition, such that a certain amount of prohibited elements and outcomes may persist<sup>vii</sup>. Achieving this level, he contends, is fundamentally a matter of addressing problems of 'circulation'.

The first lecture of the *Security, Territory, Population* series elaborates circulation as a means through which the security mechanism administers the potentially harmful commodities, forces, subjects, and technologies that are unavoidably produced under a biopolitical administration. Optimising the population involves 'organising circulation, eliminating its dangerous elements, making a division between good and bad circulation, and maximising the good circulation by diminishing the bad' (2007, pp. 32-33). Foucault reiterates that this is not a case of eradicating all that is harmful but 'of maximising the positive elements, for which one provides the best possible circulation, and of minimising what is risky and inconvenient, like theft and disease, while knowing that they will never be completely suppressed' (p. 34).

Applying this analytic prism to the racing effect and racism that Foucault had earlier argued is endemic to the modern nation state, circulation and the logic of security would seem to offer a way of reconciling the raced Other's persistent reproduction with the logic of race war. A security mechanism allows the raced other to be administered and let die in ways that maximises their beneficial effects and minimises (or compensates for) their alleged detrimental effects on the population's health and wellbeing. This helps address the issue of whether biopower provides an analytic framework capable of recognising different treatments and effects of race, such as distinguishing between forms of life marked for extermination and those economically integrated into the modern nation state (see Lee 2014, pp. 217-218). In an Australian context, deploying a security- and circulation-based analysis allows the re-reading of a situation in which the Indigenous raced Other is not only subject to elimination because of the threat they pose to non-Indigenous occupation and sovereignty (Wolfe 2006, p. 388; cf May 1994; Reynolds 2000) but also reproduced in such a way that their deaths may optimise the population. Instead of attributing Indigenous persistence to Indigenous people and their allies successfully resisting the logic of elimination (Rowse & Smith 2010), this suggests a more pessimistic reading in which the raced Other is continually resurrected in forms amenable to the colonial order (Morgensen 2011).

The negative framing of raced forms of life as detrimental to the population's health—and complicit in optimising it even when attempting to resist biopolitical administration (see O'Malley 1996)—to which this theoretical account lends itself is redressed in *Grog War*,

which shows how the Indigenous peoples of Tennant Creek apply population-wide regulations that enhance the town residents' overall wellbeing without reproducing a racial caesura. By ensuring the town's regulatory and spatial environment applies to and minimises harm to Indigenous lives as well as non-Indigenous ones, Indigenous representative organisations construe Indigenous life as that which must be made live rather than let die. In this way, the Indigenous-led initiative to reduce alcohol's circulation manifests an affirmative and emancipatory biopolitics. As the reading that follows will show, throughout this process, food is an important site of biopolitical administration where the raced Other's reproduction, and the boundary between life that must be made live and let die, is at stake.

### Grog War

Wright introduces *Grog War* as 'a story of how the Warumungu people in the Northern Territory town of Tennant Creek are dealing with the invasion of grog on their traditional lands' (p. ix). As the citation preceding the first chapter makes clear, this invasion is part of a genocidal race war: 'I have heard white people say cynically, "[w]e couldn't clean them up with poison and guns, but you watch, we'll do it with the grog"' (Downing 1973, p. 3 cited in Wright 1997, p. 1).

For the Warumungu, the first step in combatting this invasion is to conceive the problem afflicting the population as one of alcohol supply rather than alcohol consumption. As Wright makes clear, '[t]he feeling among Aboriginal people about grog is that it is not theirs. They are not the ones selling it. They do not order it and sell it in Tennant Creek' (p. 102). The Indigenous representative organisations Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation and Anyinginyi Congress devise and implement, against considerable non-Indigenous opposition, a strategy to reduce the harm being done to Indigenous people, and to improve the whole population's health, wealth, and wellbeing, by imposing greater restrictions on the sale of alcohol (for a summary of measures, see Gray et al 2000, p. 39; Wright p. 163;). Crucially, and for the first time in a town where the majority of the population are non-Indigenous (Saggers & Gray 1998, pp. 101-102), the new regulations apply to all Tennant Creek residents. This differs from non-Indigenous counter-proposals for 'special measures' that apply only to Indigenous people or exclusionary regulations that preserve existing levels of alcohol supply while insulating the non-Indigenous population from its consequences (see Wright 1997, pp. 104-125).

