

Uncertain Lives is the first book to examine the impact of neoliberal policies on everyday life in Australia. Going beyond the discussions of multiculturalism that dominated the 1980s and 1990s, *Uncertain Lives* examines the persistence of race and racism in the Australian experience. While the governments of John Howard followed the rhetoric of neoliberalism in suggesting that market forces dominated social relations, in reality the racism that had been founded in the White Australia policy became again increasingly acceptable, and accepted, in a society no longer subject to the values of multiculturalism.

Uncertain Lives tracks this racism from its pervasiveness in everyday life to the ways race influenced decisions about who would, and would not, be allowed into Australia. From discussions of asylum seekers to migrants to the ways that thinking about the border itself has been transformed, *Uncertain Lives* charts the recent history of the Australian experience. *Uncertain Lives* ranges over events such as the Cronulla Riots of 2005 and the 2006 Beaconsfield mine rescue and uses a variety of recent films to highlight the impact of race in a society where liberal and social democratic values have been replaced by neoliberal ideology.

“For thirty years, Jon Stratton has been the sharpest, most acute observer of cultural phenomena around. This latest collection of his investigations into the racial contours of Australian neoliberalism is further testimony to the extraordinary contribution he has made to cultural studies around the globe.”

– **Toby Miller**, University of California, Riverside, USA
Author of *The Well-Tempered Self* (1993), *Technologies Of Truth* (1998),
Cultural Citizenship (2007) and *Makeover Nation* (2008)

“In a context of global crises – political, economic and social – Stratton’s book stages a series of compelling interventions that clarify the origins of these crises and their impact on the lives of both citizens and socially designated ‘others.’ At once analytical and impassioned, this is a landmark book offering a rigorous and inspired account of the destructive ways in which neoliberalism has critically transformed Australian society and culture.”

– **Joseph Pugliese**, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia
Author of *Biometrics* (2010); editor of *Transmediterranean* (2010)

Jon Stratton is Professor of Cultural Studies at Curtin University, Perth, Australia. Jon has published widely in cultural studies, Jewish studies, popular music studies and Australian studies. *Uncertain Lives* updates his discussion of Australian multiculturalism in *Race Daze: Australia in Identity Crisis* (1998).

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Jon Stratton

UNCERTAIN LIVES

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Culture, Race and Neoliberalism in Australia

BY JON STRATTON



Uncertain Lives

Uncertain Lives:
Culture, Race and Neoliberalism in Australia

By

Jon Stratton
(Curtin University, Australia)

CAMBRIDGE
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P U B L I S H I N G

Uncertain Lives: Culture, Race and Neoliberalism in Australia,
by Jon Stratton

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	vii
Introduction	1
The Neoliberal Exclusionary Order in Australia: Race, Religion and Incarceration	
Chapter One.....	29
Two Rescues, One History: Everyday Racism in Australia	
Chapter Two	55
The Murderous State: The Naturalisation of Violence and Exclusion in the Films of Neoliberal Australia	
Chapter Three	79
Non-Citizens in the Exclusionary State: Citizenship, Mitigated Exclusion and the Cronulla Riots	
Chapter Four	103
Dying to Come to Australia: Asylum Seekers, Tourists and Death	
Chapter Five	131
Uncertain Lives: Migration, the Border and Neoliberalism in Australia	
Chapter Six	151
“Welcome to Paradise”: Asylum Seekers, Neoliberalism, Nostalgia and <i>Lucky Miles</i>	
Chapter Seven.....	169
Trouble with Zombies: <i>Muselmänner</i> , Bare Life and Displaced People	
Chapter Eight.....	197
Preserving White Hegemony: Skilled Migration, “Asians” and Middle Class Assimilation	

Endnotes	223
Bibliography	229
Index	253

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INTRODUCTION

THE NEOLIBERAL EXCLUSIONARY ORDER IN AUSTRALIA: RACE, RELIGION AND INCARCERATION

This book brings together my essays principally concerned with the cultural effects of neoliberalism on matters related to race, ethnicity, Australia's border, and the political management of the state's populations. Almost all were written during the fourth term of John Howard's Liberal-National coalition government between 2004 and 2007. It was during this time that the cultural impact on Australian society of the coalition's neoliberal policies became most apparent. The social impact began much earlier. Many of these essays lift off from changes in the treatment of those people most commonly these days called asylum seekers that began under the Labor governments of Bob Hawke and Paul Keating.

Since the mid-1970s the political management of the Australian population had been achieved through the rhetoric and practice associated with multiculturalism. In Australia multiculturalism was the liberal solution to the problem of migrant cultural diversity. As the Howard governments struggled to transform Australian society into an aggregation of competitive individuals in a marketised environment so multiculturalism, like all policies that emphasised social groups, became increasingly attenuated. It needs to be added here that there was a contradiction in the Howard governments' attitude to neoliberalism. While on the one hand Howard wanted to marketise all institutional processes, on the other hand, he also set about actively reasserting an Australian national identity based on Australia's British origins. The gradual termination of policies that supported ethnic groups, such as multiculturalism, was matched by a reassertion of assimilation as the basis for the reformation of a unitary Australian culture.

I discuss the program of neoliberalism, and the Howard government's peculiar inflections of it, in many of the essays in this book. Here I will provide a brief definition of the broad sense of the ideology taken from an

article written by Suvendrini Perera and myself, “Heterochronotopes of Exception and the Frontiers and Faultlines of Citizenship”:

David Harvey explains that: “Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong property rights, free markets, and free trade” (*A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 2005, 2). Its foundation is a privileging of the market over all other concerns, including moral ones, and an emphasis on individual entitlements and responsibilities over older notions of the public or collective. As Wendy Brown elaborates, “neoliberal rationality while foregrounding the market, is not only, or even primarily, focused on the economy; it involves extending and disseminating market values to all institutions and social actions” (*Edgework: Critical Essays on Knowledge and Politics* 2005, 30–40). (Perera and Stratton 2009, 588)

In the essays in this book I am concerned with what happens when that rationality begins to pervade the practices of the state as they impact on the people who live within the Australian state, or who come within the power of that state.

As we shall see, the impact of neoliberalism in Australia can be understood as occurring in two stages. The first is what we might call structural. This related to the opening up of Australia’s markets to the impact of global economic flows, from the lowering of tariff barriers to the floating of the Australian currency. These measures impacted directly on the lived experience of Australians but were not in the first place aimed at their everyday lives—though, for example, many people were made unemployed as a consequence of their industries becoming unviable when forced to compete with cheap imports from countries where costs were lower because workers were paid less and worked in less safe environments. These changes began under Gough Whitlam, whose Labor government ran from late 1972 to late 1975, and Malcolm Fraser, whose coalition government replaced that of Whitlam, but were mostly the work of the Labor governments of Bob Hawke and Paul Keating.

The second stage occurred under the four Coalition governments of John Howard between March 1996, when the conservative parties defeated the Labor party under Keating in the federal election, to December 2007 when Labor, under Kevin Rudd, returned to office. It was the Howard governments that made neoliberalism personal in the sense that they progressively undermined the idea that the state had a responsibility to all who lived within its borders, replacing this with the claim that there is a reciprocal relationship, founded ultimately on the market, between the

state and the people who live within it. Increasingly, this relationship was understood in practice in terms of a contract and the basis of this contract was economic. In this new order individuals replaced groups of any description as the basis for life within the state. Thus, on the one hand the Howard governments attacked unions and collective bargaining in the workplace while, on the other hand, they moved away from the rhetoric of multiculturalism and forward—many would say backward—towards a political practice that looked more like a form of *laissez-faire* assimilation.

At the same time that his governments struggled to marketise Australian society so Howard had another agenda. The dismantling of the policy of multiculturalism was balanced by a renewed emphasis on Australia's British cultural foundation. In 1988, when Leader of the Opposition, Howard remarked on ABC radio that: "I'm not in favour of going back to a White Australia policy. I do believe that if it [Asian migration] is—in the eyes of some in the community—that it's too great, it would be in our immediate-term interest and supporting of social cohesion if it were slowed down a little, so the capacity of the community to absorb it was greater." For Howard social cohesion involved the incorporation of new migrants into the existing Australian culture. This meant that, while migrants could come from cultural backgrounds other than British, or perhaps European, they should not come in such numbers as to transform the established Australian way of life.¹

During the 1990s conservative historians such as Geoffrey Blainey and Keith Windschuttle attacked the increasingly accepted view that Australia had been settled through the genocidal destruction of Indigenous people and their cultures. Blainey named this the "black armband" version of Australian history. Howard championed this criticism arguing that such a view was divisive and did not do justice to the struggles of the pioneers to settle the country. In his 1996 Sir Robert Menzies Lecture, delivered eight months after he became prime minister, Howard said:

The "black armband" view of our history 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 very 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. (Howard 1996)

In his final term in office, Howard directly intervened in the school history curriculum to ensure that the conservative view of Australia's past would be taught.

While Howard moved to reconstruct Australia as a neoliberal state, he had a clear, and conservative, view of what kind of Australian society he wanted. He actively sought to re-establish an Australian national identity that was fundamentally homogeneous and based on Australia's British cultural heritage. It should go without saying that Howard was a monarchist. The Howard governments also wound back many of the advances in women's equality made under previous governments in changes ranging from cutting by forty per cent the funding for the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission to drastically reducing funding available for child care.² Howard's cultural conservatism played out easily with his neoliberal marketisation of the Australian state because that neoliberalisation enabled long-established attitudes, including, as we shall see below, those related to race and religion, to once again become normative.

The inclusionary order of the modern state fostered the possibility of group existence from the family to the ethnic, or racial, grouping. Ethnicity, in the Australian usage, has tended to be used to refer to a culturally, or nationally, distinct group who are, nevertheless, considered to be, to some extent, white. "White", here, like all forms of racialised classifications, needs to be thought of in quotation marks as it is a discursive construction. The contractarianism of the neoliberal state generated an experience of the state as exclusionary. By this I mean that in an environment where the state's relationship with its members was increasingly seen in terms of individualised contracts in which the state's obligations to its members were dependent on each member fulfilling what the state regarded as their obligation to the state, lack of fulfillment by an individual led to relative exclusion from the benefits of state membership. Membership of the state depended on one fulfilling what the state regarded as one's economic obligations. In this order the state considered that it had few, if any, moral and ethical obligations to those within the borders of the state. As state membership declined in value, nationalism became more important. The meaning of the experience of being "Australian" became increasingly invested in national identity. And this identity was understood as simplistically unitary. I discuss some of the consequences of this development in Chapter 3.

Where the inclusionary claims that founded liberal multiculturalism enabled a complex, and contentiously debated, sense of state membership in which nationalism was problematised, in the exclusionary order generated

by neoliberalism nationalism, based in Australia's traditional and overlapping heritages of Britishness and whiteness, became the recourse of a dominant group, identified during the era of multiculturalism as Anglo-Celtic, who felt increasingly disenfranchised. As these developments took place so the border took on new characteristics. It became porous, a site through which global flows of goods and finance moved into and out of the state. At the same time the border became increasingly rigid and unyielding. People whom the state felt were not useful to its economic needs were excluded. It is not coincidental that the mandatory detention of asylum seekers began during the time of the Keating government in 1992 and was radically overhauled and reinforced by the Howard government in 2001 when that government put in place the so-called Pacific Solution. In this new exclusionary order based in economic obligation the assumption—an assumption that was foundational to the neoliberal worldview—was that non-market, socio-cultural considerations such as race, ethnicity, religion would disappear, at least in the economic world, overwhelmed by market determinations founded in decisions about who was most suitable, and most qualified, for a particular job. This turned out not to be the case; I am tempted to add: of course. Indeed, as the institutional protections that offered relative equality of opportunity in the inclusionary state were weakened and sometimes set aside, so the established, naturalised, forms of discrimination in Australia became normalised.

Race has always been a foundational form of discrimination in settler Australia. Chapter 1, which is not directly concerned with neoliberalism, tracks the racism of everyday life that pervades the Australian quotidian. In that chapter I am particularly concerned with showing how the racialised Australian order naturalises the subaltern positioning of Indigenous Australians. My specific example in that chapter concerns Torres Strait Islanders. In my usage, everyday racism does not necessarily entail conscious discrimination. Rather, it is a consequence of the exercise of assumptions that are deeply ingrained in the everyday Australian experience. While my concern in the chapter is with one particular, and crucial, grouping in the Australian postcolonial nation-state, the practice of everyday racism in Australia is pervasive and is an expression of a racial hierarchy that remains founded in whiteness, a whiteness that, as I have suggested above, has at its heart a traditional Britishness from before the post-Second World War migrations of West Indians and people from South Asia, or, a little more generally, a whiteness that equates with assumptions about the phenotypical characteristics of people from northern Europe. Because everyday racism pervades Australian life, it

structures experience and expectations, often in ways not consciously obvious to those who live that racism.

In the transformation to a relative exclusionary order, Indigenous Australians remained the most discriminated against and became the most excluded. The most obvious example of this exclusion came in 2007 when the government initiated the Northern Territory National Emergency Response. This operation, also known as the Intervention, was ostensibly the government's reaction to the material in a report about child sexual abuse in the Indigenous communities of the Northern Territory called *Little Children Are Sacred*. The Response required exemption from the *Racial Discrimination Act*. The implementation of the measures included in the Response was primarily the responsibility of the Australian Defence Force. The Response included a range of direct measures including the suspension of the permit system for entry into Indigenous communities, new restrictions on the sale and consumption of alcohol, and, perhaps most significantly, the quarantining of a percentage of people's welfare payments to ensure that money was spent on food. There is a great deal that needs to be written about the Intervention. Here, I want to make the point that, while the concern for children's safety was, of course, legitimate, the manner in which the Response took place suggested more an intervention into a failed state, something similar to the deployment of Australian troops in Solomon Islands in 2003 called the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI).³ Rather than suggesting their inclusion, this kind of intervention signals how close to being excluded from the neoliberal Australian state Indigenous Australians are.

In *Race Daze* I introduced the idea of everyday multiculturalism, a term I used to describe the forms of interaction and mixing between individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds that happen as part of the quotidian experience. This relates to everything from personal relationships to the sharing and mixing of cultural attitudes and goods. I compared this to the official forms of state-sponsored multiculturalism which supported group cultural heritage. We can now say something like, everyday multiculturalism is inflected by the quotidian practices of everyday racism. Everyday racism is not simply unthinking prejudice. It is the lived experience of the racialised order that pervades life in the Australian nation-state and is a part of Australian socialisation. Sometimes the practices of everyday multiculturalism challenge everyday racism; other times, and sadly more often, the embeddedness of everyday racism means that it affects the processes of everyday multiculturalism even among people who would claim not to be racist. Everyday racism has not been challenged by the marketisation of the Australian state. Rather, the

racialised order which informs everyday racism also informs and relativises the exclusionary organisation of the neoliberal Australian state.

I mentioned religion above. Little of this book is concerned with the way religion functions in the neoliberal Australian state. This omission will be rectified in a small way later in this Introduction. It is remarkable how little attention has been given to religion in discussions of Australian multiculturalism and its neoliberal aftermath. What discussion there is is primarily concerned with Islam and what has come to be called Islamophobia. In their important analysis of the media-based construction of the Arab Other in *Bin Laden in the Suburbs*, Scott Poynting, Greg Noble, Paul Tabar and Jock Collins write about the ways that the identification of Islam with people identified as of Arabic background has reinforced their stigmatisation. They describe how, since the 9/11 destruction of the twin towers of the World Trade Center in 2001, Muslims in Australia have become linked in media representations with Islamic fundamentalism (2004, chap. 1). This construction of Islam and its use in the creation of an Arab folk devil has succeeded because of the ways that religion had been included in the ideological workings of Australian multiculturalism. In turn, this inclusion was founded in the ambiguous place that religion has held in Australia.

Unlike Britain, Australia has never had an established religion. The Church of England was never recognised as the official religion of the state. In this sense Australia is an example of that Enlightenment ideal, a secular state. At the same time, Christianity has been bound up with whiteness. The British convicts and colonists were mostly Anglicans. The Irish convicts, who were not considered fully white, were Catholic.⁴ Up to the 1970s the key division in white Australian society was between Anglicans and Catholics. When whiteness was extended to large numbers of Italians who were allowed in as migrants, one reason for their acceptability was that they were Catholic. With the whitening of the Irish in the early twentieth century, Catholicism, as a form of Christianity, marked their acceptable, but not full, whiteness. It needs to be added that Catholicism was itself not quite as acceptable as Anglicanism. In the same way that the Irish, though less than the later migrants from southern Europe, were, and to an extent still are, not quite (fully) white so Catholics, while being Christian, are not as Christian as Anglicans. In similar fashion, because of the shared Christianity, the Catholicism of the Italian migrants marked their acceptable, but not full, whiteness. The whiteness of the post-war Greek migrants was also related to their Christianity. In this case their Orthodox communion was enough to make

them acceptable. Orthodox Christianity had a lengthy existence in Australia. Russian and Greek Orthodox churches were consecrated in the 1920s.

What we are beginning to see here is a hierarchy of forms of Christianity which is imbricated with the relativities of whiteness in Australia. In discussions of Australian multiculturalism, ethnicity refers to groups in this grid of whiteness, and, in part, whiteness relates to Christianity. The assumption here is that all forms of Christianity have, at bottom, a common repertoire of moral and ethical assumptions which inform a shared social order. This moral and ethical repertoire is assumed to found what is understood to be the Australian social order (Stratton 1999). It is this assumption that establishes the connection between whiteness, Christianity and Australian society. As Holly Randell-Moon puts it: "The political implications of articulating whiteness in terms of a moral homogeneity means [sic] that a residual discourse of Christianity inflects and informs political institutional structures and arrangements in Australia" (2006, 3). Broadly speaking, members of other religions enter Australia in increasing numbers from the early 1970s at the time when the ending of the White Australia Policy enabled people identified as non-white to migrate. Thus, the secularity of Australia has always been closely linked with the dominance of Christianity. This is most obvious, as I have remarked elsewhere, in Australian public holidays at Christmas and Easter (Stratton 1999). At these times, and for example at the Christian services on Anzac Day, Australia's claim to be a secular state is called into question by state-sanctioned holidays that coincide with Christian festivals and, indeed, festivals that fall at the times celebrated by Anglicans and Catholics and by state-sanctioned religious services. Being wished, for example, a merry Christmas or a happy Easter can provoke complex emotions in members of other religions. Sunday, the day of Christian worship, remains the common day for time away from work. Members of religions such as Islam and Judaism that worship on Fridays or Saturdays often have trouble getting time for their weekly religious devotions when they work in Christian or apparently secular workplaces as they do also for the observance of important annual religious festivals.

It needs to be added that, while the Constitution forbids the state establishment of a religion, Australia has no constitutionally formalised separation of church and state. Michael Hogan (2001) argues that: "What Australia does have is a principle of state *neutrality*, or equal treatment, when dealing with churches." This principle evolved in the context of relations between Anglicanism and Catholicism. While Judaism was able to take advantage of this principle, the small proportion of Jews in Australia meant that the Christian basis of the principle was never placed

into question. Since the 1970s the increasing numbers of members of other religious faiths has begun to put pressure on the tacit connections between Christianity and the Australian state.

The close links between the Australian secular state and Christianity made it easy for Christian fundamentalism to gain a foothold in the Howard government. In *God under Howard* (2005), Marion Maddox describes the connections that developed between the Christian right and the Howard government. The lack of a moral and ethical code as a consequence of the espousal of neoliberal economics meant that the Howard government was easily influenced to take a conservative stance on social issues associated with, for example, gay and lesbian rights, stem-cell research, abortion, and Indigenous matters. Under Howard's governments Christianity was increasingly asserted against other religions and, most significantly, Islam was opportunistically demonised for, it is claimed, having social values inimical to Australian society.

Because of the connections between religion and race, where Christianity reinforces whiteness, those who are identified as non-white have that identification reinforced if they also profess a faith other than Christianity. Conversely, a person identified as non-white will be given a degree of honorary whiteness if they are Christian. In the neoliberal Australian exclusionary order being of a faith other than one that is a version of Christianity calls into question a person's ability to fulfil the contract asked of them. If the person is Muslim then that can even override a claim to whiteness as can be seen in the media treatment of women identified as white who wear burqas.⁵ In this exclusionary, contractual order being both non-white and a member of a faith other than Christian marks one as unlikely to be able to complete one's side of the contractual bargain.

In this exclusionary system, what happens to those who are most excluded from the contractual order? To answer this we need to examine the changed role of prisons. In the inclusive, liberal state, the prison is the site where, paradoxically, that inclusion was felt the strongest. The nineteenth century shift from the use of prison colonies to specially designed prisons as advocated by Jeremy Bentham is well known. While the prisoner was denied their freedom, and certain rights, they remained members of the state and were guarded by employees of the state. Increasingly the aim was for rehabilitation so that the inmate could be returned to society less likely to indulge in behaviour deemed criminal. In the exclusionary state the prison took on a different status. The best way to understand this is through Giorgio Agamben's reworking of the idea of the state of exception. I shall discuss this later. Here it is enough to note that

the prison moved from a key site of inclusion to a peripheral position on the edge of the state. Prisoners became those who were redundant to the needs of the neoliberal state; those without contracts. Prison was reinterpreted as a place of punishment. It is not surprising that the rapid increase in the number of prisoners across all Western states began in the 1970s, at the same time that the economic policies of neoliberalism were being initiated. The prison became closely allied to the detention camp. Both marked the border of the state. One contained those attempting to enter the state without permission, the other includes within its confines those the state deems redundant to its economic project. In Australia, as we shall see, this means that there are significantly higher rates of incarceration for Indigenous Australians and for Muslims than their proportion in the general community. In this context it is also not surprising that many incarcerated Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders are being converted to Islam. Indeed, as Peta Stephenson discusses in *Islam Dreaming* (2010), it is not only imprisoned Indigenous people who are converting to Islam but also Indigenous people outside of prison.

Neoliberalism in Australia

There is a certain amount of debate over when neoliberal economic policies began to be implemented in Australia. Mostly this has to do with defending the Labor Party's record. Joe Collins and Drew Cottle argue that: "There is a common misconception that Hawke and Keating orchestrated the epochal shift in Australian political economy from a Keynesian welfare state to neoliberalism" (2010, 33). They argue that while Hawke and Keating presided over a fundamental restructuring in the Australian economy they did so with the agreement of the labour movement and, in the process, preserved key elements of Australian social democracy. The argument is put more lucidly by former prime minister, Kevin Rudd:

Hawke and Keating pursued an ambitious and unapologetic program of economic modernisation. Their reforms internationalised the Australian economy, removed protectionist barriers and opened it up to greater competition. They were able to dramatically improve the productivity of the Australian private economy, while simultaneously expanding the role of the state in the provision of equity-enhancing public services in health and education. (Rudd 2010, 67)

Alternatively, Michael Pusey writes of "25 Years of Neo-liberalism in Australia" arguing that: "Although the Whitlam government cut import

tariffs a decade earlier in 1973, it was Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser who prepared the way for the ensuing onslaught” (2010, 125). Pusey goes on to write that the Hawke and Keating governments, along with the Howard governments, instated neoliberal policies and practices. It was, after all, Hawke’s government which implemented the recommendations of the Campbell Committee set up by Fraser on reform of the financial sector: “The key suggestions were removal of state regulation of interest rates; dismantling of exchange controls and floating the dollar; and relaxing barriers for foreign banks to enter the market” (Collins and Cottle 2010, 32). At the same time, as Pusey notes: “Hawke and Keating, to their credit, resolved to hold up the incomes of the poorest bottom quintile of the population even if that meant replacing lost job-incomes with targeted welfare” (2010, 127). Pusey’s argument is founded on the continuity of macroeconomic change which opened up Australia’s national economy to global market influences. What he also shows is that Hawke and Keating attempted to strengthen the safety net for low-income earners and to establish and reinforce broad-based social democratic initiatives. It was, for example, Hawke’s government which reintroduced universal medical care in 1984 after Fraser had privatised the Medibank scheme established by Whitlam.

I have pointed out that the debate over when neoliberalism was introduced to Australia is political in the sense that Hawke and Keating, and indeed Whitlam, are defended by Labor apologists. In the end, the resolution to the debate depends on where one places the emphasis—on macroeconomic change or the attempt to protect and enhance the social equity of the population. This is what changed under the Howard governments. Social democracy is founded on the inclusionary nature of the modern state. David Theo Goldberg has described the modern state as a container. He argues that, “as states have increased their scope and range, their growth in institutional determination and (formal) authority over the lives of their inhabitants—both citizens and non-citizens, those in and out of the state alike—de facto control, efficiency and effect have diminished” (2002, 121). The point I want emphasised here is that this contained form of the state, for good and bad, is inclusive in the sense that the activity of the state is directed at all within its borders. This state manages and organises its population. Michel Foucault uses the idea of biopower to talk about this. Biopower refers to “the set of mechanisms through which the basic biological features of the human species become the object of a political strategy” (1977–78, 1) for, as he describes it in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, “the control of populations” (1976, 140). This is the state that one classical formulation has as

mythically founded in a shared social contract between those who become members of the state.

It is in this sense that we can think of the Australian policy of multiculturalism as a means of population management. The instauration of multiculturalism by Whitlam and, in more detail by Fraser, and subsequently by Hawke and Keating, signals the persistence of the modern understandings of the state in these leaders' attitudes to the Australian people. Multiculturalism is concerned with the management of groupings of people, of populations. Toulia Nicolacopoulos and George Vassilacopoulos suggest that Whitlam's version of multiculturalism was a minority rights model, that Fraser's functioned in the terms of cultural pluralism and Hawke and Keating's emphasised universal rights (2011, 145–46). Recognising how multiculturalism has always privileged Australia's British heritage, Nicolacopoulos and Vassilacopoulos go on to argue that "with the election of the Howard government the transition to the post-multicultural era did not require the abandonment of the model of multicultural citizenship since the changes merely rendered the very same logic explicit through the now *public* re-assertion of the privileged role of 'old Australia' as bearer of Australia's British heritage" (2011, 148, their italics). Others, including myself, have used the idea of a core-periphery model for understanding how multiculturalism functioned.⁶ The core referred to the dominant Anglo-Celtic population, the periphery referred to the placing of the plurality of ethnic populations who remained subordinated.

While the model of multiculturalism was inflected by the differences identified by Nicolacopoulos and Vassilacopoulos the model itself remained constant. When Howard's governments dismantled the policy and practices of multiculturalism the dominance of the core culture was, as Nicolacopoulos and Vassilacopoulos suggest, revealed. However, what is just as important is that the termination of the policy of multiculturalism was related to Howard's move to transform Australian society. While Howard championed the practice of, if not a policy of, assimilation the movement away from multiculturalism was also a function of the neoliberal promotion of individualism. In 1987, in an interview with the British women's magazine, *Woman's Own*, Margaret Thatcher, then pursuing neoliberal policies as the prime minister of Great Britain, notoriously remarked that:

I think we have gone through a period when too many children and people have been given to understand "I have a problem, it is the Government's job to cope with it!" or "I have a problem, I will go and get a grant to cope with it!" "I am homeless, the Government must house me!" and so they are

casting their problems on society and who is society? There is no such thing! There are individual men and women and there are families and no government can do anything except through people and people look to themselves first. (Cited at *Margaret Thatcher Foundation* website n.d.)

In line with neoliberal ideology, Howard wanted to do away with all forms of group alliance on the grounds that these threatened the level market playing field that was supposed to optimise economic practice and generate wealth for all. To this end, Howard's government abolished the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) in 2005. ATSIC had been established by Hawke's government in 1990. In 2007, as the culmination of a decade of attrition, the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs was rebadged as the Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

Understandably, though, the main focus of the Howard governments' reforms was workplace relations. In 1996, after winning the federal election, Howard's government passed the *Workplace Relations Act*. The Act severely curtailed the rights of unions to take industrial action. It also increased employers' abilities to fire employees without union recourse. Most importantly, the Act established the Australian Workplace Agreement which enabled workers to negotiate their own contracts with employers without union participation. In 2005 the Howard government moved further down the track of a deregulated and individualised workplace relations system. The *Workplace Relations Amendment Act*, commonly known as WorkChoices, did away with unfair dismissal laws for companies employing less than one hundred employees. It further weakened union power by reducing the number of matters that could be covered in awards. It also limited the role of the Industrial Relations Commission and transferred its responsibility for setting minimum wages to a new Australian Fair Pay Commission. This new body had little input from unions. At bottom the purpose of these two acts was to destroy the power of collective bargaining and establish a free market in workers.

In 1987 the Liberal Party, then in opposition, proposed a Work for the Dole scheme. The program was started on a trial basis in 1997. In 1998 it was extended to all 18–24 year olds who had been unemployed for six months. In 2000 the program was expanded to include all those unemployed up to and including the age of thirty-nine. From the beginning the program also was known by its description as “mutual obligation”. In a press release from 1998 we find that: “The Government's principle of mutual obligation is based on a simple proposition: that unemployed job seekers, supported financially by the community, should actively seek work, constantly strive to improve their competitiveness in

the labour market and give something back to the community that supports them” (“Minister Archive; Media Release” 2005). As can be seen in this definition, the government withdrew any responsibility for people’s unemployment. Support for the unemployed was identified as a community responsibility not a responsibility of government. In the changes to workplace relations and in the development of Work for the Dole we can see clearly the ideology of the individualised contractual relation that was replacing the assumption of population governmentality that had dominated in the modern state.

In 2002 R. W. Connell summed up the ideological changes taking place in Australian society: “More and more, people have been encouraged to think of their relationship with the collective processes of society as that of a purchaser in a market, or an owner seeking profit. In both cases the fundamental imperative is to improve one’s private return at the expense of others” (2002, 8). Over the time of the Howard governments the role of the state was minimised and, rather than the container state with its inclusive attitude towards its members, and rather than government in terms of population groupings, the neoliberal state faced its members based on economically-founded, individualised contracts.

Neoliberalism and the Border

The introduction of neoliberalism in Australia was a two-stage process. Starting with the Whitlam, Fraser, and then more significantly the Hawke and Keating governments, structural economic changes were made that integrated the Australian economy into the increasingly sophisticated global economic system. At the same time that this was happening there developed a heightened preoccupation with regulating human entry to Australia. In the first place this concern connected with settler Australia’s long history of anxiety over the “yellow peril” and fears of “Asian invasion”. Peter Mares writes that:

Whitlam may have swept away the last remnants of the White Australia policy while in office, but he had little sympathy for refugees from Indochina. Clyde Cameron, a former minister for Immigration in Whitlam’s government, recalls that Whitlam exploded when the issue was discussed in a cabinet meeting in 1975, declaring that he was “not having hundreds of fucking Vietnamese Balts coming into the country”. (2002, 74)

The use of Balts here recalls the displaced persons of Europe, DPs as they were also often termed, allowed to come to Australia in the post-Second

World War period when Australian governments were expanding the population as part of the attempt to industrialise the country. Those Balts were identified as white.

The first boat carrying Vietnamese asylum seekers entered Darwin harbour in April 1976. As boats started arriving on Australia's geographical borders so concern about unregulated arrivals increased. Fraser was now prime minister. In a detailed analysis of the Fraser government's attitudes to boat-based asylum seekers, Jack Smit estimates that, between that first boat and 1980 when the Fraser government introduced the Immigration (Unauthorised Arrivals) Bill into parliament, 53 boats reached Australian shores with 2,059 passengers (2010). At that time, as later, there was pressure from immigration officials to establish a detention centre. Fraser resisted. Margaret Simons explains that:

Fraser remembers the idea of the reception centre coming before cabinet. He says that [Michael] MacKellar did not push it. It originated within the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. "We disposed of it in about thirty seconds. I thought it was a piece of racist barbarism". (Simons and Fraser 2010, 419)

Clearly there was little or no support in government at that time for mandatory detention. Fraser felt that Australia had a moral obligation to take refugees from Vietnam and sent immigration officials to refugee camps in Malaysia and elsewhere. At the same time, Fraser moved to establish a formalised refugee entry program for Australia, taking, among others, 4000 refugees from Lebanon. Most of these were Muslim, unlike earlier Lebanese migrants who had been Christian. This marks the beginning of the post-White Australia Policy settlement of Muslims in Australia. In the end, the Fraser government provided sanctuary to almost 70,000 Vietnamese. Anne McNevin has remarked that: "The politics of asylum in the Australian context . . . reflect the tension between transnational engagement and territorial closure that characterises neoliberal states more generally" (2007, 626). As the economic borders of Australia became more open so, as we have seen, Keating finally acceded to the pressure to mark the border not only with detention camps but with mandatory detention.

The second stage of the introduction of neoliberalism to Australia took place, as I have argued, under the Howard governments. Over this period, as Howard set about fragmenting and individualising Australian society, so he also reinforced the closure of the geographical border. Much has now been written about this (for a detailed discussion, see Marr and Wilkinson 2003) and I shall not repeat the detail here. However, in short,

the crucial period was in 2001 when the MV *Tampa* picked up 438 Afghan refugees from a sinking boat and the Howard government refused to allow the *Tampa* to dock at Christmas Island. This resulted in the beginning of the Pacific Solution where, first of all, the islands surrounding the northern coast of Australia were excised from the migration zone and, second, agreements were reached with Papua New Guinea and Nauru to establish detention centres on their territory where asylum seekers could be processed (on these developments see Perera 2009; Perera ed. 2007a). By processing these people offshore, they do not have access to the procedures and rights granted to those who enter Australian territory. This ramping up of what was described as border security directly paralleled the loss of a sense of inclusive membership within the Australian state. I discuss some of the effects of the anxiety over people breaching the border in Chapters 2 and 4 where I suggest that the characters of the unnamed killer in *Jindabyne* and of Mick Taylor in *Wolf Creek* can both be read as private enterprise patrollers of the Australian border. Chapter 4, written before I started focusing on neoliberalism, is concerned more generally with this issue, as is Chapter 7 where I suggest that the preoccupation with zombies, which is pervasive across the West, can be understood in terms of a fear of being overwhelmed by displaced people from countries outside the West.

This was also the time when, as we have also seen, the attrition of the policy of multiculturalism allowed the resurgence of an Australo-British nationalism. McNevin comments that: “Right at the moment when the ‘us’ of Australia was challenged by neoliberal globalisation, a parallel project of social conservatism generated a powerful idea of a bounded connection between territory, citizenship and an Anglo cultural past” (2007, 626). As Australians began to think of themselves as individuals bound to the state by contracts, what was lost was the sense of populations united in an Australian identity—the kind of everyday understanding of which is reproduced in the lyrics of Bruce Woodley’s song “I Am Australian”, written in 1987 before Howard came to power, in which the chorus tells us that “We are one, but we are many/ And from all the lands on earth we come.” The incredible popularity of this song, which has also been used in an advertising campaign by Telstra, testifies to its articulation of a worldview undermined by Howard’s reforms.

Race in the Australian Neoliberal Environment

I have remarked above that the economic ideology of neoliberalism presumed that, once the market was privileged, markers of difference such

as race and religion would disappear, at least in the economic environment. This did not happen. Instead, the longstanding racial hierarchy in Australia became integrated with the new, exclusionary, contract-based social order. In the early 2000s Val Colic-Peisker and Farida Tilbury conducted research on the work circumstances of three refugee groups. They connected prejudice in the workplace with what they call “visible difference”:

In the 1970s new immigrant groups arrived from Africa and the Middle East, mostly within Australia’s humanitarian intake. These immigrants, “visibly different” from the white Anglo majority of Australians, seem to suffer from a degree of disadvantage related to the extent and type of their “visibility”. (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007, 60)

In Australia race has always been located in phenotypical features, in the first place skin colour. In 1951 a policy decision was made that migrants should have 75 per cent “European blood”. However, the purpose of this ruling was to ensure that immigrants “looked white”. In one case, the immigration officer decided that: “Miss E. Aaron shows very little trace of colour and in my opinion is a quarter caste or less. Her sister appears dark but in my opinion is less than half caste.” Having been previously rejected both sisters were now allowed to migrate (Stratton 2000, 214). Smit notes that in the 1950s: “Immigration officers ‘kept simply treating refugees as ordinary immigrants’ and rejected European Displaced Persons if they were ‘too swarthy’; or, as was the case with ‘a very dark gipsy with crinkly black hair’, because he was thought to become a ‘stare object’ at Sydney’s Martin Place” (Smit 2010, 5).⁷ This understanding of race did not end with the ending of the White Australia Policy. Colic-Peisker and Tilbury quote data from the 2001 census which shows that while 26.2 per cent of Sudanese migrants have higher qualifications, 27.6 per cent were unemployed. Similarly, 21.7 per cent of Eritreans had higher qualifications but 28.5 per cent were unemployed. This was at a time when 18 per cent of Australian-born had higher qualifications. The overall unemployment rate in Australia in 2001 was 6.7 per cent. The figures for people of visible difference who were also Muslim were even worse. Somalians, 13.6 per cent of whom had higher qualifications, had an unemployment rate of 46.8 per cent and Iraqis, 19.6 per cent of whom had higher qualifications, had a 34.2 per cent unemployment rate. These figures do not register the very high percentage of people from all these backgrounds who would have taken jobs significantly below the level suggested by their qualifications.

It should be added here that “visible difference” is not confined to phenotypical qualities. Names and clothes can signal a person’s religious difference. A nurse from Somalia commented: “I think my colour and my

name were major factors in not being successful in getting many jobs” (cited in Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007, 72). Colic-Peisker and Tilbury record numerous examples of people who started to be interviewed for jobs once they had changed their names from ones that signalled they were Muslims. Needless to add, once the interviewer saw that they were “black” they almost always failed to get the position advertised. As Colic-Peisker and Tilbury note: “‘African-ness’ together with ‘Muslim-ness’ is often a double jeopardy” (2007, 71). African-ness, of course, translates into blackness.

Here we can see in operation the Australian race hierarchy. In a society where the individual contract has replaced a sense of state responsibility for its members that hierarchy now operates in terms of relative exclusion. There is one exception to the organisation of the race hierarchy that should be noted. Colic-Peisker and Tilbury write that: “The focus of Australian racism appears to have shifted from Asians, who nowadays tend to migrate under the skilled business migration categories, to immigrants from the Middle East and Africa, who tend to be refugees” (2007, 61). I have discussed the Asian entry into the Australian middle class in Chapter 8 where I also write about how these people are granted honorary whiteness, a kind of whiteness conditional on them doing what is expected of them. Should they not, for whatever reason, they lose their honorary whiteness and often find themselves at the bottom of the job hierarchy with the people studied by Colic-Peisker and Tilbury.

Middleclassness brings with it the possibility of honorary whiteness. Kirk Zwangobani has a “black” father from what was then Rhodesia and a “white”, Australian mother. His father came to Australia to study for a doctorate in nuclear physics. Brought up among the Canberra middle class Zwangobani nevertheless writes that, in his school years, “I often battled with being typically characterized as a ‘nigger’, the essential ‘exotic’ other or the ‘native come good’, an ongoing dilemma for African-Australian youth” (2008, 56). Zwangobani has been interviewing people of a similar background to himself for his doctorate research. He writes that:

The middle class participants in my study could well be described as Udo-Ekpo’s (1999 [*The Africans in Australia: Expectations and Shattered Dreams*]) more “tenacious Africans” who have refused to accede to a position of second-class citizen. Because of their families’ professional backgrounds and their class status, they also struggle to identify themselves with refugees. (2008, 60)

In spite of their childhood racist stereotyping, these interviewees’ middle-class positions give them access to an honorary whiteness, and simultaneously

an honorary invisibility, that separates them from those people identified as black who enter Australia as refugees and, therefore, no matter what their educational qualifications or social backgrounds in their home countries, are positioned in the working class.

One place where we can see that the dominant Australian fantasy remains that Australia is a white country is in television advertisements. Around 2004 Bronwyn Higgs and Laura Milner conducted a study of racial diversity in 328 advertisements shown on weekday and prime time television. These advertisements had 241 “primary adult characters”. This was a study based on visual identification which included southern Europeans in the category of “White/Caucasian”. The results identified 95.5 per cent of the characters as white, 0.4 per cent as Indigenous, 1.5 per cent as black African, 2.5 per cent as Asian and 0.4 per cent as Indian. It may be that the surprisingly high percentage of characters identified as black African, which nevertheless translates into only 3 people, is a result of one or more American advertisements that may have been revoiced for Australian audiences.⁸ The total non-white presence in these advertisements comes to 4.5 per cent, 3 per cent if the black African figure is discounted. Most estimates of the white population of Australia, a questionable statistic that depends on a variety of assumptions and decisions about which groups do and which do not count as white, put it at about 92 per cent—Higgs and Milner use a figure of 85 per cent (2005).⁹ Either way, the whiteness of Australian television advertisements in the mid-2000s was clearly greater than that of the substantive population which itself remained overwhelmingly white in spite of the ending of the White Australia Policy thirty years earlier. In this fantasy genre, the purpose of which is to make people feel relaxed enough to be encouraged to buy commodities, whiteness was considered the key to making the Australian population feel at ease. Visible difference was very rarely seen.

Neoliberalism and Religion in Australia

I have already noted how religion, especially when identifiable as different from the secular, yet Christian, norm, and especially when identifiable as Muslim, counts prejudicially against a person. In a 1995 article, Gary Bouma discusses the consequences for religion in Australia of the ending of the White Australia Policy. He argues that: “One of the unintended consequences of Australia’s massive program of immigration has been the emergence of a very religiously plural society” (1995, 286). Analysing the figures from the 1991 census, he tells us that, at that time, “76.6 percent of Australians identif[ied] with a religious group” and “74 percent of

Australians identify with a Christian religious group” (1995, 286). Only 2.6 per cent identify with a non-Christian group. So, while there are many different religions represented in Australia, their individual numbers make up a very small total compared with the Christian majority. On Bouma’s 1991 figures all non-Christian religions were numerically smaller than 1 per cent of the population with the figure for Muslims at 0.9 of the total population. In the twenty years since 1991 the percentage of people identifying as Muslim in Australia has increased to nearly 2 per cent.

The Christian grouping is itself completely dominated by Catholics, 27.3 per cent, and Anglicans, 23.9 per cent. The next largest figure is for members of the Uniting Church who were 8.2 per cent of the population (1995, 290). Bouma writes that: “Given this Anglican and Catholic dominance and the fact that the dominant form of Catholicism in Australia is Irish, while Australia is a multicultural society, the religious aspects of that plurality is [sic] shaped by the presence of a strong, historically prominent Anglo-Celtic Christian religious community” (1995, 288). We can take this argument further. The numerical equation of Christianity with Anglo-Celts leads to a further equation of Christianity with Australia’s British, and Irish, heritage. It also links Christianity with whiteness. Here, again, a person who is identified as non-white, but who is Christian, gains a certain amount of honorary whiteness from their religious affiliation. This is the case with many of the skilled east Asians who have entered the middle class. When whiteness was extended to eastern and southern Europeans in order to enable increased migrant numbers in the post-Second World War period the presumption was that these people would be Christians of some denomination. Elsewhere I have discussed the difficulties faced by Jews trying to migrate during this period (Stratton 2000, Chapter 7). The assumption was that these European migrants would share the (Christian) values that grounded the Australian moral, and therefore social, order.

In Australia race, and ethnicity, are closely intertwined. Bouma remarks that, “as a result of this clear dominance of two groups [Anglicans and Catholics], issues of multiculturalism will center on how each [non-Christian] group relates to the core rather than to each other”(1995, 289). What Bouma is describing is the classic understanding of Australian multiculturalism that I have mentioned earlier: an Anglo-Celtic core with a periphery of ethnic, and racial, groups valued for their cultural diversity but allowed to make little inroads into the institutional organisation of Australian society. Indeed, as I argued in *Race Daze*, multiculturalism was established in the first place to manage those post-Second World War European migrants. They were presumed to be Christian. Multiculturalism

was founded on the assumption that while diverse groups had different cultural practices these groups were not only acceptably “white”, they also shared the moral assumptions that grounded the Australian social order. Earlier I mentioned that certain Australian public holidays are timed to coincide with Christian religious festivals. Nahid Kabir tells us that in the 1980s, and persisting today: “Religious discrimination was . . . also manifest in barriers to Ramadan observations and Eid celebrations. [Muslims] also experienced difficulties in gaining time off work to attend Jum’ah or Eid congregational prayers or even to perform individual prayers at work” (2004, 169). In the neoliberal state, where the policy of multiculturalism has been set aside, this core and periphery structure ceases to exist. Rather, as we have seen, race, and religion, become integrated into a hierarchy of relative exclusion. Whiteness, and Christianity, remain privileged in this putatively secular state.

Under the Howard governments the Christian foundations of this state were made increasingly overt. In June, 2001, Howard took advantage of the constitutional lack of distinction between church and state, discussed above, to make Peter Hollingworth the Governor-General. This was the first time that a cleric had been offered the highest political position in Australia. Hollingworth had been the Anglican Bishop of Brisbane for eleven years. At the time of his appointment Hollingworth gave up his role as a bishop. Nevertheless, this appointment called into question Australia’s secularity and asserted the claim to its Christian basis.

Lejla Voloder argues that “the multicultural frame positions religion as secondary to ethnic identification within Australian society, fostering multicultural belonging through secular ideology” (2010, 153). She also suggests that what she calls the ethnicisation of religion has led to the understanding of “religious belonging as commensurate with ethnic belonging” (2010, 153). Here we can see how the integration of ethnicity, and race, with religion has coalesced. If whiteness, or more specifically here the ethnic groups which are related to whiteness, and Christianity, are assumed to be commensurate, then, also, “Muslim” has become a category commensurate with “Arab” and “Middle Eastern”. As Poynting, Noble, Tabar and Collins note, “some essential Arab-ness or Middle Eastern-ness or Islamic-ness *is seen to be* central to this group of people, to weave them into a single entity. This link is repeated again and again in media items and public statements” (2004, 33, their italics). This is the link that criminalises Muslims as rapists, as in the so-called “ethnic gang rapes” of 2000–2001, as terrorists, most obviously as identified with Osama bin Laden and Al-Qaeda, and as asylum seekers who are criminalised by virtue of being asylum seekers but who, in 2000, the then Immigration

Minister, Philip Ruddock, associated with terrorists (see, for example, Kabir 2004, 304). Islam, it would seem, has a different moral basis to secular, but really Christian, Australia.

The imbrication of Islam with ethnicity has enabled what Poynting and Mason (2007, 75) describe as “the criminalisation of ethnicity and the ethnicisation of crime.” They date this from the late 1990s. This was shortly after the implementation of the Howard government’s first wave of industrial relations changes and when the project for individualising and contractualising Australian society was beginning to make inroads into Australian everyday life. The connection here is with the exclusionary structure of neoliberalism. In short, the most excluded groups are criminalised and in this way placed on the edge of membership of the state. In order to understand this we need to think about the changed role of prisons.

Neoliberalism and Prisons

I mentioned above that the prison takes on a different role in the neoliberal state. In the modern state the prison evolved as an internal means of sequestering those who broke the laws of the state. As is well known, Foucault (1977) argues that the post-Benthamite prison functioned not only to surveil and discipline those incarcerated but also as an instrument of correction. As David Garland notes: “Writing in the mid-1970s, authors such as Michel Foucault and Michael Ignatieff argued that the correctionalist approach was rooted in the structures of modern Western society” (2001, 54). While the prison in that society removed the prisoner from the everyday life of the society, it positioned them at the centre of the attention of the state. Ultimately, the role of prison was not punishment but to rehabilitate prisoners so that they could take their places as contributing members of society. In this way the prison was fundamentally different from the detention camp.

However, as Garland commented in *The Culture of Control* (2001, 8): “If asked to describe the major changes in penal policy in the last thirty years, most insiders would undoubtedly mention ‘the decline in the rehabilitative ideal’—a phrase that Francis Allen brought into common usage when he used it as the title of his 1981 book.” Why did this happen? It is important to recognise that the shift away from rehabilitation took place at the same time that the United States and Great Britain were pioneering the neoliberal transformation of their societies. To oversimplify, if you don’t believe that you have a society, only an aggregation of competitive individuals, then there is nothing into which to rehabilitate

those who have been identified as criminals and imprisoned. Instead, punishment becomes more important and, at the same time, the position of the prison changes in the developing exclusionary order of the neoliberal state.

