Against
Paranoid Nationalism

Searching for hope in a shrinking society

Ghassan Hage

AGAINST PARANOID NATIONALISM

Ghassan Hage teaches anthropology at the University of Sydney and is fast becoming one of Australia's most controversial public intellectuals. He has an international reputation, teaching at Pierre Bourdieu's Centre de Sociologie européenne, Paris and the Centre for Social Research at the American University of Beirut. He has previously taught at the University of Technology, Sydney and University of Western Sydney. His previous books include *Arab-Australians Today: Citizenship and Belonging*, *White Nation: Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society*, *The Future of Multiculturalism*, and *Home/World*.

We need books like this. Whether he is writing about hope, the dispossession of indigenous peoples, collective responsibility, national identity and what it means to be an immigrant, or suicide bombers, Ghassan Hage makes one think hard. Speaking for myself, he has exposed assumptions I did not know I held and enabled me to appreciate possibilities I had not seen before. In a voice distinctively his own Hage speaks in many tones – analytical, polemical, caustic, ironic, compassionate. Few writers engage so uncompromisingly the whole of oneself. For that reason Hage can be profoundly unsettling. Few people will not sometimes disagree with him, seriously and at the many levels of mind, feeling and character needed to respond fully to his call to rise with him to the challenge of trying to understand the many forms of our shared humanity. By the same token, few people will not thank him for it.

Raimond Gaita, Professor of Moral Philosophy, University of London King's College, Professor of Philosophy, Australian Catholic University, and author of *A Common Humanity* and *The Philosopher's Dog*.

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In memory of my father-in-law
Claudio Alcorso (1913–2001),
a man of hope

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Camera obscura,
or the unbearable lopsidedness of being

2001 was a good year in Australia as far as opposition to 'racism' is concerned, and 2002 is looking better. While not claiming to have investigated the matter empirically, my impression is that in 2001 a record number of Australians declared themselves to be opposed to the use of the terms 'racist' and 'racism'. Everywhere I turned, people were courageously stating things like 'I am not racist', 'That's not racism', 'I did not mention race, I am talking about culture' or 'People will say I am racist but I am not.' And, of course, to the delight of the connoisseurs, the famous 'I am not racist, but ...' was everywhere. Anti-racist culture is flourishing. We're clearly over the timid years of Hansonism.

It is true that in 2001 a considerable number of Indigenous people and Arab and Muslim Australians felt demeaned, inferiorised and excluded from the rest of society ('Asians' were breathing with relief in 2001 – at least they'd have time to replenish before the next round). But does being demeaned, inferiorised, treated insensitively and excluded mean you are being subjected to racism? It's no longer easy to answer this question, for it is no longer up to the victims to decide if a person is racist. Racists declare themselves to be so. And the fact that no one in Australia has done so just shows the depth of anti-racism in this country. So strongly do the anti-racists feel that if you refer to one of them as racist without their agreeing, they are likely to sue you. I have tried to get some people I think are racists to sign a contract agreeing that they

are racists before I use the term to refer to them, but I have not succeeded so far: it is clear that they are deadset anti-racists.

Strangely, many of the people who have been accused by some misguided third world-looking minority or another of being racist have been key figures in the promotion of Australia's 'anti-racism' culture. They might have occasionally demeaned, inferiorised, treated insensitively or excluded people they have pictured as belonging to a tribe other than theirs, but obviously I cannot apply the slur 'racist' to them when they have such an established record of hating the very sight of the word.

This is especially so since in 2001 it was *internationally* established, at the United Nations conference on racism, that most colonised and previously colonised third world-looking people don't know much about racism. They've shown themselves to be notoriously oversensitive and unreliable when it comes to this subject, and are very likely to misunderstand what is actually happening to them. To make things worse, those living in colonial and post-colonial slums and ghettos – the Palestinians, for instance – expressed their *hatred* of their colonisers. What's more, the Palestinians do so in a totally *vulgar* and *unsophisticated* way. Clearly unaware of where such vulgarity might lead, other third world-looking people expressed sympathy with the Palestinians instead of being rightly outraged at the massive suffering inflicted on the Palestinians' sensitive and civilised colonisers.

Luckily, countries such as the US, Canada, the European states and Australia used the magnificent historical record of their emergence as nations to enlighten everyone and explain that this hatred of the coloniser was the only real racism there is. It is now well known – and it was widely reported in the press – that by stopping this hatred of the coloniser being officially accepted and expressed by other delegates at the conference, they actually '*saved* the conference'.

Having done so much for anti-racism at that conference and everywhere else around the world, some people in Australia are rightly 'offended' when *they* are accused of racism. For instance, the Prime Minister has publicly declared himself 'offended' on many occasions; he even went as far as being 'outraged' once when faced with the term 'racism'. More offended by it than by the sight of the dehumanising concentration camps he has used to cage third world-looking asylum seekers. In fact, in Australia today those offended by the term 'racist' almost outnumber those offended by racists.

Another measure of the depth of this 'anti-racism' is the degree of heroism shown by the people who are struggling in its front line. These courageous people might *appear* to be in power, they might *appear* to have pages of newspapers and endless radio and television time at their disposal, but every now and then the repressive conditions under which they are operating reveal themselves in the way they speak. They all say something along the lines of: 'I know they will get me, but I am going to say it ...' Even the Prime Minister says it. 'They', in case you've been kept in the dark, is the formidably powerful ultra-left revolutionary council of political correctness. This council, all appearances notwithstanding, and as every ordinary mainstream, paranoid-and-allowed-to-be-relaxed-and-comfortable-with-his/her-paranoia Australian will tell you, is clearly *still* ruling the country. So one can appreciate the effort it takes the John Howards and Alan Joneses of the country to heroically squeeze their points of view across to the public despite the incredibly repressive measures being used against them by the revolutionary council. And let us not forget that these 'heroes' all *volunteered* to do so. Which goes to show you that you cannot repress Australian values.

One version of Marx's theory of ideology, based on the concept of the camera obscura, is that capitalism creates an 'appearance' – a level of experience – that is an 'upside down' version of reality. This idea has long been academically discredited. But it clearly needs to make a comeback to make sense of the lopsided reality which increasingly engulfs us.

As this book goes to press I find myself right in the midst of such a reality.

In the aftermath of the April 2002 Israeli reoccupation and vandalisation of the West Bank, I initiated, with my colleague John Docker, a petition calling for a boycott of Israeli academic institutions. A petition, one would think, is a basic and peaceful means of democratic expression. But not so for the editor of *The Australian* (well known for standing up for the oppressed across the world), who captured its incredible violence by editorialising that the petition 'verges on book burning'. On the other side of this camera obscura reality stood the Israelis' medieval-like rampage in occupied Palestine, where books and documents were actually burning. Obviously, that kind of burning was too subtle for the editor of *The Australian* to smell.

But there is more. This was a petition that was initiated and signed by Arab-background and Jewish-background academics,

precisely to avoid any sense of 'communal chauvinism'. It was a
petition that had been laboured over for many days to ensure that
it was not open to claims of being anti-Semitic, and that was then
signed by some of the most important Australian academics to have
researched and written on racism in Australia. Here, the venerable
editor of *The Australian*, and a minister of the government that
brought us the *Tampa* crisis and the concentration camps and
destroyed the process of reconciliation with Australia's Indigenous
people while tabooing the use of the term 'racism' to refer to any
of this, finally broke the taboo, in the face of the horrendous assault
on, and exceptional inferiorisation of, other fellow human beings
that the petition represented, and called it … yes … you guessed it
… racist! I guess even anti-racism can reach its limits of tolerance.

Along with other academics, I had long dismissed Marx's
camera obscura theory. I didn't know that a time would come
where I'd be living what it described with all its nightmarish
qualities. Sorry, Marx, I take it all back.

This book is about the currently pervasive paranoid nationalist
culture of neo-liberal capitalism that underlies this lopsided reality.
It emphasises the importance of a 'caring' social environment, and
underlines the corrosive effects of its absence on the quality of our
daily lives. So I want to begin by thanking the many friends and
colleagues who, in the last couple of years, have provided me with
a warm and supportive environment. In particular, I want to thank
those whose active engagement with various versions of the texts
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In my previous book, *White Nation*, I was lucky to be researching a phenomenon that was part of my everyday life, politically 'hot' and academically interesting. Writing the results of such research allowed me to experience a political and theoretical effervescence that was exceptionally rewarding and exciting. My current Australian Research Council-funded ethnographic research – on migrants issuing from three Lebanese villages – is only tangentially related to the issues raised in *White Nation*. It is also less immediately 'political', and is not really articulated to my everyday political concerns in life, or at least not in the same way. However, *White Nation* incurably reinforced the fully 'engaged' academic in me, and I found myself extrapolating from the themes and theories I was developing in my new research and using them to reflect and write about the crucial events that mark my everyday life in Australia. Thus the concepts deployed in this book, such as hope, caring, and the gift of social life, were all developed primarily to make sense of the mode of living of the Lebanese migrants whose lives I am researching around the world. I almost unconsciously found myself deploying them to analyse the situation in Australia. So even though only a couple of the chapters dealing with migrants are directly related to my research project, I feel it important to thank the Australian Research Council for so generously financing my research and making the writing of this book possible.

Some of the chapters in the book have appeared in a different form in a number of national and international journals. Chapter 1 began its life as an article in the *Australian Financial Review*; parts of Chapter 3 appeared in the journal *Society and Space*; a different version of Chapter 4 was written for the *Journal of International Migration and Integration*; Chapter 5 appeared in *Arena* magazine; Chapter 6 appeared in the multilingual journal *Traces*; a slightly different version of Chapter 8 was specifically written for the University of Chicago journal *Public Culture*; and Chapter 9 appeared in *Meanjin*. My thanks to all those who encouraged me to write and publish the above articles.

My mother May, and my sisters Nada and Amale and their

families, and my mother-in-law Lesley Alcorso, continuously provide me with a living experience of a life where solidarity, love, affection and hospitality are always there, though not needing to be demonstrated with excessive verbosity.

Finally, I continue to be exceptionally lucky to have the support of my partner Caroline Alcorso and my daughters Dominique and Aliya. They have endured my absence from the household more often than I should have made them, or would have liked them to. Caroline has given me more moral, intellectual and domestic support than I can ever possibly repay.

INTRODUCTION

The chapters that make up this book can be usefully seen as the meeting ground of three lines of inquiry: my current comparative ethnographic research into what I've called the Lebanese migrants' 'struggles for viability' in a number of locations around the world, my attempts to deal with some of the political and theoretical issues generated by *White Nation*, and my attempts to make sense of the Australian social and political reality (or lack of it) created by the rule of John Howard's Liberal National Party. The critical notion of 'caring' that is either explicitly or implicitly present throughout these essays is articulated to all of the above.

Caring is one of the categories I have developed in my analysis of migrant settlement, initially to complement the formal notion of citizenship and add an affective dimension to the question of belonging. There is the question of nostalgia and 'caring' about the original 'homeland': how much do migrants really 'care' about where they originally come from? But there is also the question of the migrant's participation in the political processes of the host society. The latter is often an object of popular debate in host nations. In the public arguments generated around this issue, the portrayal of migrants fluctuates. They can be portrayed as people who are too 'home'-oriented[1] and thus not participating enough, or as phantasmally imagined people who are participating too much – so much that they are feared to be 'taking over'. Generally, the question of participation is used in these debates to demonstrate

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that migrants are at best instrumentally interested in the institutions of the host society, but are not affectively attached to them.

Despite often reproducing racist stereotypes of migrants, these views nevertheless also contain a lucid everyday differentiation between participation as a formal/instrumental process and participation as an affective relation to society, an indicator of how much one 'cares'. Indeed, one of the popular phobic fantasies that is animated by this differentiation is the 'anti-political class' idea that the nation is controlled by those who can technically participate too well but who do not 'care'[2] at the expense of those who care but who are technically unable to participate. Here, caring is perceived as an important emotional investment in the nation, and thus an intense form of participation, but a form that is not recognised by politicians.

The academic works dealing with political participation often fail to incorporate this public intuition. In these works, discussions of participation remain dominated by political scientists and sociologists working with the formal categories of 'rights' and 'responsibilities' associated with their analysis of citizenship. The question of affective belonging and participation is generally left out.

But if caring signals an affective investment in the nation, what kind of investment is implied by it? There are different kinds of caring, manifesting different modes of investment. This is where the concept has been useful in thinking through some of the questions raised by *White Nation*. In that book, I began my analysis with a critique of the culture of the 'White worrier', the White person who is always worrying about something: about migrants, about single mothers on the dole, etc. I argued that such people were trying to reassert a sense of governmental power over the nation through their worrying. While most people who have read this analysis have been in general agreement with it, many have asked something along the lines of: 'If people can't worry about the nation, what else do you propose?' I often answered that it wasn't up to me as a researcher to prescribe different ways of belonging to the nation. My role, I suggested, was limited to stating the negative effects of the paranoid mode of belonging implied by 'worrying'. But the question of what a 'healthy' mode of relating to the nation can be remained in the back of my mind.

And as my analysis of 'participation as care' in relation to migrants was developing, I gradually began to see that caring might well be the alternative to worrying that I and others were looking

for. People might use the language of 'caring' and 'worrying' in an undifferentiated way, but I think that worrying, as a kind of affective investment in the nation, is radically different from what I believe caring implies. Worrying is, as I implicitly argued in *White Nation*, a narcissistic affect. You worry about the nation when *you* feel threatened – ultimately, you are only worrying about yourself. Caring about the nation, as I will argue in this book, is a more inter-subjective affect. While one always cares primarily about oneself, caring also implies keeping *others* within one's perspective of care. Most importantly, caring does not have the paranoid, defensive connotations that worrying has.

The most important thesis developed in this work is that societies are mechanisms for the distribution of hope, and that the kind of affective attachment (worrying or caring) that a society creates among its citizens is intimately connected to its capacity to distribute hope. The caring society is essentially an embracing society that generates hope among its citizens and induces them to care for it. The defensive society, such as the one we have in Australia today, suffers from a scarcity of hope and creates citizens who see threats everywhere. It generates worrying citizens and a paranoid nationalism. This brings us to the final problematic around which the issue of caring has been thought about and articulated: the institutionalisation of a culture of *worrying* at the expense of a culture of caring under the rule of John Howard's Liberal Party.

The first five chapters of this book deal directly with these issues: hope, worrying, and paranoid nationalism. In Chapter 1 I examine the relationship between the rise of neo-liberal economic policy and the shrinking capacity of the nation-state to distribute hope, at the same time trying to explain the Australian chapter of the West's generalised unwillingness and inability to offer hope to, and show sympathy with the plight of, the third world-looking refugee claimants knocking on its doors.

In Chapter 2 I examine how 'caring' as an affective mode of attachment to the nation is predicated on the nation's capacity to distribute hopefulness. While worrying is generally produced by an external threat to an object we care for, with paranoid na-tionalism, worrying is the product of an insecure attachment to a nation that is no longer capable of nurturing its citizens.

In Chapter 3 I examine the dual and gendered nature of the national imaginary as embodied in the concepts of motherland and fatherland. I define how the relationship between the two is

classically imagined. I then examine the specific imaginary of paranoid nationalism. I emphasise that within this nationalism, the motherland is increasingly an unrealistic hope that needs to be protected from reality. In this situation the nation, instead of being a reality that needs to be protected, becomes a fantasy that needs to be protected from reality – this is what generates the paranoid border disorder specific to paranoid nationalism.

In Chapter 4 I examine the historical basis of John Howard's paranoid nationalism. I argue that Howard's rule involves the recentring of an always existing but until now marginalised subculture of colonial White paranoia. The chapter traces the historical origins of this White paranoia and the social and political conditions that allowed Howard to reactivate it politically.

In Chapter 5 I examine Howard's brand of 'Australian fundamentalism' and the resulting culture of 'political narcissism' that his institutionalisation of a paranoid form of nationalism has helped foster. John Howard came to power with a promise to make people 'relaxed and comfortable'. As it turned out, he equates relaxation and comfort with a kind of 'It's OK to be paranoid in our hopeless society' view. He arrived with a promise to reintroduce ethical conduct into political life, but has made use of this culture of paranoia to justify either his involvement or the involvement of those close to him in some of the most unethical forms of political behaviour Australia has ever witnessed (especially in relation to the handling of refugee claimants). No politician has been as opposed by the churches and the organisations catering for the disadvantaged and the poor or by human rights organisations as Howard has been. For a man who insisted on trying to include a reference to God in the Australian Constitution this is particularly ironic. He should be remembered as – among other things – the man who wanted to introduce God into the constitution and take Him out of our daily lives.

Chapter 6 examines the relationship between migrant and Indigenous politics. It affirms the position argued by many – that there can be no ethical belonging to Australia without an ethical relationship to Australia's history of colonisation. However, the chapter argues against reducing this ethical position to the often-posited choice between a politics of recognition of genocide and a politics of 'valorisation' of Australia's achievements (a black versus white armband view of history). I argue that reducing the alternatives to a question of recognition or non-recognition is

reducing Australian history to a question of White remembering. It is true that only White worriers see the recognition of the shameful aspects of the past as a threat to their identification with the good parts. This is because they relate to those good parts defensively and claustrophobically; they don't see them as tools for hoping and imagining better national futures. But the alternative is not White caring: a recognition of the past as shameful. This, I argue, remains a coloniser's take on history. There is a set of Aboriginal histories where the alternatives are also memories of heroic resistance or memories of shameful defeats. Such memories cannot be integrated into the histories of 'recognition of the colonial past', for they are markers of the unbridgeable split that colonialism produces between the culture of the colonised and the culture of the coloniser. An ethical coming to terms with this split requires a lot more than recognition of a shameful past: it requires a symbolic tipping of the balance between coloniser and colonised. As such, it requires a *becoming Indigenous*, what American radicals call becoming a 'race traitor', on the part of non-Indigenous Australians.

While Howard exemplifies the uncaring side of White politics, this does not mean that multicultural or ethnic politics are necessarily on the side of caring. In Chapter 7 I look at the decline of working class-centred concerns within Australian multi-culturalism. This, I argue, opens the way for the complete articulation of a middle-class multicultural aesthetics to the process of globalisation. I also examine the way this process relates to the politics of anti-racism. In particular, I analyse the conflation of anti-racism with an aestheticised moral politics of good migrants versus bad White people. Against such a moral politics, I conclude by pointing to some of 'the bad things that migrants do'.

In Chapter 8 I move to a completely different concern: the way Palestinian suicide bombers have been portrayed in the West. I delineate what a social scientific study of suicide bombing entails and analyse the reasons behind the urge to not only condemn suicide bombing but also to condemn any attempt at understanding the social causes of such a phenomenon. I argue that this latter response is part of a generalised Western culture that fears the humanity of the 'bad other' because it puts it in touch with its own 'badness'.

In the final chapter I examine the way care emerges out of a form of gift exchange between the self and others, and between the self

and society. I show how caring citizens and a caring society go hand
in hand. I conclude by asserting the importance of defending the
ethical ideals of a caring society against neo-liberal economic
policy.

Transcendental capitalism and the roots of paranoid nationalism

Introduction

The majority of the polls published in the media are clear: Westerners, on the whole, are suffering from compassion fatigue in the face of the increasing number of asylum seekers heading towards their shores. In Australia, at the very least, 50 per cent of all people support conservative Prime Minister John Howard's 'tough' stand on the asylum seekers issue. Some say it is up to 70 per cent. While the Prime Minister's capacity to 'be in touch with the views of ordinary people' is celebrated by some, it is interesting to note that the 'non-ordinary people', the minority opposing this stand, see themselves as a moral opposition. They oppose in the name of things like 'compassion' and 'hospitality' rather than in the name of a left/right political divide. This has become a pattern in the last ten years or so. Whether dealing with issues of poverty, or indigenous rights, or the conditions in the asylum seekers' detention centres, a small-"l" liberal, largely but not solely middle-class population, supported by churches and human rights organisations, increasingly perceives itself as the outraged defender, the last bastion of a decent and ethical society. Now that the 'moral majority' is in power it has been shown to be clearly less moral than it initially claimed; instead, we have a 'moral minority' in opposition. It argues that with the increased worldwide implementation of a dogmatic neo-liberal social and economic policy, by left and right governments alike,

ethics and morality have been thrown out the window.

Interestingly, conservative intellectuals, who in Australia are more often than not newspaper commentators who have mastered a slightly comical neo-tough journalistic style of the 'hey softie, let me tell you about what reality is *really* all about' variety, seem to agree, despite themselves, with the liberals. They argue that there is no place for ethics and morality in a world where people, such as the incredibly rapacious asylum seekers, can viciously 'exploit our compassion and generosity'. Consequently, the disagreement is not about the lack of ethics and morality in social life. Everyone agrees on that. The question is how should one react in the face of such an ethical vacuum. The small-"l" liberals see themselves as courageously fighting to maintain a glimmer of ethical life within society. The incredibly pragmatic neo-tough conservatives condemn the soft liberals for being naïve. Considering themselves very 'ordinary' despite their high-profile middle-class jobs (and in a way they are often right on this point), these conservative populists like to portray themselves, like John Howard, the Prime Minister they support, as incredibly in touch with 'ordinary' people (it is rumoured that they actually imagine themselves to have encountered such people in the streets from time to time). As such, they are particularly down on the small-"l" liberals, whom they see as being from privileged class backgrounds and unable to see the relationship between their pompous airs of tolerance, compassion and hospitality and their comfortable lifestyles.

But it is not clear why the assertion that a certain ethical point of view is the product of middle-class comfort makes such a view less ethical. It is more ethical to be hospitable to needy people than not to be. It is more ethical not to be racist (that is, to consider a group of people as less 'human' in one way or another than you are) than to be one. It is also more ethical to be a racist and acknowledge it than to be one and deny it. The list is a long one ... It is more ethical to acknowledge that the West is reaping the benefits of the colonisation and decimation of innumerable indigenous societies than not to do so. And it is more ethical not to marginalise and vilify a whole ethnicised or racialised 'community' under the excuse of fighting crime than to do so.[1] No amount of ordinary neo-tough huffing and puffing against imaginary threats of political correctness can change this.

Nevertheless, it is also true that small-"l" liberals often translate the social conditions that allow them to hold certain superior

ethical views into a kind of innate moral superiority. They see ethics as a matter of will. And they see the voters falling for the paranoid 'zero-tolerance against crime and asylum seekers' packages of the competing political parties as not *wanting* – rather than not *being able* – to offer marginalised others the kind of *hope* they ought to be offered as fellow human beings. For there is no doubt that this is, at least partly, what we are talking about when it comes to discussing hospitality towards asylum seekers, or compensation for the colonised indigenous people of the world, or compassion towards the chronically unemployed: *the availability, the circulation and the exchange of hope.*

Compassion, hospitality and the recognition of oppression are all about giving hope to marginalised people. But to be able to give hope one has to have it. This is why the conservatives, populist as they are, are right in this respect. Those who are unable to give hope to others, who see in every Indigenous person or refugee someone aiming to snatch whatever bit of hope for a decent life they have, are not immoral people as such. They are just people who have very little hope to spare or to share. And so the conservative supporters of neo-liberalism might feel triumphant for being in touch with the great popular majorities who are unwilling to be hospitable to the asylum seekers. But only idiotic neo-tough ones find reasons to celebrate this. For such a situation, more than anything else, begs a rather sad question: why is it that the great majority of the population of the Western world are left with so little hope for themselves today, let alone for sharing with others?

National capitalism and the distribution of hope within society
To think about and with hope as a social category is both an exceptionally exhilarating and an exceptionally frustrating exercise. It is exhilarating because, as I hope to show (even if briefly) here, thinking about human subjects as 'hoping subjects', and thinking about societies as mechanisms for the generation and distribution of hopefulness and social opportunities, allows us a fresh and enriching angle from which to examine and understand our social nature and the nature of society. Furthermore, once one has hope within one's field of vision, one discovers the astounding degree to which the constellations of feelings, discourses and practices articulated to hope permeate social life. But perhaps because of this, to think about hope is also exceptionally frustrating, in that it sometimes seems as if one is examining something as vague as 'life', given the multitude of meanings and significations associated

with it. Not only is the language of hope associated with aspirations as different as 'hoping for an ice-cream' and 'hoping for world peace'; there is also a considerable difference between hoping as an affective practice, something that one does, and hope as an affect, something that one has. There is also a considerable difference between hope as a momentary feeling and hopefulness as an enduring state of being. As Farran et al. point out: 'Hope has often been described as an elusive, mysterious, and "soft" concept. Part of this elusiveness is due to the fact that the term is used as a verb, a noun and an adjective ...' Furthermore, they argue, after Averill et al.: [2] 'The concept of hope is also elusive because it can be expressed as a way of feeling (affectively), as a way of thinking (cognitively), and a way of behaving or relating (behaviourly).'[3]

What makes hope even more difficult is that it is associated with many other concepts that have approximately similar significations, and these both clarify and blur what it actually means. For instance, optimism, fear, desire, wishing, wanting, dreaming, waiting and confidence are among many other terms all associated with hope and hoping. Nevertheless, despite the plurality of meanings, attitudes and practices that constitute the discourse of hope, there is still something important that unifies them: all those terms express in one way or another modes in which human beings relate to their future.

In his *Principles of Hope*, Ernest Bloch goes further, saying that hope means that people are essentially determined 'by the future'.[4] Here 'the future' is not so much a 'science fiction' construction as the future that one can already detect in the unfolding of the present. It invites a more complex conception of the present. It is, as Erich Fromm has put it, a 'vision of the present in a state of pregnancy'.[5] The nature of our hope depends on our relation to this state of pregnancy. While the social sciences, and particularly the analysis of nationalism, pay particular attention to people's relation to the past, it is interesting to note that not many perceive the importance of our relation to the future. As Kenneth Nunn, from a general psychological perspective, has rightly pointed out: 'The construction of the perceived future has not been elevated to a faculty of brain function in the same way as the construction of the perceived past, namely, memory. Despite this, anticipation, planning, foresight and the executive functions are pivotal to human adaptation.'[6]

Another difficult aspect of hope is that there can be different views as to its moral worth. There is, of course, the classical dark

version of hope – the Pandora tale. Pandora, whom the God Zeus sent to bring misery to all humans for having accessed the heavenly fire, arrived with a box containing all the ills of the world. When the box was opened, all those ills spread into the world, except hope, which remained in 'our possession' (in the box). Hope here is the worst of all human ills: if it wasn't for hope, our subjection to a miserable life full of those ills that escaped into the world would lead us to suicide. It is only because we continue to have hope that we continue to suffer and endure the ills. As Friedrich Nietzsche put it, 'hope is the worst of all evils, for it protracts the torment of man'.[7] Here hope is perceived as the force that keeps us going in life. In that sense, it is not defined any differently from more positive conceptions of hope; it is the depressed version of life as full of ills that makes hoping in it such a miserable affair. More analytically pertinent is the sociological difference between 'realistic' and 'unrealistic' hopes, which captures the extent to which hope is grounded in 'the pregnancy of the present' as opposed to being totally detached from reality. As the psychoanalyst Anna Pontamianou argues:

> As the vehicle of a state of trusting expectation, or even conviction, that what is expected can or must come to pass, the feeling of hope is a psychic strategy. On the one hand, this strategy remains attached to reality testing, because it acknowledges when our hopes are but lures and illusions, whereas, on the other, it tends to short-circuit the reality principle, which, of course, hands down the verdict that our internal wishes do not necessarily correspond to what can be found in the external world. At any rate, by introducing fulfilment of the wish as probably and sometimes even as practically assured, our hopes keep alive in the mind the image of a good object to come, able and willing to respond to our demands.[8]

This possible disjuncture between wishes and reality has led to a range of moral evaluations of hope throughout history. For most of the philosophers who see hope negatively, hope is considered a variant of a commonsense conception of 'religious hope', the hope to end up in heaven. This has often been seen as a hope that detaches people from their social reality and makes them less committed to act to change their circumstances. It raises the issue of the relationship between hope and passivity/activity. The negative views of hope, here, are often along the line of Karl Marx's characterisation of religion (and presumably religious hope) as 'the

opium of the people'. This kind of hope breeds passivity. Fromm also criticises passivity-inducing hope and exemplifies it as the man in Franz Kafka's *The Trial*, who is waiting for permission to enter heaven's door but never takes the initiative to enter.[9] Here hope is seen not only as working against reality but also against the knowledge of reality which can lead to its (hope's) demise. It breeds anti-intellectualism. This antagonism between hope and knowledge is represented best in Jean Anouilh's *Antigone*, where the heroine screams: 'We are of the tribe that asks questions, and we ask them to the bitter end – until no tiniest chance of hope remains to be strangled by our hands. We are of the tribe that hates your filthy hope, your docile, female hope.'[10]

Pontamianou has usefully characterised the difference between the hope that induces an active engagement with reality and the hope that breads passivity and disengagement by using the Nietzsche-inspired differentiation between 'hope for life' and 'hope against life'.[11] As we examine the social distribution of hope, it is always useful to remember that society not only distributes hope unequally; it also distributes different kinds of hope. The importance of this difference will be examined in Chapter 3. In the analysis of the unequal distribution of social hope below, I will be referring mainly to a hope that is 'for life', a hope that allows people to invest themselves in social reality.

National capitalism and the distribution of hope within society

In a lecture presented in London, Slavoj Zizek, the Slovenian philosopher and psychoanalyst,[12] reflected on the inability of the British left to dent Margaret Thatcher's electoral appeal among the working classes with their usual strategy – emphasising the massive inequalities her policies were generating. For Zizek, the opposition, in its preoccupation with inequalities in the distribution of wealth and the distribution of goods and services, left out of its sight the very area where Thatcher's strength resided: her capacity to distribute 'fantasy'. 'Fantasy', in Zizek's 'Lacanese', is the set of subliminal beliefs that individuals hold that makes them feel that their life has a purpose, that they have a meaningful future. Fantasy, here, covers important elements of what has been referred to above as hope.

What Zizek's point implies is that social hope, as a perception within society of a better future already potentially existing in the pregnancy of the present, is capable of overriding the determining powers of the inequalities experienced within this present. This

capacity for hope clearly works well with capitalism. Not least because the yet-to-come of life offers exactly the kind of space in empirical reality that is most open for ideological intervention. Thatcher, for example, distributed hope: first through a racist ideological strategy that emphasised the causal power of the British character, and second through highlighting the viability of the small shopkeepers' dreams of rising above their situation and experiencing upward social mobility. Her message was simple and clear: if you 'possessed' the 'British character', you possessed the capacity to experience upward social mobility even if, in the present, you were at the bottom of the heap. The British character did not give you immediate equality and the good life, but it enabled you to hope for a future good life. You could look at your Pakistani neighbours, living in the same conditions you were living in, and say: 'Sure we're in the same hole, but I've got the British character, so I can at least hope to get out of this hole, while these black bastards are hopelessly stuck where they are.'

Here lies the magic of national identification and the capacity to utter the national 'we'. 'I' as an individual can live most of my life watching sports on TV, but as an Australian I can still claim with confidence that 'we' are a sporting nation. 'I' as an individual can be hopeless at playing cricket (as indeed I am), but that doesn't stop me from telling an English colleague (on a good day!) that 'we thrashed you last night' (as indeed I do). 'I' can be uneducated and yet can confidently claim that 'we are highly educated compared to the people of Afghanistan'. The national 'we' magically enables the 'I' of the national to do things it can never hope to be able to do as an individual 'I'. As importantly, the 'we' is also transformed into an aspiration. The child uttering 'we are good at football' sets himself or herself on the road of 'trying to be good at football'. The imagined 'we', in a kind of noblesse oblige, actually becomes causal in influencing the capacity of the person who is trying to be what 'we' all are. Through this magical quality all collective national identities work as a mechanism for the distribution of hope.

But capitalist society does not produce and distribute hope only through the mechanism of national identification. It also does so through its ability to maintain an *experience* of the *possibility* of upward social mobility. First we have to note how capitalism hegemonises the ideological content of hope so it becomes almost universally equated with dreams of better-paid jobs, better lifestyles, more commodities, etc.[13] But second, and as importantly,

despite the fact that capitalism on the whole works towards the inter-generational reproduction of class locations, there are always enough stories circulating of people who have 'moved on' (thanks to hard work, or to education, or even to a lottery ticket!) to allow for the belief in the possibility of upward social mobility. The power of these hopes is such that most people will live their lives believing in the possibility of upward social mobility without actually experiencing it.

This capacity to distribute hope in the midst of massive social inequality has been the secret of the nation-state's enduring ability to sustain capitalist accumulation. Jules Michelet, the 18th century observer and historian of the rise of nationalism, relates to us nicely, in his famous description of the 'birth of a Frenchman', how the nation worked as an apparatus for the distribution of hope. No sooner was the person born as a 'Frenchman', he informs us, than he was immediately 'recognised' and 'accounted for' as a person. Through his inclusion as part of a national society, the nation-state provided him with a recognition of his moral worth, and he could immediately 'claim his dignity as a man'. At the same time, Michelet stresses, the national subject is made to feel in 'control over the national territory'; no sooner is he born than he is 'put ... in possession of his native land'. But most importantly, the sense of being included, being accounted for and being in control all add up to what is in a sense the finality of the process: the national's capacity to receive what Michelet called 'his share of hope'.

We should remember that in the history of the West, access to a share of 'dignity and hope' was not always open to the lower classes. The rising bourgeoisie of Europe inherited from the court aristocracies of earlier times a perception of peasants and poor city people as a lower breed of humanity. The lower classes were 'racialised' as innately inferior beings considered biologically ill-equipped to access human forms of 'civilisation' – which included, particularly, 'human dignity and hope'. 'Human' society within each emerging nation at that time did not coincide with the boundaries of the nation-states. Its borders were the borders of 'civilised' bourgeois culture. Bob Miles, relying on Norbert Elias' classic work, *The Civilising Process*,[14] has examined the way racist modes of thinking originated in the West in categorising the working classes.[15] This has also been examined by Tzvetan Todorov, in his analysis of the French racist thinker Frederic Le Bon. Le Bon, in his *Les lois psychologiques de l'évolution des peuples* (1894), exemplifies the way European thought racialised

the working classes and excluded them from the sphere of civilisation. He argues that 'The lower strata of European society are similar to primitive peoples', and that 'it is enough ... to let time intervene, to see the upper strata of society separate themselves intellectually from the lower strata by a distance as big as that which separates the White from the Black, or the Black from the monkey'.[16]

What Michelet's work describes to us is the important historical shift that began in the late 18th century and continued throughout the 19th century: the increasing inclusion of nationally delineated peasants and lower classes into the circle of what each nation defined as its own version of civilised human society. But this deracialisation and civilisation of the interior went hand in hand with the intensification of the colonial racialisation of the exterior.[17] Now skin colour, in the form of European Whiteness, was emphasised, more than ever before, as the most important basis for one's access to 'dignity and hope'. Michelet captures the birth of the ideal imaginary of the European nation-state proper: a state committed to distribute hope, to 'foster life' as Foucault has put it,[18] within a *society* whose borders coincide with the borders of the nation itself.

Through his emphasis on the relationship between dignity and hope, Michelet also illustrates another important way in which national society works as a mechanism for the distribution of hope. This is a mechanism that is not specific to capitalism but is an intrinsic quality of any society: the production and distribution of a meaningful and dignified social life. If hope is the way we construct a meaningful future for ourselves, as was established above (with the help of Ernst Bloch and Erich Fromm), such futures are only possible within society, because society is the distributor of social opportunities for self-realisation. We can call this hope societal hope. That society is a distributor of these forms of societal hope, these social routes by which individuals can define a meaning for their lives, is a point implicitly but powerfully present throughout Pierre Bourdieu's work.

Responding to a critique of the anthropological basis of his work which assimilates it to a utilitarian vision of human beings as always aiming to accumulate capital,[19] Bourdieu has argued: 'It is not true to say that everything that people do or say is aimed at maximizing their social profit; but one may say that they do it to perpetuate or to augment their social being.'[20] Bourdieu is offering a conception of being that is inspired by Spinoza's ideas

of *conatus* and joy[21] (as augmentation of being); this gives us a key to his general anthropology and sociology. In positing the idea that humans aim to accumulate being, Bourdieu is first of all undermining the holistic, and commonsense, phenomenological idea of 'being' as an either/or thing (epitomised by Shakespeare's 'to be or not to be'). Indeed, for Bourdieu, being is not an either/or question, but a more or less one: some people have more being (a life that is more meaningful, satisfactory, fulfilling, etc) than others. To paraphrase him, we could say that there is no communism of being in society. Being is not equally distributed among the population. While some people inherit 'a lot of being', others have to scrape the bottom of the barrel to get even a bit of being.

At the heart of Bourdieu's anthropology is the idea that people are not passive recipients of being; they struggle to accumulate it. At the heart of his sociology is that being, a meaningful life, is not, unlike what is posited by religious thought, something given prior to social life. Life has no intrinsic meaning. Rather, it is society that offers individuals the possibility of making something meaningful of their lives: 'doomed to death, that end which cannot be taken as an end, man is a being without a reason for being. It is society, and society alone, which dispenses, to different degrees, the justifications and reasons for existing.'[22] This is made particularly explicit in his philosophical work *Pascalian Meditations*. 'The social world,' he argues, 'gives what is rarest, recognition, consideration, in other words, quite simply, reasons for being.'[23]

For Bourdieu, therefore, society is primarily a mechanism for the generation of meanings for life. It does so by offering people the opportunities to 'make a life for themselves', to invest and occupy and thus create and give social significance to their selves. This is what Bourdieu calls *illusio*:[24] the deep belief in the importance of our life pursuits, our future, and thus the deep belief in the importance of our social selves. The key to a 'decent' society is above all this capacity to distribute these opportunities for self-realisation, which are none other than what we have been calling societal hope.

It is, of course, quite clear that under capitalism, government has always given primacy to the interests of capitalist investors. But thanks to the nation-state's being a mechanism for the distribution of hope, the interests of investors were made compatible with a commitment to the construction of a viable society within national boundaries. Hospitality towards migrants and

refugees in this national system was also part of this dual economic/ social logic. They represented an extra source of (often cheap) labour, but their reception was also represented as a commitment to an ethic of the good society in general.[25] The fact that they were received at all reflected something positive about the quality of life within the host society and legitimised it in the eyes of its nationals as capable of producing a surplus of hope. This was so even when this surplus was itself the product of the colonial plundering of resources and destruction of existing social structures – which undermined the hopes of millions of people in what became known the Third World. The vacuum of hope left behind is still felt today within the societies of the colonised, in terms of the hopelessness found in some colonised indigenous societies and in terms of the migration generated by dysfunctional colonially produced nation-states that are unable to provide a sufficient 'share of hope' to more than a small minority of their citizens.