Like Foucault's analysis of the complex issues that a security mechanism must address, the town's Indigenous residents are faced with a biopolitical situation where the super-race exhibits substantial interest in sustaining and reproducing them as a form of raced life characterised by extremely high levels of alcohol consumption. The financial gain some members of Tennant Creek's non-Indigenous population accrue from supplying high volumes of alcohol is considerable. Indigenous alcohol purchase, and other expenditure,

contributes significantly to the local economy and thus the population's economic wellbeing and, ultimately, persistence (Wright 1997, pp. 129, 166, 228). The ill-health, dysfunction, and deviance from non-Indigenous norms of conduct that excessive alcohol supply accentuates among Indigenous people are used to publicly denigrate them and inhibit their ability to participate in and shape local government policy and practice (Wright 1997, p. 77). Foregrounding deleterious Indigenous practices of alcohol consumption also serves to deflect attention from non-Indigenous residents' detrimental relationship with alcohol (Brady 1988, p. 22). Furthermore, as Michelle Grossman's reading of *Grog War* points out, local conditions and discourses in Tennant Creek derive from and support national, and international narratives in which Australia is heavily invested, including the associations of rural environments, masculinity, and Australian culture with consuming alcohol, Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations, and liberalism, anti-discrimination, and human rights (Grossman 1998, p. 83).

Consequently, few non-Indigenous efforts are made to curb excessive alcohol supply. Instead, non-Indigenous alcohol vendors, liquor industry representatives, and members of local government seek to secure the non-Indigenous population from alcohol's most visible detrimental effects by managing Indigenous circulation through the town. Disorder is assumed and incorporated into the social and spatial order and the proposed ways of defending the population from it: local architecture, town planning, and the regulatory and juridico-political environment are all enlisted to minimise the Indigenous community's proximity and visibility to non-Indigenous residents and visitors (Wright 1997, pp. 93, 105-112; see also Brady 1988, pp. 40-48).

*Grog War's* account of non-Indigenous proposals for remedying the problems of excessive alcohol supply reveals that their underlying biopolitical strategy is to manage rather than prevent the raced Other's death. The text's multiple accounts of alcohol-related illness, injuries, and deaths demonstrate that alcohol is a weapon of race war that produces the raced Other and lets it die (Wright 1997, pp. 60-65). It also illuminates how alcohol is a potent security mechanism that renders race war more efficient by linking the means by which the raced Other is produced and let die to the unraced population's economic gain and enhanced claims to sovereignty.

While alcohol and the regulatory environment governing its supply are foregrounded in *Grog War*, food recurs as an important technology of biopower throughout the text. As will be shown below, food is a metric through which Indigenous subjects assess and assert the population's health and wellbeing and apprehend and experience the threat posed to it by raced and unraced forms of life. For them, food is a source of wellbeing capable of effacing racial boundaries and optimising the wellbeing of all forms of life. By contrast, the non-Indigenous testimony *Grog War* collects indicates that food plays an important role in producing the Indigenous raced Other as, for them, an inferior form of

life unable to manage its biological needs for sustenance. Members of the non-Indigenous community use food to preserve the conditions under which race war persists, in part, as a means of securing the economic benefits they accrue from the raced Other produced by their excessive alcohol supply. Examining these different uses of food reveals how it produces and marks a racial boundary and becomes a site where the logics of race war and security intersect.

### **Indigenous accounts of food and alcohol in *Grog War***

*Grog War*'s introduction to Country records a young Warumungu man nostalgically recalling the land's munificence: '[w]e got too much bush tucker. Bush potato. Bush honey. Kangaroo. Turkey. Goanna. Emu' (p. 5). Wright goes on to observe that, '[t]he Warumungu know every plant and can tell you which ones are good for eating and others which are good for bush medicine. It takes a birthright and lifetime to gain access to the knowledge to properly understand the powers of these lands' (p. 5). These comments identify food as a source and metric of the population's belonging, health, prosperity, and vitality.

