

Ice Dreaming

Reading Whiteness

in Kim Scott's

Benang: from the heart

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This work is dedicated to D.M.

Also for Eleanor and Zoë,

my light and my life.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the University or any other institution, except by way of background information and duly acknowledged in the thesis, and to the best of my knowledge and belief no material previously published or written by another person except where due acknowledgement is made in the text of the thesis.

Kris Harman
28 May 2004

Abstract

Through a close reading of Kim Scott's *Benang: from the heart*, this thesis interrogates what whiteness in an Australian colonial context looks like from an Aboriginal perspective. Its central proposition is that Scott's narrator, Harley, discovers whiteness as a consequence of discovering his Aboriginality. It suggests whiteness is imbued with a power that arises through its invisibility and its ability to racialise and circumscribe non-white others. When this process is reversed, and whiteness is made visible, its power is diminished. Harley (re)places whiteness into an Aboriginal paradigm from within which he imagines a syncretic future for Australia.

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