Until recently, the capacity of the great majority of migrants to settle in Western societies was dependent on the availability of a Western 'surplus of hope'. This surplus is the precondition of all forms of hospitality. But it is clear today that while the West is producing a surplus of many things, hope is not among them. As Bourdieu points out, while society is certainly defined through its capacity as a distributor of 'meanings of life', any society's actual capacity cannot be taken for granted at any time, and hope and meaningfulness are not always offered. Capitalist societies are characterised by a deep inequality in their distribution of hope, and when such inequality reaches an extreme, certain groups are not offered any hope at all. 'One of the most unequal of all distributions, and probably, in any case, the most cruel, is the distribution of symbolic capital, that is, of social importance and of reasons for living,' he tells us. For him 'there is no worse dispossession, no worse privation, perhaps, than that of the losers in the symbolic struggle for recognition, for access to a socially recognized social being, in a word, to humanity'.[26] Elsewhere, he speaks of 'social ageing' as a social situation where the possibilities that life has opened before us become fewer and fewer.[27] By the same token, a situation where the possibilities of life are nil is akin to social death. For, as he puts it, 'The competition for a social life that will be known and recognized, which will free you from in-significance, is a struggle to the death for symbolic life and death.'[28]

This opposition to social death is perhaps what marks Bourdieu's 'radical phase' in the 1990s. As he saw it, capitalist

societies have always been marked by an unequal distribution of
hope. Yet they have offered the ground for struggles towards more
equitable distributions. What characterised neo-liberal economic
policy in his eyes was not that it was shaped by a society marred
by inequality, but that the very idea of society, of commitment to
some form of distribution of hope, was disappearing. This has been
perhaps the most fundamental change that global capitalism has
introduced to Western and non-Western societies alike. In the era
of global capitalism, the growth of the economy, the expansion of
firms and rising profit margins no longer go hand in hand with the
state's commitment to the distribution of hope within society. In
fact, what we are witnessing is not just a decrease in the state's
commitment to an ethical society but a decrease in its commitment
to a national society *tout court*. Many social analysts today debate
the decline of national sovereignty and national identity as a result
of 'globalisation'. Yet the greatest casualty, and the one that has
most bearing on the quality of our lives, is neither the decline of
sovereignty nor of identity as such, but the decline of society. This
is hardly ever mentioned. When the society of the past saw the
possibility of social death, the welfare state intervened to breathe
in hope, for there was a perception that all society was at stake
wherever and whenever this possibility arose. Today, not only does
the state not breathe in hope, it is becoming an active producer of
social death, with social bodies rotting in spaces of chronic
underemployment, poverty and neglect. We seem to be reverting
to the neo-feudal times analysed by Norbert Elias,[29] where the
boundaries of civilisation, dignity and hope no longer coincide with
the boundaries of the nation, but with the boundaries of upper-
class society, the social spaces inhabited by an internationally delin-
eated cosmopolitan class. Increasingly, each nation is developing
its own 'third world', inhabited by the rejects of global capitalism.

Transcendental capitalism and the shrinking configuration of hope

It is well understood today that what characterises the global
corporation most, and what sets it apart from its multinational and
national predecessors, is the absence of a permanent national
anchorage point that the corporation sees as its 'true home'. In the
era of the dominance of colonial or international capitalist enter-
prise, capitalism had a specific and stable national base, partly
because it was physically difficult to relocate the great majority of
industries. This was so even when a company's operations had

spread to wherever it was able to exploit resources and labour. With the rise of the big multinational companies we began to see a shift. The multinational firm, as its name implied, was no longer associated with a single nation-state. It had core bases in many parts of the world, but wherever it was, it operated within a nation-state framework. The most important political aspect of global capitalism is the end of this reliance on a nation-state framework of operation.

In a way, global capitalism is simply the intensification of the tendencies of multinational capitalism towards capital accumulation outside the traditional industrial sector. But there are also changes: now there is a clear dominance of the finance sector and a massive expansion of the services sector. These developments have been accompanied by the rise of a relatively new field of capital accumulation: the information sector. Partly because of the above changes, and partly because of the use of computer technology in some of the more traditional sectors, the global firm is now characterised by an almost complete loss of a specific national anchoring. It is not that, like the multinational corporation, it has anchors in many nation-states; rather, it hasn't any. Wherever it locates itself is considered a home, but on a conjunctural, non-permanent basis. Capitalism goes transcendental, so to speak. It simply hovers over the Earth looking for a suitable place to land and invest ... until it is time to fly again.

It is here that a significant phenomenon emerges. The global/transcendental corporation needs the state, but does not need the nation. National and sub-national (such as State or provincial) governments all over the world are transformed from being primarily the managers of a national society to being the managers of the aesthetics of investment space. Among the many questions that guide government policy, one becomes increasingly paramount: how are we to make ourselves *attractive* enough to entice this transcendental capital hovering above us to land in our nation? This involves a socio-economic aesthetic: how do we create a good work environment – a well-disposed labour force and suitable infrastructure? It also involves an architectural and touristic aesthetics: how do we create a pleasing living environment for the culturally diverse and mobile managers and workers associated with these global firms, so that they will desire to come and live among us for a while?

The global aestheticised city is thus made beautiful to attract others rather than to make its local occupants feel at home within

it. Thus even the government's commitment to city space stops being a commitment to society. This global urban aesthetics comes with an authoritarian spatiality specific to it. More so than any of its predecessor cities, the global city has no room for marginals. How are we to rid ourselves of the homeless sleeping on the city's benches? How are we to rid ourselves of those underclasses, with their high proportion of indigenous people, third world-looking (i.e. yucky-looking) migrants and descendants of migrants, who are still cramming the non-gentrified parts of the city? Not so long ago, the state was committed, at least minimally, to propping up and distributing hope to such people in order to maintain them as part of society. Now, the ideological and ethical space for perceiving the poor as a social/human problem has shrunk. In the dominant modes of representation the poor become primarily like pimples, an 'aesthetic nuisance'. They are standing between 'us' and the yet-to-land transcendental capital. They ought to be eradicated and removed from such a space. The aesthetics of globalisation is the aesthetics of zero tolerance.

As the state retreats from its commitment to the general welfare of the marginal and the poor, these people are increasingly – at best – left to their own devices. At worst, they are actively portrayed as outside society. The criminalisation and labelling of ethnic cultures, where politicians and sections of the media encourage the general public to make a causal link between criminality, poverty and racial or ethnic identity, is one of the more unethical forms of such processes of exclusion. This is partly why globalisation has worked so well alongside the neo-liberal dismantling of the welfare state. The state's retreat from its commitment to seeing poverty as a socio-ethical problem goes hand in hand with its increasing criminalisation of poverty and deployment of penal sanctions.[30]

Societal hope, which is, as I have argued, about one's sense of the possibilities that life can offer, is not necessarily related to an income level. Its enemy is a sense of entrapment, of having nowhere to go, not a sense of poverty. As the state withdraws from society and the existing configuration of hope begins shrinking, many people, even those with middle-class incomes – urban dwellers paradoxically stuck in insecure jobs, farmers working day and night without 'getting anywhere', small-business people struggling to keep their businesses going, and many more – have begun suffering various forms of hope scarcity. They join the already over-marginalised populations of indigenous communities, homeless people, poor immigrant workers and the chronically unemployed.

But unlike these groups, the newly marginalised are not used to their state of marginality. They are not used to being denied a share of hope by society. So they don't know how to dig for new forms of hope. They live in a state of denial, still expecting that somehow, their nation and their 'national identity' will be a passport to hope for them. 'Deep down', they know that their national society is no longer 'servicing' them, but like a child whose mother has stopped feeding her, the very idea of such a reality is too hard to accept and to think. Struggling with it generates trauma. They become self-centred, jealous of anyone perceived to be 'advancing' (being cared for by the nation) while they are stuck. They project the fear that is inherent in the fragility of their relationship with their own nation onto everything classified as alien. Increasingly, their attachment to such a non-feeding nation generates a specific paranoid form of nationalism. They become vindictive and bigoted, always ready to 'defend the nation', in the hope of re-accessing their lost hopes. They are not necessarily like this. Their new life condition brings out the worst in them, as it would in any of us. That is the story of many of those in the Western world who are anti-asylum seekers, who are running towards the right and extreme right ideologues who still promise a 'good nation'.

Paranoid nationalists are the no-hopers produced by trans-cendental capitalism and the policies of neo-liberal government. They are the 'refugees of the interior'. And it is ironic to see so many of them mobilised in defending 'the nation' against 'the refugees of the exterior'. Global rejects set against global rejects constructing what is perhaps the greatest phobic international order instituted since World War II.

On worrying: the lost art of the well-administered national cuddle

Introduction

Since the rise of paranoid nationalism in the last 15 years or so, its affective expression, 'worrying about one's nation', has become such a dominant cultural trend in most Western societies that it is sometimes uncritically equated with what it means to be attached to the nation. The culture of 'worrying' which was initially most pronounced among supporters of extreme-right, anti-immigration movements, such as the *Front National* in France and Pauline Hanson's One Nation in Australia, has now become the dominant cultural form of expressing one's belonging to the nation. Nowhere has this generalised culture been as intense as it has been in the Australia of the *Tampa* crisis and the detention centres. This is perhaps because no other society has ideologically legitimised, even institutionalised, the culture of worrying to the extent that the conservative government of John Howard has (see Chapter 5).

'Worrying' clearly denotes the prominence of a dimension of fear about the fate of the nation that is only minimally present in the affective practice of 'caring'. Thus the difference between the two can simply be the result of the presence or absence of a threat: our caring turns into worrying when something is threatening what we care for. Indeed this is often the case when worrying is a relatively fleeting sentiment associated with a specific threat to a specific relation, and where the threat is external to the caring relation. In such cases 'caring' emerges as the norm to which one

reverts after the disappearance of the threat and the worrying it has caused.

The problem with cultures of national worrying is that they are not of such a fleeting nature. Of course national worriers do posit threats – threats that are located, either literally or symbolically, outside the national subject-national society relation – as the source of their worrying. Migration, illegal refugees, crime, paedophilia, 'foreign investment', etc are often cited, and one can imagine why they can be a matter of concern for some people. These sorts of threats do not, however, explain what is beginning to look like a structural entrenchment of the culture of worrying. Indeed, worrying has become such an enduring mode of relating to the nation that if the nationalists ever ceased 'worrying about the nation' it would be hard to remember what the 'caring about the nation' one is supposed to return to means. That is, worrying today exerts a form of symbolic violence[1] over the field of national belonging. It eradicates the very possibility of thinking of an alternative mode of belonging.

In this chapter, I aim to recover the significance of the relation of care that can exist between the nation and its citizens. I will argue that the cultures of worrying and caring about the nation do not reflect the existence or absence of a threat to the nation as much as they reflect the quality of the relation between the nation and its citizens. Extending the argument developed in the previous chapter, I will emphasise the way society works as a mechanism for the distribution of hope and examine the relationship between this distributional capacity and the prevalence of either caring or worrying. As I will show, understanding the ethics of care provides us with an important conceptual site from which we can capture the pathological nature of a nationalism consumed by worrying.

On dispositional hopefulness

In the previous chapter I argued that by being a mechanism for the distribution of social opportunities, society operates as a distributor of social hope among the population it encompasses. Given its location within society, I called this societal hope. Social hope, however, does not refer only to these societal routes for self-realisation. As implied by a statement such as 'I am hopeful but the situation is hopeless', hope also refers to a disposition within individuals. Farran et al. differentiate between hope as a state and hope as a trait. They argue that:

As a state, it reflects the present feelings that persons have about a particular situation, it may fluctuate over time, and it can be influenced through growth or intervention. As a trait, hope functions as a more enduring attitude or approach to life, and is less subject to fluctuation in response to life's vicissitudes.[2]

The dispositional hopefulness that concerns us here is, in Farran et al.'s language, more like a trait than a state. It is an enduring disposition rather than a fleeting feeling. But if hopefulness is a disposition, what does it dispose the body/the self to do?

For most social and psychological researchers who have worked on this issue, hopefulness is above all a disposition to be confident in the face of the future, to be open to it and welcoming to what it will bring, even if one does not know for sure what it will bring.[3] Spinoza importantly points out that hope (unlike wishing, for example) is an ambivalent affect, always laced with fear. For him hope is like a combination of desire for and fear of the future in which the desire for the future is more dominant.[4]

One can extract from Spinoza a conception of the hopeful disposition as nothing more than the will to live – come what may – that is inherent in the human body. It can be linked to Spinoza's theory of *conatus*, that 'each thing, in so far as it is in itself, endeavours to persevere in its own being'.[5] We can call this raw disposition to embrace life as it unfolds, conatic hope. It is a disposition denoting what Spinoza would call an 'appetite' for life.[6] It is well captured by the popular saying, 'Where there's life there's hope.' This kind of hopefulness emerges most clearly when humans are confronting desperate situations. This is why one finds it captured most powerfully in the literature analysing human beings' 'fighting spirit' in the face of fatal illnesses[7] or in concentration camps.[8] But this desire to confront life and live it, even if it is an intrinsic property of all human beings, cannot be separated from the effect of society on its development. Indeed, in some cases society ends up extinguishing it – this is the case with suicides.

Galina Lindquist, an anthropologist doing her ethnographic work in contemporary Russia, describes how some small business people (such as her informant, Olga) rely on visits to urban magicians who give them enough 'hope' (in the form of 'cosmic advice', charms, spells, amulets, etc) to confront the deep uncertainties of a market characterised by an acute absence of trust. For her, hopefulness is the ability to cope with what is beyond one's control and a belief in the possibility of a minimum sense of agency

despite all. In this sense, it is the perceived capacity to exercise some mastery over life, and it stands in opposition to helplessness.[9] As Lindquist points out: 'Magical means are the very few left to a woman like Olga to exert power over others in this society, to exercise agency ... Olga is learning to have confidence in her own self.'[10]

Magic, then, gives Olga hope in the form of a capacity to confront the uncertainties of the market; she does not know what the future will bring but she has some 'magical' confidence that she is on the right path. Such hope 'sustains people like Olga and helps them to arise and continue after absorbing the hardest blows'.[11] Thus even though the social conditions of the Russian market are, so to speak, hopeless, magic allows Olga to reach a hopefulness that is within her regardless of what the social situation is like. Lindquist ends up defining hope as 'a stubborn confidence without any substantial ground, an ineradicable human faculty'.[12]

We can see that Lindquist, here, ends up with a definition of hope close to what we have called conatic hope. Though one senses a contradiction in this definition. For if this hope was, as Lindquist says, an 'ineradicable human faculty', why did Olga need a social means in the form of magic to find it within her? This does not so much negate the idea of a conatic hope as awaken us to the fact that even when we say that the disposition for hopefulness is inherent in all people, this does not mean that it is present in the same way in every single person. The intensity with which this inherent disposition of hopefulness is activated within an individual depends on the material and symbolic social conditions of its activation.

So society is not only a mechanism for the distribution of societal hope; it also functions as a mechanism for the distribution of hopefulness, through the provision of certain social conditions which, once internalised by individuals, activate their conatic hopefulness and allow it to flourish. Olga's story, by emphasising their lack, already gives us a sense of what some of the social conditions that activate this hopefulness can be: they are the negation of the conditions whose presence magic is trying to compensate for. These are, according to Lindquist, 'lack of trust', 'a society where the dangers of social interaction are pre-eminent', 'where the mechanisms of security and control are dramatically reduced', and where there are no sanctions for breaching contractual relations.[13] Although Lindquist is speaking of the 'market' in a strictly economic sense, I would like to suggest that

these conditions are equally important in defining more generally 'the market of life'. A society that can induce and distribute a dispositional hopefulness, a lasting and enduring hopefulness, is precisely a society where the opposite of the conditions mentioned by Lindquist prevails.

The distribution of hopefulness and the art of the well-administered cuddle: on caring and worrying

In its examination of the dynamics of early childhood, psycho-analysis has already shown us that the internalisation of 'good social relations' as a means of developing a healthy sense of hopefulness begins with the internalisation of a 'good mother–child' relation. Within Kleinian psychoanalysis, for example, hope has been explicitly linked to the infant's internalisation of the good breast. As Anna Pontamianou argues, 'Hope is conditional upon the idea of a breast which it is possible to find, as opposed to non-breast, non-existence of breast, or destructive fragmentation of the other and of self.'[14] A well-internalised breast allows us to develop a capacity to wait for the object of our desire with minimum anxiety, even when this object does not show up when expected. That is, the internalisation of the good breast allows the development of exactly that capacity to 'face the uncertainties of the future' which, I suggested above, is an essential characteristic of hopefulness.

Hopefulness, then, is a 'historically' acquired sense of security in facing what the future will bring – historical in the sense being the product of an internalisation of the history of one's relation to the breast and the objects of desire that come to replace it later in life. It is also an enduring disposition, in that it is not likely to be modified just by the odd occasions where the object doesn't 'turn up'. It is thus a confident belief that 'of course the good object will come, or of course my mother will feed me, even if I am a bit worried that she hasn't shown up yet (Spinoza's fear)'. This 'bit of worrying' takes over, however, when the history of the child's relationship to the breast is such that it leads to an insecure form of attachment, an attachment overshadowed by the fear of the bad breast. We can begin to see here the relationship between worrying and hope-deprivation.

Clearly, there are elements in this foundational breast–child relation that offer us some key insights into the imaginary relationship between the national citizen and the 'breast of the motherland'. Above all, it allows us to appreciate how the social

hopefulness of the national subject is produced through an internalisation of the certainty that their national society will care for them. Worrying emerges when this certainty disappears, and when the national's answer to the question 'Will my society care for me?' is an insecure 'I don't know.' Then anxiety sets in.

But despite these insights, it is clear that the Kleinian breast–child relation is of limited value in understanding the national subject–national society relation; not least because, at this early stage in life, the passivity of the child in this relation makes it an unsuitable model for understanding the active role the national subject plays in relating to the nation. Taking a later stage in the parent–child relationship offers us a better understanding of the development of hopefulness within the nation, and of its complexities.

One can note, when watching children who have only recently began to walk confidently play with others in a playground, how often such children go back to the parental lap for a 'reassuring cuddle' before resuming their play. More often than not this parental cuddle lasts a bit longer than the child desires. And one can see children, especially when they have 'returned to the lap' in the middle of some very involved game, battling to free themselves from a cuddle they initially sought but now find restraining. They wildly struggle to free themselves, screaming with all their body: 'Hey, I've only come for a little reassuring cuddle. No need to suffocate me. I want to move on ...'

This situation emerges when the parent's desire to reassure the child is overcome by more narcissistic desires. In such a situation we have an interaction between two different desires: the desire of the child to make contact with a reassuring presence and the desire of the parent to treat the child as a cuddly and perhaps soothing possession. To begin with, each wants the other as an object that satisfies their own needs; *to be just that and nothing more.* The child wants the parent to be around but not so around as to restrict their movement. The parent wants the child to stay long enough for *them* to 'get a cuddle'. But this is only at the beginning. What is crucial is that with time, both parent and child start learning to seek what they themselves need *and* to try to give the other what the other needs.

For the children, the cuddle they seek is an energising cuddle. It is a cuddle which replenishes their capacity to face the world (the game they are playing). Confident with the caring presence of the parental lap, they are ready to confront the uncertainties of the

future (as they present themselves in the playground). The cuddle represents the essence of the relation between caring and hopefulness. That is, the cuddle acts like Lindquist's magic. It activates conatic hopefulness in the child. The caring cuddle also represents the essence of what it means to be 'at home', and opens up for us the significance of the relationship between hopefulness and homeliness.

Although one often finds in the literature on 'home' and 'homeliness' an equation between 'home' and the mother, the mother's lap and/or particularly the mother's breast (see next chapter), there is an enduring assumption that home and the mother's breast represent security *in the form of immobility as well as in the form of an enclosure*. Such homeliness is perceived to stand in opposition to openness and movement, which are somehow associated with homelessness. As Paul Chilton and Mikhail Ilyin argue:

> The concept of 'security' seems in English to be understood by accessing base concepts of fixedness and being inside an enclosing space or a container. This basic cognitive schema is also an important component of the 'house' metaphor.[15]

Yet this is at best an incomplete definition of both security and homeliness. Alone it provides an imaginary of claustrophobia rather than of homeliness and security. For what is security if it isn't the capacity to move confidently? And what is 'home' if not the ground that allows such a confident form of mobility, i.e. that allows us to contemplate the possibilities that the world offers confidently and move to take them on. A home has to be both closed enough to offer shelter and open enough to allow for this capacity to perceive what the world has to offer and to provide us with enough energy to go and seek it. This is why there is always a subliminal psychological value to the 'room with a view'. This also explains the homely ontology of glass and the reasons for its popularity in the construction of houses. Is it not the ideal medium for the embodiment of this double movement of closure and openness that is the essence of homeliness, providing a shelter from the outside without becoming a claustrophobic inability to see what the outside has to offer?

It is precisely that double movement that the child seeks in the parental cuddle. It is a cuddle that manages to simultaneously embrace and protect and allow the child to contemplate the future

and move towards what it has to offer. Working towards ad-
ministering such a finely tuned cuddle is part of the essence of
parental care in all walks of life. After their initial tendency to
'suffocate' the child with a claustrophobic embrace, parents soon
learn that their child needs different kinds of embraces at different
times, and they then aim – according to their ability and their own
history – to become both physical and metaphorical providers of
this range of hope-inducing cuddles.

The more parents are capable of providing such caring embraces
to their children, the more likely the latter are to develop a sense
of security which will make them less dependent on these cuddles
and more capable of moving into the world confidently and
securely, without needing a constant direct physical relation
with their parental 'home'. They acquire something similar to what
in attachment theory is called an 'internal secure base':[16] a sense of
confidence and homeliness that is internalised as a place in
the psyche, and which allows one to move away from parental
care without losing the sense of homeliness it provides. As
Jeremy Holmes puts it: 'the child no longer is wholly dependent
on the physical presence of the care-giver but can be comforted
by the thought of "mum-and-dad", or "home"'.[17] The child de-
velops the capacity to move further and further away from the
parents and to live more and more without needing an actual
'cuddle', since the latter has now become internalised.[18]

Another equally important effect of the caring embrace is that
the child who has internalised such an embrace becomes more
amenable to allowing himself or herself to become the object of
parental desire: s/he becomes more disposed to allow the parent to
get out of the cuddle what that parent wants to get out of it. Care
essentially generates an inter-subjective and reciprocal ethics that
is intrinsic to its nature: there is no caring without caring back.
And the *way* one has been cared for shapes one's capacity to care
for others. As Holmes puts it:

> As care-givers, to put ourselves in the other's shoes, we take a small
> fragment of our own experience and amplify it so that it fits with
> that of the person in our charge. In this way, our own experience as
> receivers of care is used when we become care-givers ourselves.[19]

It is precisely this kind of caring relation that national societies
are ideally imagined to have with their members. Nation-states are
supposed to be capable of providing a nurturing and caring en-

vironment and of having a considerable mastery in the art of border management. They are supposed to be able to operate between the two never-to-be-reached extremes: where openness becomes lack of protection and where protection becomes claustrophobia. Likewise, by being cared for, citizens 'care back' through their active and affective participation in the nation. It is this relation which the uncaring penal state of transcendental capitalism and its paranoid obsession with border controls is no longer allowing us to even think of as a mode of attachment to the nation.

Worriers cannot care about their nation because they have not been and are not being cared for properly by it. Because of the insecure relationship they have with their own nation, they substitute a national belonging based on the defence of a good national life they cannot access (worrying) for a national belonging based on the enjoyment of such a good life (caring). The primary source of worrying, therefore, is internal to the relation. As Holmes argues: 'In insecure and especially disorganised attachment, the body becomes a vehicle for an introjected "alien" other from and with which the individual can neither peaceably separate nor harmoniously co-exist.'[20] That is, the threatening object in the discourse of worrying is intrinsic rather than extrinsic to the national subject–national society relation. It is nothing but the manifestation of the national subject's relation to the motherland, the subliminal fear that 'she' is going to abandon us. It is in this sense that worrying is part and parcel of paranoid nationalism.

Conclusion: all overboard
During the 'children overboard' case, the government made people believe that asylum seekers were throwing their children overboard to gain access to Australian soil and the right of refuge. As this was later proven to be a lie, it was argued that it is xenophobia that allowed Australians to believe such stories. But is it really so? What kind of people believe that a parent (even an animal parent, let alone a human from another culture) could actually throw their child overboard? Perhaps only those who are unconsciously worried about being thrown overboard themselves by their own motherland?

CHAPTER 3

Border dis/order: the imaginary
of paranoid nationalism

Introduction

In what way can we characterise one kind of nationalism as 'paranoid' in comparison with other forms of nationalism? This is not an easy question, for in some ways all nationalisms, by their very nature, invite a defensive posture. What's a nation without borders to defend? And a nationalist might well self-destruct without the noble mission of defending the nation from some internal or external threat. But defensiveness is hardly paranoia. Every community that fosters social hope and distributes it among its members also needs to define and defend its geographic or symbolic borders. However, the fostering of hope and its defence have irreconcilable and contradictory sides, despite the necessity of both and their complementarity. At the border we do the things that we have to do to protect our society, and this might involve doing things that we might not like to see being done inside our society. Inside our social communal space, the fostering of hope is aimed at unleashing the forces of democracy, love, affection, friendship and the like. At the border, the protection of hope sometimes unleashes aggression, hatred and mistrust.

The dilemma of the nation, and of every other community for that matter, is that there is always a danger that the aggressive politics of the border will affect the loving interior. This is why we like to push border politics out of our sight. We keep them where they belong: at the border. Which is somewhere between

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our society and the societies of others. When aggressive, non-democratic border politics needs to be practised among us, we prefer it to be done by a 'secret service' that keeps its actions as invisible as possible. The capacity to keep such politics invisible is often the mark of the 'rich nations' of the first world. In this, they are much like rich people who can afford to erect the most forbidding defences to protect their houses but prefer to have these defences as far away from the centre of inhabitance as possible. The fence protects the lifestyles pursued in the house, but if it is too near it can add a dimension of claustrophobia to this lifestyle and thus diminish its quality.[1]

The same contradiction exists between the defences we erect to protect our 'selves' and the forces of affect and love that constitute that self. As Jeremy Holmes argues, 'in classical psychoanalysis, defences are both necessary – it is useful not to be aware of potentially disruptive erotic and aggressive feelings – and an encumbrance – the effort of removing such thoughts from awareness restricts and compromises loving and self-assertive possibilities'.[2] Managing the self is always a question of being able to maintain such defences while also maintaining the self's 'loving assertive possibilities'. Likewise, managing the distribution of hope within a nation and maintaining the quality of life within it always involves a balancing act between internal and border politics.

As I will argue below, paranoid nationalism sets in when such an act of management becomes impossible, when the aggressive politics of the border takes over the very interior it is supposed to be protecting. In this chapter I examine this state of 'border disorder' and the paranoid nationalist *imaginary* that accompanies it. I begin by analysing the way the dual politics of fostering hope/ defending hope reflects itself in an equally dual imaginary of the nation. I then examine how the conditions of hope scarcity generated by transnational capitalism, and analysed in the previous chapters, create the conditions for the over-dominance of the defensive national imaginary that constitutes the ideological backbone of paranoid nationalism.

On motherlands and fatherlands
The dual politics of the enjoyment and defence of the community noted above implies that nationalist discourse, like all communalist discourse, but with its own specificity, involves two modes of imagining the nation. On one hand, the nation is imagined as a

social/geographical space that one inhabits. On the other, it is imagined as a national will, the will of a unified national body (the national territory and its inhabitants) hovering above the territory, protecting and defending it. The first invites an imaginary of the nation as a container-like space and of the national subject as a bodily individual positioned *in* it (as in 'I live in Australia'), enjoying its goodness and the hope it has to offer. The second invites an imaginary of the nation as a surface, and of the national as a non-bodily entity that exists through the national collective and speaks as a 'we' while gazing from above at the whole nation, trying to regulate the good life within it, as in 'we Australians feel there are enough migrants coming into Australia.'

In *White Nation* I analysed how this duality reflects a dual mode of belonging to the nation as it is present in the claim 'this is my nation.' I pointed out that such a claim had a double meaning. First, it meant 'I belong to the nation', what I called homely belonging, which reflects the spatial-container image and entails the enjoyment of national life. Second, it meant 'the nation belongs to me', what I called governmental belonging, which invites the hovering above the nation-as-a-possession image and entails the defence of national life.[3]

In the nationalist imagination, the above duality is always articulated to the gendered concepts of the motherland and the fatherland. Unlike in German, Italian, French or Arabic, versions of such specifically gendered language referring to the nation are not publicly used in the English-speaking world. Nevertheless, intimations of gender are just as present in English-language nationalist discourse as they are anywhere else in the world.[4] In Australia, there are no specific words used to refer to the imaginary of the fatherland. It is often contextually implicit in the national 'we' (as in 'we decide who will enter our borders'). The 'we' here is given the 'masculine' qualities of will, decision-making, capacity for aggression, etc. The imaginary of the motherland, on the other hand, is often embodied in the language of 'home' (as in 'I still call Australia home'), where home embodies the caring community – as R.E. Pahl has argued, this is 'a euphemism for the caring work done largely by women'.[5] What facilitates a rapprochement between nation and home is that as most ethnographic work on national identification shows, national identity is always mediated by local experience of homely entities at the level of the family, village or neighbourhood.[6]

The *Heimat* movement at the end of the 19th century in

Germany exemplifies both the mediation between the local and the national and the yearning for homely living embodied in nationalist discourse. *Heimat*, the secure and peaceful home ideal where serenity as well as plenitude rule, moved from being an idealisation of mere locality to an idealisation of nation. Or, more often, an idealisation of the nation through the idealisation of locality.[7]

The articulation of this conception of the 'homely nation' to the gendered concept of 'motherland' is more often than not explicit. In the case of the German *Heimat*, for example, Celia Applegate argues that 'the identification of *Heimat* with femaleness is as fundamental as the gender of the German world itself – *die Heimat* – and takes a number (though not a variety) of forms'.[8]

That the conceptions of national mothering and homeliness are both rooted in the spatial images of the nation as container is itself symbolically important, for the container is an abstract projection of the imaginary womb: a place where one feels totally fulfilled, both in feeling a kind of 'total fit' and in feeling fully nurtured. (The dominant idea of the womb is that there are no bad breasts and good breasts there. One is forever located *within* the good breast, so to speak.) As Phil Cohen points out, the nation as motherland and as home is conceived as 'a space of absolute unity and solidarity associated with feelings of fusion and oceanic gratification', where 'our desires and needs have absolute priority'.[9] Examining a Russian nationalist poem abounding in images of plenitude, nurturing and bosoms, Cohen presents a standard psychoanalytic reading of the association between nation and mother. As he points out:

> Like many national anthems, this poem clearly states the association between home and mother/land. The infant's earliest feelings of symbiotic love and identification with the lost object are articulated directly into the nationalist sentiment. The link with 'native soil' is likened to an umbilical chord, and attachment to the homeland is captured in the figure of the baby at the mother's breast.[10]

But as Cohen also argues, just as it is a place where one can experience love and plenitude, the nation is also a place 'where some kind of order can be imposed in that small part of a chaotic world which the subject can directly own and control'.[11] It is here that the imaginary of the fatherland emerges. The national subjects unconsciously picture themselves inhabiting the imaginary of the fatherland by gaining the capacity to utter the transcendental

national 'we' and feeling legitimised to impose order 'from above'.

Importantly, this transcendental 'we' does not only contain the imaginary of a national will directed towards the regulation of the national interior. It also delineates the imaginary of the nation as a collective will in the face of otherness outside the nation: the will of other nations or other non-national entities.

It needs to be stressed here that 'the fatherland as the will of the collective body' is not merely about the nation as an organic unity, as opposed to the contractual unity posited in formulations that are in line with Emile Durkheim's, and then Ferdinand Tönnies', differentiation between *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft*.[12] In *Gemeinschaft*, the community, the communal body, is always defined in relation to its inhabitants; it is never considered in relation to other *Gemeinschafts*, which is what is being emphasised here. In the classical *Gemeinschaft* conception, the individual communal subjects that constitute the communal body do not lose their individuality. They remain distinct individual subjects even when they are part of the collectivity. In fact it is their relation to the collectivity that defines both themselves and the collectivity. In that sense, the notion of *Gemeinschaft*, though associated with the notion of communal body, is closer to the notion of the nation as home/motherland discussed above than it is to a conception of the community as unified subject. Indeed Frantz Pappenheim defines it by arguing that 'one finds oneself belonging to it as if one belongs to one's home'.[13] 'One' is still present as a distinct subject despite the formation of 'it' to which 'one' belongs. This 'one' disappears and melts away in the fatherly national body.

To conceive of the nation as both a unified body and a unified will invites us to articulate the imaginary of the organic body to Rousseau's notion of general will. Rousseau conceives of his notion of general will as a process whereby: 'Each of us puts his person and all his power in common under the supreme direction of the general will, and, in our corporate capacity, we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole.' As he goes on to explain in his classical formulation:

> In place of the individual personality of each contracting party, this act of association creates a moral and collective body, composed of as many members as the assembly contains voters, and receiving from this act its unity, its common identity, its life, and its will. This public person, so formed by the union of all other persons, formerly

took the name of the city, and now takes that of Republic or body politics.[14]

However, to fully capture the nature of the fatherland imaginary we also need to move from seeing this general will as a will solely present to the individual subjects that constitute 'the republic' to seeing its inter-national dimension as an integral part of its make up: a general will always conscious of its presence before other wills. Indeed, within most national communal imagining, this general will is seen not only as acting on its members, which is of course crucial; it is also seen, from the moment of its birth, as an internationally recognised unit, as an international subject which allows the individuals that exist nationally *in it* to also exist and be recognised internationally *through it*. As argued above, unlike the subjects of the motherland, the subjects of the fatherland are not imagined as bodily subjects, for it is precisely the dissolution of all individual subjects into a collective transcendental subject that creates the fatherland.

On the relation between motherlands and fatherlands

Clearly, the imaginaries of the motherland and the fatherland can only be distinguished analytically as they are present together dialogically in all the nationalist discourses and the practices in which they are enmeshed. As Cohen indicates above, the nation as 'the mother's breast' cannot exist without the nation as an ordered space with secure borders. The nation as community, home, or motherland without a fatherland to order it and protect it would not be a very satisfying nation to belong to. As Zygmut Bauman points out:

> The 'we' made of inclusion, acceptance and confirmation is the
> realm of gratifying safety cut out (though never securely enough)
> from the frightening wilderness of the outside populated by 'them'.
> The safety would not be felt unless the 'we' were trusted to possess
> the binding power of acceptance and the strength to protect those
> already accepted. Identity is experienced as secure if the powers that
> have certified it seem to prevail over the enemies construed in the
> process of their self-assertion. 'We' must be powerful, or it won't be
> gratifying. There is little pleasure in being included if – as Heine once
> remarked on one of the less effective protective walls, those of an
> ethnic ghetto – 'cowardice guards the gates from the inside, and
> stupidity from the outside.'[15]

The fatherland's 'we' delineates first of all the we of the national will ensuring the motherliness of the interior. In the gratifying imagined homely community, the shadow of the father has to be constantly looming over the motherland, ensuring that it remains a peaceful provider of food, love and hope – that is, totally subjugated to the fatherland's laws. In this sense, the nationalist is the anti-Oedipus (not in Gilles Deleuze's sense) *par excellence*. Rather than wanting to kill his father to have access to his mother, he – and it is always symbolically a male here – is someone who needs his father to secure his access to the mother. He is someone who senses the relation of power underlying 'total mothering' and who would ask: can I be sure that my mother will continue to nurture me (that the breast of the motherland will be a good breast that feeds me) without the presence of my father (a strong communal body and national will)?

Within the imaginary of the nation, there is no contradiction between the 'order and border politics' of the fatherland and the loving and nurturing nature of the motherland. Indeed the loving nurturing interior acquires its qualities because it is also a secure ordered place. Here we move to the unhomely unconscious (a social version of Freud's *unheimlich*) of the homely nation for the national subject. It is not that the national 'home' is a place of nurture, love, serenity and peace in opposition to a place of power and subjugation. It is a place of nurture, love, serenity and peace *because* it is a place of power and subjugation, a place where the will of the father is trying to ensure that everything is positioned in a way that suits the national subject. Essential for the homeliness of the nation, however, is the misrecognition and the invisibility of the relations of subjugations in which it is grounded. That is, this foundational 'fatherly violence' is a public secret in Michael Taussig's sense – something that is well known but that should not be shown.[16] As Pierre Bourdieu has powerfully argued:

As often happens in the family and within relations of *philia* in Aristotle's sense of the term ... violence is suspended in a pact of non-aggression. However, even in these cases, the refusal to wield domination can be part of a strategy of condescension or a way of taking violence to a higher degree of 'denegation' and dissimulation, a means of reinforcing the effect of misrecognition and thereby of symbolic violence.[17]

The fatherland has to be hovering over the motherland, ensuring that it is a feeding mother, at all times. For in this imaginary, the motherland is not a working mother. She is completely under the patriarchal rule of the fatherland and is always there available to service her children.[18] The art of 'national fatherhood' is to know how to subjugate enough to allow the motherland to perform her role as if *naturally*. If the national subjects occupying the imaginary space of the fatherland fail through their practices and institutions to provide the necessary order within the nation, the same subjects occupying the imaginary space of the motherland will perceive it as less nurturing and satisfying. And if the imaginary fatherland's subjects regulate and order life too much, the feeding becomes *visibly* forced and the motherland's subjects will again find it less nurturing and serene.

The imaginary of paranoid nationalism

As I have already argued in the introduction, there is a sense in which all nationalisms are inherently defensive. This is especially so when we keep in mind that the images of the motherland and the fatherland are always fantasies whose ideals are destined never to be reached. As in the conceptualisations of the nation popularised by Slavoj Zizek,[19] the nation is never motherly or fatherly enough. The perfection of this motherliness and fatherliness is precisely the goal nationalists set themselves to achieve – in so doing, they hope to give a meaning to their lives. In the nationalist imaginary there is always an otherness, in the form of persons (such as asylum seekers, migrants, criminals or youth) or situations (such as economic crisis or bad government), which makes the achievement of the eternally united and vigilant fatherland and the immensely gratifying motherland a forever-deferred finale. And such 'national threats and viruses' are always at hand: either within the national body (can we trust our youth, can we trust the present generation, can we trust the migrants to fight for this country?) or outside it (the terrorists are coming, so are all the asylum seekers of the world). Bauman quotes and comments on a passage from Elias Canetti's *The Human Province I*, which excellently typifies the feverish defensive gaze that characterises this search for national order:

> The paradox of order ('the ludicrous thing about order', in Canetti's expression) is that it wants to be so total and all-embracing while it 'depends on so little. A hair, literally a hair, lying where it shouldn't,

can separate order from disorder. Everything that does not belong where it is, is hostile. Even the tiniest thing is disturbing: a man of total order would have to scour his realm with a microscope, and even then a remnant of potential nervousness will remain in him'. Nationalism breeds such an endemic nervousness in nations it spawns. It trains the nations in the art of vigilance that means a lot of restlessness and promises no tranquillity.[20]

But while one can capture an element of paranoia in such nationalism, it does not represent a pathological state, primarily because such a feverish defensiveness can coexist with a good-enough-but-can-be-perfected image of the motherland. As we have seen above, what characterises a nationalism where the defensive functions are overwhelming is not that the relations of power and subjugation come to exist in the interior of the nation but when they can no longer be hidden. The 'good father' of the national imaginary has to protect and secure the availability (for the national subject) of the good breast of the motherland without undermining its 'goodness'. It is when this 'goodness' becomes not good enough, when the defensive function starts not only to coexist with a deterioration of the enjoyment function but to take over from it, that we know that paranoid nationalism has set in.