Race begins to mediate food's technological role when the Warumungu encounter their first white explorers, who arrive hungry and sick. For three months, Wright explains, John McDouall Stuart and his men had been subsisting on rations of dried meat, which the explorer 'complained wasn't very good anyway', and a weekly ration of five pounds of flour (p. 23). The inverse relationship between alcohol supply and food that *Grog War* elaborates is foreshadowed by Wright's claim that, in contrast to the explorers' privative diet, at least one, William Kekwick, carried sufficient alcohol to be regularly intoxicated (p. 23). Wright observes,

[t]hey must have looked a sorry sight for the Warumungu who approached loaded with opossums and a number of small birds and parrots ... [t]he food was to feed them. They were so skinny and weak. The opossums (which have since been wiped out by cattle and mining activities) were also a bush medicine. Proper good food and medicine at the same time. Prized meat ... Stuart misunderstood all of this. He simply took the food for nothing .... (1997, pp. 23-24)

Food demarcates and mediates racial boundaries here, as the diet of the healthy and well-nourished Indigenous population is contrasted with that of the hungry, ailing colonists. As in other colonial scenes (see Rowse 1998, p. 5) food provision and receipt occurs without mutual agreement as to its meaning. Wright reiterates the point by describing a subsequent non-Indigenous trespasser, Alfred Giles, who also misunderstands the Warumungu presentations of food that accompany demands for him and his party to leave: the explorers, she tells us, interpret the proffered supplies as 'a sort of peace offering' (Wright 1997, p. 27).<sup>viii</sup>

Warumungu's generous gifts of food differ substantially from the non-Indigenous food provision, discussed below, that *Grog War* records. Of

particular note is the way Warumungu use food to alleviate ill health across the racial boundary rather than elicit it in the way the subsequent non-Indigenous occupiers will be shown to do. By feeding the new arrivals and improving their health and wellbeing, Warumungu efface some of the biological discrepancies and hegemonic relations that subsequently serve to race life. This suggests an affirmative and emancipatory biopolitical use of food that refuses the logic of race war. At the same time, a circulatory strategy of security is evident in the way Warumungu deploy food to reduce the presence and proximity of a potential threat to their wellbeing. They provide food to enable the explorers to move on—to continue to circulate and return to their ancestral lands rather than coalesce in places where they will cause harm.

Wright's brief aside concerning possums 'wiped out by cattle and mining activities' precedes the familiar invocation of Indigenous people 'driven from rivers and creek frontages and deprived of their traditional means of obtaining food' by subsequent waves of interlopers (pp. 29, 35). In contrast to the Warumungu practice of providing food to hasten the colonists' departure, the new arrivals seek to discourage Indigenous occupation by inducing food shortages and thus diminishing Indigenous vitality. Wright describes the nature of the relationship across the racial boundary that food now mediates:

"My family is starving. Give me some food". This would have been a frequent request of the Warumungu living in starvation conditions and dying near the miners. Not an unfair request from people who were being invaded and locked into a program of genocide on their own land. "I'll give you grog. You give me a woman". (1997 p. 36)

The phylogenetic reversal of food-related fortune is abrupt. Dispossession produces a new hegemonic relationship that eliminates the food-providing Indigenous subject and replaces it with a subaltern food-receiving one who replicates the early non-Indigenous explorers' hunger, illness, and tendency to console themselves with alcohol. In contrast to the affirmative and emancipatory biopolitics that Wright's account suggests Warumungu practice, food now functions as a weapon of race war that produces and facilitates the subordination and elimination of a sub-race. Instead of connoting and enhancing vitality, food is withheld to improve the super-race's claims to undisputed sovereignty (and thus wealth and wellbeing) by letting the raced Other die.