In Chapter 5 I discuss the neoliberal state as approaching the state of exception as discussed by Giorgio Agamben. Here, therefore, I will only concentrate on what Agamben writes about the concentration camp: “The camps . . . were not born out of ordinary law, and even less were they the product—as one might have believed—of a transformation and a development of prison law; rather they were born out of the state of exception and martial law” (2000, 37). For Agamben, then, the concentration camps were something very different from prisons. They were related to the state of exception which, as its name implies, was itself apart from the modern state. Now, what I am arguing here is that, as the state evolves into the state of exception so the prison changes its meaning to become a camp structurally similar in its positioning within the state to the concentration camp.

Working off Agamben’s theorisation of the camp, Suvendrini Perera (2002b) writes: “The structure of the camp as a ‘dislocating localisation’ that exceeds the political system of the state is a space where the ‘national’ is placed in suspension: not-Australia.” As the state approaches the state of exception so the detention camp becomes normalised; more, the detention camp and the prison function similarly but on different sides of the border. Or, this was the ideal attempted by the Pacific Solution. Most camps have been within the political borders of Australia and those concentrated in the camps are subject to Australian law. The crucial difference between camps and prisons, then, is that the former house people attempting to enter Australia to live while prisoners are people at the furthest point of exclusion from the Australian state without being expelled from that state. It is no wonder, then, that as prisons have become privatised, they are often run by the same private security organisations that run detention camps. Howard had started the process for privatising the camps as far back as 1996. The following year Australasian Correctional Services was awarded the management contract. At the present time, Serco, for example, administers the detention camp on Christmas Island and Villawood detention centre in Sydney and also Acacia Prison in Western Australia and Borallon Prison in Queensland.

As the role of prisons changed so did the numbers of people incarcerated. In the United States, the buildup, as Bert Useem and Anne Morrison Piehl call it, began in the second half of the 1970s. Between 1925, when recording of prison numbers began, and 1975 the rate of

imprisonment remained roughly steady at 110 inmates per 100,000 residents (Useem and Piehl 2008, 1). Then: “The number of prisoners shot upward and would continue on this trajectory for 25 years. By the end of the twentieth century, there were 476 inmates per 100,000 US residents or more than 1.36 million people in prison. . . . By year-end 2005, the number behind prison bars had risen even further, to 1.5 million” (2008, 2). What needs to be noted about these numbers is the disproportionate rate of imprisonment of African-Americans:

By year end 2004, 8.1% of black males between the ages of 25 and 29 were in prison. About one third of all African American males are predicted, during their lifetime, to serve time in a state or federal prison. (Useem and Piehl 2008, 2)

In an article published in 1999, Loic Wacquant wrote that in Europe, “between 1983 and 1995, the number of prisoners rose from 43,000 to 55,000 in England, from 39,000 to 53,000 in France, from 41,000 to 50,000 in Italy, from 14,000 to 40,000 in Spain, and from 4000 to nearly 10,000 in Holland and 7000 in Greece” (1999, 216). Wacquant goes on to explain that,

throughout Europe, it is foreigners, so-called “second-generation” immigrants—who precisely are not immigrants—of non-Western extraction and persons of color, who are known to figure among the most vulnerable categories both on the labor market and vis-a-vis the public assistance sector of the state, owing to their lower class distribution and to the multiple discriminations they suffer, who are massively over-represented within the imprisoned population, and this is comparable, nay in some places superior, to the “racial disproportionality” that affects blacks in the United States. (1999, 216)

Writing about the United States, in 1998 Angela Davis argued that:

Imprisonment has become the response of first resort to far too many of the social problems that burden people who are ensconced in poverty. These problems often are veiled by being conveniently grouped together under the category “crime” and by the automatic attribution of criminal behavior to people of color. Homelessness, unemployment, drug addiction, mental illness, and illiteracy are only a few of the problems that disappear from public view when the human beings contending with them are relegated to cages.

Much the same could be said about the use of prisons in Europe. Structurally speaking, imprisonment has become the place of confinement for those the neoliberal state excludes from the contractual order.

Perera, discussing Agamben's genealogy of the camp, explains that, "the initial characteristics of the camp are colonial war, with an implicit racial/ethnic difference in the internal population, and the invocation of a state of exception based on considerations of 'national security' rather than criminal behaviour on the part of those imprisoned" (2002b). Perera is arguing that those locked up in the detention camps on the border of Australia are those that, at other times, would have been identified as the colonised; those doing the locking up would be the colonisers. Her point is that this is still the case. Davis, like Wacquant writing about European countries, writes that criminality in the United States has been racialised. The majority of prisoners in the United States are African-American, Latino/a, Native American and Asian. Prison inmates have taken on the characteristics of those in camps. In Australia, there has been an analogous proportional increase in the prison population to that in the United States. Dot Goulding writes that:

Over the past 25 years Australia's prison population has almost tripled. In 1980 the average daily prisoner count was 9746. In the March quarter of 2006 the average daily number of prisoners was 24,425. The national average imprisonment rate for Australia during March 2006 was 156 prisoners per 100,000 of the adult population. (2007, 25–26)

This rate may be massively lower than in the United States, especially allowing for the increase in total population, but it is still clearly very much higher than it was in 1980.

Except for Indigenous inmates, Australia does not collect detailed figures on the race or ethnicity of prisoners so further breakdowns are difficult to come by. Jock Collins has analysed data from the 1991 prison census which asked where prisoners were born. He found that, "when the foreign-born data were broken into different birthplace groups, the Turkish-born had the highest rate of imprisonment (309.2 per 100 000 adult Australian residents), followed by the Lebanese-born (275.1), the Vietnam-born (156.6) and the New Zealand born (168.4). These rates are higher than the rate of imprisonment for the Australia-born, which was 131.6 per 100 000 adults in 1991" (2002, 6). It would be safe to assume that the figure for incarcerated New Zealanders refers primarily to Maoris. In Aotearoa/New Zealand, in 1997, 53 per cent of male prisoners and 60 per cent of female prisoners were Maori (Durie 2003, 60). In the 2006 census, 17.7 per cent of the population claimed Maori descent. In

Australia in 1997 the same foreign-born groups as in 1991 were overrepresented. Quoting figures from a 1997 data collection, Collins finds that, taking the Australian-born rate of incarceration as 1, the rate for those born in New Zealand was 1.6, in Vietnam was 2.7, in Turkey was 1.6, and in Lebanon was 2.0. Rates for those born in Italy, Greece and the United Kingdom were below the rate for Australian born.

We can see that Australian imprisonment rates relate to those settler groups most stigmatised and excluded in Australian society—those likely to be Muslims; working-class Asians; and, generally speaking, those who are either considered to be non-white, or non-Christian, or both. At the same time, those groups granted whiteness, and who come from predominantly Christian countries, have lower incarceration rates. That Africans are not showing up in these figures is, it must be assumed, because their arrival in Australia was too recent, and their numbers too small, for any statistically significant result. We can reinforce these figures with some statistics Collins has collected for youth crime. These suggest, in his words, “that Lebanese, Indo-Chinese, New Zealander (including Maoris) and Pacific Islander juveniles are significantly over-represented” (2002).

The groups most stigmatised and excluded in Australia are Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. Goulding also tells us that in the March quarter of 2006 there were 5,842 Aboriginal Australians in custody. This figure means that approximately 19 per cent of the Australian prison population is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent (2007, 26). Indigenous Australians make up about 2.5 per cent of the Australian population. I have not mentioned Indigenous Australians previously because my analysis of relative exclusion has focused on settler Australians. I have discussed the racial discrimination against Indigenous Australians in my exemplification of everyday racism. When writing about the Northern Territory National Emergency Response I made the point that Aborigines are the most excluded group in Australian society. We can now see this again in the incarceration figures for Indigenous Australians.

As in the United States, in Australia, as neoliberalism took hold so, as we have seen, the numbers of prisoners increased. A disproportionately high number of those prisoners were drawn from groups most excluded from the new contractual order of mutual obligation. These groups are the most non-white, and also those from religions considered to be most different in their value systems from Christianity. As we have seen, the two most excluded groups are Indigenous Australians and Muslims. Groups identified as African and as Middle Eastern, or Arab, are the most excluded settler Australians. People of Middle Eastern background are

near the bottom of the exclusionary hierarchy because they are presumed to be Muslim. In Victoria in 2008 while around 2 per cent of the population was Muslim, Muslims made up 6 per cent of the prison population (Cooper 2008). These people are likely to include some of the Turks and some of the Lebanese identified by Collins as being disproportionately imprisoned. It is not surprising that, where analysis of television advertisements showed that there were more characters identified as white than in the substantive Australian population, the prison population has a much greater proportion of people identified as non-white than in the general population. On the figures that I have quoted the combined percentage for Indigenous and Muslim prisoners across Australia, assuming that the Victorian figure for incarcerated Muslims is constant for the other states and territories,¹⁰ comes to 25 per cent or a quarter of all inmates. The prison population, made up of those of visible difference, and those of Muslim persuasion, makes these people invisible through incarceration.

In Australian society reconfigured by neoliberal ideology, as in the United States and other neoliberal-based societies, the purpose of prisons has changed. Prisons now hold those most excluded from the state but whom the state is unable to expel. Where possible expulsion did, indeed, become an option. The Howard governments developed a policy of expelling permanent residents on character grounds who had served more than a year in prison no matter how long they had lived in Australia. In one notorious example, Robert Jovicic, who had lived in the country since he was two, was, at thirty-eight, deported to Serbia after serving prison terms for burglary and theft, crimes committed to fund his heroin addiction.

Neoliberalism transforms the state from a governmental form founded on an ideology of inclusion bounded by the state's borders, to a governmental form founded on relative exclusion where the least excluded are those who are of most economic use to the state. The state's relationship with its members, whether citizens or not, is founded on an idea of an economic, rather than social, contract. The most excluded are those who, from the economic point of view of the neoliberal state, have the least to offer. In a time when skills are highly valued, these are the least educated. In a state that values whiteness and Christianity, these are also the people who are disadvantaged in other ways, by being non-white, and this itself functions hierarchically with those settler Australians who are darkest having the greatest problems getting jobs, and getting jobs commensurate with their qualifications, and visibly Indigenous Australians being the most

discriminated against; by being of a religion other than Christian, which also works in a hierarchy of relative acceptability with Anglicans being preferred within that Christian system, and, overall, Muslims being the most excluded.

The most excluded people who are legitimately living within the political boundaries of the Australian state are disproportionately represented in the prison system. Rather than places primarily of rehabilitation, as was the dominant ideology of the inclusive, often welfare, state of the twentieth century, prisons have become places where those unwanted and uncared for by the neoliberal state are made invisible. They have become virtually identical to the camps for mandatory detention, the purpose of which is to incarcerate people whose only “crime” has been to enter Australia asking for asylum. Detention camps hold those who are striving to enter the state and for whom the state’s first reaction is exclusion.

This, then, is the general background for the more specific topics taken up in the essays in this volume. Individually, the essays address specific elements of the problems related to race, ethnicity, the border and migration. Together, they provide an overview of the transformation in these areas occasioned by the implementation of neoliberal policies in Australia.

CHAPTER ONE

TWO RESCUES, ONE HISTORY: EVERYDAY RACISM IN AUSTRALIA

If you watched television or read the newspapers in Australia, or even chatted with friends, on 9 May 2006, you knew that an extraordinary rescue had just taken place. Two miners trapped 925 metres underground by a rockfall that had also killed another miner, Larry Knight, had been brought to the surface after fourteen days. As one commentator remarked, the timing of their appearance fitted in well with the constraints of breakfast-television current affairs programs. After all, Todd Russell and Brant Webb were not brought straight to the surface. They had been able to stop off on the way to have a shower and change into some fresh clothes. Consequently, when they did walk out of the mine's lift at 5.59am they looked as spry and clean as when they got to work on 25 April, Anzac Day. Then, in front of the huge media contingent, the two men "clocked off", removing their name tags from the board that showed who was down the mine, before embracing their waiting wives.

The media and Australia lapped it up. What more could Australia ask for—two Aussie working men, tested in a battle with nature, coming through it unscathed; and then there was that laconic Aussie humour and the romance. What most Australians never found out, because it hardly rated a mention in the media and when it did it was completely overtaken by the mining rescue, was that, at the other end of Australia, in the far north as it is sometimes called in those urban centres of Sydney and Melbourne, and, far north Queensland or F.N.Q. as it is called in Brisbane, capital of that state, another rescue was taking place.

On 17 April John Tabo, his son John junior and his nephew Tom had put to sea from their home on the island of Mer in the Torres Strait in a five-metre dinghy. They had planned to travel to Masig, also called Yorke Island, about sixty kilometres away, to pick up some members of a rugby league team. Among the Torres Strait islands this is the kind of journey made every day. There would have been nothing special this time either, except for Cyclone Monica. When Monica changed course and headed

down the coast to Queensland it caught the Tabos as unaware as did the “seismic event”, as it came to be called, that caused the rockfall that trapped Russell and Webb. The Tabos’ dinghy was blown off course in the huge seas. Without the navigation equipment that John Tabo had not expected they would need, the three found themselves adrift in the open sea with no way of knowing which way to point the boat. They ran out of petrol for the outboard motor. Drifting, they fashioned makeshift paddles out of empty plastic fuel containers and worked metal tins into hats to protect their heads and faces from the dangerous tropical sun. They spent some days on a barren sand cay waiting for Monica’s winds to abate. During all this time the Tabos collected rainwater to drink and ate raw clams and squid that they caught in a throw net they happened to have with them in the boat. After a week the search for them was called off.

Luckily, the Tabos had a mobile phone with them. In the Torres Strait mobile reception is limited to a distance beyond each island. The Tabos kept their phone switched off to preserve the battery only putting it on briefly once or twice a day to check if there was a signal. Finally, on 9 May, there was. They sent seven text messages to be sure—a text message uses less battery power than phoning someone—“Need help, fuel, food.” Relatives told the Queensland police and, at just past 4.00 in the afternoon, an Australian Search and Rescue helicopter winched the three men up from their dinghy and flew them back the seventeen nautical miles to Mer, also known as Murray Island. The men had lost around twenty or thirty kilos each during their ordeal.

Unlike Beaconsfield there was no media contingent on Mer to report on the Tabos’ arrival and where Russell and Webb needed to get themselves a celebrity manager to handle the competing offers for their stories of life in a cramped mining cage nearly a kilometre underground, the Tabos, after twenty-two days lost at sea, appear to have simply gone back to their daily lives.

The Reportage

Regional ABC in Cairns reported the news of the Tabos’ amazing rescue and Ian Gerard had a short report published in *The Australian* on 10 May: “Trio Rescued after Three Weeks Adrift.” Also on 10 May, Lisa Millar on the ABC radio’s national current affairs program, *The World Today*, reported the story under the heading, “Islanders’ Great Escape.” The reference to a great escape connects the Tabos’ tale of endurance to that of the miners by way of the developing tendency to describe that rescue in terms of a great escape. In a publicity coup, Sustagen, the milk-based

health drink company, had provided the miners with business cards that read “The Great Escape” and then: “To all who have supported us and our families, we cannot wait to shake your hand and shout you a Sustagen. Thanks is not enough.” Russell and Webb handed these out after they reached the mine’s surface.¹ Bill Shorten, the Australian Workers’ Union national secretary, picked up on this rhetoric describing the miners’ rescue to the media as “the great escape” and saying that: “This is the biggest escape from the biggest prison we have, the planet” (“Beaconsfield Celebrates Mine Miracle” 2006). This expansion of the “great escape” idea, which I shall discuss further below, at the very least functions as an expression of the alienation from the land of Australia which has been a characteristic of European colonisation of the continent. Here, however, in Millar’s story, the reference to a great escape serves to make the miners’ rescue the touchstone for thinking about the Tabos: “While Australia has been focused on the extraordinary story of the rescue of the Beaconsfield miners this week, at the other end of Australia another tale of endurance and survival has been unfolding.” Within the Torres Strait the rescue of the Tabos was becoming known as the “Mer miracle” (for example, the *Torres News* used this as a headline on 17–23 May 2006). Miracle is a term which, among other things, reflects the importance of Christianity in the Torres Strait Islands since the coming of the London Missionary Society in 1871.

On 11 May the Brisbane *Sunday Mail* published a different story about the Tabos by Gerard. Possibly influenced by Millar’s radio segment, he began: “Just a day after miners Todd Russell and Brant Webb walked free from their underground cage in Tasmania, a similarly miraculous tale of survival was unfolding in the nation’s north” (Gerard 2006). It is important to ask what the difference would be if the media scrum had been around the Tabos’ story and if that had become the measure for reporting on the miners’ story. Much of this chapter is about why that could not have happened.

Let me contextualise this by making an observation. On 19 May 2006, Prime Minister John Howard held a reception for Russell and Webb at Parliament House in Canberra. It should go without saying that no reception was held for the Tabos. Howard gave a speech in which he held up the two miners as a mirror for the nation. They embody, he said: “All of the things that we pride ourselves on as distinctively Australian characteristics at work—we saw guts, we saw resilience, we saw courage, we saw strength, enormous endurance” (“Beaconsfield Miners Pay Tribute to Rescuers” 2006). Almost three weeks earlier, on 10 May, Inspector Russell Rhodes of the Queensland police, paid tribute to the Tabos:

“‘They have tremendous resilience, these people,’ Insp. Rhodes said. ‘They’re experienced sea people and they have a tremendous determination to survive’” (“Torres Strait Sea Rescue an Act of God” 2006). Certainly Rhodes is a lowly police inspector and Howard is Australia’s prime minister but Howard has never commented publicly on the Tabos’ story so it has been left to Rhodes to present Australia’s tribute. Howard uses the inclusive “we”; we Australians. Who are “we” here? Rhodes gives “them” the same qualities that Howard suggests typify Australians, most obviously both Howard and Rhodes use resilience as a descriptor, but for Rhodes “they” are not a part of “us”.

We, it seems, are suspicious of them and their stories. On 10 May, under the headline, “22 Days at Sea,” the Brisbane *Courier Mail* published the first of three reports on the Tabos’ rescue. The account begins by telling readers that the three Torres Strait Islanders were “purportedly missing at sea for 22 days.” In spite of the fact that we know from other reports that the men went missing on 17 April and that a search was instituted and called off after a week, the *Courier Mail* suggests a lack of credibility in the men’s story by writing that they “told police last night they had been at sea since April 17.” Later, the article becomes more forthright saying that, “it’s believed some authorities doubt the claims of the men.” While making this aspersion the article carefully hedges by not identifying which “authorities”, which means that the claim cannot be checked, and by implying a degree of doubt in the claim. Subsequently, the article quotes a woman who, it implies, is saying something of great concern by writing that she “didn’t want to be identified,” saying that, “it was a coincidence that they [the Tabos] were found the same day the Tasmanian miners were freed.” Here, Russell and Webb’s rescue takes on a moral quality. Their “honest” drama might have been being used as a cloak by the possibly dishonest Torres Strait Islanders so that, perhaps, the police might not come to know of their return, or be so distracted by the extraordinary events going on in Beaconsfield that the Tabos’ return would not be followed up.

Some years ago I published an article in which I argued that:

Australian history has traditionally located itself in a factual history of white settlement occurring from the south-east of the continent. The north of the continent has been constructed as the site of the Other, of that which has been repressed in the south’s production of the real. (Stratton 1989, 38)

In the distinction that is made between the miners’ rescue and the Tabos’ rescue we see this divide being played out in everyday life. One of the important qualities of the northern, apparently less real, history is that it is

also more indigenous—though the term “indigenous” needs to be treated circumspectly as in its general usage of describing a people’s presence before colonisation it assumes that colonisation for the term to have meaning. In the article under discussion here, we see how the greater reality assumed for the white and southern is used to problematise the northern and indigenous.

Finally, the article comes clean: “There were rumours circulating in the days after the men went missing that they had been found and were hiding out to escape police prosecution.” Again, we are not given any source for the rumours. Nor are we told what the Tabos might have done that the police were supposedly looking for them. Just in case all this might not be enough to undermine the extraordinary nature of the Tabos’ feat, the article ends on a different tack: “It is understood the small fibreglass [sic] boat had no safety equipment.” “They”, it seems, not only engage in illegal activity, contravening Australian laws, but they also cannot be trusted to prepare their boat properly before setting out on an inter-island trip. In short, while reporting the amazing achievement of the Tabos in surviving for twenty-two days in extremely adverse conditions, the article simultaneously undermines the Tabos, casting doubt on the veracity of their story and suggesting that they are, in fact, criminals.

We can compare this with the reporting of the mining disaster. Almost all of the reportage on the trapped Tasmanian miners makes no mention that the gold mine had been in receivership since the owning company, Allstate Explorations, collapsed in 2001 and that Allstate, now run by an administrator in Perth, is now controlled by Macquarie Bank to whom Allstate owes \$47 million. It seems that Taylor Woodings, the administrators, sold Macquarie \$77.4 million of the debt for just \$300,000 (Trounson and Andrusiak 2006). Now, with the price of gold at twenty-five year highs of around \$835 an ounce, the Beaconsfield mine has been under pressure to increase its output. Consequently, in the first three months of 2006, that is until three weeks before the “seismic event” that killed Knight and trapped Russell and Webb, gold production at the mine was up by twenty-four per cent. This required increased use of explosives. The blasting has been related to numerous earth tremors, or seismic events, that had been felt for about nine months by both townspeople and miners:

Linked to blasts a kilometre below the town’s surface, the earth movements were also deeply worrying for those working underground. If the tremors could scare the daylights out of townsfolk on the surface, how much more hazardous were they for the men working below? (Denholm 2006)

According to this same report, published when Russell and Webb were still missing and thought possibly dead, Russell “was among the miners warning management about the dangers.” However, by the time Russell and Webb were interviewed on Channel Nine after their rescue, Russell was absolving the mine management of responsibility for the accident. It would seem, then, that at the very least the story of the mine itself is of problematic business practices and dubious safety standards.

The bulk of the reportage, especially on television, concentrated on the human interest of the trapped miners and their rescue. It was this focus that enabled the narrative of Australianness and Australian qualities and values to become paramount. Indeed, because in both the miners’ and the travellers’ stories the centre of media interest lay in the men who were rescued, these narratives, taken both separately and together, emblematised what I am going to describe as everyday racism.

Everyday Racism

In *Race Daze* I differentiated “the policy of official multiculturalism” from what I called “everyday multiculturalism”. Identifying the latter as syncretic and rhizomatic I went on to write that: “I use these terms to describe how cultures, produced by individuals in their everyday lives, merge, creolise and transform as people live their lives, adapting to and resisting situations, and (mis)understanding, loving, hating and taking pleasure in other people with whom they come into contact” (Stratton 1998, 15). In short, everyday multiculturalism is a practice arising out of everyday life. In *The Empire Strikes Back*, Errol Lawrence writes about what he calls “common-sense racist ideologies” (1982, 95). Lawrence uses Gramscian theory to think about the day-to-day, common-sense ideological legitimations that white English people in the 1960s and 1970s developed to justify their racist practices. Lawrence writes that: “Whilst we should not forget that these dominant definitions are contested, we must also remember that they are embodied within the dominant institutional order and are inscribed within the social relations of everyday life” (1982, 50). Here, I am not concerned with these dominant definitions, these ideological legitimations. Rather I want to think about the practice of everyday racism. Everyday racism, though, is not a new term. In 1991 Philomena Essed published a book titled *Understanding Everyday Racism*. She writes that:

[R]acism is more than structure and ideology. As a practice it is routinely created and reinforced through the concept of “everyday racism” which connects structural forces of racism with routine situations in everyday life.

It links ideological dimensions of racism with daily attitudes and interprets the reproduction of racism in terms of the experience of it in everyday life. (1991, 2)

My interest here is with the formation of attitudes and understandings that are so embedded in the everyday life of a racialised culture, in this case Australian culture, that the members of that culture, those that, loosely, we might call Australians, don't even recognise themselves as making decisions based in a racialised history.

With its shaping in nineteenth-century racial ideologies, the culture that we call "Australian" leads members of that culture to have a range of taken-for-granted assumptions and expectations to differentiate between groupings of people. It is these shared assumptions and expectations that produce the practice of everyday racism. The individuals involved may well claim that they are non-racist, or even anti-racist. Consciously they would be right. Using Lawrence's terms, in Australia everyday racism permeates the dominant institutional order and the social relations of everyday life because race and racialised preferences are core structuring mechanisms of Australian culture. To put it more succinctly, the weight of Australia's racialised and racist past weighs heavily on Australia's multicultural present, both in government policy and in everyday life. This chapter considers why it is that Australians, whoever they are, should find it surprising, if not inconceivable, to make the rescue of three Torres Strait Islanders the touchstone for the rescue of two (Anglo-)Australian miners.

The Miners

I want to begin by going back to Shorten's comments after the rescue of the miners. In the media absence of the mine manager Shorten became the person to whom the media turned for daily briefings on the rescue effort. After the rescue Shorten's comments were widely disseminated and repeated. He began by talking about the rescue as an escape, as "the biggest escape". Later, he refined this. The rescue became, "the great escape from under the ground". This idea of the miners' rescue as a "great escape" was picked up and reused in much media commentary. The reason for this has much to do with the resonance of the term. *The Great Escape* is a still-popular film released in 1963, with Steve McQueen. The story is based on the escape by allied prisoners of war from the German Stalag Luft III camp in 1944. Also starring James Coburn and Charles Bronson, the most memorable scene has the blond, blue-eyed McQueen's character riding a motorbike over a barbed wire fence attempting to reach safety in Switzerland. It goes without saying that, this being a story set in Second

World War Europe, all the characters are white thus naturally reinforcing the whiteness of the miners.

One further resonance here is to Anzac Day, the day that commemorates Australia's participation in wars. As it happened, as I have mentioned, the seismic event that killed Knight and trapped Russell and Webb took place on Anzac Day—a day which, for most Australians, is a public holiday. But that is not the most important thing about Anzac Day for this story. Fiona Nicoll writes about the Australian War Memorial, the centrepiece of the memory process associated with Anzac Day, that:

In commemorating a great sacrifice that occurred *elsewhere*, the Memorial articulates an important element of a white nationalist ontology. The construction of the Great War as a test, or process of “bleeding”, through which a previously “innocent” Australia passed into a state of national “maturity”, pervades Anzac mythology. (Nicoll 2001, 175)

The point here is twofold. First, that the memorialising connected with Anzac Day has been an instatement of Australian whiteness, an assertion of Australia as a white country; second, as Nicoll goes on to argue in different terms, that this memorialisation represses the genocidal settler wars on Aborigines. That the seismic event happened on Anzac Day, then, helped to reinforce the whiteness of the narrative of the miners' story by association and, by implication, identified it with the settler part of the Australian population at the expense of indigenous Australians—and, for the purposes of my argument, I want to emphasise Torres Strait Islanders.

If a film about an escape from a prisoner of war camp is the most immediate reference for Shorten's rhetoric it is by no means the most profound. It was not a coincidence that so many journalists were able to get to Beaconsfield so quickly. April 28th was the tenth anniversary of what has become known as the “Port Arthur massacre”. In 1996 on that date Martin Bryant went to the Port Arthur heritage site with two rifles, an autoloading AR-15 and an FN FAL, killed thirty-five people and wounded a further thirty-seven. The Broad Arrow Café, the site of the majority of the murders, was subsequently turned into “a place of quiet reflection” as a memorial to those Bryant killed.

The point here, though, has not so much to do with the massacre itself as with where the massacre took place, Port Arthur. For Port Arthur was a secondary penal settlement, a place where convicts who had been transported to the penal colony of Van Diemen's Land were sent if they offended again. In 2000 John Frow published a piece about the insistence of the memory of Port Arthur in which he refers to the massacre and to the Broad Arrow Café:

Nobody uses Bryant's name but his denied presence is everywhere. Nobody knows the forms which will lay the ghost. Nobody knows what kind of monument will insert this story into the other story for which the site is known, into that past which is barely available for understanding. (2000, 2)

The media were arriving in Tasmania for the massacre commemoration service.

Bryant has never given a reason why he went on his horrific shooting spree. Nor has he spoken about why he chose Port Arthur. However, Port Arthur in popular memory is the site of the most notorious secondary penal settlement in Tasmania, the site where, during the time of its operation, the rule of law was attenuated to the point of non-existence. Bryant must have felt some association between the place and the murderous act he planned to commit. In spite of questions about his mental health, and the general acknowledgement of his low intelligence, Bryant was deemed fit to stand trial. He is now incarcerated in Risdon Prison with the condition that he should never be released. In another resonance of Shorten's expression, Tasmanians fervently hope that Bryant will never make his great escape.

By now it should be clear that Shorten's turn of phrase was highly evocative, conjuring resonances that go back to the British settlement of Tasmania, to the convict era. Given this context, the use of the film reference helps to enforce a positive valence for the idea of escape. The film makes heroes of these POWs seeking escape from Nazi imprisonment. The incarceration and escape image was not the only metaphor Shorten and others had to hand. Another possibility was that of being buried alive. The American *CBS News* used this image on 9 May when it talked about "the men who were buried April 25th" ("Aussie Miners Emerge" 2006). Rhodes, the Queensland police inspector we have already met, also used the image: "At one end of the country there's two men rescued from an entombed mine. . . ." he said ("Torres Strait Sea Rescue" 2006). The idea of being buried alive has been a powerful Gothic image since Edgar Allan Poe published his short story "The Premature Burial" in 1850. As recently as 1990 a horror film using this theme titled *Buried Alive!* was released. However, in Tasmania, and mainland Australia, the theme of premature burial does not resonate as profoundly as a metaphor that evokes white Australia's popular memory of convict origins.

Frow asks, "how has the lived violence of Port Arthur's past been folded into national historical time?" (2000, 9). In this instance we can find an answer in Shorten's, and others', choice of rhetoric. The British

first established a settlement on the island then called Van Diemen's Land in 1803. The first convicts arrived from England in 1812 and the first free settlers four years later. Robert Hughes writes that:

In convict lore, Van Diemen's Land always had the worst reputation for severity. Its name induced a *frisson* that later became integral to Australian culture. (1987, 368)

We need to think carefully, if briefly, here about penal colonies and transportation. As Michel Foucault pointed out in *Madness and Civilization* (1965), the modern state is founded on a conceptual privileging of confinement. The obverse of confinement is exclusion, figured in the case of convicts as transportation. Foucault was remarkably dismissive of transportation. In *Discipline and Punish* (1977, 272), he wrote in passing that: "The only alternative [to prison] envisaged was deportation, which England abandoned at the beginning of the nineteenth century and which France took up under the Second Empire, but rather as a rigorous and distant form of imprisonment." Yet in 1802, Jeremy Bentham had titled one of his tracts in support of the panopticon, his model prison, *Panopticon versus New South Wales*. Bentham knew how seriously the British took transportation as a form of punishment. In Tasmania the acceptance of transported prisoners did not cease until 1856, the same year that the state's name was changed and it gained an elected legislature. We need to remember, though, as Foucault indicates, that, while transportation implied exclusion from the home territory of the state, the place to which the convicts were transported, the penal colony, became, itself, a place of confinement. It is this linking of exclusion and confinement that makes transportation a modern idea. The earlier practice of banishment simply involved sending a person away, either beyond the rule of the banisher or to a place where the banisher would not exercise further punishment.

In England transportation had been evolving out of the idea of banishment since the later seventeenth century. Between 1655 and 1699, A. G. L. Shaw writes, "about 4,500 criminals were transported to the Caribbean and American colonies" (1966, 24). The first *Transportation Act* was proclaimed in 1718. In English thinking the penal colony was not a place outside of the state. Rather, it was an extension of the state on new land where the power of the state could be enforced.

In English thinking the penal colony always seems to have had an ambiguous status as both administrated prison space and colonisable space for settlers. Thus, as David Neal has shown, one of the most crucial political battles in the Australian colonies was over the establishment of the rule of law.

'Damn the Law! My will is the Law!,' Governor Bligh expostulated with a fine disregard for the rule of law tradition. He was not the last of the military and naval governors of New South Wales to become impatient of the checks placed on his authority. Justice Jeffery Bent scorned Governor Macquarie's principle of government described by the judge as, '*quod gubernatori placet, legis habet vigorem*'. (Neal 1991, 78)

Summing up Neal's historical argument, Stefan Petrow writes that, it "was not until a partially elected legislature was formed in 1842 that, Neal argues, New South Wales finally changed from a penal colony to a free society" (Petrow 2000). In Van Diemen's Land, Petrow writes that: "The court system was a travesty of the rule of law." As we shall see, this deeply rooted denial of the acknowledgement of the rights of individuals who come under the power of what is now the Australian state is a theme that runs through Australian government to the present day.

The French watched the English experience in Australia and, when they decided to establish penal colonies, they were determined not to make the same mistakes:

What [the French] took for mistakes included all features of colonial Australia that made possible some semblance of normal life for convicts and ex-convicts there. These included the commingling of convicts, ex-convicts and free emigrants in the same settlements; the employment of convict workers in private enterprise; the lack of special surveillance methods for Emancipists; and the liberality of judges toward convicts and Emancipists. (Spieler 2005, 190)

The French penal colony remained, administratively, a prison governed outside of laws applicable to free citizens. When Lieutenant-Governor George Arthur arrived in Van Diemen's Land in 1824 he would have had much sympathy with the French. Arthur had been commissioned in England to make Van Diemen's Land a place of terror in order to dissuade potential criminals from breaking the law. For Arthur:

Those who "knowingly" emigrated to a convict colony, which was in effect "an immense Gaol or Penitentiary", should not expect "to retain every immunity and privilege" they enjoyed in England and should "abide cheerfully by the rules and customs of the Prison." There could be "no happiness nor prosperity without personal security," and this could only be secured by "*severe discipline*". (Petrow 2000)

An important element of Arthur's disciplinary system was incarceration in confined spaces. One of the places Arthur sent convicts he considered

worthy of greater punishment were the bridgeworks for spanning the River Derwent. In Hughes's words: "The facilities provided there . . . included cells that were more like animals' lairs, seven feet long and less than three feet high, the men crawled into them at night and were padlocked there, behind a stout lattice, unable to stand or sit" (1987, 387). At Port Arthur, Charles Booth, appointed commandant three years after Arthur founded the penal settlement, "had solitary cells built, and special punishment cells, 7 feet by 4 feet and pitch dark . . . For less 'atrocious' offenders there were boxes like dog-kennels where the prisoner was chained, breaking stones from a pile in front of him" (Hughes 1987, 404). The barred metal platform on which Russell and Webb were working is known as a "mine cage". It was 1.5 metres high, two metres wide and 1.2 metres long, that is just under five feet high, six and a half feet wide and just under four feet long. Coal was discovered within a reasonable distance from Port Arthur, about fifteen miles from Eaglehawk Neck:

What more chastening form of extra punishment than to turn convicts into miners, condemned to hard labour, darkness, extreme confinement and hourly fear of cave-ins? So Arthur reasoned, and told Booth to sink shafts there, worked by the most refractory prisoners. (Hughes 1987, 407)

The echo of all this gets carried down the generations in the reproduction of cultural memory and memorialised at the Port Arthur heritage site. It is no wonder that the miners' rescue was figured as an escape from a prison.

But Australia's preoccupation with confinement is much more general than just the connection I have made here. Writing about the treatment of asylum seekers, Ghassan Hage makes this point well:

Well before the caging of illegal refugees, there were many examples of caging in Australian history. The Australian colonizing national will exterminated and caged Aboriginal people literally and metaphorically . . . More recently Australians engaged in a massive exercise during World War II of caging and detaining "ethnics," including some who actually held Australian citizenship. (Hage 1998, 111)

Hage's last point is mistaken as the concept of Australian citizenship did not exist until the *Nationality and Citizenship Act* of 1948 but this itself signals an uncertainty in who could be included as part of, and excluded from, the category of "Australian" to which we must return when discussing the rescue of the Tabos.

As Hughes writes, referencing the correct generic topos: "[Arthur's] Utopia of punishment and reform would be an autocracy" (1987, 381). In

France, starting in 1820, Pierre Ballache wrote an uncompleted utopia of punishment called *La Ville des Expiations* (*The Town of Expiations*) published in fragments between 1832 and 1835 (see Spieler 2005, Chapter 5). Arthur founded Port Arthur as a secondary punishment settlement in 1830, a settlement for those who transgressed his regime in the Van Diemen's Land penal colony. Port Arthur is on the Tasman Peninsula past the narrow isthmus of Eaglehawk Neck. What does it mean to describe Port Arthur as utopian? Writing about Thomas More's originary modern utopia, the work from which the genre derives its name, published in 1516, I have commented that, "to the extent that difference is asserted, that [readers accept] the work is fictional, it becomes a realistic account of a fantasy, a representation of an already inscribed Otherness" (Stratton 1990, 61). For a fantasy to be utopia, a no-place, it must be cut off from the "real" world, the world of the everyday. The island can be constituted as the trope of this excision. To put it differently, Elizabeth McMahon argues that since More's text, "utopias have always been represented as islands because they need absolute borders to fend off contamination from the world outside" (2003, 191). As a consequence utopias are simultaneously places of containment that can also be sites of confinement.

McMahon, who has much to say about the utopian quality of Tasmania in Australian culture, writes of Tasmania that, "it has long epitomised the utopian/dystopian dilemma of the island within both the Australian imaginary and boreal projections of the antipodes more generally" (2003, 195). Again, we must come back to this but Australian history is full of this use of islands from the penal colonisation of Tasmania itself to the secondary penal settlement of Sarah Island off the west coast of Tasmania to the conversion of Torres Strait islands into "reserves"—including Mer—from which islanders needed permission to leave, to the use of the Papua and New Guinean Manus Island and the independent island of Nauru as sites for detention centres as a part of the Pacific Solution that the Australian government developed in 2001 to deal with the "problem" of asylum seekers. The topos is also present in the way that the mainland of Australia has been consistently figured as an island. Technically, Australia is a continent rather than an island. The largest island in the world is said to be Greenland, but, as any web search will confirm, Australians think of the mainland of Australia as a huge island, indeed the largest in the world, surrounded by sea.²

In *Utopia*, the land that King Utopus conquers is not an island. Utopus takes over Abraxa and then orders a channel to be built to isolate the land renamed Utopia and convert it to an island: "To accomplish this [Utopus] ordered a deep channel to be dug fifteen miles long, and that the natives

might not think he treated them like slaves, he not only forced the inhabitants, but also his own soldiers, to labour in carrying it on” (More, 1989, book III). The construction of Utopia was a colonial enterprise in which the original, indigenous inhabitants were forced to destroy both literally and metaphorically their connection with the everyday life that had been handed down from previous generations.

It may be that an element in the fascination of Port Arthur today lies in this similarity to Utopus’ enterprise. The isthmus at Eaglehawk Neck is, as Hughes tells us, “less than 100 yards wide” (1987, 406). To stop convicts escaping, nine tethered guard dogs were placed along the width, “Booth increased the guard to twenty-five men, built guardhouses and sentry-boxes, and doubled the number of dogs” (406). Booth even put dogs on platforms in the water. If all this sounds a little over the top to prevent the escape of convicts we need to remember the importance of the utopian fantasy. McMahon remarks that the guard dogs, “performed the same task as the unassailable trench of utopia [sic]” (2003, 200). Thomas Lempriere, who worked at Port Arthur in the commissariat between 1833 and 1837, commented that: “Whether Port Arthur is an ‘Earthly Hell’ or not, it has in all events its Cerberus . . . [T]hese dogs form an impassable line” (cited in Hughes 1987, 406). Cerberus, a three-headed dog, guarded the entrance to Hades in Greek mythology. Lempriere understood the utopian nature of Port Arthur. About thirty years later, in the 1860s, a group of tourists wanted to pass Eaglehawk Neck to see the settlement. The commandant sent a message that they could “freely enter into the enchanted ground of all wickedness” (cited in Weidenhofer 1981, 65). The isthmus crossing seems to have made people aware of Port Arthur’s utopian quality.

However, we must not stop here. The Tasman Peninsula exercised a strong hold over Arthur. Also in 1830, Arthur devised a plan to resolve the Aboriginal problem once and for all. Displaced from their lands, abused and massacred, the indigenous people of Tasmania were continuing to trouble the white settlers. In a utopian moment, Arthur assembled all the settlers and the military in a long line across the settled part of the island and attempted to herd the Aborigines into the Tasman Peninsula. Arthur’s plan was to isolate them between the beginning of the peninsula, at Forestier’s Neck, and Eaglehawk Neck. Unlike King Utopus who, in the fashion of colonial fantasy, brought civilisation and good government to the conquered people of Abraxa, Arthur’s plan was to create another utopian site of confinement right next to his utopian penal settlement. The Black Line, as it was called, failed. However, by 1835 the remaining Aborigines, about 160 only, were relocated to Flinders Island, renamed from its indigenous name of Wybalenna. Arthur was still thinking in

utopian terms. Having managed the confinement of the Tasmanian Aborigines to an island considerably smaller than Tasmania, sounding like King Utopus he wrote to the new commandant of Flinders Island, Lieutenant Darling, in 1832: “Your first duty will be to provide for the security of the Natives and to afford their protection, and as the great design of the Government in forming this Establishment is with a view to their civilisation, His Excellency places the fullest reliance on your exertions to accomplish this great and important object” (Ryan 1996, 179). Typical of the Australian history of exclusionary confinement, by 1835, Lyndall Ryan tells us, “the establishment had become a gaol” (1996, 181).

Regardless of the actual colour of the convicts—there were, for example, nine convicts of African descent on the First Fleet—convict history in Australia is constructed as white. Moreover, since the 1980s having a convict ancestor has become something of which to be proud. Associating Russell and Webb with Tasmania’s convict past affirms their whiteness at the same time that it reinforces their Australianness.

Both the Prime Minister and Kim Beazley, the Federal Leader of the Opposition, used the rhetoric of mateship which, as we shall see, is also claimed to have a convict heritage. Howard said: “It has been a triumph of Australian mateship, the way in which the whole community worked together.” Beazley said: “Australians just witnessed a rolled-gold miracle and a great Australian epic, an epic of mateship, an epic of family, responsibility for each other, of skill” (“Beaconsfield Celebrates” 2006). Mateship is commonly thought of as a bonding process between men. However, its homoerotic connotation appears to have produced some more or less repressed anxiety when applied to two men forced into the extreme of personal intimacy for two weeks. For example, many reports helped readers think about the size of the mine cage by describing it as “about the size of a double bed” and Russell himself played with homoeroticism when, in the miners’ interview on Channel Nine after their release, he retailed how he had got Brant Webb to calm down at one point by threatening to kiss him.

Mateship is most importantly thought of as typically Australian. Russel Ward in his classic account of what he called the “national *mystique*”, *The Australian Legend*, found it in:

the strongly egalitarian sentiment of group solidarity and loyalty, which was perhaps the most marked of all convict traits. This was recognized as the prime distinguishing mark of outback workers fifty years before Lawson and others wrote about mateship. (Ward 1966, 77)

Mateship, then, is not only an Australian quality, it originates in those mythic white, Anglo-Celtic convicts. Thus, when Howard applies the term to “the whole community”, while being unclear quite who is a member of this community—Beaconsfield? Tasmania? Australia?—the deep resonance is with Australian whiteness, as it would seem to be with that “we” he used that I discussed earlier. To put it more specifically, my problem here is whether Howard’s community includes the Tabos, Mer people and more generally the inhabitants of the Torres Strait Islands. Beazley’s use is more specific. Probably, as befits a Labor leader, he is referring to the miners themselves and their rescuers. Again, though, what is being asserted is an implicit privileging of whiteness through a convict history. Nobody, to my knowledge, has described the Tabos’ survival in terms of mateship.

The Travellers

To think about how the Tabos are positioned in the Australian national imaginary we need to begin by remembering Inspector Rhodes’ description of the three men as part of “they”, those “experienced sea people”. Bound up in this apparently unexceptionable comment is the long history of racialisation, exclusion and confinement of the indigenous people incorporated into the space identified as Australia that bears on the present and informs the often unintentional everyday racism of Australians.

The Tabos come from Mer which is the most easterly of the Torres Strait Islands. In 1791 Captain Edwards of the HMS *Pandora*, having been to Tahiti to take prisoner the seamen who had mutinied against Bligh on the *Bounty*, named Mer, Murray Island. Paul Carter reminds us that “naming was an act of civilizing, that it did not refer naively to the locality, but was an assertion about possession, about the future where exploration would no longer be necessary” (1987, 65). We should be reminded here of the colonising force in the naming and renaming of Van Diemen’s Land. Beaconsfield itself was named in 1879 after the then Prime Minister of Britain, Benjamin Disraeli, who had been made the first Earl of Beaconsfield in 1876. That Mer is now more often than not known by its Meriam name, unlike Flinders Island, tells us much about the reassertion of indigenous presence on the island. Carter explains that, “aboriginal names, with their local genealogies and resistance to possession (even pronunciation and transliteration), . . . could be said to express the ‘otherness’ of the traveller’s experience, the sense in which it could not have been predicted and, for this reason, was valuable, the sense in which, too, any ‘possession’ was purely symbolic” (61). Indeed, it was on Mer in 1982 that Eddie Mabo, along with Sam Passi, Father Dave Passi and

James Rice, launched a claim in the High Court on behalf of the people of Mer for the restoration of their rights in the land of Mer. In 1992 the High Court found in their favour. As David Lawrence and Helen Reeves Lawrence sum it up: “This landmark decision recognising Islanders’ legal rights to ‘native’ or ‘traditional’ title in land, led to the Commonwealth *Native Title Act 1993* which now provides a mechanism for consideration of Indigenous Australians’ claims to native title” (2004, 27).

But we are way ahead of ourselves here. Meriam Mir is the language of Mer and for many it is their first language. We need to note this because there is an important politics around the use of English in Australia. The Department of Immigration and Multiculturalism and Indigenous Affairs (a combination of institutional concerns that, in itself, appears to equate migrants and indigenous Australians) describes English in official documents as Australia’s national language. Since 1 November 2005, all applicants applying to migrate to Australia in the category of General Skilled Migration and who are not from the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, the United States of America, or Ireland, that is, people deemed not to be native speakers, have to take an International English Language System test to demonstrate their English language competency. While around 15% of Australians speak a language other than English at home, there is a prejudice centred among the dominant Anglo-Celts that Australians who do not speak English are not somehow proper Australians. This maps onto the divide in official Australian multiculturalism between Anglo-Celtic Australians and so-called ethnic Australians—that is, Australians with origins in non-English speaking countries. In other words, linguistic communication in Australia is closely allied to the privileging of British-derived culture as can be seen from the list of countries exempted. People applying as skilled migrants must now possess “vocational” English. Pauline Hanson’s One Nation Party, the right-wing political party founded by Pauline Hanson in 1996, had, as part of its political platform, that: “Passing a spoken and written English test [is] to be compulsory before naturalisation” (Pauline Hanson’s One Nation 1998). For those for whom English is not their first language, as is the case for many of the Mer people, and for other indigenous Australians, they are highly likely to be viewed as less Australian than, for example, Russell and Webb.

Meriam Mir is “structurally a typical Papuan language related to Bine, Gidra and Gizra languages from the Papuan coast to the north, [and] belongs to the Papuan (non-Austronesian) language family” (Lawrence and Lawrence 2004, 18). This is in contrast to the language spoken on many of the other Torres Strait Islands which, while including Melanesian

elements, has the structure of Aboriginal languages (Beckett 1987, 25). This suggests how, culturally, the people of the Torres Strait Islands merge the traditions of Papua and Australia, blurring any attempt to define a clear boundary. The *Immigration Restriction Act*, passed immediately after Australian federation in 1901, attempted precisely this, that is, to create a clear boundary round Australia—a utopian channel, we could say—across which non-white people could not travel to reside permanently in the confined space of the new Australian state. From this point of view, the identification of mainland Australia as an island and the rhetorical importance so often given to the sea surrounding it can be understood as echoes of the modern utopian structure of thought. Anna Shnukal and Guy Ramsay explain that the *Immigration Restriction Act* was further refined:

A number of amendments followed, each more restrictive. In January 1904, the *Commonwealth Naturalisation Act* of 1903 came into force, giving the Commonwealth responsibility for the naturalisation of aliens (non-British subjects). It replaced the Queensland *Aliens Act* of 1867, which had excluded Asians (and Africans) on the grounds of being unmarried and less than three years resident in Queensland. (Shnukal and Ramsay 2004, 43)

Queensland's relative permeability to people designated as non-white was being closed off.