There isn't, of course, a single variety of paranoid nationalism, but it is crucial not to conflate an excessively defensive nationalism with a paranoid nationalism. A society at war with a specific enemy can become an excessively defensive one, and the quality of life that 'the motherland' can provide can end up being affected, but this is not necessarily a situation of paranoid nationalism. As we have seen in the previous chapters, paranoid nationalism is not dependent on an external threat. It is the product of a deterioration of the relationship between the national subject and the motherland produced internally within the nation.

Claude Lefort analyses a particular form of nationalist paranoia that was specific to the ex-socialist nations of Eastern Europe (what he calls 'totalitarianism'). What characterises this paranoia is a perception of a direct threat to the will of the united national body, what we have called the imaginary of the fatherland and what Lefort calls 'the People-as-One':

At the foundation of totalitarianism lies the representation of the People-as-One ... In the so-called socialist world, there can be no

other division than that between the people and its enemies: a division between inside and outside, no internal division ... a division is being affirmed, on the level of fantasy, between the People-as-One and the Other. This Other is the other of the outside. It is a term to be taken literally: the Other is the representative of the forces deriving from the old society (kulaks, bourgeoisie) and the emissary of the foreigner, the imperialist world.[21]

Here, as Lefort explains, nationalist thought imagines the presence of the other as a virus, something that weakens the performance of the total communal body, and, by the same token, threatens the very existence of the nation, for its existence is nothing but its capacity to perform. It becomes a matter of life and death. The virus has to be neutralised: in social terms, it has to be rendered powerless or, better still, exterminated. This is what Lefort has called a 'social prophylaxis', whereby:

What is at stake is always the integrity of the body. It is as if the body had to assure itself of its own identity by expelling the waste matter, or as if it had to close in upon itself by withdrawing from the outside, by averting the threat of an intrusion by alien elements ... The campaign against the enemy is feverish; fever is good, it is a signal, within society, that there is some evil to combat.[22]

Lefort provides us here with an excellent description of national paranoia in a situation where the nation imagines the very existence of its national will as being under threat. Framing it in terms of the totalitarianism/democracy oppositions, however, weakens the analytical potential of his argument. Lefort argues that such a defensive culture and its particular form of otherness is peculiar to totalitarianism and that 'modern democracy is that regime in which such an image tends to vanish'.[23] But in doing so he simply elevates the social conditions which lead to a partial eclipse of the national will problematic in Western democracies into a general nature. He ends up underestimating the extent to which the defensive imaginary of the fatherland is a component of Western nationalist discourse, just as it was in the discourse of existing socialism. For no sooner does a historical context arise whereby the national will is perceived to be under threat and is given precedence than the Western democratic nations' own 'totalitarian' tendencies become apparent and the logic of national protection takes over from the logic of national enjoyment. The fatherland, rather than protecting

the motherland, ends up suffocating it, just as it did in the countries Lefort was discussing.

However, while sharing some of the general symptoms of paranoid nationalism, the above situation is not the kind of national paranoia we are confronting in Australia today. In all the possible relations between motherland and fatherland alluded to above, it has been assumed that the motherland is always ready to deliver serenity, nurturing and hope when it is well ordered and well subjugated by the fatherland. It becomes deficient as a result of a malfunctioning fatherland function. But the problematic of paranoid nationalism that concerns us is different. Here, the deficiency originates in the motherland.

Indeed, in the situations we have examined in the previous two chapters it is not the defensiveness of society that leads to the deterioration of the way of life within it. The deterioration of the motherland function is the product of forces inherent in these societies: the nature of 'transcendental' capitalism and neo-liberal economic policy creates the conditions that help it flourish. Over-defensiveness comes after the deterioration of the nurturing, hope-distributing function of the motherland. It only contributes to that deterioration a posteriori. Here it is not the motherland that is shaped into an unhomely entity by an overbearing fatherland, but an unhomely motherland that creates for the fatherland a distinctly pathological problematic: how does one defend that which ought to be defended but is not worth defending?

'A 5-year-old who has hurt his knee at school may put a brave face on it until the moment when his parents come to collect him, when he will suddenly burst into tears,'[24] Holmes tells us. That is, when we are in touch with our homely 'secure base', when we feel hopeful and confident, we are able to let go our defences and exhibit our vulnerability. The tragedy of the nationalists we have been examining is that the insecurity they experience towards the nation does not allow them to ever let go of their defences. Not even when they are supposedly 'at home', in touch with their motherland. Perhaps what characterises this nationalism best is the psychoanalytic concept of avoidance.

Avoidant types are people who are too scared to fully trust and relate to their perceived source of security for fear it might hurt them. A child who has been hurt by his mother, for instance, cannot bring himself to believe that she can hurt him, and will refuse to give up the hope that she will not hurt him. As Holmes explains: 'the avoidant strategy means staying

near to a protective other, but not too near for fear of rejection or aggression'.[25]

The paranoid nationalism we have been examining is essentially an avoidant form of nationalism. Avoidant nationalists have been hurt by their national motherland but cannot bring themselves to stop believing that the motherland is there for them. They fear that their motherland can no longer nurture them, cuddle them and give them hope, but they cannot see any possibility of a substitute provider. They want their nation to give them a motherly embrace but they cannot bring themselves to come too near, for fear of rejection. On the one hand, they have already experienced the bad breast of the motherland, they know that their nation has been letting them down, but on the other, they want to maintain the hope that their motherland will provide them with the good national breast.

That is, against the reality of a non-nurturing motherland the avoidant nationalist develops an attachment to an ideal motherland s/he hopes will eventuate in the future. It is here that the difference between realistic and unrealistic hopes that we have noted in Chapter 1 becomes of major importance. Just as society is capable of distributing a hope that is 'for life', it is also capable of distributing an unrealistic hope that is 'against life'. Unrealistic hope is a hope that is detached from the actual social reality of the subject and from the immediate future this reality carries within it. A psychoanalytic variant of this negative view is a conception of hope as deferral of desire. H. Boris argues that hope develops from the actual limited availability of the breast and a counter-imaginary of endless availability.[26] The latter is an imaginary of how things ought to be. It is a 'hoping for the breast' that becomes distinguished from the 'desire for the breast'. As Anna Pontamianou explains: 'When hope outweighs desire, anything that is potential or lies in the future is likely to loom large compared with the present. In this case waiting, or delay, takes precedence over the immediate securing of pleasure.'[27]

Pontamianou's analysis of hope is part of her analysis of borderline patients 'who use hope as a means of preventing change and sustaining omnipotence'. Here is how she describes the retreat from 'life' in one of her patients: 'She felt secure only within the four walls of her house, where she would remain for hours on end without doing anything, without a thought in her head and devoid of interest.'[28] Those patients, she explains, are 'fixated on waiting for a future that is always "to come"'.[29] And, 'Whereas

hope is usually regarded as an affect that promotes development and change, here it is in the service of a series of fixations which transform its aims.'[30]

In much the same way, the avoidant nationalist substitutes a fantasy of a future homely cuddly motherland for the actual threatening motherland. The more the nation moves into becoming the non-nurturing social reality of neo-liberal policy, the more this hope for a good motherland becomes unrealistic, with no connections to the immediate empirical reality of the subject. That is, rather than the imaginary of the motherland being articulated to a reality that needs protecting, it becomes an increasingly hollow imaginary that needs to be protected from reality. It is here that the paranoid nature of the defensive mechanisms of this avoidant nationalism emerges. The defensive mechanisms of the fatherland are no longer directed towards ordering and protecting the nurturing motherland from internal and external threats; instead, their task is to defend a fantasy of the motherland against the reality of the motherland. From being the object of protection, everything that is part of the national's reality becomes the threat: the past as well as the future. The national subject develops a pathological narcissism as s/he becomes unable to cope with the view of the other, as it risks puncturing his or her increasingly hollow 'hoped-for-motherland'. Here in Australia, nothing characterises this hollow fantasy as well as John Howard's hope of a traditional 1950s-style Australian society.

Appendix to Chapter 3: Anthrax culture

The question 'does the end justify the means?' and the many contradictory answers and considerations it invites is often presented to students of politics and philosophy, and even to schoolchildren, to exemplify the complexities involved in achieving one's aims in life. Most importantly, we learn that means and ends are related, that what we aim for in life can be affected by how we aim for it.

One would have thought that the asylum seekers 'crisis' offers a classical example of this problem. The end: protecting our way of life from the threat that thousands of real or imaginary boat people ready to sail towards us clearly pose. The means: make the life of those who have already landed here against our will as difficult as possible so as to discourage all those others waiting in the wings from following suit. Somehow, the political leaders of the West have convinced themselves that the complexities of the relationship between means and ends do not exist, or do not apply, when it comes to asylum seekers. Protecting the good life justifies whatever we do to those who arrive on our shores uninvited. In their minds, end and means, the good life and the way one protects this good life, are not related. They see no relationship between internal politics and border politics, between domestic policy and foreign and immigration policy. The first is concerned with promoting the good life inside Australia and sharing it with whoever we legally allow within our border; the others are concerned with protecting this good life from being 'stolen' by non-deserving others.

In Australia, one of the few government appointees still committed to multiculturalism, Neville Roach, resigned in 2001 in the wake of the *Tampa* affair and the deplorable conditions at the asylum seekers' detention centres. His warning that the handling of refugee claimants is 'tearing at our multicultural fabric' was more important in its ramifications than as the narrow statement about multiculturalism it was taken to be. As usual, White governmental interpreters fantasised that 'tearing at our multicultural fabric' meant 'affecting the marginal woggy part of our society', instead of understanding and accepting what it actually signified: 'tearing at the core of our culture'. Roach's statement was reality's wake-up call to the government that one cannot ignore forever the complexities of the relationship between means and ends. The way the government is protecting our good life is affecting the quality of this good life, a good life

already impoverished by years of 'globalisation' and 'neo-liberal economic policy'.

Our protective societal border politics have reached a point where they have become too aggressive and too vigilant for the loving interior. Instinctively, we know that the aggressiveness of border politics should not be allowed to seep back into the loving interior and ruin its quality. We also know that the nastiness allowed on the border is deeply connected to the goodness of the interior: we cannot defend our border in a totally racist and totalitarian way and then claim to – or pretend to – live within that border as a non-racist, democratic society.

These are the rules of life. They do not only apply to relations between people.

In my garden, I want to protect the goodness of the fruits and vegetables growing there. What I use to protect this goodness affects it. I can use a really efficient poison that will exterminate all possible threats coming from the outside, but I know that this would kill the very goodness I am protecting. I need to perform a balancing act.

Australia's politicians seem have lost touch with the nature of this balancing act; they seem to see Australia as one of those societies unable to perform it. In Israel, for example, torturing a Palestinian is perceived as the acceptable price of protecting the goodness of the Israeli interior. It is argued that only idealists can celebrate Israel's democracy and internal goodness without recognising the country's need for a less than democratic and a less 'good' border politics to protect the internal goodness. However, all Israelis, whether they support such border politics or not, will tell you that things do not end up being so neatly divided. When taken too far, the nastiness and tension that moves border politics ends up permeating the interior and affecting the quality of the good life they are supposedly protecting. What is equally important is that the very division between the inside and the border disappears. Everything becomes a border.

The political culture of paranoia and fear that results from such a situation was most dramatically exemplified during the anthrax scare in the United States. We can perhaps make use of the term 'anthrax culture' to refer more generally to the kind of political culture that emerges in any similar situations. Anthrax-culture prevails when a generalised culture of 'threat' permeates the whole society. The national interior becomes subverted; the citizens begin to perceive everything and everywhere as a threat, as a border; a

supposed Islamic threat on the border becomes an Islamic threat everywhere. Every breath of fresh air becomes imagined as a line behind which the enemy (always ready to infiltrate the nation) lurks. Slowly but surely, the love, affection and friendship that animate the interior are replaced by the aggression, suspicion and hatred that were supposedly deployed to protect them.

Is the supposed threat of 'thousands of boat people' we are facing, even if real, worth the slow subversion of the quality of our way of life and the rooting of this anthrax culture within it? We must remember that our options are not between border protection and no border protection. In our national fruit and veggie garden, we have choices about the kind of poison we use to protect the goodness of our fruits and vegetables from outside threats without affecting that goodness. Unless of course they are rotting from the inside ...

CHAPTER 4

A brief history of
White colonial paranoia[1]

Introduction

So far in this work I have been concerned with the nature of the current wave of paranoid nationalism in Australia and the rest of the Western world: a nationalism obsessed with border politics and where 'worrying' becomes the dominant mode of expressing one's attachment to the nation. I have argued that this paranoid nationalism is primarily the product of 'the decline of hope' in an era where the dynamics of capital accumulation no longer produces mere inequalities within society, but endangers the very idea of a national society. In Australia, however, these structural factors did not create a culture of paranoia out of thin air. As I will argue in this chapter, there is a history of White paranoia in Australian culture which has structured Australian nationalism from the time of its birth. Since the early post-World War II era, however, there have been economic and political forces which have increasingly worked to relegate this paranoia to the margins of Australian society. What marks the current period is the emergence of a counter political tendency which has reactivated this colonial paranoia, successfully repositioning it at the core of today's national culture.

In the first part of the chapter I will give a very brief historical account of the emergence of White colonial paranoia and of the way it has shaped Australia's society and culture from the time of federation (independence) in 1901 until the rise of multicultural

policy in the early 1970s. I will then examine the period from the mid-seventies to the mid-eighties, when the tendency was marginalised due to the political consensus that formed around the introduction and consolidation of multicultural policy by successive Australian governments.

The last part of the chapter examines the igniting of the debates on multiculturalism and indigenous land rights in the mid-eighties which signalled the re-emergence of White paranoia in the public sphere. As I will argue, to understand this process of re-emergence we need to examine the economic, social and historical circumstances which made dominant sections of the capitalist class, their political agents and the media develop an interest in the reactivation of White colonial paranoia and in bringing it back to the fore as a potent political/cultural force.[2]

White colonial paranoia in Australia

Since its emergence as a British colonial-settler society, Australia's national culture and identity have evolved in the shadow of contradictory colonial tendencies. On one hand, even more than is the case with other colonial-settler societies of the 'New World', such as the United States, Australia's 'first world' wealth and democratic institutions are built on the decimation of the continent's Indigenous population and on the social, political and economic dispossession of those who remain. Theoretically, this ought to minimise the presence and effects of the paranoiac colonial sensibility one finds in colonial-settler nations that are in constant fear of decolonisation. This sensibility is largely due to the continued existence of a colonised political will trying to reassert its sovereignty over all or part of the territory. This is the case in Israel today, for example, as it was the case in apartheid South Africa before decolonisation. But Australia's Indigenous people are no longer capable of engaging in any significant anti-colonial political practices of this kind – that is, although there are many Indigenous practices that can be seen as 'anti-colonial',[3] there is no serious Indigenous movement aiming to regain sovereignty over Australian territory. And given the country's relative wealth and its stable democracy, one expects Australia to share with the United States the 'colonial *fait accompli*' confidence that permeates the latter's national culture. But this is not the case.

While traces of such a confidence were and still are present, a form of White colonial paranoia has remained part of Australian culture long after the Indigenous population had been decimated.

'Paranoia' denotes here a pathological form of fear based on a conception of the self as excessively fragile, and constantly threatened. It also describes a tendency to perceive a threat where none exists or, if one exists, to inflate its capacity to harm the self. The core element of Australia's colonial paranoia is a fear of loss of Europeanness or Whiteness and of the lifestyle and privileges that are seen to emanate directly from that. It is a combination of the fragility of White European colonial identity in general and the Australian situation in particular.

Claude Lévi-Strauss, in his famous UNESCO article on race, points out that:

> for huge portions of the human species, and during tens of millennia, the notion [of humanity] seems to have been totally lacking. Mankind stops at the frontiers of the tribe, of the linguistic group, and sometimes even of the village, to the extent that a great many of the peoples called primitive call themselves by a name which means 'men'... thus implying that the other tribes, groups and villages have no part in human virtues or even human nature.[4]

In a not too dissimilar way, and despite the existence of a general category of 'humanity' derived from Christianity, the European tribes of colonial capitalism constructed themselves as the ideal type of what it means to be a 'human being'. What the history of the rise of European colonialism shows is how this 'being the best type of human being' became associated with being White European. In Chapter 1 we examined part of the process through which the European working classes stopped being constructed as essentially inferior and were given access to humanity and to 'dignity and hope' within the nation. As Alistair Bonnett has shown, this process also involved a historical 'bleaching' of these same working classes. It was a continual process of historical change that led the British working classes from being perceived as on a par 'with monkeys' to the point where Lord Milner, at the battle of the Somme in 1918, is supposed to have said, 'I never knew that the working classes had such white skins.'[5] As Bonnett has also shown, while historical accounts of non-European Whites were quite abundant in the pre-colonial era, the emergence of European Whiteness involved the slow work of 'de-whitening' everything that was non-European so that 'the category "white European" became both a tautology and a group beyond compare.'[6] This is the history of the construction of Whiteness into

a racial category. It involved both a European monopolisation of 'civilised humanity' and a parallel monopolisation of Whiteness as its marker. Finally, the two are combined in what is the quintessential colonial racist logic: Question: why are Europeans civilised and superior? Answer: Because they are White. This is how Whiteness became a valorised racial causal category. But this is also where an anxiety specific to colonial Whiteness emerged.

At the basis of this anxiety is the simple fact that when we speak of the racist social and historical construction of Whiteness, we are not implying that every single European individual had the same degree of Whiteness constructed for them. What was socially constructed at a macro level was a general aspirational model specific to various social and historical conditions. Clearly, some White Europeans were capable of living up to the 'civilised ideals' of White Europeanness with greater success than others – here class remained as important a marker as ever. Whiteness was the means of accessing the ideal, but it gave no promise of achieving total identification with it. It only meant that one could hope and aspire towards such an ideal. It is in this sense that racial Whiteness operated, as we have seen in Chapter 1, as a mechanism for the distribution of hope. But not everyone hoped with equal confidence. The members of the upper classes claimed a natural aristocratic access to high civilisation. The working classes, on the other hand, were generally less secure in their possession of Whiteness; it was often a promise of a 'better life' without that actual better life ever materialising. So the working classes were the ones who most needed the reinforcement of hope provided by colonial racism. Like the phallus in Freud's theory, 'it' (Whiteness) was a symbolic possession that created an expectation that great things could be achieved. At the same time, 'it', as a supposed causal power, was so fragile and uncertain and dependent on an inter-subjective desire for it that it created a structural anxiety and a constant fear of 'not really having it' or of 'losing it': a castration complex, a constant fear of losing what gives life a sense of 'distinction'.

Likewise, the more the European working classes were deprived of material access to the 'White' civilised lifestyle, the more they relied on their symbolic access to Whiteness and the future promise of civilised life it embodied. Whiteness, like the paranoid nationalism I examined in the previous chapters, became the trigger of unrealistic hopes. Such hopes, as I have argued, by being 'against life', become the generators of anxiety, since they have to be

protected from empirical reality, because empirical reality works to negate them. It is in this sense that the colonial Whiteness of the European working classes embodied a structural tendency towards paranoia: can I ever live up to the standards of my Whiteness and become as civilised as it promises it should make me? Will my Whiteness deliver its promises? White colonial paranoia was structured by an unconscious fear that the answers to these questions are simply: no. This Whiteness lives under the constant threat of not realising the potential it supposedly embodies because it is subverted by the reality of class. As such, it is always ready to project onto external factors the threatening impulse that is inherent to it. It is this structural tendency, with its class specificity, that the Australian settlers brought with them to the continent. This class-based anxiety about living up to Whiteness continues to mark Australia even today. One would think that the successful colonisation of the continent and the creation of a society which for more than one hundred years has provided its White inhabitants with a decent 'civilised lifestyle' would be enough to bury this colonial paranoia. But it hasn't been enough. This is where we come to the specificity of Australian colonialism.

First, it should be noted that whatever traces of colonial confidence existed in Australia are built on genocidal practices, and so remain haunted by these constitutive deeds. The fact that no post-colonial pact has ever been reached (no treaty with the Indigenous people yet exists, for example) has left Australian culture with a continuous sense of unfinished business, and has opened the way for a continual struggle by the remaining Indigenous population for some form of moral redress as well as material compensation. Thus despite their relative weakness and the fact that they are hardly ever concerned with challenging White political sovereignty, the struggles of Indigenous Australians act as a constant reminder of the uglier aspects of the colonial past – even for those most determined to forget them or deny their continuing relevance.

Another factor which has bred colonial uncertainty is an Australia-specific sensitivity to and awareness of the impossibility of fully colonising the natural environment. The relatively 'undomesticable' nature of the Australian outback and the awareness of a constantly present and sometimes mystically defined 'undomesticable remainder' even within domesticated spaces[7] have given Australia's colonial culture a sense of its own fragility which seems to be missing from the confident 'frontier' culture that marks

US colonial history. Awareness of one's fragility is usually considered 'healthier' psychologically than denial of it, and it could be argued that this awareness has helped shape some of the better aspects of traditional Australian culture, including its trademark self-deprecating sense of humour. However, when it is added to the nationalist drive to 'domesticate everything', it transforms into the anxiety vis à vis undomesticated 'cultural otherness' which has marked the Australian psyche from the very beginning.

Finally, as is well known, because of its distance from the 'mother country' and because of its geographic location, Australia's early settlers, or at least those who had the power to shape the identity and culture of the settlements, constructed Australia as an isolated White British colony in the heart of a non-European (read also uncivilised) Asia-Pacific region. Here Australia shares with countries such as White South Africa and Israel a fear of being 'swamped' by what is perceived as a surrounding hostile and uncivilised otherness. 'From the far east and the far west alike we behold menaces and contagion ...' stated the Australian leader Alfred Deakin in 1898.[8] This is not just a fear that the 'uncivilised other' can end up taking over the country through military invasion. It is also a fear that through the pressure of sheer numbers, the uncivilised others slowly end up penetrating the place and their different cultural forms and norms slowly end up 'polluting' colonial society and identity. The coloniser is here expressing his fear of losing the 'civilised' cultural identity that propelled the colonial project and gave rise to the nation in the first place. However, it should be remembered, as Albert Memmi explained long ago, that behind all this is an often unconscious fear of losing the social and economic privileges gained from one's structural position as a coloniser.[9]

Around the time of Federation, when Australia was moving towards becoming an independent nation, many Australians worried that by weakening the country's links with Britain their fears of being 'swamped' by Asians would become a reality. The phallic fear of losing one's 'Whiteness' (and the privileges that came with it) was as prevalent as the hopes unleashed by the newly inaugurated era. It meant that Australia was peculiarly – and characteristically, as history has shown – timid for a nation about to 'gain' its independence. This timidity gave birth to the foundational White Australia Policy. On one hand, this policy reflected the hopes of the 'founding fathers' that Australian society would be a projection of a White racial identity, that Australia would

remain an expression of a constitutive Whiteness and an example of what the White British race could achieve. On the other hand, the policy expressed the fear that this constitutive Whiteness was under threat and needed to be protected by a stringent racial policy that worked to maintain the White racial character of the nation. This basically meant having a domestic policy geared towards the continuing extermination of the culture of the colonised Indigenous people and an immigration policy geared towards excluding non-Whites from Australia and from Australian citizenship.[10] Ideologically, then, White paranoia was structured by the following discursive logic:

1   British civilisation is the highest of all civilisations in terms of ideals and achievements. While, as already mentioned, European colonialism had monopolised Whiteness and civilisation in general, there was fierce national competition between European countries as to which national European Whiteness (French, English, etc) embodied the highest ideals of civilisation.

2   British civilisation is a racially determined civilisation. That is, as defined within the logic of developmental racism, White British racial identity is causal. Its 'possession' allows certain people to create and/or be committed to societies which express the high values of British civilisation.

3   Those who are not White are by definition unable to appreciate or to commit themselves to, let alone create, societies which uphold the British values of democracy, freedom, etc. The sheer presence of non-Whites ends up either deliberately or accidentally undermining those values and the culture based on them.

4   Being all located in poor countries, non-Whites are generally not used to high standards of living and are happy to accept low wages. Thus by migrating to the West they undermine civilised culture and the civilised high standard of living of White workers.[11]

5   The more a White society is penetrated by non-White elements the less it is capable of expressing the values of White civilisation, therefore it is imperative to maintain a White society that is as racially pure as possible.

The White Australia Policy did not just keep Australia homogeneously White; it actually worked at making it even more homogeneous than it was at the time of Federation. According to

historian Andrew Markus, the demographer 'Charles Price has estimated that in 1891, [Australia] was 87 per cent Anglo-Celtic and 6 per cent north European. Eastern and southern Europeans combined came to less than 1 per cent, Asians 1.9 percent, and Aborigines 3.4 per cent. By 1947 ... the Anglo-Celtic component had increased to 90 per cent, the northern European was unchanged, and the combined total for Aborigines and Asians had fallen to 1.1 per cent.'[12] As the history of Australia for most of the first half of the century was a history of rising living standards, the White Australia Policy worked to actually further ingrain – in a population already predisposed to believe it – the racial causal logic that links White racial identity and high civilised standards of living.

From the White Australia Policy to multiculturalism: the repression of colonial paranoia

The White Australia Policy prevailed well into the 1960s. However, from World War II onward it was slowly eroding, both as a population/immigration policy and as a racial conceptualisation of society. From an ideological point of view, Markus points out that as the sixties approached, it was becoming increasingly unacceptable internationally to retain the racial tenets of the White Australia Policy.[13] They were now decried as forms of racist ideology. From an immigration point of view, fears of declining population and acceptance of the need to look for sources of large-scale migration other than Britain had been being expressed by academics from as early as the 1930s.[14] These fears began to be shared with the rest of the population when they were given public prominence during and in the aftermath of World War II. This was a time when the possibility of a Japanese invasion of Australia highlighted the need to 'populate or perish'.[15] Notwithstanding the above, the most important support for an increase in the rate of immigration came from Australia's industrialists, who were at the time facing a shortage of labour that could threaten their expanding industries.

After World War II Australia committed itself to a 1 per cent immigration-based annual population growth. Given that immigrants from Britain were not enough to sustain such a rate, the Australian government began accepting relatively large numbers of non-British migrants. While to begin with it accepted the displaced persons from Northern and Eastern Europe, there were not enough of them, and it soon had to recruit its immigrants from

the 'darker shade of White' regions of southern Europe and the Mediterranean. Despite the fact that the immigration program continued to give overwhelming preference to British migrants, and to finance recruitment campaigns in Britain, this change in direction was bound to worry a population whose sensibilities continued to be shaped by the White Australia Policy and its structural White paranoia. This population was now torn between the phobic war fantasy 'populate or perish' and the racial non-White immigration fantasy 'populate and perish'.

The government's policy of 'assimilation', launched in the wake of the new immigration program, was in many ways directed towards soothing this paranoia more than towards being a settlement program for the new immigrants. 'Assimilation' carried a clear message to the White population: migrants will not perturb or change Australia's Anglo-Celtic culture. It is the migrants who have to change to fit into it. For the incoming migrants, 'assimilation' was more a general ideological directive to assimilate than a set of 'assimilationist institutions' provided to produce a desired outcome.

Despite all this, the new non-White immigration and the ideological nature of assimilation dented the racial structure of White paranoia described above. It dented it first through the settlement of the 'not so White' Greeks, southern Italians and Lebanese, whose mere presence in Australia's cities signalled a major change in Australia's urban 'visual' culture – the everyday faces one met in the street were no longer as homogeneously white, although they were never entirely so anyway. Racial Whiteness was also dented in a more fundamental way through the puncturing of the causal racial logic that underlay it. It was not possible to maintain the belief that Australia's British culture and civilisation were a direct result of racial Whiteness and still argue that non-Whites could be made to assimilate into this culture. This is why assimilation created a fundamental split around the way this paranoia expressed itself. One part of the population adapted to assimilation by moving from a racial to a cultural formulation of their fears.

The changes were minor but important ones. Australia's colonial civilisation was increasingly perceived as 'European' rather than strictly British. This was done more through an emphasis on the European aspects of Britishness than through an opposition between the two. It was still, though, a civilised culture threatened by uncivilised barbarians. The threat, however, was no longer

purely racial. It was increasingly perceived as cultural. This became
the ruling ideology on both sides of the political divide. Thus, in
1959, the Minister for Immigration saw himself as enacting a
policy that would attract 'the types of peoples ... who can most
readily be absorbed, so that we can mould Australia into an Anglo-
European community embodying the old and the new'.[16]

Because certain 'races', such as 'Asians', were still fundamentally
perceived as unassimilable and thus dangerous, there was now a
further division – between assimilable non-Whites and non-
assimilable ones. Thus the threat to Australia's White culture was
no longer non-Whites as such but non-assimilable non-Whites. It
was this developing shift of emphasis from race to culture that
made assimilation and the White Australia Policy ideologically
compatible in government circles and among those who supported
the policy.

Because all the dominant political, economic and ideological
forces embraced this shift, those who still clung to a totally racial
conception of Whiteness and a more strictly British conception of
Australian civilisation, though they remained a sizeable section of
the population, found themselves for the first time on the margins
of the debates that shaped Australian identity. So much so that
assimilation was introduced with very little public debate. As Mark
Lopez points out:

> There was a relative consensus of approval for the program among
> policy-making elites in the public service, major socialising
> institutions (mass media, education system), and all levels of
> government. This dramatically reduced the scope for political debate
> to substantially challenge the policy, despite the existence of
> widespread popular opposition to most aspects of the policy except
> British immigration.[17]

This was an important shift. For the first time, there was no se-
rious political force in Australia willing to or capable of propping
up the racial expressions of White paranoia and give them
a privileged position in public space or take them as the basis
for formulating policy. It was a shift that became a feature of
Australia's immigration and settlement politics well into the 1980s.
Like taxation, immigration and settlement policy became thought
of as something that ought to be worked out by politicians,
preferably through bipartisan politics. It was not to be decided
through public debates, as it was clear where such debates would

lead. If governments were to tax according to the will of the people, taxation would be minimal, and this would be against the interests of the nation. It would be likewise with immigration, it was believed.

What characterises this period, then, is not the disappearance of the racial strand of White paranoia but rather its increased marginalisation. While it remained alive in some parts of the tabloid media and in places such as the RSL (Returned Services League) clubs, the business/quality media/political class consensus that formed around immigration and settlement policy meant that no political force was willing to take up that racial approach and use it for their political advantage. This consensus, which saw itself as reflecting the more enlightened and adaptable part of the population, was powerful enough to survive the slow abolition of the White Australia Policy, which by the mid-sixties was almost universally recognised as 'offensive'.[18] But perhaps the better proof of its power and durability was its survival through the shift from an assimilationist to a multicultural settlement policy, and its capacity to carry large sections of the population with it through that change with minimum public debate.

Since World War II and the rise of assimilation, Australia's settlement policy had been a response to the effects of its immigration program. By the late 1960s the effects of the postwar immigration period were being felt, and as Australia's immigration program was beginning to recruit even 'darker shades of White', it was becoming clear that assimilation did not just 'happen'. That is, postwar migrants – the Lebanese, the Greeks, the Italians and the Yugoslavs, and even the 'Whiter' ones, such as the East European Jews, the Poles and the Germans – had not simply become 'Australians'. They did not shed their previous cultural practices and they did not become indistinguishable from the population of British origin. At least not as quickly as expected. Moving in Australia's cities, one could witness the formation of ethnic streets and enclaves.[19]

The government responded by abandoning assimilation and shifting to an 'integrationist' settlement policy. The latter, like assimilation, was heavily directed at soothing the cultural paranoia (still alive and well) of the White people who had found assimilation acceptable. 'Integration', it was argued, meant that it was unreasonable to ask newly arrived migrants to become 'like us'. They will always maintain their cultural practices and habits. Their sons and daughters, however, were the ones who had to

be worked on, to ensure that they became fully Australians. Integration was a way of saying that assimilation took more time than expected, and it was an request to the White population not to 'panic' in the face of the now visible non-British ethnic presence in public spaces.

However, integration also prefigured multiculturalism in that it was the first state/bureaucratic recognition that Australia was no longer a homogeneous White European society; it did now contain non-English speaking communities (the non-assimilated first generation) whose needs required special government policies. Ultimately, the fantasy of a White European Australia as an ideal that Australia yearned to maintain continued to be the basis of all government policies – and the conceptions of Australia that went with them – until 1973, when the newly elected left-wing Labor government of Gough Whitlam, the first Labor government in 23 years, began to advance the first timid conceptions of a multicultural Australia.[20]

The specificity of Australian multiculturalism

Since it has become associated with the processes of globalisation today, the word 'multiculturalism' has undergone a paradoxical homogenisation of its meanings and its social significance, a homogenisation primarily based on its American meaning: cultural pluralism and identity politics. That is mostly what it means in Australia today, but this has not been always the case. When it was introduced into Australian society, 'multiculturalism' defined a number of social and political realities. It is impossible to understand the debates around it without examining the transformations it has undergone.

Australian multiculturalism embodied a set of differences reflecting the complex realities in which it was grounded and the diverse social forces that had an interest in advancing it.[21] Firstly, multiculturalism was perceived as both a descriptive and prescriptive concept. Descriptively, many insisted, multiculturalism was not a government choice; 'multiculturalism' merely described the inescapable fact that Australia's immigration program, which had become even more diversified throughout the 1960s, had created a society with more than a hundred different minority ethnic cultures that existed with but also transformed – and were in turn transformed by – Australia's Anglo-Celtic culture. Prescriptively, multiculturalism was the set of policies adopted by the state to govern this inescapable reality. These policies involved

not just accepting that cultural difference exists and must be catered for, but also celebrating it as a positive aspect of society that ought to be promoted.

Second, and closely related to the above, was the difference between multiculturalism as a mode of governing ethnic cultures and multiculturalism as national identity. This was and still is a subtle difference. The difference is perceived as that between multiculturalism as a marginal reality in a mainly Anglo-Celtic society and multiculturalism displacing Anglo-Celtic culture to become the identity of the nation. In the first, the culture of the ethnic minorities is imagined as contained, and having little effect on a still largely 'European Australian' mainstream culture. In the second, the migrant cultures are seen to be actually hybridising with the European Australian culture, creating a new multicultural mainstream.

Third, there were the differences between multiculturalism as welfare and multiculturalism as a structural socio-economic policy. Both these multiculturalisms were less about culture and more about access to the institutions of Australian society. Both were concerned with the fact that most non-English speaking background migrants to Australia were positioned in the most economically unfavourable positions in society.[22] But while the first was mainly concerned with facilitating access to the state, in the form of interpreting services or in the provision of state help to ethnic communities via specific grants, the second had a more radical conception of the role of the welfare state: it saw it as a tool for dealing with the structural class inequalities produced around ethnicity.

Fourth, there were the differences between multiculturalism as social policy described above and multiculturalism as cultural policy. This was what Brian Bullivant nicely called the difference between life chances and lifestyle multiculturalism.[23] While the first was concerned with socio-economic issues, the second was the closest to the forms of cultural pluralism that are most identified with multiculturalism today. It was more concerned with cultural traditions and practices. Its core element was the shedding of the ethnocentric claim that Anglo-Celtic culture was the most desirable culture to aim for and the accepting of a cultural relativism which recognised that no culture was superior to another, that all had enriching elements that could be incorporated into Australian society. This version of multiculturalism was crucial for the ethnic (non-Anglo-Celtic) middle class, who, to compete against the

traditional Anglo-Celtic middle class, needed a recognition of the worth of their cultural traditions and backgrounds more than they needed welfare and English programs.[24]

'Life chances multiculturalism' had only a fragile beginning during the years of the Whitlam government (1972–75). The general onslaught on whatever claims the Australian welfare state had to being a tool for dealing with structural inequality began in 1975, with the conservative government of Malcolm Fraser, and has been continued by every government thereafter. Indeed, as Castles et al. point out, the Fraser government promoted multiculturalism (in its cultural pluralism and managing cultural diversity sense) in order to promote a culturalist version of Australian society ahead of a class one. It was: 'a key strategy in a conservative restructuring of the welfare state whose main purpose was the demolition of Whitlam-style social democracy'.[25]

Along with the rise of Asian immigration, the greatest taboo of the White Australia Policy, it is the movement – within a period of less than ten years – from a descriptive multiculturalism perceived primarily as a form of welfare and of cultural government to a multiculturalism that is more prescriptive and perceived to be primarily about national identity which signalled the re-entering of White Paranoia in both its cultural and racial garbs into the sphere of public debate.

The rise of identity multiculturalism and the resurfacing of White paranoia

The most important ideological shift between the conservative Liberal/Country Party government of Malcolm Fraser (1975–83) and the right-wing Labor government of Bob Hawke (1983–91) is the move away from multiculturalism as cultural government and towards multiculturalism as national identity. The difference between the two, mentioned above, can be restated as the difference between saying, 'We are an Anglo-Celtic society with a number of diverse non-Anglo-Celtic cultures that we (the Anglo-Celtics) strive to manage' and saying, 'We are an Anglo-Celtic multicultural society because we have been transformed by the existing diversity of culture.'

The first formulation clearly embodied a multiculturalism that was not radically incompatible with the old conception of a White Australia. Australia was still primarily a White nation, and its Whiteness remained unaffected by the existence of ethnic minorities. It just happened that it had a multicultural program to

manage its diverse ethnic minorities. It was just like having an Indigenous program to manage the Indigenous minority; it did not make Australia more or less of an Indigenous nation. This version of multiculturalism, with its images of 'contained ethnicity', managed to carry with it some parts of the population steeped in the White paranoia of the assimilationist period – these people had been confident enough, especially because of the favourable economic conditions at the time, to accept the change.

The second formulation, however, was a far more radical break with the Australian identity of the past. It entailed an Australia that was still Anglo-Celtic, but one that had been fundamentally transformed by its immigration program. So much so that it now had a different identity. Here multiculturalism was not a kind of feature on the side in an Australia that was still an Anglo-Celtic society. It involved a new conception of Australia, in which multiculturalism represented a kind of higher type of Anglo-Celtic civilisation. This version appealed to the growing number of increasingly well-travelled and cosmopolitan middle-class Australians who wanted to shed the image of Australia as a racist colonial backwater and appear in a more symbolically competitive light in the eyes of nationals of other places. In emphasising 'a unified nation of diverse cultures' it also provided a national ideological counterpart to the corporatist economic ideology of unifying 'labour and capital' being advocated by the Hawke government. But it was also a version of Australia that alienated many White Australians who had found multiculturalism as cultural management acceptable; it revived in them the old paranoid fears of cultural extinction. They found this too radical a step to take, and from that moment on they began to move closer to the till now historically marginalised section of the population who were still holding on to a racially defined White Australia.