Wright connects this recent history with the contemporary period, in which the Indigenous community's health and wellbeing continues to diminish, largely due to an inverse relationship between alcohol and food supply that becomes increasingly pronounced. Alongside accounts of alcohol-induced lateral violence (pp. 208, 215, 99) self-harm (pp. 100, 239), and misadventure (pp. 12-15, 200, 217), *Grog War* records numerous food-centric testimonies from Indigenous people concerning alcohol's deleterious effects on the Indigenous population: alcohol 'affected the people's health...[p]eople use to take fits, lose

weight, had diarrhoea. They would not eat food. That thing would make them so sick that they did not like to eat tucker. They just liked to drink, drink, drink...' (p. 86, see also p. 158). The stresses that alcohol place on the family unit, kinship networks, and the entire Indigenous community are articulated through food. Wright observes that, '[t]he elders were constantly warning parents about children. Kids were sick, losing weight and hungry because the mother and father were drinking' (p. 53). Some children's inability to use a knife and fork is cited as evidence of parental neglect (p. 87). Food is also implicated in the patriarchal violence to which women are subjected within the family. Wright records an elder 'ask[ing] why they [drinkers] don't give money to their wives so that they can shop for the men and give them tucker'. The question is rhetorical: 'the wife has no money and she goes wandering around and robbing old people for tucker for the husband... If the wife cannot do it, she gets a hiding' (p. 54). Other elders testify that, "'drinkers don't buy anything except grog ... Drunks won't let us sleep if they find out our names ... Drunks keep wake all night—can't sleep. Some of us are sick they don't care. Want blanket and tucker. Meat ...'" (p. 239). A group of older women complain to Wright about alcohol's erosion of cultural practices, explaining "'in ceremony you got to sit down quiet. No argument. Even if got old enemy there. Can't say nothing. But they come in drunk picking argument for food. No respect for anyone even themselves'" (pp. 132-133).

By recording these testimonies from Indigenous community members and representatives, Wright conveys and reproduces their use of food as a technology of biopower: a measure of the population's vitality and well-being and a medium through which forms of life are distinguished and experienced as a threat. The contemporary accounts she reproduces demonstrate how food is a medium through which race war proceeds, is experienced, and articulated. This food-centric discourse differs substantially from the non-Indigenous accounts of the problems alcohol is deemed to cause the community. As the following section of the essay will show, in contrast to the Indigenous community members who apprehend and experience an inverse relationship between food and alcohol supply, the town's non-Indigenous vendors of alcohol strive to conceive a positive correlation between the two.

### **Non-Indigenous accounts of food and alcohol**

In contrast to Wright's record of the many food-centric Indigenous accounts of the harms alcohol causes, *Grog War* does not record members of the non-Indigenous population mooting food as an issue during meetings held to address the topic with local and territory government representatives (pp. 102-109) or at the symposium, 'Tennant Creek, Tourism and Grog—Progression or Regression' (pp. 111-121). For the non-Indigenous population, the problems associated with alcohol are the frequency of 'offensive behaviour, loitering, disorderly conduct, threatening behaviour, indecent exposure, [and] obscenity' (p. 111) that the Commander of the Northern Territory police illustrates 'with statistics shown on many graphs' (p. 114). (Notably,

such statistics describe Indigenous people as the main perpetrators of crime without recognising them as the main *victims* of crime.) Of particular concern for the non-Indigenous population is that such conduct will discourage tourists from visiting Tennant Creek and thus deprive its residents of a potential source of income (p. 112).