All the Torres Strait Islands, up to just a few kilometres off the coast of Papua New Guinea, are a part of the Australian state. In 1872 the Queensland government began its northern push beyond the mainland of what was not yet the country of Australia by annexing all the islands within sixty miles of the coast. Seven years later, the passage of the *Queensland Coast Islands Act 1879* annexed for that state all the Torres Strait islands up to the Papuan coast. As Martin Nakata comments:

Thus, the [Queensland] government gained both strategic territorial control of the waters and the legitimate means to regulate the activities of the marine industry. So began a series of legislative Acts and amendments that also legitimated the regulation of the entire population of Islanders. (Nakata 2004, 156)

However, Queensland's territorial ambitions did not stop at the coast of Papua. In 1883, partially inspired by the likely German take-over of New Guinea which took place the following year, Queensland annexed Papua. This move was immediately repudiated by the British government which formally annexed Papua itself in 1888. Then, in 1906, following years of negotiation and the passing of the *Papua Act 1905*, the new Commonwealth

of Australia government took control of what now had become known as British New Guinea. Papua became, in legal terms, a territory of Australia, a “possession of the Crown” (Prince 2005). In 1909, to celebrate the incorporation of Papua into the Australian Commonwealth, an extra point was added to the Commonwealth star on the Australian flag.

At this time, as I have indicated before, there was no such thing as Australian citizenship. Ann-Mari Jordens writes that:

Prior to 1921, Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders who were denied citizenship under colony or State law, had to apply to become British subjects in Australia in the same way as aliens. Under the Commonwealth *Nationality Act 1920* all Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders born after 1 January 1921 were natural-born British citizens. (Jordens 1995, 10)

In the 1920s, then, all these people were incorporated into Australia; the Torres Strait Islanders who had been incorporated when Queensland became a part of the federation and also the Papuans, had become, like the white Australians of the mainland, including Tasmania, British subjects. As Peter Prince points out:

The *Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948* which created the status of Australian “citizen” defines “Australia” as including Norfolk Island and the Territory of Papua. (Prince 2005)

The Act does not mention the islands of the Torres Strait, these had been directly incorporated into Queensland before “Australia” had a legal status. Prince goes on to explain that, as a result of the Act, “people born in Papua between 1948 and 1975 became Australian citizens by birth . . . Despite being Australian citizens, however, people born in Papua required an entry permit under the *Migration Act* before they could travel to the Australian mainland.” So, while Papua had been incorporated into “Australia” and its people had become Australian citizens, they were understood to be beyond the border of the Australian community—I use this word deliberately echoing Howard’s usage in his celebration of the miners’ rescue—and required permission to set foot on what was constructed as the white *Australian* mainland, remembering that the indigenous people within the borders of the Australian state, as a racialised group, were at this time subject to state law rather than federal law.

Summing up another aspect of the *Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948*, Jordens writes that:

From 1948 to 1987 [the Act] defined an alien as “a person who does not have the status of a British subject and is not an Irish citizen or a protected

person.” That is, the image of Australian enshrined in Australian citizenship was that of an Anglo-Celtic people. (Jordens 1995, 1)

Not being aliens, Britons and Irish who settled in Australia had the same status as Australian citizens.

Section 51 (xxvi) of the Australian Constitution is commonly known as the “races power”. It enabled the federal parliament to make laws with respect to: “The people of any race, other than the aboriginal race in any State, for whom it is deemed necessary to make special laws.” It was this power which was changed by the success of the 1967 referendum giving the Commonwealth power over “the aboriginal race” as well as all other races by deleting the specifying phrase. This does not mean that the races power has been abolished. Australia has no Bill of Rights to protect its citizens and to ensure that all are treated equally regardless, in this case, of race. There is a history to the attempt to establish such a Bill for Australia which cannot be tracked here. Most recently such a Bill was introduced into the Federal Parliament in 1984 as the *Australian Human Rights Act*. It failed to gain majority support in the then Liberal and National Party controlled Senate (see Williams 1999, Chapter 3, “Attempts at Reform”). George Williams, an advocate for an Australian Bill of Rights, writes that: “It is significant that nations that had previously relied upon the common law tradition, such as Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and the United Kingdom, have recently adopted a Bill of Rights” (1999, 13). In the United States, the first ten amendments to the American Constitution are regarded as that country’s Bill of Rights. Why does Australia continue to rely on common law to define the rights of citizens in respect of the Constitution? One answer takes us back to Bligh’s and Macquarie’s, and the other early Governors of the Australian colonies’, lack of respect for the rule of law. I have discussed this earlier in relation to convict society. There is a long history in Australia of governments not liking to be constricted in the ways that they can impinge upon the subjects over whom they rule. This can be seen in its most extreme form in the lineage of confinement and exclusion in Australia, a lineage that I have already mentioned. As Don McMaster notes: “Settler Australia had its origins in a penal system; remnants of the penal attitude can still be found in exclusionary politics such as the White Australia and detention policies” (2001, 39). The races power is a crucial example of the means Australian government can use to exclude and confine.

In 1897 the Queensland Parliament passed the *Aboriginals’ Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act*. This Act “implemented a system of tight controls and closed reserves” (Hodes 2000, 166) for Aboriginal people. Here, again, we can see the imposition on indigenous people of the

Australian preoccupation with confinement allied to exclusion from what Howard would term the Australian community. The 1897 Act did not apply to Torres Strait Islanders. Since 1885 John Douglas, previously the Premier of Queensland, had been the Government Resident for the Torres Strait Islands. He had a very high opinion of the Islanders, describing them in 1900 as:

British subjects. They are civilised people; they are being educated, and I say, should be treated as British subjects . . . Of course there is a very great distinction between the natives of the Torres Strait and the natives of Australia . . . The natives of the Torres Strait are capable of exercising all the rights of British citizens and they ought to be regarded as such. (Hodes 2000, 167)

Twenty-one years after the completion of the annexation of the Torres Strait Islands, Douglas continues to distinguish them from mainland Australia, as he distinguishes the Islanders from Aborigines. Douglas argued strongly both here and in other fora that Islanders should have the same legal status as white Australians.

However, the tide of history was against him. We have already noted the new federal government tightening up entry laws in the early years of the twentieth century to keep out non-whites. In July 1904, Douglas died and the Queensland government “gradually began to extend the provisions of the 1897 Act to incorporate Torres Strait Islanders” (Hodes 2000, 167). Jeremy Beckett writes that: “The documentary sources do not indicate why the Islanders were brought under this regime after 1904” (Beckett 1987, 47). What the process did was homogenise the treatment of indigenous people in Queensland, regardless of their very different historical circumstances, and attempt to produce a clear distinction between indigenous and white “settler” Australians—a distinction that would parallel the federal attempt clearly to limit “Australianness” to white people. “White” thus becomes defined against a confined and excluded, and homogenised, indigeneity. Maureen Perkins argues that:

It is widely understood in Australia that “black” means Indigenous and that the converse of this is “white”. However, if blackness is about Indigenous identity, then it is *not* about the colour of skin, since an Aboriginal person of fair skin is just as Aboriginal as someone with dark skin. (Perkins 2004, 178)

What Perkins is describing is the structural relation in which “whiteness” is defined against an homogenised Other constructed as indigenous, and more conventionally named in the phrase “Aborigines and Torres Strait

Islanders". In this process of transforming Torres Strait Islanders into indigenous people, Queensland was also increasing the incorporation of the annexed islands into that State and, by extension, into Australia.

One consequence of bringing the Islanders under the 1897 Act was the creation, in 1912, of "reserve islands" of which Mer was one. The Tabos' ancestors were the ones being confined. In Tasmania while Russell and Webb's ancestors might have been convicts, though Webb actually hailed from Queensland, that confinement, as I have mentioned, is now celebrated. It is to the confinement of those who, in popular memory, are thought of as the last Tasmanian Aborigines on Flinders Island that we must look for the equivalence with the confinement, to their own islands in this case, of the people of Mer. If we think in terms of More's *Utopia*, the people of Mer, who already lived on an island, were being placed in the position of the people of Abraxa. It was as a by-product of their inclusion in the Act that the people of Mer, and of the other Torres Strait islands, lost ownership of their land.

With little help from the Queensland government, Douglas persuaded John Bruce, originally from Scotland but now living on what the colonisers were calling Murray Island, to take over the school there that had been set up by the London Missionary Society. Alan Williamson tells us that: "The syllabus taught by Bruce was adapted from the Queensland model by reducing the number of classes from six to four and simplifying its content to a standard of one level below its equivalent in schools on the mainland" (1992, 70). However, the school was not deficient in instilling:

a sense of patriotism towards the British Crown and things British. Schools were supplied with photos of the king and queen and provided opportunities for government officials to foster in children allegiance to crown, empire and nation . . . Children also sang British songs, such as "Auld Lang Syne", while the "Murray Island boys" were reported to have led the singing of "Britons never shall be slaves", and "God Save the Queen" at the opening of the Mabuiag Island Church School in 1897. (Williamson 1992, 71)

Such schooling was important in producing the islanders as Queenslanders, and subsequently also as Australians, while, at the same time, the extension of the *Aboriginals' Protection Act* and the lower standards in the Mer and other island schools ensured that islanders remained excluded from the white social order. In this process, Torres Strait Islanders were Australianised and Othered simultaneously, while also homogenising them with Aborigines, themselves a homogenised group, thus clarifying the internal border of whiteness.

The continuing linking together of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders as indigenous Australians was epitomised in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC). This was founded by the Labor government in 1990 and abolished by Howard's conservative government in 2005. ATSIC had an appointed chairperson and a board mostly elected by Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. The main purpose of ATSIC was to oversee development projects for indigenous people. However, in 1994 the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) was formed. This took over ATSIC's role in the Torres Strait Islands. This development has been seen among the Islands as a move towards greater autonomy within Australia. Appearing to echo Douglas's differentiation between Torres Strait Islanders and the Aborigines of mainland Australia, Howard's government did not abolish the TSRA when ATSIC was abolished.

As with Aborigines, the *Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948* gave Torres Strait Islanders Australian citizenship and the 1967 referendum transferred power over them to the federal government. Nevertheless, the status of the Torres Strait Islanders remains unsettled. About the time that Britain annexed Papua, Douglas had suggested that the more northerly islands, to the tenth degree south latitude, be removed from being a part of Queensland to British New Guinea. Similar plans were proposed and negotiated with Queensland until the establishment of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901. Mer would have been one of the islands shifted from Queensland to British New Guinea (on this history see Singe 1989, 113–16). In 1975, when Papua and New Guinea gained independence as Papua New Guinea, the idea of giving the islands above the tenth latitude to the new state was again seriously countenanced.

In the end, Papua New Guinea and Australia signed the Torres Strait Treaty in December 1978. At a meeting called by Gough Whitlam's federal Labor government in 1973 to discuss options prior to the agreement on a treaty Eddie Mabo first put forward the idea that the Torres Strait Islands should have an autonomous status within Australia (on this history see Russell 2006, 55–8). The Treaty came into force in 1985 and allows for some Papuans to enter the Torres Strait Protection Zone, which includes Mer, for traditional fishing purposes and also, more importantly for the argument here, allows free cross-border movement of people living in the TSPZ into Papua and from Papua into the TSPZ for traditional purposes. In short, Mer is part of a regulated but deliberately porous border zone.

From the point of view of an Australianness that is presented as epitomised in Russell and Webb, the Tabos are caught up in a plurality of

forces which construct them, and indeed their island home, Mer, as only problematically Australian. In this regard we should take note of Jordens' comment on Australian migration in the 1960s that: "Whether non-Europeans temporarily resident in Australia were allowed to stay permanently . . . depended on how well they integrated" (1997, 218). The concept of absorption into the community has become an important criterion in deciding whether a person without citizenship can remain in Australia. As recently as the High Court's decision in *Te and Dang* (2002) Justice Gummow noted that:

Notions of "membership of the Australian community," "absorption into the Australian community" and "becoming part of the people of Australia" have been employed in the decisions of the Court to indicate a state of affairs which marks the passage of an individual beyond the range of the immigration power. (Cited in Prince 2003)

Is there, then, a single "Australian community"? Certainly both John Tabo and Todd Russell wanted a steak after their rescue but this superficial similarity is not enough to override the historical exclusions up to and including Rhodes' alienating "these people" and Howard's ignoring of the Tabos' tremendous triumph over adversity, or for that matter the lack of media attention paid to the Tabos.

In 2001 the Australian government excised Christmas, Ashmore and Cartier Islands, along with the Cocos (Keeling) Islands from the Australian migration zone. The migration zone is the area within which an alien, that is, say, an asylum seeker, has to be treated as an unlawful non-citizen and must be detained. This gives the person the right to apply for a visa to stay in Australia. If such a person arrives at a place excised from Australia's migration zone, however, they can be treated as if they have not arrived in Australia and need not be given the same rights as someone who has arrived within the migration zone. The Australian government's concern, then, is to ensure that such a person does not set foot on Australian soil that is part of the migration zone. In July 2005 the Australian government excised all Queensland islands north of latitude 21 degrees south, which meant all the Torres Strait Islands. On 13 April 2006, four days before the Tabos put to sea, the Immigration Minister, Amanda Vanstone, announced a plan to process all asylum seekers, that is not only those whose boats make landfall in areas excised from the migration zone but including those that reach the Australian mainland, outside of the territory of Australia. This she has described as "essentially an extension of the so-called 'Pacific solution'" ("Gov't Confirms Plans to Transfer Asylum Seekers Offshore" 2006). On 9 May, the same day that the Tabos,

and the miners, were rescued, three men from the Indonesian province of Papua were found on Boigu Island, one of the Torres Strait islands nearest the coast of Papua New Guinea and in the Torres Strait Protection Zone. These Indonesian nationals, however, do not come under the free travel arrangements of the zone. Vanstone said that “the men [are] not entitled to seek protection as they arrived at an excised place and are ‘offshore entry people’” (“More Papuans Found” 2006). Also on 9 May Australian Customs announced that “more than 100 illegal fishermen and twelve boats [had] been caught in the Gulf of Carpentaria in the past fortnight” (“Customs Sweep” 2006). These traditional fishermen, on the west side of Cape York peninsula above which are the Torres Strait Islands, may or may not have been in their traditional fishing grounds. The area is under Australian sovereignty.

The Tabos’ story is one of the ambivalent incorporation of their home into the territory of the state of Australia. In this story their island is part of a deliberately porous border zone which, while admirable in intent, is anxiety-producing for predominantly white settler Australians, a part of whose Australian culture is the historical desire for clear borders which can be used to exclude those unwanted in the Australian community. The Tabos’ story is also of the divided demands of white Australia, of their people’s Australianisation on white terms while, at the same time, they were excluded from that dominant, historically white, Australian settler society. It is, as the Rhodes quotation makes clear, a story of their construction as Other within Australia—to the extent that the Torres Strait Islands have been agreed to be a part of Australia. These islands are no longer within Australia’s migration zone and, while the government and its jurists have spent time explaining that this does not mean that the islands are any less Australian and the people any less Australian citizens, for people who have always been constructed as not proper Australians, and whose islands in the not so distant past were identified as reserves and their land as not theirs but as belonging to the Crown, such reassurances are understandably not completely satisfactory.

The Tabos were treated suspiciously because they reminded settler Australians of things that they would rather not have to think about. The Tabos’ story conjures up white Australian anxieties about asylum-seeker boat people, about indigenous land claims, about who exactly is “Australian” and what are the components of Australian culture. Where Russell and Webb’s story is about whiteness and the reassertion of what have come to be called core Australian values—mateship, resilience, family, triumph against the odds, and all those other things that Howard

and Beazley and others associated with the miners—to identify the Tabos with these same values would be to threaten the hegemony of Australian whiteness. The Tabos, then, were, to all intents and purposes, ignored by the media, by settler Australia. As we saw at the beginning, where the Tabos' rescue was mentioned it was often compared with Russell and Webb's "great escape", using the latter as the point of comparison. In this instance, everyday racism functioned by ignoring or, at worst, undermining, the Mer miracle or, at best, diminishing the Tabos' extraordinary story by making it secondary to the also extraordinary story of Russell and Webb.

CHAPTER TWO

THE MURDEROUS STATE: THE NATURALISATION OF VIOLENCE AND EXCLUSION IN THE FILMS OF NEOLIBERAL AUSTRALIA

Jindabyne was released in 2006 to much praise. Based on a Raymond Carver short story, the discussion of the film focused on the characters and the consequences of the four fishermen failing to report immediately that they had found a dead body floating in the river. There was hardly any mention that the film harbours a serial killer. In a rare exception Avril Curruthers in *In Film Australia* wrote that: “Although there is a murder in [the film], and a serial killer, these are simply the stone to the ripple effect that is the main concern of the film” (2006). Here, the serial killer, and indeed the murder, are identified only so that they can be dismissed. Yet there is no serial killer in the Carver story. The presence of a serial killer is not necessary to the film’s moral issues and psychological action. However, the predatory surveillance of Gregory, the serial killer, frames the film. He is the first person we see, and the last, sitting in his van on top of a rocky outcrop monitoring the road, and the vast, flat plain across which it snakes, with his binoculars. Narratively, for the film’s viewers, Gregory’s presence through the film—he is embedded in the community as the town’s electrician—appears to be simply taken for granted.

Gregory is not the only serial killer in recent Australian films. There is the much better known Mick Taylor in the slasher genre film, *Wolf Creek*, released a year earlier, in 2005, to unexpected popularity. Taylor patrols the outback of northern Western Australia. He has a shed full of the cars and other mementos of the tourists that he has murdered. In the film’s narrative, of the three backpackers he brutalises only Ben, the Sydneysider, survives. In both *Jindabyne* and *Wolf Creek* the police are ineffectual and barely present, not at all in Taylor’s outback, and the serial killers remain at large at each film’s conclusion. In both films audiences

can assume that Gregory and Mick Taylor will continue in their murderous ways.

They are not the only people to get away with murder in recent Australian films. In *The Proposition* the murderous psychotic is only finally stopped by the moral revulsion of his brother who, killing him at the film's conclusion, is seemingly justified in the lawless land of 1880s outback Queensland and, having, in a twisted way, fulfilled his agreement with Captain Stanley, the policeman, will go free. In *Suburban Mayhem*, also released in 2006, Katrina goads her boyfriend Rusty into killing her father and, when she thinks he doesn't have the balls to do it, she uses her sexual wiles on the intellectually challenged Danny to persuade him to do the deed. As things fall out, Rusty commits the murder and Danny is convicted. Nothing can be traced back to Katrina. At the end of this black, and bleak, comedy, it is clear that Katrina has not used the money from the sale of her father's house to fund an appeal against her brother's conviction for murder. Rather, she and Rusty are living quite blissfully in a cottage by the sea. In both these films murder has its reward.

There is one more film I want to add to this list, even though it does not contain a murder. *Kenny*, also released in 2006, is a mockumentary about a sanitary worker. The titular Kenny is portrayed as endearingly passive, accepting good-heartedly the impositions of everybody from his selfish ex-wife and his thoughtless, overbearing father to the badly behaved, mostly middle-class customers who use the portakabin toilets that Kenny's firm supplies for large gatherings. Until, that is, almost at the end of the film, when an obviously middle-class young man uncaringly parks his car and goes to see his girlfriend who works in a local shop, blocking in Kenny's tanker full of sewage. After a number of attempts to get the man to move his car Kenny finally loses his patience and, in an echo of a well-known urban myth, starts to fill the car with sewage. This is a comedy and a mockumentary, indeed, as I will argue, *Kenny* is an example of the carnivalesque, so this scene stands in for murder. Clearly the audience is expected to side with Kenny and approve of his wanton destruction of the recalcitrant owner's car. To aid this identification, the scene stops here. Kenny, though, we should note, remains unable to move his tanker. Clearly, this is of less importance than Kenny's self-satisfying burst of road rage.

More importantly for the argument that I am building here, Kenny at no time considers contacting the police and, since this scene is so close to the end of the film, we never get to see the consequences of Kenny's action. Indeed, as the film moves towards its conclusion we have the strong impression that there are no consequences for Kenny, legal or in

terms of his job. Kenny not only gets away with a spiteful, personal act of revenge but the film asks its audience to praise him for it. Here, then, as in *Suburban Mayhem*, the personal is validated over the social and the individual action, transgressive as it might be from a social point of view, brings its reward—financial in *Suburban Mayhem* and cathartic retaliation in *Kenny*. A social morality that acknowledges the worth of a shared social order is here replaced by a personal ethics which privileges individualistic desires.

What is going on in these films? What I want to argue is that we are at a watershed in Australian culture, that these films, and others, mark a shift in the Australian national imaginary.¹ Since the Hawke–Keating years, but especially since the return of the Coalition to power under John Howard in 1996, Australia has been increasingly managed according to the ideological tenets of neoliberalism. As Dennis Woodward has explained, since the 1980s:

A particular version of economic theory—the ‘Washington Consensus’—became dominant in Australia (following the rest of the Anglo-Saxon countries) and increasingly elsewhere. This dominant economic theory is called “neoliberal economics.” (Woodward 2005, 33)

I am not arguing here, though, that Australia has become an incarnation of the theory of neoliberalism as expressed by the economist Friedrich Hayek, its most celebrated originator and proponent. Rather, Australia, in a similar manner to many other western countries, has adopted a mixed bag of Hayekian and other neoconservative economic practices which, together, are most easily identified as neoliberalism and this is the general term that I shall be using in this chapter.

The ideological precepts which underlie these economic practices are now beginning to be found naturalised and reproduced in Australian cultural products as accepted aspects of Australian culture. By this I certainly do not mean that writers and film-makers are consciously making films that are driven by neoliberal ideologies. Rather, what I am arguing here is that the ideological elements of neoliberalism are becoming so naturalised in Australian society that they are now appearing in Australian cultural products as “obvious” elements of the story line. Thus, for example, when I discuss *Jindabyne*, I am not arguing that Ray Lawrence made the film as a vehicle for neoliberal ideology. Indeed, it is clear from his interviews that Lawrence holds many views sympathetic to traditional left-wing values. Nevertheless, I am arguing, the naturalisation of a mixture of neoliberal and neoconservative assumptions in Australia has had the consequence of these being reproduced in Lawrence’s, and others,

films. While there are, of course, other ways of reading the films under discussion here, it is this reproduction that I am seeking to tease out.

What interest me most in this chapter are the narratives and characterisations in the films I am discussing. It is at these sites that we can find reproduced the clearest expressions of those neoliberal ideological assumptions that are coming to dominate Australian social life. It could be argued that genre plays an important part in the reception of Australian films and, while this is true, I am suggesting that, for my purposes here, this is secondary to the importance of narrative and character. Thus, for example, that *Suburban Mayhem* is a comedy helps to make more acceptable to viewers Katrina's determination to have her father murdered and that *Kenny* uses documentary techniques, in this way making *Kenny* more "real", helps to disguise the extent to which *Kenny's* character can be read as the personification of neoliberalism's ideal worker.

Neoliberalism and Individualism

Neoliberalism has been conventionally understood as a political ideology founded in a capitalistic economics that places the market, and indeed the free market, as the basis for all human relations. Following the ideas of her mentor, Hayek, Margaret Thatcher, then Prime Minister of Great Britain, notoriously commented in a 1987 *Woman's Own* interview that there is no such thing as society:

. . . and who is society? There is no such thing! There are individual men and women and there are families and no government can do anything except through people and people look to themselves first. It is our duty to look after ourselves and then also to help look after our neighbour and life is a reciprocal business and people have got the entitlements too much in mind without the obligations . . . (Margaret Thatcher Foundation n.d.)

The social implications of a political philosophy which dismisses the idea of society and valorises not only the individual but the individual whose moral outlook is founded on looking after themselves first before anybody else are immense. Henry Giroux is one cultural critic who has commented on these. He writes:

Neoliberalism has heralded a radical economic, political, and experiential shift that now largely defines the citizen as a consumer, disbands the social contract in the interests of privatized considerations, and separates capital from the context of place. Under such circumstances, neoliberalism portends the death of politics as we know it, strips the social of its

democratic values, and reconstructs agency in terms that are utterly privatized and provides the conditions for an emerging form of proto-fascism that must be resisted at all costs. (Giroux 2004)

As Giroux implies, ideologically it is the idea of a social contract, as developed by such early political theorists as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, that has founded the claim that society, defined here as the shared relationships between human beings, is the assumed basis of order within the modern state.

In *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, C. B. Macpherson explained the connection in the work of Hobbes, writing in the seventeenth century, between the human being, constructed as a possessive individual and the social contract. In *Leviathan*, published in 1651, Hobbes argued that, in the State of Nature, where there would be no government, human beings would relentlessly fight each other, indeed murder each other, in order to gain personal power, advantage and safety. As a consequence, as Hobbes put it in a resonant phrase, in such circumstances people would live in “continual fear, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short” (1651, 186). Macpherson argued that Hobbes’ State of Nature was a description of what he called a “possessive market society”, that is, we can add, a capitalistic market order “in which men who want more may, and do, continually seek to transfer to themselves some of the powers of others, in such a way as to compel everyone to compete for more power” (1962, 59). Macpherson goes on to write that, “all this [is] by peaceable and legal methods which do not destroy the society by open force.” This, however, is an effect of the putting in place of the social contract.

Macpherson argues that:

Once Hobbes has established that the general inclination of all men is the search for ever more power over others, he is able to show that if there were no power able to overawe them all, their lives would necessarily be miserable and insecure in the utmost degree. (1962, 70)

The consequence is that people come together and transfer to a new power, a sovereign, both their personal power and their individual rights. This transfer not only enables the competitive market to be regulated but, in the general, shared acknowledgement of the need for order, provides the basis for society. It is, ideologically, the social contract which limits the self-interest of the possessive individual. One element of the limitation has been the establishment of a morality which places high importance on the welfare of other members of the society. The neoliberal ideological shift

away from the idea of a social contract means that the self-interest of the possessive individual is given free rein and retributive justice supplants distributive justice.

Another way of thinking about the impact of neoliberalism is by way of the idea of freedom. Freedom was a central concept in Hayek's thought. He begins *The Constitution of Liberty* by writing that:

We are concerned in this book with that condition of men in which coercion of some by others is reduced as much as possible in society. This state we shall describe throughout as a state of liberty or freedom. (Hayek 1960, 11)

For Hayek this kind of freedom is established and guaranteed by the freedom of the capitalistic market. As David Harvey writes: "The assumption that individual freedoms are guaranteed by freedom of the market and of trade is a cardinal feature of neoliberal thinking, and it has long dominated the US stance towards the rest of the world" (2005, 7). Hayek's notion of freedom has much in common with what Isaiah Berlin, in his well-known essay, "Two Concepts of Liberty", describes as negative freedom: "If I am prevented by others from doing what I could otherwise do, I am to that degree unfree, and if this area is contracted by other men beyond a certain minimum, I can be described as being coerced, or, it may be, enslaved" (1991, 34). As Harvey indicates, for Hayek and other neoliberal and neoconservative thinkers, the limits on constraint are found in the expression of the market. What needs to be guarded with all necessary exercise of violence is the freedom of the market itself.

Within the state, the effect of the ideology of the social contract was to establish a space where, as far as possible, violence became the prerogative of the state. Thus, when Noam Chomsky writes that "[a] state is a structure of violence" (2001), in the modern state a distinction is made between violence within the state, which is controlled by the police and regulated by law, and violence outside of the state which is practised by the armed forces. Politically speaking, the violence that can be exerted by the police in keeping the space of the state, the space subject to the social contract, free of violence is itself limited by the same law of the state which it is the duty of the police to uphold.

It is this law of the state which functions to articulate the space of the social contract as the site of society. Following an argument of Jacques Derrida's in "Force of Law: The 'Mystical Foundations of Authority,'" Maria Giannacopoulos argues that:

Once a legal system is established through force, it eradicates all other forms of law that might judge its legitimacy. It declares certain questions, including the one about its own legality, to be non-justiciable . . . The category of the non-justiciable then is the legal process through which the violence of the law is relegated to the realm of the invisible. (Giannacopoulos 2007, 47–48)

The law must hide the violence of its instantiation before it can mark the limits of the order of the society born of the social contract. The ideological shift away from the social contract reveals the law as the imposition of the violence of the state. More, it withdraws the protection from violence offered in social contract ideology. As Harvey writes, quoting the economist Karl Polanyi: “But if, as is always the case, ‘no society is possible in which power and compulsion are absent, nor a world in which force has no function’, then the only way this liberal utopian vision could be sustained is by force, violence, and authoritarianism, or even outright fascism” (2005, 37). We shall revisit these terms throughout this chapter.

It is at this point that, as we shall see, the police and the military become interchangeable in the neoliberal state. Or, rather, the police become redundant and are replaced by the armed forces. Thus, in 2005, we find John Howard sounding remarkably like Hobbes, telling Australians that:

The most important civil liberty I have and you have is to stay alive and be free from violence and death. I think that when people talk about civil liberties, they sometimes forget that action to protect the citizen against physical attack is a blow in favour and not a blow against civil liberties. (cited in Briton 2005)

The context for this speech was a special meeting of the Council of Australian Governments, the purpose of which was to increase Australia’s protection from terrorism. In Anthony Burke’s words:

That meeting of state premiers and Commonwealth ministers agreed on a series of counter-terrorism measures which included sweeping new legislation that overturned longstanding principles of criminal law and revived controversial laws abandoned in parliamentary negotiations in 2002, laws that would provide Australian federal security agencies with sweeping new powers of surveillance, detention, arrest and control. (2007, 198)

As a beginning, since 2001 the job of patrolling Australia's borders had been militarised. Suvendrini Perera succinctly describes:

the new topographies of inclusion and exclusion on land and sea created by this exercise of sovereignty [the so-called Pacific Solution] over refugee bodies: the contraction and expansion of national borders as detention camps are placed outside the space of the nation and lines are drawn in the sea to deterritorialise and excise parts of Australia from the migration zone, while yet other parts are annexed under measures such as the “Pacific Solution”, and new cartographies of surveillance constituted through extensive militarisation and policing of the oceans. (Perera 2007c, 131)

Now, four years later, the rule of law, the state's expression of the social contract, was being set aside and protection within the Australian state was being given to quasi-military groups. These developments were legitimated by a claim to the external threat of terrorism but, as we can see, Howard's rhetoric slips easily into a Hobbesian scenario where, as Hobbes puts it in *Leviathan*, in the State of Nature there would be a “warre of every man, against every man” with the consequence that those highly competitive possessive individuals would require the protection of an authoritarian government's military forces.

Morality and Murder in *The Proposition* and *Suburban Mayhem*

2005 was also the year that the Nick Cave-scripted film, *The Proposition*, was released. Set in the 1880s in outback Queensland, the film is most often thought of as an Australianisation of the Western. Philip French (2006), in the English newspaper *The Observer*, for example, described it as “stylistically influenced by the westerns of Sergio Leone, Sam Peckinpah and Monte Hellman.” In the film Captain Stanley has been brought out from England by a landowner, Eden Fletcher. Stanley's remit is to stop the violence and depredation caused mostly it would seem by a group of Irish brothers and their associates, known as the Burns gang. That the film is set in a lawless, colonial Queensland helps to justify and give realism to what is, ideologically speaking, a Hobbesian and neoliberal world where power is an expression of wealth and violence.

Historically, that the gang is Irish and preying, it would seem, on English settlers is an accurate understanding of the divide between Irish and English in nineteenth century Australia—a divide legitimated by the English claim that the Irish were not “white” (see Stratton 2004, 222–38). At the same time, with the neoliberal-based move against multiculturalism,

the film's depiction of violent depredation by Irish against English can also be read in the present as part of the gradual breakdown of the fifty-year coalition between English and Irish which has given rise to the neologism, Anglo-Celtic. Colonial Australia, and the Western genre, then, can be read in *The Proposition* as making neoliberal ideological assumptions more believable and, simultaneously, less obvious for viewers—in other words, more naturalised.

There is no government in the land *The Proposition* depicts. Stanley and his men have military titles, “captain” and “sergeant”, yet function more like police. Anthony Harriott tells us that:

In the ex-colonial variant of the [English] watchman style [of policing], order maintenance is prior to crime fighting, which is in turn prior to the service function of the police force. Paramilitarism is thus an appropriate form, given these priorities and the relative freedom of the police from the normal legal constraints on the means available for their accomplishment that tend to accompany this perspective. (2000, 76–77)

Harriott argues that the colonial establishment of the police as a paramilitary-style force begins as a key element of the imposition of imperial power. However, imperial power has yet to be imposed on this land. Stanley's wages are paid by Fletcher. Stanley and his men operate, then, not as an apparently impartial police force enforcing a law to which all are forced to subscribe but as a kind of private security force in the service of the moneyed elite. We can find a clue to what is going on here in Will Wright's *The Wild West* where he argues that:

Social contract theory tells a story, a theoretical story of social origin. It is a story about rational individuals leaving the State of Nature, and the cowboy myth simply retells the story for popular, cultural understanding. (Wright 2001, 27)

If this is the ideological force of the conventional Western, we can understand that much of the violence and hopelessness of *The Proposition* comes from the failure to put in place a social contract, which in turn relates to the lack of government, or, thinking in today's neoliberal terms, quite simply the displacement of any possibility of a social contract by an emphasis on the individual at the expense of the law. Stanley says at the beginning of the film “I will civilise this land” but the film is a chronicle of his failure. Giroux writes about the dismantling “of the social contract in the interests of privatized considerations” and this reflects Stanley's situation. *The Proposition* can be read as a depiction of a world without a

social contract and therefore without government and without a law applicable to all within this society.

At the foundation of the film is the proposition itself. Stanley has captured Charlie and Mikey Burns but the most violent brother remains at large. Stanley makes a deal with Charlie that, if he will kill his elder brother Arthur, then he and Mikey will go free. In this offer we see that Stanley, himself, does not function according to an established rule of law. More, and thinking in terms of the neoliberal ideology that permeates these films, his individual contract with Charlie is strongly reminiscent of the Australian Workplace Agreement individual contracts which were legislated in the Howard government's first wave of industrial relations reforms that came into force in January 1997. Individual contracts replace the idea of a social contract. The violence of the state is enacted in this relation. Charlie has no bargaining position. He has little choice but to accept the contract. Yet, when he finally does kill his brother, in a small triumph for individualism over family, it is not to fulfil his side of the contract because Mikey is already dead. Rather, it is an act of personal morality, an expression of Charlie's own disgust at Arthur's propensity for rape, torture and murder.

At this climax of the film Stanley has let his guard down so that he and his wife can celebrate Christmas as if they were still in England, in society. Arthur, along with his offsider and Charlie, take them by surprise. Stanley is terribly assaulted and his wife is in the process of being raped. In this amoral, neoliberal world without a social contract, Stanley and his wife are saved, in spite of Stanley's inability to keep his side of the individual contract, that is, the proposition, by Charlie's individual moral stand against his brother's behaviour. In *The Proposition* this development seems nostalgic and out of place—as, as we shall see, does the reconciliation scene between Aborigines and whites at the end of *Jindabyne*. We might read these scenes as sites of conflict between the ideology being reproduced in these films and the political position of the writers and/or directors. In *The Proposition* viewers, in the main, seem to accept the realism of Charlie's behaviour because it saves us from confronting the violent consequences of neoliberal assumptions.

Suburban Mayhem, as I have already indicated, has no such regressive moral scruples. Katrina and her boyfriend Rusty literally get away with murdering Katrina's father. The police, and the law, do have a strong and visible presence in this film. However, they are incompetent and ineffectual. They have already arrested Danny, Katrina's brother, and secured his conviction for murder. Katrina, though, is beyond their reach. Writing about the screenplay, Andrew Urban (n.d.) suggests that Alice

Bell “has created a scenario that measures how far a young woman will go to impose her will on others simply for the sake of getting her way.” Indeed, Katrina can be read as a spunky product of post-feminism manipulating the weaknesses of the men around her in order to achieve what she wants. But Katrina is much more than this. She is the validation of the possessive individual in a world where the social contract which legitimates the role of the police is breaking down. Thus, what empowers her is her sexuality and it is this that she uses to get the boys to do her bidding. Sex for Katrina has no moral valence in a wider social order, it is simply a means to a personal end. It is because the position of the police is undermined that, in the narrative of the film, Katrina is able to take revenge on Detective Robert Andretti for dobbing her into the welfare agency for her lack of care of her baby daughter without there being any consequence. In this way the narrative’s acceptance of Katrina’s revenge parallels the revenge episode in *Kenny* that I have already mentioned. Revenge, it seems, is morally acceptable in the neoliberal world. Perhaps this is because revenge celebrates the perpetrator, the individual in a world without society.

In *Suburban Mayhem* the family is breaking down into its component individuals. Here, we should remember Thatcher’s phrase and its ordering: “There are individual men and women, and there are families.” For the modern state the ideological claim was that the family was the foundation of society. In neoliberal political philosophy where there is no society, individuals take precedence over the family. While, in what is now an old-fashioned morality where there is respect for others, Charlie Burns’ murder of his brother can be justified, it also signals the privileging of the individual over family ties. In *Suburban Mayhem*, Katrina’s mother was a drug addict who left the family. Katrina’s father, John, had to tell her to stop coming round because it upset the children. Katrina herself is a single mother in a dysfunctional relationship with her boyfriend who is not the father of her child. Katrina’s father, who attempts to force his daughter to take responsibility for her life which, in his view, means her getting a job and taking care of her daughter, is portrayed as old-fashioned. Within the film’s diegesis viewers are asked to feel little sympathy for John and, consequently, to feel little distress at his violent murder. He, and his morality which is so much that of the previous generation, before the acceptance of neoliberal cultural assumptions, is expendable in this new, selfish world.

The love of Katrina’s life is her brother, and this seems to be reciprocated. Danny cuts off the head of the cashier in the convenience store he is robbing because the cashier called Katrina a slut. In this highly

attenuated family, Katrina and Danny's relationship appears to set aside any concern with an incest taboo between siblings. Katrina's fantasy for the future involves her and Danny living together in a relationship which, in other circumstances, would be described as romantic. Similarly, in this transgression of modern family organisation, there seems to be no emotional attachment on Katrina's side to her father. For Katrina, the possessive individual, her father is a financial resource. Thus, when Katrina thinks that an appeal against Danny's conviction will free him, her plan is to raise the money by murdering her father and selling the family home. This is the amoral Hobbesian State of Nature, or rather, it is a neoliberal world where the market is foundational, and murder is a legitimate means to fulfil personal need.

Danny, then, languishes in prison for two reasons. First, he defended his sister's reputation. Second, when Katrina explains to him how she had their father murdered so that she could appeal his conviction, Danny, traditionalist as he is revealed to be, is shocked and revolted. Danny remains in prison, Katrina lives happily ever after with Rusty in that beach-house I have already mentioned.

Citizenship and Exclusion

From the point of view of the modern state, the ideology of the social contract had two important and related features. Citizenship was ascribed to those included in the social contract and therefore subject to the law of the state, and sovereignty was a key element in the ordering of the power of the state. Thus, the primary vector of the modern state was inclusion. It is inclusion which gives the idea of the nation its force. This is the role of inclusion, and exclusion, that Perera mentions in the quotation that I have used earlier. As Aihwa Ong writes:

Heretofore, influential concepts of citizenship have been based on a binary opposition between the rights of citizenship rooted in a national territory and a stateless condition outside the nation-state. This politico-legal concept is based on the practical reality that only the nation-state can implement citizenship entitlements and protections claimed through recognised political membership. (Ong 2006b, 15)

Ong goes on to assert the continuing importance of citizenship for groups such as asylum seekers and refugees but then writes that: "Nevertheless, contemporary flows of capital and of migrants have interacted with sovereignty and rights discourses in complex ways to disentangle citizenship claims once knotted together in a single, territorialised mass"

(2006b, 15). Ong's book, *Neoliberalism As Exception*, focuses on the way that neoliberal states, giving primacy to the market, and global financial flows, have begun to problematise the borders of state inclusiveness. For example, she writes about the problematic status of Filipina and Indonesian maids working in large numbers in Singapore, Hong Kong and Malaysia, and also about the creation of Export Processing Zones and regional free trade zones and their effects on sovereignty.

However, this transformation is more fundamental. In the neoliberal state, where the social contract is set aside, the preoccupation with inclusion and its limits is increasingly supplanted by a hierarchisation of state membership, of citizenship, which is founded on exclusion. Stephen R. Stoer and António M. Magalhães, writing about new forms of citizenship and education, express surprise that, "at a time when so much emphasis is placed on inclusion, inclusive schooling and the so-called 'inclusive society,' social exclusion appears to be more the norm than social inclusion" (2002, 701). Assuming that inclusion remains the basis of state practice, they go on to write that, "the definition of inclusion based on the exclusion—or attempted eradication—of difference means almost inevitably new forms of exclusion, economic, social, political and cultural" (2002, 702). We need to take a further step here and understand that the neoliberal state is not founded on inclusion but, rather, on exclusion. It is in this context, and in the ordering of the neoliberal state's hierarchisation founded on the violence inflicted on those relatively excluded, that we find the neoliberal state's preference for authoritarian government. Notoriously, Hayek himself was a supporter of General Pinochet's right-wing dictatorship in Chile, and Pinochet's attempt to impose neoliberal practices on the country. Just as notoriously, Hayek, who held a meeting of his think-tank on neoliberalism, the Mount Pelerin Society, in Chile in 1981, during the time of Pinochet's regime, was quoted in the Chilean newspaper *El Mercurio* as saying: "My personal preference inclines to a liberal dictatorship and not to a democratic government where all liberalism is absent."² There is a synergy, which there is no space to explore here, between the ideology of democracy and that of the social contract.

What Stoer and Magalhães are signalling in the quotation above is the neoliberal state's radical refusal to understand the possessive individual in the market situation as anything more than a human being. The effect is that state membership is consequent upon the denial of any attribute that could be understood in terms of group membership from gender, race, sexuality, disability, through to union membership and, indeed, family membership. In the neoliberal state group identification is a marker of

exclusion—as in the case of those generically classified as asylum seekers and refugees. Group markers must be stripped away for state membership and individuals within the state cannot claim special concessions because of their membership of a group claiming to be suffering discrimination. The driving idea here is that identifying groups, and giving group members particularised treatment depending on their circumstances within the state, would cause a malformation in the governing free market.

However, this does not mean that cultural practices within the neoliberal state are blind to these differences. They are not. In Australia, for example, whiteness becomes even more entrenched as the site of inclusion and power because of the state's determination to deny the continuing social importance of race. In the post-multiculturalism of *Suburban Mayhem* Katrina manipulates both the Andretti family, who are, obviously, of Italian extraction, and the girl she befriends, Lilya, who is the daughter of Polish immigrants. Katrina's Anglo, dysfunctional family is privileged over the functional non-Anglo families. Lawrence has spoken of the multiculturalism of *Jindabyne*—he is paraphrased as saying that he preferred the American actor, Laura Linney, for the role of Claire because “of what he wanted: a certain foreignness which goes with the multiculturalism [sic] of the film” (Curruthers n.d.)³—yet of the four men two are Anglo, one, Rocco, is of Italian extraction and one is Irish with a white American wife. Thus all, to a greater or less extent, are classified as white in early twenty-first century Australia. Indeed, in none of the films under discussion are there any main characters that Australians would describe as non-white with the exception of the Indigenous Carmel in *Jindabyne*. Carmel's main diegetic purpose, though, as a school teacher and girlfriend of Rocco, would seem to be to show how difficult it is for an Indigenous person to span Indigenous and white cultures. There are no “Asians”—I am using this term here as a reflection of standard Australian usage—for example, except for the Japanese prostitutes at the beginning of *The Proposition* and the Thais who work in the Thai restaurant that the main characters in *Jindabyne* visit. Thus, in these films, “Asians” take on well-established roles in Australian society: as women who are sexualised and demeaned or running the town's Chinese restaurant, in *Jindabyne* translated into a Thai restaurant. It is in relation to *Jindabyne*'s organisation of population that we can understand that Gregory is patrolling a white Australia.

One consequence of the now unspeakable entrenching of whiteness in state power is the naturalisation of indirect violence. Indirect violence is a function of the lack of distributive justice. Ricardo J. Gomez (n.d.) explains that:

[Indirect violence] is exerted any time people are denied their basic human rights: it is a violence against the human condition. Poverty, hunger, unfair salaries, unemployment, racial and gender discrimination are all forms of indirect violence.

Gomez justifies human rights by a metaphysical appeal to the human condition. However, politically, they are present in the modern understanding of the state by way of a claim about the responsibilities of government in relation to the social contract.

Violence and the Neoliberal State

Gomez's point, though, is not just about the lack of interest in human rights in the neoliberal state, it is about the practice of violence and its relationship to exclusion. His description of the state's practice of indirect violence relates to Ong's insight about the disentangling of aspects of citizenship:

Citizens who are deemed too complacent or lacking in neoliberal potential may be treated as less worthy subjects. Low-skill citizens and migrants become exceptions to neoliberal mechanisms and are constructed as excludable populations in transit, shuttled in and out of zones of growth. (Ong 2006b, 16)

I think it is a misunderstanding to see what is done to low-skilled citizens and migrants as an exception to neoliberal political philosophy. To the contrary, as I have already explained, the neoliberal state is founded on a graded hierarchy of exclusion where loss of citizenship, or its lack, is the final, qualitative moment of exclusion. The free market is not, of course, free, it is a capitalistic market of employers and employed where profit is the determining feature.

With the extinction of the ideology of the social contract, violence returns in overt form as the ordering principle of the state. Class war becomes more than a metaphor. In this circumstance it is the armed forces, not the police, who keep stability in the hierarchical order. The police become gradually less relevant in a state founded on a hierarchy of exclusion and the patrolling of that exclusion. Writing about the use of the military in the relief effort following the disastrous flooding of New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, George Caffentzis (2006) argues that:

[T]he contemporary model for managing the working class in disasters is increasingly warfare. Workers in a disaster are increasingly being turned into rightless beings and then, when they resist, they become the “enemy.” In this logic the refugee quickly turns into the terrorist.

And David Theo Goldberg describes how:

In the name of securing the city, post-Katrina New Orleans was quickly turned into an armed military camp . . . While critics were rightly bemoaning the dehumanizing conduct of [the Iraq] war abroad, few seemed to notice that, for domestic purposes, the United States was mimicking tactics of militarization honed in the desert war. The United States, in short, had taken to turning itself into armed and gated camps at home. (Goldberg 2006, 8)

The bulk of the area of New Orleans flooded in the disaster was working class and African-American.

Caffentzis provides an explanation that expands Goldberg’s insight:

In the past, the military in the form of the state National Guards was often dispatched to scenes of disaster. These Acts of God not only opened up “a state of nature” but they also posed the possibility that the common bonds of mutual aid developed during the suspension of civil government would open up new modes of social coordination outside of the state and capital . . . The military’s role in New Orleans was not only to set the framework of a return to “normality”, *it was to create a new territorial and demographic reality.* (Caffentzis 2006, italics in original)

Setting aside the invocation of Peter Kropotkin’s 1902 book, *Mutual Aid*, a key anarcho-communist text, Caffentzis’s point is that the American neoliberal government of George W. Bush opportunistically used the New Orleans disaster to legitimate the use of the armed forces to pacify Americans who, as a group, have diminished access to the market and correspondingly lesser rights as citizens—that is, who are more excluded from the state.