Many other factors worked during the late 1980s and early 1990s to further intensify White paranoia. First, the eighties saw worsening economic conditions for large sections of traditionally better-off Australians (such as farmers and small business people). Second, now that immigration policy was freed of the ideological shackles of the White Australia Policy and its remnants, Australia was witnessing its biggest flow of Asian migration since the goldrushes of the 19th century. Like the Eastern and Southern Europeans before them, but even more noticeably so, given their 'visibility' to the Western colonial eye, they were seen to form non-Anglo-Celtic enclaves in the cities and the suburbs

where they settled. And despite both the move towards multiculturalism and the successive waves of non-White migration, the 'Asian' still played the role of a kind of primordial threat in the White Australian psyche. All this anxiety was exacerbated by the Labor government's moves towards the creation of an Australian republic; this severing of Australia's last symbolic ties with the British monarchy brought back to life fears similar to those that had arisen at the time of Federation. This was especially so since the move towards becoming a republic was accompanied by an 'Australia in Asia' campaign whose basis was the idea that Australia's future lay in its being a part of Asia. Finally, there was the government's drive towards settling the 'colonial question' by granting the Indigenous people some form of 'land rights' which later culminated in the Mabo[26] judgement. This revived, among the most vulnerable Whites, irrational fears of territorial decolonisation, such as losing their homes to Indigenous people who were going to 'grab the land back'. It was this climate of economic uncertainty and reinvigorated internal and external traditional threats that sent White paranoia into overdrive and laid the foundations for the long era of 'debating multiculturalism' that then began.

Debating multiculturalism in the shadow of White decline[27]

Before examining the general content of Australia's multicultural debates, we need to briefly ask the question: what is this social phenomenon called 'public debate'?

One important question raised by the notion of public debate is: who has the power to express an opinion?[28] Clearly not everyone has the power and knowledge necessary to access the media. This is influenced not only by class but also, and most importantly in this case, by variables that often relate to ethnicity – in this case, something as basic as fluency in English or as peculiar as the capacity to talk over the phone knowing that what you are saying is being publicly broadcast. This has often meant that multicultural debates in Australia are often *about* migrants rather than *with* them. But the capacity to express an opinion is meaningless, of course, without the existence of a mediatic predisposition to represent it. But even that is not enough.

As pointed out above, the appearance of White paranoid views in tabloid newspapers and on some radio stations has always been a part of Australian culture. At the same time, articles by right-wing cultural pluralist supporters of multiculturalism replied to in

follow-up articles by leftist advocates of a structural/egalitarian multiculturalism in the 'quality press' have also existed throughout the history of multiculturalism. Neither in themselves creates a generalised feeling of there being a public debate. The latter only happens when a sense of communication among different media – not just within each one of them – begins to happen. Thus readers of quality newspapers might never listen to talkback radio, but suddenly their newspaper starts reporting the views expressed by talkback radio listeners and publishing letters to the editor supporting or disagreeing with those views. These letters are taken up in turn by the radio station and by commercial television. Inevitably, politicians and other well-known people are asked – or volunteer – to join in the fray. Their views are more likely to be prominently reported than relegated to an obscure newspaper's middle pages and, in turn, they foster more debate. A full media circuit of ideas and counter-ideas begins to take place: this is when a sense of a 'debate' occurs.

So for a debate to occur there must exist in the media a generalised culture and a predisposition (among editors and reporters) to make an issue out of what is to be debated. In the Australian context that means remembering that journalists, despite the supposed ethos of 'objectivity' that prevails among them, were not immune to the resurfacing of feelings associated with White paranoia. As a group of predominantly White workers, they too were crisscrossed by the cultural currents that affected other White workers. The rise of feelings of White paranoia in the general Australian population, particularly in the White middle class, was always likely to be accompanied by similar trends among journalists. As soon as the rate of Asian migration increased, and this group had a higher rate of middle-class migration than any wave of migrants before it,[29] some middle-class White Australians swung straight into the traditional working-class mode of perceiving non-Anglo Australians as competition. This fear was compounded by the fact that many of the sons and daughters of the mainly peasant/working-class Southern European migrants were moving into middle-class jobs as well.[30]

But even the existence of this journalistic disposition to make an issue of multiculturalism is not enough to explain the return of White paranoia to centre stage. As I argued in the previous section, its marginalisation from the mid-1950s to the mid-1980s was a result of the agreement between quality newspapers, business and politicians not to activate it either politically or as a subject of

debate. It was the falling apart of this consensus, more than anything, that allowed White paranoia to re-enter the sphere of 'public debate'.

Labor's economic strategy of opening the economy to the processes of globalisation through massive deregulation and their political strategy (described above) generated an unusual amount of opposition. First, important sections of the mining industry, a central sector in Australia's economy and associated with many other business interests, including media interests, adopted a strong oppositional stance towards the government's commitment to grant Indigenous people some form of 'land rights'. This also happened at a time when the 'wet' supporters of multiculturalism within the conservative Liberal Party were losing to the 'dry' side of the party, led by John Howard, one of the few ideologically driven monoculturalists in Australian politics. All of this led to a break in the long consensus around multiculturalism and around the isolation of the White paranoid tendency from public space. Suddenly, the latter's ideological tenets were being muttered by politicians as if they'd never been said before, and their mutterings, as well as the muttering of those who had not been heard for a long time, began to reappear in prominent positions in the media.

Thus when the first full-scale 'multicultural debate' took Australia by storm, ignited by the reporting of an address made in March 1984 by well-known populist historian Geoffrey Blainey, what created the storm was not that what Blainey said was new. He and many others before him had expressed their opposition to multiculturalism and Asian migration well before that date. It was, as many analysts have suggested, the fact that a speech given in a country town was put in the most prominent of positions in the media, plus the willingness to continue putting the views expressed around it in similarly prominent positions, that signalled the coming of the new era. Hardly a year has passed since without Australians engaging in or at least witnessing a 'multicultural debate' that is highly predictable in form and content and that begins with some expression of White paranoia.

The first ideological cornerstone of the resurfacing paranoia is the sense of White decline I analysed extensively in *White Nation*: a sense that being 'White Australian' no longer yields the national privileges or opportunities or promises that are perceived to have existed in a previous era. This sense of decline is built on two core ideological constructions: first, a conception of the self as representing the 'average', the 'mainstream', the 'ordinary' national

(this lends a deep *legitimacy* to one's grievances), and second, a heightened perception of 'minorities', migrants and Indigenous people as a threat to one's own wellbeing.

An important outcome of such a construction is a crisis of identification with the nation-state based on the perception of a bias towards 'minorities' and migrants on one hand and global business interests on the other. This is made most explicit in the claim that is the trademark of the discourse of decline: that the 'ordinary' people of the White dominant culture are suffering from reverse discrimination.

Underlying this paranoia is the idea that government (mainly the Labor Party), along with the multicultural lobby, the Indigenous lobby and 'elitist intellectuals',[31] are all working at undermining Australia's core culture, which the White decliner strongly asserts its existence as if it is under attack. The problem is that when you go through the history of multiculturalism and of the debates around multiculturalism, it is very hard to find anyone, except some intellectuals with no significant social or symbolic power, arguing that Australia doesn't have or doesn't need a core culture. On the contrary, all multiculturalists have gone out of their way to assert that cultural pluralism is not a negation of the need for a core culture. What some multiculturalists have argued is that Australia's core culture is no longer Anglo-Celtic in a traditional sense. This was the basic idea of the 'multiculturalism as national identity' advocated by Bob Hawke (and Paul Keating after him). It is as if what White paranoia is expressing is fear that the new multicultural order threatens the old assimilationist dream of an unquestionably European Australian culture, but given the censorship that now disallows use of such ethnocentric language, this fear is expressed in terms of the loss of any core culture.

Here we come to an interesting dimension of White paranoia. In his well-documented history of the origins of multiculturalism, Mark Lopez points to something important about assimilationist ideology. Originally, he argues, it was a strategy for the preservation of a predominantly Anglo-Celtic society. But as Australian society changed demographically, culturally and socially, hanging on to the idea of assimilation involved the rather radical proposition of changing society *back* to what it had been.[32] Unless, of course, one managed to convince oneself that nothing had changed and it was just a case of too many people not fitting into an Anglo-Celtic society that still existed. If one is to maintain such assimilationist beliefs today, one still has to sustain this fantasy,

even though that society has clearly disappeared. So the very idea of debating assimilation, whether on the for or the against side, works to produce the fantasy of a society that no longer exists. The debate helps shield the assimilationists from the reality they need to avoid if they are to maintain their fantasy constructions: that they are the ones who have not assimilated to a changing society. This is precisely the closed-circuit logic that the White paranoid fantasy needs if it is to be able to reproduce itself.

This is why debates around this subject are structured in an exceptionally predictable way, as I have already pointed out. They always consist of people expressing forms of White paranoia and others trying to present either statistical or historical evidence or logical arguments to prove that there is no basis for the paranoid views expressed. More often than not, because of the closed circle logic in which it is grounded, the counter argument leads to a reinforcement of the paranoid view, which feeds on a sense that 'things are so bad *because* so many people can't even see what is happening' and end up creating images of 'dark conspiracies' that everyone has fallen victim to except for the paranoid ones themselves.

So perhaps 'debate' is a misnomer as far as multiculturalism is concerned. What actually happens is more like a parallel presentation of differing points of view. Because forms of social paranoia refuse inter-subjectivity and have to feed narcissistically on their own 'truth' to survive, they are not something one argues with, especially when they are positioned prominently within the public sphere. One either works at relegating them to the marginal spheres of society where they belong, or exploits them politically to reach one's political goal. This was the road chosen by John Howard's conservative side of politics.

Osama is coming to get you! Debating Australian multiculturalism after September 11

Given the nature of the White paranoia that has shaped Australia's debates about multiculturalism, these debates have always centred around the construction of an 'un-integrated other' and the subsequent debating of the necessity, possibility and desirability of their integration. Australia's historically favourite 'other' has always been 'the Asians'. The White Australia Policy was designed with 'Asians' in mind, and in 1996 Pauline Hanson was still being swamped by 'Asians'. In the last couple of years, however, probably to the relief of 'Asians', White paranoia has shifted its gaze towards

a more global threat: 'Muslims' and 'Islam'.

The emergence of the Muslim as the Australian 'other' did not really begin until the Gulf War, although Australian culture shares with other Western cultures the 'orientalist' legacy of colonialism. Since the late 1990s the Muslims have become the main recipients of the 'problems with multiculturalism' discourses.

The debate began to seriously heat up around the topic of 'ethnicity and crime', due to a police/media construction of a 'Lebanese ethnic gangs' problem in Lebanese Muslim suburbs (these are usually suburbs where up to 20 per cent of the population is of Arabic-speaking background). The debate became particularly intensified with reports of 'Lebanese gangs' target-raping Anglo-Australian girls. This led to a 'they're raping our daughters'-type debate in which all Lebanese/Arabs/Muslims became the new threat to Australia's Western civilisation.

Adding fuel to the 'Muslim question' was the debate around Australia's treatment of asylum seekers, who are mainly Muslim. This was highlighted by the *Tampa* affair, in which Afghan asylum seekers rescued by a Norwegian ship were refused the right to have their claims for refugee status assessed on Australian soil. To win the ideological battle against those claiming that the government was acting inhumanely, the Minister of Immigration and the Prime Minister began to actively promote the idea that the asylum seekers might be criminals and that they were doing unspeakable things to their children, such as starving them and throwing them into the sea, in order to win the right to seek asylum here. This led to the usual endless sessions of debate in which paranoia ruled and everyone on the other side was a member of the treacherous club of intellectual elites.

September 11 sealed the position of the Muslim as the un-questionable other in Australia today. If one listens to – and believes – the now regularly reported musings of the White paranoid mind, Muslims are capable of doing everything that Asians did and more (such as committing terrorist acts). Muslims are moved by a single essence, and whenever one of them does something good he or she is unusual. Whenever one of them does something bad, he or she is proof that all of them are bound to do it sooner or later. This is unlike 'us', of course: when one of us does something bad, he or she is a bad apple, and when one of us does something we are proud of, he or she is the proof that we are all great.

According to this logic, Muslims are a community of people always predisposed towards crime, rape, illegal entry to Australia

and terrorism. And, interestingly, Australia declared itself a possible victim of terrorism, even though it is most probable that not many terrorists training with Osama bin Laden would know it exists! Amazingly, the names of the prominent people and journalists now expressing expert opinions on Lebanese and Arab culture in the pages of the newspapers are the same ones who thrilled us with their expertise on the Asian threat sometime during the last 15 years or so. Suddenly, they are exhibiting their genius again, with virtuoso knowledge of the threatening nature of Islamic culture. This is unlike the 'elitist intellectuals', who are obviously struggling to keep up with reality. They are shown to not know much and are now regularly accused of the revived McCarthyist crime of being 'anti-American'.

The rise of Australian fundamentalism: reflections on the rule of Ayatollah Johnny

Introduction

To say that John Howard is on the extreme right of the Liberal Party, or that he represents a conservative cultural backlash against what he and his supporters perceive as the excesses of support for multiculturalism and for Indigenous rights exhibited by his predecessor, would hardly be controversial. But to talk about 'fundamentalism' would easily lead to one being accused of being too rhetorical and getting too carried away, or simply of just exaggerating in order to score political points. I don't mind some political point scoring. However, in this chapter, I'd like to initiate the beginning of an analytical claim that there are important elements of John Howard's politics that can be characterised as fundamentalist and, just as importantly, that his fundamentalism is beginning to mark our political culture in a significantly negative way.

In the Western world, the concept of 'fundamentalism' is too easily linked with the 'irrational' and despotic movements whose highly dramatic visuals filled the newspapers and televisions of the late 20th century. To speak of fundamentalism is to almost inevitably conjure up images of politicised religious groupings with affectively charged members marching down the streets bent on reintroducing pre-modern cultural forms into our postmodernity. The 'Muslim fundamentalist mob' has pride of place in this imaginary. But there is also room for wild 'Orthodox Jewish

settlers' and marginal groupings of Western religious zealots such as the 'Christian fundamentalists'. While there is no doubt that these forms of politics have been historically associated with fundamentalist politics, the link is not a necessary one. There is nothing, logically speaking, that should stop us conceiving of a rational/bureaucratic/democratic politics as being animated by a fundamentalist ideology.

John Howard and the essence of being Australian

Looking at the political speeches made by parliamentarians of both sides in the last decade, none has used the notion of 'Australian values' as much as Howard, and none has been as systematic as he is in deploying it. No one positions it as the cornerstone of a holistic political vision of Australia in the way he does. Though such a belief is not in itself sufficient to turn someone into a fundamentalist, it is a necessary beginning. The most basic feature of all fundamentalist ideologies is the belief in the existence of a social essence ('fundamental' values and beliefs), of which a national society is but an expression.

Whether addressing schoolchildren or elderly Australians, business groups or immigrant associations, whether speaking on reconciliation or on Australia's relations with Asia, John Howard's political discourse is always woven around an explicit notion of Australian values. These values are Australian in a 'strong' sense: they differentiate Australians from other people in the world. They trace what Howard considers a unique 'Australian way'.

What are these Australian values? There are some values that are constant in the Prime Ministerial discourse, and some that come and go. Just looking at the speeches of 1998 offers us an incredible array of 'values'. In his Australia Day speech for that year Howard informed us that 'the ethnic diversity and tolerance of our community gives Australia a unique standing in the world. This status is underpinned by the traditional Australian values of persistence, mateship, voluntary effort and optimism.'[1]   In an address to the Jewish community in Sydney we heard another set of values:

A great strength of the Jewish community has been the promotion of genuine Australian values common to all of us:

- the primacy of family life and its importance in building strong and enduring communities;

- the value of enterprise, the work ethic and reward for effort; and

- the active recognition of the obligation to give back where benefit has been received (10 March 1998, Israel's 50th birthday celebration dinner, Sydney).

At his speech for the reconciliation summit a couple more values were added: 'the values of decency, tolerance, fairness and down-to-earth common sense' (26 May 1997, The Australian Reconciliation Convention, Melbourne). When he was talking to high school students these values were perceived to be 'the traditions of mateship, the tradition of treating people fairly on the basis of their contribution to society' (10 July 1998, St Paul's School, Queensland). In a speech to the Federation of Indian Associations Howard stressed 'the importance within the Australian community of ... those enduring Australian values of tolerance and harmony' (15 August 1998, Federation of Indian Associations Dinner, Melbourne). In addressing a group of Australian businesses, he urged his audience 'to hang on to those Australian values of fairness and tolerance and equality and mateship' (8 October 1998, Australian Business Limited Annual Dinner, Sydney).

While, as already argued, the belief in 'national values' does not, in itself, set someone on the road to fundamentalism, the belief that these values constitute a causal essence firmly points them in that direction. This is the belief that these values are a trans-historical unchanging core which is almost automatically espoused by good nationals and is responsible for giving society its enduring character amidst all the changes it can experience. There is little doubt that for John Howard, 'Australian values' are such a trans-historical essence. This theme is most fully developed in his address to the students of St Paul's School:

> I remember when I left school ... the Australia that I lived in in 1956 was a wonderful country ... it's important to understand that there are some things about our country that don't change, and shouldn't change, and we should fight hard to stop changing.
>
> ... There are certain enduring Australian values that I still identify and are still as strong and as worthy and as valuable to us as Australians as they were when I left Canterbury Boys High School in Sydney in 1956.
>
> ... There is that continuity, that golden thread of Australian values that hasn't changed.
>
> And in turn, the Australia that your children will inherit when they leave school will also be different. But there will be a continuity,

there will be a golden thread of basic Australian values that will be there (10 July 1998, St Paul's School, Queensland).

'Australian values' existed considerably further back in history, it seems. Howard sees Australia as a country that has managed to 'preserve a core set of Australian values that maintain a long continuity of values connecting us now, in the last years of the 20th century, with the early beginnings of the Australian Federation almost 100 years ago' (24 July 1998, Chinese Chamber of Commerce, Perth). In fact some of the values go back even further than that: 'We are, as all of you know, a projection of Western civilisation in this part of the world. We have inherited the great European values of liberal democracy.' These 'enduring Australian values' are not only 'important today' but 'will continue to be important into the future' (8 October 1998, Australian Business Limited, Sydney).

'Values' for Howard constitute an 'essence' in two ways: this essence is a trans-historical reality and, as it is in all fundamentalist ideologies, a causal force. Fundamentalism always offers a classically *idealist* conception of national society, in the useful Marxist meaning of the term. Forget about economic relations, forget about power relations and forget about history; a nation is merely an expression of the set of trans-historical values and beliefs upheld by its individual nationals. The values are never imagined to be contradictory. Consequently, the nation which expresses its values well is always 'united' by those values. Fundamentalism offers a normative conception of society as a coherent projection of its values. Any opposing values are by definition opposed to the national interest. Howard refers to 'the great Australian values that bind us together' and about being 'united' by 'a common love of Australian values'.

It is easy to give an intellectualised critique of this discourse of values. Its incoherence and illogical assumptions are reasonably obvious. This is the case in regard to specific values – what does it mean to say that 'ethnic diversity' is a value, for instance – and in regard to the whole notion of a national people having and sharing distinguishing trans-historical values. The point is not, of course, that there are no such things as distinct and recognisable Australian cultural traditions. To say that democracy and tolerance or even decency have flourished particularly well in Australia because of the way Australia has evolved historically, and because of the resources it has managed to control, is one thing. But to

transform these values into *distinguishing values*, something Australians are more committed to than other people are, is not tenable.

The thing to note about Howard's values is their current universality. Everyone in the world today would like to share such values. What does it mean to say that decency, or commitment to democracy, or tolerance, are *specifically* Australian values? It means making the ludicrous claim that other people in the world are less committed to them or actually committed to opposing values: that there are people who actually value intolerance, who are committed to being indecent and who, when faced with democracy, freak out and try very hard to change it because it does not fit with their values! Or better still, that there are Prime Ministers who go to Parliament and say 'My fellow non-citizens, we have had yet another great year of living up to our principles of being totally off the air (as opposed to Howard's 'Australian value' of 'being down to earth'), and we have successfully lived up to the principles of intolerance, disharmony, despotism and indecency that we have valued so much throughout the ages and that we hope to continue to value in the future.' One has to be a lunatic fringe racist to believe that groups of people who live in non-democratic, or war-torn, societies do so because it corresponds to their cultural values. I am not saying, of course, that Howard is a member of a lunatic racist fringe. I am simply saying that he has not caught up with the intellectual implications of his discourse of value. Any member of the intellectual elite could tell Howard this, but we know that he does not like or keep such company.

But here we also come to the limits of an intellectualist critique. Howard is making these statements not as an intellectual, but as a politician. A critique of his politics of values has to move beyond a critique of their internal logic to a critique of the specific political effects and ramifications of his pronouncements.

Essence War: on the archaeological fundamentalism of John Howard

A fundamentalist belief in causal trans-historical core values need two crucial supplements to transform it into a *political ideology* – that is, for it to be the basis of a political project: first, there needs to be a belief that society and its people are drifting or have drifted away from the core and that there is a need to bring them 'back'. Like all nationalists, fundamentalists who believe that their society is unproblematically living according to the fundamentals simply

eradicate their very reason to exist as political subjects. There is 1
fundamentalist politics without fundamentalist whingeing abou
some corruption of the core values.   o

Second, there needs to be a conviction that these fundamental¹
are Good. This might sound like stating the obvious, but it is
necessary to state it clearly. For fundamentalist politics is always
morally driven. The fundamentals are not pursued just because
they are 'fundamental'; they are also pursued because they are
worthy of being pursued. To recover them is to recover a good
moral society. And since society is but the expression of the beliefs
of its people, fundamentalist politics is always about recovering
the Good people who are, or the Goodness within people that is,
silenced/oppressed/repressed by the Bad people.

In most fundamentalisms, the Good fundamentals are lost in the
past, so the political aim is to recover them from the past and re-
inject them into the present. Such fundamentalism can be described
as historical in that it looks to the past for inspiration. Unlike what
some commentators have intimated, Howard's fundamentalism
does not include such a nostalgic seeking for the past. This is not
because he does not believe that the past embodied Australian
values more than the present; it is because he believes that the
present embodies Australian values as well. What is the problem
then, as he sees it? The problem is that this 'truth/reality' has
been covered up. It is no longer as apparent as it used to be,
because of the politics of armies of negative intellectuals and Labor
party politicians and the anti-Australian values they choose to
emphasise.

This is where Howard's Bad people, the 'black armband'
intellectuals and the politicians inspired by them, come into the
picture. They are the people who, he claims, concentrate on the
Bad things that Australians have done and try to imply that
Australians are essentially Bad rather than Good:

> This 'black armband' view of our past reflects a belief that most
> Australian history since 1788 has been little more than a disgraceful
> story of imperialism, exploitation, racism, sexism and other forms
> of discrimination.
>
> I take a different view. I believe that the balance sheet of our
> history is one of heroic achievement and that we have achieved much
> more as a nation of which we can be proud than of which we should
> be ashamed (18 November 1996, Sir Robert Menzies Lecture).

Furthermore, there are people out there living the Australian way – as it has been initially projected by Western civilisation, of course – but their important presence has been buried by the emphasis on multiculturalism, Asia and Aboriginal land rights. Howard wants to bring back to light – not back from the past – these core values and the people living by them. Unlike the classical historical fundamentalism, Howard's is an archaeological fundamentalism. It is a fundamentalism of recovery and restoration, and it is both social and psychological restoration. For it is not just the reality of the enduring presence of Australian values that has been threatened by the negative politicians and intellectuals. The latter are also propagators of guilt, and one of the important things that needs to be restored is the pride that people ought to feel when they reflect on Australia's essential goodness.

We are right to be proud of having built one of the most prosperous, most egalitarian and fairest societies in the world.

We are right to be proud of our tradition of mateship in both peace and war.

We are right to be proud of living in one of the world's oldest continuous democracies (Sir Robert Menzies Lecture).

Howard therefore sees himself as engaged in an Essence War with those intellectuals (particularly historians) and politicians who are always concentrating on the Bad aspects of Australian history and society. They pick up on Bad deeds and then pronounce Australians essentially Bad. He picks up on Good deeds and pronounces Australians essentially Good. But this does not lead Howard into relativism. He believes that his claim that the essence is Good is a superior claim, and that his vision of Australia is a more objective one:

The attempted re-writing of Australian political history over recent years by our political opponents should not be countered by an equally politicised re-writing to redress the balance. What is needed is a sense of balance, objectivity and honesty in drawing lessons from our past (Sir Robert Menzies Lecture).

Constructing the 'essentially good Australian' from such past lessons reveals some of the more comic elements of Howard's fundamentalism. But it also points to some of its more detrimental

effects so far. It signals the rise of an unprecedented political narcissism: a numb and dumb sense of self-satisfaction with the national self and a refusal to hear any voice other than one's own.

Fundamentalism and the rise of political narcissism

In a somewhat famous 1995 speech on 'Politics and Patriotism: A reflection on the national identity debate', Howard, while still opposition leader, argued:

> Inclusion rather than exclusion is also an essential part of the Australian identity. It is a value which featured prominently in pioneering days, although tragically it didn't extend to [the] Aboriginal. Nor was it much in evidence during the gold rushes.

The logic of detecting the essential goodness of Australians here is unbeatable. It goes something like this. Essentially we are Good (we like inclusion). It is true that when we were Good we weren't Good towards everyone (we didn't include Aboriginal people). It is also true that sometimes we were Bad rather than Good (we weren't very inclusive during the goldrushes). But this shouldn't detract from the fact that we are essentially Good (we are essentially inclusive).

This has been the general structure of Howard's argument throughout: we are realists. We recognise that we Australians have done good things and bad things. But the bad things we have done are conjunctural; we need not forget that we are essentially Good. Detecting the Good essence becomes an exercise in emphasising the Good deeds of Australians and silencing those who want to emphasise the Bad deeds. Howard's fundamentalism encourages a discourse of confirmation rather than a reflexive critical discourse. This has developed into a pathological inability to listen to any voice other than one's own.

Generally speaking, fundamentalist politics, while spending considerable effort on asserting the enduring nature of identity, do not encourage a critical reflexivity concerning such an identity. Since the self knows its essence, the point is more how to exercise and practise such an essence. As Howard has forcefully put it: 'You don't indulge in some kind of intellectual exercise in trying to enumerate Australian qualities and Australian values, you practise them' (Chinese Chamber of Commerce).

Reflexive critique is *a priori* negative, for it implies a questioning of the self and, thus, the possibility of changing the self.

Fundamentalism is more concerned with the never-changing nature of the Good self. Indeed, why change such a good thing? We simply need to remember the Good self we are and act accordingly. Critical reflexivity is explicitly dismissed by Howard as 'navel-gazing':

We spend an enormous amount of time in this country navel-gazing about what kind of society we are. It seems that, on some occasions, that (sic) we engage in a form of public fretting about what it really means to be an Australian. It always strikes me as rather unnecessary and rather odd and rather unproductive ... You don't write down what it means to be an Australian. You feel what it means to be an Australian (Chinese Chamber of Commerce).

While anti-navel-gazing is common to all fundamentalist ideologies, and commonly leads to forms of political narcissism, Howard's variety has been particularly virulent because of its combination with the pseudo-realism of the 'we have been Bad but we are essentially Good' theme analysed above. In this political vision, the self 'courageously' admits the wrongs of the past only to then reassert its fundamental Goodness; the self is something of a know-all, but a know-all which has already submitted itself to self-criticism. It thus manages to immunise itself against any critical voice other than itself: 'I don't need someone else to tell me about my wrongs. I've already admitted them, but you're making too much of them.' Thus any voice that attempts to *insist* that the misdeeds committed in Australia's past and present cannot be so easily dismissed is immediately considered a Bad voice. This is the voice of the *Bad other*, the one hell-bent on undermining the essential Goodness of Australia and the pride of its people.

If someone emphasises racism, the response is that we have been essentially non-racist. If someone emphasises poverty, our response is that we have been essentially a 'class-free' society. And as happened lately, if someone emphasises our bad treatment of refugee claimants, our response is that we have been essentially a welcoming country. Anyone who tries to emphasise otherwise is on the side of the *Bad other*. This was to be the fate of the United Nations in this pathetic display of narcissism: don't tell us we are bad – we are essentially good. Go and find someone really bad and tell them they are bad.

Perhaps one of the most extraordinary exemplifications of this pathology has been Phillip Ruddock's response to a government-funded organisation speaking on behalf of the refugees and

criticising the government's handling of the detained asylum seekers. Threatening to withdraw their funding, Ruddock's incredible statement was: 'We pay them to know better.'

One has to notice that if one is paying someone to know better, this assumes one does not know everything oneself. But Ruddock's statement assumes that 'we' Australians already know better, since we are capable of judging whether 'better' really *is* better. If that is the case, why pay them at all? Ruddock here exhibits the classical symptoms of this narcissistic pathology: a delusional sense of knowing all one needs to know and a complete inability to tolerate anything other than a discourse of confirmation of one's point of view.

Of course the question in relation to the refugee organisation is not one of 'knowing better' – it is one of knowing *differently*. The organisation is not paid to 'know better', but to put the position from the refugee claimants' point of view. Our capacity to finance and listen to such organisations is linked to our capacity to hear a view other than our own. It is precisely this narcissistic failing, characteristic of our current political culture, that was confirmed in Ruddock's discourse.

Polluting memories: migration and colonial responsibility in Australia[1]

Introduction

The public recognition of the atrocities committed against Australia's Indigenous people has led to political debates regarding how to act towards healing the wounds inflicted on them. The various calls to take responsibility for acts that took place in the past, acts which today's citizens were not directly involved in, invariably advocate forms of national participation and belonging that go beyond the more instrumental conceptions of citizenship that are usual in the public arena. This becomes fertile ground in which political philosophers can consider the deeper meanings of citizenship, national identity, and belonging.

In this chapter, I review some of the issues concerning national memory and national responsibility that have arisen in this debate and examine the way notions of participation and national belonging implicitly or explicitly underlie them. I then move to examine the way postwar migrant participation and responsibility have been conceived within this debate, particularly the question of whether or not, and how, migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds should shoulder some responsibility for what happened at a time when neither they nor their ancestors lived in Australia. I will critically examine the answers given to this question and the way they can help us reformulate our conceptions of the meaning and significance of participatory belonging.

A brief introduction to the history of a 'memory war'

In 1992 the High Court of Australia decided in favour of a group of Indigenous people claiming to be the original owners of land formally under the control of the state of Queensland in the northeast of Australia.[2] The group was led by a man called Eddie Mabo, and the decision became popularly known as 'the Mabo decision' or simply 'Mabo'.

The Mabo decision was the first Australian official/judicial acknowledgement of a lawful ownership of land by Indigenous people before the British colonisation of Australia. In a historical precursor of the famous Zionist slogan that accompanied the settlement of Palestine – 'A land without people for a people without a land' – the colonisation of Australia occurred under the legal aegis of what was known as *terra nullius*. This was the claim that at the time of the early settlement of Australia British eyes could not discern any traces of an appropriation of the land by Aboriginal people (for example, there were no recognisable housing or agricultural activities).[3] As such, the land was considered 'up for grabs' and was made legally so – a land without people for a people with plenty of land, on that particular occasion.[4]

In what remains a legally controversial finding, the High Court judges did not only rule that the land in the particular claim being considered was not *terra nullius*. They asserted that their ruling had implications for the relationship of Indigenous people to the land throughout the nation. Furthermore, some of the judges (Justices Deane and Gaudron), in later comments, moved into moral territory, arguing that the practices of dispossession that emanated from the *terra nullius* principle 'constitute the darkest aspect in the history of this nation'. And, they added, 'The nation as a whole must remain diminished unless and until there is an acknowledgment of, and a retreat from, those past injustices.'[5]

In this sense, 'Mabo' aimed at fostering a new sense of caring about the nation, of participatory belonging, grounded in the willingness of today's citizens and their national representatives to acknowledge and address injustices that occurred during Australia's colonial past and that were now being recognised as particularly shameful.

It must be stressed that these calls, and the creation of this 'new' memory, were also, if not primarily, inspired by the growing political strength and the local and international activism of the Indigenous people themselves. Of equal importance was some

brilliant, straightforwardly empirical work by some Australian historians. Such works helped to make common knowledge among the non-Indigenous population what had so far been hidden and contested. They emphasised to a wider public that Australia's settlement was far from being the kind of settlement portrayed in the majority of the school history books produced in the 1950s and 1960s. The only significant hardships discussed in those texts were the hardships of the penal system and of the settlers' confrontation with an undomesticated natural environment. Instead, the newer critical historiography demonstrated the degree to which that settlement of Australia involved the violent appropriation of the land and the subjugation of a whole people. It also showed that those people whose land was being appropriated countered this violent colonisation with an equally violent resistance, including forms of guerilla warfare (see, in particular, Reynolds 1981).[6]

Indigenous struggles, the diffusion of the new critical historiography, and 'Mabo' all worked together to create an important cultural transformation within Australia. For the first time, talking about 'the British invasion of Australia' no longer positioned the speaker on the radical fringe. The histories of this invasion were being slowly transformed from marginal, radical or academic topics to a quasi-official discourse competing for the prized status of 'public truth'.

The newly acquired status of this version of colonial history, reasonably encouraged by the then sympathetic Labor government of Paul Keating (1992–96), led to a culturally conservative backlash against what was described as a 'black armband' view of history. This was a history, the conservative critics argued, that focused on denigrating the achievements of the early colonists. Yet it was those achievements that led to the building of the prosperous democratic nation that Australia has become. As such, these achievements of early colonists should not be downplayed in favour of a history of violence that was at best marginal, and was now being highly exaggerated. Australia's history, according to conservative critics, should inspire pride in Australians rather than shame.

By the mid-1990s Australia was witnessing a full-blown 'memory war' over its violent colonial past. The election of a Liberal Party/National Party government in 1996, led by what (even by Liberal Party standards) was an unusually culturally conservative politician, John Howard, gave an important boost to the forces of cultural restoration.[7]

It was in such a climate that the Human Rights and Equal

Opportunity Commission report, *Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families*, appeared. The report detailed one of the most inhumane practices that accompanied colonisation, a practice that epitomised the colonisers' racist/genocidal behaviour towards Indigenous people and Indigenous culture. This was the practice of taking Indigenous children, particularly those categorised as 'half-caste,' away[8] from their parents, often forcibly removing them from the arms of their mothers, and placing them under the foster care of white parents or white institutions in order to 'assimilate' them. The children became known as 'the stolen generation'. The report was based on testimonies from members of this stolen generation.[9]

Like the discourse surrounding the Mabo High Court decision before it, the report did not call only for reparations for the particular Indigenous individuals concerned; it saw the issue as something diminishing the nation as a whole. Thus it called for more nationally encompassing symbolic measures, such as a national 'Sorry Day'. It also recommended that State and Federal parliaments, along with other institutions such as churches and the police forces, acknowledge the responsibility of their predecessors for these practices of forcible removal. It urged such institutions to consult with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (the official body representing Indigenous people) on the best way to offer a formal apology.[10]

This led to a considerable shift in the significance and intensity of the memory war that was now well under way. For if Mabo triggered a debate about historical responsibility for events that occurred more than 200 years ago, here was a report that brought home the fact that colonial history was still being lived in the 1960s. For many Australians, this was the first time they understood that brutal forms of colonial racism had still been in existence in their own lifetime. And while there were no Indigenous people left to tell stories of how they felt when their land was directly taken away, there were still quite a few who could publicly remember what it was like to be taken away in a truck with your mother running and wailing after you, or what it was like to have 'the man of the house' where you've been sent to work come and 'visit' you in the middle of the night. Listening to people speaking their memories of these lived events could not but have a more urgent moral intensity than reading tales of atrocity from a more distant past.

Consequently, the *Bringing Them Home* report added a further dimension and a greater intensity to the debate about the significance of colonial memory in Australia's history and its present.[11] Of particular importance was the report's significance in defining the kind of citizenship and participatory belonging required from non-Indigenous Australians if they were to address and rectify the injustices of the past. For while the occurrence of colonial violence was no longer seriously contested, it was its significance, particularly the extent to which today's Australians ought to be considered responsible and accountable for it, that became the object of an important struggle.

The complexity of the debate on participatory belonging and responsibility for the past lies in the way it intimately links issues of national identity with the highly abstract issues of commitment to justice for deeds one does not necessarily feel personally responsible for. Different ways of thinking about the significance of the colonial past translate into different ways of conceiving one's own intimate national identity. Different ways of conceiving what constitutes justice in the present for Australia's Indigenous people lead to different ways of conceiving who ought to be affectively and practically implicated in the delivery of such justice. The question of the migrant's relationship to such processes only complicates matters further. Is there a difference between the migrant saying 'these events do not concern me' and the established Australian citizen saying the same thing, but on different grounds? Can a migrant relate affectively to a past that is not his or her own? Can a migrant ever genuinely care for the nation without such an identification with its past? Can he or she ever experience the same intense sense of participatory belonging that people who are assumed to identify more fully with the past feel?

Philosophy, national memory and national responsibility

One of the interesting features of the Australian political scene has been the way the memory war described above has constituted a fertile ground for the Australian chapter of the international revival of the debate on moral and political philosophy. This debate began with the publication[12] of John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice*[12] and was continued by the critical responses it generated in the following decades.[13] In an attempt to untangle the complexities of the situation, Australia has recently witnessed the production of a relatively large body of philosophical writing asking questions such as: how do liberal conceptions of justice relate to issues of past

injustices, cultural difference and colonialism? What respon-
sibilities do citizens have towards the past? What constitutes justice
in relation to Australia's Indigenous population?

Paul Patton has presented one of the clearest accounts of how
the concept of justice has fared in relation to the Mabo judgement,
from a philosophical standpoint. He argues that the popular
reactions to the Mabo judgement are an expression of three
competing intuitions about justice: equal treatment, reparation,
and recognition of the other. He suggests that the tensions around
the judgement are a reflection of a tension among these ideas of
justice as they are present within it.[14]

Insofar as equal treatment is concerned, the liberal defenders of
Mabo (including some of the judges who delivered the judgement)
have argued that the recognition of Aboriginal land rights is merely
a recognition that they have an equal right to property, something
that has been previously denied them. But the conservative
interpretation of this law and the attack on Mabo's claim to pro-
vide justice in the form of equal treatment is not an ungrounded
one. It is equally based on an intuition about justice. What
conservatives argue is that Mabo clearly invites a situation where
common law recognises a form of property right that is not
available to all citizens, since Indigenous people, alone among
Australia's citizens, can lay claim to native title. This, Patton points
out, challenges Rawls' liberal notion of justice based on an identity
of rights for all citizens.[15]

As to reparation, Patton points out that: 'it is common place to
assert that the past cannot be changed and that what is done is
done. But there is still an important strand of thinking about justice
which says that it should involve reparation for past injustices.'[16]
Agreeing with an article by Jeremy Waldron,[17] Patton stresses that
'the aim of such reparation is not to undo past wrongs but to go
some way towards removing their consequences and re-
establishing what would have been the case if those injustices had
not been perpetrated'.[18]

Finally, as far as the recognition of the other is concerned, Patton
explains that:

> Here, the underlying intuition is that justice requires the recognition
> of the other as other, that it requires giving what is due to others in
> accordance with their conceptions of right and not simply in the
> terms of the one giving or in those of a supposedly neutral third
> party.[19]

These intuitions, as Patton shows and as we shall see later, are fraught with contradictions. Suffice it to say at this point that they form the implicit background for the most disputed issue of all, the issue of responsibility.