Although members of Tennant Creek's non-Indigenous population do come to conceptualise a link between food and alcohol, they perceive the relationship differently to the Indigenous community. Initially, one licensee refutes the proposition of a causal relationship between alcohol supply and food. After hearing testimony that Indigenous community members are buying more food during trialled alcohol restrictions, he refers to the assertion as a 'nice dreaming' and claims the letters that support it are fabricated (p. 187). He then likens food to alcohol by linking the potential biological harm of each:

[i]s Julalikari going to ask Malanda Milk to ban milk sales as it is proven that milk and associated products cause problems with Aboriginal health? Is Julalikari going to ask the bakery and restaurants not to sell pasta, pizzas, or spaghetti because of diabetic problems? Where are we going to stop? (p. 187)

As in the Indigenous community's testimony, food functions here as a technology of biopower through which a threat to the population's wellbeing is elaborated. The non-Indigenous licensee tacitly acknowledges concerns about the raced Other's health that are associated with alcohol, but seeks to allay it with reference to introduced foods' potential or experienced ill effects. Tactically, this may be understood to obscure the inverse relationship between food and alcohol to which the Indigenous community testifies. In combining the two, the licensee defines the problematic in terms of Indigenous consumption. The licensee develops this tactic from an earlier contention that the Indigenous community members who suffered or died from alcohol's effects had chronic and hereditary health issues (p. 159). In doing so, he uses food to mobilise colonial tropes of Indigenous consumption as problematic and the Indigene as biologically inferior and ill-suited to modernity.

The licensee extends his use of these tropes when proposing a solution to the issues the Indigenous community raise:

because a lot of these people they would go without meals because as problem drinkers they don't buy food, they scavenge food, I put in my proposal that the hotel [will] provide free counter lunch for regular patrons ... So that should overcome some of the biological problem that person has when he doesn't eat, and drinks only. (pp. 173-174)

This concedes a link between food and alcohol, although construes the problem as emanating from the individual—an Indigenous problem drinker—rather than the systemic issue of alcohol's excessive supply in the town. Recalling Foucault's analysis of the logic of security seeking to compensate for rather than eradicate sources of harm to the

population, the licensees' response does not intend to prohibit excessive alcohol supply but off-set its effects. Perniciously, it renders food something that members of the population can access as a result of alcohol supply, rather than instead of it.

Following the hearing, several licensees start to provide food to their Indigenous customers. The Goldfields lounge bar, for instance, begins offering customers a palatable meal—sausage and meatballs or steak with a roll and salad—'but not too many people were interested in the feed' (pp. 227-228). While it is tempting to interpret licensees' food provision as evidence that the Indigenous community's concerns are being addressed and that they are achieving recognition as part of the population whose health and wellbeing needs to be secured, it instead has a number of detrimental effects and implications.

Providing food reproduces a binary of non-Indigenous food surplus and provision and Indigenous food insufficiency and receipt. The effect, magnified by the Indigenous clientele ignoring the food provided, is to reproduce the pathologised figure of the starving Indigene. Thinking this through the logic of race war, the practice of providing food evidences the flawed quality and biological inferiority of those who may be let die. At the same time, the logic of security is manifested in the link between causes and effects: providing 'free' food with alcohol reiterates the colonial framing of the raced Other as economically detrimental to the nation-state (see Mackey 1999) while simultaneously enabling the licensees to continue to profit from that raced Other. The licensees acknowledge that their food provision is factored into the costs of operating and allows them to yield a profit. The bar owner who proposes a free counter lunch for regular patrons comments of his plan, '[s]o even if you get bit extra over the bar [from Indigenous customers], we put some extra back as way of food' [sic] (p. 174); another, whose food service enables him to sell alcohol in the front bar of the hotel on grog free days, finds the arrangement "'[p]ays for the bouncers and the food with some left over'". This, Wright adds, he feels 'a pretty good situation to be in' (p. 240).

Evidently, food provision is a tactic the licensees deploy to reduce the likelihood that their excessive alcohol supply will be interrupted. From a security perspective, what is noticeable about food's use here is that it is oriented towards producing and sustaining Indigenous community members whose utility derives from their capacity to consume alcohol. Food helps ensure the raced Other's reproduction biologically and discursively: it sustains the body and the circulation of the means through which that body is produced and rendered economically beneficial to the population. In doing so, food becomes a vehicle through which the body's need for sustenance is engaged to produce a raced Other whose life is intimately linked with the weapon and institutions that race them and let them die. Unlike the state-wide levy on full-strength beer that funds programs to reduce alcohol consumption (p. 76), the costs and harm the licensees' businesses generate are compensated for through their own operations in a way

that ensures the volume of alcohol supplied does not diminish; instead, as the volume of alcohol supplied increases, so, too, does food supply, which in theory will ameliorate some of the Indigenous community's complaints about the harms they suffer.