In Australia there has been no direct parallel with the New Orleans disaster and the concomitant legitimization of the use of the military as “peacekeepers” on American soil. Rather, we have a creeping militarisation. We have already seen one aspect of this in new legislation opportunistically justified by the need to protect Australia from terrorism. Another example can be found in the militarisation of assistance given to remote Indigenous communities. In November 1996 John Herron, the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, introduced the

Army Community Assistance Program. Its purpose was to use Army personnel and equipment to help train Indigenous people in trades while doing necessary construction work on the communities' infrastructure. While this seems a benign enough mission, we have to ask why it was the army that was chosen to undertake it and what the ideological effect might be of having a military presence in Australia's most disadvantaged communities. Certainly by mid-2006 when much horror was expressed at the levels of violence and sexual abuse in the Northern Territory Indigenous community of Wadeye, there were calls, including from Dr Paul Bauert, the President of the Northern Territory chapter of the Australian Medical Association, to have "the military brought in as peacekeepers, similar to missions overseas" (Gilmore 2006). Such a suggestion, coupled with the established role of the Australian military in the local region such as the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands which was deployed in July 2003, signals the high level of exclusion of Indigenous people in the Australian neoliberal order. Bauert is not the only one to make this kind of connection. On 25 January 2007, Michael Dillon published on the net an article titled "National Security and the Failed State in Remote Australia." In concluding, he writes that:

[N]otwithstanding the positive benefits to national security of the Indigenous presence in remote Australia, it is clear that offsetting these are serious and negative impacts on national security broadly defined. These impacts derive from the substantial and longstanding economic and social disadvantage faced by Indigenous citizens, the increasing threats to human security for remote citizens and the apparent incapacity of governments to both address the disadvantage and effectively ensure order and good governance. (Dillon 2007)

Dillon couches his appeal for more aid to remote Indigenous communities in the language of national security. I shall return to the situation of Indigenous exclusion when I discuss the serial killer in *Jindabyne*.

We have already seen how, in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, the military was brought in to pacify the African-American working class. This is an example of violent class suppression and, indeed, exclusion from the neoliberal American state. In Australia the best example of such class warfare so far is the attempt through the second half of 1997 and the first half of 1998 to break the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA). In what was often described as the "War on the Waterfront" or the "War on Wharfies" Patrick Stevedores, under chief executive Chris Corrigan, in collusion with the federal government, planned to displace the MUA as representative of the workers on the docks loading and unloading

containers. The idea was to sack between 1,400 and 2,000 unionised workers and replace them with untrained and newly trained un-unionised labour. The plan came to light when it was discovered that seventy men were being sent to Dubai for three months' training in the operation of stevedoring equipment. These men were all ex-army and had been recruited through the magazine, *The Army*, by Mike Wells, himself a former army officer and Vietnam War veteran. Until its discovery, the plan had been that these men would form the core of the new wharf labour force. In the end the ex-army labour was not used and the MUA retained its presence on the waterfront but had to accede to significant job losses.⁴

The waterfront dispute illustrated well the Australian shift to a neoliberal assumption of class warfare. It is in this context that we can think about *Kenny*. As I explained at the beginning, *Kenny* is a mockumentary. It purports to show the life of a man whose job is to put in and take out portakabin toilets used at large-scale events such as rock festivals, speedway meetings and the Melbourne Cup. *Kenny* is in the Australian tradition of films celebrating the working-class man. The most obvious comparison is with Paul Hogan's characters and, in film, his portrayal of Crocodile Dundee. Where Dundee was the self-employed bushman, always ready and able to put one over on everybody regardless of class, *Kenny* is the urban employee accepting of his lowly position in the employment hierarchy. A more recent comparison is with the family of working-class Aussie battlers in *The Castle* (1997). In this film the Kerrigans fight to keep their home which is about to be resumed to make way for an extension of what viewers assume is Melbourne Airport. In the end the Kerrigans win on a point of constitutional law related to the *Mabo* decision. At one point Darryl Kerrigan remarks: "I'm beginning to understand how the Aborigines feel." But, of course, he can't. Rather, in a conservative and populist twist, the film appropriates the land rights decision in order to give the battling Aussie family a victory over the big end of town.⁵ As Christine Stapleton (2004) writes:

The defence of Darryl's case rests on invoking the *Native Title Act* in conjunction with his feelings for and attachment to his property and is encapsulated in the repetition of the clichés, "it's not just a house, it's a home" and "a man's home is his castle."

In this scenario, Aboriginal peoples' battles for land rights are muddled and the traditional relationship to the land, which underpins the land-rights movement, is reduced to a sentimentalised notion of attachment to place.

Kenny, though, almost ten years later and much deeper into the process of neoliberal exclusionary hierarchising, is no winner, even at the expense of Aborigines.

In his private life Kenny is surrounded by selfish people. His ex-wife wants everything done to suit her. Kenny's father is thoughtless and demanding and Kenny's aspirational brother, who drives a Mercedes, is selfish and rejecting of his working-class roots—to such an extent that, when Kenny organises for three of them to spend a weekend together in the mountains because of their father's illness, his brother rings a taxi on the first evening. In the midst of these people Kenny is constantly helpful, patient and self-deprecating.

The film is organised such that when this behaviour carries over into the workplace the seamlessness means that viewers read Kenny's passivity as a positive character trait rather than as an exemplification of the ideal worker in a neoliberal regime. Kenny is clearly not a member of a union. He works extraordinarily long hours—there is an implication that this was a contributing factor to his marriage breakdown—and is willing to do extra work whenever his boss asks him. Here we can add Thomas Lemke's comments on the work experience in neoliberal philosophy:

As regards labour relations . . . this means that work and leisure time are no longer inimical opposites, but tend to supplement each other . . . Flexible working hours, self-determined work teams, performance stimuli, etc are no longer intended to transform the organization of production, but . . . are aimed at the very relations between individuals and their labour. (Lemke 2001, 202–203)

From the look of where he lives Kenny is paid very little and, while appearing to be in charge of his workmates, there seems to be no formal acknowledgement of his role. Unlike his aspirational brother, when Kenny is offered a promotion he turns it down. It appears that aspiration is linked with selfishness which is here marked negatively because the ideological thrust of the film is to legitimate Kenny's accepting personality. Kenny is the submissive Aussie battler in a neoliberal world.

One way the film produces Kenny as an Aussie battler is to make out the middle class to be unthinking and self-serving. Thus, we have the university student who, working for Kenny, leaves rather than putting his hand in shit to find a dropped ring, and also the girl who gets her ring back after Kenny retrieves it, whose thanks suggests that Kenny was simply doing his job. Then there are the drunken women at Flemington race-course, one of whom pisses herself in front of Kenny while her friend falls over laughing into the mud and urine. All these images lead up to Kenny's

declaration of class war when he starts filling with sewage the car that has blocked in his parked tanker.

The interaction between the classes is constructed as carnivalesque. In *Rabelais and His World*, Mikhail Bakhtin argued that, given the taken for granted hierarchical social order in the Middle Ages:

The suspension of all hierarchical precedence during carnival time was of particular significance . . . all were considered equal during carnival. Here, in the town square, a special form of free and familiar contact reigned among people who were usually divided by the barriers of caste, property, profession, and age. (1984, 10)

Peter Stallybrass and Allon White rework this formulation arguing that, “the idea of carnival as an *analytic* category can only be fruitful if it is displaced onto the broader concept of symbolic inversion and transgression” (1986, 18, Stallybrass and White’s italics). “Inversion,” they explain elsewhere, “addresses the social classification of values, distinctions and judgements, which underpin practical reason and systematically inverts the relations of subject and object, agent and instrument, husband and wife, old and young, animal and human, master and slave” (1986, 56). To this list of elements of what is known as “the world turned upside down”, we can add, thinking of *Kenny*, middle class and working class. *Kenny*, then, has a Rabelaisian quality to it which suggests that *Kenny*’s legitimation as a salt-of-the-earth worker, a version of the Aussie battler stereotype, comes at the price of a fantastic social inversion. That is, in this comedic fantasy world, *Kenny* is constructed as the rational, humane person while the middle class are selfish, unthinking, pleasure-seeking and irresponsible. This is the source of the film’s humour. Ideologically, then, the film is actually asserting the complete opposite. After the incident where *Kenny* fills the car with sewage, we do not see the police arrive; we do not see *Kenny* lose his job; we do not see him in court; we do not see him have to pay for the damage to the car. *Kenny*’s attack on the middle class reads as a carnivalesque inversion of neoliberal class warfare which viewers know can only happen in fiction. The impact of making the film as a mockumentary is to use documentary techniques to give the film’s inverted image of the neoliberal social order a greater *vraisemblance*—in the term used by Roland Barthes, what can be translated as real-seemingness.⁶

Violence, Exclusion and *Jindabyne*

Which brings us to *Jindabyne*. As I have already remarked, there is no serial killer in Carver's original story, "So Much Water So Close To Home", the first version of which was published in 1975. Rather, the murder of Susan Miller is constructed as an isolated incident and, by the story's end, the police have taken a man, "a longhair", into custody for the crime—though some of the narrative's sense of ominousness comes from the implicit suggestion that they might have the wrong man. In *Jindabyne* the police come nowhere near catching Gregory, the serial killer. Within this narrative their presence is almost completely limited to expressing, what we can now understand as traditional, moral outrage that the four men did not report finding the body immediately. The ineffectiveness of the police is linked to their positioning as representatives of the pre-neoliberal state.

In Carver's much earlier story Susan Miller is white. Here, then, because of her whiteness, race is not directly an issue. In this pre-neoliberal world, the story reads as focused on the moral concerns the importance of which can be taken for granted where, in *Jindabyne*, they have to be highlighted by the police. After all, in a neoliberal world where, to paraphrase Thatcher, there are only individuals and people must look to themselves first, why shouldn't these men do a bit of recreational fishing before reporting the body of a girl none of them know? In *Jindabyne*, Sussan is Indigenous. Ray Lawrence has told how, "Bea [Beatrix Christian, the screenwriter] said, 'What if the murdered girl were Aboriginal?' and the story suddenly became much bigger and more important in the Australian context" (cited in Curruthers n.d.). Lawrence does not explain what he thinks that importance is but Mireille Juchau (2006) argues that, "when the film broaches the huge and complicated matter of reconciliation, it falters, drawing a precarious bow from the collusion of the men (who lie to cover their negligence) to comment on Australia's failure to confront and make amends for the suffering of the Indigenous people." Juchau is particularly critical of the scene where Claire and the other whites turn up uninvited at the Indigenous ceremony to mark Sussan's passing. She writes that: "Something is badly wrong with this scene." It is indeed. The problem is that the narrative drive of Gregory's murderous ways leads in a different ideological direction—as, as we have seen, does the narrative drive of the rampaging Burns gang in *The Proposition*. Gregory is not captured. The murder is not resolved. The wrong done to Sussan and the Indigenous community is not righted by Australian law. Rather, as I have remarked, the final scene of the film

finds Gregory back on his rocky outcrop surveilling the plain and the road which runs through it. He is still doing his job, patrolling the limits of white, settler Australia.

In Chapter 4, I write about Mick Taylor, the serial killer in *Wolf Creek*. I quote Elliott Leyton who, in *Compulsive Killers*, suggests that the serial killer “is in many senses an embodiment of the central themes in his civilization as well as a reflection of that civilization’s critical tensions” (1986, 269). I argue that Taylor’s murders of tourists can be read as an expression of the Australian government’s murderous anxiety to protect Australia’s borders at, seemingly, any cost. From this point of view it is significant that, as he is killing one of the English backpackers, Taylor tells her that he served in the Vietnam War. Taylor can be read as the individualised expression of the militarisation of neoliberal Australia’s border.

I want to take this argument about Taylor and Gregory a step further and suggest that this murderous preoccupation with exclusion can be read in terms of the violence endemic in the neoliberal state. This is the violence that I have quoted Harvey earlier explaining as inherent in the neoliberal understanding of freedom. Lemke writes of neoliberalism that:

The strategy of rendering individual subjects “responsible” . . . entails shifting responsibility for social risks such as illness, unemployment, poverty, etc and for life in society into the domain for which the individual is responsible and transforming it into a problem of “self-care”. (Lemke 2001, 201)

If Taylor can be thought of as the ideological embodiment of the neoliberal militarisation of Australia’s borders, the intent of which is a “war” to exclude asylum seekers and refugees, then Gregory can be read similarly as patrolling the white, neoliberal Australian state, excluding the members of the disadvantaged Indigenous community who are identified as different and are seeking acceptance as a community. As I have argued, neoliberalism refuses to countenance claims to special treatment on the grounds of social disadvantage. People are welcomed within the state as individuals and excluded as members of communities. From a neoliberal perspective issues such as reconciliation and the attempts to get an apology for the treatment of the people who are now collectively described as belonging to the Stolen Generation, that is, those who were taken from their parents to be brought up in white-run institutions in order to speed Indigenous assimilation, simply reinforce Indigenous exclusion. In this sense Gregory makes clear the murderous exclusion within the white-dominated, neoliberal Australian state that is implicit in *Wolf Creek* where

there are no Indigenous characters—where they are, if you like, always already absent.

In this context it is more understandable that *Jindabyne* should begin with a seemingly gratuitous shot of a barbed wire fence. In Australia since 2000 such fences are likely to connote the detention centres used to hold asylum seekers and those from whom citizenship has been withdrawn.⁷ They are markers of violent exclusion from the state. Gregory's sweeping of Indigenous people off the Jindabyne plain, the production, it would seem, of a literal *terra nullius*, connects with the violent history of the white settler genocide of Aborigines. At the same time, Gregory's serial killing can be understood in the terms of neoliberal exclusionary violence within the Australian state. In this way, Gregory's actions on the inner border of the Australian state equate with Mick Taylor's deadly protection of Australia's border from those who would enter from the outside. That barbed wire fence works, then, as a marker of this exclusionary structure. Marking the passing of the liberal order, Gregory and Taylor are more effective in their role than the police trying to catch them.

Australia is increasingly a state founded on exclusion rather than inclusion where the hierarchical order is enforced by a violence that has become acceptable and naturalised since the setting aside of notions of the social contract. The state itself is organised according to assumptions about the transcendental value of the free market and, as a consequence, citizens are seen as competing possessive individuals rather than members of groups more or less socially advantaged and disadvantaged by their culturally ascribed attributes. These ideological elements that found the neoliberal understanding of social order are now themselves being naturalised in Australian cultural productions—such as the films that I have been discussing. One consequence is that Australian attitudes to minority and disadvantaged groups are becoming increasingly selfish, uninterested in the causes of disadvantage and celebrating individualistic policies such as assimilation over the group-based concerns of multiculturalism. Murderous Katrina and passive Kenny are role models for citizens of the new Australian neoliberal state. Rather than the police, Mick Taylor and Gregory, serial killers, are the individualised ideological incarnations of the protectors of that murderous state.

CHAPTER THREE

NON-CITIZENS IN THE EXCLUSIONARY STATE: CITIZENSHIP, MITIGATED EXCLUSION AND THE CRONULLA RIOTS

The Cronulla riots took place in December 2005. What had started as an altercation on Sunday, 4th December, between three white surf lifesavers and a small group of men who have been identified as of Lebanese background, became the basis for a large gathering of an estimated 5000 people the following Sunday. This group targeted anyone who appeared to be of Lebanese heritage and, more generally, anyone who looked to be “of Middle Eastern appearance”. This latter term signals the generalisation of the rioters’ focus. At one point, two Bangladeshi men were attacked.

Scott Poynting remarks that: “In the aftermath of the riot, moral entrepreneurs ranging from local politicians to the Prime Minister [John Howard] denied, in the face of the obvious, that racism was an underlying factor in these events” (2009, 49). Specifically, Howard said:

Attacking people on the basis of their race, their appearance, their ethnicity, is totally unacceptable and should be repudiated by all Australians irrespective of their own background and their politics. . . .

I believe yesterday’s behaviour was completely unacceptable but I’m not going to put a general tag (of) racism on the Australian community.

I think it’s a term that is flung around sometimes carelessly and I’m simply not going to do so. (Cited in Poynting 2009, 49)

For Howard, and others, the obvious racial element in the attacks was a consequence of the failure of the policy of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism, they argued, by celebrating diversity, had encouraged social divisions within a country increasingly confused about its national identity. However, the argument went, the attacks were not racially based but, rather, occurrences of inebriated mob violence. Howard went on to say: “I think yesterday was fuelled by the always explosive combination of

a large number of people at the weekend and a large amount of alcohol” (“PM Refuses to Use Racist Tag” 2005).

In a subtle and incisive article published in 2006, Suvendrini Perera took issue with the claim that race was merely a pretext and did not underlie the organisation of the riots: “The disavowal of racism in the events on Cronulla Beach can in turn be located within a wider denial of the continuing role of race in contemporary Australia” (2006a, para. 61). Criticising an article in *The Australian* by David Burchell that examined the riot in relation to what Burchell described as “a volley of equally violent and damaging revenge attacks,” Perera brings to the fore the unequal social positioning of whites and non-whites in the Australian nation: “How to insert into the symmetrical narrative of riot and revenge the ways in which ‘individuals of even vaguely Middle-Eastern appearance’ have been systematically excluded . . . from the space of the ‘homeland’ designated by this same [national] flag?” (Perera 2006a, para. 58). The symmetrical narrative disguises the asymmetrical power relationship between those who self-identify as white and those identified as non-white in Australian society. For Perera, the riot, which she and Poynting both identify as a pogrom, functioned to reassert the exclusion of those considered non-white from the nation.

The nation, rather than state, is an important term in Perera’s essay. Emphasising the connections between racism and nationalism in Australia, Perera uses Amy Kaplan’s 2003 article on “Homeland Insecurities” to show how the new importance of territoriality after 9/11, marked in the emotive use of “homeland”, was a significant factor in the Cronulla riots: “Reimagined as ‘the homeland’ in the context of the war on terror the already racially contested white site of the Australian beach produces compounding effects of exclusionary violence and xenophobia” (2006a, para. 41). Quoting Kaplan, Perera writes that, in her discussion of the causes of the Cronulla riot, she wants “to pursue Kaplan’s idea that the recent adoption of ‘homeland’ in nationalist and national security discourse solicits sentiments of ersatz rootedness and national essence by evoking ‘a sense of native origins, of birthplace and birthright’” (2006a, para. 42). One of the ways that white nationalism became evident at Cronulla was in the appropriation of the Australian flag: “The Australian flag, with its affirmation of enduring racial kinship with ‘British stock,’ is inscribed on bodies in multiple forms: blazoned on bikinis and backpacks, tattooed on to arms and torsos, painted on faces like war paint, wrapped around shoulders like a trophy: a performance of native-ised territoriality that echoes other enactments of territorial ownership: We decide who comes on to this beach and the manner in which they come” (Perera

2006a, para. 49). The association of the flag with Australia's white, British heritage, most obvious in its still bearing the Union Jack in the upper left quarter, made it an easy appropriation for the racial nationalists.

In this chapter I want to take Perera's insight further. My starting point is to think about the positioning of the rioters themselves. What drove them to riot? Why did the exclusion of non-whites in the Australian national order, an exclusion which has been, after all, fundamental to Australian nationhood since federation, erupt at the end of 2005 into the worst racial violence since before the Second World War? It could be argued that the riot was primarily a way of keeping increasingly assertive ethnics in their place—after all, those attacked were predominantly born in Australia and regarded Australia as their country. The rioters' use of the phrase: "We grew here, you flew here" signals an attempt to insist that non-white identification entailed an ideological assumption of non-Australian birth, regardless of the person's actual birthplace, and therefore of a lesser claim to Australianness.

However, the causes of the riot run much deeper. In Chapter 2 I argued that one of the most insidious consequences of the acceptance of neoliberal thinking by Australian politicians on both sides of parliament has been the reformation of Australia in terms of an exclusionary order. That is to say, where the traditional nation-state has marked a division between those included and those excluded, a distinction geographically identified with the border and politically identified with citizenship, the neoliberal nation-state, for reasons that I will discuss later, functions solely in terms of a hierarchy of exclusion. In this hierarchy, the border and citizenship become key markers in an exclusionary order where there is no final inclusion. I do not want to concentrate on the border here. Rather, I am interested in some of the consequences of the renovation of citizenship as a marker of only relative inclusion, perhaps better described as mitigated exclusion, in what is, as I have already asserted, an exclusionary order. To this end I will discuss a variety of developments that have organised the experience of relative exclusion such as changes in voting eligibility, changes to the entitlement to social security funds, the installation of a citizenship test, the implementation of the Temporary Protection Visa. I want to start here with a discussion of citizenship and its place in the *Australian Citizenship Act 2007*.

Citizenship in Australia

Traditionally, citizenship is understood as the political foundation of inclusion in the nation-state. As Margaret Somers writes: "Citizenship at

its most basic is a mechanism for inclusion and exclusion” (2008, 21). In his introductory book on the topic, Richard Bellamy begins by writing that: “Historically, citizenship has been linked to the privileges of membership of a particular kind of political community—one in which those who enjoy a certain status are entitled to participate on an equal footing with their fellow citizens in making the collective decisions that regulate social life” (2008, 1). The kind of political community of which Bellamy is thinking is democracy. As he goes on to write, “citizenship has gone hand in hand with political participation in some form of democracy—most especially, the right to vote” (Bellamy 2008, 1–2). If citizenship is the key marker of inclusion in the nation-state then the ability to vote is the substantive political attribute that signals that inclusion.

In Australia, as I noted in Chapter 1, until the *Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948* came into force on Australia Day, 1949, there was no such thing as Australian citizenship. For the first forty-eight years of Australia’s existence as, as David Dutton puts it, “a self-governing dominion within the British Empire”, all members of that dominion were British subjects: “‘British subject’ was the only legal status, and it was common to the subjects of the Crown throughout the British Empire” (2002, 10). In 1945 Arthur Calwell, Minister for Immigration in the Labor government, had proposed that Australia develop the status of Australian citizen. However, ultimately, Australia’s hand was forced by Canada. Canada passed the *Canadian Citizenship Act 1946*. This meant that “Canadian citizens would, from January 1st, 1947, be British subjects in consequence of being Canadian citizens” (Hansen 2000, 41). In establishing the category of the Canadian citizen, which took priority over the category of British subject, Canada changed the status of the category of British subject which no longer functioned as an inclusive category across the Commonwealth. The consequence was that Britain enacted the *British Nationality Act 1948*, one category of which, among its various different categories of inclusive citizenship, referred to “Citizens of Independent Commonwealth Countries”. Randall Hansen tells us that: “This status was attained through citizenship of an independent Commonwealth country, and the conditions of this citizenship were defined exclusively by the country’s domestic legislature” (2000, 46).

Australia’s *Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948* defined the conditions for Australian citizenship. Dutton notes that the definition used “was a mere formalisation of the existing administrative notion of Australian citizenship” (2002, 15). He makes the point that the evolution of this administrative category meant starting to make distinctions between an

idea of Australianness and the Britishness out of which it was formed. At the same time, as he goes on to write, in the formal definition delivered by the Act:

The “alien” was legally defined as “a person who is not a British subject, an Irish citizen or a protected person”. Thus, the “foreigner” remained defined against British subject status and not against Australian citizenship. (Dutton 2002, 16)

In his account of the history of Australian citizenship, Alastair Davidson puts the point more bluntly:

From its first formal statement of what it is to be a citizen in Australia, the Australian state has made it clear that its primary concern was to establish in a country of immigration that the newcomers show clearly that they have adopted a national identity, that they have joined the national family of British descent. (1997, 45–46)

In other words, Britishness has been central to the category of Australian citizenship. As Davidson writes: “Citizenship was conceptualised in relation to British culture and ethnicity, not in terms of the rights and responsibilities of citizens of the state” (1997, 46).

The established narrative is that from the 1970s British subjects began to be treated as other foreigners and that, until the 2007 *Citizenship Act*, gaining citizenship became steadily easier. Dutton avers that: “Despite the efforts of conservative governments, the British character of Australian citizenship became increasingly irrelevant” (2002, 17). In 1973, for example, in a revamping of what was now to be called the *Citizenship Act*, the Whitlam government decreed that British subjects should have to fulfil the same administrative procedures for naturalisation as those designated as aliens. Yet, until 1984, British subjects residing in Australia—including British subjects without permanent residency—were able to vote at all electoral levels. In that year, the Hawke Labor government amended the law so that after that date, British subjects should no longer have that right. However, this change did not affect British subjects who were already on the voting rolls. As of June 2007, there were still 163,887 British citizens who were allowed to vote in Australian elections. In that same year, 1984, Australian citizens ceased to be British subjects.

Citizenship, then, is deeply imbricated with Britishness and this remains the case regardless of the legal changes that have taken place. One reason for this ongoing association of Australian citizenship with Britishness is that Australian citizenship has little actual meaning. It offers those who

have it little that is not available to those who have permanent residency status. Dutton argues that: “Australian citizenship . . . has no coherent substance, because the Commonwealth government has never put it there and the Australian populace has not demanded it” (2002, 19). The consequence of this practical emptiness in Australian citizenship is that it is able to function as an empty signifier, a symbolic entity that can carry the prejudices of the dominant group, in short, white Australians.

The one thing that citizenship does enable, the thing which, if you like, can be understood as marking a crucial site of inclusion, is the vote. Here, we should remember Bellamy’s point about the relation between citizenship and voting rights. Only Australian citizens are allowed to vote in federal and state elections. Yet, as we have seen, even this absolute statement needs to be qualified and the qualification highlights the continuing connection between Australian citizenship and British heritage. In this context, distinguishing “growing here” from “flying here” signals a recognition of, and a claim to, the ongoing importance of, British heritage.

Katharine Betts and Bob Birrell remarked in 2007: “The last 34 years have . . . seen a steady dilution in . . . the demands placed on aliens wanting to gain citizenship” (2007, 45). They make a distinction between what they call proceduralism and patriotism. They link the increasing ease of the availability of citizenship with a decline in a sense of a shared community, a loss of patriotism, a decline which they also associate with the policy of multiculturalism. From this point of view, which starts from the position of seeing citizenship as a site for inclusion in the nation and, therefore, the state, increasing the difficulty in gaining citizenship makes it more desirable and, if the difficulty is increased in appropriate ways, such as the inclusion of an English language test and a test for knowledge of Australian culture, citizenship can become the marker for inclusion in a new unitary Australian community.

Such a conservative argument can only be made if there continues to be an ideology of nation-state inclusion. In *Genealogies of Citizenship*, Somers discusses the transformation of the relationship between the state and the individual in nation-states run according to market fundamentalism. She uses this term in preference to neoliberalism but the meaning is the same. Her key claim is that in a state run according to the principles of neoliberalism there is an erosion of traditional rights. The driving force in this erosion is what Somers describes as “*the contractualisation of citizenship*—an effort to reorganise the relationship between the state and the citizenry, from noncontractual rights and obligations to the principles and practices of quid pro quo market exchange” (2008, 2). In a 1993 article, Bob Jessop discussed the shift from the Keynesian Welfare State to

what he called the Schumpeterian Workfare State. He described the latter this way:

Its distinctive economic and social objectives can be summarized in abstract terms as: to promote product, process, organizational, and market innovation and enhance the structural competitiveness of open economies mainly through supply-side intervention; and to subordinate social policy to the demands of labor market flexibility and structural competitiveness. (Jessop 1993)

The neoliberal state establishes a market-based relationship with the individual members of the nation-state. Somers explains that:

Contractualizing citizenship distorts the meaning of citizenship from that of shared fate among equals to that of conditional privilege. The growing moral authority of both market and contract makes social inclusion and moral worth no longer inherent rights but rather earned privileges that are wholly conditional upon the ability to exchange something of equal value. (Somers 2008, 3)

In this environment, as Somers suggests, the structurally unemployed are regarded as contractual malfeasants. The consequence is the development of work for welfare schemes. In the United States, for example, President Bill Clinton signed into law the *Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act* in 1996. This requires the unemployed to work in order to gain access to welfare. Welfare was no longer considered to be a right for the individual within the state. This new contractual relationship is often known as workfare. In Canada, a similar scheme had been introduced in Quebec in 1993. In Australia the Howard government introduced work for the dole legislation in 1998, after a pilot scheme the previous year, using the rhetoric of mutual obligation.¹

This kind of state relationship with the citizen is fundamentally different from the traditional, inclusive relationship described by Bellamy. Somers argues that:

when citizenship has been contractualised, failing to provide a good or service of equivalent market value in exchange for what is now the *privilege* of citizenship, results in a reduction of the moral worth of the citizen. And depending on the degree and frequency and quality of such failures to meet contractual criteria, there will be an increasing refusal to recognize as deserving of membership altogether in the political and social community. (2008, 89)

What Somers is describing is the market logic behind the new exclusionary order. As she notes, “the borders and boundaries once used solely as external demarcations designed to exclude people from nation-state entry are increasingly expanding to the centers of our polities, creating sharp interior borders of internal social and political exclusion” (2008, 21). Markers such as citizenship, which in the classic nation-state signalled the inclusive limit of the state’s obligations to its members, and beyond which was a space occupied by those allowed to live in the nation-state and to whom the state had obligations because of their presence within the state’s geographical borders, though these were less than to citizens, have become boundaries of exclusion. Similarly, that metaphorical space between the marker of the geographic boundary and the marker of citizenship is no longer a space of diminished rights within the protection of the state but a space of greater exclusion from the state’s responsibilities where those living in the space are even more at the mercy of the contractarian relationship than those with citizen status. As we shall see, if we take the vote as the key marker of citizenship then we find two things. First, that there are increasing numbers of people within the geographic borders of the state who are not citizens and do not have the right to vote. Second, that there are increasing numbers of people who have citizenship but who are being disenfranchised by various means. It is worth examining one of these means now.

In 2006 the Howard government passed into law the *Electoral and Referendum Amendment Act*, more usually known as the *Electoral Integrity Act*—an act of similar name but with a very different purpose was passed in New Zealand in 2001. The apparent purpose of Australia’s *Electoral Integrity Act* was to increase protection against voting fraud and therefore to increase Australian citizens’ faith in the federal electoral system. One change was to require more identification from people enrolling to vote or updating their enrolling particulars. This appears benign but increases difficulties for those more marginalised citizens such as Aborigines living on outstations or people with low English skills. However, the change that most threatened new enrollers was the change in the timing of the close of rolls. Previously this had taken place a week after an election was called. The new *Electoral Integrity Act* closed the roll for new electors the same day that a federal election is called. People needing to change their personal details were given three days. Those most affected by this change in the rules were people who had just turned eighteen. Signalling how many people would be affected by this change, in an article in *The Age* online in May 2007, Ben Doherty pointed out that: “If an election were called today, only half of Australia’s 18-year-olds

would be on the electoral roll and could vote.” Doherty goes on to make the point that:

In the last week before the roll closed in the previous election, 423,000 changes were made to the roll, including 78,000 people who enrolled for the first time, and another 78,000 who re-enrolled after being removed.

If those figures were to be repeated at this year’s [2007] poll, 267,000 voters would be forced to vote in the wrong electorate, and at least 156,000 people would be frozen out of voting altogether, an average of more than 1000 voters for each federal electorate.

This is by no means an insignificant level of disenfranchisement. The first thing about this development is that it decreases the number of voters. Doherty also notes that the total number of voters on the electoral roll actually went down in 2005/06 by 35,000. This at a time when the total resident population of Australia, according to figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, increased from 20,252,132 in 2004 to 20,848,760 in 2006. In short, then, while the resident population, which includes permanent residents and others without citizenship, and therefore the right to vote, increased by around 600,000, there was actually a drop in the total number of citizens eligible to vote.

The other point to make relates to who would not be enrolled. Predominantly, these were eighteen year-olds. Doherty quotes Brian Costar, a politics professor at Swinburne University, who asserts that: “[The change is] designed to exclude young people from the democratic process because they vote Labor and Greens, just by keeping them off the roll” (Doherty 2007). In other words, not only did the *Electoral Integrity Act* disenfranchise certain groups but it did so in a partisan way. Those disenfranchised remained Australian citizens but did not have the one right which distinguishes Australian citizens from permanent residents. Here we see very well how the process of exclusion functions to create a hierarchy even within the category of citizen.²

The *Electoral Integrity Act* contained a further disenfranchisement. All prisoners were barred from voting. From 1902 prisoners serving sentences of one year or more were disqualified from voting in federal elections during the period of their sentence. In 1983 the law was changed to disqualify prisoners whose crimes could be punished with sentences of five years or more. In 1995 this was altered so that only prisoners serving a sentence of five years or more were disenfranchised. Through this period, then, as imprisonment came to be seen as a means of rehabilitation, so more and more prisoners were allowed to vote. However, as neoliberal attitudes to crime started to dominate and imprisonment began to be seen

again as a means of retributive punishment so the right to vote was again taken away from increasing numbers of prisoners. In 2002 the Howard government decreased the length of sentence after which a prisoner was disenfranchised from five years to three. Then, the *Electoral Integrity Act* barred all prisoners from voting in federal elections. In 2007 this rule was challenged in the High Court and the ruling was held to be invalid. Nevertheless, the intent was clear. If members of the state are seen as breaking their contract with the state by performing illegal acts then the state, it seems, claims the contractual right to take away prisoners' right to contribute to the democratic running of the state. This development has taken place in concert with the increasing use of mandatory detention. While it cannot be pursued here, it is also the case that Australian prisons are disproportionately full of Aborigines—in 2000, 19% of the prison population was Indigenous—and people from non-English speaking backgrounds and, in a different description, the unskilled: “More than two-thirds belonged to the lowest occupational strata (‘unskilled’) as compared to just over one-fifth of the general adult population” (Hogg 2002, 14). Thus, it was primarily Aborigines and those from the lowest economic strata who were most disadvantaged, perhaps I should say excluded from the rights of citizenship, by the changes in the voting laws enacted by Howard's government.

The *Citizenship Act 2007* and the Citizenship Test

We are now in a position to think about the *Citizenship Act 2007* not as a set of changes meant to encourage inclusive participation in the Australian nation-state but as a site of exclusion. The Act became law in the same year as the *Electoral Integrity Act*. The *Citizenship Act* contained a number of changes. Mark Nolan and Kim Rubenstein argue that: “These . . . changes were part of the package that could be referred to as inclusive; they were including in the Australian community many people who had often seen themselves as Australians, but had not been recognised formally in law as such, and importantly for our discussion of blended identity, included dual citizens in the fullest legal sense” (2009). However, these inclusive developments were minor. Following the recommendations of a 1999 report by the Australian Citizenship Council the government tidied up some small matters that had produced ambiguous statuses for some people.

There was one major change in the new Act which made accessing citizenship more difficult. This was an alteration to the residency qualification. Previously, the requirement had been that a person applying

for citizenship should have been present in Australia for two years out of the previous five with one year as a permanent resident. This was increased to three years out of four. The government's claim was that the extra year would enable prospective citizens to gain a greater knowledge of the Australian way of life. This increase in the length of time a person was required to be resident in Australia before being able to apply for citizenship needs to be understood in the context of the increasing numbers of people being granted permanent residency in Australia. In 1997/98, 98,538 visas for permanent stay in Australia were issued. By 2006/07, this figure had increased to 189,524 (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2009). For 2007/08 this figure had jumped again to 206,135. So, as the number of people on permanent residency visas increased in Australia, the government, by lengthening the waiting time before these people could apply for citizenship, consigned an increasing number of people to living between the geographic border and full membership of the state. The bulk of the people granted permanent residency was in the Skilled Migration category. In 2007/08 this amounted to 158,630 people. Of this figure, as I discuss in Chapter 8, 19.9% came from the Indian sub-continent and 21.14% came from East Asia, including China, Japan and Vietnam. The figure for British migrants came between these two. As the numbers of migrants from that region of the world that white Australians call "Asia" has massively surpassed migrants from Britain so the Howard government made it harder for these new residents to call themselves Australian, and made it impossible for them to vote until they had been in Australia for an extra year. That the Howard government's reason for extending the waiting period should have been so that applicants could become more familiar with the Australian way of life when so many migrants had started to come from Asia suggests a discrimination that recognised the Australian nation defined by citizenship as continuing to be British in form. Importantly, the increased number of people subject to the Australian state who were unable to vote can also, therefore, be identified as predominantly Asian.

One further important piece of legislation was passed in that same year. This was the Australian Citizenship Amendment (Citizenship Testing) Bill 2007. The purpose of this Act was to make all people applying for citizenship take a test which examined their knowledge of Australian culture and values. In their article on what became known as the citizenship test, Farida Fozdar and Brian Spittles describe how Andrew Robb, who was then Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs in Howard's government, started selling the prospect of such a test in a speech in April 2006. Robb argued

that Australia's ageing population would produce a labour shortage that would be solved by increased migration. We should remember here that Australia under Howard's government had already very significantly increased migration, as I have already noted, but Robb may have thought that this might be unpalatable information for his predominantly white Australian audience. Fozdar and Spittles write that Robb "argued that such a vehicle for enhancing integration was necessary in order to maintain the sanctity of the nation's core Australian identity in the face of that necessary migrant intake and the terrorist threat" (2009, 500). Fozdar and Spittles argue that:

The clear message behind the process and rhetoric associated with the implementation of the Australian citizenship text is that those who do not subscribe to the values identified in it are guests who have overstayed their welcome. Indeed this was made explicit in speeches by both Howard and [Treasurer] Costello. (2009, 511)

Fozdar and Spittles sum up their argument by writing that: "Using questionable processes and with perfunctory consultation, a citizenship test was introduced for the purposes of exclusion rather than inclusion" (2009, 512). Such exclusion, which, as I have argued, is the foundation of the neoliberal state organisation, was here harnessed to the preservation of Australia's British-based culture. To put it differently, the integration of which Robb, and Howard and Costello, spoke, was into the pre-existing Australian culture. As Fozdar and Spittles also note (2009, 511), in October, 2007, the Howard government went one step further, making all applicants for visas giving permanent residency and applicants for some categories of temporary residence, sign an *Australian Values Statement*.

The Space between the Border and Citizenship

What, then, about those people who do not apply for citizenship? Davidson gives figures for the years between 1991 and 1994. In 1991, there were 1,130,851 non-citizens eligible to apply for citizenship. Over the next three years this figure decreased slightly, in 1994 the number was 1,057,587. Proportional to the total number this decrease was relatively minimal. We can say that roughly 30% of those eligible to apply were not taking the opportunity to do so (Davidson 1997, 154). With a total resident population in 1994 of a little over 18,000,000 we can estimate that roughly one in eighteen of the Australian population were not citizens. We can think about this in relation to the traditional argument about citizenship and democracy outlined earlier. The voting age in Australia is eighteen.

Roughly 20% of Australia's population is under eighteen. So, again in rough figures, we can say that in 1994 approximately one in fourteen or fifteen of the possible voting cohort was ineligible because they were not an Australian citizen.

Davidson argues that: "While they remain non-citizens it is difficult for the state to function efficiently and impossible to claim that a really democratic system exists since they live under laws which they had no part in making" (1997, 151). However, this comes from an assumption that the state should be inclusive. We need to remember that in the post-Second World War period, up to roughly the 1980s, this would have been a reasonable assumption. Since then, as I have been arguing, the state has become increasingly founded on exclusion. In this light we need to remember that those with permanent residency in Australia have a less secure status than those with citizenship. As Davidson remarks: "The position of a permanent resident, the stepping stone status to citizenship, is very shaky. Under the *Migration Act* (1958) the Minister could deport at discretion" (1997, 152). This is, perhaps, one reason why, after the election of the right-wing, neoliberal Howard government in 1996 the proportion of eligible non-citizens declined. Starting in that year, the proportion dropped to 24.4% in 2008 ("Population Flows: Immigration Aspects 2007-08" n.d., 12). It would seem, then, that the Howard government's determination to end the policy of multiculturalism and reassert a policy of assimilation, or integration as we have already seen Robb calling it, along with anxieties caused by the so-called War on Terror, and the Howard government's policies on asylum seekers and refugees, made many eligible non-citizens anxious enough about their status in Australia for them to want to secure that status as much as they could by becoming citizens. Another, more specific context for this drop was the mooted changes to eligibility to apply for citizenship, and the promotion of the citizenship test, which, as we have seen, were put in place in 2007. In other words, it would seem that a significant number of eligible non-citizens decided to apply for citizenship because they realised that citizenship was going to become harder to get.

There is a further possible reason. Since the most significant public aspect of Australian citizenship is the ability to say that one belongs in Australia, that one is, in a legal sense, Australian, taking up citizenship at a time when there was a government that publicly asserted Australia's British heritage and questioned the migration profile (while quietly opening the way for increased skilled Asian migration) was a way of asserting themselves as Australian. Here is one way that the experience of

non-citizens moved from feeling relatively secure in a benign space where they felt partially included to feeling unsafe and excluded.

At this point we should look at the national origins of eligible non-citizens. Davidson gives a breakdown for 1994. This shows that 41.1%, 434,689 people, were from the United Kingdom and Ireland. Now, this figure will include a large number of Britons who had voting rights from before the 1984 legislation. For some, the ability to vote and feel that they were taking part in an inclusive, democratic system may have been an important consideration. If so, then having that right may have made them less interested in applying for citizenship. Another reason for the high proportion is, quite simply, the historically large number of Britons who have moved to Australia. Here we see the practical effect of Australia's close relationship with the United Kingdom. A further reason, and an important one, is that Britons and Irish would feel more at ease in a country that continued to assert its British, and Irish, origins than people from other national backgrounds.

In light of this, and thinking once more for a moment about the Cronulla riot, it is important to note that migrants from Lebanon made up only 0.1% of eligible non-citizens. Now, again, we need to remember that this figure needs to be set against the long-term, post-Second World War migration figures for Lebanese. The 2006 Census identified 74,848 people born in Lebanon as being resident in Australia. For comparison, the same census found 43,701 people born in Malta in Australia. People of Maltese background made up 1.6% of non-citizens in Davidson's breakdown. Thus, with significantly fewer numbers, many more Maltese had not taken up citizenship as compared with Lebanese. What this suggests is that there must have been some reason why a greater percentage of Lebanese had taken up citizenship than, for example, Maltese. One answer may be that Lebanon has a history of unrest which Malta does not have, therefore making Lebanese migrants more likely to take up citizenship to ensure that they would not, under any circumstance, be sent back to Lebanon. Another, and more compelling, reason is that Lebanese migrants felt less secure in Australia. Over half of the first-generation Lebanese resident in Australia, 53%, are Muslim. In a state which claims to be secular but which is assertively Christian, these people have to struggle to show themselves to be Australian. At the same time, as the rhetoric around the Cronulla riot showed, Lebanese are not generally regarded as white—they are “of Middle Eastern appearance”. For the Lebanese, taking out citizenship has been a way of feeling more secure in an increasingly exclusionary environment and, simultaneously, a way of publicly claiming Australianness.

Exclusion and Bare Life

Giorgio Agamben's work provides a way to understand the very changed situation of those in the space between the border and citizenship. Agamben argues that what is unique about Western politics is "that the inclusion of bare life in the political realm constitutes the original—if concealed—nucleus of sovereign power. . . . Placing biological life at the center of its calculations, the modern State therefore does nothing other than bring to light the secret tie uniting power and bare life" (1998, 6). "Bare life" is a translation of *homo sacer*. Agamben takes this term from Roman law. He defines it as he "*who may be killed but not sacrificed*" (1998, 8). Agamben's point is that politics seeks to protect the person from being treated as bare life, as nothing but the being that is human. Paradoxically, then, by making bare life the basis of politics, politics produces the possibility for human beings to be reduced to bare life. Agamben writes that "modern democracy's specific aporia [is] it wants to put the freedom and happiness of men into play in the very place—'bare life'—that marked their subjectivities" (1998, 9–10). Bare life is the constant dark side, the always already possible, of modern politics no matter how it tries to turn away from this. Agamben explains that: "In Western politics, bare life has the peculiar privilege of being that whose exclusion founds the city of man" (1998, 6). The "city of man", the Greek polis, is the place of human community and therefore of politics. The exclusion of bare life places it in that political place the possibility of which is always included, while being excluded, from the political order, the state of exception.

Agamben follows the German political theorist Carl Schmitt in his discussion of the state of exception. Agamben makes recourse to Schmitt's definition of the sovereign as "he who decides on the state of exception" (Schmitt cited in Agamben 2005, 1). In short, the state of exception is the condition where, and when, the legal order of the state has been suspended. Only the sovereign can make this suspension and it is this ability which places the sovereign both within the law and outside of it. It is the exclusion of the state of exception from the political order that protects human beings from being reduced to bare life. From this perspective, traditional theories of democracy, which make the people sovereign because of their ability to vote political elites in and out of power, may be considered a way of protecting the members of the state from the establishment of a state of exception and the concomitant possibility that human beings might be reduced to bare life. This is another way of thinking about the understanding of the modern state as being

inclusive. To quote Somers: “It is only the primary right of inclusion and membership that makes possible the mutual acknowledgement of the other as a *moral equal*” (2008, 5). However, as I have been arguing, the neoliberal state, based on individualised contracts and not on shared rights is not inclusive, it is exclusive, and it does not consider others as moral equals but rather as entities in contractual relations. If the contract is not adhered to, or if there is not considered to be a contract, then those entities, those human beings, have the possibility of being reduced to bare life. An example of this is the *Social Security Legislation Amendment (Newly Arrived Resident’s Waiting Periods and Other Measures) Act 1997*, No. 5. As Lara Palombo writes, this,

extended the previous six month waiting period for new arrivals to access income support benefits to two years by declaring that “. . . new entrants to Australia should provide for their own support during their first two years (104 weeks) in Australia” (Parliament of Australia 1996). The Amendment embodies a form of exception that locates new arrivals within the nation but outside the body of those able to receive social security benefits. (Palombo 2009, 623)

This refusal of access to government-funded support benefits applied to newly-arrived permanent residents.³ The thinking seems to have been that a person needed to have made a contribution to the Australian economy, needed to have established a contract, before the country, represented in the institutions administered by the government, would consider that it had an obligation to provide basic care. We can see here that a permanent residency visa is not, in itself, considered contractual. It is merely the opportunity to establish an economic contract. The space between the border and citizenship begins to approach the condition of the state of exception and, without the vote, the inhabitants of this space are subject to the whim of a sovereign over whom they have no control, the federal government.

I should add here that the vote as an agent of sovereignty is in any case illusional. While the ideology of democracy places sovereignty in the people, as Agamben suggests, democracy, like totalitarianism, always has the possibility of being transformed into a state of exception. As I have been suggesting for the Australian state, the neoliberal state is authoritarian and not democratic. This is the consequence of its basis in exclusion. More, by virtue of its exclusionary nature, the state of exception cannot be democratic. As the Australian state became more neoliberal in form it also began, as I argue in Chapter 5, to take on the characteristics of the state of exclusion. Suvendrini Perera, in her meditation on Australian

sovereignty which makes up the introduction to her edited collection on sovereignty in Australia, *Our Patch*, writes that: “In Australia biopolitics and necropolitics operate as paired modalities by which a colonising sovereignty continues to be exercised over the bodies of Indigenous peoples” (2007b, 12). I would add that this violence has always been exercised over those minorities which have been unable to make themselves politically visible. This indicates the level of violence required to enact that illusion of the people as the democratic sovereign. As Agamben notes: “Sovereignty is the idea of an undeniable nexus between violence and right” (2000, 113). When the people is not an homogeneous entity, which is always, sovereignty lies in the political elite. In Australia this location of sovereignty is clearer than might be thought. Mary Crock (2007) writes that:

While the *United States Constitution* bears witness to the triumph of a revolution by “[w]e the People of the United States”, the Australian document records a compromise between the Queen’s subjects resident in the various Australian colonies. In the *United States Constitution*, the People are sovereign. In the *Australian Constitution*, it is the federal Parliament that is sovereign — most particularly . . . in the powers given to it to determine membership of the Australian polity.

In Australia, then, the legal site of sovereignty has always been the federal parliament as the representative expression of the people. The exercise of the parliament’s powers to determine membership of the polity, which at the highest level of abstraction used to be premised on inclusion, has, since the 1980s, become increasingly preoccupied with establishing a system of relativised exclusion.