The differences around this issue are epitomised by the different positions taken by Paul Keating, the Prime Minister and leader of the Labor Party until 1996, and John Howard, the conservative leader of the Liberal Party who followed him as Prime Minister. Keating was a strong supporter of the Mabo decision and advocated a full acknowledgement of the current generations' responsibility for the past as part and parcel of a process of reconciliation with the Indigenous people. For Keating:

... the starting point might be to recognise that the problem starts with us non-Aboriginal Australians. It begins, I think, with that act of recognition. Recognition that it was we who did the dispossessing. We took the traditional lands and smashed the traditional way of life. We brought the diseases. The alcohol. We committed the murders. We took the children from their mothers. We practised discrimination and exclusion.[20]

John Howard, on the other hand, believes that the best way to deal with such a past is to forget it and concentrate on present socioeconomic injustices. When asked to apologise in the name of the nation for the kind of actions described in *Bringing Them Home*, John Howard stated that he could not apologise in his capacity as Prime Minister. Instead, he offered his personal apology. As one of his ministers explained: 'The government does not support an official national apology. Such an apology could imply that present generations are in some way responsible and accountable for the actions of earlier generations.'[21]

Generally speaking, it would be fair to say that Paul Keating was far more inclined to help foster the climate of reconciliation advocated by the High Court judges and, later, the writers of the *Bringing Them Home* report. And, not surprisingly, given their general liberal disposition, philosophers and other academics have also tended to support the Keating position and see in John Howard's reluctance to apologise a regressive step, if not an outright continuation of colonial racism.

My moral position does not differ much from such academics on this question. I will, however, argue that the Keating position raises many more difficulties than have been acknowledged by the

advocates of a 'national apology'. These difficulties remain largely unnoticed and unexamined in the attempts to provide philosophical groundings for this position. In what follows, I look at two recent philosophical works that have tackled this question and see how they are weakened by their inability to notice, let alone deal with, these difficulties. I will then show that these difficulties are important enough to make it impossible to think through migrant participatory belonging without attempting to confront them.

Ross Poole, in a recent work that is commendable for the clarity and thoroughness with which it tackles the issues of nationalism and identity in general and then brings them to bear on the issues arising in the Australian situation, has strongly argued the case for linking national memory with national identity and national responsibility. This is how he formulates the question of responsibility:

> If in virtue of their history and current position, Aboriginal people have certain rights, it is important to ask: Who do they have rights against? The usual and I think the correct answer to this question is: non-Aboriginal Australians. But it is important to ask why this should be so. After all, most contemporary Australians will never themselves have acted with the intention of harming Aborigines, and most of the worst atrocities were committed in the past. By what line of inheritance do contemporary Australians inherit the sins of the predecessors? And which contemporary Australians? Is it only those of us of Anglo-Celtic stock whose ancestors came to Australia in the nineteenth century? Should we exclude those recent immigrants, especially those whose background is free from the taints of European colonialism and imperialism? And what of those Australians whose ancestors had no choice in the decision to migrate, but were brought over as convicts?[22]

Poole develops his argument through an interpretation of the relation between identity and memory that is based on the work of John Locke and Friedrich Nietzsche. He emphasises Locke's idea that responsibility for the past does not result from a mere remembering of the past, but from an identification with the subject performing the remembered act. It is because of this identification, a kind of appropriation of past actions, that 'present feelings of pride, shame, guilt, remorse, pleasure, obligation are usually present and appropriate' and that people can be held responsible for the past.[23]

Poole further develops the notion of an identity formed through the appropriation of the past through Nietzsche's well-known proposition that 'to breed an animal with the right to make promises – is not this the paradoxical task that nature has set itself in the case of man?'[24] He argues that for Nietzsche (and in this he interprets him as being very similar to Locke), 'we learn to remember what we have done, not merely in the sense that certain acts remain present to consciousness, but because we identify ourselves with the self that performed those acts'.[25]

But for Nietzsche, memory is not somehow there to appropriate. A memory has to be made, as he put it. With Nietzsche a new dimension emerges when we learn to appropriate the past as our particular past. For it also means that we recognise our promises and develop what we come to call our conscience. As Poole explains, 'We were that self which promised, its will is our will, and the suffering it would endure with the failure of its projects is our suffering.'[26] Thus for Poole, 'memory and anticipation are not merely modes of cognitive access to what we did in the past and will do in the future, but are the very forms through which our identity is constructed'.[27]

It is with the help of this construct that he reaches his conception of how national identity, national memory and responsibility relate. It is worth quoting from his argument at length:

A national identity involves, not just a sense of place, but a sense of history. The history constitutes the national memory, and it provides a way of locating those who share that identity within a historical community. The history is not given, but subject to debate and reinterpretation. For example, Australians of earlier generations grew up with a history of British achievements, the European 'discovery' and 'exploration' of Australia, the trials and triumphs of the early settlers, and so on. It was a history in which Aboriginals were marginal or absent. But this history has been and is being rewritten. It is now recognised that Australia did not come into existence with European discovery; that Aboriginal cultures and ways of life had existed for millennia; that Aboriginal practices had formed the land which was to be appropriated and exploited by the European immigrants; and that Aborigines had with flair and courage resisted White advances into their country. Australian history is now coming to terms with the suffering, destruction and human tragedy consequent upon the European settlement of Australia. The details of this history may be debated, but it cannot

be disavowed. Acquiring a national identity is a way of acquiring that history and the rights and the responsibilities which go with it. The responsibility to come to terms with the Australian past is a morally inescapable component of what it is to be Australian.[28]

The second philosophical work I want to consider here is Moira Gatens and Genevieve Lloyd's *Collective Imaginings: Spinoza, Past and Present*.[29] Despite Ross Poole's materialist disposition, his conceptualisation of appropriative memory seems to make remembering and responsibility the result of an act of free will by a subject who chooses to take responsibility for the past. Gatens and Lloyd's Spinoza allows for a somewhat more materialist analysis, where the communal imagining of the past is a necessity, produced through the material interconnection between the past and the present.

Most important for them are the ramifications of Spinoza's conception of the individual as the product of social relations rather than an *a priori* starting point. As they put it:

Our understanding of responsibility is restrained by thinking of individuals as bordered territories, firmly separated from others in such a way that the issue of where the responsibility lies is always in principle determinable. Spinoza's treatment of individuality – especially that aspect of it which Balibar terms 'transindividuality' – gives us insight into the nexus between individual and collective identity ... It can help us understand something which otherwise ... can seem puzzling and inappropriate: that individuals can take responsibility for what they have not themselves done.[30]

This is a remarkable work in its capacity, like previous works by these two philosophers, to make Spinoza appear a highly relevant avant-garde contemporary. More specifically, here, Spinoza's idea is convincingly presented as a complement to Hannah Arendt's version of collective responsibility. For Arendt, Gatens and Lloyd point out, 'we are appropriately held responsible for things we have not ourselves done where the reason for our responsibility is our membership in a group which no voluntary act of ours can dissolve ...'[31] In *The Human Condition*,[32] Arendt conceptualises this involuntary membership with the help of the Augustinian concept of 'natality'. Gatens and Lloyd observe that in the case of Arendt, the 'beginning of an individual self as a bearer of responsibility is here construed in terms of entry into a

community rather than in terms of the physical fact of birth – an initiation into language and socially meaningful action'.[33] It is here that Spinoza's work is most useful:

> Spinoza's treatment of individuality can offer here a way of thinking of individual selfhood which will complement the strength and clarify the limitations of Arendt's political version of collective responsibility.
>
> ...[For Spinoza] The modification of our own bodies by others is constitutive of our determinate individuality, as well as causally determining what we do in the here and now. The implication of memory and imagination in these determining processes means that our past is not a shadowy unreal being of thought which we can conjure up or away at will. It is here in our present – in the modifications which stay with us in the ongoing bodily awareness which makes us what we are.[34]

This bodily awareness is part of what Spinoza calls 'the imaginary', and it is through it that 'we' come to terms with ourselves as members of historical communities materially linked to a past for which we assume responsibility. This Spinozist conception of the imaginary informs Gatens and Lloyd's commentary on the Mabo case.

> The Mabo judgement disturbed not only mining, farming and other financial interests of present-day non-Indigenous Australians, it also severely disturbed the social imaginary which grounds the 'we' of contemporary Australian identity. This imaginary is the site and cause of direct and indirect harms experienced by Indigenous Australians. No amount of redistribution of goods, compensatory financial arrangements, or even the return to the land will cancel or alleviate the past and present effects of the European imaginary on Indigenous peoples. This is not an argument against redistribution, compensation or the return of land. Rather, these measures, though necessary, are far from sufficient. It is here that the 'we' of Keating's speech is crucial. Who – if not we – possesses the capacity to accept responsibility for the harmful effects on others of the social imaginaries which we inhabit and which have formed us as the types of persons we are? Responsibility for our social imaginary can only be a collective responsibility that 'we' take up toward the past.[35]

The affinity between Spinoza and Nietzsche translates into an affinity between the positions of Poole and of Gatens and Lloyd.

Both arguments provide excellent groundings for the idea that those who relate materially and imaginatively to the history of the appropriation of Australia from the Indigenous population ought to feel responsible for the injustices caused by this appropriation. I would like to argue, however, that they both suffer, very directly in the case of Gatens and Lloyd, from what I will call the undeconstructed colonial effect of Keating's 'we'.

As I will now argue, both theorisations of national responsibility are considerably weakened because despite their awareness of national multiplicity, at the point of conceiving the 'apologising national subject', they implicitly assume a non-contradictory national imaginary from which 'we' ought to relate to the past. It is that point which also weakens the position of all those who take Keating's 'We took the lands ... We committed the murders ... We took the children' speech, quoted above, as the example of what a national apology should entail.

Australia's impossible national memory

Let us begin by noticing that when Keating makes his statement, it is not clear whether or not he is using a national 'we', and thus making a national apology. What he says very explicitly is that 'the problem starts with us non-Aboriginal Australians'. But this phrase can be interpreted in two ways. If Keating, and those who take him to be making a national apology, suppose the national 'we' to exclude Indigenous people, his 'us non-Aboriginal Australians' is a national 'we' which considers the Indigenous people to be another national 'we'. Or he sees a national 'we' as including Indigenous people, in which case a national apology is a very difficult acrobatic act indeed. It would have to involve the Indigenous people as part of their new 'Australian' communal selves apologising to their past Indigenous communal selves: 'We took the lands ... we committed the murders'! Not even Nietzsche and Spinoza could make them do this!

It seems to me that this is the fissure from which conservative thought in Australia gains its moral legitimacy. When John Howard is saying that he cannot apologise in the name of the nation he is saying just that. In this sense, he is more faithfully reflecting the hegemonic wish of the state of Australia to represent all the people of the nation and to thwart any possibility of Aboriginal sovereignty. This is why an apology becomes perceived as 'divisive'. Unlike Keating, Howard does not want to use his role as a representative of the nation – one nation which includes

Indigenous people – to speak in the name of one part of the nation, be they Anglos, Europeans, or non-Indigenous population. But John Howard here faces a contradiction of his own. If he is to be really consistent in only using the national 'we' to include 'everyone', and does not want to speak of national shame when only one part of Australia can relate to it, then he also has to refrain from using it when expressing national pride and remembering rosier 'national memories'. Australia's national day itself, Australia Day, commemorates the British landing. It cannot be plausibly supported as a genuinely national day. Indeed, this is something that many Indigenous people, who remember the day as a day of sorrow, have pointed out.

But of course John Howard is not interested in being consistent; he is interested only in achieving his political goals. The same could be said about Paul Keating, for that matter. This is why neither Howard nor Keating can face the reality pointed to by the above: a national memory or a non-contradictory plurality of memories of colonisation in Australia is impossible. This is the all-important reality whose ramifications are left out of the analyses of Poole and Gatens and Lloyd.

Obvious as this fact may be when stated explicitly, it is often forgotten in discussions concerning responsibility: Indigenous people do not relate to and cannot appropriate 'Australian history', even in its morally and empirically corrected version, because what is posited as Australian history is simply not history from their perspective. In this sense, they have their own history – or, more exactly, their own pool of histories, with its own agreements and disagreements – to appropriate memory from. This does not mean that they cannot share anything with other people living in Australia, but it does mean that what they share cannot be taken for granted at all.

Gatens and Lloyd's Spinoza appears at first sight ready to encompass such a multiplicity of histories and imaginaries.

Selves are born into a future in which they will make individual decisions, in which they will be held responsible, praised or blamed. But they are also born into the past of communal life which both precedes and awaits them – a communal life which, under modern conditions, is not the life of one culture alone, but, in Tully's terms, 'inter-cultural'. Such selves have not just one but a multiplicity of pasts – pasts of collective memory and imagination which must be reckoned with in the present; and not just one 'identity', but as many

as can be constructed, and carried into the future, out of this inner multiplicity. Our responsibilities, no less than our freedom, come from understanding what in this rich profusion of 'finite modes' we are – in all senses – determined to be.[36]

Unfortunately, when they invoke Keating's 'we' as a national imaginary within which we are all positioned, Gatens and Lloyd leave this Spinozist potential for dealing with a multiplicity of memories unexploited. Instead, they end up reducing the multiplicity of pasts to a non-contradictory multiplicity in which all communities have the possibility to 'strive to persevere in their own being'. What they see as 'conflicting imaginaries' are two White imaginaries of colonisation: a bad one (represented by the idea of *terra nullius*) and a good one (represented by the Mabo decision). The fundamental contradiction between the settlers' and the Indigenous peoples' imaginaries, a contradiction which means that the striving of one communal formation is at the expense of the striving of the other, is left off the field.

The impossibility of a single Australian national memory or a smoothly plural set of national memories is not the result of there having been a war between two sides, a winning and a losing side. National memories have been forged out of such wars; they are later constructed as 'fratricidal'. As Benedict Anderson argues in the second edition of *Imagined Communities*,[37] there is such a thing as a nationally reassuring memory of fratricide. But this is not possible in Australia today, because the very sides which fought this colonial war have not melded together into one. Despite the hegemonically inspired symbolic gymnastics of some, there remain two separate communal identities, with two separate memories, trying to live together in one state.

Reflecting on the preoccupation with the need for forgetting in *Qu'est ce qu'une nation?* by Ernest Renan, and in particular Renan's statement that 'tout citoyen français doit avoir oublié la Saint Barthélémy,' Anderson comments 'in effect, Renan's readers were being told to "have already forgotten" what Renan's own words assumed that they naturally remembered!' And he asks, 'How are we to make sense of this paradox?'[38]

In fact there is not much of a paradox to make sense of here. Any person who has ever used the exclamation 'let's forget about it' will know very well what Renan means by this 'forgetful remembering'. 'Let's forget about this argument', for instance, will often mean that since we cannot but remember this event, let us at

least do so without the passion that led us into it in the first place. It is an invitation to a remembering that is no longer one-sided and affective. Anderson himself points out, 'It is instructive that Renan does not say that each French citizen is obliged to "have already forgotten" the Paris Commune. In 1882 its memory was still real rather than mythic, and sufficiently painful to make it difficult to read under the sign of "reassuring fratricide".'[39]

It is then a difference between a 'neutral' and an affective remembering that Anderson is partly aiming for in differentiating between real and mythic memory. When two parties to a conflict remember it affectively, each or at least one of them has still an investment in remembering the conflict as a two-sided affair, and in continuing to remember it from the particular side he or she belongs to. Thus remembering affectively is not just about getting worked up about a particular memory. More importantly, it means that parties remember the conflict from 'their own' perspective. Here, at least one of the two sides is refusing to share a neutralised memory of the event, so each side will still have its own particular memory of it. This is why when we speak of memory we need to analyse its relation to the imaginary gaze of the remembering subject as a way of understanding its social significance for that subject. 'I remember fighting you' is a language that would more often emphasise a 'lived memory', a memory of the event as experienced from the specific and therefore necessarily one-sided perspective of the one remembering. This is why Anderson is right in calling it 'real' memory. Such a memory does not lend itself to a 'we' language. A memory has to lose the investment of both parties in it as a real memory before it can become a memory of a distant mythic event. Only then can a sentence such as 'we remember our fight' become possible and credible.

This is why it is not an exaggeration to say that the possibility of a non-contradictory set of national memories of Australia's history is still very remote. We are far from reaching a stage where 'we', Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, can remember the acts of dispossession and murder within that history without partisan affective intensity.

This is the contemporary reality of Australia: two contradictorily located fields of memories and identification. But this is not the end of the story. For these two sets of memories and identities also mean two communal subjects with two wills over one land; two sovereignties of unequal strength.[40] The first is a dominant one, deriving its legitimacy from the force and the history

of its occupation. This is not only the brute force of numbers and technological superiority; it is also the moral force behind a history of inhabiting, transforming and defending the land as it has grown to be. The second is a dominated will, deriving its legitimacy from its historical status as the resisting will of the original inhabitants. One can turn this whichever way one likes, but it is as good a definition as any of a colonial situation; a colonial situation that is still with us today. If we are fishing for injustice and responsibility, there is no need to appropriate the past; there is still plenty to appropriate in the present.

The Australian situation is not a 'post-colonisation' situation (in the unlikely sense of a state where the process of colonisation has reached its goal of fully neutralising the colonised) because the will of the colonised has not been completely neutralised by the will of the colonisers. But it is not Algeria or South Africa either, where the will of the colonised can challenge the coloniser for a recapturing of the land. The colonial project has eradicated enough of the strength of the colonised will to make this impossible.

This is what constitutes the objective difficulty of the Australian situation. For a long time to come, Australia is destined to become an unfinished Western colonial project as well as a land in a permanent state of decolonisation. A nation inhabited by both the will of the coloniser and the will of the colonised, each with their identity based on their specific understanding, and memory, of the colonial encounter: what was before it and what is after it. Any national project of reconciliation that fails to fully accept the existence of a distinct Indigenous will, a distinct Indigenous *conatus*, whose striving is bound to make the settlers experience 'sadness', is destined to be a momentary cover-up of the reality of the forces that made Australia what it is.

It should be remembered that it is always the dominant who have an interest in the dominated forgetting that there ever were sides in a conflict. Consequently, to speak of an Australian memory is not politically innocent. It is part of a hegemonic disposition on the part of the coloniser to complete the integration of the colonised into the reality of the coloniser. One can call for justice and hold oneself responsible by identifying with the history of the coloniser. One can call for justice and put oneself in an accusatory position by identifying with the history of the colonised. The very idea of 'recognising' injustice, and assuming responsibility for it, admirable as it is, is still a coloniser's take on Australia's history, even when it is a repentant coloniser's take. This is not to make

such recognition less necessary, but to clearly spell out its limits.

What I have tried to argue in this section is that as far as its colonial past is concerned, Australia continues to have antagonistic histories with antagonistically positioned historical subjects produced by those histories. To recognise that the coloniser's history involves a history of land appropriation, massacre and 'stolen children', and to want to take some form of responsibility for such acts, is of course, ethically superior to trying to retreat from them. Nevertheless, responsibility for a shameful act is an answer to a coloniser's trauma – not to the trauma of the colonised. The colonised have an equally Australian history, and traumas specific to them as colonised. The shame of the colonised is the shame of defeat, and its relation to injustice is one not of 'recognition', but of endurance and resistance. To take the traumas of the coloniser as the only 'Australian' history someone assuming an Australian identity ought to face is to continue the process of marginalising the history of the colonised – that is, it is to continue the process of colonisation itself. This is so even at the very moment of expressing shame for colonisation. This is what is of utmost importance when thinking of migrant participation in Australia's colonial history.

Because he neglected to analyse the ramifications of this colonial antagonism, Ross Poole, though showing himself well aware of it throughout his book, ends up approaching the questions of migration and responsibility from a coloniser's angle. Thus he rightly argues that 'Where the immigrant desires permanent settlement ... they (sic) should be treated as potential citizens. They should be expected to participate in the public culture of their new country, and provided the means and the opportunity to do so.'[41] And he, equally rightly, goes on to call for the importance of the migrants' 'commitment to participate in the public culture of the nation which will be [their] new home'. Applying his Nietzschean/Lockian perspective, he argues that 'Migration ... should also carry with it a commitment to ... acquire a new national identity, and also ... to accept the responsibilities which go with this.'[42]

One can only agree with the above. But when it comes to specifying what these responsibilities are, we are left in no doubt as to whose history the migrant is being asked to relate to:

> The responsibility to come to terms with the Australian past is a morally inescapable component of what is to be Australian.
> It is in this context that we must understand one of the dangers

of multiculturalism. In so far as it involves a diminished sense of Australian historical identity and a strengthened sense of the affiliations which migrant Australians have to the countries of their origins, it also carries with it a weakened sense of the responsibilities which are written into Australian history. Many recent migrants do not feel implicated in it. It is not just that they personally have not been involved with or had direct dealings with Aboriginal people; this is true of most Anglo-Celtic Australians. It is because their cultural identity implicates them in a different history and, perhaps, with a different set of responsibilities. It is only if they have a sense that coming to be an Australian involves coming to share the history that they will recognise that they have acquired the responsibilities which go with that history.[43]

I have argued elsewhere that migration is, in an important sense, a continuation of the colonisation process, so in this sense I can see why Poole can instinctively position the migrant 'on the side' of the 'Anglo-Celtic Australians'. But migrants have shared some important realities with Indigenous people too. Enduring the racist 'White Australia Policy', for example.[44] To use a somewhat old but useful language, let us say that migrants are in a contradictory colonial location, and as such, they are quite capable of relating to Australia's history from within the imaginary 'we' of the colonised. Here, 'becoming responsible' is no longer guaranteed to mean contributing to the coloniser's postcolonial trauma-therapy that is oozing out of the 'coming to terms with the Australian past' discourse; it might just as well mean contributing to a struggle for Aboriginal sovereignty.

An important issue that emerges here is the very mechanism through which migrants come to care about Australian history – whoever's history it is they are relating to. How does one come to relate to the memory of another as if it is one's own? Poole suggests that this is what 'ought' to happen, but he does not tell us either how or why it happens. Gatens and Lloyd's Spinoza, in its refinement of Arendt's 'natality' concept, is more explanatory in this regard:

Thinking through the implications of Spinoza's philosophy we can see that human bodies are not born into a single community, but into complex criss-crossing structures of reciprocal affinity – constantly formed and re-formed under the impact of rival conatus. It is a version of what Arendt calls 'natality' which lends itself better

to the complexities of identity under contemporary conditions of cultural diversity than more unitary conceptions of contemporary community.[45]

But it remains to be seen how these crisscrossing structures of reciprocal affinity lead to the transmission of affect from the perspective of the body itself. It is to this issue of participatory belonging, with which I began this chapter, that we now need to return in order to explain the process of 'caring' for the memory of the other.

Polluting memories: on the transmission of affect

Explaining the nature of the affect involved in the process of recognition, Raimond Gaita argues that it is mainly a variety of shame. As he put it:

... shame is as necessary for the lucid acknowledgment by Australians of the wrongs the Aborigines suffered at the hands of their political ancestors, and to the wrongs they continue to suffer, as pain is to mourning. It is not an optional emotional addition to the recognition of the meaning of their dispossession. It is, I believe, the form of that recognition.[46]

He further reiterates that:

The attachment that makes shame appropriate and sometimes called for is inseparable from the desire to celebrate achievements which shape an historically deep sense of communal identity. The pained, humbled acknowledgment of the wrongs committed by the ancestors, of those who are rooted and nourished by their country, who feel as do Justices Deane and Gaudron, that those wrongs constitute a stain on their country, and whose joy in its achievements is thereby sometimes blighted – that acknowledgment I take to be one of the forms of shame. If it is not, then I do not know what to call it.[47]

Gaita's powerful and subtle moral analysis of what I have called above the relation to the coloniser's 'we' is not accompanied by an equivalently powerful sociological analysis of the mode of transmission of affect. In the above, we somehow learn that to be afflicted by this 'healthy' sense of shame, those who have committed the wrongs need to be our ancestors. However, he also sees that:

There are borderline cases as, of course, there are with any concept. More importantly, there is a condition which is neither guilt nor shame and which is not a state borderline between them. Ron Castan, a QC who played a prominent part in securing native title legislation, alerted me to it in discussion when he described the response of Adolf Eichmann's son to the fact that he was the child of one of the architects of the genocide of the Jews and the gipsies. The oppressive and ineradicable gloom of that condition was neither shame nor guilt, but more like the condition the ancient Greeks described in their tragedies as 'pollution'.[48]

I understand the historical basis for Gaita's use of such a restricted conception of 'pollution'. However, I would like to suggest that, at least for my own purposes, it is more suitable as a general category, capable of encompassing all the affective states analysed by Gaita, be they shame, guilt, or that 'other' state that is neither. To think of shame and guilt as specific forms of pollution helps us think of affect in a more materialist way – as circulating particles of guilt or shame, for example.

More importantly for our analytical purposes in this section, it gives us more space within which to think of the modes of transmission of affect than the generally idealist categories of shame or guilt do. We can now ask such questions as how do such particles of affect circulate? How do people get 'tainted'?

Memories of genocide are polluting memories. They taint those who relate to them. But how does one become polluted if one is not the originator of the polluting act? Gaita's source for the idea of pollution, the story about Eichmann's son, sees it as acquired through kinship. The son is polluted by the deeds of the father. But how does this happen? After all, shame does not circulate in the blood. What does one receive from one's father – or, more generally, one's parents – other than blood?

I would like to suggest that the answer to the above question is simply 'family life' itself, one's first collective imaginary. The family, as Bourdieu has pointed out, is not only the social space where the first 'I' is formed but also the space of the first 'we', and it has an enduring effect on how later, more encompassing, 'we's are formed.[49] This is not an incidental subjectivity – one that I might or might not have. The 'we' I manage to be 'interpellated' to forms the core of what I am as much as does any 'I'. In that sense, the family remains a good microcosm for the study of the circulation of affect within communally imagined subjects.

By living within a family (or whatever other communal form helps us develop and grow), we receive from our parents (or whoever is positioned as such), our first sense of communal life: we see ourselves protected and cared for, and we perceive ourselves as part of a historical subject that originates well before us. It is within this imaginary collectivity that we also learn that for what we have received we are expected to give back. We have responsibilities. Indeed, if what we have received is reasonably positive, we don't feel the weight of such an expectation, we see it as a natural moral obligation. We receive the gift of family life, and insofar as this gift is well given, insofar as we have internalised it well enough, we feel in return responsible for its maintenance: we care for it and for the people within it. That is what motivates and shapes our participation in such a family life and forms the basis of our family identification, or our identification with whatever we grow up to perceive as our 'community/family' entourage. This is what I called in the introduction to this chapter 'participatory belonging'.

This collective identity is as much my individual identity as it is an expression of my social viability. If my parents have known how to offer me the gift of a communal family life, I cannot refuse it short of committing social suicide. And I have to accept it whichever way it comes. It might carry with it stories of family greatness of which the family (and I) are and will be proud. It might carry with it stories of evil deeds (which I might learn about from others) of which the family (and I) are ashamed.

I cannot possibly relate to a social milieu to which I feel I owe nothing, or only negativity. This seems to me the importance of Eichmann's son's story. If Eichmann's son had only experienced evil and violence from his father, he could have easily had no affective ties to him at all. He could have experienced a sense of having received nothing but bare biological life from his father. Eichmann's son would not have had such an experience of 'pollution' if this were the case, for pride and shame are not transmitted biologically. Paradoxically, but more probably, it is because he inherited his father's evil through the love and protection that the latter gave him that he experienced such a form of oppressive pollution. It came with the gift of social life itself. The pollution defined one of the 'we's that constituted his social viability, and he was forced to relate to it.

What I am suggesting, then, is that like family life, all social communal life is communicated to us as a gift, and like all gifts, it

creates obligations when it is well given. Participating in, and 'caring for', whatever community we belong to is the common, though not necessary, mode of returning such a gift.[50] It is through this process of gift-exchange that communal affects such as pride and shame circulate.

I believe that it is from this perspective that we can best capture the nature of migrant participatory belonging in the host society. It explains why, to begin with, migration is often a guilt-inducing process. To leave the communal setting that has given us the gift of social life is precisely to refrain from paying the debt.[51] But migration also involves receiving a new gift of social life. Whether such a gift is well given is part of what determines whether or not it will create an obligation. Another important aspect, however, is whether or not the migrant is psychologically and socially equipped to receive a well-given gift. It is when (and if) migrants experience a sense of communal solidarity, of being cared for, and so forth, and when and if they become capable of appreciating such care, that they will begin to 'care for' the host society themselves. And it is at this point that they will start identifying with all or some of its we or we's and all the affective luggage they carry with them.

I will now conclude by briefly narrating, in a somewhat more anthropological, but also more literary manner, through a condensation of subjectivities encountered in my research, the way such an approach can lead us into the complexity of the Australian situation, with whose philosophers I have critically inter-acted above.

On receiving the gift of social life in a land taken without being offered ... by someone I don't like ... because he reminds me of my guilt

It is the Australian Arabic Communities Council's annual dinner. I am having a drink listening to a couple of Arab-Australian youths discussing Mabo when a piece of absolute wisdom is jokingly delivered by one of them in response to a long liberal tirade defending the Mabo decision:

What are you going on about anyway? If the Anglos didn't do the killing you wouldn't have been able to emigrate here. You owe 'em, mate. They cleared the land ... ESPECIALLY FOR YOU! (imitating a TV product promotion)

Is this a moment of Spinozist lucidity about those 'complex

crisscrossing structures' making us into what we are? ... The migrant 'owes' the colonisers ... No spears waiting at the harbour or the airport. Maybe there would have been no airport! All thanks to the coloniser.

But doesn't everyone owe the coloniser (in some cases even the colonised, depending on what social inheritance they choose to value)? The migrant's voice elucidates what the discourse of 'recognition' does not want to recognise: colonial violence is but the condition of possibility of the attempt to transcend it through 'recognition'. If my ancestors had not broken *their* spears and *their* will, *they* would be still spearing and I would have to be as much of an 'ethnic cleanser' as my ancestors.

But they've done a reasonably good job, my ancestors, and I can now say how sorry I am for their doing such a good job. I can comfortably engage in my postcolonial trauma therapy ... Don't let guilt run you down. Special treatment for First Fleet descendants: modes of apology and recognition of injustice guaranteed to soothe. But doesn't the discourse of apology *produce* the very guilt it is supposed to soothe? A soothe-able guilt rather than that non-soothe-able colonial one?

They've done a good job, my ancestors, but they could have done a better job. They could have put me in a position where the Indigenous people would have been grateful for my 'recognition'. The Prime Minister, John Howard, waited so long to offer his 'personal apologies' that he was clearly expecting the recipients to be grateful. He's come a long way. The postcolonial art of apology as gift: *thank you for expressing your regrets ... we owe you, mate!*

In the meantime the migrant is also grateful ... *'We owe you, mate. A beautiful gift to be allowed to live in Australia. We would be happy to reciprocate ... if only you learn to give this gift a bit more gracefully!'*

This is where we come to yet another complex crisscrossing structure determining us. A gift of social life will create an obligation to reciprocate if it is well offered ... offered gracefully. Many migrants to Australia are offered the gift of a new social life: visa, work, social security. Not many are offered it gracefully.

'They finally gave us the visa. They made us feel like beggars,' a Lebanese woman says. Australian embassies are the last bastions of the White Australia Policy. The gracefulness with which you are offered the gift of an Australian life is strictly proportional to your Whiteness ... or your capital. We are very instrumentalist in choosing our migrants, but we don't want our migrants to relate instrumentally to us.

Nevertheless, I felt like saying, *'Beggars? But isn't that what we are?'* Begging on the international market for a more economically sustaining 'we'. It would have complicated the interview.

Come to think of it, it would have been easier than saying it here. Now I am complicating the analysis. More crisscrossing structures. A well-offered gift of social life will create an obligation if it is well received. But is the migrant always ready to receive well even what is most generously and ethically offered? What of the shame of belonging to a country that cannot give you a decent enough gift of social life to keep you in it, and then the added shame of migration ... *everyone has to know that I belong to a sick 'we' animated by centrifugal forces!* The bad breast of my motherland exposed ...[52] Excuse me, sir, my motherland's breast cannot feed me, can I have a suck of yours? Who would want to relate to his or her mother while envying someone else's?

And so the man is apparently treating the migrant like a beggar. He is a racist: a good object of transference of repressed centrifugally induced shame if there ever was one. *It's all your fault if I don't feel at home in your country! I was all geared up to do it! I CHOSE to stay here, you know!*

Ressentiment: *I don't like my hosts to begin with. Everything about them reminds me of the person I should have been. The person who stayed put! The person whose mother(land) knew how to keep her. I envy your centripetal force ...*

Even before that man in the shopping centre spat on me and said, 'Why don't you go home where you belong, you son of a bitch', I hated him. Yes, I am hurting, of course I am. He called my mother bitch. How dare he lay bare what I am escaping from most: the thought of my mother as that bitch who did not manage to feed me and keep me. But at the same time, thank god he said it. Now I can hate him a little bit more comfortably. I hate him because he is a bloody racist. And he IS.

Finding a rational reason to hate those we hate already for no good reason: how soothing!

And now I learn that they've killed all these Aboriginal people when their ancestors invaded Australia. So it wasn't your mother's breast after all: you stole it. You're worse than me!

Sophisticated psychoanalysts might call this longitudinally maintained transference of repressed centrifugally induced shame. We might recognise this little convenience by the name of 'being onto a good thing'.[53] *Why should I be grateful to you anyway for letting me have a suck? It is not your mother's breast anyway. You haven't offered me anything. Stolen goods: that's what you have*

offered me. I don't owe you anything. You thought you didn't offer me hospitality. In fact, you couldn't. It's not your land. I am liberated. NO OBLIGATIONS.

I ought to thank the Aboriginal people for letting me in ... Except they didn't give me a visa either ... I ought to apologise ... to each her therapy ...

I might be onto another 'good thing' here: the struggle for the equal right to apologise and recognise injustice! That must go far ... Actually, maybe I can belong here. That guy Noel Pearson said that Australia is made out of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. I like that. Finally a category that puts me and John Howard in the same position. Maybe I can belong here ... Who says I don't care ...?

This is how the sea of subjectivity around Mabo can present itself on a stormy day. As Spinoza understood, 'man's strivings, impulses, appetites, and volitions ... are not infrequently so opposed to one another that the man is pulled in different directions and knows not where to turn'.[54] No neat relation to Australian history here, and too many vacillating *conatus* ... a very postcolonial *colonial* situation.

Appendix to Chapter 6: In defence of critical intellectuals

In the aftermath of September 11, in some of the deprived suburbs of many Arab cities inhabited by poor and uneducated people, you could enter a little mosque and hear some pretentious and mediocre sheikh (religious preacher), supported by some morally bankrupt politician, explain to the worshippers that September 11 was a Jewish plot; that in fact – and the little sheikh would know, of course – most of the Jewish people who worked in the World Trade Centre were contacted, on a special Jews-only phone presumably, and asked not to enter the building on that day.

If an Arab intellectual had entered the mosque at that time and disturbed the gathering by saying, 'Hey, this is idiotic, how can you believe such a silly thing, those responsible for this are clearly Muslims', he or she would have been thoroughly rubbished for being a negative elitist intellectual, who is too disconnected from the real world to know what is really going on, and who is, of course, always out to criticise his or her own people.

But it is much easier to mock other people's prejudices than face our own. The same Australians who will find the sheikh's pronouncements ridiculous can come out with prejudiced views that have a similar logical consistency, whether about Indigenous people, about refugees plotting to come here or about Muslims being all little closet Osama bin Ladens unable to appreciate Western civilisation and its democratic values.

For thinking with one's prejudices is easy and common. It is more economical in that it takes less time. Not everyone has time or training to subject everything they think about to critical scrutiny. It is also more economical emotionally. People who think with their prejudices often reach unshakeable certainties, and it is more demanding psychologically and intellectually to live with uncertainties.

But there are always some people who will try to inject uncertainties and question marks into the general culture; people who force others to confront their comfortable prejudiced knowledge. These are the critical intellectuals.

They are certainly an elite, precisely because they can 'take their time'. Since Ancient Greece, this has been the basis for the existence of the intellectual class: the liberation from material needs provides the luxury of time for reflexivity, time to develop the art of thinking about our ways of thinking.

Unfortunately, both for the people and for the critical intellectuals, not everyone who has time is interested in making

people think about how they are thinking. There are some, like our little sheikhs above, who feed on people's prejudiced knowledge. They derive their authority from reinforcing people's belief in the truth those people are most 'relaxed and comfortable' with. They can easily portray critical intellectuals competing with them for the people's attention as a nuisance and as overwhelmingly negative, for they certainly are. Instead, they celebrate with the people their prejudiced views by pretending to be 'of the people' and by encouraging the people to 'continue to think for themselves'.[55]

Intellectual and political logic are not often compatible. Politicians need certainties. That is, they need pieces of knowledge that are no longer subjected to critical questioning. People are defined as friends or enemies according to how they relate to these certainties. Critical intellectuals do not know what certainty is. They judge each other according to how thoroughly, ethically and interestingly they can keep questioning everything. This is why intellectuals, more often than not, are hopelessly unpractical in this sense. They perform, at best, a general function of keeping a culture democratically alive, forward looking and open to transformations. The knowledge they produce is as complex and subtle as they are good at being intellectuals.

Despite this difference between intellectual and political logic, politicians and intellectuals are not necessarily enemies. Throughout history we have many examples of politicians who feel enriched by the complex and challenging knowledge intellectuals produce, even if it is not a knowledge they can easily peddle for political purposes. But clearly, there are many more examples of politicians who simply ignore intellectuals because of this difference in logic. The era and the society we live in is rather unusual in the history of Western democratic societies in that many politicians neither like nor ignore intellectuals but actually attack them systematically. Complexity and subtlety are among the first casualties, though the list is a long one.

Take Australia's early history of colonising the Indigenous population, for example. For the anti-intellectual politicians such as John Howard and Tony Abbott, as well as the people supporting them, such as Roger Sandall, it is very simple. If you are shamed by Australia's colonial past, you must therefore be unwilling and unable to appreciate all the good things that Australia has given you: democracy, freedom of speech, high standard of living, etc. It is either one or the other: you are a friend and a positive thinker if you believe that Australia's history leaves you with a past you can

be proud of; or you are an enemy and a negative thinker if you feel that what you have inherited shames you.

Intellectuals who have spent time reflecting on this supposed opposition are bound to reach a more complex understanding of how people come to feel, or not feel, shame about their national past. See, for example, the intellectuals referred to above in this chapter.

Gaita's reference to the story of Adolf Eichmann's son, who felt 'polluted', as he put it, by the fact that he was the child of one of the architects of the genocide of the Jews and the gypsies, raised the question: how does a son get polluted by the deeds of his father? As I argued, if Eichmann's son had only experienced evil and violence from his father, if he was simply shamed by all of his father's history, he could have easily felt no affective ties to him at all and therefore no 'pollution'. What is more likely is that he inherited his father's evil along with a relatively satisfying relation with him. Some of what he has inherited from his father must make him proud and grateful to be his son, which is why he feels polluted by his father's bad deeds.