The use of food provision as a way of sustaining non-Indigenous businesses and increasing their profitability reaches its apex in the case of a local taxi driver. *Grog War* records much local opinion that the driver provides a grog delivery service or re-sells alcohol to Indigenous community members, particularly those receiving government pensions, at high prices that keep them in a cycle of continual debt (pp. 141, 227)<sup>x</sup>. The driver himself denies illicitly supplying alcohol and frames his business practices in a paternalistic manner; in his account, '[a]ll I do is look after the communities with meat and groceries that I deliver from my legitimate business ...' (p. 140).

Wright cites a Tennant Creek resident who inspected the taxi driver's records of his grocery business and the goods he sold:

"He showed me a bag with flour, rib bones, four chops, one loaf of unsliced bread and a packet of black and gold soup mix" ... The bags are sold for ten dollars. A cab fare for delivery of these bags to his customers cost seventy cents in August 1990, whether "they want it or not". (p. 142)

Wright reports that the woman 'had seen a lot of these bags of food at various camps' and that:

[s]he is particularly concerned when women with young children are dependent on this cycle with the taxi driver ... The food the taxi driver supplies is not very nutritious for a nursing mother or small children ... They are dependent on the plastic bags of food to be delivered each day because they are unable to book up anywhere else in town. If this is the only system operating for Aboriginal people dependent on grog, they are not in a position to complain about the operations of the taxi driver. (p. 142)

The driver's provision of the budget brand 'black and gold' as part of his food deliveries is apt, given the connection between his earnings and the impoverished black lives on which it is premised. Such food does not ensure the Indigenous community's health or wellbeing; it does, however, sustain sufficient life to facilitate continued purchase of food *and* alcohol. The driver keeps members of the Indigenous community alive, albeit in poor condition, to continue profiting from them. Again, food is a point at which the logics of race war and security intersect: providing food ensures the raced Other, from whom the unraced population profits, persists in a biologically and economically impoverished state from which it is difficult to escape and in which it can only survive through consuming the commodities that produce its privation. Fortunately, the Indigenous community are able to inhibit the circulation of harmful commodities that the taxi driver facilitates and performs by enforcing the state's regulatory conditions. Wright cites

prominent local man (and subsequent Member of Parliament for Barkly) Elliot McAdam stating that “[o]ur efforts so far have been to ensure that he complies with the conditions of his licence. We have stopped him from selling food from his home which is against the law and we are concerned that he has a licence to sell meat” (p. 144). The alcohol restrictions the Indigenous community negotiate specifically prohibit third party sales of alcohol to taxi drivers (p. 189).

### **Food and the effects of alcohol regulation**

After Julalikari Council secures a trial of increased restrictions on the supply of alcohol in Tennant Creek, food becomes an important anecdotal measure of the efficacy of their regulatory solution to the harms alcohol is doing to the Indigenous community. Members of the Indigenous community observe that Tennant Creek becomes ‘a different town’ on the days when alcohol sales are restricted (p. 124). “The pubs were all closed so Aboriginal people went to the shop to get their tucker ... We thought that was good”, reports one local resident (p. 124). Local Councillor (and later ATSIC Commissioner) Dave Curtis concurs: “there wasn’t much of that problem of abandoned kids all over the place and robbing old people of tucker because of grog” (p. 239). The increased funds available for food generate new circulations: the Indigenous community establish a bus service ‘to take people to town to shop on Thursday and Friday ... [it] soon had over a hundred clients every week’ (p. 229). Wright cites the trial’s formal evaluation, which reports that ‘on the town camps people were saying that they were happy. “Drinkers were eating more—making soup in the morning. There wasn’t as much fighting in the camps ...”’ (p. 243). These findings reiterate the inverse relationship between food and alcohol supply to which members of the Indigenous community testify. They retain a sense that the population is problematised through food, which remains a metric of well-being and vitality.

Regulating alcohol supply generates some unexpected outcomes during the trial. The Indigenous testimonies that Wright collects largely identify alcohol and food supply as inversely related; however, *Grog War* also identifies positive correlations that arise between the two, particularly when increased restrictions on alcohol’s circulation are imposed. Even before the trialled restrictions, some drinkers used alcohol to *procure* food: a participant at an alcohol abuse meeting observes that when drinkers become hungry, ‘they get the old and middle-aged people so drunk they go to sleep and then they pinch all the[ir] tucker’ (p. 54). When licensees introduce unfamiliar sweet varietals to replace the prohibited Moselle and Riesling casks of wine, the community learns that, ‘[w]hite lambrusco makes you hungry and as a result people are eating more’ (p. 233). Restricting alcohol supply also generates new circulations, as some drinkers begin to patronise local restaurants that are not subject to the licensing variation and serve alcohol with their meals (p. 232). Other drinkers, unable to meet the dress standards necessary to enter such venues, begin purchasing bread and milk, which they use to strain and dilute the methyated spirits

they imbibe instead of beer or wine (p. 106). In these ways, the trialled alcohol restrictions synthesise new and unanticipated *positive* correlations between food and alcohol.

### Conclusion

Read through a biopolitical lens, *Grog War* documents the ways in which the Indigenous peoples of Tennant Creek are produced, and resist their designation, as a form of life that may be let die. The Indigenous community's attempt to restrict alcohol supply through regulatory measures may be understood as a move by the raced Other to be reconceived and reclassified as part of the population whose vitality is government's object and rationale. Their strategy for optimising the population is to ensure that the juridico-political and regulatory environment defends their health, wealth, and wellbeing instead of letting them die.

*Grog War* records the important role that food plays in this affirmative and emancipatory biopolitics. Throughout the text, food is an important site of raced conflict where the raced Other's reproduction, and the boundary between life that must be made live and let die, is at stake. Extending Wadiwel and Tedmanson's diagnosis of food as a weapon of race war that facilitates the material and symbolic denigration of Indigenous peoples and communities, *Grog War* demonstrates that food is a technology of biopower through which power may flow from below: throughout the text, Indigenous residents of Tennant Creek use food to problematise the population and legitimise its regulatory administration, as evidenced in their food-centric accounts of the biological and socio-cultural ills that excessive alcohol supply causes and their anecdotal assessments of improvements to the community's wellbeing that restricting alcohol supply generates. *Grog War* also describes Indigenous people using food as a means of enhancing life, rather than as a commodity that enables it to be raced and let die. In addition to the challenge to race war this poses, the attempted use of food to organise and administer the circulation of potential threats indicates that the logic of security is also operating through food.

In contrast to Wright's account of Indigenous approaches to food and the population's optimisation, *Grog War* records non-Indigenous members of the Tennant Creek population using food coercively to ensure the reproduction of raced life in and through hegemonic relations and the regulatory environment. It describes non-Indigenous licensees providing meals to ensure their excessive alcohol supply—the means of producing and profiting from the raced Other as well as letting it die—persists. The 'free' food they serve drinkers may be understood as a weapon of race war that symbolically denigrates Indigenous peoples by representing them as an inferior form of life unable to manage its biological need for sustenance; it also materially degrades them by enabling the excessive consumption of alcohol. Thought through the logic of security, the licensees' food provision does not reduce the volume of alcohol they supply but, at best, attempts to

ameliorate or compensate for some of the harm that results while preserving the desirable aspects (for them) of its circulation. In this way, food again becomes a medium and site where the logics of race war and security intersect.