The Howard government’s attempt to produce an homogeneous, in their word integrated, population, at the same time that younger people and recent migrants were strategically excluded from voting was, at the least, an attempt to reinforce the authoritarian sovereignty of the government. This took place within an increasingly contractarian regime where exclusion replaced inclusion and the state of exception was taking the place of the modern polis. This was most obvious in the treatment of people who lived in the space between the border and citizenship. For people on visas providing permanent residency the experience of living in this space changed fundamentally as Australian governments refounded the nation-state on neoliberal values. However, the changed environment was most apparent at the other end of the spectrum, in the attitude to people whom the government would have preferred had not come to Australia.

Bare Life and Temporary Protection Visas

The most egregious example here is of the instantiation of Temporary Protection Visas for people who had been judged to be deserving of refugee status. The Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) was legislated in October 1999 and was designed to be used for people who had arrived by boat asking for asylum in Australia—those people known conventionally as asylum seekers or boat people. As Fethi Mansouri and Michael Leach tell us, “the Government argued that these legislative measures against ‘unlawful’ onshore arrivals were designed to protect humanitarian resettlement places for more deserving offshore refugees awaiting protection in other countries” (2009, 104). That is, the government distinguished between people who were “correctly”, in their terms, applying for refugee status in other countries and waiting to be allocated a place in Australia’s refugee program and people who arrived at the Australian border seeking asylum. The government claimed that its purpose in creating the TPV was to discourage people from seeking residence in Australia in this way. TPVs were issued for three years. After this time, the TPV holder had to either return to their country of origin or apply for another visa. Until 2001 it was possible that, at this time, the applicant might be granted a Permanent Protection Visa (PPV). In that year the government changed the regulation to make impossible any granting of a PPV to a person with a TPV. Such a person was doomed to apply for a TPV every three years until such time as the country from which they had fled was deemed safe enough for their return.

The rights of a person holding a TPV were severely limited as compared with a refugee with a PPV. Mansouri and Leach outline these limitations:

TPV holders have no right to family reunion programmes, and, in apparent contravention of article 28 of the Refugee Convention, no right of return if they leave the country. As such, many TPV holders remained separated from their spouses and children for years. They are also denied access to Commonwealth government settlement services offered to other Convention refugees, including federally funded English language classes, housing assistance, migrant resources centre support schemes, and other programmes offered under the Integrated *Humanitarian Settlement Scheme*. (2009, 106)

These rights and services, as well as the ability to reside permanently in Australia, are markers of inclusion. They signify, in Somers’ term, that the person is a moral equal and should be treated as a member of the

Australian community, albeit a member without citizenship. In being markers of inclusion, the withdrawal of these rights and services brings the excluded individual closer to the status of bare life. More, they mark the person as not being a moral equal.

In a neoliberally ordered state where inclusion depends on one's economic worth, people on TPVs were placed close to the political edge of humanness. Writing about one particular case, Peter Mares outlines the man's state of being:

Government policy has ensured that Khalil's integration with this society will be protracted and painful. Khalil's [metaphorical] boat has been allowed behind the breakwater to shelter from a wild sea, but he still has no place to drop anchor. He has been granted physical safety in Australia, but no emotional mooring. (2002, 28)

The physical safety was minimal. The lack of access to family enforces emotional isolation. Without rights and services presence in the Australian nation-state would have been experienced as similar to being in a prison. Mares points to the difficulty that Khalil would face in integrating into Australian society. Integration was, as I have already noted, a term used by the Howard government, a way of talking about assimilation. Mares most probably means the term in the traditional, political theory sense of becoming a member of the national community. In Khalil's case, as with the other holders of TPVs, both meanings are relevant. In the terms of the Howard government, integration meant accepting a British-based culture. As we have seen, this acceptance was the basis for entry into the national community defined politically in terms of citizenship. In an exclusionary order this would mean moving from living near the border of bare life to an integration that would always be provisional.

Exclusion, Nationalism and the Cronulla Riots

At this point it is time to return to a consideration of the Cronulla riot. Who were the rioters? Wendy Shaw has described growing up in Cronulla:

for many teenagers of the 1970s (some of whom would become the parents of the "rioters"), these were very good times indeed, the days of plenty, of hedonistic freedom and few responsibilities. . . . These were the days before a range of societal shifts, of multiculturalism and Native Title, "political correctness" and the spectre of "terrorism." (Shaw 2009, 64)

Later she writes that: “The unexpectedness of the violent behaviour at the beach, particularly in what was regarded as a comfortable area, sits in stark contrast to the other recent Sydney riots, which occurred in ‘troubled’ areas, with ‘other’ (to the mainstream) groups” (2009, 68). She argues that:

The dominant image of a laid-back beach place celebrates an image of healthy *goodness* about Australia, and of Australians as happy-go-lucky bronzed Aussies, where all (who fit in) deserve a “fair go”. But the “riots” shattered this illusion, and revealed a hint of a much wider, national rise of revanchist resentment against an increasingly apparent, and seemingly privileged, other. (2009, 69)

Here we begin to see a white, lower middle-class group protecting their territory from non-whites that they perceive as starting to claim, at the least, equality. In an article online in *Political Affairs*, Dale Mills (2006) writes that: “Many of the white Australians who took part in the demonstration appeared to be poorer and less educated than average Australians.” An article by Minotaur (2005) on the blog, Modia Minotaur, offers a way of understanding how these views might be reconciled:

The Sutherland Shire was once solidly working class; an area where young families built their first homes where such a thing was still in the reach of young families. In the years it has taken for one of the two Federal seats in the Shire to become solidly Labor (held by Keating government Aboriginal Affairs Minister Robert Tickner) to solidly Liberal (held by Howard government former Vets Affairs Minister and legendary blunderer Danna Vale), the Shire has become the absolute epitome of an aspirational area—money, property investment, money, white bread, money, money, and money.

In this sketch we have an image of an upwardly mobile, white, aspirational area, an area moving from solid working-class to well-off middle-class. Suggesting a different reason from Shaw for the rise of white resentment, Mills (2006) goes on to write:

The racial protesters/rioters are the same people who have been under pressure from industrial relations reforms introduced by the right-wing Prime Minister John Howard. The reforms, introduced last year, undermine traditional minimum workplace guarantees.

Both Shaw and Mills identify a strong resentment among white locals to their present circumstance. A frustration at their increasing lack of power

which manifested in a racial attack on people who, they thought, were becoming more successful than themselves.

To put this into perspective we can turn to Somers. Somers was interested in the lack of support given to the African-American residents of New Orleans after the flooding caused by Hurricane Katrina in August 2005. She suggests that, as well as racism and class prejudice, “an entire population [was] being excluded from the rights of citizenship and civil society” (Somers 2008, 107). She was also intrigued by the patriotism shown by these same people who were so clearly let down by the institutions of the American state. Somers’ starting point was an argument by Hannah Arendt in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* which was concerned with the way the Nazis excluded the Jews from the German state. Following Arendt, Somers explains that: “Long before the Nazis thought up the idea of the final solution and the gas chambers, they understood that the first step in the destruction of the Jews would be to systematically strip them of their citizenship and turn them into stateless peoples” (2008, 121). Without citizenship the Jews would be without rights and, to refer back to Agamben, they could be treated as bare life.

As it happens, the history is a little more complicated than Somers acknowledges and, because of my argument about the treatment of those situated between the border and citizenship in the Australian neoliberal state, it is worth pursuing this complexity. The 1935 Nuremberg Laws took away citizenship from German Jews but did not take away their membership of the German state. To quote Rogers Brubaker, the change in the law “distinguished full citizenship (*Reichsbürgerschaft*) from mere state-membership (*Staatsangehörigkeit*). Only full citizens were to have political rights, mere state-members simply belonged to the protective association (*Schutzverband*) of the German Empire” (1992, 167). What we have here, then, is the evolution of a status that looks suggestively like what is known in Australia as permanent residency. Since the Jews remained under the protection of the German Empire they could not be treated as bare life. The solution was found,

by making the loss of *Staatsangehörigkeit*, for Jews, an automatic consequence of “taking up” (or being forced to take up) “residence” (even in a concentration camp) “abroad” (defined broadly for the law so as to include most destinations for Jewish deportees). Thus “legally” it was not German *Staatsangehörige* but stateless persons who were slaughtered in the death camps. (Brubaker 1992, 167–68)

This loss of rights has a disturbing echo in the rule for TPV holders that, should they leave the country, they would not be able to return. We need

to remember that Agamben notes that in Nazi Germany a state of exception had been proclaimed in 1933 and was never repealed (2005, 57). We can now understand how jeopardous life can be in that space between the border and citizenship in a state that is, or approaches to being, a state of exception. Stripped of political rights, rights in the broadest sense founded in membership of the polis, these people were no longer understood to be moral equals. As that life in the space between the border and citizenship moves towards bare life, as it is excluded from the rights of the nation-state, so it is gradually seen as less than human.

Somers' concern, however, is to ask what happens to the way citizens think about the nation-state when the rights of citizenship are withdrawn. She argues that:

In today's post-9/11 nation, the rise of ethnos provides the internally stateless and excluded with an alternative ontology to that of the demos. They have become nationalist patriots—a symbolic garb that compensates for the loss of rights by cultural and symbolic identification with the dominant political culture. . . . Today, while it is natural rights that are responsible for social exclusion, nationalism is not amplifying but compensating for statelessness, providing an alternative source of national identity—one that allows them to be at the very heart of the *included*, not as rights-bearing citizens but as free-market patriots. (2008, 134)

There is, as I have argued, no longer an “included”, only a relative excluded.

Citizenship, as I have been arguing, and as Somers also makes clear, is no longer a certain site of inclusion, only a relative site. However, it is a site which still conjures expectations. We can now understand that the white rioters at Cronulla were motivated by disappointment in the role of the state in protecting and nurturing them as its privileged citizens. Central were the changes included in the industrial relations legislation alluded to above in the quotation from Mills. The Howard government attacked workers rights twice in the name of increased flexibility in the workplace. In 1996 the *Workplace Relations Act* restricted the role of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC), introduced individual bargaining arrangements in the form of Australian Workplace Agreements, enabled award conditions to be bargained away, and limited the role of unions in the workplace. On 2 December 2005, the government's Senate majority ensured the passing of the *Workplace Relations Amendment Act*, sold to the Australian public as WorkChoices. This went much further. Among other things it did away with the arbitration system of the AIRC and

replaced it with the Australian Fair Pay Commission; increased restrictions on industrial action; decreased the range of coverage of industrial awards; exempted companies with up to one hundred employees from unfair dismissal laws where the dismissals could be claimed to be for operational reasons.⁴ Betsy Esch and David Roediger describe WorkChoices as: “The centerpiece of the triumph of neoliberalism in Australia” (2010). Esch and Roediger go on to note that the riot that followed on so quickly after the passing of WorkChoices was not aimed at the government but, rather, was racist, directed, as we have seen, at those of Middle Eastern appearance, Arabs, as Esch and Roediger put it.

The disappointment of the white rioters at Cronulla manifested in a racist nationalism which placed white Australians as the legitimate, if not rightful, protectors of the Australian nation. On the beach, as we have already seen, the Australian flag became a signifier of a white, racial nationalism. This was not the first time it had recently been used in this way. In 1997, the year after she was elected to federal parliament, Pauline Hanson, who started the One Nation Party principally based on a concern about what she thought was excessive Asian migration to Australia, was photographed wrapped in the Australian flag (on Hanson, and the background to Hansonism, see Stratton 1998). This same white nationalism has begun to appear on Australia Day when predominantly white, working-class Australians fly the national flag from their utes and cars. This, too, is a development that took off during the period of the Howard government and is another inflection of white nationalism. Bülent Diken and Carsten Bagge Laustsen remark that:

In the state of exception the distinction between friends and enemies is blurred: the state starts treating its own citizens as potential enemies, as outsiders. The distinction is blurred in that suddenly one’s status as a citizen ceases to remain taken for granted and becomes something to be decided upon. (2005, 19)

Today, nationalism, it seems, is the last resort of those who, in the excluding order of the neoliberal state, lose the inclusive rights traditionally associated with citizenship. In Australia this nationalism is more and more taking the form of an aggressive white racism that celebrates Australia’s British heritage. This leads to violent attacks on the increasing number of Australians from other backgrounds.⁵ Multiculturalism in Australia was undermined by the processes of neoliberal exclusion which brought to the fore the fundamental split between white Anglo-Celts and so-called ethnics on which Australian multiculturalism was founded.

CHAPTER FOUR

DYING TO COME TO AUSTRALIA: ASYLUM SEEKERS, TOURISTS AND DEATH

On 15 June 2000, the then federal Minister for Immigration, Philip Ruddock, released a triple video set commissioned for distribution to consulates and embassies in countries from which unwanted asylum seekers might be expected to arrive. The purpose of the videos was to portray the difficulties of the journey and to show Australia in as undesirable light as possible. The first video was called *The Trip* and explained that asylum seekers were lied to about the quality of the boats used for the voyage and are often left stranded on the Australian coast far away from help. The second video was titled *The Reception* and the third, *Experiences and Expectations of Travellers*. These included descriptions of detention centres, interviews with asylum seekers targeted by criminals and accounts of the dangerous fauna of Australia: sharks, crocodiles and snakes. All in all these videos amount to a kind of anti-tourism campaign. In publicity interviews about the videos Ruddock frequently described them as horrific.

What is the discursive context for this narrative of danger and death awaiting new arrivals to Australia?

In 1970 John Stonehouse was Postmaster General in Harold Wilson's Labour government in Great Britain. After Labour lost power Stonehouse set about making himself financially secure. However, by 1974 his companies began to fail. Stonehouse decided to disappear. Inspired by an episode in Frederick Forsyth's *The Day of the Jackal*, Stonehouse created a new identity for himself based on that of a dead man, Joseph Arthur Markham. In November, Stonehouse flew to Miami. His plan was to make it appear as if he had gone swimming on a Miami beach and drowned. At the second attempt Stonehouse succeeded. He then flew to Melbourne by way of Hawai'i. At Tullamarine airport Stonehouse entered Australia as

Markham, an English migrant. Meanwhile the British bottom-feeding Sunday newspaper, the *News of the World*, announced “Sharks ate John Stonehouse.” Stonehouse began his new life with a new identity—actually with two new identities—but was subsequently discovered, arrested on Christmas Eve, and finally deported back to Britain.

It is the earlier part of the story that interests me here. Stonehouse transformed himself into a migrant by killing his old identity, and by taking that of a dead man. In his autobiography Stonehouse writes: “To be Joe Markham for all day and every day and to destroy for ever the shell of John Stonehouse would be a rebirth” (1975, 168). The autobiography’s title echoes the pervasive importance of death in this process. It is called *Death of an Idealist*. But why Australia? Why did Stonehouse not simply kill off his Stonehouse identity and disappear into the United States? Stonehouse himself provides part of the answer:

[Australia] is a great country, created by migrants who—to a greater or less extent—had done exactly what I was doing. They had escaped from the frightening conditions of the old countries to be liberated in a continent where there is enough room to move and where there is a genuineness in human relations, born of a challenge in a new environment. (1975, 167–68)

In other words, Stonehouse thought that migrants to Australia went through an analogous process of death and rebirth, of transition to a new identity, as the one that he was acting out, literalising in his apparent drowning.

That Stonehouse chose to kill off his old identity in the United States but not to stay there suggests a crucial difference in the way migration to that country is thought about as compared with Australia. To put it as an overgeneralised statement, migration to the United States is thought of in terms of opportunity. The migrant does not have to give up their old life, they can keep their culture, their customs, habits, even their language, while the United States offers them a new, enhanced future. We can think of Emma Lazarus’s sonnet to the Statue of Liberty, “The New Colossus” written in 1883. Lazarus describes the statue as the “Mother of Exiles” and in those now very well-known words, has the statue exhorting the Old World: “Give me your tired, your poor, / Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.” America, then, is the land of opportunity where you can take what you already have and make of it something extraordinary.

Australia has always been much more anxious about migrants, especially those from outside Britain and Ireland. Coming to Australia has always involved a kind of death. Often this has been linked to the sea. Australians are much more preoccupied with people who come to the

country by boat rather than aeroplane. The concern with unregulated migration is fixated on “boats” and “boat people”. In the Australian national imaginary, the beach is the border of the country as well as being “the fatal shore”, the place of death. In their discussion of the Australian beach, John Fiske, Bob Hodge and Graeme Turner quote from a *National Times* article, adding their own emphasis, that: “Australia *means* the beach” (1987, 53). They argue that the myth of the beach in Australia is “rooted in an ideal (that is, one not necessarily made material on any one beach) image of Australia—classless, matey, basic, natural” (1987, 58). Australians think of the beach as the site of pleasure. Fiske, Hodge and Turner describe it as “our great natural playground” (1987, 54). Unacknowledged in Fiske, Hodge and Turner’s analysis is the racialised foundation of the Australian beach. The qualities it bears are those of the old, white, Anglo-Celtic Australia.

Meaghan Morris has remarked that, for her, the Australian beach “has always been a ‘deep-laid,’ and thus ambiguous, reality of life” (1992, 458). Against those who think of the Australian beach solely in terms of pleasure Morris reminds us of the sedimented histories of indigenous and settler contact, of convicts, of the connections across the northern Australian coastline between Aborigines and Macassans, and of Neville Shute’s novel, *On the Beach*, which works over the sense of ominousness that Morris implies is always present in the Australian experience of the beach. Indeed, while Shute’s novel is about global death as a consequence of nuclear war, the book ends with Moira Davidson, dying from radiation poisoning, parked looking out to sea, taking some tablets to hasten her death. Symbolically at least, she is the last person alive on earth and she is dying overlooking an Australian beach.

Death and the Australian Border

If, in the nineteenth century, the coastlines of the individual colonies all carried the kinds of experience that Morris mentions, it was federation that enabled the beach to take on a more consummate role. With federation, ideologically, Australia, an island, became also Australia the country and it became possible to put in place a single law across all the states to protect Australia from unwanted, non-white migrants. This was the *Immigration Restriction Act* of 1901. The coastline, localised in the beach, became the symbolic site of the differentiation between “us,” the white people within Australia, and “them” the non-white people to be kept out of Australia.

It is no wonder, then, that in today's multi-racialised Australia the chosen site to assert white racial privilege should be the beach. As Suvendrini Perera writes about the race riots at Cronulla beach in Sydney in December 2005: "The beach remains the rallying ground of Anglo-Australia, the preserve of decent, wholesome white bodies, policed in a variety of ways against any contaminating whiff of 'dirty wog'—and, by implication, even dirtier black—bodies" (2006a, para. 39). The beach, the border of white Australia, has become the site from which those who continue to be designated as non-white within Australia should be kept away.

From the beginning of white settlement death was an important and very real aspect of the journey to the Australian colonies. On the Second Fleet, notoriously the worst for convict deaths, "out of 1,006 prisoners who sailed from Portsmouth, 267 died at sea and at least another 150 after landing" (Hughes 1987, 145). By 1815 the average death rate per voyage was 1 in 85 and by the end of transportation in 1868 this figure had declined to 1 in 180 (1987, 145). Across the entire history of convict transportation to the Australian colonies there remained a not insignificant chance that any particular convict might die at sea during the journey.

At least for the first twenty or thirty years large numbers of these convicts would have been sentenced to death in Britain. Robert Hughes writes that:

The ferocity and scope of eighteenth-century capital statutes created . . . an extraordinary range of hanging crimes. The erratic mercy of the courts could, and did, transmute such sentences to exile in Australia. (1987, 160)

Transportation itself, then, was a sentence shadowed by the earlier sentence of death. From the 1820s legal reforms meant a decline in capital offences, however "as the number of capital crimes shrunk, so the volume of 'transportable' offences grew" (Hughes 1987, 161). In this change, transportation became a substitute for the death penalty.

Moreover, from the time they were sentenced to death, a convict was treated by the law as if they were already dead. Hughes writes that: "From the Crown's point of view, all convicts were legally dead under the civil law from their arrival in Australia to their emancipation" (1987, 302). Bruce Kercher (2003) argues that the situation was actually more complex than this, that at the start of Australian transportation convicts were allowed legal rights they would not have had in England but that, by 1820, these had been severely curtailed. Hughes's claim, if not completely historically accurate, reflects the general Australian thinking about the

transported convicts: that they were, in a particular sense, dead. Death was a key topos in the early settlement of Australia.

At this point I want to return to the border, to that which historically in Australia, separated white from non-white. Stonehouse, as we have seen, thought of the border as the site where he could be transformed from his old identity of “Stonehouse”, which would be “destroyed”, would die, to his new “dead” Australian identity of “Markham”. It would be, as he wrote, a rebirth. We can think here of Victor Turner’s reworking of Arnold van Gennep’s idea of the rite of passage, a process by which a person is transformed from one status to another. Turner writes that:

Liminal entities are neither here nor there, they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention and ceremonial . . . Thus liminality is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness and to an eclipse of the sun or moon. (1969, 95)

Spatially, liminality is a limbo through which a person travels to their new status. In achieving this, the old self must die so that the new self can be born. The person undergoes a rebirth. Historically, this is how the Australian border functioned. That the beach is thought of as the border reinforces this. Fiske, Hodge and Turner suggest that the beach fits into the “‘anomalous’ category, in the middle of the basic oppositions of the culture from which we construct our meanings” (1987, 59). For the Australian national imaginary, though, the beach produces those basic oppositions. Those allowed across it, into Australia, had to be reborn as white. Those excluded remained in a symbolic, or sometimes all too literal, death. While, of course, all state borders function as liminal sites, not all demand the complete transformation, the death and rebirth, that typifies the Australian experience.

A further aspect of this rebirth was the Australian emphasis on assimilation. Prior to the Second World War the expectation that migrants would assimilate to Anglo-Australian culture was taken for granted. In the post-Second World War period, up to the late 1960s, it was government policy. In the era of multiculturalism, as the divisions manifested in the Cronulla riots illustrated only too well, the core and periphery structure of official multiculturalism, where Anglo-Celtic whites continue to make up the Australian mainstream, to use a word that Howard has appropriated (see Stratton 1998, 76–80), and so-called ethnics make up the periphery, means that retention of cultural elements that do not form a part of Anglo-Celtic Australian culture relegates a person at best to the peripheral status of “wog”.

Stonehouse was lucky. Coming from England it was relatively easy for him to assimilate into Australia's white, Anglo-Celtic monoculture. However, for those migrants about whom he writes that, "[t]hey had escaped from the frightening conditions of the old countries," by which I presume he means the refugees from Second World War Europe, assimilation was much harder. This aspect of the liminal transformation involved the death of one's cultural identity for the rebirth into Anglo-Australian conformity.

It is, though, the practice of assimilating Aborigines to Anglo-Australian culture that is more often described in terms of death. Mick Dodson, on the commission of the Stolen Generation inquiry, is reputed to have said that "assimilation is genocide." The far right in Australia have picked up on this idea. Andrew Patterson in "Taking Back the Moral High Ground" (2004) writes that: "Whilst 'Whites' are accused of genocide of the Aboriginal race, due to attempts to assimilate Aborigines into the White population, the Multiculturalists somehow forget to refer to their long-term aim to eliminate the White race, and all other races, via assimilation, as genocide." Patterson is thinking in racial rather than cultural terms. His fear is of a white race genocidally lost in a merging of all races allowed under the banner of multiculturalism. However, the idea of a genocidal cultural death, albeit figured in the first place in individuals, has always permeated the assimilatory process in Australia in the idea that a person has to lose, eradicate, the culture that they bring to Australia and take on the local culture.

Migration and Death

In the Australian national imaginary issues around migrants are often played out in relation to tourists. Indeed, if we think of the tourist as someone who has come from somewhere else, is visiting, and will return whence they came, this is one way that those Australians who claim whiteness distinguish themselves from those they identify as non-white and as not properly Australian. White Australians understand themselves as always already here, in Australia. Of course, this raises a huge question about the status of Aborigines and marks the paradoxical anxieties—indeed paranoia as I shall describe it later—of settler Australians but this is not the place to pursue this argument. Describing the Cronulla riots, Perera writes:

Inscribed across a bare, bronzed back the ultimate claim to native-ised essence: *We grew here, you flew here.* The Australian flag, with its affirmation of enduring racial kinship with "British stock," is inscribed on

bodies in multiple forms: blazoned on bikinis and backpacks, tattooed on arms and torsos, painted on faces like war paint, wrapped around shoulders like a trophy; a performance of native-ised territoriality that echoes other enactments of territorial ownership. (2006a, para. 49)

Why “flew” aside from its use as a jingoistic rhyming device? In the overlapping binary between migrants and tourists, migrants have historically been thought of as coming by boat (the roots of this understanding run from the convicts and free settlers to the influx of European migrants in the post-Second World War period) while tourists fly here. The claim that these non-white “wogs” and “Lebs” flew here then not only identifies them as not authentically Australian but also signals that they can go back where they came from. In this conservative throwback to an assertion of White Australia, these people are migrants who have failed to assimilate and who should, therefore, be reclassified as tourists.

From the 1980s onwards, as the Australian tourism industry geared up and started promoting Australia as a tourist destination, most successfully with Paul Hogan’s “I’ll slip an extra shrimp on the barbie” television advertisement, first shown in 1984, this connection between non-white migrants and tourists has become more important and more problematic. After all, if certain types of migrant can be thought of as tourists then tourists can be thought of as (potential) migrants. At the same time, the desired tourist, in the first instance historically British and Americans, the ideal potential tourist to whom Australia makes its pitch, is white, while asylum seekers and refugees are thought of as non-white.

One place to start thinking about the figuring of the tourist as migrant is Peter Weir’s 1974 film, *The Cars That Ate Paris*. Morris (2002) describes the film as a “macabre and very funny parable about a paranoid, exclusionary society with a cannibalistic immigration policy.” Paris is a small town in outback New South Wales which “feeds on strangers.” Like the myth of the eighteenth century Cornish ship wreckers, the people of Paris deceive visiting drivers into crashing their cars. The cars are then taken to bits and the parts enter the car-based economy of the town. Any survivors of the wrecks are taken to the hospital where they are given lobotomies before being allowed into the community. Embedded in Morris’s cannibalism metaphor is the sense of the cultural death that the survivors are forced to undergo in the crude operations performed with a power drill before these visiting strangers can be accepted as permanent residents of the town. According to Annie Rule, a researcher on English migration to Australia, taking out Australian citizenship is often referred to as “having the operation” (Rule, pers. comm.). Even after the lobotomies,

though, with the memories of their earlier lives erased, these people cannot be complete members of the Parisian community. Their involuntary transformation into residents of the town means that they will always be seen as different.

By 1974 white Australia had begun to accept that the attempt to impose total assimilation on the comparatively large numbers of Greeks, Italians, Maltese and Christian Lebanese who had been allowed to migrate to Australia in the postwar period had failed. As I have argued elsewhere (Stratton 1998), the installation of multiculturalism as a government policy was meant as a means to manage these diverse groups until, it was hoped, by the next generation they would indeed have finally assimilated. Nevertheless, for those white Australians, now categorised as Anglo-Celtic, who prized Australia's British-based monoculture, the new cultural diversity was a threat. In *Mad Max* (1979), Max, with the Eastern European-sounding family name of Rockatansky, and played by the very Anglo-looking Mel Gibson, is a policeman. The combination of Max's name and his job marked the European limits of who is acceptable as "white" in quotidian Australia by the late 1970s. The film presents a scenario of civilisation breaking down. There is still law but the police are finding it harder and harder to enforce, especially on the roads of the outback. Morris (2002) describes one of the film's plotlines as Max's "struggle to *not*-become another crazy in a violently male, indivisibly anarchic world." Characteristically, in what is a common Australian distinction, the cities are feminised and the site of civilisation while the outback is a masculine, threatening and lawless place. We shall revisit this theme in both *Crocodile Dundee*, where it is inverted, and *Wolf Creek*.

It is not Max's struggle in itself that I am interested in here. It is the bad guys, the group led by the Toecutter who cruise the roads wreaking rapine, destruction and, of course, death. Many of this motley group, with their exotic post-punk look and their heavily customised vehicles, especially apparent in the second film, have Italianate names: Bubba Zanetti, Crawford "Nightrider" Montizano, Diabando. It seems, then, that as Malcolm Fraser was putting into place the structure of official multiculturalism and in the process entrenching the distinction between Anglo-Celtic Australians and the ethnics, Max was patrolling the roads attempting to preserve the Australian culture being destroyed by Toecutter's ethnic gang.

It is worth noting that Toecutter, played by Hugh Keyes-Byrne, has an Irish accent. That the ethnic gang has an Irish leader suggests how uncertain is the place of the Irish in Australia's so-called Anglo-Celtic core. Elsewhere I have argued that the Irish in Australia were only

whitened around the time of federation (Stratton 2004, 222–38). After that, Irish exclusion became more focused on their Catholicism. *Mad Max* signals the possible beginning of the ethnicisation of the Irish within the ideological context of multiculturalism.

In this film, where the destruction of civilisation by the ethnics is already well advanced, what is left is embodied narratively in Max's family: Jess, his wife, and Sprog, their child. When the ethnic gang kill them at the end of the film, callously running them down as they flee along the road, we have not only what Morris (2002) describes as the "symbolic extermination of the private sphere" but also, in the destruction of the nuclear family, the death of the Australian culture that Max and the rest of the police are attempting to protect. This nightmare vision is of the depredations that follow the multicultural acceptance of cultural diversity. It is, if you like, a morality tale about what happens if the government allows into Australia people who are so culturally different that they cannot, or will not, assimilate.

In *Mad Max*, it is clear how the moral order works. Max is "good," the ethnics are "bad" and their badness is marked by their destruction of Max's family. I want to pause here for a moment to compare these filmic deaths with some real deaths twenty-two years later. On 19 October 2001, a grossly overcrowded boat carrying 421 passengers, asylum seekers on their way to Australia, sank in international waters about one-third of the way to Christmas Island. As Tony Kevin writes: "It sank well inside Australia's declared and intensively patrolled Operation Relex military border-protection and surveillance zone, which covered almost all the sea/air gap between Java and Christmas Island" (2004, 3).¹ Three hundred and fifty-three people, 146 children, 142 women and 65 men, died in the disaster. This was the boat that came to be known by the acronym SIEV X. Perera quotes from the story of one of the survivors, Amal Basry:

Encircled by sharks, surrounded by the dying, she keeps alive, clinging to the body of an unknown dead woman. *Little children, dead babies, desperate parents, families dying one by one, and I was alone believing all the while my own son was dead.* Three women are reported to have given birth in the water as they drowned during those desperate hours. (2006b, 642)

Basry talks of ships coming in the night but not rescuing survivors.

Kevin suggests that the Australian government knew a great deal more about this boat, its voyage and the sinking than has ever been acknowledged. It is possible, Kevin deduces, that an agent working for Australia sabotaged the boat. In the Senate on 25 September 2002, John

Faulkner, the Leader of the Opposition, asked about Australian involvement in the disaster saying, finally:

At no stage do I want to break, nor will I break, the protocols in relation to operational matters involving ASIS or the AFF. But those protocols were not meant as a direct or indirect licence to kill. (Cited in Kevin 2004, 8)

Faulkner appears to have been suggesting that, directly or indirectly, the Australian government may well have been complicit in these deaths.

Ten days after the sinking, at the Liberal Party's campaign launch for the 2001 federal election:

For Philip Ruddock, the protector of Australia's borders, there was a tumult of whistling, stamping and clapping. The needle went right off the dial not once but twice. (Marr and Wilkinson 2003, 323)

David Marr and Marian Wilkinson sum up the reception for Ruddock and Howard's emphasis on protecting Australia from asylum seekers: "In the centre of Sydney on a quiet Sunday morning, ringed by police, inside an elegant recital hall, a crowd of prosperous, white Australians were baying for border protection" (2003, 324). This, as Perera rightly glosses it, when one thinks of hounds in the chase baying, "is baying, in effect, for blood" (2006b, 647).

Ruddock's and Howard's Liberal supporters, more or less out of control with anxiety, bring us back to Max. Morris (2002) remarks that: "As [Tom] O'Regan points out, the death of his wife and child *makes* Max; 'Mad,' he can avoid the "vegetable" fate of his mate', survive the apocalypse and enter the new world." Max's survival, his ability to overcome the predatory ethnic gang, is premised on the destruction of his family and the moral order they represent. Within the logic of the film this frees Max of moral constraints.

Morris (2002) identifies two types of phobic narrative in Australian texts. In one:

the coast is a permeable barrier against waves of *over*-population rolling in from the future (often "Asia"). This figure operates most powerfully in a register of paranoid anticipation.

This attitude was deeply embedded in the Australian national imaginary. Gwenda Tavan writes about the White Australia Policy in the era before the Second World War that: "Australians . . . clearly believed that the threat they faced from Asiatics was a *potential* rather than an actual one"

(2005, 19, Tavan's italics). In the 2001 Liberal election campaign Howard and Ruddock brought this future into an anxious present. Marr and Wilkinson tell us that: "Ruddock's knockout blow to his critics was always the apocalyptic vision of Australia overrun by 20 million refugees in the world looking for a home" (2003, 41). Max's apocalyptic future became a present in which the Australian government could behave without any moral imperative other than the claim to act in the interest of Australia.

Boat People and Tourists

The late 1970s and early 1980s saw two almost simultaneous developments. The first people to arrive by boat, the first to be designated by what was to become the highly evocative term "boat people", arrived in Darwin harbour on 26 April 1978. They were fleeing Vietnam. As Peter Mares writes:

The Liberal prime minister, Malcolm Fraser, and his minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, Michael Mackellar, displayed considerable generosity and good sense in responding to the first boat arrivals. They successfully undercut the attraction of sailing south in a leaky boat by holding out the prospect of organised resettlement to Indochinese refugees holed up in camps in Southeast Asia. (2002, 67)

At this time Australia had no system for making decisions about residency from applications made onshore, "in" Australia. In 1978 the government established the Determination of Refugee Status Committee and began to use the definition of a refugee as a criterion for making judgements on applications to stay in Australia made by this new type of migrant, boat people. By June 1979, Australia had admitted 11,872 Indochinese refugees of which 2,011 were designated as boat people (McMaster 2001, 72). The last boats arrived during 1981. During these three years, at least partly because of the way Fraser and his government handled the issue, there was relatively little public anxiety over these onshore arrivals.

The United States and its allies, including Australia, had lost the Vietnam War, Whitlam's government had both formally ended the racialised entry restrictions which provided the basis for the White Australia Policy and put in place the policy of multiculturalism to manage the failure of the old policy of assimilation. As is indicated by *Mad Max*, Australian anxieties were focused internally on issues of race, cultural difference and the consequences of the lack of assimilation by new migrants, not on the method by which possible migrants arrived in the

country. There was, however, one straw in the wind: “Shortly before the 1977 election [Bob] Hawke (then ALP president) called for Australia to stop accepting refugees who simply landed on its doorstep” (Mares 2002, 67).

Australia, though, was repositioning itself in the global order. From a public awareness point of view the most important aspect of this was the development of Australia as a mass tourist destination, in particular for Americans. Two of the people involved in the 1980s campaign, Bill Baker and Peggy Bendel, write that up until this time:

Australia was regarded as a distant place with exotic wildlife—where “kangaroos deliver the mail”. Americans thought of a visit to Australia as “once in a lifetime”; a trip you took when you retired and usually in combination with a visit to New Zealand, Fiji and Tahiti. (n.d.)

The purpose of the campaign was to make Australia appear recognisable, desirable and accessible. As Baker and Bendel remark, Australia became a pioneer in what is now known as “destination branding”.

At the heart of the campaign was the television advertisement generally known as “I’ll slip an extra shrimp on the barbie” that I have already mentioned, more formally known as “Come and say G’Day.” At the time that he was asked to feature in the advertisement, two years before the release of *Crocodile Dundee*, Paul Hogan had developed an Australian reputation as a television comedian in his own sketch show, *The Paul Hogan Show* which had begun in 1973, with the persona of an easy-going, knockabout, working-class, ocker larrikin. As Tom O’Regan writes:

A defining characteristic of ocker was its unabashed celebration of the “Australian”, particularly the vernacular whether in speech, content, or action. This celebration was couched in an aggressively Australian or “strine” accent. (1989a, 76)

O’Regan goes on to comment that by the mid-1970s “ockerism had become a powerful advertising pitch on television and radio” (1989a, 77). Racially, ockerism was very conservative, very Anglo-Celtic white. One way of understanding the rise to prominence of ockerism is as an Anglo-Australian backlash against the breakdown of the drive for assimilation of the Mediterranean migrants and the putting into place of the policy of multiculturalism.

Hogan’s success in television comedy and advertisements—he began by selling Winfield cigarettes from 1973 to 1980—made him an obvious

choice for the tourism advertising campaign. Using him was, though, not without its critics. As Baker and Bendel write: “Many saw him as somewhat of a redneck, relating him to the everyday working class characters he portrayed in his television programs, and not Paul Hogan, the skilled communicator and actor.” The advertisement ran for seven years, until 1990 when the campaign finished. It was incredibly successful. During that time:

Australia firmly established itself as a destination in its own right. Arrivals doubled over the first three years and for four years the growth rate was still in excess of 25% annually. (Baker and Bendel n.d.)

By 1993 around 2.8 million international tourists were visiting Australia each year.

At the same time, the language of the advertisement resonates with white Australian anxieties about people coming to the country. However, the author of the text, possibly Hogan himself, deftly reworks these to produce a positive, welcoming image. For example, Hogan says: “Now there’s a few things I’ve got to warn you about.” This sounds potentially worrying but, of course, it turns out well. The cautions include having to learn to say “g’day” because “every day is a good day in Australia.” He also warns that, “you’re going to get wet, because the place is surrounded by water.” This was an opportunity for emphasising Australia’s beaches. The reference is disturbing though. Coming to Australia there is no need to get wet, especially if a person comes by plane. The image reminds people that mainland Australia, large as it is, is an island. At bottom, the image is rooted in the idea of coming to Australia in boats and, coming out of the Australian national imaginary, it carries the anxieties about the beach as a border and the sea as a place of death. All this is simultaneously acknowledged and repressed as Hogan’s friendly and relaxing larrikinism rolls on to his most direct invitation: “C’mon and say g’day. I’ll slip an extra shrimp on the barbie for you.” As if in response, by 1990 more boat people had started to arrive. The first boat landed at Broome in November 1989 with twenty-six people on board. Two more boats came in 1990 and eight in 1991 (Mares 2002, 68).

Released in 1986, *Crocodile Dundee* further develops the fantasy of a welcoming Australia promoted in the “shrimp on the barbie” advertisement. Like that advertisement the film is, to quote O’Regan, “all surface effect. It is made for display, for ‘entertainment’” (1989b, 136). The plot involves Sue Charlton, a journalist, coming to Australia from New York to write a story about a crocodile hunter, Mick Dundee. Dundee, played of course by Hogan, meets her at Walkabout Creek, in the

outback, and proceeds to show her around. Subsequently, Dundee goes back to New York with Charlton where their romance blossoms.

Morris describes the film as “an ‘*export-drive*’ allegory: the small, remote community of Walkabout Creek with its fumbling exotic industry (emblematic of Australia’s place in the global cinema economy) manages to export its crocodile-poacher and, with a little help from the American media, market him brilliantly in New York” (1988, 248). Yet it is also a tourism promotion. Certainly Charlton is working but, for much of her time in the outback with Dundee, she behaves like a tourist. Moreover to Anglo-Australian audiences Charlton is entirely unthreatening. She is youngish, attractive, white and English-speaking even though, as Hogan remarks in “slip an extra shrimp” Americans do “have a funny accent”. Charlton’s Anglo quality is reinforced by her name. Charlton is a village now incorporated into the London borough of Greenwich.

Elsewhere (Stratton 1998, 146) I have explained how, in setting almost all of the film in the Australian section in the outback, it was possible to show an Australia without non-Anglo-Celtic, unassimilated migrants and thus, with Dundee’s ocker persona, produce an anachronistic, but to many Anglo-Celtic Australians a reassuring, image of Australia as Anglo and white, without cultural diversity. We can now take this further. Charlton is the ideal tourist for Australia—she has, by the way, of course flown not come by boat—who, with her romantic attachment to Dundee, could become the preferred migrant. Indeed, in real life Hogan divorced his wife, Noeline, and married Linda Kozlowski who played Charlton. Dundee, meanwhile, typifies the shift to a service economy that is characteristic of a burgeoning tourist industry. He stops being a crocodile hunter and gets paid to show Charlton around.

Morris remarks that:

Crocodile Dundee is a relatively passionless film . . . There’s no heat to the violence, no steam to the sex, no ice to Dundee’s cool. Human life is pure, rational, free sociability: no unconscious, no neurosis, no repression (gossip gets things “out in the open”)—and no maniacs. (1988, 254)

These outback people are characters, always up for a laugh and a bit of larrikin horseplay. But they are safe and friendly, they are pleased to be able to help Charlton—all just as the Australian government would like the tourist image of Australia to be.² They live in an outback that is only dangerous if you don’t know your way around. Nobody gets killed here. The local Aborigines are benign. The water may be threatening—it contains crocodiles—but, if you treat them with respect and know what to do, you, like Charlton, will be all right, especially if you have someone

like Dundee to help you. This is not the parched, threatening and increasingly lawless outback of *Mad Max* and, as Morris presciently remarks, there are no maniacs.

Americans could, and did, identify with Charlton as a tourist. Baker and Bendel (n.d.) write that:

In 1986 Paramount released “Crocodile Dundee” starring Paul Hogan, which became a worldwide hit grossing over \$328 million in the first year, making it one of the most successful comedies of all time. This reinvigorated the [tourism] campaign and took it to new heights by extending Australia’s “fifteen minutes of fame.”

The film piggybacked on the advertisement and, in turn, gave the tourism campaign a further lease of life.

By the late 1980s Australia was successful in enticing large numbers of tourists while it was also beginning to receive again unwanted boat people. Hawke was now prime minister. As we have seen, he had already expressed his dislike of refugees arriving directly in Australia in 1977. Now he condemned the boat people, as he had done then, as “queue-jumpers and economic refugees” (McMaster 2001, 57). As boats started arriving again, in June 1990 Hawke was quoted in *The Australian* saying, “let no one think that we’re just going to stand idly by and allow others, by their autonomous action which reflects perhaps some unhappiness with the circumstances in which they find themselves in their own country . . . to determine our immigration policy” (cited in McMaster 2001, 57). Hawke’s success lay in his populism. He was a prime minister deeply connected to the concerns and anxieties of the Australian national imaginary. In this statement of his we find, most importantly, Australia’s anxiety over its border, over who should, and should not, be allowed to cross it into Australia. This anxiety is often discussed in relation to Australia’s fear of being overwhelmed by some mythical “Asian” horde. However, as I explained early in this chapter, the anxiety is also about the affirmation of the existence of the border itself.

Border Security

Ghassan Hage has linked paranoia with colonialism. He suggests that, “a form of White colonial paranoia has remained part of Australian culture long after the Indigenous population had been decimated” (2003, 48). Alice Jardine has argued that: “Male paranoia involves, fundamentally, the fear of the loss either of all boundaries or of those boundaries becoming

too painfully constrictive” (1985, 98). She exemplifies this using one of Freud’s most well-known cases, that of President Schreber:

Schreber (also) believed that the world was coming to an end. “Schreber became convinced of the imminence of a great catastrophe, of the end of the world.” He alone could restore it to its lost state of bliss (*Seligkeit*—both *jouissance* and death). (Jardine 1985, 98)

The Australian national imaginary, and at this point Hawke, and later Howard and Ruddock, as vehicles of it, operates in these terms. The tremendous fear is that, if the sea border is breached it will mean the end of the Australian world. Without the border, (white) Australia, and Australians, would die. The border must be defended at all costs from those who are not invited to cross it. This may involve their death—as we have already seen in the case of the SIEV X passengers.

Ruddock started publicly talking about border security in a speech to the National Press Club in Canberra in March 1998, two years after the coalition gained power. The speech was called “Immigration Reform: the Unfinished Agenda.” He said that, “we are . . . determined to safeguard the integrity of the nation’s borders and to protect the Australian public from the entry of people who have serious criminal backgrounds” (Ruddock 1998). Ruddock conjured fear of “those seeking to abuse the system” of orderly immigration and stated that: “We have introduced into Parliament measures to narrow the scope of judicial review by the courts of cases that have already been considered on their merits by departmental officers and independent review tribunals.” Implicitly, Ruddock was addressing the issue of boat people. Where Hawke had only denigrated them as queue-jumpers and economic refugees, Ruddock raised the level of anxiety by suggesting they were serious criminals. Moreover, as Jardine explains, if, for the paranoid, the loss of the border leads to the end of the world, then, as the judiciary, regulating the law of that world, is preoccupied only with the world as it exists, measures to protect the existence of that world must be taken out of the role of the judiciary. The protection of the border, and the regulation of those that enter, must be beyond the law and in the hands of government.

There is no room here to do any more than refer to the increasing anxieties over the affirmation and protection of Australia’s sea border in the last years of the twentieth century. By 2001 this anxiety had reached fever-pitch. Others have tracked very well the *Tampa* affair in August and September of that year when the KV *Palapa I* with 460 mainly Afghan asylum seekers lost power about 140 kilometres north of Christmas Island, how the people were finally rescued by a Norwegian container ship, the

MV *Tampa* and the Australian government's adamant refusal to allow the rescued to be put ashore on Christmas Island in violation of all established international sea law. Others have also detailed the claims, and misleading and wrong statements, issued by the government in the "children overboard" affair during October when it was asserted, and subsequently proved to be false, that asylum seekers on the boat designated as SIEV 4—SIEV stands for Suspected Illegal Entry Vessel—had, in desperation, thrown their children overboard (see for example Marr and Wilkinson 2003; Mares 2002). This false claim was used by the government to demonstrate that "they" did not love their children and respect family values as "we" Australians do. We have already seen how, in *Mad Max* white Australian civilisation was symbolically destroyed by the ethnic gang's murder of Max's wife and child. Others have detailed too the terrible loss of life when the boat that came to be known as SIEV X sank on the night of 18 October (as I discussed earlier). In addition there was the establishment of the so-called Pacific Solution, put in place in the context of the *Tampa* crisis, where boat people were to be processed in camps set up in other countries, Manus Island in Papua New Guinea and Nauru. In September, also spurred by the *Tampa* crisis, the government militarised the border, ordering the navy to blockade the Indian Ocean in what was called Operation Relex. As Marr and Wilkinson describe it: "Stripped of all military jargon, Relex was a *show* of force designed to frighten people smugglers and asylum seekers—while impressing the Australian electorate" (2003, 175).

Finally, here, I want to discuss briefly something that Howard was unable to put in place, the Border Protection Bill 2001, which he wanted to get passed by Parliament on 29 August, during the *Tampa* crisis. The full title of this Bill is "A Bill for an Act to provide for the removal of ships from the territorial sea of Australia, and for related purposes." Marr and Wilkinson usefully sum up its contents:

The Prime Minister would have the power to direct soldiers, police, customs officials and public servants to seize "any vessel" and use force if necessary to take the ship and everyone on board "outside the territorial sea of Australia." This would happen out of sight of the courts. No matter what happened—deaths, disasters and injuries—no civil or criminal proceedings could be taken against the Commonwealth or the officers carrying out these operations . . . This new regime was to operate "in spite of any other law." (2003, 116–17)

This law would have been as close as it is possible to get within the Australian Constitution to a law that would not be subject to judicial

review. It would have been a paramount law, a law beyond the ordinary rule of law. In his discussion of the legal practice of the Weimar republic and Nazi Germany, Giorgio Agamben writes about the *Ausnahmezustand*, translated as “state of exception” which, when invoked, suspended “the articles of the constitution concerning personal liberty, the freedom of expression and of assembly, the inviolability of the home, and postal and telephone privacy” (1997, 107). The Border Protection Bill 2001 would have had a similar effect on Australia’s maritime border. Like Schreiber, who happened to be a senior judge, Howard and his government felt they alone could save Australia from imminent destruction and this could only be achieved by putting in place a law beyond the reach of all other laws. The Bill was finally passed later in the year after the provision that it would override all other laws was excised.

Kim Beazley, the Leader of the Opposition, refused to support the Bill and it failed to pass in the Senate. The extent to which the paranoid anxiety about the border inherent in the Australian national imaginary had been brought to the surface was evident in the reaction to Labor’s decision:

The phones were feral from this point right to the end of the election campaign. Labor members would go home to their electorates at the end of this first week and be spat on in the streets. Beazley said, “It was unprecedented in my experience. Never had it in my career.” (Marr and Wilkinson 2003, 131)

Howard won the 2001 election with a campaign slogan that echoed what Hawke had said in 1990: “We will decide who comes to this country and the circumstances in which they come.” Indeed, the views inherent here go back to Robert Menzies who, in his 1967 book, *Afternoon Light: Some Memories of Men and Events*, wrote that: “It is one of the attributes of sovereignty that any nation may determine for itself how far and on what principles other people may enter or become citizens” (cited in Tavan 2005, 65–66).

Labor started detaining boat people as soon as they began arriving in 1989. In 1991 “the first remote detention centre was established at Port Hedland, Western Australia” (Mares 2002, 68). Legally, it was claimed this was made possible by Section 89 of the *Migration Act 1958*. Subsequently, the government passed through Parliament the *Migration Amendment Act 1992* which required that a “designated person” who was a non-citizen “should be kept in custody until he or she leaves Australia or is given an entry permit” (Mares 2002, 69). This was the formal beginning of mandatory detention in Australia. As well as being a manifestation of

border paranoia, the space of detention, this limbo, marked the non-citizen's metaphoric death in their journey to cross the border and become an Australian.³

The idea of Australia as a utopian island which must protect its border has developed many permutations.⁴ An early version presaging the anxiety demonstrated, and reinforced, by Hawke and Howard can be found in Mike Gore's promotional statement for the first gated community in Australia, which he called Sanctuary Cove, in 1987. Gore said:

The streets these days are full of cockroaches and most of them are human. Every man has a right to protect his family, himself and his possessions, to live in peace and safety. Sanctuary Cove is an island of civilisation in a violent world, and we have taken steps to ensure it remains so. (Cited in Burke 2001)

Gore did not identify who were the cockroaches. Are they the ethnic Other, the fearsome gang of *Mad Max*, the non-whites attempting to enter the new protected space of whiteness? Is there a reference here to Australia as a sanctuary which must keep out the threatening boat people? Or is it, as Gore would probably have explained his remarks, simply a recognition of the rising tide of crime in Australia and the need to provide a haven of safety for those who could afford it? It is all these things. The statement works off a deep and abiding structure in the Australian national imaginary. In 1987 it was a signal of the return of an old anxiety, and one that, through the 1980s, had been displaced by the rhetoric of tourism.

Backpackers, Death and *Wolf Creek*

Gore was right about it being a violent world. In 1989, outside Sydney, two backpackers, tourists from Victoria, went missing. In 1990 a British backpacker, Paul Onions, was threatened with a gun but managed to escape. 1991 saw three German backpackers disappear, two women and a man, and in 1992 two British female backpackers vanished, their bodies found later that year. The bodies of the other backpackers were found in 1993. Death had started stalking those tourists that Australia had been courting through the 1980s at the same time that Australian anxiety over boat people had begun to increase. In 1994 Ivan Milat, who became known as The Backpacker Killer, Australia's most notorious serial killer, was convicted of seven of these murders though there remain suspicions that he was responsible for more. When Milat was sentenced the trial judge said he was certain that Milat had not committed these crimes on his own, but no one else has ever been charged.⁵

How can we place serial killing in a societal context? Or, to put it differently, how can Milat be situated in the Australian national imaginary? In *Compulsive Killers*, Elliott Leyton argued that:

Our multiple murderers transcend mere catharsis and temporary gratification: their aim is a more ambitious one, a kind of sustained sub-political campaign directed toward “the timelessness of oppression and the order of power.” (1986, 261)

Further on Leyton suggests that the serial killer “is in many senses an embodiment of the central themes in his civilization as well as a reflection of that civilization’s critical tensions” (1986, 269). There would seem to have been some increasing confusion among Australians about the treatment of boat people and tourists. As it happens many backpackers are in Australia on working visas. Many of these overstay when their visas run out. In 2005, there were around 5,500 British in this category and 5,200 Americans. As overstayers such people fall into the category of “illegal migrants”. As it happens, Milat was doing to white backpackers what increasingly anxious and paranoid Australians wanted for the boat people—to have them erased from Australian territory.

The backpackers’ deaths did not stop with Milat’s capture. In 2000 fifteen backpackers, seven from Britain, one Irish, one Japanese, one Korean, two Dutch, and three Australians were killed when Robert Long set fire to a hostel in the outback Queensland town of Childers. The news reports said that Long “hated backpackers.” He is reported to have “vowed to drive the backpackers out of town” (“Life Sentence” 2002). Long had limited horizons, “town” here can be read as a synecdoche for Australia. In 2001 two English backpackers, Joanne Lees and Peter Falconio were in Australia on a working holiday. In May they left Sydney in an old orange Kombi they had bought. On 14 July they set off from Alice Springs for Darwin. After they were flagged down near Barrow Creek Falconio disappeared and is presumed murdered. Lees was attacked, bound and gagged, but managed to escape.⁶ In 2002 a man robbed nineteen-year-old English backpacker Caroline Stuttle on the Burnett River Bridge in Bundaberg, Queensland, and then threw her over to her death.

All these murders should be put in context. In 2001 around 600,000 British tourists visited Australia of whom around 115,000 were backpackers. However, that is not the point. Australia is beginning to get a reputation as a dangerous place to visit. The BBC News, for example, on 11 April 2002, remarked that “recent much-publicised crimes against Britons in the country may well have raised concerns about the safety of young, often inexperienced, travellers going it alone” (“Voyage of Self-

Discovery” 2002). Commenting on the Falconio murder case, the article goes on:

the Youth Hostels Association said the ambush could have a serious effect on the number of visitors to the Northern Territory . . . And there were fears it might also affect tourism across the rest of Australia.

Also in 2002, Channel 4 in Britain aired a documentary called “The Trials of Joanne Lees” which, lifting off from the Falconio and Lees case, said that: “Like most backpackers, Joanne and Peter would be unaware that Australia is easily the world’s most dangerous country for serious assaults” and went on to claim that Adelaide is “the murder capital of the world”. In another example, Sarah Howden, writing in *The Scotsman* in January 2006, connected Australia with Thailand as paradisaical destinations for backpackers and went on to write:

But such paradises—especially in South-East Asia—have a poverty-stricken population and a criminal underbelly that regards foreigners as fair game. And although Australia may seem a safe English-speaking destination, it has housed some of the most brutal backpacker murders.

Howden goes on to reference the Childers hostel murders and the Stuttle murder.⁷

There are a number of obvious reasons why, in spite of the very large numbers of tourists who visit Australia in complete safety, these cases are highlighted and Australia’s image as a friendly and inviting destination is damaged. For example, precisely because Australia is so safe these exceptional cases appear all the more shocking and consequently get highlighted, leading to a perception that Australia is, indeed, unsafe, murderous and deathly. However, the Channel 4 documentary claims, which are so extreme, suggest something else, suggest that Australians’ anxiety over the penetration of its border, as this has been ramped up constantly since the Hawke government’s attitude to the boat people arrivals in the late 1980s, has spilled over not only into Australians’ own attitude to tourists—remember that Long, who set fire to the Childers hostel is said to have “hated backpackers”—but into how Australia is perceived as a destination from Britain and, we can presume, elsewhere. Since that critical time in 2001 when Howard reconstructed what Morris describes as the future threat of alien invasion held in “paranoid anticipation” into a present actuality, there has been an increasing blurring in the Australian national imaginary of the distinction between unwelcome (non-white) boat people and welcome (white) tourists.

The place where this conflation is most obviously played out is in the 2005 film *Wolf Creek*. Breaking the generic conventions of the serial killer and slasher genres, the film is indisputably the most financially successful Australian horror film ever made. On a budget of \$1,100,000 it has grossed worldwide around \$25,000,000. In Australia alone by February 2006 *Wolf Creek* had taken just under \$6,000,000. The popularity revealed by this figure suggests the film speaks to something in Australians' present-day worldview.

The plot is quite straightforward. Three young backpackers, two English women and a man from Sydney, buy an old car in Broome where they are staying and plan on driving to Darwin by way of a celebrated meteor crater in the outback at Wolf Creek. When they get to Wolf Creek they find that their car won't start. They are wondering anxiously what they should do when a four-wheel drive turns up. It is driven by a local called Mick Taylor. Taylor offers to fix their car. He finds he can't do this on the spot so he offers to tow them to where he lives where he has spare parts. The three agree. Once at Taylor's home, a deserted mine site, Taylor drugs them. A slasher gore-fest follows with Ben as the only survivor of the backpackers. The film's conservatism extends to misogyny which expresses the worst aspects of patriarchal Australian society.

There is no retribution for Taylor. We last see him striding into the sunset with his gun. We, the audience, know he had done this before and will do it again. We realise that it was he who ensured the backpackers' car would not start while they were at the crater. Taylor's motivation for the brutal treatment and subsequent murder of all these tourists is left unknown. Here, on the other side of 2001, Milat and his murders served as an inspiration for the character of Taylor and his killings.

At the end, Ben, the male backpacker, is found collapsed in the outback by some Swedish-speaking tourists. He is tried in Adelaide for the two English girls' murders and acquitted. The police do not appear to go after Taylor. If, in *Mad Max* the law in the outback is stretched increasingly beyond breaking point by the social fragmentation caused by cultural diversity, in *Wolf Creek* the law no longer seems to have a presence in this outback at all.

Greg McLean, who wrote and directed *Wolf Creek*, has been clear that Mick Taylor deliberately echoes Mick Dundee. Taylor is played by John Jarratt, an established Australian actor but whom many Australians know best from his benign appearances in the long-running lifestyle television show *Better Homes and Gardens*. This inter-textual association makes Jarratt's Taylor even more shocking. Does Taylor's behaviour, or at least the moral propensity for it, exist in every (male) Australian? Here we

should remember the crowd at the 2001 Liberal Party launch giving Ruddock and his announcements about border protection a tumultuous reception.

When Taylor meets the backpackers he is as open and friendly as Hogan's Dundee. Taylor becomes Dundee's awful alter-ego. The tourists that Hogan and Dundee invite in such a welcoming fashion to Australia are assaulted and murdered in a dry, empty outback by Taylor. The resonances between the two permeate the film. They both, of course, share their forename. Dundee, though, with its Scottish—that is Celtic, but not as different as Irish—connotations suggests a not-quite-absolute Angloness which matches Hogan's character's larrikin working-class insider/outsider status, whereas Taylor's name identifies him as totally, English, Anglo. Both, though, are thoroughly "white" in Australian terms.

If Taylor is Dundee's amoral doppelgänger, the backpackers can be read as boat people. How does this neurotic subtext develop? The film utilises binaries that are well established in the national imaginary: the coast as civilised and populated versus the outback as uncivilised, indeed lawless and empty. In this film this binary is reinforced by the amount of water in the Broome scenes. Structurally, from onshore in Australia, water is associated with civilisation. We see the three backpackers mucking around in the hostel's swimming pool. They sleep on the beach and in the dawn before they leave, Liz goes for a swim. In contrast the outback is completely dry. In Australian mythography the drier the outback the more lawless and threatening it is. *Crocodile Dundee's* outback has plenty of water—even if that water does contain crocodiles. However, in *Wolf Creek* the dryness of the outback has a pathological quality. The three stop for petrol at Emu Creek but we don't see any water. Nor do we see water at Wolf Creek, except for the rain which lends atmosphere, reminding of water where there is none in the ground. One reference point here is the history of Australian explorers' search for an inland sea and their misrecognition of the outback as an ocean. Roslynn Haynes writes this about the way Australians have thought about the desert:

[Charles] Sturt set out into the desert and, predictably, saw reminders (to his mind, evidence) of a sea all around him. Certainly there are many features of the desert landscapes which invite such a comparison and Sturt was by no means the only traveller to mention them. (1998, 67)

If this is a part of the Australian national imaginary, when the friendly Taylor turns up offering to tow the backpackers' broken-down car to a place that becomes his version of a detention camp, Taylor's actions echo the navy's practices in Operation Relex. One function of Relex was to

move boats away from Australian territorial waters at first by boarding them and taking control of the steering, later by towing these boats into Indonesian waters (see Marr and Wikinson 2003, 285–88). If *Wolf Creek*'s outback suggests the ocean and the backpackers, looking for help, for sanctuary, can be read as boat people, then Taylor becomes a version of Howard, Ruddock, indeed the Australian government and its maritime executive arm, the navy. Even more directly, Taylor's deliberate disabling of the backpackers' car echoes the inferred actions of a paid Australian agent in the disabling of the engine of the SIEV X and other boats used by asylum seekers.

At this point we can think a bit more precisely about Taylor, this very Anglo, white man who is keeping Australia free of these foreigners. He is at least one whole generation away from the backpackers. McLean (2005) himself has said this about Taylor: "Mick is the 1950s kind of Australian character, he's a very old-fashioned guy." Taylor is not as old as Hawke and Howard but he has similar values. Indeed, Howard is often described as attempting to return Australia to a mythic 1950s. In a speech to the Fabian Society in March 2006, for example, Labor's Julia Gillard (2006) has suggested that: "Howard's 1950s is a two-dimensional vision, as simplistically coloured as a child's picture book, of the white knights of benevolent businessmen battling Howard's childhood bogeymen—unions and organised labour." Taylor's conservative, 1950s, moral values are well-exemplified when he and the backpackers are sitting round the campfire before the three fall into a drugged sleep. Taylor asks them where they are from. Ben says he comes from Sydney. Taylor replies that Sydney is "the poofter capital of the world." He then breaks the shocked silence that follows by laughing and saying he has never been there.

The film, then, sets up a generational conflict on top of the city/outback, civilised/uncivilised binary. Ben not only comes from the feminised, cosmopolitan city, he is of a generation that accepts those values and has turned away from the traditional masculine values such as mateship embodied in Mick Dundee's ockerism. Ben's generation accepts homosexuality and has made Sydney's annual Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras a highpoint of the city's cultural life. He associates with foreign visitors. Indeed, as the film's audience knows, even if Taylor doesn't, he has started an affair with Liz. While it was all right for Mick Dundee to romance Sue Charlton, encouraging tourists, from the xenophobic ideological perspective of Taylor and *Wolf Creek* twenty years on, having an affair with any foreigner, even if they are English, and white, is disastrous.

In Fortress Australia all foreigners, whether tourists or asylum seekers, “white” or “coloured”, can be perceived as a threat to national integrity. Liz, also the more self-possessed of the two girls and the one who most threatens Taylor’s control of the situation, is killed in a way much more horrible than Kristy. Ben is unable to take on the male role and protect the girls. He becomes an embodiment of an Australian cosmopolitanism that is willing to accept boat people. It is no wonder, from Taylor’s ideological position then, that Ben is literally crucified, his arms outstretched, nailed to a board. This is not the crucifixion of the redeemer, though. This is an image of what he and his generation of cosmopolitan thinkers are doing to Australia. Ben will not protect Australia’s maritime border. This job falls to the older generation. Taylor, a serial killer like Milat, has to, like the Australian government—I am thinking here most obviously of the almost-rejected Border Protection Bill legislation—protect Australia from itself.

In that same campfire conversation Ben asks Taylor what he used to do on this vast property he describes that covers three states. Taylor replies: “Clearing vermin: roos, horses, pigs, buffalo, you name it.” He subsequently launches into an increasingly detailed description of how he killed these animals. The reference to vermin here should immediately remind us of Gore’s cockroaches, the ones he wanted to keep out of Sanctuary Cove. However, the rhetoric of vermin has more profound echoes. The Nazis characterised the Jews as vermin that had to be destroyed, most obviously in the film *Der Ewige Jude (The Eternal Jew)* (1940) where an equivalence was made between rats as the vermin of the animal world and Jews as the vermin of the human world. Quoting Michel Foucault, Perera writes that, “racism is what enables the displaced power of sovereignty to take life, or let die, be once again ‘inscribed as a basic mechanism of power as it is exercised in modern States’: it is the ‘precondition for exercising the right to kill’” (2006b, 648). She comments on the Liberal Party campaign slogan for the 2001 election that I have already mentioned, “We decide who comes into this country and the circumstances in which they come”, that:

This declaration of sovereignty rang out as a call to arms and declaration of war on three levels: the first level is the war on our maritime borders, a call that resonates powerfully with deeply embedded fears of an alien invasion by sea; the second, the War on Terror, declared two weeks after the *Tampa* arrived in the waters off Christmas Island; and, third, the war at home, which mobilised an already primed and armed body politic against the figure of the un-Australian and outsider. (2006b, 644)

Taylor can be read as a soldier in this war. For him, the backpackers are vermin.

Wolf Creek is not the only text to express the new amoral conservatism. To take just one more example, in 2006 a new advertisement for VB, Victoria Bitter, was shown on television during sporting events. Like Hogan's "I'll slip another shrimp on the barbie" advertisement, this one too involves a barbecue. This time around, though, the voice-over celebrates real Australians' omnivorous appetite for meat. We see all sorts of meat being thrown on a barbie by a group of ockerish white men and the voice-over tells us that Australians eat anything: "beef, chicken, pork, lamb—you name it, we'll eat it." The advertisement goes on to tell viewers that: "We'll even throw our official coat of arms on the barbie"—that is, Australians eat kangaroo—and the voice-over goes on to tell us that Australia is the only country that eats its own national emblem.

Kangaroos are also one of the forms of vermin that Mick Taylor used to clear from the property he worked on before he started clearing tourists from Australia. *Wolf Creek* has no Indigenous characters. Taylor's possession of the Australian land is at the price of a reassertion of *terra nullius* reminiscent of the white Australians on Cronulla Beach who claim they "grew here". Clearing kangaroos, then, works as a substitution for the genocide of Aborigines. Eating kangaroo takes on a cannibalistic quality that metaphorises the serving up and consumption of Aboriginal culture that is produced for tourists. More, Irene Watson argues that:

[White Australians] anticipate coming into their own state of lawfulness through the consuming of our sovereign Aboriginality. In this colonising process of us becoming white and white becoming Indigenous, white settlement deems itself as coming into its own legitimacy, as whites come into the space of our freedom to roam as Aboriginal peoples over our Aboriginal places and spaces. We become cannibalised. (2007, 18)

If Morris's understanding of the filmic Paris is of a town that cannibalistically feeds on strangers, this VB advertisement gives us an image of a white Australia which, inward looking, amorally consumes with relish the foundation of its own national identity.

Wolf Creek is simply a weathervane. The ethical and literal violence inflicted on asylum seekers has spread through the community. The uncritical heroising of a maniacal serial killer is now socially acceptable. Yes, we, the audience, know Taylor is bad, but the last time we see him, in that shot I have already mentioned, striding purposefully into the sunset, rifle in hand, is an image that could be straight out of a traditional Western where the hero, having saved the town, goes off on his own to look for

other wrongs to right. Taylor is saving Australia and is licensed to use any means he can. At the same time, Ben, the survivor of Taylor's victimisation, was prosecuted for the girls' murders. Blaming the victims has become an accepted practice in Australia where, for example, the government tells us that asylum seekers have only themselves to blame for their woes if they are prepared to attempt to reach Australia in unseaworthy boats.

Since Max lost his family and became mad, no longer working within legal means to destroy those who threaten what was left of Australian civilisation, the Australian moral order has become increasingly unsettled. Like Taylor, it would seem that the Australian government, regardless of its political persuasion, and the Australian people generally, believe that any action that saves Australia from the mythical impending apocalypse of being overrun by Ruddock's "20 million refugees looking for a home" is acceptable, regardless of its morality.

In early 2006 Tourism Australia launched a new tourist promotion campaign. The advertisement showed a sequence of iconic Australian images starting with an outback pub followed by a shot of camels on the beach. Each image is followed by a tag-line suggesting an invitation. In one, we see a group of Indigenous girls dancing and a young Aboriginal woman tells us: "We've been rehearsing for over 40,000 years," a statement that cannibalistically rewrites Aboriginal genocide in the benign terms of a present-day cultural welcome for the consumption of visitors. In spite of this recuperation those indigenous bodies haunt this colonial landscape.

In another image, a girl in a bikini swims out of the sea and says: "We've saved you a spot on the beach." The advertisement ends with the same girl standing on a deserted beach with the seashore at her side. She is, white, blond and blue-eyed, an eighteen-year-old, soon-to-be-famous, model named Lara Bingle.

We know now the freight of connotations this border carries, especially since 2001. We know the anxious, paranoid undertones associated with boat people that complicate any invitation to cross this border. As Australians we know about the ghostly bodies piling up on this beach. Is the spot saved for our new visitors saved for them alive or dead? Ruddock's horror videos, described earlier, mark the overlapping connections between this advertisement and *Wolf Creek* in the Australian national imaginary. This advertisement to tempt tourists begins to seem like a threat, as though

something lurks beneath its enticements. It is no wonder, then, that what the girl says sounds simultaneously ordinary and unremarkable and also quite aggressive even to Australians. Are all Australians now, implicitly, serial killers? The British Advertising Clearance Centre actually banned the advertisement asking for her question to be cut before the advertisement could be reinstated. The ban was overturned on appeal. She asks: "So where the bloody hell are you?" The only possible answer, from boat people and tourists alike, would seem to be: "Too fucking frightened to come!"

CHAPTER FIVE

UNCERTAIN LIVES: MIGRATION, THE BORDER AND NEOLIBERALISM IN AUSTRALIA

“We decide who comes into this country and the
circumstances in which they come”

—John Howard, used in the 2001 election campaign.

“But to live outside the law, you must be honest”

—Bob Dylan “Absolutely Sweet Marie.”

The election in 1996 of the Liberal and National coalition government under John Howard was a tipping point in the deployment of neoliberal economic and governmental policies in Australia. However, such policies had begun to be deployed earlier, during the time of the Labor government of Bob Hawke, when Paul Keating was Treasurer. Labor, under Hawke, came to power in 1983. Keating was Treasurer from the start. In 1991 Keating became Prime Minister. This trajectory, from Hawke to Keating to Howard, marks the increasing implementation of neoliberal practices in Australia. As these practices were put in place so there was a transformation in the understanding of the Australian border. There are many markers of this transformation, starting, most obviously, with the institution of mandatory detention for asylum seekers, a practice begun by Hawke’s government and formalised by Keating’s. During the time of the Howard government we can also identify the *Tampa* affair, which I shall outline later, Operation Relex, in which the navy was used to turn back boats loaded with asylum seekers, and the establishment of detention centres beyond Australia’s border, in other Pacific countries, known as the Pacific Solution, as more key moments, among others, in the border’s transformation.

The mandatory detention of asylum seekers was part of a larger ideological shift associated with neoliberal policy implementation. As Australia’s industrial base shrank, so neoliberal practices such as the

establishment of the 457 visa in 1996, which brought skilled labour to Australia for only as long as the people with those skills were required, became the means by which a transformation in Australia's migration intake was effected. One element in this transformation was a decreased need for unskilled, manual labour. At the same time, there was an increased need for specialised, skilled workers across a range of trade and professional areas. By 2008 the skilled component of the permanent intake in the migration program stood at 70% (Kelly 2008).

It is, again, no coincidence that during the 11 years of Howard's coalition government, at the same time that large numbers of skilled temporary and long-term migrants were able to enter Australia, in 2001/02 53,520 skilled migration visas were issued rising rapidly to 97,500 in 2005/06, a furore of anxiety and anguish was whipped up over the comparatively very small number of asylum seekers. Official figures tell us that, in 1998/99, 921 asylum seekers arrived by boat. In 1999/2000 this figure increased to 4,175 and remained roughly steady in 2000/2001 at 4,141. In November 2001, around 3,400 people were being held in immigration detention facilities. We should note that, at the same time, in 2007/08, Australia granted 13,014 visas under the refugee resettlement program. There is, then, a stark contrast between the welcome given to the relatively high numbers of skilled migrants and the treatment apportioned to putatively unskilled asylum seekers as well as the small number of refugees permitted to enter the country. While many asylum seekers are, in fact, skilled, the image of the asylum seeker is predominantly of someone unskilled. In a study of the cultural construction of the asylum seeker conducted in the South Australian city of Port Augusta, Natascha Klocker (2004) found that 48.5% of respondents thought of asylum seekers as unskilled. Only 19.5% of Klocker's respondents thought of asylum seekers as skilled.

In short, in terms of the market logic of neoliberalism, asylum seekers and refugees are considered too expensive to skill in the areas where it has been identified that Australia has needs. Mares reports on a presentation given by Philip Ruddock, the Minister for Immigration, in 2000. Ruddock asserted that:

for every 1000 people who enter the country as skilled or business migrants, there is a net gain to the Commonwealth budget of \$36.7 million over five years. By contrast family migrants cost the budget \$1.8 million over the same period, while 1000 refugees and humanitarian entrants represent a much bigger burden, draining the government coffers of \$21.5 million (Mares 2002, 102).

In 1991/92 the Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs calculated that the total cost of operating the Curtin Immigration Detention Centre was \$7,922 million. There being 294 detainees this works out at \$27,184 per person (Reilly 1995a). More recently, Chris Evans, the Labor Minister for Immigration and Citizenship has noted that, in 2006/07, it cost \$220 million to operate the immigration detention system (Vernon 2008). There have been attempts to recoup some of this outlay. On release, unsuccessful asylum seekers are charged for the cost of their detention. In 2002:

During the last three years, according to the Immigration Department, unsuccessful asylum seekers have been charged a total of \$18 million for their detention. Some have received bills for \$100,000 or more. That doesn't include the tab for court cases and appeals, which can easily exceed \$10,000. (Paddock 2002)

The government did not expect these bills to be paid but those with unpaid bills were unable to apply to re-enter Australia. Economic practice thus became one way of excluding unwanted migrants.

Neoliberalism and Australian Politics

In *The Shock Doctrine*, Naomi Klein argues that the spread of neoliberalism has been facilitated by the opportunistic use of crises to enable the imposition of its economic policies. She writes that:

As I dug deeper into the history of how this market model had swept the globe . . . I discovered that the idea of exploiting crisis and disaster had been the modus operandi of Milton Friedman's movement from the very beginning—this fundamentalist form of capitalism has always needed disasters to advance. (2007, 11)

Often these crises are central to the system on which neoliberal policies are to be imposed. The classic example is Augusto Pinochet's coup in Chile in 1973 about which Klein has much to say.

Sometimes the crisis can occur on the edge of the system. As Klein writes:

The Falklands War in 1982 served [this] purpose for Margaret Thatcher in the UK: the disorder and nationalist excitement resulting from the war allowed her to use tremendous force to crush the striking coal miners and to launch the first privatization frenzy in a Western democracy. (2007, 12)

In Australia the manufactured crisis was not as dramatic as a coup or a war. However, the engineering of the Australian population's anxieties and fears around race and immigration, which was a crucial factor in the election of the Coalition in 1996, and which were embodied in asylum seekers, served the same purpose for the eleven years the Coalition was in office. This reached its high point in the worries generated during what has become known as the *Tampa* affair in 2001 (See Marr and Wilkinson 2003 for detailed discussion of the *Tampa* affair). This also marked the start of the Pacific Solution. At the time of the *Tampa* affair the Coalition was trailing in the polls. The ALP had won state elections in Tasmania (1998), New South Wales (1999), Victoria (1999), Queensland (2001) and Western Australia (2001). In August of 2001, at the same time as the *Tampa* affair was unfolding, the ALP won power for the first time in the Northern Territory. Nevertheless, in the November federal election, capitalising on the fears generated by the *Tampa* affair and the September terrorist attacks in the United States, the Coalition retained power. This was in spite of the great unpopularity of the Coalition's neoliberal economic reforms, the centrepiece of which, the *Workplace Relations Act*, which introduced individual Australian Workplace Agreements and stripped workers of numerous rights, had been made law in 1996.

By 2007 the decline in the always small numbers of asylum seekers arriving in Australia had made any further use of this manufactured crisis unfeasible. The Howard government attempted to construct another crisis out of concerns about child sexual abuse in Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory. To this end the government created the Northern Territory National Emergency Response. Like the *Tampa* affair and Operation Relex, the Response also included a military aspect, the deployment of members of the army's Norforce unit under the name Operation Outreach. However, Indigenous issues do not trigger the same fears among the Australian population as do the combination of race and migration. The Coalition lost the 2007 federal election. A key contributing factor was the government's revision of the 1996 *Workplace Relations Act*, the *Workplace Relations Amendment Act 2005*, named WorkChoices by the government. This radicalised industrial relations in Australia in favour of employers.

I want to comment here, briefly, on the increased use of the military in Australia, as in other neoliberal regimes, for purposes that would previously have come within the jurisdiction of the juridico-legal order and, therefore, be carried out by non-military personnel such as the police. David Harvey comments on the neoconservative social theory which has operated in conjunction with neoliberalism. He writes that: "The anarchy

of the market, of competition, and of unbridled individualism . . . generates a situation that becomes increasingly ungovernable. It may even lead to a condition verging on social anarchy and nihilism” (2005, 82). Harvey goes on to argue that:

The neoconservatives therefore emphasize militarization as an antidote to the chaos of individual interests. For this reason, they are far more likely to highlight threats, real or imagined, both at home and abroad, to the integrity and stability of the nation. (2005, 82)

These threats will require the involvement of the military. Here we can see how the neoconservative theory of society connects with the neoliberal construction of crisis to reinforce the apparent need for the use of the military at the border or, indeed, at other sites of apparent social crisis within the nation-state. In Australia this has meant the involvement of the military in the “protection” of the border and, subsequently, in the “protection” of Indigenous Australia.

Where a police force functions to enforce the state’s laws, the role of the military is to defend the state. The increased use of the military at the border, and within the state, functions as a marker in the shift towards greater authoritarianism—an authoritarianism characteristic of the ordering of the state as described by the English seventeenth-century political theorist Thomas Hobbes, about whom I shall have much to say later. Here, I shall simply refer to Louis Althusser who, in his celebrated essay, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” (1971), writes of the army that, within the state, it “intervenes directly as a supplementary repressive force in the last instance, when the police and its specialized auxiliary corps are ‘outrun by events.’” The use of the military signals a decrease in the acceptance of the rule of law and narrows the role of the juridico-legal order, placing more responsibility for social order in the hands of the political system. In Australia, while the Constitution invests the Governor-General as Commander-in-Chief, there has been a push since the 1970s, not coincidentally the period when neoliberal ideology was taking root in Australian politics, for the control of the armed forces to lie with the Executive (Steven 1983). The kinds of crises identified by Klein invariably involve the use of the military.

What Is the Australian Border?

The changing concerns over migration have transformed the understanding of the border. Catherine Dauvergne writes that, “citizenship law and migration law work together in creating the border of the nation” (2008,

119). She argues that “migration law is being transformed into the last bastion of sovereignty” (2008, 169). Her reasoning is that, “as the capacity for national governments to influence policy in many areas is eroded by global forces, control efforts have been concentrated on those areas that remain, ostensibly, within the direct control of national lawmakers” (2008, 169). While this has validity what we will find is that, for a number of further reasons, the border is of central importance to the functioning of the neoliberal state. Indeed, not only does the idea of the border occupy a crucial place in all Australian discussions of migration and the regulation of migration, it is something that has been especially important in the mythic understanding of asylum seekers. What I will argue is that the role of the border has been transformed through the instauration of neoliberal policies. This is the case globally but my interest here is specifically with Australia.

Angela Mitropoulos has reworked an argument of Althusser’s to highlight the importance of the border to the establishment of capitalism. In “The Underground Current of the Materialism of the Encounter,” Althusser notes that what he calls the encounter between raw labour-power and the owners of money “*occurred several times in history before taking hold in the West*” (Althusser 2006, 197, Althusser’s italics). He goes on to argue that what was necessary for the take-off of capitalism was “a *domestic market* capable of absorbing what might have been produced” (2006, 197, Althusser’s italics). What enables such a domestic market, Althusser notes, was the nation-state. However, Althusser suggests that one other element crucial to capitalism’s take-off was “an accumulation of producers (proletarians divested of all means of production)” (2006, 198). As Mitropoulos (2006a) remarks in her commentary on this section, Althusser is arguing that the nation-state founds not only “the formation of a domestic market in goods . . . but a domestic market in labour.” In economic terms, then, we can say that the border brings order to capitalism. However, the border’s relation to order is much broader than this. As Prem Kumar Rajaram and Carl Grundy-Warr argue:

The border . . . is a transformative and creative instrument; it marks the transition from a state of anarchy to one of order, thus enabling a narrative of justice and recognition centering on the clarification of what form of life or living constitutes belonging and what constitutes non-belonging. (2007, xii)

The opposition of order and disorder, distinguished by the border and centred on the limitation of the movement of people, has been crucial to the organisation of capitalism in the modern state.

In a discussion of Giorgio Agamben's idea of the state of exception, Dominick LaCapra (2007) writes:

In the runaway state of exception (which seems close to Schmitt's state of emergency), the exception becomes the rule (hence the distinction becomes blurred or breaks down), and pre-existing normative and legal orders are suspended. (At the limit one is in a "state" of anomic or Hobbesian war.) Agamben sees this condition as generalized or rampant in the post-Auschwitz world, and this allows him to assert that the camp is the prototype of modern life and that Auschwitz is now everywhere.

In this dense passage, one of the things that LaCapra is explicating is Agamben's history of the state of exception as an institutional practice. The state of exception is founded in the idea of the nation-state. As Agamben himself writes: "The state of exception is not a special kind of law (like the law of war); rather, insofar as it is a suspension of the juridical order itself, it defines law's threshold to the limit concept" (2005, 4). For Agamben the limit case of the state of exception is the Nazi regime (2005, 38). The concentration camp is the product and manifestation of that state.

Agamben argues that the state of exception is always already implicit in the idea of the nation-state. In *Homo Sacer*, Agamben thinks about the relationship between that state of nature and sovereignty:

It is important to note that in Hobbes the state of nature survives in the person of the sovereign, who is the only one to preserve its natural *ius contra omnes*. Sovereignty thus presents itself as an incorporation of the state of nature in society, or, if one prefers, as a state of indistinction between nature and culture, between violence and law, and this very indistinction constitutes specific sovereign violence. (1998, 35)

Sovereignty incorporates the exception. At the same time, the state in the rule of law is marked out from the exception—the state of exception is always present as a possibility implicit in the state ordered by law. We can extrapolate from this that the more sovereignty expresses that violence, for example in its use of the military rather than the police, the further it moves from the rule of law and the nearer it comes to the state of exception.

Agamben links the exception to the state of nature: "Far from being a prejudicial condition that is indifferent to the law of the city, the Hobbesian state of nature is the exception and the threshold that constitutes and dwells within it" (Agamben 1998, 106). Here, the threshold, the border, distinguishes the state of exception from the state of norms, indeed of the

rule of law, which is the normative nation-state. As Rajaram and Grundy-Warr write:

Agamben understands the border as a concept distinguishing norm from exception. This exception is cast out from the norm, but in the act of casting out, the exception is brought into the system of the nation-state. (2007, xix)

Metaphorically, then, the border marks the distinction between the order of the practice of the nation-state and the disorder of the state of exception that lies beyond it—and yet is always already implicit within it.

Agamben's image of the state of nature, which as a political fiction had a lengthy history, is specifically that of Thomas Hobbes as detailed in *Leviathan* (1651) and other works. For Hobbes the state of nature is indeed, as Agamben writes, the war of all against all. It is a circumstance where, as Hobbes lists, there is nothing that obtains in the ordered state including "no place for industry," that is no work. For Hobbes, the state, brought about through the social contract, is the way that naturally aggressive and competitive human beings are ordered and disciplined. In *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (1962), C. B. Macpherson argued that what Hobbes understood as natural to humans were learnt characteristics necessary to the practice of a market-based economic order. Macpherson explains that: "To get to the state of nature, Hobbes has set aside law, but not the socially acquired behaviour and desires of men" (1962, 22). We should note here that, as Macpherson indicates, law is the foundational ordering feature of the state. Writing that:

If a single criterion of the possessive market society is wanted it is that man's labour is a commodity, i.e., that a man's energies are his own yet are regarded not as integral parts of his personality, but as possessions, the use and disposal of which he is free to hand over to others for a price. (1962, 48)

Macpherson explains that only in such a society "in which each man's capacity to labour is his own property, is alienable, and is a market commodity, could all individuals be in this continual competitive power relationship" (1962, 59). There is a lot of freight, then, in Agamben's use of Hobbes's state of nature. It would seem that one way we can identify Agamben's state of exception is as the dark side of capitalism, the world of the unfettered market beyond the border of the legally ordered, regulated, capitalist state.

While the Hobbesian state of nature functions outside of the law, Agamben asserts that “the state of exception is neither external nor internal to the juridical order” (2005, 23). His point is that a state of exception is instituted when there is “a (total or partial) suspension of the juridical order,” but that “[t]he suspension of the norm does not mean its abolition” (2005, 23). Where, philosophically speaking, the state of nature exists prior to the state, the possibility of the state of exception exists as a consequence of the existence of the state. The state of exception functions through the Hobbesian idea of authoritarian, sovereign power. In Hobbes’s view, such power is not limited by law. It has no limits. The state of nature and the state of exception become homologous at the moment of the collapse of sovereign power.

This leads us to a further question. LaCapra makes the point that Agamben sees the state of exception “as generalised or rampant in the post-Auschwitz world.” How has this come about? In an original and weak reading of Agamben, Aihwa Ong (2006b, 5) writes that he “has used the exception as a fundamental principle of sovereign rule that is predicated on the division between citizens in a juridical order and citizens stripped of juridical-political protections.” At the same time she does make the important connection between the idea of exception and neoliberalism. She writes that, in contrast to Agamben, she conceptualises:

the exception more broadly, as an extraordinary departure in policy that can be deployed to include as well as exclude. As conventionally understood, the sovereign exception marks out excludable subjects who are denied protections. But the exception can also be a positive decision to include selected populations and spaces as targets of [quoting Stephen Collier] ‘calculative choices and value-orientation’ associated with neoliberal reform. (2006b, 5)

In the Australian case, Ong’s insight here helps us to understand the market-based, calculative decisions to exclude apparently unskilled asylum seekers and minimise the acceptance into the country of refugees while encouraging much greater numbers of skilled migrants without reference to any moral criteria.

However, Ong’s most important point involves her recognition of the relationship between neoliberalism and exception. She uses the term “yoking” to describe how the two processes inter-relate. Ong thinks of neoliberalism in terms of two sets of “optimizing technologies” (2006b, 5). One of these is technologies of subjection which, she writes, “inform political strategies that differently regulate populations for optimal productivity, increasingly through spatial practices that engage market

forces” (2006b, 6). This, again, is something that we can see in the differentially graded access to rights and entitlements of the various Australian visa groups, a grading which is directly related to the labour needs of the Australian economy.

For Ong, exception is a way of understanding the political intervention in the juridico-legal order as a means of “optimising” that market practice of the economy which is a key characteristic of neoliberalism. The question here is, why was the optimisation increasingly thought to be necessary? During the 1970s, the established organisation of capitalism was unsettled. Along with this, as we shall see, the form of the migration structure, including the practices of the border, were transformed. In the post–Second World War period John Maynard Keynes’s ideas for a state-managed capitalism, a way of avoiding another capitalist crisis like the Great Depression of the 1930s, had become generally accepted to a greater or lesser extent. The Keynesian state kept a clear division between the roles of the political, the juridico-legal and the economic. The political order managed the state as a distinct and bounded entity. David Theo Goldberg (2009, 384) has usefully described this formation as the container state. He explains that it froze space. However, the 1970s and 1980s saw a transformation in the form of capitalism. Al Campbell asks, “why productive capital subscribed to Keynesian ideas after WWII and then came to abandon nearly all of them by the 1970s and 1980s” (2005, 188). His answer is that:

Broadly, there was a structural crisis of capitalism. That is, the policies, practices and institutions that had been serving well capitalism’s goal of capital accumulation ceased to do so. More narrowly, one can say that capitalism abandoned the Keynesian compromise in the face of a falling rate of profit, under the belief that neoliberalism could improve its profit and accumulation performance. (2005, 189)

As profits fell, capitalists looked for ways of reinstating their profit margins. Walden Bello argues similarly: “The fundamental cause of the long downturn was a crisis of profitability. It stemmed from downward pressure on prices, the result mainly of the conjunction of stagnant demand and excess industrial capacity, which in turn triggered intense competition among the center economies” (2005, 79). Bello goes on to explain that:

The process of neoliberal reform . . . was marked by destabilising contradictions, in the North and in the South. Liberating capital from the constraints of governments that had imposed a compromise between labor

and capital and a *modus vivendi* between northern capital and developing elites entailed (1) bringing down wages, which meant cutting the engine of demand that capital needed in order to reproduce itself profitably, and (2) adding to the ranks of the global unemployed, as the penetration of goods and capital into less developed economies bankrupted local firms and farms, eliminating millions from the market. (2005, 83)

These developments directly relate to the increase in global migration. A Global Commission on International Migration report tells us that: “Numbers are increasing rapidly: from 82 million international migrants in 1970 through 179 million in 2000 to nearly 200 million today” (“Migration at a Glance” 2005, 83). In developed countries, the countries of the North, which, however, includes Australia, the border has become the neoliberal filter where decisions that have been made about the economic worth of these migrants to the nation-state are instituted.

One way of thinking about neoliberalism is that it is an ideology whose time had come. David Harvey, with his usual perception, argues that: “We can interpret neoliberalism either as a *utopian* project to realize a theoretical design for the reorganization of international capitalism or as a *political* project to re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation and to restore the power of economic elites” (2005, 19). He remarks, though, that: “The evidence suggests . . . that when neoliberal principles clash with the need to restore or sustain elite power, then the principles are either abandoned or become so twisted as to be unrecognisable” (2005, 19). For Harvey the crisis of the 1970s was of capital accumulation. As he writes: “The crisis of capital accumulation in the 1970s affected everyone through the combination of rising unemployment and accelerating inflation” (2005, 14). Neoliberal policies appeared to offer elites a solution to the economic woes of capitalism while enabling them to re-establish their profit margins.

This neoliberal reworking of capitalism provides us with a way of thinking about the generalisation of the state of exception in the post-Auschwitz world. One key characteristic of the neoliberal state is the decline in the power of the law. Increasingly, the juridico-legal order of the state is bypassed in favour of politically motivated decision-making. This is typically the case in the processes that surround migration and, as we shall see, is very much in evidence in relation to the management of the Australian border. While neoliberalism is clearly not a necessary condition for the state of exception, the state of exception is the ideal type of the neoliberal state; that is the state whose purpose is to optimise the capitalist market at the expense of moral criteria, and legal processes, in favour of profit and capital accumulation.

The neoliberal state grades the population as labour, in order to enhance labour's relationship with the needs of the market. For Goldberg this is the traffic cop state. This "order[s] flows[,] freezes time and controls through special regulation, through normalized exception" (Goldberg 2009, 348). One of the most important flows, as we have begun to see in the case of Australia, is people. However, whereas in the traditional container state a person was, in the first place, either inside the state or outside, now membership of the state, and therefore one's relationship to the border, is graduated. We have seen this in my discussion in Chapter 3. This means that the status of the border changes. It becomes a national site dominated by economic determinations. On the one hand it becomes more impermeable. Those who are of no use to the socioeconomic system of the state are to be excluded at all costs—and we have already seen how expensive it has been to operate the detention centres for asylum seekers attempting to enter Australia. On the other hand the border gains porosity, allowing in and out those who have skills that the socioeconomic system requires, and then no longer requires.

Markus Euskirchen, Henrik Leuhn and Gene Ray have discussed the transformation of the European border regime. They note how Europe has come to be identified as "Fortress Europe" and how, indeed: "High walls are being built around the wealthy cores of the Global North to keep out millions of people who are forced to leave their home countries in order to survive" (Euskirchen et al. 2007). In an interview with Peter Mares in 2000 when Mares asked about the possibility of quarantining the 12,000 places the government had set aside for refugees from places given to asylum seekers awarded refugee status, Ruddock bridled. His response was to ask if Mares thought Australia should take the 21 million refugees that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimated were in the world at that time (Mares 2002, 111). It is clear that Ruddock is thinking of a Fortress Australia with a border functioning like that of Europe. It should be pointed out that this anxiety over migrants to the rich, white core is nothing new. In 1974 Charles Price published a book titled *The Great White Walls Are Built* in which he discussed the historical process through the nineteenth century of putting in place a restrictive and racialised immigration program across North America and Australia. I will return to the matter of race shortly.

At the same time, Euskirchen et al. (2007) also remark on the European border's "ability to differentiate and regulate". Referring to work by Tobias Pieper they explain that the border regime distinguishes four groups of people according to their economic worth for Europe:

(1) highly qualified workers from the capitalist periphery who are actually recruited or invited to work in Europe; (2) low-skilled guest workers who legally come to Europe, mainly to Germany, on short-term visas to live and work under very restricted conditions; (3) an illegalized trans-national labor force of workers who lack any formal rights or protections for the negotiation of their living and working conditions, and (d) economically superfluous refugees, who increasingly are denied any secure legal status in Europe. (Euskirchen et al. 2007)

As in Australia, this is not only a gradation of entry, it is also a gradation of rights and entitlements within Europe; a grading of legal presence according to economic criteria governed by political decisions.

Euskirchen, Lebuhn and Ray remark that: “In effect, the old lines of national demarcation are being transformed into new and militarized border zones and spaces that overlay the social space of everyday life. Europe is becoming a borderland.” For these writers this development is happening as the new European border of the European Union takes over the role of individual nation-state borders. As in Australia, this new border is militarised, marking a shift of control from the juridico-legal order to the political order, and the border expands to become increasingly synonymous with the land it borders—in Australia with the nation-state itself. This occurs as a steadily increasing percentage of people resident within the state are not citizens. If we think about this development in terms of Agamben’s state of exception we can appreciate how, as the traditional capitalist state is transformed by degrees into the neoliberal state of exception, so the border, which is the materialised hinge between the state forms, becomes the site for the most dramatic enactment of the state of exception. In Australia this is most apparent in the establishment of the regime of detention centres. Suvendrini Perera (2002b) has discussed these as spaces of exception in the context of Agamben’s work and a genealogy of the camp in settler Australian history. She refers to the detention centre as: “A place that is . . . not Australia” because of its excision from the Australian juridico-legal system.

Racing the State—and the State of Exception

At this point we need to start thinking about the centrality of race to the articulation of the modern state. Goldberg argues that:

Race appears in this scheme of things [the organisation of the modern state] as a mode of crisis management and containment, as a mode mediating that tension, of managing manufactured threats and of curtailing

while alienating the challenge of the unknown. As a representative of the Natural Order (the State of Nature in Hobbes, Pufendorf, Locke, Rousseau), race stands for that which the modern state is not, what the state avoids, what it is to keep at bay. Notwithstanding the differences between them, it is instructive that the principal or only examples these social contractarians respectively cite for the State of Nature are deeply configured in racist terms. (2002, 40)

The state and its mythic Other, the state of nature, are fundamentally raced. Writing specifically about Hobbes, Goldberg asserts that he “render[s] explicit a rationalizing narrative concerning the modern state’s legitimation, one central to which are the configurations of gendered and raced domination intertwined with and expressed in and through class” (2002, 41). To this we can add Mitropoulos’s observation that, “the distinction between frontier spaces and bordered realms correlates with the distinction—in Social Contract theories—between the ‘state of nature’ and ‘society’ that, in turn, are the ideological placeholders for the ‘West’ and the colonies” (Mitropoulos 2002, 374). If the state of nature is a version of Agamben’s state of exception then that, too, is racially marked.

If the modern state is raced from its European origins then its reworking as the neoliberal state is also raced. More, if the neoliberal state marks the instantiation of the state of exception in state form, then that state is doubly raced. In practice this means that where the European state was marked by the exclusion of those identified as non-white, the state operation of capitalism was a white preserve, in the neoliberal state those that were racially excluded are allowed to enter on the rational, calculative terms of the market. Where with the modern state racial segmentation mapped onto economic segmentation, in the neoliberal state both forms of segmentation are imbricated as the state’s ordering mechanism while the actual presence of the racial Other continues to be strictly controlled.

At this point I want to set in place another piece of this puzzle. Earlier, following Althusser, Mitropoulos and Goldberg, I argued that the modern state was central to the elaboration of capitalism because its borders contained those who then had no option but to supply their labour-power to those who, using a Marxian term, owned the means of production. However, as we have seen, borders also function to regulate entry to the state. Mitropoulos argues that, “without the foreigner, the nation and practice of the social (or wage) *contract*—as a voluntary agreement between more or less symmetrical agents—falls apart” (Mitropoulos, 2006b). The foreigner is the excluded Other, both philosophically and racially, whose exclusion enables the contract to be fixed. It has been a requirement of the modern state that entry was regulated. John C. Torpey

argues that “modern states, and the state system of which they are a part, have expropriated from individuals and private entities the legitimate ‘means of movement,’ particularly though by no means exclusively across international boundaries” (2000, 4). As the nation-state became more organised so the role of the border became ever more important:

As markets for labor power, in particular, became ‘nationalized,’ states asserted dominion over the right to determine who could move about and under what conditions. The general result of the process was that local borders were replaced by national ones, and that the chief difficulty associated with human movement was entry into, not departure from, territorial spaces. (Torpey 2000, 20).

By the early years of the twentieth century countries had begun to impose migration restrictions and, during the First World War, passports started to be generally needed for crossing national borders.

As a modern state, Australia’s exceptionalism at the time of federation in 1901 lay only in its overt assertion that it was to be a white nation-state and that this would be the overriding imperative of its immigration policy. As Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds write: “In the Commonwealth of Australia, white men appropriated the discourse on civilisation for themselves, defining it in terms of wages and conditions and the standard of living” (2008, 152). Lake and Reynolds go on to quote Alfred Deakin, the leader of the push for federation and Australia’s second prime minister. Deakin, they write:

explicitly theorised White Australia as an exercise in social justice: “it means the maintenance of conditions of life for white men and women; it means equal laws and opportunity for all; it means protection against the underpaid labor of other lands; it means social justice so far as we can establish it, including just trading and the payment of fair wages.” (2008, 153–54)

Whiteness was overtly central to Australian capitalism and a founding feature of the Australian state until the ending of the White Australia Policy in the early 1970s.

Referring to the large increase in migration numbers in the decades after the Second World War, which I have mentioned earlier as caused by the desire to establish an industrial base in Australia, Stephen Castles and Ellie Vasta write that:

From the 1860s to the 1960s unions largely supported the White Australia Policy. After World War II, the unions only accepted the migration

program after receiving assurances that the migrants would not take jobs from Australian workers (2004, 159).

During this post–Second World War period the official Australian understanding of whiteness was expanded to include people from Mediterranean and Eastern European countries.

Nevertheless, as Castles and Mark Miller write:

Up to about 1973, . . . Australian . . . immigration policies were concerned with the recruitment of a manual labour force. Non-British migrants who received assisted passage to Australia were directed into jobs on construction sites such as the Snowy Mountain Hydro-electric Scheme, in heavy industry or in factories. (1998, 193)

As we have seen, the 1970s saw the end of the Keynesian compact. Before this, Australia, like most core, white states, required the migration of people for manual labour. Most of these migrants were identified as non-white. In Britain, for example, labour was drawn from the West Indies and from South Asia. Germany took in guest-workers from Turkey. In Australia, while the Italian, Greek, Lebanese and other migrants were officially classified as white they remained discriminated against in everyday life.

While white, British migrants were also often employed as unskilled labour, they found it easier to get better paid jobs and climb the social order. To quote Castles and Miller again:

Economic restructuring since the 1970s has brought significant changes. In [Australia] the pre-1973 entrants bore the brunt of the restructuring, as low-skilled jobs in manufacturing declined. Research in Australia has shown that unemployment during the recessions of 1974–5, 1982–3 and 1990–2 was significantly higher for non-English-speaking background immigrants than for other workers. (1998, 195)

In the traditional state, when non-white migrants were allowed in in any numbers they were channelled into low-level manual labour jobs. In Australia, this is what happened to the newly reclassified “white” migrants in the post–Second World War period. While formally identified as white, in the main they took manual labour jobs and found themselves able to rise in the economic order to only a limited extent. In other words, in spite of official claims to the contrary, these migrants were treated as non-white.

Through the 1970s, Australia instituted multiculturalism as a population management policy. I have discussed this elsewhere (Stratton 1998). The official aim of multiculturalism was to help migrants from diverse cultural

and linguistic backgrounds to settle in Australia by acknowledging and valuing their cultural differences. In practice, as numerous critics have pointed out, multiculturalism functioned as a core and periphery structure where the members of the Anglo-Celtic core remained in positions of power while the relatively powerless ethnic minorities were meant to take solace in the new valuation of their cultural practices. In economic terms this was a re-emphasising of a middle class and working class structure. In other words through the decades after the Second World War Australia established a racialised class structure founded in the economic order and disguised while reinforced by multiculturalism.

When globalisation forced a restructuring of the Australian economy in the last quarter of the twentieth century, as Castles and Miller (1998) explain, a disproportionate number of this racialised—for which in Australian multicultural terminology read “ethnicised” because they were officially thought of as white—working class were made unemployed. However, they had migrated to Australia on a permanent basis and many had citizenship.¹ Thus, they became the responsibility of the state. In the neoliberal Australian state far fewer migrants take out citizenship, indeed this is not possible on a 457 visa which enables the holder to stay for three years and is granted provided a company offers employment. These, as it happens, middle-class, skilled workers will have to return to their country of origin if an economic downturn, or another restructuring, means that their skill is no longer in demand. Analogously, in 2009 the government gave the go-ahead for a new guest-worker scheme to bring in 2,500 workers from the Pacific Islands on three-year visas for seven months in any twelve-month period to work in low-level, seasonal jobs such as fruit-picking (see Millbank 2008; “Fruit Growers Furious” 2009). Unlike the post-Second World War migrants these unskilled non-white workers will also be returned to their countries of origin when the economic need for them no longer exists.

Back to the Border

In Australia, and indeed in Europe, the anxiety over those described as asylum seekers grew as elements of the neoliberal state were beginning to be put in place. The term “asylum seeker”, we should remember, is used for people who have not, or not yet, been classified as refugees—that is, incorporated into the international legal order. “Asylum seeker” is a placeholder. In Australia those now conventionally described as asylum seekers have been called boat people, queue jumpers, possible terrorists, and, with a certain unconscious irony, economic migrants, among other

appellations. These people are thought of as illegal. Discussing the use of this term, Dauvergne notes that: “By the late 1960s it [‘illegal’] was used in quotation marks, or as a repeat reference, once illegal immigrants had already been discussed. Now it is used without drawing any special attention at all” (2008, 10). It has been during the ascendancy of neoliberalism that “illegal” has become a noun to describe a category of people. Dauvergne writes that:

Although the term “illegal” is precise in its relationship with the law, it is empty of content. It says even less than other identity markers in the migration hierarchy: resident, visitor, guest worker or refugee. It circumscribes identity solely in terms of a relationship with law: those who are illegal have broken (our) law. (2008, 16)

Those described as illegals are not named. The term functions similarly to “asylum seekers”. These people are placed outside of the state, an empty category containing the anxieties of those who live their everyday lives in the neoliberal order, provoking the dread that they might cross the border and bring the anarchy, the state of nature, out there, in here, into the, in this case, Australian nation-state.

One way of thinking about these abject people is that they do not have access to the rights and entitlements, and the quality of life, of those who are allowed to live within the border of the state. For Ruddock, in his interview with Mares, the relatively few asylum seekers that have arrived on the Australian border metamorphose into the terror of Australia being overwhelmed by 21 million refugees.

The dread of the loss of distinction between an ordered “inside” and a chaotic “outside” became greatest as Australia was being transformed into a traffic-cop state with a partially permeable border, greatest also as the neoliberal state of exception began to supplant the traditional, juridically ordered state. Without the law, as Hobbes understood, power was its own legitimation and the fear is of the loss of that ordering power. When the law is set aside, it is simply authoritarian power, manifested in military force, which marks the site of the border. After all, paradoxically, as LaCapra indicates, at the fantastic, final moment when the neoliberal state of exception is fully established there would be no border, nothing to distinguish “inside” from “outside”—or, to put this differently, the border would take up the entire state. For Agamben, a defining quality of the state of exception is that the rule of law is set aside. Once the law is gone, there is nothing to ensure its restoration. Order is defined by the whim of the sovereign and is always on the verge, the border, of chaos. It is important to remember that, for Agamben, as we have seen, “the state of nature

survives in the person of the sovereign.” And it is only this authoritarian power which stands between the fragile order of the raced state and the anarchic chaos of the racialised state of nature. Only this lawless authority stands between the state of nature and the state of exception. It is no wonder, then, that the understanding of the Australian border should have been transformed; that the fear of this neoliberal nation-state being overwhelmed by racially Othered asylum seekers should be so powerful.

Postscript

As I was finalising this chapter for publication as an article in 2009, another boatload of asylum seekers was picked up in Australian waters. That made six boats that year to date (17 April 2009) carrying a mere 264 asylum seekers. Not very many at all when compared with Australia’s annual, total migration intake of around 170,000 people. Nevertheless, the national newspaper *The Australian*’s lead headline for 16 April was “Rising tide of boatpeople [sic]”, evoking once again the spectre of Australia(ns) being drowned under an incoming sea of seemingly threatening asylum seekers.

CHAPTER SIX

“WELCOME TO PARADISE”: ASYLUM SEEKERS, NEOLIBERALISM, NOSTALGIA AND *LUCKY MILES*

Lucky Miles was released in July 2007. That year it was nominated for both Best Film and Best Screenplay at the AFI Awards and won the Audience Award at the Sydney Film Festival. Critical reaction was generally positive if a little cautious. For example, Philippa Hawker in the *Melbourne Age* described it as ‘a poignant film, but it is above all a comedy of errors: a political film, without a doubt, but a subtle, oblique and entertaining one’ (Hawker 2007). It should also be noted that the film was not particularly successful at the box office. In 2007, *Lucky Miles* took \$544,000. That same year, *Romulus, My Father* took \$2.5 million and *Bra Boys*, \$1.6 million. Interestingly, in 2007 there were two other major Australian films featuring Asian characters. *Home Song Stories* (\$371,000) and *The Jammed* (\$252,000), both achieved lower audience figures than *Lucky Miles*. David Dale (2007) classifies all three films as “Aussie Flops That Should Have Done Better.”¹ This may suggest that mainstream, by which I mean the majority Anglo-Celtic Australians, may still not be ready to watch in films set in Australia those who Australians think of as Asians.² *Lucky Miles* is set in 1990. It follows the tribulations of a group of asylum-seeking boat people set down on the remote, northern coast of Western Australia. They are all, it should be noted, male. I shall discuss this later.

In this chapter I will discuss the relationship between *Lucky Miles* and the practices of neoliberalism which, as I have argued in earlier chapters, began to be instated in Australia by Bob Hawke’s Labor government after its election in 1983 and which were radicalised under John Howard’s Liberal and National Party coalition which came to power in 1996. As I explained in the previous chapter, anxieties about the border and its “protection” from asylum seekers have been transformed by the ways that neoliberalism changes understandings of the state, asylum seekers and the relationship between power and sovereignty within the state. I am

particularly interested in how these films relate to these anxieties. My main focus is on *Lucky Miles* because, as we shall see, it attempts to minimise the effects of neoliberalism by, among other things, being set before the Howard government gained power. I shall also refer to *Children of Men*, a film set in Britain, which presents what we might describe as a dystopian version of a neoliberal future, to show how some of the anxieties about the consequences of neoliberalism can be played out in film. By minimising these concerns, *Lucky Miles* creates a more favourable context for watching a film about asylum seekers reaching the Australian mainland.

Given the highly charged Australian debates through the 1990s and early 2000s on the treatment of asylum seekers, *Lucky Miles* surprised many viewers by being a comedy—which may be one reason for its relative success as compared with *Home Song Stories* and *The Jammed*. One of the factors that made this generic choice more feasible is that in 1990 mandatory detention of those identified as illegal migrants was only just becoming the norm. Peter Mares writes that, “after 1989 almost all of them [boat people] were detained” (Mares 2002, 74). To begin with they were held in the low-security Westbridge migrant hostel in Sydney. Westbridge was part of the Villawood complex. In 1991 the first purpose-built immigration detention centre, known as the Port Hedland Immigration Reception and Processing Centre, was opened in Port Hedland on the north-west coast of Western Australia somewhat near where the boat people of *Lucky Miles* were put onto the shore. Helen Grace notes that: “The landscape in which *Lucky Miles* is set . . . requires only one language—that of money—since the Pilbara setting is the landscape of the transnational commodities market of resources export” (Grace 2008, 209). There is a certain neoliberal irony in Port Hedland being both the site of an asylum seeker detention centre and the main port for the export of iron ore from the Pilbara. In 1992 Paul Keating’s Labor government guided the *Migration Amendment Act* through parliament. This required that a “designated person” who was a non-citizen “should be kept in custody until he or she leaves Australia or is given an entry permit” (Mares 2002, 75). The requirement was backdated to 19 November 1989, and the Amendment also ensured that no court could overturn this ruling (2002, 75). The immediate cause of the legislation was the arrival of boats carrying Cambodian asylum seekers. The first Cambodians had arrived on 28 November. Hawke labelled the Cambodians economic rather than political refugees. Howard’s government radicalised Keating’s detention practices. It is not coincidental that both Keating and Howard were strong supporters of neoliberal economic policies.

The mandatory detention of asylum seekers was part of a larger ideological shift associated with neoliberal policy implementation. The key to neoliberal practices is the claim that the market should be self-regulating.³ My interest here focuses principally on neoliberalism as it relates to the Australian border. As I explained in the previous chapter, during the eleven years of Howard’s Coalition government, at the same time that large numbers of skilled temporary and long-term migrants were able to enter Australia, a furore of anxiety and anguish was whipped up over the comparatively very small number of asylum seekers.

The Australia of 1990, then, for all its increasing neoliberal economic and social architecture, was a more benign environment than that of seventeen years later. *Lucky Miles* is not just a comedy, it trades on a nostalgia for a more humane time. This nostalgia is present even in the film’s title. Arun is the one boat person to escape being rounded up. He is sitting in a deserted petrol station which doubles as a bus stop. It has obviously had this role for a long time. Behind Arun there is a scene painted onto the wall. In art deco style there is a coach set into a tropical landscape signalled by two palm trees. Beneath the scene is the phrase “Lucky Miles”. It would seem that this is an old advertisement for a long-gone bus company, a sign from a more hopeful, yet also racist, past. Australia moved from using imperial units, inherited from Great Britain, to the more generally used metric units in 1974, during Gough Whitlam’s time as prime minister. In 1973, Whitlam formally abrogated the White Australia Policy in favour of non-discriminatory migration. 1974 was before the first Vietnamese boat people arrived on the north Australian coast; that was in 1976 and, indeed, before the establishment of multiculturalism as a government policy. Thus, the very title, *Lucky Miles*, conjures a time when Australia was still closely linked to Britain and before any thought of a threat from asylum seekers. Was this a lucky time? Donald Horne had published his attack on Australian complacency, *The Lucky Country*, in 1964. The title was ironic. Horne wanted to point out in his book that Australia’s success had come in spite of poor leadership and a lack of innovative forward-thinking. The greater irony was that, within two decades, the phrase was being used without irony as a description of the quality of life available in Australia. Moreover, setting *Lucky Miles* in 1990 places it in a time when Bob Hawke was still prime minister, a time before the Howard government set about radicalising Paul Keating’s neoliberal policies, which he instituted first as treasurer in Hawke’s Labor government and subsequently as prime minister, a time before the 9/11 attacks of 2001 in the United States and before the so-called War on Terror. This was also the time before the *Tampa* affair, Operation Relex

and the militarisation of Australia's border; and before the establishment of immigration detention centres beyond Australia's border, in other Pacific countries—the so-called Pacific Solution.

The Border and the Neoliberal, Gothic Other

In Chapter 5 I explained that, in the traditional state, where the juridico-legal order marked out the space of the state, as Prem Kumar Rajaram and Carl Grundy-Warr argue: “The border . . . is a transformative and creative instrument; it marks the transition from a state of anarchy to one of order, thus enabling a narrative of justice and recognition centering on the clarification of what form of life or living constitutes belonging and what constitutes non-belonging” (2007, xii). In philosophical terms this was metaphorised as the classic version of the state of nature as described by Thomas Hobbes in *Leviathan* (1651), the place inhabited by the racial Other. How, then, are people beyond the state's border thought about? I want to start thinking about this by referring to Judith Butler's conceptualisation of the abject. Butler is writing about the formation of the gendered subject:

This exclusionary matrix by which subjects are formed thus requires the simultaneous production of a domain of abject beings, those who are not yet “subjects”, but who form the constitution outside of the domain of the subject. The abject designates here precisely those “unlivable” and “uninhabitable” zones of social life which are nevertheless densely populated by those who do not enjoy the status of the subject, but whose living under the sign of the “unlivable” is required to circumscribe the domain of the subject. This zone of uninhabitability will constitute the defining limit of the subject's domain; it will constitute the site of dreaded identification against which—and by virtue of which—the domain of the subject will circumscribe its own claim to autonomy and to life. In this sense, then, the subject is constituted through the force of exclusion and abjection, one which produces a constitutive outside to the subject, an abjected outside, which is, after all, “inside” the subject as its own founding repudiation. (1993, 3)

I have quoted this at length because, while Butler is writing about gender, her metaphor is spatial and her description of the abjected Other beyond the border meshes well with the way the modern state has traditionally functioned. The state was formed simultaneously with the production of a domain, identified philosophically as the state of nature, of abject beings, the racialised Other who, historically, have been denied the status of citizen; indeed, as it happens, very often of subject. The border marked

this separation. One way of thinking about these abject people is that they do not have access to the rights and entitlements, and the quality of life, of those who are citizens of the state.

Butler writes about the subject’s “dreaded identification” with the dense population of “the zone of uninhabitability”. The fear, we might say interpreting this, of recognising oneself, as a white citizen, in the abject racial Other. Dread describes a very powerful emotion. It should remind us of those tropes of modernity which, sometimes gathered under the rubric of the Gothic, unsettle, disturb and threaten the citizen’s everyday life. Immanuel Kant, in his *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*, described the experience of what he called the terrifying sublime as “a certain dread, or melancholy” (1799, 47–8). Introducing the Gothic, Fred Botting writes that:

Gothic terrors activate a sense of the unknown and project an uncontrollable and overwhelming power which threatens not only the loss of sanity, honour, property and social standing but the very order which supports and is regulated by the coherence of those terms. The terror and horror of transgression in Gothic writing become a powerful means to reassert the values of society, virtue and propriety: transgression, by crossing the social and aesthetic limits, serves to reinforce or underline their value and necessity, restoring or defining limits. (2001, 5)

For Botting, here, the ultimate Gothic terror is the uncontrollable and overwhelming power which transgressively crosses what I shall call the border and, in doing so, brings into that ordered, let me now say juridico-legal, realm the chaos, or in Rajaram and Grundy-Warr’s word anarchy, that exists beyond the border. This is the nameless horror of the Other, the monster, like the creature in Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818) or the destructive creature in Ridley Scott’s film, *Alien* (1979)—the title is worth a little thought in the context of my argument; “alien” had been used in Australia, as it had in Britain, for a non-naturalised foreigner since before the First World War when “enemy aliens” were interned⁴—which is not named, where naming places something within an established epistemological order, and so remains fundamentally outcast.

At this point we need to remember that in Australia, and indeed in Europe, the anxiety over those described as asylum seekers began as elements of the neoliberal state were beginning to be put in place. In 2000 Mares interviewed Philip Ruddock, at that time Minister for Immigration. For Ruddock, these few asylum seekers who were arriving by boat on Australia’s shores metamorphose into the Gothic terror of Australia being overwhelmed by the 21.5 million refugees that the Office of the United

Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimated were displaced in 1998. Ruddock says: “The issue of principle is that there are people who have refugee requirements, and here is Australia. Why not take 21 million? You tell me. Why not 21 million?” (Mares 2002, 111). We can hear his dread.

Discussing those described as illegal migrants Catherine Dauvergne notes that:

By the late 1960s, it [“illegal”] was used in quotation marks, or as a repeat reference, once illegal immigrants had already been discussed. Now it is used without drawing any special attention at all. (2008, 10)

In other words, it has been during the ascendancy of neoliberalism that “illegal” has become a noun to describe a category of people. Those described as illegals are, in actuality, not named. Rather, like the Gothic monster, they are placed outside of the state, an empty category containing the anxieties of those who live their everyday lives in the neoliberal order provoking the dread that they might cross the border and bring the anarchy, the state of nature, out there, in here, into the, in this case, Australian nation-state.

Visualising the Border Threat: Children of Men

To appreciate how this dread works, we can turn to one of the most celebrated films of 2006, *Children of Men*. The film was nominated for three Oscars including for Best Writing (Adapted Screenplay), and won the Saturn Award for Best Science Fiction Film from the Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy & Horror Films. It took around \$US70 million worldwide and was the most watched film in Britain the weekend of its release. Clearly, the film spoke to many people’s anxieties. *Children of Men* was directed and co-written by Alfonso Cuarón.

Children of Men is set in 2027. Based on a dystopian novel by P. D. James, Cuarón’s *Children of Men* highlights a world that has, indeed, been overwhelmed by asylum seekers and refugees. Britain is the only country left with a functioning government, though, as in the book, parliamentary democracy appears to have been replaced by some form of authoritarian dictatorship—as it happens the type of government not only reminiscent of Hobbes’s theory of state power but also that favoured by those who advocate neoliberal policies. Barry Hindess explains that, in Hobbes’s understanding of sovereign rule:

the sovereign is in no way bound by the desires or moral concerns of its subjects. Subjects may disagree with the sovereign's actions on moral or other grounds, but their disagreement gives them no right to withhold their allegiance or to replace one sovereign by another. In Hobbes' view of the constitution of sovereignty, then, there is no scope for anyone to question the legitimacy of the rule to which they are subjected. (1996, 48)

Neoliberalism has a strong affinity with authoritarian government. As I discussed in Chapter 2, Friedrich Hayek was a supporter of Augusto Pinochet's right-wing dictatorship in Chile. This was not just a personal preference, rather an extension of Hayek's neoliberal ideology. In *Children of Men*, the authoritarian government protects the country's borders with military zeal. More, the army patrol the city streets picking up illegal migrants. The border now pervades the state.

The breakdown in social order is implicitly attributed to the overwhelming pressure of the illegal migrants. The film, and the book, lift off from many of the assumptions of neoliberal, and neoconservative, ideology. That the film spells out some of the logic, and consequences, of neoliberalism may well have been a contributing factor in its popularity with critics—that is to say, the film gains much of its emotional power from triggering shared fears that are the consequence of neoliberal and neoconservative practices. Illegal immigrants in large cages pepper the streets of London and the sleepy seaside town of Bexhill-on-Sea has been transformed into an enormous detention centre secured by the army. Bexhill is portrayed as a totally disordered, Hobbesian state of nature. Like the London cages it is full of British people's most feared racial Others; blacks, Eastern Europeans, Arabs and a very few Muslim women identifiable by their hijabs. If the border gives way then what little difference there remains between the order of the state and the disorder of the state of nature will be erased and the limit-case of the state of exception will be materialised.

Dauvergne remarks that: “We imagine illegals as poor and brown and destitute” (2008, 16). However, this is only partly correct. While Dauvergne's “we” is clearly positioned as white, the racialised identification of illegals will be inflected by the particular anxieties of the members of any particular white, developed state. In Australia, historically, the fear has been about an influx of “yellow” people, of east Asians. This is based in the longstanding fear of “Asian invasion”. Robert Dixon (1995) has discussed the fictional literature related to this anxiety around the time of federation. Nikos Papastergiadis (2004) has connected the long-term Australian concern with Asian invasion to the political practices of Howard. Interestingly, since the last two decades of the twentieth century,

asylum seekers were increasingly less characterised as Asian and more as Muslims from the Middle East. Thus, for example, Hurriyet Babacan and Narayan Gopalkrishnan argue that, during the early 2000s, the Howard government's anti-Muslim rhetoric:

impacted on asylum seekers from the Middle East. Most of the boat people arriving in Australia during the 1990s and into 2001 were of Islamic backgrounds (mainly from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Bangladesh and Pakistan). A convenient connection was made by the Australian government between asylum seekers and terrorists in public discourse. Muslim asylum seekers were portrayed as a collective group to be feared and treated with suspicion. (2008, 148)

It should be noted that this shift in stigmatisation has taken place at the same time that increasing numbers of Indians and Chinese have entered Australia on forms of skilled work visas allowing variously temporary and permanent residency. I discuss this in Chapter 8.

James's original book version of *Children of Men* centres on the horrifying idea that, suddenly, women stop getting pregnant and no more children are born—a consequence of the male sperm count declining to zero. While this idea that there have been no children born for eighteen years is central to the narrative of the film, it is the dystopian world in which the story is set that lives in one's memory. As Slavoj Žižek says: "The film is there in the background and it is crucial to leave it there in the background" because, he argues, only then will the horror of that world be fully apparent (2007). Cuarón is Mexican. In an interview with Richard von Busack he placed the film's background in the context of American attempts to stop Mexican immigration and explained that:

I have to question the ethics of borders when there is humanity in need. When we start segregating ourselves from what humanity needs . . . we lose more and more of the sense of humanity as a whole. (2007)

Nevertheless, the image of a world without borders which he presents in *Children of Men* is of a disastrous state of nature where, without borders, the state of exception is, indeed, becoming the norm.

Reflections on Paradise

As a piece of comedic realism *Lucky Miles* does not carry the dystopian loading of *Children of Men*. An important element in this lack is the nostalgic positioning of the film in the early years of neoliberal policies in

Australia. Where *Children of Men* is set in a future and exaggerates the possibilities inherent in the neoliberal worldview, *Lucky Miles* is set in the past and minimises these. In *Lucky Miles* asylum seekers do not carry the level of anarchic threat that is present in the apocalyptic future of *Children of Men*.

When the asylum seekers are disembarked on that remote beach, nowhere near a road and a bus stop as they had been promised, the skipper of the Indonesian boat, Muluk, played by Sawung Jabo, says to himself in Bahasa Indonesia: “Welcome to paradise.” He is being ironic. For the viewer the ironies are many. The first is the connection between the idea of paradise and idea of Australia as the lucky country—which, as we have seen, is itself a complicated phrase when applied to Australia. Also, through the nineteenth century the phrase “workingman’s paradise” was often used to describe Australia. In *Inventing Australia*, Richard White notes that it “was most often heard” in the 1880s (1981, 41). Indeed, so common was the phrase that, in 1892, William Lane could publish the ironically titled *The Workingman’s Paradise*, his novel attacking the conditions in which Australian workers were forced to labour. Lane later left Australia to form a utopian community called New Australia in Paraguay. We should remember that this Australian workingman’s paradise was for white men. The radical nationalist magazine, *The Bulletin*, founded in 1880, carried “Australia for the White Man” on its masthead until 1961 when, under the ownership of Frank Packer, that same Donald Horne who later was to publish *The Lucky Country* was appointed as the magazine’s editor and deleted the phrase.

In 1903, Joseph Furphy, under the pen name Tom Collins, published *Such Is Life*. Tom Collins is the name of the Aboriginal army reservist in *Lucky Miles* played by Sean Mununggurr. The book purports to be extracts from the Collins’ diaries. Collins was supposedly a white colonial. Giving the name to an indigenous Australian offers another irony, then, for knowledgeable viewers—an irony compounded in an unfortunate way for viewers who also know that in Furphy’s time the name “Tom Collins” had negative connotations as it was a slang term applied to rumours and gossip, and those who spread them. In 1893, Banjo Paterson had published a poem about rumour in *The Bulletin* titled “Tom Collins”. The book begins with an exclamation full of irony: “Unemployed at last!” As such, the novel is another example of the disillusionment of the period with the idea of Australia as a workingman’s paradise.

Muluk’s comment, then, has many complex resonances for Australians. These signal for *Lucky Miles*’s audience that the asylum seekers are not where they think they are in a number of ways. They are not near a bus

stop, but also they think they are in a rich Western country which will treat them well. We know they will soon find out their mistake. By 1990 this paradise is beginning to guard its borders with detention camps.

The asylum seekers quickly split up into their two ethnic groups, Cambodians and Iraqis. The decision to use these two groups is intriguing. Cambodians signify the older, “Asian invasion” anxieties of white Australians. They also echo the Cambodian boat people who arrived in the late 1980s and early 1990s. These Iraqi asylum seekers were fleeing the autocratic rule of Saddam Hussein, either before or after the First Gulf War when the United States at the head of a coalition of forces invaded Iraq in January 1991 after Iraq occupied Kuwait in August 1990. However, watching the film in 2007, the immediate referent is the Second Gulf War which started in 2003 when the United States again invaded Iraq with Australia as an ally. The second war was much more unpopular with Australians than the first war and, unlike the First Gulf War, was not sanctioned by the United Nations. With this reference, the Iraqi asylum seekers would have more sympathy from film viewers. Nevertheless, Iraqis have come to be associated with the concern of the 1990s and, especially, 2000s with Muslims and the threat of terrorism. As Elisabeth Porter writes with reference to attitudes during the period of the Howard government:

Senior politicians fostered people’s fear of terrorist threats by promoting the idea that the mainly Afghani and Iraqi asylum-seekers might be criminals, terrorists and morally shallow people who do shocking things like throw their children into the sea. There is an “associative logic of racism” at work here, whereby these claims about asylum-seekers are attached to Arab-Australians and Muslims in general. (Porter 2003; see also Hage 2002)

With the exception of one man from each group they are all soon taken into custody. We see no more of them. Whatever happens to them—incarceration at the Port Hedland detention centre, most probably—is not shown. In the main, Australia functions as an empty backdrop against which the asylum seekers, with their hopes and fears, allegiances and enmities, are humanised.

Protecting the Australian Border—Or Not

The strangest element in this humanisation is the framing story of Arun. At the very start of the film we see Arun’s father in Phnom Penh about to leave Huoy, his pregnant Cambodian girlfriend, to go back to Perth. He

tells her it will only be for a few weeks. She obviously does not believe him. He gives her his business card and says that she should contact him if she has any problems. He speaks very poor French, which she points out to him when he addresses her as “vous”, a mode of address used in formal situations and between masters and servants—not within the family or between lovers. French, we should remember was the colonial language. The Australian Peter Coade, perhaps, can be read as poorly replicating French colonialism—I shall not dwell on the obvious pun of his name. It should make the viewer wonder about the nature of the couple’s relationship, about the power relations through which it takes place. In this context it is worth remembering that, in 1972, Australia was still eliminating the last formal remnants of the White Australia Policy, to the dismay of many Australians.

Yet, the Australia of 1990 that we get to see, which is understandably very little because all the Australian scenes until the final one are shot in the remote outback, remains very white. The people in the pub, both when the Cambodians arrive looking for water and when the pub is crowded and the patrons are watching the news of the apprehension of the asylum seekers, all appear to be Anglo-Australians. The police who come to pick up the Cambodian asylum seekers are also Anglo-Australians. The only non-white Australians we see are the two Indigenous army reservists who, along with another Anglo-Australian, spend much of the film rather incompetently, if humorously, searching for the remaining asylum seekers. Given the ideological thrust of the film, I suspect that viewers are supposed to read this positively as the integration of Indigenous Australians into positions of authority in the management of Australia’s borders. However, if we remember the argument in Chapter 5 about the militarisation of the neoliberal border then we need to think of these two men as being co-opted into the military protection of white Australia. This co-option is especially ironic given the role of the military in the Northern Territory National Emergency Response which was taking place as *Lucky Miles* was being released. This Australia of 1990, then, which many viewers will think of as the present-day Australia when they are watching the film, could be the Australia of 1972—or, indeed, earlier as there are not even any representatives of the post-Second World War European migrants. In this way, again, the film panders to the prejudices of Anglo-Australia in order to get across its humanitarian message.

Coade, who, his business card tells us, works in Engineering and Construction, never returns to Cambodia. Whether Coade simply stays in Perth and forgets his Cambodian liaison or whether the Khmer Rouge takeover of the country and the ensuing genocide made returning impossible

we do not know. Certainly there is no reason to think that, after the Khmer Rouge were overthrown, Coade went looking for his lost lover and their child. In 1990, when Arun lands on the Australian coast, he has with him his father's business card. His purpose is to visit his father. Why? We are not told. Perhaps he just wants to meet his father. Perhaps he wants to live with him in Australia. Perhaps he wants a job. Or perhaps Arun wants to ask his father why, when he knew he was not going to be returning to Cambodia, he didn't send for his pregnant girlfriend. Whatever it is, Arun's quest subverts the narrative of the film. He is not, in the first instance, an asylum seeker. He is an Asian man looking for his white, Australian father. It is, then, not surprising given the anxiety, perhaps better dread, around asylum seekers, that he should be the only one to make it past the border.

This he succeeds in doing with the help of a kangaroo shooter. In the horror film, *Wolf Creek*, as I argued in Chapter 4, the serial killing kangaroo shooter Mick Taylor patrols the border murdering those considered unsuitable to live in Australia—many of them, as it happens, Europeans, either tourists or descendants of the post-Second World War migrants. As a neoliberal figure, he operates outside of the law. In *Lucky Miles* the unnamed kangaroo shooter, played by hard-man actor Gerard Kennedy, appears just as awful, and, as it happens, he is working in the same vastness where Taylor lives. He meets Arun when he mistakes him for a kangaroo and almost shoots him. He is taciturn in the extreme and we, the viewers, like Arun, do not know what his plans are for Arun. It is the moment of highest anxiety in the film, the moment when the Gothically constructed neoliberal anxieties of *Jindabyne* and *Wolf Creek*, and *Children of Men*, leak briefly into this comedy. Finally, though, the kangaroo shooter drops Arun off at a bus stop where he can, indeed, catch a bus to Perth—it is this bus stop that carries the advertisement for the Lucky Miles bus company. Like Gregory and Taylor, this kangaroo shooter seems to defend, in a free enterprise way, the Australian border. Why does he allow Arun in? For Australian viewers, this is a moment of confliction. The film asks us to side with Arun on his quest and, therefore, to feel grateful to the kangaroo shooter for his humanitarianism in helping Arun, but, at the same time, through the Howard years, Australians have been schooled in protecting the border against entry from asylum seekers.⁵ We see this earlier in the film when the barmaid at an outback pub rings the police to tell them that a group of Asian men have come in wanting to know how to get to Perth. As Mares writes, criticising the Australian public's acceptance of the treatment of asylum seekers: "We assuage our collective conscience with the thought that the asylum seekers may be

criminals or terrorists-in-waiting” (2002, 246). From this point of view this kangaroo shooter is being un-Australian in allowing Arun into the country.

In the next scene Arun is knocking on his father’s door. He still lives at the same address as is on the card. We see the scene from inside the house. A woman calls out; a man, Peter Coade eighteen years older, says that he will go to the door. He opens it. Arun is framed by the doorway. He asks, in good English, unlike his father’s poor French and seemingly non-existent Khmer: “Hello; Mr Peter Coade?” Coade asks: “What can I do for you, son?” Another irony, the Australian colloquialism is realised but Coade does not know this yet. What are we to make of this extraordinary scene? In their review of the film on ABC’s *At the Movies*, Margaret Pomeranz and David Stratton like this conclusion:

Margaret: I love the discipline of the ending. I think it is the most beautiful ending.

David: It is a very nice ending (2007).

We can surmise that in their minds this is a moment of reconciliation; Arun has found his father. He has closure and the narrative of the film is resolved. Indeed, as a metaphor, this scene can be read as the reconciliation of Asia with Australia. With this ending the film forces its viewers to forget the other asylum seekers most likely languishing in the Port Hedland detention centre.

But this ending is itself deceptive. Will Coade be pleased to see the son he fathered while working in Cambodia all those years ago? It seems he is now married, and from her accent to an Anglo-Australian woman, a member of his own race and class. What will she think of Arun’s arrival, and Coade’s behaviour during his sojourn in Phnom Penh? Did she know Coade in those days? Were they, perhaps, already in a relationship then? Were they married—after all, Coade is still living in the same house he was at that time. It would certainly seem to be a good thing for the reconciliation narrative that Arun’s mother appears to have been murdered in the Khmer Rouge killing fields. Her presence with Arun at Coade’s door would without doubt have disrupted this “most beautiful ending”. Of course, none of these questions have answers but they unsettle a narrative that is too determined, indeed too anxious, to give this comedy about asylum seekers a happy conclusion.

Arun, of course, is not white—or, is only partly so. As it happens, this part-Anglo-Australian, part-Cambodian man is played by Kenneth Moraleda who has a Filipino heritage. It is worth considering what a white Australian audience might think of Coade’s behaviour if Arun’s mother

had been white—but, of course, white people are characteristically not asylum seekers. Arun is also male. It is interesting to wonder what the audience reaction would be had he been a woman instead; if Coade had left a mother and daughter to fend for themselves through the years of Khmer Rouge violence. However, as I have mentioned, all the asylum seekers in *Lucky Miles* are male. What are we to make of this? Certainly it decreases the emotional loading of the film, allowing it to be more of a comedy. It also enables the film to erase the memories of those female asylum seekers who died in the tragedy of the SIEV X which sank in October 2001 killing 353 people when Australian naval ships did not come to their rescue. 142 of these people were women. I have discussed them in Chapter 4. This history, and the history of the treatment of all the female asylum seekers, is erased by the film's focus on male asylum seekers, making the Australian government appear less hostile, less morally culpable, and therefore enabling white Australian audiences to feel better about themselves and the government that represents them.

It is no coincidence that Arun, with a white father, is the only one of the people from the boat to avoid being rounded up. Arun, we might say, is not, or not entirely, one of those 21 million abject, racial Others that Ruddock was so fearful would want to come to Australia. Being part white, Arun is also partly humanised. Perhaps this is what the threatening kangaroo shooter realised when he allowed Arun into the country and enabled him to reach Perth. Arun is a product, both literally and metaphorically, of Australia in Asia. As such, he also signifies the ongoing difference between Australia and Asia. For this film, Australia remains a white nation in Asia. When Muluk makes his ironic remark about Australia being paradise as he turns the boat round for the trip back to Indonesia he is signalling this fundamental distinction.

Arun can also be read as the uncanny return of the repressed. In this reading Cambodia is a displacement for Vietnam. In a review on the web for the 2007 Chicago International Film Festival, Marilyn Ferdinand mistakenly writes that: "The film begins . . . in Cambodia in 1972, as an Australian soldier bids farewell to his Khmer lover" (2007). Australia joined the United States in the Vietnam War in 1962. Australian troops pulled out (pun intended) of Vietnam in 1973, the year after Arun's father left Cambodia. Arun stands in for the Vietnamese asylum seekers, the people who came to Australia by boat and gave the name "boat people" to all who followed them. Australia accepted 137,000 Vietnamese refugees just as the White Australia Policy had been finally laid to rest. The first boat arrived in Darwin in 1976. The presence of these people in Australia can be read as a consequence of Australia in Asia, of Australia's military

and political, and indeed colonial, presence in the region. Arun’s biography parallels this other, dark history. The histories of Cambodia and Vietnam have been inextricably linked. Indeed, Ben Kiernan argues that the success of the Khmer Rouge in gaining power in Cambodia was linked to the American bombing of Cambodia as part of their attempt to stop Viet Cong forces moving into South Vietnam (1996, *passim*). Arun is a reminder of Australia’s involvement in the Vietnam War and the complex feelings of responsibility that that aroused in Australia. The film trades on liberal guilt about that war, as well as on a nostalgia for the radical activism of the 1960s and early 1970s, for what is now regarded as a time long gone.⁶

Lucky Miles narrates a time before neoliberalism was more fully deployed in Australia. Of the group of three characters whom the film follows after the bulk of the asylum seekers have been rounded up only the Iraqi, Youssif Al-Samir, played by Rodney Afif, is an asylum seeker, the others are Arun and Muluk’s clumsy nephew, Ramelan, played by Srisad Saccpraseuth, who accidentally sets fire to their boat forcing the Indonesian people smugglers to abandon it. It is one of *Lucky Miles*’s many ironies that Youssif, like Coade, is a fully qualified engineer. T. Fred Smith writes that, “data extracted from the 1991 Census reveals that 31,369 (44.2 per cent) out of all 70,910 persons holding degree level qualifications in engineering resident in Australia were born overseas and that, of these, 12,082 arrived in Australia in the period 1986–91” (1996, 67). However, as an asylum seeker rather than an applicant for a long-term or permanent residency, Youssif will be compulsorily detained.

In a scene near the film’s end Youssif finally has his chance to ask for asylum. The person he asks is the Indigenous army reservist named Tom Collins. The resonances here are complicated. Geoffrey Partington tells us that: “[Furphy’s] concern was with groups which could not or would not join together with the majority population, but he was willing to welcome as mates individuals who were able and willing to make the effort. His novels depict numerous bullockies and other workers of many varied ethnic origins who have been fully accepted by the native-born” (1998, 27). Thus, it would seem, Collins, the author of *Such Is Life*, might have been favourably disposed towards Youssif in his plight. We need, though, to think a little more about giving an Indigenous man the name of the white, pseudonymous author of that book. Partington tells us that Furphy, “had no time for what have now become termed ‘black armband’ contact histories” (1998, 27) and:

He believed that all people born in Australia were “indigenous” and determined that it should always be their home. Although he had little

confidence that it would easily or quickly be achieved, Furphy hoped that a way would be found towards genuine equality of condition between Aborigines and other Australians. (1998, 29)

It would be wrong simply to accept that the views of Furphy and his alter-ego were the same. Nevertheless, Partington writes that in *Such Is Life*:

At Runnymede Station, the Aboriginal stockman, Toby, is presented as a very positive figure. Toby has racial pride and claims “Why, properly speaking, I own this here (adj.) country as fur as the eye can reach”. Yet Toby also identifies with much of White Australia, including a loyalty to New South Wales in sporting contest with upstart Port Phillipers. Toby also shows himself a true mate by his fondness for Collins’ kangaroo dog Pup. (1998, 28)

In Toby, Furphy as Collins has created the colonialist’s fantasy Aborigine; the one who can acknowledge that he no longer owns the land, only owns it “properly speaking,” and who is assimilated enough to practice mateship, enjoy sport and barrack for New South Wales. *Lucky Miles* points up the politics of this characterisation by making the film’s Tom Collins Indigenous—not “indigenous” in the sense that everyone born in Australia could be described as indigenous, as Partington signals Furphy, and probably Collins, believed. At the same time, this Collins is, as I have noted, a member of the Australian army reserve. He is, then, assimilated in the sense that he has entered the military which defends the Australian state but he retains his culture enough to be an expert tracker, a skill he uses in the service of the state. This Collins, like Toby, is “properly speaking” the owner of the territory over which he and his colleagues travel. This is the complexity at the heart of his acceptance of Youssif’s request for asylum—a request which, in the years to come, the Howard government would struggle hard to ensure could not be made by those seeking asylum by excising Australia’s northern islands from the migration zone and using the navy to patrol the seas and turn back approaching boatloads of asylum seekers. We cannot know if Collins’ acceptance of Youssif’s request is made as a member of the local Indigenous land-owners or as a representative of the Australian state. Of course, since, even with native title rights, Collins’ ownership of the land is subjugated to the sovereignty of the Australian state, in the end this question is always already resolved.

Making Arun the dominant character, rather than Youssif, provokes the film’s nostalgia—a yearning for a lost pre-neoliberal yet always racist Australian paradise. During the 1990s and early 2000s the bulk of boat

people arriving in Australia were not the east Asians that Australians were used to as boat people. Rather, they were mainly Iraqis, Afghans, Turks, Iranians and Sri Lankans. It is these people, often Muslims, who have been caught up in the neoliberal reconstruction of the border as the state is transformed into a state of exception. These are the people who have been constructed as unskilled and therefore unwanted and a potential burden in Australia’s renovated, skills-intensive economy—as it happens, Youssif identifies himself as a fully qualified structural engineer. It is these people who were detained on Manus Island and Nauru as part of the Pacific Solution. These are the people who, as a nameless Other, have been constructed as possible terrorists and as a threat to Australian sovereignty and, indeed, as Muslims and, therefore, as a threat to Australia’s secular, though in reality Christian-founded, way of life. These are the people who, attempting to cross the border, precipitate the dread of the neoliberal, increasingly authoritarian state. The marker for *Lucky Miles*’s nostalgia is that seemingly kindly, white, kangaroo shooter who nevertheless, like the enterprising, serial-killing kangaroo shooter in *Wolf Creek*, protects Australia’s border. Certainly, at the least, he is able to make a decision about who should be turned over to the authorities and who he will help. I wonder if he would have been so kindly if it had been Youssif whom he found in his gun sights.

CHAPTER SEVEN

TROUBLE WITH ZOMBIES: *MUSELMÄNNER*, BARE LIFE AND DISPLACED PEOPLE

This chapter is about the relationship between zombies and displaced people, most obviously refugees, asylum seekers and illegal immigrants. It is founded on a realisation that the underlying characteristics of zombies are similar to those attributed to displaced people—people, predominantly from non-Western states, striving for entry into Western states. The chapter begins from the recognition that during the 2000s there has been a tremendous increase in the number of films released featuring zombies. At the same time, zombies have started appearing in other media. A video game series called *Resident Evil*, which includes biologically mutated flesh-eating undead, founded a genre now called “survival horror.” Released originally for Sony PlayStation in 1996, by 30 September 2004, the various forms of the game had sold over 25 million units (see CAPCOM 2004). In 2002 it spawned a film also called *Resident Evil*. The film became the fourteenth highest grossing “R” rated film in the United States that year and the fiftieth highest grossing film globally (Box Office Mojo 2002). There are now two sequels. In 2009, Quirk Books released *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, a mash-up in which author Seth Grahame-Smith introduced zombies into Jane Austen’s 1813 romance novel. The book became an instant success. In April it had reached the third spot on the New York Times bestseller list and by the end of the year it had sold over 700,000 copies (Merritt 2009). Such was the success of the revisioned novel that Quirk Books were inspired to commission a prequel, Steve Hockensmith and Patrick Arrasmith’s *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies: Dawn of the Dreadfuls*.

At the same time, since the 1990s, there has been an increasing anxiety in Western countries over the numbers of displaced people attempting to gain entry across their borders. The reasons for this are many but not my main concern here. Certainly there has been an overall increase in refugee numbers. One set of figures released by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR 2009) tells us that where in 1960

there were 1,656,669 people classified as refugees, in 2006 this had climbed to 9,877,703. However, most of these refugees are situated in countries outside the developed West. Similarly, between 1980 and 2000 there has been a significant increase in asylum seeker applications in Europe, from around 150,000 to around 450,000 with a spike up to 700,000 in the early 1990s and in Australia and New Zealand from virtually nothing in the mid-1980s to around 5000 a year. In North America the figure increased significantly in the mid-1990s to nearly 200,000 and then declined to around 50,000 by 2000 (UNHCR 2000). Anxieties over border protection in all countries but, perhaps, especially in the West, were heightened in the wake of the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York. The link between these anxieties and concerns over displaced people attempting to gain entry to Western countries was made in, for example, *Children of Men*, released in 2006 and set in 2027, which I discussed in the previous chapter.

I will be arguing that, in many of the recent zombie films, the zombie threat can be read in terms of the fears of many members of Western countries about being overwhelmed by displaced people. What might be the justification for this connection between zombies and displaced people? The recent renaissance in zombie films lifts off from the revision of zombies in Western popular culture that is traced to George A. Romero's now classic 1968 film, *Night of the Living Dead*. This film began what is now colloquially called the zombie apocalypse trope in which entire communities, whole countries, and even the world, are subject to destruction by increasing numbers of zombies that appear from nowhere, often originating as a consequence of radiation from outer space if any rationale for their existence is proffered. In these films the zombie presence is qualitatively different from the earlier zombie trope, derived from claims about the existence of zombies in Haiti, in which witches or evil scientists turned individuals into zombies as a means of controlling them. Nevertheless, the foundational idea of the zombie as a dead person resurrected to a state that remains nearer death than life is a constant.

What audiences find most frightening in the zombie idea is not the resurrection from death but the state of living death which is the fate of the zombie. Indeed, in some films that are identified as a part of the zombie genre, such as the recent *28 Days Later*, the person doesn't even die before turning into what is now being described as a zombie. In this case, if the key to the identification of a zombie is the interstitial state of being between life and death then, I will argue, the zombie takes on the characteristic of what Giorgio Agamben calls "bare life". Bare life is difficult to define because it has two aspects. The first is, for want of a

better word, social. Setting up his discussion of the relationship between bare life and aesthetics, Anthony Downey writes that:

Lives lived on the margins of social, political, cultural, economic and geographical borders are lives half lived. Denied access to legal, economic and political redress, these lives exist in a limbo-like state that is largely preoccupied with acquiring and sustaining the essentials of life. The refugee, the political prisoner, the disappeared, the victim of torture, the dispossessed—all have been excluded, to different degrees, from the fraternity of the social sphere, appeal to the safety net of the nation-state and recourse to international law. They have been outlawed, so to speak, placed beyond recourse to law and yet still in a precarious relationship to law itself. (2009, 109)

Members of all these groups, including displaced people, can be thought of as experiencing bare life in its modern form.

Bare life also describes the existential state of a person placed in this circumstance. Following Agamben, I will argue that the typifying existential state is that to which many Jews were reduced in the concentration and death camps of Nazi Germany, a person in this condition was called in many camps a *Muselmann*. This state, often described as a living death, closely resembles that of the zombie. The difference being that zombies, living after death, are portrayed as fundamentally threatening to the living while the *Muselmänner* lived only until their transformation into the dead was complete. The point here is twofold. First, that, excluded from the rights and privileges of the modern state, those displaced people are positioned legally as bare life. Second, in this legal limbo, these people can be treated in a way that enables them to become associated with a condition mythically exemplified in the zombie. The consequence is that not only can the zombie texts of films and other media be read as reproducing this connection, drawing on present-day anxieties to increase the terror produced by these texts, but displaced people are characterised using the same terminology that describes the threat that zombies generate in zombie apocalypse texts.

The Popularity of Zombies

Through the first decade of the twentieth-first century there has been a very significant increase in the cultural presence of zombies. In January 2006, Steven Wells, in an article in the *Guardian*, wrote that, “there were zombies everywhere in 2005” (cited in Bishop 2009, 19). That same year, in March, Warren St. John in the *New York Times* commented that: “In

films, books and video games, the undead are once again on the march, elbowing past werewolves, vampires, swamp things and mummies to become the post-millennial ghoul of the moment” (cited in Bishop 2009, 19). What St. John’s remark signals is something quite important, that it is not just that there has been an increase in visibility of zombies as a consequence of their appearance in an increased number of texts but that this increase outstrips other conventional horror characters such as werewolves and vampires. Agamben has discussed the werewolf and I shall return to this creature later.

Here, it is worth noting that vampires have also recently enjoyed a renaissance in popularity. At the end of *Our Vampires, Ourselves*, Nina Auerbach writes that: “The reversibility of vampirism in 1980s movies . . . suggests that at the end of the twentieth century, vampirism is wearing down and vampires need a long restorative sleep” (1995, 192). That sleep did not last long. In the late 1990s Angel and Spike appeared in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, helping to start the shift to more humanised vampires that could be love objects. Since then, vampires have appeared in the four Twilight books by Stephenie Meyer, the first of which was published in 2005, and the immensely popular film, *Twilight*, made from the books, was released in 2008 with a sequel, *The Twilight Saga: New Moon*, being released the following year. In 2008 *Twilight* was the seventh highest grossing film in the United States (Box Office Mojo 2008). Among other recent texts, vampires also feature in a number of television series. *Moonlight* ran for one season in late 2007 and early 2008. The protagonist was a private investigator who was also a vampire. His love interest was a mortal woman who was a reporter. The show achieved a cult following and was very successful with adults in the 18–49 range. Originally broadcast on CBS in the United States, signalling its particular popularity with women it was rerun on the CW television channel which its President of Entertainment has said is aimed at women in the 18 to 34 demographic (“The CW Television Network” 2010). *The Vampire Diaries*, in which a mortal woman becomes romantically entangled with vampires, began in September 2009 on CW. It rapidly won its time-slot for a female viewing audience aged up to 34. In these texts vampires, which, to put it quickly, used to suggest, among other things, forbidden sexual desire, now, in a more liberated time, constitute the love interest.¹ Vampires are also a key character component of HBO cable television network’s *True Blood* series which is based on Charlaine Harris’s *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* novels first published in 2001. In these texts vampires are either the source of forbidden romance or are integrated problematically into everyday society, or both. Vampires, then, have lost their traditional fear factor and

are positioned more as a strange Other who have different cultural ways and are sometimes still a threat but one generally manageable. In other words, coming out of an American society dealing with major changes in its racial profile, these vampire texts suggest a racial reading, one in which the dominant society is struggling to come to terms with a rapidly changing racial order. As we shall see, zombies can also be read racially but this reading has them as a racial threat to Western civilisation.

There is nothing benign about zombies. In short, as Simon Pegg (2008), the writer of, and actor in, *Shaun of the Dead*, a British zombie film released in 2004, remarks: “As monsters from the id, zombies win out over vampires and werewolves when it comes to the title of Most Potent Metaphorical Monster.” It needs to be noted that Pegg has an ahistorical view of these monsters. He writes that:

Where their pointy-toothed cousins are all about sex and bestial savagery, the zombie trumps all by personifying our deepest fear: death. Zombies are our destiny writ large. Slow and steady in their approach, weak, clumsy, often absurd, the zombie relentlessly closes in, unstoppable, intractable. (2008)

As I have argued, the sex and bestial savagery of vampires have now been tamed into a disturbing and disruptive cultural difference, fear transformed into a romantic frisson, within a cultural pluralist multiculturalism. And the fear of zombies is now not so much about death as of those excluded from Western societies who seem to be threatening civilisation as we, in the West, know it.

Zombies, then, have become the most important mythic monster at the present time. Peter Dendle, in an astute discussion of the zombie phenomenon, “The Zombie As Barometer of Cultural Anxiety,” published in 2007, writes about “the resurgence of zombie movie popularity in the early 2000s” (2007, 54). For him, this “has been linked with the events of September 11, 2001” (2007, 54). Making a different, but still generalising, claim to Pegg’s, Dendle goes on to argue that,

apocalypticism has always been ingrained into the archetypal psyche of any society defining itself—as all human endeavours must—in the context of history and time. The possibility of wide-scale destruction and devastation which 9-11 brought once again into the communal consciousness found a ready narrative expression in the zombie apocalypses which over thirty years had honed images of desperation subsistence and amoral survivalism to a fine edge. (2007, 54)

Following Dendle, Kyle Bishop makes a similar point: “Although the conventions of the zombie genre remain largely unchanged, the movies’ relevance has become all the more clear—a post-9/11 audience cannot help but perceive the characteristics of zombie cinema through the filter of terrorist threats and apocalyptic reality” (2009, 24). As we shall see, there is certainly a link between zombies and a terrorist threat that is claimed to be of Islamic origin. And, it can be argued, as both Dendle and Bishop have done, that 9/11 had a considerable impact on the American national imaginary and that this is expressed in the way that Americans make, and read, zombie films.

However, films made outside the United States, and even a recent American zombie film such as Romero’s *Land of the Dead*, released in 2005, evidence a quite different anxiety. To understand this, we need to begin with a discussion of what constitutes a zombie. Dendle argues that:

The essence of the “zombie” at the most abstract level is supplanted, stolen, or effaced consciousness; it casts allegorically the appropriation of one person’s will by another. It is no coincidence that the creature flourished in the twentieth century, a century whose broad intellectual trends were preoccupied with alienation. (2007, 47–8)

Dendle is here extrapolating from a history that refers back to the zombie as a characteristic of Haitian voodoo. In doing so he elides the recognition that the zombies of the zombie apocalypse films after Romero’s *Night of the Living Dead* are often not created by someone. They do not have will but they are not in somebody’s control. Indeed, this is one of things that make them so frightening; their existence is entirely alien. We shall see that this is one way that the zombie as terrorist threat functions. That is, while in the American, and indeed Western, imaginary, terrorists are thought to be controlled by some evil master, usually personified as Osama bin Laden, they are also thought to be a mindless threat coming from outside the West, from outside any Western country.

Dendle traces the American popular cultural interest in zombies to the American occupation of Haiti between 1915 and 1934. He writes that:

Ghosts and revenants are known world-wide, but few are so consistently associated with economy and labour as the shambling corpse of Haitian vodun, brought back from the dead to toil in the fields and factories by miserly land-owners or by spiteful *houngan* or *bokor* priests. . . . The zombie, a soulless hulk mindlessly working at the bidding of another, thus records a residual communal memory of slavery: of living a life without dignity and meaning, of going through the motions. (2007, 47)

Dendle links the rise of American interest in zombies to the Great Depression and the crisis of labour. It is an important point. In post-*Night of the Living Dead* zombie apocalypse films, the link between the zombie and slavery, and by extension the worker in a capitalist economy, has been repressed. As we shall see, in the films where the zombies can be read as displaced people, this connection is reappearing.

Joan Dayan, an anthropologist, has recently provided this description of the zombie: “Born out of the experience of slavery and the sea passage from Africa to the New World, the zombi tells the story of colonization: the reduction of human into thing for the ends of capital. For the Haitian no fate is to be more feared” (1997, 33). Dayan goes on to explain that, in the present day:

In a contemporary Caribbean of development American style, the zombi phenomenon obviously goes beyond the machinations of the local boco. As Depestre puts it, “This fantastic process of reification and assimilation means the total loss of my identity, the psychological annihilation of my being, my zombification.” And Laënnec Hurbon explains how the zombi stories produce and capitalize on an internalization of slavery and passivity, making the victims of an oppressive social system the cause: “The phantasm of the zombie . . . does nothing but attest to the fulfilment of a system that moves the victim to internalize his condition.” (1997, 33)

Dayan’s purpose is to explain how, in the present Haitian context, the zombie functions as an explanation for the destruction of Haitian culture by American colonialism disguised as development. The mindless zombie, labouring for another, becomes a way of understanding the impact of American capital on Haiti and the Caribbean more generally.

Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff make a similar point about the rise in zombie stories in South Africa. They write that:

There can be no denying the latter-day preoccupation with zombies in rural South Africa. Their existence, far from being the subject of elusive tales from the backwoods, of fantastic fables from the *veld*, is widely taken for granted. As a simple matter of fact. In recent times, respectable local newspapers have carried banner headlines like “Zombie Back from the Dead” illustrating their stories with conventional, high-realist photographs. (2002, 786–87)

The Comaroffs argue that the zombie narrative is a useful way for people who do not understand the complexities of international, neoliberal capitalism to account for how some people seemingly get rich very quickly without doing any visible work: they create zombies who work for

them and do not have to be paid. Looking over the history of zombies in Africa, the Comaroffs write that: “Zombies themselves seem to be born, at least in the first instance, of colonial encounters, of the precipitous engagement of local worlds with imperial economies that seek to exert control over the essential means of producing value, means like land and labor, space and time” (2002, 795). In other words, at a conceptual level, zombies are a local response of the colonised to the impact of colonial capitalism, a way of understanding how those capitalist practices produce wealth for some and immiseration for others.

From *Pride and Prejudice* to *Pride and Prejudice* and *Zombies*

At this point we can return to the Caribbean. Two years before Romero’s *Night of the Living Dead* revisioned the zombie trope, Jean Rhys published a book in England which is now written about as a key postcolonial novel. *Wide Sargasso Sea* is a kind of answer text, what Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin describe as a text that writes back to the book that inspired it, illuminating the colonising assumptions that underpin the earlier novel (1989, 190). In this case that novel is Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*. Published in 1847, thirty-four years after *Pride and Prejudice*, to which we shall shortly turn, *Jane Eyre* tells the story of a young woman’s rise from a straitened childhood eventually to marry Edward Rochester, the owner of Thornfield Hall. What Jane does not know until the day she is supposed to marry Rochester is that he is already married. He keeps his first wife, whom he regards as mad, locked in the attic under the ministrations of Grace Poole. This wife is Bertha Mason, the Creole woman from Jamaica whose dowry of £30,000 is the source of Rochester’s wealth. Unable to marry, Jane refuses to cohabit with Rochester and leaves. Later, Bertha escapes her prison and sets fire to the Hall, committing suicide by jumping from the roof. Rochester loses his sight and his left hand in trying to save her. Finally, though, Jane and Rochester are able to marry.

What Rhys divined was that behind this romance lay the story of an abused first wife, married for her colonial wealth and then discarded. *Wide Sargasso Sea* tells Bertha’s story. In this novel we find that Bertha was originally named Antoinette and that it is Rochester who renames her. Rhys’s narrative highlights the power imbalance between the Caribbean colonies and Britain while also showing how, at the time of the novel, much of the wealth on which Britain’s gentry depended came from these colonies in which slavery had only been abolished in 1834 and where

many remained slaves for a further six years. In a discussion of the novel, Thomas Loe has argued that the zombie is “an extremely potent central image associated with Antoinette” (1991, 35). One of its purposes would seem to be to give an exotic quality to the Caribbean as compared with the mundane realism of Rochester’s England. However, the zombie motif does other work. Loe argues that Antoinette’s mother is made into a zombie, that Antoinette tries to zombify Rochester in the hope of keeping his love, and that, most important of all for my purpose here, Rochester attempts to turn Antoinette into a zombie. For Loe, “the figure of the zombie provides Rhys with an astonishingly appropriate metaphor for dramatizing her vision of the powerless and displaced woman against [what Judith Gardiner calls] the ‘unified ideology’ of ‘capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchal domination . . .’” (1991, 41). Rochester tries to transform Antoinette as he moves her to England, attempting to remake her as a woman of the gentry, even going so far as to change her name from the French-influenced Antoinette to the solidly English Bertha. He does not succeed. Instead, Antoinette becomes “mad”, a victim of a failed zombification, displaced from her Jamaican home to an England she neither likes nor understands, caught between two cultures.

On a blog site called Boing Boing (2009), in a response to a review of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, nanuq comments: “Any classic book could be improved with a few zombies around. Charles Dickens seems a natural for that (Zombie versions of *A Tale of Two Cities* or *Oliver Twist* practically write themselves). *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* would be great too (Catherine coming back as a zombie! Mr Rochester keeping his zombie wife locked in the attic!).” nanuq does not realise that Rochester’s wife has already been made into a zombie by Rochester, a consequence of Rochester’s wanting to live off the wealth acquired by Antoinette’s family’s colonial Jamaican plantation. What is unknown in *Jane Eyre*, and remains obscure in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, is whether Bertha/Antoinette has a black ancestor. The implication, though, is that she has. Nevertheless, in metaphor Antoinette’s journey to England, her displacement, reveals the slave past in terms of a zombie present.

We can now turn to *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*. Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* remains her most popular book. It is a romance that is also a comedy of manners about the early nineteenth century English landed gentry, and its setting is restricted to England. Stimulated by the work of Edward Said there has been some debate over Austen’s awareness of the slavery in the colonial Caribbean, the plantations of which provided some of the wealth which made the life of the English gentry possible. In 1772, Lord Mansfield’s judgement in the case of a recaptured runaway slave

owned by a man from Boston visiting England, known after the slave's name as the Somersett case, established the basis for ending slavery in England. However, as I have already mentioned, slavery in the British colonies continued until the *Emancipation Act* came into force in 1834. Austen published *Pride and Prejudice* in 1813 and *Mansfield Park* in 1814.

In *Mansfield Park*, the wealth which sustains Sir Thomas Bertram and his family at the home that bears the name of the man who ended slavery in England derives from Sir Thomas's plantation in Antigua. There are problems on the plantation that require Sir Thomas's presence. Commenting on the narrative, Said remarks that: "Whatever was wrong there—and the internal evidence garnered by Warren Roberts suggests that economic depression, slavery, and competition with France were at issue—Sir Thomas was able to fix thereby maintaining his control over his colonial domain" (1993, 87). I do not want to enter the debate whether or not Austen approved of slavery—though it seems to me that the evidence points to her disapproval of it (see, for example, Fraiman 1995). Said explains that: "The Bertrams could not have been possible without the slave trade, sugar, and the colonial planter class; as a social type Sir Thomas would have been familiar to eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century readers who knew the powerful influence of this class through politics, plays, . . . and many other public activities (large houses, famous parties and social rituals, well-known commercial enterprises, celebrated marriages)" (1993, 94). Robin Blackburn (1997), in his history of British colonial slavery, argues that the wealth derived from New World slavery formed the necessary basis for the industrial revolution.

Austen's indication of the presence of slavery in the colonies, and its importance, occurs in the novel following *Pride and Prejudice*. As Suvendrini Perera remarks: "This growing visibility of the navy in *Mansfield Park* supplements the increasing presence of empire at the edges of Austen's texts; progressively, her '3 or 4 Families in a Country Village' . . . come to encompass and incorporate more extensive portions of the globe" (1991, 47). Only a decade earlier, in 1804, the slaves of Haiti had completed a successful rebellion against the French and, as Perera suggests, "the terrifying possibility of a Haiti-style rebellion in the English slave colonies had instantly become a national obsession" (1991, 20).

What then, are we to make of the zombies that increasingly threaten the social life of the gentry in *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*? As is usual in zombie apocalypse texts, we are not told whence they came. In this text, Elizabeth Bennett and her sisters are trained in martial arts so that they can act as vigilantes, killing zombies. They have visited China where

they learnt kung fu from Shaolin monks. What we do know is that zombies have been roaming the English countryside for a generation or more. We know that London has been walled and that the army moves from area to area of England trying to keep the zombies under control. We know also that zombies are comparable to “savages” because Mr Darcy remarks to Sir William Lucas that: “Every savage can dance. Why, I imagine that even zombies could do it with some degree of success” (Austen and Grahame-Smith 2009, 22). Zombies, then, have some similarity with the black slaves, who were thought of as savages, that work the colonial Caribbean plantations that supply the wealth which supports the life-style of the gentry.

Zombies do not appear to infest anywhere but England—or possibly Britain. With the connection between slavery and zombies that we have already established, we can now understand the zombie threat as a return of the repressed. Whether we read the text literally in terms of a slave revolt that has spread to England, or metaphorically as an expression of the vengeance of the enslaved Africans on which the gentry’s wealth was built, what we have is a movement of the displaced from the Caribbean colonies to England. It is a zombie apocalypse set back in the early nineteenth century that can be read as making clear the connections between English wealth and colonial slavery which, in this early novel at least, Austen had elided.

Zombies, Bare Life and Muslims

Bringing this zombie apocalypse back to the present, we can turn again to Comaroff and Comaroff. They write that:

The fear of being reduced to ghost labor, of being abducted to feed the fortunes of a depraved stranger, occurs alongside another kind of specter: a growing mass, a shadowy alien-nation, of immigrant black workers from elsewhere on the continent. Like zombies, they are nightmare citizens, their rootlessness threatening to siphon off the remaining, rapidly diminishing prosperity of the indigenous population. (2002, 789)

The Comaroffs are describing how poor, black South Africans experience the displaced people arriving in South Africa through its porous land border. One of the established themes of zombie apocalypse films is the siege—the scene where the humans seek sanctuary somewhere and find themselves surrounded and besieged by increasing numbers of zombies striving to get in.

At this point we shall turn to Romero's first film, the film that transformed the zombie genre, *Night of the Living Dead*. The film offers little more than the siege theme. Seven people find themselves trapped in a house and attempt to protect themselves from zombie attack as gradually each, except one, is killed by the zombies, or in the case of the young daughter, becomes a zombie, eating her father and killing her mother. What, ultimately, was so shocking about this film was its nihilism. The man who survives the zombie attack is himself killed in the mistaken belief that he is a zombie. The first thing to know about this low-budget, black and white film is that Romero never envisaged it as a zombie film. He thought of the creatures as ghouls. As he has said: "I never called them zombies, I called them 'flesheaters' or 'ghouls'—back then, zombies were those boys in the Caribbean who were doing wetwork for Lugosi—I never thought of them as zombies" (Rocchi 2008). Ghouls are demons that entered Western popular culture from the Arab world in the nineteenth century. They are supposed to haunt graveyards and feed on the flesh of corpses. Indeed, Romero's original title for the film was *Night of the Flesh Eaters*. The title was changed by someone at the Walter Reade Organization, the film's distributors, because of objections by the connections of a film called *The Flesh Eaters*, released in 1964. I will write about the importance of the new title later. Here, it is necessary to realise how the change of name, which was not Romero's doing, contributed to the change in the type of creature that audiences thought was being depicted. When the film was released, these were still understood to be ghouls. Roger Ebert, for example, in a review published in *Reader's Digest* in January 1969, in which he discussed his shock at the horrifying nature of the film, wrote about the creatures as ghouls.

It is unclear when the creatures became zombies but probably around the end of the 1970s. When Romero's sequel, *Dawn of the Dead* was released in the United States in 1978, he was still thinking of the creatures as ghouls. When the film was released in Italy it was called *Zombi*, and Lucio Fulci's notorious *Zombi 2* was given that title as if it was somehow related to the Romero film. In the United States, when it was released in 1980, Fulci's film was titled *Zombie*. At the same time, *Variety*, in a negative review of *Dawn of the Dead*, published in January 1979, that rivalled the paper's earlier review of *Night of the Living Dead*, described the creatures as "carnivorous corpses". In many European countries, such as Italy, Greece, West Germany and France, the film carried a title associating it with zombies. What seems to have justified the changed perception of Romero's creatures is that they were resurrected corpses.

The shift from ghouls to zombies brought a different set of connotations into play. Romero's father was a Cuban migrant. His mother was from Lithuania. Romero tells this story about his father, who always denied he was Cuban and claimed his family was from Spain: "I grew up in New York with a Spanish dad right in the days of West Side Story, where you know the Puerto Rican gangs and shit? My dad telling me Puerto Ricans are shit. I have a Latino dad who's telling me that Puerto Ricans are shit (laughs). I mean this is a very confusing situation" (Romero in interview with Lee Kerr, cited in Casares 2009). Commenting on this autobiography, Cindy Casares writes: "Perhaps this confusion is what led Romero to express his angst through monsters" (2009). Seemingly glossing Romero, she goes on: "he got the idea for a low-budget horror film with an apocalyptic theme about the invasion of a new kind of monster—a monster that was tearing the world as we knew it apart because the audience didn't know who was one and who wasn't" (2009). Could these monsters be migrants transforming America's racial structure? Eric Hamako (2009) notes that: "George Romero has raised—and critiqued—the idea of Latino immigration and zombies-as-Latinos, in at least two of his films." Of course, the audience could tell who was a monster and who was not. However, the white men hunting down the zombies in *Night of the Living Dead* seem unable to. The man who is mistaken for a zombie and shot dead is African-American. Reading this as a statement about American race relations can distract from reading the zombies as non-white migrants. These invading monsters were even more threatening than a black American who had taken charge and successfully defended the besieged house; these were mindless, living dead.

To understand what is going on here we need to think about Giorgio Agamben's idea of bare life. Bare life is key to understanding the functioning of the modern state. Indeed, the presence of bare life within the state is foundational to its form. Agamben begins by distinguishing two complementary ways of thinking about life as they are used by Aristotle. These are *zoē* and *bios*. *Zoē* is a term that unites species-being and embodiment. *Bios* can be translated as "form of life". It can be used to think about how *zoē* is lived. Agamben writes that: "In the classical world . . . simple natural life is excluded from the *polis* in the strict sense and remains confined—as merely reproductive life—to the sphere of the *oikos*, 'home'" (1998, 2). "Simple natural life" is a translation of *zoē*. This is not bare life. Bare life is the constituting feature of political life. As Agamben describes it: "*No simple natural life, but life exposed to death (bare life or sacred life) is the originary political element*" (1998, 88, Agamben's italics). Sacred life is a reference to a particular Roman legal idea. Agamben

uses it as a way of defining not only bare life and also sovereignty: “*The sovereign sphere is the sphere in which it is permitted to kill without committing homicide and without celebrating a sacrifice, and sacred life—that is, life that may be killed but not sacrificed—is the life that has been captured in this sphere*” (1998, 83, Agamben’s italics). Bare life is a description of life in a political context.

If *zoē* is simple natural life, bare life is what gives meaning to sovereignty. However, this life is revealed in its exclusion from pre-modern political life: “The sovereign and *homo sacer* are joined in the figure of an action that, excepting itself from both human and divine law, from both *nomos* and *physis*, nevertheless delimits what is, in a certain sense, the first properly political space of the West distinct from both the religious and the profane sphere, from both the natural order and the regular judicial order” (1998, 84). *Homo sacer*, and its equivalents in other pre-modern political orders, is the person who does not have the protection of the sovereign. It is not the state that has the right to kill this person reduced to bare life but anybody. This person exists on the borderline of the *polis*, both included and excluded—their inclusion making their exclusion possible. Death marks the limit of sovereignty.

Agamben goes on to make another point which will be important later in my argument: “Contrary to our modern habit of representing the political realm in terms of citizens’ rights, free will, and social contracts, from the point of view of sovereignty *only bare life is authentically political*” (1998, 106, Agamben’s italics). Here, Agamben is extending the idea of bare life into the practice of the modern state. But more of this shortly.

Agamben illustrates his point that bare life exists on the margin of the pre-modern state with a discussion of the werewolf. He explains that: “Germanic and Anglo-Saxon sources underline the bandit’s liminal status by defining him as a wolf-man” (1998, 105). The bandit was the medieval equivalent of *homo sacer*. Agamben continues:

What had to remain in the collective unconscious as a monstrous hybrid of human and animal, divided between the forest and the city—the werewolf—is, therefore, in its origin the figure of the man who has been banned from the city. That such a man is defined as a wolf . . . is decisive here. The life of the bandit, like that of the sacred man, is not a piece of animal nature without any relation to the city. It is, rather, a threshold of indistinction and of passage between animal and man, *physis* and *nomos*, exclusion and inclusion: the life of the bandit is the life of *loup garou*, the werewolf, who is precisely *neither man nor beast*, and who dwells paradoxically within both while belonging to neither. (1998, 105, Agamben’s italics).

Agamben is implicitly reworking Claude Lévi-Strauss's idea that myths ultimately mediate between nature and culture. Here, the werewolf was a way that members of premodern political orders could understand the relationship between existence in a political order and the natural world, that is, the place of bare life. We should also note, and it is something to which we shall return, that being excluded from the *polis* diminishes a person's humanity. They exist between human and animal. The werewolf, like the bandit, is essentially predatory, threatening the existence of the *polis* while living off of it. It both requires the *polis* but threatens its destruction. In the modern world the position of bare life changed fundamentally. In doing so, the power of the werewolf myth dissipated. What I want to suggest is that, equating with the werewolf in the premodern world, the zombie has become the emblematic figure for bare life in the modern world.

Agamben argues that, "the entry of *zoē* into the sphere of the *polis*—the politicization of bare life as such—constitutes the decisive event of modernity and signals a radical transformation of the political-philosophical categories of classical thought" (1998, 4). As we have seen, *zoē* is not bare life but its presence within the arena of the political transforms it into bare life. Elsewhere, in *Remnants of Auschwitz*, and referring to Michel Foucault's work, Agamben provides a more extensive insight into this crucial political shift:

In its traditional form, which is that of territorial sovereignty, power defines itself essentially as the right over life and death; it concerns life only indirectly, as the abstention of the right to kill. This is why Foucault characterizes sovereignty through the formula *to make die and to let live*. When, starting with the seventeenth century and the birth of the science of police, care for the life and health of subjects began to occupy an increasing place in the mechanisms and calculations of states, sovereign power is progressively transformed into what Foucault calls "biopower." (1999, 82)

At this point, bare life, which previously existed on the margin of political orders, now begins its move to becoming the basis of political practice; to rephrase Agamben, "in modernity life is more and more clearly placed at the center of State politics (which now becomes in Foucault's term, biopolitics), . . . in our age all citizens can be said, in a specific but extremely real sense, to appear virtually as *homines sacri*" (1998, 111). Agamben does not mean that anybody is allowed to kill the citizen of such a state. Rather, the lives of everybody within the state are governed by the

power of the sovereign; everybody exists not as potentially bare life but as bare life with a reprieve.

The consequence is itself horrifying: “It is almost as if, starting from a certain point, every decisive political event were double-sided: the spaces, the liberties and the rights won by individuals in their conflicts with central powers always simultaneously prepared a tacit but increasing inscription of individuals’ lives within the state order, thus offering a new and more dreadful foundation for the very sovereign power from which they wanted to liberate themselves” (Agamben 1998, 121). Bare life has become increasingly cloaked with the panoply of citizenship and rights but this is simply a disguise for what is really at stake in modern politics, bare life itself.

We now need to make a brief detour. Gil Anidjar has written a history of the development of the discursive construction of Muslims in the modern West. His interest is in how the Muslim world has come to be understood in the political terms of despotism and total subjection. He explains that it was Montesquieu, following Jean Bodin, who first introduced the idea of despotism as a political form. Anidjar details this:

The invention of despotism . . . involves the translation of a domestic term into a political one—the *despotes* was the head of the household, *not* a political figure. Yet this inventive gesture was structurally linked to another no less potent, if perhaps less visible invention: the “apathy” and the “faithful resignation” of the despot’s subjects. What emerged at this momentous historical point in the writings of Montesquieu and others was also the invention of absolute subjection, its rapid and unceasing translation, . . . religion and politics as the conflictual union of incomparables. (2003, 125)

Anidjar quotes from Montesquieu’s *De l’esprit des lois*, published late in his life in 1748: “‘The flood tide of Mahomedans brought despotism with it,’ and despotic government ‘is most agreeable’ to the Mahomedan religion” (2003, 126). Glossing Montesquieu, Anidjar writes that: “Such subjection, like blind fatalism, excludes reason and excludes one from reason” (2003, 127). Anidjar notes that Montesquieu describes despotism, and its associated absolute subjection, as an absurdity. We might think it not so much an absurdity as a fantastic description of the dark side of the modern politics that Agamben outlines. Despotism and mindless submission represent the possibility of modern politics once bare life has been made its foundation. Montesquieu, and later thinkers from Kant to Hegel and onwards, image this awful phantasm as the political life of the orientalist Other, the Muslims.

Anidjar takes one more step. His interest is in how a certain type in the concentration and death camps of Nazi Germany came to be called *Muselmänner*, Jews who become identified as Muslims. The immediate question is why these victims of the camps were named Muslims. In an insightful and complex discussion that does not concern us here, Anidjar suggests that: “As figures of absolute subjection, the Muslims can no doubt represent a degree zero of power, the sheer absence of a political displaced by a (negative) theology” (2003, 145). The Jews in the camps who had lost their ability to think, lost their will, appeared like the fantastic absurdity of Muslims under a despotic religio-political regime.

***Muselmänner* and Zombies**

We now need to consider these Muslims, *Muselmänner*. The *locus classicus* for the *Muselman* is Primo Levi’s account in his first book called in its original Italian, *Se questo è un uomo* and published in England as *If This Is a Man* and in the United States as *Survival in Auschwitz*:

To sink is the easiest of matters; it is enough to carry out all the orders one receives, to eat only the ration, to observe the discipline of the work and the camp. Experience showed that only exceptionally could one survive more than three months in this way. All the muslimans who finished in the gas chambers have the same story, or more exactly, have no story; they followed the slope down to the bottom, like streams that run down to the sea. On their entry into the camp, through basic incapacity, or by misfortune, or through some banal accident, they are overcome before they can adapt themselves; they are beaten by time, they do not begin to learn German, to disentangle the infernal knot of laws and prohibitions until their body is already in decay, and nothing can save them from selections or from death by exhaustion. Their life is short but their number is endless; they, the *Muselmänner*, the drowned, form the backbone of the camp, an anonymous mass, continually renewed and always identical, of non-men who march and labor in silence, the divine spark dead within them, already too empty to really suffer. One hesitates to call them living: one hesitates to call their death death, in the face of which they have no fear, as they are too tired to understand. (Levi 1996, 83)

We can add to this description from an account published by Agamben in *Remnants of Auschwitz*:

The other inmates avoided *Muselmänner*. There could be no common subject of conversation between them, since *Muselmänner* only fantasized and spoke about food. . . .

I can still see them returning back from work in lines of five. The first line of five would march according to the rhythm of the orchestra, but the next line would already be incapable of keeping up with them. The five behind them would lean against each other; and in the last lines the four strongest would carry the weakest one by his arms and legs, since he was dying. (Goscinki cited in Agamben 1999, 169–70)

These descriptions of *Muselmänner* make them appear remarkably similar to the creatures invented by Romero, the ones that by the end of the 1970s were beginning to be called zombies. I do not want to suggest that Romero had read Levi. Rather, Romero was tapping into an anxiety about those excluded from the protection of the modern state, those reduced to bare life.

Like Romero's creatures, *Muselmänner* have no will, they stagger along, they are interested in only one thing, food, and they do not speak—the zombie attribute is a groan. Here we can think about Elaine Scarry's comment on the experience of severe pain: "Physical pain does not simply resist language but actively destroys it, bringing about an immediate reversion to a state anterior to language, to the sounds and cries a human being makes before language is learnt" (1985, 4). The zombie is a creature without language, which Western thought has considered a founding characteristic of human society. The zombie groan can be read as the expression of the pain of bare life, of the living dead.

It is instructive that, when the title of Romero's film was changed, the new title included the words "living dead". Since then, this has become the characteristic description of zombies. It is also a term often used to describe the *Muselmänner*. Aldo Carpi may have been the first person actually to have applied the term "living dead" to the *Muselmänner* in his *Diario di Gusen*, the diary he kept of his time in that concentration camp, first published in 1971. In the translation given in *Remnants of Auschwitz*: "I remember that while we were going down the stairs leading to the baths, they had us accompanied by a group of *Muselmänner*, as we later called them—mummy-men, the living dead" (Agamben 1999, 41). In the title of Romero's film, "living dead" is an inspired shorthand for Levi's: "One hesitates to call them living: one hesitates to call their death death." The translation, *Survival in Auschwitz*, had been published in the United States in 1961. However, JoAnn Cannon tells us that "it seems hardly to have been noticed when it first appeared" but that, Holocaust literature "began to be read as a sub-genre in the mid-sixties" (1992, 33). It is possible that someone in the Walter Reade Organization made the connection. But perhaps not. By the late 1960s there was a growing awareness of what was beginning to be termed the Holocaust in the United

States. The scene towards the end of *Night of the Living Dead* where we watch on television as the sheriff and his men hunt down and destroy zombies, and kill the African-American survivor, can be read in the context of the stories of the Nazi *Einsatzgruppen*, the SS death squads whose role was to search out and murder Jews, gypsies and others who were unwanted in the conquered territories. However, the scene also has a general resonance with those reduced to bare life including displaced people, people denied the protection of the state.

We must not forget the literal meaning of the *Muselmann*, that is, the Muslim. I have discussed the background to the use of the term in the camps, the association of Muslims with total, mindless submission. This link also works the other way round. In the post-9/11 American fear of Islamic terrorists, Muslims can get figured as zombies. Referencing the historical association of Muslims with submission, and with the *Muselmann*, on the web buttub (2009) wonders about the increase in zombie films in the 2000s. S/he tells us that, “the theory that most interests me, and that strikes me as likely most responsible for zombie mania, is that our culture’s zombie fascination stems from widespread fear of Muslim terrorists.” Hamako (2009) makes the same point:

[The] Orientalist characterization of Muslims is not different . . . from the characterization of modern zombies. The modern zombie expresses Orientalist fears of Violent “Islamic” (and perhaps soon, “Confucian”) opposition to modernity and secularism.

Where Dendle and Bishop focus on the apocalypse aspect of the zombie apocalypse motif, buttub and Hamako identify the continuity with the discursive construction of the Muslim. The emphasis on apocalypse does not account for why the apocalyptic vehicle should be zombies. The orientalist connection of zombies with Muslims does. The zombie apocalypse, then, becomes a meaningful way to represent the so-called Islamic terrorist threat to the United States.

Awful as the *Muselmänner* state is, it is by no means unique. Alexander Esquemelin was a Dutchman who was indentured with the French West Indies Company and shipped to Tortuga, an island off the coast of Haiti, in the seventeenth century. He wrote a book called *Bucaniers of America*:

Esquemelin deplores the condition of the many men kidnapped in Europe as “servants” and sold as slaves. These bonded men, he asserts, are used worse than African slaves; for their masters, with only three years to get their money’s worth, often extracted that value at the price of the worker’s life. Pressed beyond the limits of human endurance, they literally take

leave of their senses: “These miserable kidnap’d people, are frequently subject to a certain disease, which in those parts, is called *Coma*; being a total privation of the senses. And this distemper is judged to proceed from their hard usage.” Experienced as a coma in the days when Haiti was called Hispaniola, this state of death-in-life induced by the [quoting Joan Dayan] “reduction of human into thing for the ends of capital” is now called zombification. The zombie, like the comatose indentured servant, is a being whose identity and will are slaughtered in service to the exactions of unfree labor. (Mackie 2009, 135)

We find here a more direct connection between the condition of the *Muselmann* removed from the protection of the state and, as bare life, reduced to the barest condition of the experience of life, and the classical ideas of zombies.

Agamben reinforces the *Muselmann*’s threshold state. He writes that: “That one cannot truly speak of ‘living beings’ is confirmed by all witnesses. Améry and Bettelheim define them as ‘walking corpses’” (1999, 64). Agamben provides this reading:

It is . . . possible to understand the decisive function of the camps in the system of Nazi biopolitics. They are not merely the places of death and extermination; they are also, and above all, the site of the production of the *Muselmann*, the final biopolitical substance to be isolated in the biological continuum. Beyond the *Muselmann* lies only the gas chamber. (1999, 85)

We can now understand what is so terrifying about the zombie. It is not that the zombie reminds us of our own forthcoming demise but that the zombie is the mythic expression of bare life in the modern world. The zombie apocalypse is the fantastic representation of the modern state being overwhelmed by the bare life which underpins its existence; the bare life that is lived by those people excluded from the privileges of citizenship and rights. This includes those displaced people who, for many reasons, seek entry to Western states. In the neoliberal world, where inclusion has been supplanted by exclusion, or in Agamben’s terms where the state of exception is becoming the norm, those attempting to gain entry to the state are a part of a continuity with those within the state—all are treated as bare life to a greater or less extent, all have the possibility of being reduced to the condition of *Muselmänner*.

Zombies and the Displaced

Given what I have already said about Romero and *Night of the Living Dead*, it is not surprising to find that, in his fourth zombie film *Land of the Dead*, released in 2005, the parallel between the zombie siege of Pittsburgh and the fear over illegal entry to the United States across the Mexican border is easily made:

To ensure the status quo, Dennis Hopper's Kaufman, the self-appointed leader of Pittsburgh, constructs the world's most extreme border security—blown up and barricaded bridges make the rivers impassible [sic], and electric fences and armed guards protect the area from any intrusion; in an extreme example of xenophobia, soldiers shoot any invaders on sight. These forms of immigration control have become even more jarringly familiar with recent debates about erecting a fence between the United States and Mexico and the redeployment of National Guard troops to guard the United States' southern border during George W. Bush's presidency. (Bishop 2009, 24)

Here, the zombies can with facility be read as illegal migrants threatening traditional American society. With this reading, the zombie acquires again its earlier reference; a worker who either already is, or is able to be worked into, a state of coma. Indeed, the worker with no protection can become a slave.

In zombie films made outside the United States this reading is more available. In *Shaun of the Dead*, with the sudden transformation of people into zombies, Shaun and his white friends make for their local pub, the Winchester, as the most defensible place he can think of. In British films, the pub is historically the place of community, as it is, for example, in *Passport to Pimlico* (1949). By extension, in *Shaun of the Dead* the pub is a synecdoche for a white England under siege from a range of illegal immigrants, asylum seekers and so forth, all trying to breach the pub's defences. Finally, the British army comes to the rescue of Shaun and his friends, killing off the besieging zombies.

Pegg, in his *Guardian* article from which I have already quoted, comments on his dislike of Charlie Booker's use of "fast" zombies, that is zombies that walk and run, in his television series, *Dead-Set*.² In what I presume is supposed to be read as a jokey riposte, Booker (2008) responds: "Simon: your outright rejection of running zombies leaves you exposed, in a very real and damning sense, as a terrible racist." If zombies stand for those displaced people attempting to enter Britain, then they are, indeed, mostly non-white. The immiseration of the displaced people at the

border is expressed in the bare life that is represented in the zombies. The racialised difference of those people is metaphorised in the zombies' difference from humans.

With this in mind we should not be surprised that, in a voice-over at the end of *Shaun of the Dead* that tells us what happens after the zombie threat has been quelled, we are told that the few remaining zombies are used as game-show participants and domestics. Domestic work is characteristic labour for illegal immigrants across the West. *Shaun of the Dead* can be read analogically where *Children of Men* presents a literal image of Britain falling to the pressure of displaced people entering the country.

In *Fido*, a Canadian zombie film released in 2006, zombies are fitted with a specially invented collar that renders them harmless to humans.³ They can then be used for menial work and any household that does not have at least one zombie domestic is considered to be socially embarrassing. *Fido* goes even further in the development of the zombie/displaced people connection. Set in a 1950s America after the Zombie Wars, towns are fenced off from the Wild Zone where the zombies without collars still prowl, attempting to enter the areas where humans live. In an information film that we see at the beginning, made by ZomCom, the company that makes the zombie collars, we are told in rhetoric that echoes the anxieties about border security that stretches from illegal immigrants to terrorists, that the advent of the zombies meant that "we were forced to defend our homeland . . . mankind pitted against legions of the undead." ZomCom also "built security systems like the perimeter fence that encloses our towns in a wall of protective steel." The film's title comes from the name Timmy, the Robinsons' young son, gives the zombie his mother acquires for their home. It is, of course, a name that is typically given to a dog, though nobody in the film acknowledges this. When Timmy plays baseball with Fido, he acts towards him in the way that black servants were historically treated. Telling him to get the ball: "Go fetch it, boy." These zombies are racially different and, indeed, not human. In these films, but especially in *Fido*, the zombie as bare life is linked with the zombie as unenfranchised worker.

An Australian low-budget film called *Undead* is perhaps one of the stranger recent additions to the zombie genre.⁴ Made over a number of years by the Spierig brothers, Michael and Peter, it was released in 2003. It includes both zombies and an alien visitation from space. A small town in Queensland is the focus of a zombie outbreak caused by something raining down from outer space. Marion is a survivalist who has been affected by this development before, when fish he was catching turned

into zombies. He is convinced that the aliens are a part of the zombie threat. When asked by Sallyanne: "Have you ever seen anything like this before?", he answers: "I have. It's an invasion. The end of life as we know it." The police are shown to be incompetent and unable to understand what to do in the new circumstances. Marion takes charge of protecting the small group of people who have escaped being transformed into zombies. He is a characteristic figure in recent Australian film. Similar to Mick Taylor, the kangaroo shooter and serial killer in *Wolf Creek* (2005), and the unnamed kangaroo shooter in *Lucky Miles* (2007) who, as we have seen in previous chapters, both appear to be patrolling Australia's border, Marion attempts to protect the village from what he thinks are the depredations of the aliens. By the film's end, it turns out that the aliens are, actually, trying to stop the zombie plague and return everybody to being human. Thinking they have succeeded, they leave. Unfortunately, one of the townsfolk, who has been bitten by a zombie, escapes and infects the rest of Australia. This time the aliens do not return.

This somewhat confusing combination of zombie apocalypse and sci-fi film can make sense in the context of the ramping up of the Australian population's anxieties about asylum seekers by the government of John Howard in the early 2000s. In 2001, the government refused entry to shipwrecked asylum seekers picked up by the MV *Tampa*, started the so-called Pacific Solution where asylum seekers were sent to detention camps in other countries in the Pacific region, and changed Australia's migration zone to exclude the Australian islands round the north of the country. Also in 2001, shortly before a federal election, the government promoted the idea that asylum seekers on a boat had thrown their children overboard. The consequence of these and other acts by the government were that the general population became increasingly concerned about the threat posed by asylum seekers and voted the government back into power.

With this history we are now better able to read *Undead*. Here, again, the zombie threat is a translation of the fear generated by, in this Australian case, specifically asylum seekers attempting to find a home in Australia. Only here, it seems, nothing can stop them, certainly not the police or even the local survivalist, except aliens. We now need to think about these aliens. They emit light, they wear what look like cassocks with cowls, and, as they cure people of zombification, those people are taken into the clouds until the aliens have eradicated the zombie scourge. The Christian connotations are spelt out by Rene, near the end of the film when she is trying to convince Marion that he has been wrong about the intentions of the aliens. She says: "Aliens are the saviours. It's not us." It seems that "we" are simply not powerful enough to save Australia from

the zombies. At one point in the film, when Rene is shooting down zombies in the town's general store, she has the Australian flag behind her. We need God, or some Christian force allied to God, to save us. When that is no longer available, Australia is overrun.

Rhetoric

That *Fido* can make such a clear analogy between displaced people and zombies is because the same rhetoric is used for each. Zombies provide a monster for our time because they express our anxieties over the relationship between bare life and the modern state. The displaced people attempting to enter the countries of the West are, from the point of view of the members of those countries, bare life. They have no protection from any state. This underlying similitude enables the same metaphors to be used for both zombies and displaced people. Where zombies appear as a remorseless threat laying siege to wherever humans manage to collect to defend themselves, displaced people are constructed in the same way, as a threat at the border of the state. In an article on the way Austrian newspapers write about asylum seekers, Elisabeth El Refaie describes how “Kurdish refugees are quite regularly represented as an ‘army’ on the point of ‘invading’ Europe, and their arrival is often referred to as an *Ansturm* [onslaught] or *Invasion* [invasion]” (2001, 364). She quotes from a newspaper article that writes of, “new hordes of applicants for asylum” (2001, 364). While an onslaught or invasion might conjure up an image of an organised, rational army, “horde” implies a disorganised, irrational mass. El Refaie explains that: “In other articles, the ‘war’ metaphor is also evoked by verbs, which describe the refugees as ‘forcing their way’ (*drängen*) over the border into Europe, of ‘invading’ (*eindringen*) Germany and of ‘storming’ (*stürmen*) Fortress Europe” (2001, 364–65). All these metaphors suggest that Europe is under siege from a mindless throng.

In describing the language used in Australia, Sharon Pickering lists some of the terms she found in the *Brisbane Courier Mail* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* between 1997 and 1999 to describe the threat posed by asylum seekers, “‘we’ are soon to be ‘awash’, ‘swamped’, ‘weathering the influx’, of ‘waves’, ‘latest waves’, ‘more waves’, ‘tides’, ‘floods’, ‘migratory flood’, ‘mass exodus’ of ‘aliens’, ‘queue jumpers’, ‘illegal immigrants’” (2001, 172). Terms like “wave” and “flood” use the water reference to conjure up some overwhelming and amorphous force. They are dehumanising expressions that identify the asylum seekers as a mass rather than as individuals. These people are “aliens”, constructed, as

Pickering points out, in a system of binary logic “which routinely renders one normal and the other strange/other” (2001, 172). Thinking of the zombie as bare life, this is the binary Other of the humanising effect of membership of the *polis*.

As in zombie films, Pickering shows that it is the human members of the Australian state who are the ones under siege, their civilised existence always at threat from the zombified bare life attempting to enter the protected space. