

# **The NT Emergency Response: Foucault, *neoptolemus* and the governmentality of new race/pleasure wars**

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## **Abstract**

In the 'Society must be defended' lectures, Foucault noted that 'the problem of war' is linked to the state's biopolitical power to destroy not only political adversaries, but also 'the enemy race' (2003: 257). In this paper we conceptualise the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) as a novel form of racialised combat: a form of *neoptolemus* or 'new war'. We argue that new configurations of race/pleasure wars reinforce elements of biopower and population management foundationally connected to sovereignty within the western tradition (Foucault 2003; Agamben 1998). We suggest that there is a correlation between new governmentalised bureaucratic regimes of race war and the prurient, sexualised and intensely moralising national public discourse about the NTER. The regimes of legitimation, violence and racialisation that accompany western sovereignty also inculcate economies of pleasure connected to sex, sexuality and reproduction that are defined and decided upon through a law of continuing racial domination.

## **Biographies**

Dinesh Wadiwel is an adjunct researcher at the Hawke Research Institute's Social Policy Research Group. Dinesh currently heads a national nongovernment peak disability organisation.

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