To come back to Australia, what I am suggesting, then, is that people who are shamed by Australia's past could not possibly be shamed unless they feel that Australia has offered them something so valuable that they feel strong affective ties towards it. If some Australians feel that Australia has offered them nothing at all, and there are some who feel that way, they will be indifferent to both the good and the bad in its history. Shame can only come from caring and caring can only come if one feels pride in what one has inherited. It is because I am so proud of what Australia has offered me (democracy, freedom of speech, the good life, etc) that I care about it. And it is only because I care that I am shamed by the negative parts of history that have come with the package. This is enough to show how simplistic the political opposition's position of 'either you feel pride or you feel you shame' is.

As an intellectual, I am not interested in classifying people as friends or enemies according to how they relate to this explanation. I see it as offering me a way to further reflect on the complexity of what it means to belong to Australia. I want to refine it and use it to help me work out why it is that some people have such a fragile and insecure relation to the good things they have inherited that they cannot assume responsibility for the bad things as well. I also want to know what kind of political party is so dependent on encouraging and fostering a paranoid relation to Australia's history

that it is willing to attack one of the most important corner-stones of the Western society it purports to want to preserve: critical intellectuals.

CHAPTER 7

The class aesthetics of global multiculturalism

Global multiculturalism – Take 1 (Beirut)

On 26 January 2001, the Lebanese English newspaper published in Beirut, the *Daily Star*, offered a special feature supplement celebrating Australia Day and the centenary of Federation. In keeping with the spirit of globalisation, the supplement was sponsored by Malaysia Airlines. Being one of the few airlines with a direct Sydney–Beirut flight, it was one of the global corporations most interested in the celebration of Australian nationalism in Beirut. In the era of globalisation, it is the nationalists, not the workers, who 'have no country'.

This, however, was not the most notable aspect of the supplement. Nor was the fact that in his brief celebration of the history of Australia the Australian ambassador did not feel the need to burden the Lebanese reader with any account of the British–Indigenous encounter. What was most notable was that the entire eight pages devoted to the Lebanese in Australia and to Lebanese-Australians in Lebanon made it sound as if the history of Lebanese migration to Australia was purely a history of business migration, and of joint Australian-Lebanese companies operating either in Australia or in Lebanon. Except for a brief reference to the high unemployment rate among the Lebanese in Trevor Batrouney's historical article, one wouldn't have guessed that there is such a thing as a Lebanese working class, let alone a Lebanese under-class, in Australia. Insofar as an Australian multiculturalism was

intimated to exist, it was a business multiculturalism linking cultural pluralism and business opportunities. A good 95 per cent of Australia's Lebanese were left out of it.

Global multiculturalism – Take 2 (Canberra)

The conference I was attending in Canberra had been going for two days. It centred on the representations of Asianness in multicultural Australia. Academics and students, of all political leanings, of all kind of sexual orientations, masterfully using all kinds of psychoanalytic, semiotic and other theories of discourse and ideology, theorised and over-theorised 'Asian identity' and the 'orientalist representations' still embedded in Australian multiculturalism.

Two days into the conference, after lunch was served, three cleaning ladies working for the university started clearing up the mess created by the anti-orientalist representation academics. I noted that the cleaning ladies were all Asian, and it struck me that after two days of papers on 'representation', that for all the talk about Asians, Asian cleaning ladies and whatever problems they might have in Australia were not really what we were talking about here. It was a middle-class multiculturalism that everyone was imagining, even though no one was saying it explicitly. A good 70 per cent of Australia's Asian population were again being left out of the conversation.

The reason the above accounts of multiculturalism need to be problematised is not that they are middle-class-centred conceptions of multiculturalism; the problematic of cultural diversity, and the struggle against racist representations, is equally important for the middle class and the working class. The problem is that working class-centred multiculturalism has been eclipsed from Australian society and it seems that middle-class multiculturalism has been used to eclipse it.

Global multiculturalism – Take 3 (Paris)

I was giving a lecture – at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris – on Australian multiculturalism. A sociologist from the Ecole asked me: 'Why do you take it for granted that an American concept such as multiculturalism is suitable to transpose to Australia?'

I started to explain that Australian multiculturalism predates the latest academic interest in the issues raised by American multiculturalism. But deep down, I was disturbed. Multicultural

discourse was clearly now a global phenomenon that people associated with 'American multiculturalism'. There was a need to emphasise the social and historical specificity of the Australian variety. But what was that specificity? Going through the history of Australian multiculturalism, the answer is quite clear: American multiculturalism is solely concerned with issues of representation and the incorporation of the perspective of the 'other'. Australian multiculturalism, from the beginning, incorporated both this cultural pluralism perspective and, most importantly, the more worker-oriented, welfare state-related issues of access and equity (see Chapter 4). The history of the retreat of the welfare state in Australia is also the history of the retreat of access and equity multiculturalism and the growing emphasis on identity multiculturalism.

Consequently, the globalisation of American multicultural discourse, rather than replacing existing Australian multi-culturalism, seems to have accentuated the already existing tendency to make 'cultural diversity' a substitute for 'migrant workers' rights' instead of its complementary element. But these two tendencies are not just 'cultural options', devoid of political and economic significance. American multiculturalism is, after all, as many commentators have pointed out, the very ideology of transnational capitalism, and its rise – and the concomitant decline of 'workers' rights multiculturalism' – has accompanied the rise of neo-liberal globalisation.

Here we come face to face with the global importance of the middle-class nature of identity multiculturalism. One of the most important cultural changes that has accompanying globalisation has been the increased cultural diversity of the professional and managerial class of capitalist corporations. Once upon a time, this professional and managerial class was almost exclusively white. Today this has changed dramatically, particularly in the pro-fessional area. This class, though diverse in origins and 'roots', is unified by similar tastes and aspirations. And those managers and professionals from non-European backgrounds do not need 'workers' rights' or interpreting services. They need a cultural recognition of the equal worthiness of their cultural roots. This is why their interests have been well represented in the multicultural struggles for 'cultural recognition' initiated on American campuses.

When, as I argued in Chapter 1, in the face of transcendental capitalism, every government around the world can be heard begging, 'Please come here Mr Transcendental Capital, please

invest here in my very multicultural zoo-like city, where all kinds of safe and domesticated otherness is available for consumption', governments also have this multicultural professional and managerial class in mind. That is why, while inviting transcendental capitalism to land in their aestheticised cities, they also make sure to say: 'I can provide your multicultural workers with the tallest buildings which offer unbeatable views, I can provide them with the grooviest coffee shops you can imagine, equipped with the latest Italian coffee-making machines, the best baristas and the best macchiatos. I will offer them the most culturally diverse culinary scene possible. All of this is guaranteed if you come and invest here, Mr. Transcendental Capital.'

It is as part of this process that we see the decline of 'workers rights multiculturalism' and the rise of a neat, middle-class, aestheticised multiculturalism whose boundaries often do not go beyond the urban spheres that are of interest to the managers and professionals of the investing global corporation – leisure, entertainment and consumption. Interestingly, this aestheticisation does not only actively marginalise working-class concerns from the multicultural-zoo society. Paradoxically, or maybe not so paradoxically, it also reanimates some of the middle-class aesthetic fantasies that were, and still are, part and parcel of traditional colonial racism. This aesthetic class dimension of racism has never been made clear, to my knowledge, in the sociology and anthropology of racism. Analysing it is crucial today, given its similarity to the aesthetics of global multiculturalism.

To be clear, I am referring here to colonial racism as the particular form of racism that emerged with the rise of capitalism in Western Europe and became part and parcel of the European colonial project. Its main characteristics were its relationship to 'scientific racism' and its developmental nature. It is its nature as a developmental form of racism that interests me here. But to understand the feature I want to emphasise, we need to go through some of the basics first.

As is well known, what characterises developmental racism is its essentialising of the presence or absence of European Whiteness and other popular racial markers as an explanation of the different levels of economic and cultural development that came to existence with the rise of European capitalism. Why did European society develop and become advanced, leaving all other societies 'behind'? Well, simply because European societies are inhabited by White Europeans who, by their very nature as White, are imbued with

superior values and superior capacities. Essentialising, to be clear, is a mental operation associated with classical racist thinking: if Jews are calculating and manipulative, this is because it is part of their character; they just can't help it. You are what your racial or cultural identity is. Your cultural or racial identity is your essence. So if blacks in Africa or Arabs in the Middle East have not created societies that are advanced (in a capitalist sense), this has more to do with their essential character as black people or Arab people (they are lazy, or slow, for example) than with the socio-historical and ecological conditions of social development. On the face of it, this doesn't have much to do with class. Yet the fact that class, and particularly the aesthetics of class, is an intrinsic component of this racism becomes very clear if we go a bit deeper into the mental operations that occur when people think in developmental racist terms. As we shall see, developmental racism works primarily by aestheticising the self, which is itself achieved through a middle-class image-based aestheticisation of the 'group' one claims to belong to. This group/self-aesthetisisation happens when we make an image in our mind of 'our' people as aesthetically nice and pleasing.

Let me give an example. Imagine the most traditional and basic racist encounter: a White European racist thinking that Indigenous people are lowly underdeveloped types. Let's go in a slightly more microscopic way into the way the racist's mind works here. What does s/he think? Roughly something like: 'I belong to the White race, made out of developed and thus superior people. The Aboriginal people belong to the black race, made out of under-developed and thus inferior people.' Now when racists make such a statement, when they think 'I belong to the race of developed superior people', *who* exactly do they imagine in their mind as their 'superior people'? I would think that the White people who are most likely to be invoked in the mind of the White racist will not be a group of White bikies having a shootout, or a drunken White guy sleeping on the bench in the park. The racists immediately think of what they conceive as superior beautiful people: that is, classy people. It is here that we reach the class-dominated imaginary of this kind of racism. When the racists think of 'my superior White people', the images that dominate their imaginary are of middle-class White people: clean people, spunky people, people who move and groove ever so well, etc, all selected according to the way each particular racist imagines 'classiness'.

So this is the first step in developmental racism: the person

assuming superiority selects images of aesthetically pleasing groups of people among the 'race' that he or she is constructing and decides that he or she is a member of these groups. But with this process of selection comes another necessary process: repression. The person represses precisely those class images that undermine the aestheticised image invoked by thinking 'My people are superior people.' That is, racist thinking requires the suppression of the unpleasing images of 'underdeveloped' members of one's own group, a classification that has class at its very core. In Chapter 1 I examined how, before the rise of the nation-state, the working classes of Europe were racialised and inferiorised as intrinsically unable to access a 'civilised state'. It can be argued that although colonial racism tried to undo this class racism in favour of other biological or cultural forms of racism, it is still haunted by the imaginary of the underdeveloped, smelly, brute working classes, and therefore constantly works at repressing such images.

But this is not enough to understand the class imaginary of colonial racism, a racism that is still very alive and well today. For along with the class aestheticisation of the self comes the process of de-aestheticising the other, the one who is being racialised negatively. That is, our White colonial racists will engage in exactly the opposite process where Indigenous people are concerned. When they say that Indigenous people are a race of inferior people, they do not start thinking immediately of middle-class Indigenous people, such as Ernie Dingo and Cathy Freeman; they start thinking of wretched people, people sleeping on a bench in the park, etc. That is, they invoke and collapse the other into the very class images that they have banished from their definition of themselves and their White people. We can see now how the aesthetic imaginary of class is part and parcel of the way racism manages to create a sense of absolute racialised developmental difference.

It is often the case that migrant communities internalise the principles of such a class-based imaginary. This can be clearly seen in Australia when an 'ethnic community' perceives itself to be on the defensive. For example, I have recently witnessed a number of Lebanese community meetings when certain 'community members' or 'leaders' begin invoking images of class in reaction to what they perceive as demeaning racist practices or pronouncements by the media and the politicians. Inevitably someone from the audience emerges to say, 'Don't they know how many Lebanese-Australians are doctors, lawyers, academics' This valorisation of middle classness is performed before an audience of largely working-class

people who all seem to be in agreement about the need to devalorise their own life experiences in Australia. Their unity as a community becomes constructed around collective petit-bourgeois dreams of upward social mobility rather than around a valorisation of the labour and the struggles they have endured – and continue to endure – as working-class Australians.

This 'class imaginary' of the ethnic community is hardly new, of course. It is part and parcel of the make-up of 'migrant communities' as a class construction in the postwar history of Australia.[1] This is why, paradoxically, the very same 'migrant communities' that struggled for the emergence of a 'workers' rights multiculturalism' also provided a solid basis for its ideological eradication in the era of transcendental capitalism. This process is perhaps most advanced today within the Asian community.

As with every other 'ethnic community', global multiculturalism's promotion of a highly racialised and class-aestheticised image of the Asian has led to an increased repression of the image of working-class Asians, who remain a majority of Asians in Australia. What is different for 'Asians', however, is that a developmental racism similar to the White colonial racism of the past is emerging within the regions of rapidly developing Asian capitalism. This racism is expressing itself within the discourse on 'Asian values'. Although it is not synonymous with it, there is no doubt that within this discourse some are beginning to see Asian development as caused by 'Asian values'. Once again, we have the same essentialised logic that is specific to developmental racism: if Asians have developed economically it is because there is something about Asians and the Asian character that is lacking in other people (such as Africans or Arabs). This is further racialised when only people from Asian background are perceived as able to possess and understand 'Asian values'. This kind of racist thinking is not only used to distinguish between 'Asians' and others; it is also used to mark out various people in Asia who are seen – on the basis of religious affiliation, for example – as more or less inclined towards having and sticking to 'Asian values'.

I don't think, of course, that the very idea of 'Asian values' is useless. Societies set values for themselves, and even if 'Asian values' or 'Australian values' often have a somewhat unrealistic and mythical character, they nevertheless play an important role in creating an ethico-political climate within society. It is when such values are essentialised and used to discriminate against people who are seen to be naturally unable to be committed to them that

such values become the ground of racist thinking, racist practices and racist institutions. It is because of this that there has been an increasing complicity between Asian developmental racism and global multiculturalism in highlighting images of the Asian as a spunky mediatic ideal,[2] a classy investor, hardworking and clean-cut, and repressing the image of the working-class or the underclass Asian. Interestingly, anti-Asian racism in Australia directed at both the middle class and the working class is complicit with developmental racism in its denigration of working-class ethnicity. The difference is that anti-Asian racism makes working-class ethnicity visible, while global multiculturalism wants to render it invisible.

Nasty things that migrants do

It is perhaps ironic that postcolonial theorisations of migration seem to inadvertently encourage the very 'neatness' of migrants encountered in this class-aestheticised realm. Can migrants do anything wrong? Are there such things as nasty migrants? You wouldn't think so if you read a certain type of postcolonial literature. I am hoping to publish a little booklet one day (maybe even a big one), with the title: *Nasty Things that Migrants Do* (even when they are hybrid and in between). For the time being I'll just conclude with a little section dealing with a simple question that brings to the fore one little nasty thing that migrants can do: Can migrants be racist?

Such a question sometimes appears provocative (within the dominant literature of neat 'anti-racism'), even though asking it is like asking, 'Are migrants human?' Of course there are political ramifications to asking such a question at a time when some migrants in Australia are subjected to various forms of exclusionary discourses and practices. Inquiring about whether Arabs, Muslims or Asians or Indigenous people are racist can easily lead others to think that one has joined those White racists who try to minimise the importance of their own racism through that wonderful 'competitive racism'-type discourse that we often encounter in the Australian public sphere: the 'they are more racist than, or just as racist as, we are and therefore we can be as racist as we like' variety.

But let us take this question seriously and try and reflect on the very reasons that make it 'provocative' or even unpleasant to our ears. To bring out what is at stake here, let us first ask the ultimate in this form of questioning: 'Are Australia's Indigenous people

racist?' The reason why such a question appears distasteful, even immoral, is quite obvious. What are we to make of a situation when – knowing about the horrific colonial genocidal acts perpetrated against Australia's Indigenous people, knowing about the continuing structural racism they are still subjected to, knowing the effect this continues to have on their lifestyles and knowing about the racist behaviour, subtle and unsubtle, which they still face in their daily lives – our mind wanders into a question such as 'Are Aboriginal people racist?' It is like asking 'Were the Jews living inside Auschwitz racists?' It is not just that the question's timing would be immoral; a 'yes' answer to it would also feel immoral. A 'yes' to these two questions is, for any reasonably sensitive and sensible person, unthinkable. An 'unthinkability' of the same kind, but not of the same degree, accompanies the questions 'Are Asians racist?' or 'Are Muslims racists?' in Australia.[3] It is this 'unthinkability', and the assumptions that underlie it about what racism is, that I want to examine here.

The usage of binary oppositions in the process of categorising and classifying our experience is something well known to anthropologists. Of these binaries, no pair has been as prominent as the moral categories good and evil. Our minds work in such a way as to make these categories clearly demarcated, mutually exclusive, and always in a state of confrontation. When evil is at work, its opposite is always good. Something quite similar occurs when we are confronted with the experience of those who are subjected to racism. For those of us who see racism as evil, our impulse is to immediately locate the good in whoever is being subjected to it. The poor black man is subjected to the evil racist white man. The poor black man immediately becomes the repository of innocence, passivity and goodness. This is the basis of a form of moralising anti-racist discourse in Australia. The one that makes us unable to think the 'yes' when confronted with the question, 'Are Afghani asylum seekers racists?' Such asylum seekers, like Aboriginal people and other Muslim or Asian migrants, are 'subjected' to racism, are subjected to evil, so of course they cannot be, at the same time, the perpetrators of racism, the perpetrators of evil. That is why we are often invited to think that evil, when it comes to racism, is White.

This kind of reasoning is clearly illogical, and yet we find ourselves attracted to it sometimes, despite ourselves. Why should the victims of racism be any more or less racist than the perpetrators? Why should they be seen as the repository of higher

moral values? Indeed, both logic and history, as well as present events in the world, clearly show that this simply cannot be the case. There is no reason why those subjected to racism of the worst kind cannot be racist themselves. Being subjected to the Holocaust did not stop some Jews from exterminating Palestinians, and one has to be quite disingenuous to locate 'the good' in the Palestinian people because of their current colonial experience. It is well known that when the UN forces arrived in Kosovo in the aftermath of the Serbian wars of ethnic cleansing, many Muslim Kosovars who had been the victims of Serbian ethnic exterminators were immediately transformed into ethnic exterminators themselves. There is no reason to think that at the very time when they were being subjected to ethnic cleansing by the Serbs they weren't harbouring fantasies of ethnic cleansing against those very Serbs, and maybe against others as well. The fact that some Serb groups engaged in ethnic cleansing does not in itself make the Serbs more or less morally bankrupt than the Muslim Kosovars, nor does it make the latter morally superior. The question of who had the *power* to activate their racist fantasies of extermination is what is crucial.

Of course fantasies of extermination are very specific forms of racism that are not necessarily implied by every form of racist behaviour. But the above example does lead us to consider the role of power and how it becomes marginalised in the moralistic confrontation I have just described. For it is precisely here, in a confusion between racism as a morally reprehensible attitude and racism as a power to discriminate, that we can find the roots of the unease that we experience with a question such as 'Can migrants be racists?'

Racism as an attitude, as a way of thinking about, conceiving and relating to people that we define negatively as a cultural group (blacks, Anglos, Asians, Muslims, Americans, for example), is hardly the monopoly of one group or another. It can be safely said that ethnic or national groups with similar social and historical backgrounds will have a similar range of racist views within their populations. Different historical experiences will lead to different modes of exhibiting such racism, but one can be sure that it will exist. In my research I have encountered many instances of racism towards Anglo-Australians by Lebanese-, Greek-, Vietnamese- and Chinese-background Australians and visitors: 'Australians (meaning Anglo-Australians) are dirty', 'Australians do not open their houses to let fresh air in', 'Australians leave their children on the street' (no one mentioned chucking children overboard,

though!), and even the always-useful-for-an-insult 'convict stock' bit. I have also witnessed among these very communities some of the ugliest colonial forms of racial stereotyping of Indigenous people. I can confidently say, and I am sure this will not come as a major surprise for most people, that Asian migrants and Muslim migrants in Australia, like everyone else, are racists in this important sense. The question that then emerges is: why do we always concentrate on White racism, and is it fair to do so?

Clearly, White racism is the most important form of racism in Australia exactly because of the power dimension we have raised above. Greek people can be racist, Aboriginal people can be racist, but their power to activate their racism and use it for discriminatory purposes is not the same as the power that some Anglo-Australians have. Furthermore, White racism is entrenched in the very make-up of Australian institutions – other racisms remain individualised and scattered. But let us be clear about this. This does not mean that migrant and other forms of racisms exist in a power vacuum. Asian business owners have power within the spaces of their businesses, and can use this power to discriminate against their employees if they are so inclined. I know of several cases of Lebanese small-businessmen who have reportedly discriminated against Anglo-Australians by refusing to consider them for a job and preferring Lebanese employees. Migrant working-class kids can also develop a micro spatial power within their neighbourhoods or their schools and can use this to discriminate against other people. However, regardless of these micro-spaces, the salient point is that the macro Australian public/national space remains a space where Whiteness gives one most power to discriminate.

As I hope I have shown here, raising a question such as 'Can migrants be racist?', even if it initially appears anti-migrant, allows us some important political and analytical insights into the nature of racism in Australia. First, it makes us realise that the primacy of White racism is based on a political critique, not a moral critique, of White people. This is an important message to carry to a White Australian population suffering from neo-liberal policy-inflicted paranoia. White Australians are not the repository of evil while all of us who are non-Whites are wonderfully virtuous. Although this might be logically obvious when speaking about it calmly, it is also a fact that the accusations of racism and the reactions to such accusations are often made with such moralistic assumptions in mind. Secondly, such a question is useful because it forces us to

recognise the importance of directing anti-racist campaigns towards non-White communities just as much as towards White communities. Often some very vile racism flourishes in spaces that are seen not to be in need of an anti-racist ethos because they are subjected to White racism.

In today's claustrophobic national culture it would be easy for 'ethnic communities' who perceive themselves as 'under attack' to duplicate the paranoid communalism prevalent within the nation and retreat into a defensive multiculturalism which sees any critique of 'one's ethnic community' as a threat. To counteract such an impulse, which might seem a natural one, I would suggest that a reflexive critical attitude towards sub-national communal formations can play an important role in combating the dominant paranoia. It maintains the possibility of a community open to inter-cultural interaction despite the bunkered mentality propagated by the national state.

Exighophobia/homoiophobia:
'Comes a time we are all enthusiasm'

Talking suicide bombers in the West, a polemic

In the days that followed the Israeli army's reinvasion of the West Bank in March 2002 and the resultant destruction of the embryonic elements of a sovereign Palestinian society, I, like many, sat in my office fuming, emailing depressed friends and colleagues to express our helplessness and despair at the unbelievable injustice of it all. Besides the death and devastation, most depressing perhaps was the mediatic normalisation of the very idea of a nation's military rampaging virtually unopposed – like Genghis Khan in tanks – through another nation's cities and towns, levelling entire streets, destroying houses, libraries, and so forth. It was for all of us an absurdly anachronistic form of violence: a medieval mode of warfare outfitted in modern technology. I took it upon myself to send Arab, Jewish and other concerned friends an email trying to think through the nature and ramifications of this violence.

While addressing the Israeli government's use of Palestinian suicide bombers (hereafter PSBs) as an excuse for transforming cities into rubble, I pointed out that, to a large degree, the Israeli government shared with the suicide bombers a lack of concern with the actual humanity of the people they murdered in the course of the conflict. In a communal 'us' versus 'them' logic, the dehumanising gaze that sees 'them' as a non-differentiated entity (Israel/the Palestinians), abstracted from the particular human beings that constituted it, is often accompanied by an equally self-

dehumanising, abstracted vision of 'us'. I knew very well from my experience of the Lebanese civil war, as both a participant and a student, that when a logic of communal war prevails, neither of the warring sides really cares for the actual material human-being-ness of the situation. More 'important' things, such as 'communities' and 'nations' are at stake. I argued in my email that given the prevalence of that logic, 'the bombs of Hamas against civilians might outrage the humanists among us for being precisely that: bombs against civilians', but what was more important for the Israeli colonialist government was that these bombs showed the Israeli 'us' to be vulnerable, which was also what the suicide bombers were trying to demonstrate.[1]

The day after I sent my email, I was surprised to receive a long rebuke from a colleague on the Jewish left. In his email he informed me that he was 'sad to see that these days scholars speak in strangely brutal language. This does no credit either to them or to the human causes they espouse.' I thought this was a bit over the top, but nothing prepared me for the end of the text, where he said that he could not:

> join in common cause with people who endorse this horrendous path of voluptuously violent martyrdom. I don't really want to stand alongside anybody who cheers other people, young people, along that appalling path without being prepared to follow it themselves … I cannot respect the political sensibilities and moral judgment of people who indulge, from positions of comfortable impunity, in this unbecoming kind of vicarious bravery – which is really a form of bad faith and moral cowardice.

The moralising nature of the reply took me aback. I could not believe that I had become someone who endorsed the 'horrendous path of voluptuously violent martyrdom', someone faced with either exploding himself in Palestine or acknowledging his moral cowardice. I imagined myself 'exploding' and smiled at the headline: 'After the first woman Islamic suicide bomber comes the first Christian Lebanese Islamic suicide bomber.' I imagined the faces of my parents, relatives and friends, with whom, as a good Maronite, I learnt how to hate all Arabs, particularly Muslims, and even more particularly Palestinians. I imagined my parents as they faced neighbours giving them the 'your Lebanese Christian son is really a Palestinian Islamic suicide bomber!' look, and how surreal it would have all been … comic relief in sad times of war.

More seriously, I wondered how my matter-of-factly stated observation about the political imaginaries behind suicide bombing, regardless of whether one agreed with it, had been transformed into support – or lack thereof – for 'voluptuous martyrdom'. It was as if the moral neutrality of my statement was itself self-condemnatory.

Indeed, as I was later informed by a mutual friend, my colleague felt that the real issue was whether or not I 'absolutely condemn' suicide bombers. Apparently it is crucial to 'absolutely condemn' suicide bombers if you are going to talk about them; otherwise you become a morally suspicious person. This immediately raised an issue for me. As I had only mentioned suicide bombing in relation to what I thought were the inhumane acts of violence Israel was perpetrating through its reoccupation of the West Bank, I wondered why it was that suicide bombing could not be talked about without being condemned first. After all, we can sit and analyse in a cool manner Israel's formidably violent colonial invasion without feeling that 'absolute' moral condemnation should be a precondition of such a discussion (or a substitute for uttering an opinion about it). To my mind, both the Israeli invasion and the suicide bombings constitute a kind of warped postmodern pastiche of medievally violent political affects, early modern veneration of political entities such as 'the nation', and late modern military technology. The fact that my colleague decided that only 'suicide bombing' is *necessarily* a moral issue raised questions about the assumptions implicit in our categorisation of violence and about their significance in shaping our political and analytical judgement. The polemic also raised the issue of the political nature of the 'condemnation imperative' and its significance for academic practices in the social sciences.

It is clearly the case that in the Western public sphere the 'condemnation imperative' operates as a mode of censoring attempts to provide a sociological explanation for why PSBs act the way they do. It is difficult to express any form of understanding whatsoever, even when one is indeed also condemning the practices of PSBs. Only unqualified condemnation will do. And if one tries to understand, any accompanying condemnation is deemed suspicious. A number of public figures have expressed some form of 'understanding' of suicide bombers (often linking their emergence to the absence of hope among Palestinian teenagers), only to be forced to apologise for voicing such views; the most publicised cases were those of Ted Turner, the former owner of

CNN, and Cherie Blair, the wife of the British Prime Minister. There is a clear political risk in trying to explain suicide bombings.[2]

But leaving aside the political nature and the moral pros and cons of this censorship in the public sphere, one would think that a university is still a place where people make a living out of 'understanding' as opposed to condemning. I am certainly more comfortable with 'absolutely condemning' the living conditions that make people into suicide bombers than absolutely condemning suicide bombers as such. And I like to think that it is the social scientist in me that makes me feel this way. By raising the issue of 'absolute condemnation', my colleague seemed to be casting Ariel Sharon and George Bush's shadow over the university: 'nothing ever justifies a suicide bombing'. In this climate, how might an academic, located in the West, attempt to understand why suicide bombers do what they do?

Initially, I tried to formulate this question by separating the issues of condemnation and explanation. I began by asking: Can one talk about suicide bombers by concentrating on explanation, leaving condemnation aside without this being seen as a form of 'justification'? I soon realised that I could not ignore the specificity of my location in the West. How could I, in the seclusion of academia, try to understand suicide bombing without taking into consideration the fact that such an understanding would conflict with certain political interests? What was needed was an attempt to understand both suicide bombers and the public impulse for a categorical condemnation of them.

Talking suicide bombers in the West: a lecture

As a testing ground for my initial question – Can one understand suicide bombers? – I used a seminar with some of my senior students to try to imagine what an anthropology of the practice of suicide bombing might be like. Primary sources consisted of a number of conversations I had with Palestinians in Australia; secondary material was the body of available literature on suicide bombing. I began the seminar with the following brief definition of the phenomenon – which made a number of my students visibly agitated.

Palestinian suicide bombings are acts of violence directed against the Jewish colonisers of Palestine and their descendants in Israel and the occupied territories, who are seen as continuing the colonial enterprise. Anti-colonial struggles have almost always involved forms of violent resistance on the part of the colonised.[3]

What makes PSBs an uncommon phenomenon and an object of strong condemnation in the West is, above all, that their violence is often, though not always, directed at civilians. The PSBs disrupt the ability of the colonisers to consolidate a 'normal peaceful life' inside the colonial settler state of Israel. As such the PSBs do not respect the Israeli coloniser's division of labour – between the military, who engage in protecting and facilitating the process of colonisation, and the civilian population, who can peacefully enjoy the fruits of this process. Furthermore, the practice is condemned and considered socially pathological because it involves what anthropologists call *self-sacrifice* on the part of the perpetrators.

The most obvious aspect of the PSB phenomenon is that it is a *social fact* in the Durkheimian sense of the word 'social'. It is a social tendency emanating from colonised Palestinian society, and as such it can be explained only as the product of specific social conditions, not as an individual psychological aberration. There is, of course, very little research, let alone statistical data, that can be obtained on the phenomenon. The *Washington Post* journalist Daniel Williams, in an article on the woman suicide bomber Abu Aisheh, estimates that there were 59 acts of suicide bombing in the first 18 months of the second Intifada. Williams also notes that 'the pool of potential bombers seems far from exhausted among despairing, hostile youths of Abu Aisheh's generation'.[4] A *Ha'aretz* article reports on research conducted by Fadal Abu-Hin, a psychology lecturer at Al-Aqsa University in Palestine:

> In April 2001, Abu-Hin conducted a research study among 1,000 young Gaza Strip Palestinians, aged 9 to 16. According to the results he published, over 40 percent of the respondents said that they were actively involved in the Intifada. Over 70 percent said that they wanted to be martyrs. 'If I were to carry out the same study today,' says Abu-Hin, 'I am sure the figures would be even higher,' adding that he believes that similar figures would be found on the West Bank.'[5]

This notion of a 'pool of potential bombers' reminds us of the need to differentiate between the presence of a social disposition towards sacrificing the self (the pool) and the actual practice of sacrificing the self. These are just two of many strands that an anthropology of PSBs would need to untangle.

An anthropology of the practice of suicide bombing is of course a highly unlikely endeavour. It would require the anthropologist

to go into the technical and institutional processes of the practice and would involve fieldwork within such organisations as Hamas and Islamic Jihad. Nevertheless, theorising about what this anthropology might involve can provide us with a more complete sense of the phenomenon and what it entails.

Understanding suicide bombing as a social practice requires first of all an examination of the processes of recruitment, including the structure of the organisations and their recruiting and selection methods. As was made clear in press reports following the emergence of women suicide bombers, and then of 'under-age' suicide bombers, these organisations do not always agree about the social prerequisites of membership. They do agree, however, in their opposition to a laissez-faire suicide bombing, and their primary method of eliminating this possibility is by monopolising the manufacture and availability of the explosives used in these acts. But these organisations are also in competition over members; each bombing produces a form of symbolic anti-colonial capital that in turn attracts more members. A higher number of bombers and of successful bombings also invites further support from those behind the financing of such operations. To be sure, this is not a market situation where a person emerges from the pool of potential bombers and then proceeds to choose the organisation she or he wants. It is more likely that these organisations play an active role in the formation of the pool; they might have special relations of care, kinship, friendship or patronage with potential bombers, perhaps even before they become potential bombers.

An anthropology of PSBs would also examine the technology of violence used in suicide bombings: manufacturing, distribution, and modes of training; the art of handling, wearing and detonating explosives; how to infiltrate Israeli territory, what networks of infiltration exist, and the art of passing as a Jew; how to target and approach one's target; the art of staying cool as the time for detonating the explosives approaches; and so on. It is likely that this whole process is grounded in an exceptionally masculine culture, and this too needs to be examined.

As mentioned above, the anthropologist is unlikely to have access to this kind of information; it is the reserve of the recruiting organisations themselves and the various secret service agencies that might have succeeded in infiltrating them. Yet we have already begun to confront the nature of the violence perpetrated by the PSBs. Is it terrorism? What does 'terrorism' mean? This is an issue that the anthropologist needs to clarify before he or she

can understand the nature of the phenomenon being analysed.

What is meant by 'terrorism' has never been very clear. Through its intensive strategic usage on the political market by the media and politicians, it has become further loaded with ideological assumptions. From what I have read so far, it seems, unfortunately, that many analysts have added more confusion to the concept as they have struggled with a definition. No author, for instance, has made it clear whether he or she is undertaking an analysis of terrorism as such or of terrorist organisations. To my mind, terrorism is clearly a *form* of political violence. Terrorist organisations, on the other hand, are *groups* for whom terrorism is a core political practice. Thus it is unsatisfactory when analysts who claim to be studying terrorism (a form of violence) concentrate solely on terrorist organisations, as if they have a monopoly over this form of violence.[6] But the terrorists and their intellectual sympathisers' claims that the state (whether it is a colonial state or not) is a 'terrorist' organisation are also analytically unhelpful.[7]

Two clarifying remarks have to be made. First, if a state uses terrorism, that does not make it a terrorist organisation. Terrorist organisations are groups that rely solely, or mostly, on violence to attain their political objectives. States might use terrorism as an element that helps them maintain power, but it is unlikely that they would rely on it exclusively or mainly. Second, some go as far as describing any coercive aspect of the state as terrorism. Accusations of that sort used to be commonly made against capitalist states by such groups as the Red Brigade and the Baader-Meinhof gang.[8] It should be made clear that although the coercive aspect of the capitalist state is by no means unimportant and might include terrorism in certain cases, it is incorrect to equate any form of coerciveness with terrorism. Terrorism is a violence that directly aims to kill and destroy, even when its ultimate aim is to exert a form of 'psychological violence'.

So I think it is somewhat pretentious (not to mention insensitive) to deny that someone who blows himself up in the middle of a teenage disco, murdering young people and wreaking havoc, is a terrorist. On the other hand, we need to question the way we are invited to uncritically think of a particular form of violence as being 'the worst possible kind of violence' just by merely classifying it as 'terrorist'. Mark Twain's description of postrevolutionary France in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* holds true for many political realities throughout history:

There were two 'Reigns of Terror,' if we would but remember and
consider it; the one wrought murder in hot passions, the other in
heartless cold blood ... the one inflicted death upon a thousand
persons, the other upon a hundred million; but our shudders are all
for the 'horrors' of minor Terror ... A city cemetery could contain
the coffins filled by that brief Terror ... but all France could hardly
contain the coffins filled by that older and real Terror ... which none
of us has been taught to see in its vastness or pity as it deserved.[9]

Twain's 'none of us have been taught to see' points to perhaps
the most important aspect of the classification 'terrorist': it involves
a form of symbolic violence that forces us to normalise certain
forms of violence and pathologise others.[10] This is an invitation to
the social analyst to think of terrorism as part of the struggle
between states and opposing groups: first, over the distribution of
means of violence, and second, and more importantly, over the
classification of the forms of violence in the world, particularly of
what constitutes legitimate violence.

Terrorism is not the worst kind of violence that humans are
capable of. The 59 suicide bombings of the first 18 months of the
second Intifada have killed 125 Israelis. Compared with the
violence the Israelis have inflicted on the Palestinians before the
recent murderous invasion of the West Bank, let alone after, suicide
bombings represent a minimal form of violence in Israel and
Palestine today in terms of the number of deaths they cause, the
psychological damage they inflict on people, and the damage to
property they bring about. The fact that we approach suicide
bombing with such trepidation – as opposed to the way we
approach the violence of colonial domination, for example – is an
indication of the symbolic violence that continues to shape our
understanding of what constitutes ethically and politically
illegitimate violence. Indeed, the fact that terrorist groups never
classify themselves as terrorists, instead calling themselves revo-
lutionaries, martyrs, nationalists or freedom fighters, is an
indication of the depth of this symbolic violence. If we accept a
less morally outraged and more empirical conception of terrorism
– as a form of violence specific to a mode of distribution of the
means of violence – there is no necessary contradiction between
martyr or *freedom fighter* and *terrorist*. This does not make
terrorist violence less condemnable for those who want to condemn
violence; it does, however, make us question why it is terrorist
violence that is always at the centre of a condemnation/non-

condemnation problematic and not other, relatively more lethal forms of violence. This is especially so when terrorist violence is considered affectively 'theirs' by a majority of the population from which the terrorists emerge. This is different from the violence of the self-styled radical groups of the 1960s, such as the Japanese Red Brigade or the American Weathermen, who were affectively almost on their own when they engaged in violence.

For the many Arabs who invest a lot of political affect into the Palestinian struggle, terrorist violence is a violence of last resort. As a Palestinian Australian put it to me: 'Let the Americans give us the monopoly over nuclear power in the region and the strongest army there is and we are happy to do "incursions" and hunt down wanted Israeli terrorists by demolishing their houses and "accidentally" killing civilians. Who would want to be a suicide bomber if such a luxurious mode of fighting is available to us. You can kill more Israelis and the world will think you are more civilised!' Suicide bombings are seen here as a marriage between the necessity for resistance and a state of quantitative and qualitative military hardware deprivation.

It is this logic of necessity that is also emphasised by Michael Neuman, a professor of philosophy at Trent University in Ontario. In a piece widely circulated on the Internet, he argues that he sees no moral problem in the Palestinians' deliberate killing of civilians. Using as an example the Native Americans' deliberate killing of white children during their resistance to colonisation, he argues that sometimes, even certain acts that are terrible and cruel can be justified. The American Indians, he points out, had their very existence as people threatened, and in such a situation, 'every single white person, down to the children, was an enemy'. They were 'doomed without resistance' and therefore, 'they had no alternative'. For Neuman, the Palestinians are facing a similar situation:

> Like the Indians, the Palestinians have nowhere to go ... Like the Indians, the Palestinians have not the slightest chance of injuring, let alone defeating Israel through conventional military tactics. Like the whites, every single Israeli Jew, down to and including the children are instruments wielded against the Palestinian people.
>
> The Palestinians don't set out to massacre children, that is, they don't target daycare centers. They merely hit soft targets, and this sometimes involves the death of children. But, like anyone, they will kill children to prevent the destruction of their society ... And if the

only effective way of stopping their mortal enemies involved targeting daycare centers, that would be justified too. No people would do anything less to see they did not vanish from the face of the earth. [11]

This text clearly speaks to the logic embedded in the way Israelis and Palestinians approach each other today. Many consider the imbalance of power – Israeli might and strength versus the Palestinians' struggle to survive – as a sufficient explanation of the suicide bombers' actions. This is definitely how many people in the Arab world, sitting in their lounge rooms watching the news, see it: a real gladiator show featuring the Israeli Goliath and the Palestinian David, inspiring, of course, a total affective identification with the latter. In this unequal struggle, the Palestinians are always imagined on the verge of being squashed, and with them all the Arab masses' aspirations of a dignified life. The suicide bombers become a sign that the Palestinians have not been broken. They are a sign of life. For what better sign of life is there, in such violent conditions, than the capacity to hurt despite the greater capacity of the other to hurt you?

Violence here has no other function than to symbolise the survival of a Palestinian will. There is no room for Fanon's lyrical 'Violence alone, violence committed by the people, violence organised and educated by the people's leaders, makes it possible for the masses to understand social truths and gives the key to them.'[12] Indeed it could be argued that suicide bombings are inherently antidemocratic practices in that they elevate the militancy of the few and encourage the passivity of the majority, rather than their participation. As such they reflect the absence of democratic institutions within Palestinian society (whether or not they are possible in a colonial situation is another question). There are echoes here of the great Marxist debates between the Trotskyites and others about the role of violence and terrorism in bringing about revolutionary change.[13] Unfortunately, again because of the absence of democratic institutions, no such debates have emerged within Palestinian society.[14]

From an explanatory point of view, however, Neuman's Hobbesian, state-of-nature analysis falls short. It risks normalising the situation rather than recognising it as the product of a non-viable political framework, one in which Palestinians have continued to experience a sense of being assaulted (the continued expansion of settlements, people arrested or humiliated, etc). It

is only because of the failure of the political that such a 'state of nature' becomes the cultural norm, and violence emerges as a genuine and apparently reasonable possibility. As David Held lucidly wrote in an article that appeared just after the attacks of 11 September:

> The news (in October 2001) of an increasingly intense pattern of extra-judicial, outlaw killings (organized, targeted murders) on both sides of the Israeli-Palestine conflict compounds anxieties of the breakdown of the rule of law, nationally and internationally. This way only leads one way; that is toward Hobbes's state of nature: the 'warre of every one against every one' – life as 'solitary, poore, brutish, and short.'[15]

That one can come to consider such a 'brutish' state of affairs a norm is a sad indication of how far the situation has moved from the logic of political negotiations and solutions.

The PSBs' *Illusio*

It is possible from what has been examined so far, and from an understanding of the daily horrors, humiliations and degradations that constitute colonised Palestinian society, to present an explanation of how some Palestinians develop, in turn, a 'brutish', dehumanised abstract conception of Israeli human beings, a conception that facilitates the task of committing mass murder without any sense of guilt.[16] More difficult to explain, however, is the suicide component of Palestinian suicide bombing. Why have young people embraced the culture of 'martyrdom'? To begin to answer this question, we need to try to understand what kind of suicide suicide bombing involves. Starting with Emile Durkheim's conceptions of egoistic and altruistic suicide, we would note that PSBs do not really fit either of these categories, though they have a stronger likeness to the latter.[17]

In a forward to a study initiated in the late 1990s, focusing on suicide and attempted suicide among Palestinians living on the West Bank, Rita Giacaman, a professor of public health at Bir Zeit University, noted the existence of 'chronic protracted stress, emanating out of poverty, oppression and a sense of powerlessness brought about by war'. She adds, however: 'Despite these seemingly harsh conditions, the author found surprisingly low levels of suicide and attempted suicide, even when taking into account undocumented cases, and certainly much lower than the

levels in industrialised societies ... Although this study focused on those who are unable to cope, in fact, it spoke forcefully of the resilience and internal strength of the rest of the population.'[18] Clearly, the conditions of occupation lead to strong forms of communal solidarity and interdependence, and thus make egoistic suicide unlikely. Giacaman points out that during the first 18 months of the second Intifada (before the Israeli invasion):

[The] escalation of army violence, excessive use of force, siege conditions, destruction of infrastructure and economy and the shelling and bombardment of civilian areas, including partial periodic re-occupation by the Israeli army, the loss of lives – over 1000 martyrs to date, mostly young men – and the serious disabilities resulting from injury are only some of the characteristics of daily life. Yet ... communal support is at its peak and is provided in every way: families house other families whose homes are destroyed; houses damaged by shelling and bombing are fixed with the speed of light compared to the normal local standards; and resources, although very scarce, are shared in unprecedented proportions.

This does not make clear, though, whether or not the suicidal tendencies of the PSBs are the result of too much communal solidarity in a warring situation, which leads to a lessening of the sense of individuality among Palestinian youth. These are the conditions of what Durkheim calls *altruistic suicide*. This term may partially describe the Palestinian case, but it misses a crucial aspect: the youth culture from which the PSBs emerge, particularly in the Palestinian refugee camps, is not only conducive to solidarity; it is also highly masculine and highly competitive. That is, even when struggling 'in the name of the community', Palestinian youth do not lose their sense of individuality. They engage in a form of competition for symbolic capital: the surreal practice of throwing stones at the coloniser's tanks in the streets. In this field, the courage to face the tank, cop the rubber bullet and risk death gives an individual youth the highest cultural capital possible, and ends in a heroic consecration of the youth, whether he is alive or dead. There is already a suicidal tendency at work in this practice, well before its 'flowering' in the form of suicide bombing. But this is not all. Such practices also point to one of the core paradoxes that constitute suicide bombings. They are at the same time acts that aim to put the self in danger of annihilation and acts that seek to

accumulate personal status and boost self-esteem. A traditional conception of suicide as a desire to self-destruct and a lack of interest in living a meaningful life is particularly unsuited to explain such a phenomenon.

In an astonishingly ethnocentric piece analysing the relationship between globalisation and terrorism, driven by its final punchline – 'one of the most ancient rituals of our species, human sacrifice, has also succumbed to globalisation' – leading German intellectual Hans Magnus Enzensberger constructs a kind of McDonald's Terrorism Burger, with the same ingredients and taste around the globe. According to Enzensberger, 'practically all terrorist activities have one characteristic in common that is hard to overlook: the protagonists' self-destructive tendencies'. Yet, he argues,

> the West has persistently underestimated the power of this collective craving for self-mutilation, not to say suicide. As it is apparently not sufficient for us to reflect on our own recent past in order to throw a little more light on the seemingly incomprehensible, it is perhaps necessary to risk a heuristic comparison with phenomena closer to home. A consideration of some aspects of our so-called highly developed societies quickly reveals how widespread is the desire for a personal Armageddon: drug addicts and skinheads deliberately deprive themselves of any opportunity to make something of their lives, and daily we hear reports of 'family tragedies' and gunmen going on the rampage … In all such cases the motives for self-destruction are secondary, and often the perpetrators themselves cannot articulate them.[19]

It is somewhat ironic to speak simultaneously of PSBs and talk about people 'deliberately depriv[ing] themselves any opportunity to make something of their lives', since one of the key features of Palestinian society today is precisely the *social unavailability* of any opportunity to make something of one's life. This is particularly the case in the refugee camps from which most of the suicide bombers emerge. This is one of the most important factors that we need to consider when trying to understand the emergence of the PSBs. It is also a key factor in explaining the paradox referred to above: of a self aiming to abolish itself and seek self-esteem in the same act.

Pierre Bourdieu's idea that society is primarily a mechanism for the generation of meanings for life, which I examined in Chapter 1, is of immense importance here. Bourdieu sees society

as distributing opportunities for people to 'make a life for themselves', to invest themselves in life, what he calls *illusio*:[20] the deep belief in the importance of our life pursuits. In the popular conception of suicide reproduced by Enzensberger, life is full of meaningful offerings, and suicide is the rejection of all such social offerings. But for Bourdieu, meaningfulness is not always offered by society. Indeed, society is characterised by a deep inequality in the distribution of meaningfulness. As we have already quoted him as saying, 'One of the most unequal of all distributions, and probably, in any case, the most cruel, is the distribution of ... social importance and of reasons for living.'[21] When people face a shrinking of their opportunities to realise their selves they suffer from 'social ageing'.[22]

In this sense, we can argue that colonised Palestinian society produces a generalised form of premature social ageing, even of social death: a situation where there is felt to be an almost complete absence of the possibility of a worthy life. This tragicomic summing up of the situation by a Palestinian man I interviewed in Sydney conveys at least the subjective experience of this social impasse:

> What we end up having [in Palestine] is the most unusual situation. The Israelis monopolize everything. They monopolize nuclear weapons, they monopolize tanks, planes, what else ... They monopolize the land, they monopolize the water ... what else ... They even monopolize moral virtue ... you know, democracy and freedom of speech, and they monopolize the capacity to write the history of our land ... But they are not only content with this; after monopolizing all this and colonizing us to the bones, they also monopolize victimhood! To my knowledge, no colonizer has ever succeeded in monopolizing even victimhood ... just our luck! We say: 'Hey, you're hurting us', and they say, 'Don't you know how hurt we are? Haven't you heard of the Holocaust!' They are suffocating us, and when we try to push them away a little bit so we can breathe, they say: 'We're being victimized. You don't recognize we exist.' How on earth you can not recognize the existence of someone as fat as Sharon sitting on top of you suffocating you, I don't know!

An investigation by the Institute of Community and Public Health at Bir Zeit University conducted during the first period of the second Intifada (2000–2001) and focusing on Bir Zeit University undergraduates notes: 'Our students generally have an

inability to dream, an inability to visualize a better future than their hopelessly miserable current life offers.'[23] Nothing symbolises social death as clearly or as forcefully as this inability to dream a meaningful life. But this generalised state of social death does not in itself directly cause suicide bombers. Indeed, such a state can as likely cause the emergence of the classical alcoholic postcolonial culture of despair and resignation. The difference in this particular bleak social landscape is the development of a martyr culture. It seems to me that it is here that the suicide bombing as a meaningful activity – as an *illusio* – emerges.

The development of the culture of martyrdom in Palestinian society is an object of historical examination. The obvious point of departure is the perceived military success of the Hizb'allah suicide bombers in south Lebanon and the willingness of other Islamicist organisations in the West Bank and Gaza to copy them. But from an anthropological point of view, what is important is that once the first act of suicide bombing occurred, it was immediately followed by a culture of glorification of self-sacrifice, which became further reproduced as more suicide bombings occurred, until this culture of glorification became an entrenched part of Palestinian colonised society. The culture of martyrdom, with the high social esteem (symbolic capital) it bestows on the 'martyrs' themselves (the funeral processions, the speeches, the photos filling the streets and so forth, plus the relative wealth and social support their families receive), stands against the background of social death described above. It reveals itself for many Palestinian young people as a path of social meaningfulness and self-fulfilment in an otherwise meaningless life. The culture of martyrdom is an astonishing manifestation of the capacity of the human imagination – individuals commit themselves to a path that leads to an imagined enjoyable symbolic life following the cessation of their physical life. It is a swapping of physical existence for symbolic existence.

Let us be reminded once more of Bourdieu's conception of social life: 'Through the social games it offers, the social world provides something more and other than the apparent stakes: the chase, Pascal reminds us, counts as much as, if not more than, the quarry, and there is a happiness in activity which exceeds the visible profits – wage, prize or reward – and which consists in the fact of emerging from indifference (or depression), being occupied, projected towards goals, and feeling oneself objectively, and therefore subjectively, endowed with a social mission.'[24] This is

how Bourdieu defines the way society invites us to live. In the case of Palestinian colonised society, it is also how it can invite us to die. The struggle to accumulate symbolic capital ('the chase') defines for Bourdieu the essence of how we make our lives worthy of living. But here we are faced with a peculiar 'chase': the accumulation of death as a mode of seeking a meaningful life. There emerges a paradoxical social category: suicidal capital.

In his analysis of boxers and the way they come to invest themselves in the sport, Loic Wacquant points out that the violence and pain that people are confronted with in the streets of the ghetto play an important role in shaping the boxer's disposition and his inclination to take up boxing as a means for making a viable life.[25] In the case of the suicide bomber it is likewise not enough to say that suicide bombing is a way to create a meaningful life; a person must be predisposed to take such an action. It is here that the stone throwing fields mentioned above play an essential role. They become almost an institutional preparatory ground for the formation of suicide bombers. But these fields are themselves the culmination of a history of violence structured by the particularities of Israeli colonialism. Indeed, it is impossible to understand the disposition towards self-sacrifice without understanding the unusually suffocating nature of Israeli colonialism. Talking about suicide bombers, Giacaman also argues: 'Their stressful and desperate life events do not only relate to what is taking place in their lives now, but more importantly, to the fact that they have chronically been violated, have been cumulatively disadvantaged, beginning in early life, and have undergone series of subsequent experiences that accumulated over time to produce in youth the disadvantages, inclinations, and behaviour that we see today.'[26] Perhaps what characterises Israeli colonialism most is that it is driven by an unusually consuming search for a point of 'zero vulnerability'. The popular support for such a political path is clearly shaped by the sense of insecurity that many Israeli Jews have acquired through their deep internalisation of centuries of anti-Semitism and 50-odd years of Arab anti-colonial enmity. Usually, the expectation of achieving something as extraordinary as 'zero vulnerability' is very hard to sustain. In Israel, however, the euphoric military victories of the 1967 war, the entrenched images of smashed retreating Arab armies that accompanied it, and the continuing overwhelming superiority of the Israeli military combine to make such expectations more sustainable.

This search for zero vulnerability produces a gaze that sees

threats everywhere and ends up reproducing the very vulnerability it is supposedly trying to overcome. It is reminiscent of the gaze of 'order' well captured by Elias Canetti in *The Human Province* and referred to by Zygmut Bauman: 'The paradox of order ('the ludicrous thing about order', in Canetti's expression) is that it wants to be so total and all-embracing while it "depends on so little. A hair, literally a hair, lying where it shouldn't, can separate order from disorder. Everything that does not belong where it is, is hostile. Even the tiniest thing is disturbing: a man of total order would have to scour his realm with a microscope, and even then a remnant of potential nervousness will remain in him".'[27]

Indeed, this is how Soraya Asmar, a Palestinian Australian, describes life in Palestine: 'The very existence of anything or anyone Palestinian is perceived as a potential threat to the security of Israel. Be it an office, a farm, a bank, a bakery, a fruit stall, a family home – if you are born Palestinian, anything to do with you is branded "security risk" and is therefore vulnerable to elimination.'[28]

It is this relentless search for anything that might cause 'vulnerability' that characterises Israeli colonialism most from the perspective of the Palestinians, for any aspect of life where there is a hint of independent political Palestinian will is considered a threat. These attempts to eliminate Palestinian political will have led Baruch Kimmerling, professor of sociology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, to speak of 'politicide', arguing that it should be considered a crime against humanity on a par with genocide.[29]

Interestingly, even many on the left, in Israel, prefer their Palestinians without a political will. Anti-colonial resistance by the Palestinians is perceived as undermining the efforts of the left to reform the dominant Israeli mentality. As the chorus of 'disappointed' so-called peace supporters that follows any form of Palestinian anti-colonial violence indicates, such leftists prefer their Palestinians to be passive so that they can be safely 'left' about them. They see their leftism and radicalism as part of the story of 'Israel, the American-style democracy'. After all, what's an American-style democracy if it doesn't have its radicals and its decimated indigenous people for the radicals to be radical about? For such leftists, the violent resistance of the Palestinian people stands in the way, between them and their radicalism. The sooner the Palestinians swap the bombs for bottles of whisky or gin the better. Then the radical leftists could become truly radical and outraged about the conditions of the Palestinian people – without

anyone violently disrupting their leftism. They could thus follow
in the footsteps of their successful American and Australian
brothers and sisters, where it's nice, and certainly very safe, to be
radically pro-Indigenous or pro-Indian, since any organised anti-
colonial resistance has been broken and there is no longer a
practical anti-colonial *will* capable of disrupting the process of
colonial settlement.

More importantly for us, however, this 'politicidal' drive, as it
is implemented on a daily basis by the Israeli colonisers, generates
the affective condition many Palestinians consider as one of the
main factors behind the rise of suicide bombings: colonial
humiliation. Humiliation is the experience of being psychologically
demeaned – treated like less than a human being by someone more
powerful than you, without having any capacity to redress the
situation. This is experienced not only at a national level – though
the experience of having another nation enter your territory at will,
arrest your leaders and talk about them as if they are disposable
entities is clearly and significantly humiliating. It is also experienced
at a personal level: being shouted at, abused, searched, stopped,
ordered around, checked, asked to wait, 'allowed to pass', and
so on.[30]

In a piece with Deleuzian and Spinozan resonances, the
philosopher Alphonso Lingis provides an excellent description of
how mundane slights are internalised by an individual and how
the resulting affect gnaws at his or her very being:

> In a social gathering, you find yourself exposed to a caustic or
> demeaning remark cast your way. Had you been strong in social
> skills, you would have met the blow with a repartee that would have
> ended in laughter. Had you been very strong, you would have
> surprised the aggressor with a put-down so witty he would have
> found himself unable not to laugh at himself. But you could only
> mumble something witless, and the fencer turned away to a worthier
> opponent. You feel wounded, mortified. The blow was delivered
> and the aggressor turned away; the feeling does not pass. You find
> yourself unable to be fully present to the sallies and rebounds of the
> crackling banter about you. Back in your room, unable to sleep, you
> go over the wound, probing it, feeling it, verifying the pain. In the
> trace of the aggression you secrete the image of the aggressor.
> Having been unable to parry the blow at the time or answer it with
> a counter-blow, you strike out at that image: you disparage,
> denigrate, vituperate the other, not in his presence, but in his image.

It goes on for hours, for days. How much longer and how much stronger resentment is than was the pain felt in the encounter itself! Your impotence to engage the aggressive force and discharge the pain prolongs itself in this stoked violence.[31]

One can only imagine how much more powerful this affect, this stoked violence, is when the situation described by Lingis is a structured, enduring, and daily encounter with a colonial aggressor whom you cannot ever hope to have 'the strength' to be witty against. Alphonso Lingis allows us an insight into the colonial circulation of affect, without which an understanding of the social conditions of the emergence of suicide bombers cannot be complete.[32] And it is also here that we reconnect with the terrorist organisations responsible for the recruitment and formation of suicide bombers. Perhaps their primary function and the secret of their success is that they are mechanisms for the channelling of this colonial affect, transforming the stoked violence born out of colonial impotence into anti-colonial potency.

End of the seminar: are suicide bombers human beings like us?
A student came up to me after the seminar. 'I wasn't very comfortable during some parts of this talk,' she said. 'You've made it seem as if suicide bombers are ordinary human beings.' This struck me as true. But isn't that what is always at stake in social explanations?

This is why it is not surprising that it is often Arabs or Arab sympathisers who, in the political market of condemnation of suicide bombers, counter these populist condemnations with equally populist attempts at social explanation. In demanding or proposing a social explanation, regardless of whether or not the explanation is satisfactory, Arabs are demanding to be included as part of humanity. They're claiming: 'We are not as weird as you think.' Thus, in an open letter to President George W. Bush, the ex-Lebanese Prime Minister Selim el-Hoss asks: 'Those deplorable suicidal operations which you brand as terrorism, have they not ever for a moment prompted you to ask yourself the question: why would a young boy or girl be willing to sacrifice himself or herself with utter peace of mind and full determination? ... How do you label the phenomenon of a whole people standing ready to sacrifice half its numbers in a struggle and martyrdom so that the other half will regain dignity on its own land?'[33]

While on field work (working on the unrelated issue of transnational migration) in a Shi'a village in south Lebanon, a

village studded with photos of young men who died fighting the Israeli occupation of Lebanon, I heard the same argument – expressed in stronger terms – from one of my informants, an educated man and a member of Hizb'allah:

Ali: The Americans pretend not to understand the suicide bombers and consider them evil. But I am sure they do. As usual, they are hypocrites. What is so strange about saying: 'I am not going to let you rob me of all my humanity and all my will?' What is so strange about saying: 'I'd rather kill you on my own terms and kill myself with you than be led to my death like a sheep on your own terms?'[34] I know that the Americans fully understand this because this is exactly what they were celebrating about the guy who downed the Philadelphia flight on September 11, the one where the hijackers failed to hit their target. Isn't that exactly what he must have said when he decided to kill himself and everyone else by bringing the plane down? Didn't he say to those hijacking him: 'I'd rather kill you on my own terms and kill myself with you than be led to my death like a sheep on your own terms?' They made a hero out of him ...the only hero of September 11. They are hypocrites, the Americans. They know as much as we do that as a human being we all have the capacity to rush enthusiastically to our death if it means dying as a dignified being.

Me (laughing): We are all enthusiasm! (*kulluna hamas*, which also translates as 'We are all Hamas')

Ali (smiling): That's right, comes a time we are all enthusiasm!

Despite its convenient 'forgetting' of the more unsavoury aspects of suicide bombing that were not part of the 'suicide crashing' of the Philadelphia plane, this explanatory attempt can be seen as driven by an attempt to establish a 'common humanity'.[35] This view stands in opposition to the condemning attitude that wants to deny such a common humanity. From a kind of warring disposition towards the suicide bombers, those who can only condemn the PSBs end up sharing with them, at a very general level, the same warring logic. After all, the negation of a common humanity – in its more dramatic form a vision of an abstract dehumanised other where children are not perceived in their children-ness, mothers in their motherliness – is of course inherent to the practice of the Palestinian suicide bomber. Rather than

losing that sense of common humanity ourselves in the rush
to condemnation, those of us driven by the ethics of social
explanation will always want to ask, 'What kind of social con-
ditions must prevail and what kind of history must a people have
internalised to make them lose this capacity of seeing the other in
his or her humanness?' This is not an easy question to ask in the
West today because the West itself is rapidly losing whatever
capacity it had to see the other in his or her humanness.

Exighophobia/homoiophobia: social explanation and the humanity of the other

The rise and dominance of neo-liberal economic policy and its
replacement of the welfare state with the penal state is a well-
documented and researched phenomenon today, especially in the
United States, where the penal state has become a particularly
salient feature of the social structure.[36] Less documented has been
the accompanying backlash against social explanations of crime.
The newspapers' letters to the editor commenting on apprehended
criminals are often accompanied by sarcastic 'and please let's not
hear about his or her deprived childhood'-type statements. There
is a noticeable public division between the minority that still likes
to hear or formulate some kind of social explanation for crime and
a majority that sees any social explanation as a full-blown or
creeping justification, aimed at depriving people of the right to seek
justice through punishment. More than ever, the practice of social
science in this domain becomes itself the object of political struggle.
Social scientists, generally proponents of social explanations, are
often attacked as a privileged group sheltered from the effects of
crime and therefore unable to understand the feelings of the general
population.[37]

It is clear that both zero tolerance towards crime and zero
tolerance towards the social explanation of crime are grounded
in the uncertainties created by what is called globalisation.
Throughout this work, we have amply examined how the latest
cycle of capitalist accumulation, the modalities of class exploitation
it has made necessary, the resulting change in the quality of work
and in the precariousness of people's hold on their employment
have all led to a general climate of insecurity in the face of the
future. We are increasingly witnessing the rise of a culture that
combines a warring and a siege mentality; by necessity, it em-
phasises the eradication of a potentially menacing other.

In a war/siege culture, understanding the other is a luxury that

cannot be afforded. War emphasises the otherness of the other, and divides the world into friends and enemies and good and evil. This war logic is negated in a social explanation that draws on an ethics of social determinism. By proposing that the other is fundamentally like us, social determinism suggests that given a similar history and background, we might find ourselves in the other's place.[38] When we explain an act as the product of a particular history and particular social circumstances, we give its perpetrators some of their humanity back. The ethics of social determinism invites us to think that we might – indeed ought to – put someone like former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic and his followers on trial, not to emphasise how different they are from us. Social determinism reminds us of how depraved *we* human beings can become under certain circumstances, and of how much we need to work against what is worst in ourselves. This is not a negation of responsibility but an affirmation of the importance of both the social conditions of action and the historical conditions of the formation of the acting self – that is, an affirmation of Marx's everlasting dictum that 'we all make history, but not in conditions of our own choosing'.

Social explanation is driven by an inclusionary rather than an exclusionary ethics, and as such it embodies the negation of the logic of war and becomes itself perceived as a political threat in times of war. In the war/siege society, social explanation can disrupt the way both self and society are invited to define and stabilise themselves against an other that has to remain different and unknowable. Social explanation can threaten the warring self with disintegration, which is why it sometimes unleashes such passionate responses. Social explanation is not merely rejected. The threat of the humanised other it carries with it is affectively feared. Thus emerges the couplet of phobias I refer to in the title of this chapter: exighophobia (from the Greek *exigho*, to explain) and homoiophobia (from the Greek *homoio*, the same).[39] In this homoio-exighophobic culture, anyone wishing to *know* and to inquire about the social conditions that might explain a possible rise in criminal offences, for example, or about the social background of asylum seekers, is perceived as inherently suspect, a nuisance if not a traitor. Recently, it was revealed that the Australian government directed its bureaucrats not to issue photos that would 'humanise' the refugees seeking entry to Australia. Note that while people refer to such an attitude toward refugees as xenophobia, what is really feared here is not the otherness of the

other but their sameness – it's homoiophobia, not xenophobia.

Consequently, given its warring imaginary, it is hardly surprising to see that this homoio-exighophobic cultural tendency has emerged even more strongly in relation to the terrorist mass murders of 11 September 2001, and later in relation to the PSBs. The monstrous criminality of the September 11 events and the war climate they helped create understandably made them resistant to social explanation at a popular level. But this very resistance was used by politicians to give the homoio-exighophobic attitude a sense of monopoly over morality. To attempt a sociopolitical explanation of the terrorists' actions or to explain why those acts were supported by large sections of the Arab population was considered sacrilegious and immoral in the post-September 11 market of outrage.[40] In answering the famous question 'Why do they hate us?', anyone who deviated from the Presidential 'They hate us because they hate us', they hate 'our values' and 'our way of life' (that is, they are not humans in the same way we are), was considered not outraged enough and accused of blaming the victim. This is why a group of American politicians referred to a number of critical academics as 'the weak link in America's war against terrorism'.[41] It is this same attitude that also shapes the 'nothing ever justifies suicide bombing' discourse.

Thus in taking the side of social explanation one is clearly not inhabiting a politically neutral position. But it should also be noted that in taking the side of explanation one does not necessarily stand in opposition to the condemnations voiced by politicians. Condemnations of the 'nothing ever justifies' type might well be considered useful when there is a fear of imitation. But clearly, if the aim is to stop the spread of such practices, then knowledge and modification of the social conditions of their emergence is far more effective than the assumption that they are somehow the product of some transposable cultural or religious 'state of mind' disconnected from any social situation, any social conditions, or any specific history, and can therefore be combated solely with moralistic statements of condemnation. Suicide bombings are undoubtedly a form of social evil, but their evil is also the evil of the living conditions from which they emanate. That evil (or sinfulness) resides more in social conditions where the possibilities of a meaningful life are shrinking than in the individuals trying to survive in such conditions. Seeing evil in the conditions rather than in the people is what Roy Bhaskar, following Margaret Archer, powerfully refers to as 'structural sin'.[42] Some politicians might

choose to portray social scientists who detect such structural sins as 'on the other side', but never have these social scientists been more necessary. Now more than ever, we could all benefit from Spinoza's ethical injunction for the intellectual: 'Do not deplore, do not laugh, do not hate, but understand.'

CHAPTER 9

A concluding fable: the gift of care,
or the ethics of pedestrian crossings

Introduction to a pedestrian crossing
Ali Ateeck is a Lebanese factory worker and artist who migrated
to Australia in the late 1970s. He was from a village in South
Lebanon but lived in Beirut from 1969 until he migrated. In
Australia, he lived in Campsie, NSW, a Sydney suburb with a large
Lebanese population. Ali died last year. He was fifty-three. I
interviewed him in 1993. He told me this story about himself:[1]

   AA: I arrived in Sydney in 1979. I was half-mad when I arrived but
   they didn't know ...

   GH: What do you mean ...?!

   AA: Well, I was fine when I applied ... and they gave me the visa ...
   a couple of days later our house received a direct shell. My sister
   and her daughter died ... and I was shell-shocked ... I was never the
   same. I developed a mental condition ... (he starts crying) ... I am
   still not one hundred percent ... I still take tablets ... but it was worse
   ... I used to disappear for days not knowing what I was doing ...
   My brother's family here used to go looking for me ...

   GH: And immigration didn't notice?

   AA: No. It wasn't obvious to begin with, but I got worse when I

came here. I developed this (his right arm was unusually thin). I used to see my sister and niece waving to me from all sort of places. I once jumped from the second floor at my brother's bakery ... I don't do anything like this any more ... I was 'looked after' and I am on medication.

GH: Lucky you weren't killed or something ...

AA: Yes, everyone says it's a miracle I haven't been killed by a car while I was roaming the streets. I used to love crossing Beamish Street (Campsie)!

GH: What do you mean?

AA: Yes, I was often found crossing the street over there near the bank (vaguely pointing in the direction of Beamish Street). I developed a liking for pedestrian crossings (laughing)! I spent hours crossing them and crossing them again. I loved the moment the cars stopped for me! It made me feel important! I thought it was magical!! Can you imagine this happening in Beirut?

GH (laughing): you must have received a few insults along the way, as well, no?!

AA: I can't remember. I had a vague memory of myself crossing after doing it. Like I wasn't totally off the air! I even remember I used to have conversations with people from the village, inviting a few of them to see how the cars stopped. My brother's family returned to Lebanon. They asked me to return with them but I didn't want to. They joked that I wouldn't leave Australia because of the pedestrian crossings. But it's more because I'm scared that I wouldn't be well looked after if I have a nervous breakdown. I went to Lebanon three years ago and I had a breakdown. I didn't like how I was treated. Here, no matter what, your honour is protected, you are a human being ...

I want to use Ali Ateek's account of his encounter with the pedestrian crossing to reflect on the nature of 'social obligations'. I want to do this because something strange is happening to this most ethical of concepts. Borrowing from the imaginary of neo-liberal economics with which their minds are saturated, the latter-day peddlers of 'mutual obligation' have emptied it of its ethical content. Equating it with trite capitalist common sense of the 'you

don't get something for nothing' variety, they want to leave us with an impoverished enterprise bargaining-like concept that conjures up ideas of contractual rather than ethical compulsion. It is the nature of this ethical compulsion at the heart of the notion of 'mutual obligation', as well as the social conditions of its prevalence, that Ali's story can help us recuperate.

The pedestrian crossing as a social gift

Ali experiences 'magical' time at the crossing. The magic is not only due to the 'unimaginable' idea of cars stopping for a pedestrian. Magic is also a kind of buzz generated by the moment of recognition Ali gets from cars stopping for him. It is what he experiences as being made to feel 'important'. 'Important' here is not linked so much to social status as to existential status: the recognition of one's 'importance' as a human being. The magic of the crossing for Ali is that it *offers* this moment of recognition. That we speak of this recognition, along with the bit of space to cross the road that comes with it, as 'offerings' allows us to capture their nature as forms of 'social gifts', gifts that society offers its members.

There are of course a multitude of ways in which pedestrians and drivers negotiate a pedestrian crossing. There are drivers who would simply stop for the pedestrian no matter what – except maybe if they are taking someone who is seriously injured to a hospital. There are drivers who see crossings as a place to compete with pedestrians over who gets to cross first. There are drivers who stop in a matter of fact manner and drivers who expect to be thanked. But of course the same driver can behave at a crossing differently according to the mood they are in, if they are in a hurry or not, if they slept well or not, and maybe according to their previous experiences of stopping at pedestrian crossings. For, of course, just as drivers stop in different ways, crossings are also crossed in many ways by pedestrians. There are pedestrians who express gratitude and pedestrians who cross arrogantly. There are pedestrians who cross absentmindedly and those who are very conscious of the traffic. There are those who cross treating cars as enemies and those who cross trying to cause minimal disruption to the traffic.

But this plurality of modes of interaction, in all its richness, should not conceal the underlying – and by far the most important – aspect of the phenomenon: a pedestrian crossing is an ethical structural fact. It is a space where the dominant mode of occupying and circulating on roads, driving, is requested by social law to yield

to a marginalised form of road occupancy, walking. This is what constitutes its ethical component and its character as a social gift. It is social because even when it is an individual driver who 'offers' the pedestrian the possibility of crossing, what the driver is offering, or perhaps, better still, conveying, is really society's gift to the pedestrian. Otherwise there would be no difference between a pedestrian crossing and a crossing created by a driver who chooses to stop for a pedestrian at an unmarked part of a road. The fact that a pedestrian crossing embodies a social compulsion, a social law, that says 'drivers must stop' is what makes it a gift offered by society. No conjunctural practice – short of a law abolishing it – can change the nature of this space. What changes within it are the modes drivers use to 'convey' the gift and the modes people choose for receiving it. As we have already seen, there are drivers who offer the gift gracefully and those who offer it grudgingly. There are pedestrians who receive the gift gracefully and those who receive it arrogantly or nonchalantly. There are those who snatch it and those who are grateful for it being offered to them. But underneath all these possible modes of interaction remains the fact of the crossing as a structurally present ethical space. A space where people can enact a ritual of stopping and crossing, and through which society affirms itself as civilised (that is, ethical), as a place where it is understood that dominant modes of inhabitance need to yield, in some circumstances, to marginal modes of inhabitance.

It is this gift which Ali became so strongly aware of in his madness. In Ali's narrative there are two stories in which he receives gifts with a similar ethical content: the story of Ali the pedestrian and the story of Ali the mentally ill migrant. While Ali the pedestrian was being made to feel important by negotiating the crossing, Ali the mentally ill migrant was being 'well taken care of' and made to feel 'like a human being', as he put it, thanks to the mental care he received in Australia. The latter preserved his 'honour', he tells us. Both spaces offered gifts of recognition and valorisation and were contrasted with Lebanese spaces in which Ali felt devalorised and dishonoured.

The social gift, the honourable society and the nature of 'mutual obligation'

In Ali's account, the gifts of valorisation and recognition at the pedestrian crossing and in the domain of mental care end up forming the basis of his commitment to not follow his brother back to Lebanon but to stay in Australia instead. Here lies the

importance of dwelling on the 'gift' nature of these social phe-
nomena. It is from such socio-ethical offerings of recognition that
'mutual obligation' emerges in society. The term is the signifier of
an ethical structure of reciprocity that can only exist and be
reproduced in societies that valorise, or better still, in Ali's
language, *honour* their members. It is when we have a society
which, through the bodies that govern it, feels 'obligated' to offer
spaces that 'honour' its members as 'important' human beings, and
when these members, in turn, experience an ethical obligation
towards it – which means nothing other than becoming practically
and affectively committed to it, caring about it – that we have a
structure of 'mutual obligation'.

While it is common to see gift exchange and reciprocity as
'horizontal' relations between groups or individuals, many of those
who have reflected on the nature of the gift and social reciprocity
have seen the importance of this 'vertical' relation between
individuals and society. Marcel Mauss's classic work on the gift is
the first to link gift exchange systematically with questions of
honour and obligation. But he also links it to the 'vertical exchange'
that occurs when groups make offerings to their gods in thanks
for what the gods have made available to them. Mauss famously
reduces gift exchange to three obligations: the obligation to give,
the obligation to receive, and the obligation to give back.[2] Gift
exchange, he stresses, involves not only the exchange of 'things'
but also the symbolic exchange of recognition. It reproduces our
material relations with other people, but in so doing also
reproduces communal living in general, which is the essence of
our sociality.

This aspect of Mauss has been perhaps most developed in
Claude Lévi-Strauss's analysis of reciprocity in his *The Elementary
Structures of Kinship*.[3] Lévi-Strauss shows us that in exchanging
recognition we are reproducing our basic humanity. Reciprocal
obligations are not only obligations towards other people, he
argues, but obligations towards our own sociality and our desire
to live communally. Generally speaking, then, a society maintains
itself as an ethical community only by continually offering to its
people the very ethical conditions it wants them to be 'obligated'
to reproduce. This point emerges in Georg Simmel's important
analysis of faithfulness and gratitude.

Simmel sees faithfulness as a 'psychic state' that comes to exist
when people are committed not so much to each other as to the
relation they have to each other. This idea of a relation to the

relation is the basis of what we have called 'vertical' reciprocity. As Simmel puts it:

> Faithfulness refers to the peculiar feeling which is not directed toward the possession of the other as the possessor's eudemonistic good, nor toward the other's welfare as an extrinsic, objective value, but towards the preservation of the relationship to the other.
> ... [It is] a specific psychic state, which is directed toward the continuance of the relation as such, independently of any particular affective or volitional elements that sustain the content of this relation. This psychic state of the individual is one of the a priori conditions of society which alone makes society possible (at least as we know it), in spite of the extraordinary differences of degree in which this psychic state exists.[4]

He develops a similar point concerning the importance of gratitude:

> Although we are often unaware of its fundamentally important existence, and although it is interwoven with innumerable other motivations, nevertheless, it gives human actions a unique modification and intensity: it connects them with what has gone before, it enriches them with the element of personality, it gives them the continuity of interactional life.[5]

Let us go back to our pedestrian crossing and imagine occurring on it an exceptionally civilised encounter: a driver stops even though s/he could have passed, and the pedestrian says 'thank you' even though s/he doesn't have to. In this inter-subjective moment of mutual exchange and mutual recognition, two people acknowledge each other. But in so doing they also acknowledge their common belonging to a society committed to honouring its members. They thank each other. But in so doing they are grateful to the society to which they belong and which laid the structural foundations for such a moment to occur. At one 'horizontal' level, the driver has offered, the pedestrian has received and given back. But at another level, a 'vertical' level, both have been offered something by society, both have received it, and both have given back precisely by living the ethical moment: by assuming responsibility for it and thus reproducing the ethical foundation of society. As an Arab saying has it: the society that honours its members honours itself.

On the obligation to rid ourselves of neo-liberal government

The ethics of 'mutual obligation' is very far, then, from 'you don't get something for nothing'. In the 'mutual obligation' imagined by today's political class, society gives us social security and other quantifiable economic and material benefits and that is enough to ask us to give back not only equally quantifiable labour and productivity but also faithfulness and gratitude. This concept of reciprocity reduces the state's obligation to a delivery of services and empties it of all that is ethical: honour, recognition, community, sociality, humanity. The fact that we might give the unemployed some benefits but dishonour them in the very process of giving it to them, treat them as if they do not deserve what they are getting, as if they are a lesser breed of humanity, is immaterial to the neo-liberal economic mind that has colonised our governmental institutions: we've given, we want something back. That's all that matters. If one gives that way, one might be entitled to ask for something back, but whatever it is, it does not come under the umbrella of mutual obligation. There is no mutual obligation where there is no honouring and recognition of the moral worth of all those others – Indigenous people, migrants, accepted refugees, pensioners, single mothers, etc – whom the government is expecting to 'give back'.

At the heart of this suppression of the dimension of recognition is an even deeper misconception: an *unethical* belief that reciprocity begins the moment we benefit from living in a particular society. As soon as we enter social life, so to speak, we have been given something by society and therefore we have to return it. Society – or, more directly, the state – gives first and we live our lives trying to give back; this is how social reciprocity begins and keeps on going.

In what is perhaps an early unwitting construction of neo-liberal commonsense into a metapsychology, the psychologist George Homans argues that children are constructed as inferior and subordinate to their parents through receiving gifts they cannot reciprocate except through blind obedience to the parent-givers.[6] The thesis is reasonably seductive, and certainly contains an element of truth. It is particularly seductive because it appears to bring to the surface a dimension of gift-giving to children that is not merely hidden – it is actively repressed. For parents who lovingly shower their kids with presents it would not be easy to acknowledge that they are also inferiorising the children in the process. But like the neo-liberal economic state that sees reciprocity

as beginning with what the state gives its citizens, this psychology fails to acknowledge that people whose presence we welcome into this world are always already perceived as bringing an initial, primary, gift with them. It is the gift of their very presence.

When I give my child a present, I feel that she has offered me the gift of her presence well before I have given her anything. I am not initiating the cycle of reciprocity; I am giving back. This is perhaps very obvious in the case of a loved child. But does not any human being we encounter carry such an a priori gift insofar as we recognise in them a fellow human being? In this sense, giving to any human being is always giving back, since we receive the gift of that person's presence at the very moment we first encounter him or her. This is why to give is an obligation for Mauss as well as for Lévi-Strauss. Simmel captured an element of this gift of presence in his analysis of gratitude:

> We do not thank somebody only for what he does: the feeling with which we often react to the mere existence of a person must itself be designated as gratitude. We are grateful to him only because he exists, because we experience him. Often the subtlest as well as firmest bonds among men develop from this feeling.[7]

Perhaps the foundation of all ethical practices, and certainly the foundation of any social ethics, is precisely this: relating to the presence of the other as gift. Why is the other's presence a gift? Because the other, through my desire to interact with him or her, offers me, by making it visible, my own humanity. When I interact with others and I fail to receive from them the gift of the common humanity that we share, when I fail to see them as offering such a gift, it means that I consider such others as less than human. Here we have the basic unethical foundation of all forms of racism. Less dramatically perhaps, but of equal importance to us, here we also have the unethical foundation of the policies of neo-liberal government.

Today the Western world is dominated by governments that neglect to create the necessary pedestrian crossings that make our societies honourable civilised societies. They see it as unthinkable that the existing national cultures ought to *yield* before the marginalised forms of social inhabitance they constantly encounter. They treat the unemployed, the refugee, the Indigenous person as 'getting something for nothing', and in so doing fail to perceive in them the very humanity their presence brings. This negation of the

humanity of the marginal others that come our way becomes a negation of our very own humanity. What is our most urgent social obligation in such a situation, other than the obligation to recapture the ethical foundations of society by dislodging those who have imprisoned it in the dungeons of neo-liberal economic profitability?

Conclusion: black economy

Let me go back to the Lebanese community dinner (see Chapter 6) and to the young man who, on hearing a Lebanese pro-Mabo rave, retorted: 'What are you going on about anyway? If the Anglos didn't do the killing you wouldn't have been able to emigrate here. You owe 'em, mate. They cleared the land ... Especially for you!'

The pedestrian crossing is a social gift. It is also a piece of land; a piece of stolen land. This is a difficult reminder. The totality of the social gifts we receive in Australia make up a black economy. Both in the sense of an economy based on Indigenous land and in the sense of an economy of stolen goods. How can we have an ethical basis for society when what circulates as a social gift is based on stolen goods? What kind of obligation does the reception of stolen goods create?

There is no doubt that Australia's political culture has changed much since Mabo reawoke in us the memory of our original theft. We have begun to relate to ourselves and our land in the way that people who were thieves in the past relate to themselves and to what they have stolen and kept. Perhaps this could also explain our newly found neurotic sensitivity to the international bodies that criticise us. We overreact, as if with every blame they send our way we are scared they might dig up the thief in us. This could also explain why we have become so ungenerous to the migrant and the refugee. Are we not scared that they might steal what we have? For, undoubtedly, what we have can be stolen. We know this only too well. And until we choose to face and deal with the consequences of our colonial theft, it will remain the ultimate source of our debilitating paranoia. We will always 'worry about the nation' and will never fully know the joy of care.

ENDNOTES

Introduction

1 'Home', here, is, in a matter-of-fact manner, taken to mean homeland of origin.

2 I will later argue that in this popular form, 'caring' takes the pathological form of 'worrying', which, while still an affective investment in the nation, is an investment of a somewhat different character.

Chapter 1: 'Transcendental' capitalism and the roots of paranoid nationalism

1 This is a reference to the NSW Premier Bob Carr propagating the concept of 'Lebanese crime' and cynically encouraging the view that there is a link between criminality among chronically unemployed youth in the poorer suburbs of Sydney and the Lebanese cultural origin of their parents. See Scott Poynting, 'Street Arabs' and 'Mug Lairs' in Ghassan Hage (ed.), *Arab-Australians Today: citizenship and belonging*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2002.

2 J.R. Averill, G. Catlin and K.K. Chon, *Rules of Hope*, Springer-Verlag, New York, 1990.

3 Carol J. Farran, Kaye A. Herth and Judith M. Popovich, *Hope and Hopelessness: Critical Clinical Constructs*, Sage Publications, London, 1995, p. 5.

4 Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1986, p. 5.

5 Erich Fromm, *The Revolution of Hope: Towards a Humanised*

Technology, Harper & Row, New York, Evanston and London, 1968, p. 13.

6 Kenneth P. Nunn, 'Personal Hopefulness: A conceptual review of the relevance of the perceived future to psychiatry', *British Journal of medical Psychology* (1996), 69, 227–45, p. 228.

7 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human all too Human* (1878), Vol. 1, (translated by R.J. Holland), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986, p. 45.

8 Anna Pontamianou, *Hope: A Shield in the Economy of Borderline States*, Routledge, London, 1997, p. 57.

9 Fromm, op. cit., p. 6.

10 In Karl Menninger, 'Hope', *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 116, December 1959, p. 483.

11 Pontamianou, op. cit., p. 2.

12 I can no longer trace the source of the lecture which was available on the Internet, but a similar point is raised in Slavoj Zizek, *For they know not what they do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor*, Verso, London, 1991, pp. 37–38.

13 These hopes are of course also age-specific, and one needs to examine the empirical specificities of 'hopes of retirement', for example.

14 Norbert Elias, *The Civilising Process: The History of Manners*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1978.

15 Robert Miles, *Racism after 'Race Relations'*, Routledge, London and New York, 1993: see particularly Chapter 3.

16   Frederic Le Bon in Tzvetan Todorov, *Nous et les Autres: La reflexion française sur la diversité humaine*, Éditions du Seuil, 1989, p. 161. Le Bon further extends his 'racist' arguments to women, differentiating them from men in ways that would make some avant-garde feminists very passé indeed. 'They can have common interests [with men],' Le Bon argues, 'and common sentiments, but never similar trains of thought. The difference in their logic is by itself enough to create an unbridgeable abyss.' What is more, Le Bon uses a well-known scientific process to establish that 'the average size of the craniums of Parisian women makes them among the smallest craniums ever observed, about the same size as the craniums of the Chinese and just above the female craniums of New Caledonia': Todorov, ibid., pp. 161–62.

17   Miles, op. cit.

18   Michel Foucault, *Résumé des Cours 1970–1982*, Conférences, Essais et Leçons du Collège de France, Juliard, Paris, 1989.

19   Such claims are made by Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, for example, in Craig Calhoun, Edward LiPuma and Moshe Postone (eds), *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives*, Polity Press, Oxford, 1993, pp. 41–42. See also John Frow, for an even more reductionist conception: he finds in Bourdieu an 'implicit psychology of pursuit by actors of their interests in either economic capital and/or symbolic capital': John Frow, 'Invidious Distinction: Waste, Difference, and Classy Stuff', *The UTS Review*, Vol. 7, No. 2, November 2001, pp. 21–31, p. 25.

20   In Calhoun et al. (eds), op. cit., p. 274.

21   Benedict de Spinoza, *Ethics* (edited and translated by G.H.R. Parkinson), Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000.

22   Pierre Bourdieu, *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology*, Polity Press, Oxford, 1990, p. 196.

23   Pierre Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, Polity Press, Oxford, 2000, pp. 240–41.

24   Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical Reason*, Polity Press, Oxford, 1998, pp. 76–77.

25   In the Australia of the post-World War II era, this was best represented by the Good Neighbour movement and Councils. See Jean Martin, *The Migrant Presence*, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1978.

26   Pierre Bourdieu, op. cit., 2000., pp. 240–41.

27   Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, Polity Press, Oxford, 1993, pp. 104–107.

28   Bourdieu, op. cit., 1990, p. 196.

29   Elias, op. cit.

30   See Loic Wacquant, *Les Prisons de la Misère*, Raisons d'Agir, Paris, 1999.

Chapter 2: On worrying: the lost art of the well-administered national cuddle

1   Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Violence*, Polity Press, Oxford, 1991.

2   Carol J. Farran, Kaye A. Herth and Judith M. Popovich, *Hope and Hopelessness: Critical Clinical Constructs*, Sage Publications, London, 1995, p. 5.

3   Averill et al. provide what is perhaps the best attempt at capturing the many significations of hope and some of their consequences. See J.R. Averill, G. Catlin, and K.K. Chon, *Rules of Hope*, Springer-Verlag, New York, 1990.

4   Benedict de Spinoza, *Ethics* (edited and translated by G.H.R. Parkinson), Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000, p. 215–16.

5   ibid., p. 171.

6   This is notwithstanding the fact that for Spinoza hope and confidence are ultimately forms of sadness. Spinoza sees such affects as sadness because they are 'signs of a mind lacking in power'. One can argue, from a psychoanalytical point of view, that such sadness is foundational, and that this 'lacking in power' corresponds

to the inescapable lack that structures individuals.

7 Kenneth P. Nunn, 'Personal Hope-fulness: A conceptual review of the relevance of the perceived future to psychiatry', *British Journal of medical Psychology*, 69, 1996, p. 233.

8 Viktor Frankl, *Viktor Frankl Recollections: An Autobiography*, Insight Books, Plenum Press, New York and London, 1997.

9 Nunn, op. cit., p. 232.

10 Galina Lindquist, 'In Search of Magical Flow: Magic and Market in Contemporary Russia', *Urban Anthropology*, Vol. 29, No. 4, Winter 2000, p. 351.

11 ibid., p. 350.

12 ibid.

13 ibid., pp. 318–19.

14 Anna Pontamianou, *Hope: A Shield in the Economy of Borderline States*, Routledge, London, 1997, p. 73.

15 Paul Chilton and Mikhail Ilyin, 'Metaphor in political discourse: the case of the "common European house"', *Discourse and Society*, Vol. 4 (1), 1993, p. 9.

16 Jeremy Holmes, *The Search for the Secure Base: Attachment Theory and Psychotherapy*, Brunner-Routledge, East Sussex, 2001, p. 5.

17 ibid., p. 12.

18 Attachment theory therapists aim to duplicate this process. As Holmes explains: 'Therapists aim to create some of the parameters of [a] secure base in their dealings with patients: consistency, reliability, respon-siveness, non-possessive-warmth, firm boundaries. This, it is hoped, becomes internalised as a "place" in the psyche to which the patient can turn when troubled, even after therapy has come to an end. Fonagy (1991) and Meins (1999) argue that a key feature of parents of securely attached children is their "mind-mindedness" or reflexive function, the ability to empathize with their children and to see them as separate beings with feelings of their own': Holmes, ibid., p. 4.

19 ibid, p. 4.

20 ibid. p. 23.

Chapter 3: Border dis/order: the imaginary of paranoid nationalism

1 In the gated 'villages' that are increasingly housing the middle classes of the world, the further a house is from the gate, or the more it has a 'view' which bypasses the gate as if it does not exist, the more expensive is the house.

2 Jeremy Holmes, *The Search for the Secure Base: Attachment Theory and Psychotherapy*, Brunner-Routledge, East Sussex, 2001, p. 3.

3 Ghassan Hage, *White Nation: Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society*, Pluto Press, Sydney, 1998.

4 These gendered images exist primarily because the patriarchal family remains the dominant mode through which we are socialised into thinking of all supra-individual groupings.

5 R.E. Pahl, 'The search for social cohesion: from Durkheim to the European Commission', *Archives Européennes de Sociologie*, XXXII, 1991, p. 352.

6 Anthony P. Cohen (ed.), *Belonging: Identity and social organisation in British rural culture*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1982.

7 Celia Applegate, 'The question of Heimat in the Weimar Republic', *New Formations*, No. 17, 1992, p. 67.

8 ibid, p. 72.

9 Phil Cohen, 'Home rules: on racism and nationalism in everyday life', paper presented at the British Sociological Association Conference, 'Research Imaginations', University of Essex, Colchester, 5–8 April 1993.

10 ibid.

11 ibid.

12 Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community and Society* (translated by C.P. Loomis), Michigan State University, East Lansing, 1957.

13 Frantz Pappenheim, *The Alienation of Modern Man*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1968, p. 66.

14 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social*

Contract, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., London, 1913, pp. 15–16.

15 Zygmut Bauman, 'Soil, Blood and Identity', *The Sociological Review*, No. 4, 1992, p. 679.

16 Michael Taussig, *Defacement: Public Secrecy and the Labour of the Negative*, Stanford University Press, Stanford (CA), 1999.

17 Pierre Bourdieu, *An Invitation to a Reflexive Sociology*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1992, p. 145.

18 It can be argued here that the national imaginary reveals its middle-class origins. For it is only among this class that the idea of the non-working mother devoted to her children emerges.

19 See the chapter 'Enjoy Your Nation as Yourself!' in Slavoj Zizek, *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology*, Duke University Press, Durham (NC), 1993.

20 In Bauman, op. cit., p. 687.

21 Claude Lefort, *The Political Forms of Modern Society: bureaucracy, democracy, totalitarianism* (edited and introduced by John B. Thompson), Polity Press, Oxford, 1986, pp. 297–98.

22 ibid., p. 298.

23 ibid., p. 302.

24 Holmes, op. cit., p. 5.

25 ibid., p. 3.

26 In Anna Pontamianou, *Hope: A Shield in the Economy of Borderline States*, Routledge, London, 1997, p. 59.

27 ibid.

28 ibid., p. 11.

29 ibid., p. 1.

30 ibid., p. 2.

Chapter 4: A brief history of White colonial paranoia

1 The original paper from which this chapter developed was written with an international readership in mind. Australian readers well versed in the history of multiculturalism will feel that some of the historical details and explanations are unnecessary.

2 See John Stratton, *Race Daze*, Pluto Press, Sydney, 1998, on the re-emergence of 'race' politics in Australia.

3 See Gillian Collishaw and Barry Morris, *Race Matters: indigenous Australians and 'our' society*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 1977.

4 Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, Vol. 2, Basic Books, New York, 1976, p. 329.

5 Alastair Bonnett, *White Identities: Historical and International Perspectives*, Prentice Hall, Essex, 2000, p. 28.

6 ibid., p. 17.

7 See Michael Symonds 'Outside the spaces of modernity', in Helen Grace, Ghassan Hage, Lesley Johnson, Julie Langford and Michael Symonds, *Home/World: space, community and marginality in Western Sydney*, Pluto Press, Sydney, 1997.

8 Anthony Burke, *In Fear of Security: Australia's invasion anxiety*, Pluto Press, Sydney, 2001, p. 17. On this issue, see also Ien Ang in Ghassan Hage and Rowanne Couch (eds), *The Future of Multiculturalism*, University of Sydney, Research Institute for the Humanities and the Social Sciences, 2000, and Meaghan Morris, 'White Panic or Mad Max and the Sublime', in Kuan-Hsing Chen (ed.), *Trajectories: Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, Routledge, London and New York, 1998.

9 Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonised*, The Orion Press, New York, 1965, p. xii.

10 Andrew Markus, *Australian Race Relations*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1994, p. 110.

11 This last assumption was most important in shaping the Australian working class's commitment to the White Australia policy. See, for example, the classic work by Ann Curthoys, 'Conflict and Consensus', and other works in Ann Curthoys and Andrew Markus, *Who are our enemies? Racism and the working class in Australia*, Hale & Iremonger,

Neutral Bay, 1978.

12   Markus, op. cit., p. 152.

13   ibid., p. 155.

14   Mark Lopez, *The Origins of Multiculturalism in Australian politics 1945–1975*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2000, p. 44.

15   Stephen Castles, Bill Cope, Mary Kalantzis and Michael Morrissey, *Mistaken Identity: Multiculturalism and the demise of nationalism in Australia*, Pluto Press, Sydney, 1988, p. 23.

16   Quoted in B.M. Bullivant, 'Educating the pluralist person', in Millicent Poole, Phillip De Lacey, and Bikkar Randhawa (eds), *Australia in Transition: Culture and Life Possibilities*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Sydney, 1985, p. 13.

17   Lopez, op. cit., p. 45.

18   Castles et al., op. cit., p. 51.

19   Jean Martin, *The Migrant Presence, Australian Responses 1947–77*, Research Report for the National Population Inquiry, Studies in Society Series, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1978, p. 34.

20   Markus, op. cit., p. 176.

21   See Lopez, op. cit, passim, for an excellent empirical history of these forces.

22   See Jock Collins, *Migrant Hands in a Distant Land: Australia's Post-War Immigration*, Pluto Press, Sydney, 1988.

23   Brian Bullivant, *Race, ethnicity and curriculum*, Macmillan, Melbourne, 1981.

24   A. Jackubowicz, M. Morrisey and J. Palser, *Ethnicity, Class and Social Policy in Australia*, Reports and Proceedings No. 46, Social Welfare Research Centre, University of New South Wales, May 1984.

25   Castles et al., op. cit., p. 57.

26   In 1992 the High Court of Australia decided in favour of a group of Indigenous people claiming to be the original owners of land formally under the control of the state of Queensland in the northeast of Australia. The group was led by a man called Eddie Mabo and the decision became popularly known as 'the Mabo decision' or simply 'Mabo'. The Mabo decision was the first Australian official/judicial acknowledgment that there had been a lawful ownership of land by Indigenous people before the British colonisation of Australia.

In what remains a legally controversial finding, the High Court judges did not only rule that the land in the particular claim being considered was not *terra nullius* (unoccupied land). They asserted that their ruling had more far-reaching implications concerning the relationship of Indigenous people to the land throughout the nation. Furthermore, some of the judges, in later comments, moved into moral territory, arguing that the practices of dispossession that emanated from the *terra nullius* principle 'constitute the darkest aspect in the history of this nation'. And, they added, 'The nation as a whole must remain diminished unless and until there is an acknowledgment of, and a retreat from, those past injustices' (Mabo v Queensland, *The Mabo Decision*, Butterworths, Sydney, 1992, p. 82).

27   The theme of White decline is fully developed in Ghassan Hage, *White Nation: Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society*, Routledge, New York, 2000.

28   See Pierre Bourdieu, 'What is public opinion?', in *Questions of Sociology*, Sage Publications, London, 1996.

29   Christine Inglis, in Ghassan Hage and Rowanne Couch (eds), *The Future of Multiculturalism*, University of Sydney, Research Institute for the Humanities and the Social Sciences, Sydney, 2000.

30   See Ghassan Hage, op. cit, Chapters 7 and 8.

31   This is a reference to critical intellectuals which began with Blainey forcefully expressing his concern for what he saw as the devaluing, by historians and intellectuals, of the positive British-Australian contribution to the making of Australia

and a concentration on negative aspects such as racism and the genocidal drives against the Indigenous people that permeate the history of White colonial settlement in Australia. He defined the works of such critical historians as the 'black armband view of history'.

32 Lopez, op. cit.

Chapter 5: The rise of Australian fundamentalism: reflections on the rule of Ayatollah Johnny

1 All quotations from John Howard's speeches are taken from the Federal Parliament of Australia's website. http://www.aph.gov.au

Chapter 6: Polluting memories: migration and colonial responsibility in Australia

1 I'd like to thank Oliver Marchant and Hal Wooten for their helpful reading of an earlier draft of this paper.

2 The land itself was not physically part of the state of Queensland, but an island in the Torres Strait.

3 Legally, *terra nullius* was proclaimed in Australia in the early 1800s, some 50 years after the first settlements. There were clear indications of uncertainty within the British government as to whether the Australian Aboriginal people should be considered the rightful owners of Australia. These uncertainties disappeared as the squatters and pastoralists started to become an Australian ruling class in their own right.

4 Of course it was the British as a general national category who figuratively 'owned a lot of land'. The people actually sent to Australia were themselves largely landless peasantry.

5 Mabo v Qld, *The Mabo Decision*, Butterworths, Sydney, 1992, p. 82.

6 Henry Reynolds, *The Other Side of the Frontier,* The History Department, James Cook University, Townsville (Qld), 1981.

7 The Liberal Party in Australia is more an equivalent of the Conservative Party in Britain or the Republican

Party in the US. It is the Labor Party which actually espouses liberal values, as such.

8 This practice began in the late 19th century, but was most intense and sporadic between the 1930s and the 1960s.

9 Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, *Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families*, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, Sydney, 1997.

10 ibid., pp. 284–93.

11 See here Robert Manne's excellent work, 'In Denial: The Stolen Generation and the Right', *Quarterly Essay*, Issue 1, 2001.

12 John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge (MA), 1971.

13 *Magazine littéraire*, 'Le renouveau de la philosophie politique', No. 380, October 1999.

14 Paul Patton, 'Justice and Difference: The Mabo Case', in Paul Patton and Diane Austin-Broos (eds), *Transformations in Australian Society*, University of Sydney, Research Institute for the Humanities and the Social Sciences, Sydney, 1997, pp. 83–98.

15 ibid., pp. 87–88.

16 ibid., p. 88.

17 Jeremy Waldron, 'Superseding Historic Injustice,' *Ethics*, 103, 1992, pp. 4–28.

18 Patton, op. cit., p. 88.

19 ibid., p. 91.

20 Paul Keating, quoted in Moira Gatens and Genevieve Lloyd, *Collective Imaginings, Spinoza, Past and Present*, Routledge, London and New York, 1999, p. 142.

21 Raimond Gaita, *A Common Humanity: thinking about love and truth and justice*, Text Publishing, Melbourne, 1999, p. 99.

22 Ross Poole, *Nation and Identity*, Routledge, London and New York, 1999, p. 138.

23 ibid., p. 50.

24 ibid., p. 55.
25 ibid., p. 56.
26 ibid., p. 56.
27 ibid., p. 64.
28 ibid., p. 140–41.
29 Gatens and Lloyd, op. cit., p. 74.
30 ibid., p. 75.
31 ibid.
32 Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1958.
33 Gatens and Lloyd, op. cit., p. 76.
34 ibid.
35 ibid., p. 146.
36 ibid., p. 83.
37 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, London and New York, 1991, postscript.
38 ibid.
39 ibid., pp. 199–201.
40 Paul Patton, in his use of Derrida to assess the nature of Mabo as an act of 'recognition of the other', has been one of the few to hint towards this. As he points out:
In Derridean terms, the difference between European law and native law and custom is at once both a condition of the possibility of justice and a condition of its impossibility. This means that justice in the sense of a full and complete recognition of the other is impossible, since any such recognition of the other is impossible, since any such recognition will always be carried out in the language and on the terms of one party (Patton, op. cit., pp. 94–95). Indeed, as Patton concludes his article by saying:
Aboriginal law is not fully recognised as a body of law grounded in the sovereignty of the Aboriginal peoples. The recognition of Indigenous law is therefore both accomplished and deferred. This feature of the judgement ensures that it will always be open to criticism from the perspective of the very grounds which make it a substantial improvement in justice for Indigenous peoples. It also ensures that the issue of

sovereignty will remain with us for some time to come (Patton, ibid., p. 96).
41 Ross Poole, op. cit., p. 125.
42 ibid., p. 126.
43 ibid., p. 141.
44 The White Australia Policy was one of the first Acts of Parliament after the formation of the Australian Commonwealth in 1901. It was designed to stop the migration of non-White people to Australia. It rallied conservatives and radicals alike: the former because the idea of purity related to ideas of a strong unified nation; the latter because they associated White Australia with strong democratic and union traditions which they felt were threatened by people from non-white 'races'. The White Australia Policy was officially abandoned in the late 1960s. It was considered properly buried only with the rise of Australian multiculturalism in the early 1970s.
45 Gatens and Lloyd, op. cit., pp. 76–77.
46 Gaita, op. cit., p. 92.
47 ibid., pp. 101–102.
48 ibid., p. 94.
49 Pierre Bourdieu, *La Domination Masculine*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1998.
50 As Nietzsche has well perceived, the community can go after those who do not repay the debt. In 'Genealogy of Morals', he comments that:
the community, too, stands to its members in that same vital basic relation, that of the creditor to his debtors. One lives in a community, one enjoys the advantages of a communality (oh what advantages! We sometimes underrate them today), one dwells protected, cared for, in peace and trustfulness, without fear of certain injuries and hostile acts to which the man outside, the 'man without peace,' is exposed–a German will understand the original connotations of Elend – since one has bound and pledged oneself to the community precisely with a view to injuries and hostile acts. What will

happen if this pledge is broken? The community, the disappointed creditor, will get what repayment it can, one may depend on that (Friedrich Nietzsche, 'Genealogy of Morals', in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche* (edited by Walter Kaufmann), Modern Library, New York, 1992, p. 507).

51 It is important to stress that there is no necessary communal entity we feel indebted to. Not all migrants feel indebted to their nation, for example, but most will feel indebted to their family. This guilt-inducing state of indebtedness is most apparent in times of crisis, when your family, your village, or your nation is going through a hard time and you (the subject organically related to the community through the original debt of social/communal life) are not there to help. When you do not share the fate of the collectivity which gave you social life you are guilty of letting others pay alone for a debt you are collectively responsible for.

52 It is true, as Bourdieu argues, that centrifugal orientations are to centripetal orientations what male is to female (Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, Polity Press, Oxford, 1990). But this is only valid insofar as such orientations are orientations of the will. The gender of centripetal and centrifugal forces becomes more confusing when a person is perceived to be under the effect of centrifugal or centripetal forces, propelling her against her will. In this case, the subject becomes feminised, more often than not, perceived and perceiving itself as lacking control over its orientation.

53 With apologies to Frank Zappa.

54 Benedict de Spinoza, *Ethics*, Penguin Books Australia, Ringwood (Vic), 1996, p. 104.

55 I have often thought of talkback radio's shock jocks as Australia's equivalent of our little sheikhs above. But reading Roger Sandall's support for Tony Abbott (*The Australian*, 9 January 2002), it is clear that Australia's sheikhs of knowledge can

be found within an increasing number of social categories today.

Chapter 7: The class aesthetics of global multiculturalism

1 The postwar process through which the ethnic middle classes were involved in the symbolic construction of 'ethnic communities' has been exceptionally well analysed by Andrew Jackubowicz, Michael Morrisey and Joanne Palser in 'Ethnicity, Class and Social Policy In Australia', *SWRC Reports and Proceedings*, No. 46, 1984.

2 Elements of this process have been powerfully analysed by Ien Ang long ago in relation to Asian women. See the chapter on 'The Curse of the Smile' in Ien Ang, *On Not Speaking Chinese: Living Between Asia and the West*, Routledge, London and New York, 2001.

3 I am not including Australia's tough right-wing journalists here, for whom, as is well known, no question is tough enough, and who have always thought – unthinkingly! – that a yes was thinkable.

Chapter 8: Exighophobia/homoiophobia: 'Comes a time we are all enthusiasm'

1 Here is some of the text, for those who want more:

It is not new to us to face the painful fact that Israel has been allowed by the United States to be an overwhelmingly dominant military power in the region. All in all, it is this sense of overwhelming military strength which allows so many Israelis to keep their colonial fantasies of omnipotence alive despite the intifada and the miserable Israeli experience in Lebanon. Israel today is so bereft of any superior moral or ethical or even social imagination in terms of what kind of society it wants to be that overwhelming military superiority is all it's got left to distinguish it in the region. The bombs of Hamas against civilians might outrage the humanists among us for

being precisely that: bombs against civilians. But for the Israeli colonialists what hurts them most about these bombs is not the death of civilians but the fact that they are further denting their sense of omnipotence. Sharon is the ultimate political representative of those who still dream of recovering such colonial omnipotence. This is what Sharon's tanks are desperately trying to do. But they will fail ... Remember that Sharon is only a dominant political tendency in Israel. Sharon is not even 'the Israeli people', let alone 'the Jewish people'. Already many Israelis and many more Jewish people here in Australia do not see the future through such warped colonial ways of thinking ... we need to make sure we create common fronts with the anti-colonialist Israelis and Jews who live among us. I certainly find it healthier associating with the people who bring out the best in me than concentrating on the people who bring out the worst!

2 Here is a typical example of the journalistic attempt at (not) understanding the phenomenon: 'The suicide bomber's name, appropriately enough, was Mohammad al-Ghoul. Other than blind hatred, who can say what motivated this 22-year-old to detonate himself on a bus full of students on a Tuesday morning in Jerusalem?' Tony Parkinson, 'Defenders of the Palestinian Cause Are Running Out of Excuses', The Age, 20 June 2002.

3 It is astonishing how many seasoned analysts simply forget the existence of the colonial relations of domination and the colonial practices that dominate everyday life when commenting on the Arab-Israeli question. Thus Martin Jay manages to see only 'religions' at each other's throat. 'Whether one sees Ariel Sharon's ill-fated visit to the Temple Mount as a cynical provocation or as the assertion of a justifiable right, the fact that it could produce such a horrific outcome speaks volumes about the thinness

of the veneer of mutual tolerance that keeps these different religions from each other's throat' Martin Jay, 'The Paradoxes of Religious Violence', Salmagundi, Vols 130–31, Spring/Summer 2001, p. 31.

4 In Daniel Williams, 'Young Palestinian Bombers Nurtured by Despair,' The Age (first published in Washington Post), 25 March 2002, p. 10.

5 Omar Barak, 'Palestinians Speak out against Suicide Missions by Children', Ha'aretz, 27 April 2002.

6 Walter Laqueur, who among social scientists seems by far the most analytical and precise of those who have dealt with the topic, entitled his book Terrorism although he solely concerns himself with the analysis of terrorist groups. He even defines terrorism as 'the use of indirect violence by a group towards political ends and usually directed against a government ...' Walter Laqueur, Le Terrorisme, Presses universitaires de France, Paris, 1979, p. 89. The second part of this definition is certainly true – terrorism is usually directed against governments – but this does not mean that terrorism can be defined as violence against governments. As has often been argued by critical analysts such as Noam Chomsky and Edward Said, terrorism as a particular kind of political violence can be used by anyone, from individuals to groups to governments. 'Political terrorism,' Paul Wilkinson informs us, 'may be briefly defined as coercive intimidation. It is the systematic use of murder and destruction in order to terrorize individuals, groups, communities or governments into conceding to the terrorists' political demands': Paul Wilkinson, Terrorism and the Liberal State, Macmillan, London, 1977, p. 49. This is a useful definition, though Wilkinson also goes on to examine only terrorist organisations.

7 See Jean Genet's preface to the published writings of the Baader-Meinhof gang. Textes des prisoniers

de la Fraction Armée Rouge et dernières lettres d'Ulrike Meinhof (préface de Jean Genet, introduction de Klaus Croissant), François Maspero, Paris, 1977.

8   See, for example, Alessandro Silj, *Never Again without a Rifle*, Karz Publishers, New York, 1979.

9   Mark Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (edited by Bernard L. Stein), University of California Press, Berkeley, 1983, p. 72.

10   Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Violence*, Polity Press, Oxford, 1991, Chapter 3.

11   Michael Neuman, 'Israelis and Indians,' *Counterpunch*, 9 April 2002 (available online at www.counterpunch.org).

12   Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (preface by Jean-Paul Sartre), Penguin Books, Middlesex (UK), 1978, p. 118.

13   See, for example, Leon Trotsky, *Against Individual Terrorism*, Pathfinder Press Inc., New York, 1974.

14   Although as I finish editing this essay Hanan Ashrawi and a number of other prominent Palestinians have signed a petition opposing suicide bombing.

15   David Held, 'Violence, Law and Justice in a Global Age', 5 November 2001, posted on www.opendemocracy.net.

16   It is interesting to note, in this regard, that people often expect the colonised, because they are victims, to be 'nice' people. As if colonisation produces nice people. Though its darker legacy is sometimes conveniently forgotten, Western colonialism has often produced, and still produces, some of the worst living conditions created on the planet. And yet the people who try to rise above these living conditions are somehow expected to be chic, humanitarian, cosmopolitan–even aesthetically appealing.

17   Emile Durkheim, *Suicide: a study in sociology*, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1970.

18   Rita Giacaman, 'Youth Suicide in Palestine', Bir Zeit University, 2001, unpublished report.

19   Hans Magnus Enzensberger, 'The Resurgence of Human Sacrifice', *Society*, Vol. 39, No. 3, March/April 2002, p. 76.

20   Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical Reason*, Polity Press, Oxford, 1998, pp. 76–77.

21   Pierre Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations* Polity Press, Oxford, 2000, pp. 240–41.

22   Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, Polity Press, Oxford, 1993, pp. 104–107.

23   Giacaman, op. cit., p. 2.

24   Bourdieu, op. cit., 2000, p. 240.

25   Loic Wacquant, 'The Pugilistic Point of View: How Boxers Think and Feel About Their Trade', *Theory and Society*, Vol. 24, No. 4, August 1995, pp. 489–535; Loic Wacquant, 'Why Men Desire Muscles', *Body and Society*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring 1995, pp. 163–80.

26   Giacaman, op. cit., p. 3.

27   Zygmut Bauman, 'Soil, Blood and Identity,' *Sociological Review* 4, 1992, p. 687.

28   Soraya Asmar, 'Education in Palestine: classrooms become detention cells', *Union Recorder*, Vol. 82, Issue 05, June 2002, p. 18.

29   Baruch Kimmerling, 'The Politicide of the Palestinian People', *Dissident Voice*, 11 June 2002 (available online at www.dissidentvoice.org).

30   Avram S. Bornstein, *Crossing the Green Line Between the West Bank and Israel*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2002.

31   Alphonso Lingis, *Dangerous Emotions*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2000, p. 76. I thank Stephen Muecke for drawing my attention to this text.

32   In his recent work, *The Politics of Story Telling: Violence, Transgression and Intersubjectivity* (Museum Tusculanum Press, University of Copenhagen, 2002), Michael Jackson emphasises the way violence is a mode of exchange obeying Marcel Mauss's

laws of the gift. In much the same way, Lingis's passage can be seen as describing the effect of a violence that is received but cannot be 'returned'.

33 Salim Hoss, 'Open Letter to George Bush', *Daily Star* (Beirut, Lebanon), 11 April 2002.

34 This same discourse emerges in Daniel Williams' (*Washington Post*) investigation of the suicide bombers: the woman suicide bomber Abu Aisheh, was reported to have asked: 'Aren't we being shot like dogs? Do you feel like a human being when the Israelis control your every move? Do you believe we have a future? If I'm going to die at their hands anyway, why shouldn't I take some of them with me?' Daniel Williams, op. cit.

35 On this general theme see the excellent work of Raimond Gaita, *A Common Humanity: thinking about love and truth and justice*, Text Publishing, Melbourne, 1999.

36 See Marc Mauer, *Race to Incarcerate*, New Press, New York, 1999. See also Loïc Wacquant's body of work on the rise of the penal state, particularly *Les Prisons de la Misère*, Raisons d'Agir, Paris, 1999.

37 In Australia, academics are dismissively called 'the intellectual elite'. According to the populist attacks encouraged by conservative governments, the intellectual elite are usually unrealistic people who are completely out of touch with the reality of so-called ordinary people.

38 I have derived this idea of an ethics of social determinism particularly from the work of Pierre Bourdieu. This ethics is most apparent in the collective work directed by Pierre Bourdieu, *The Weight of the World*, Polity Press, Oxford, 1999. See especially the last chapter, 'Understanding', pp. 607–26.

39 I thank Gina Rizakos for providing a quick lesson in Greek to help me

to construct the phobia terms I use in this paper.

40 I am not implying here that the social explanations presented were adequate. Nevertheless, it was not the adequacy of the explanations that raised people's ire. It was the mere fact that an explanation was attempted.

41 In Jerry L. Martin and Anne D. Neal, 'Defending Civilization: How Our Universities Are Failing America and What Can Be Done About It', a report produced by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni. This group was founded by Lynne Cheney, the Vice-President's wife, and Senator Joseph Lieberman. The report is available at www.goacta.org.

42 Roy Bhaskar, *From East to West: Odyssey of a Soul*, Routledge, London and New York, 2000, pp. 37, 57, 91.

Chapter 9: A concluding fable: the gift of care, or the ethics of pedestrian crossings

1 Translated from Arabic.

2 Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: forms and function of exchange in archaic societies*, Routledge, London, (1954) 1988 reprint, p. 37.

3 Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (edited by Rodney Needham), Beacon Press, Boston, 1969.

4 Georg Simmel, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* (edited and translated by K.H. Wolff), The Free Press, New York, 1950, p. 380.

5 ibid., p. 45.

6 In Barry Shwartz, 'The social psychology of the gift', in Aafke E. Komter (ed.), *The Gift: an interdisciplinary perspective*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, 1996, p. 72.

7 Georg Simmel, op. cit., p. 45.

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INDEX

Not long ago, an excessive 'worrying' about the nation was associated with extreme Right organisations. Today this worrying and the paranoid nationalism in which it is grounded have become part of our mainstream political culture. Why?

In an original thesis marrying political economy and psychoanalysis, Ghassan Hage defines societies as mechanisms for the production and distribution of hope. He argues that the rise of paranoid nationalism throughout the world is linked to the shrinking of western nation-states' ability to distribute hope among their citizens. In shrinking the shared space of the public sector, neo-liberal policies have loosened the social bonds, diminishing our hopes for a better life and making us anxious and worried.

Against Paranoid Nationalism examines the effects of the culture of worrying on 'White' Australian politics, tracing the roots of worrying in a 'brief history of White paranoia' and its transformation – in the wake of Pauline Hanson, stalled reconciliation, the Tampa situation, border protection and the mandatory detention of asylum seekers – into a politics of Australian fundamentalism.

But an alternative can be found in the notion of 'the caring society'. If the defensive society sees threats everywhere and generates worrying citizens, the caring society generates citizens who care about each other. Hage explores an ethics of care through an analysis of the important relationship between migration and the colonisation and dispossession of Australia's indigenous people.

Ghassan Hage teaches Anthropology at the University of Sydney and is fast becoming one of Australia's most controversial public intellectuals. His previously published books include *Arab-Australians Today: Citizenship and Belonging*, and *White Nation: Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society*.

'In a voice distinctively his own Hage speaks in many tones – analytical, polemical, caustic, ironic, compassionate. Few writers engage so uncompromisingly the whole of oneself. For that reason Hage can be profoundly unsettling. Few people will not sometimes disagree with him ... By the same token, few people will not thank him for it.'
Raimond Gaita, Professor of Moral Philosophy, University of London King's College, Professor of Philosophy, Australian Catholic University, and author of *A Common Humanity* and *The Philosopher's Dog*.