*Grog War* demonstrates how food may be incorporated into efforts to efface the racial caesura; however, the discrepancies between Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of conceiving it suggest a continuing role in producing and marking a racial boundary. Tennant Creek's Indigenous community members identify food insecurity and insufficiency as one of the major deleterious effects of alcohol supply, but its non-Indigenous residents rarely invoke food in their assessments of the harm alcohol inflicts. Indigenous and non-Indigenous experiences of food are also distinct in being conceived as inversely, positively, or unrelated to alcohol supply. Under these conditions, it becomes important for Indigenous communities to be wary of the possibilities for food provision to perform a racing function that surreptitiously advances race war under the guise of responding to their demands for improved Indigenous nutrition and health outcomes. Attending to the logic of security as well as race war decreases the likelihood of reproducing the broader conditions under which the raced Other may be sustained in ways that ultimately optimise the population at the (further) expense of Indigenous vitality, wealth, and well-being.

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### Notes

<sup>i</sup> In addition to Warumungu people, members of the Warlpiri, Alyawarra, Wambaya, Warlmanpa, Jingili, Mudburra, and Kaytetye nations reside in this area (Boffa, George, Tsey 1994, p. 359).

<sup>ii</sup> See Altman and Russell (2012, pp. 4-5) for a summary of differences between the original NTER and the Stronger Futures/Closing the Gap policies and practices. Bray, Gray, Hand and Katz (2014, p. 2) specify the differences between the NTER's income management and Stronger Futures's new income management.

<sup>iii</sup> Perspectives on gambling's relationship to food were not uniform in the report: '[g]ambling was not regarded as such a problem in communities where the winnings were in, any event, divided up among the players and used for food shared out' (Wild & Anderson 2007, p. 201).

<sup>iv</sup> This aspect of the programme requires licensed stores to provide a '[r]easonable quality, quantity and range of groceries and consumer items available and promoted at the store, including healthy food and drinks' as well

as having the 'capacity to participate in the requirements of the income management arrangements under the social security law; and hav[ing] sound financial structures, retail and governance practices' (cited in Australian Human Rights Commission 2012, p. 57). The Stronger Futures program further obliged licenced stores to promote good nutrition and address operational factors that could negatively impact food security.

<sup>v</sup> The key indicators reveal a 14.4 year gap in life expectancy between the Northern Territory's Indigenous and non-Indigenous people (SCRGSP 2016, Table 4A.1.1), which is a slightly greater discrepancy than ten years earlier (see SCRGSP 2016, Table 4A1.3), a medium income for Indigenous people nearly two thirds less than non-Indigenous people's (SCRGSP 2016, Table 4A.10.1), which is slightly worse than the figures for 2002, and, significantly for an initiative ostensibly aimed at improving children's wellbeing, more than four times as many Indigenous minors suffering physical, sexual, emotion abuse or neglect compared to their non-Indigenous peers (SCRGSP 2016:Table 4A.11.3), which is a considerably worse ratio than in 2001-2002 (SCRGSP 2016, Table 4A.11.14).

<sup>vi</sup> Foucault does not articulate the limits or conditions that might inhibit racism's emergence. As Didier Fassin has shown in relation to France, efforts to impose legislative and cultural restrictions that inhibit racism and exclude it from the social have produced it in new forms (2001).

<sup>vii</sup> It may be noted that the boundary between permitted and prohibited is not entirely effaced: a limit remains in the form of 'a bandwidth of the acceptable that must not be exceeded' (Foucault 2007, pp. 20-21).

<sup>viii</sup> Giles's diaries, like Stuart's, record the hunger and hardship he and his parties endured as they survive on a 'constant diet of jerked and salt junk' while travelling in the region (1926, p. 21). As in Wright's account of Stuart's expedition, alcohol is present even when food supplies are insecure and insufficient. On approximately the 3rd of January, 1871, the party sight Central Mount Stuart. Giles and his party are astonished when their surveyor produces a bottle of O.P. Rum. 'It certainly must have been the first rum to reach Central Australia', Giles comments (p. 47).

<sup>ix</sup> Other sources also identify the taxi driver accruing 'huge profits'—and generating new circulations—by taking Indigenous passengers to liquor outlets beyond the town limits on days when alcohol supply is restricted (Christen 2004, p. 187). Other sources identify non-Indigenous 'sly groggers' operating in the region (see Edgar 2001, p. 17).

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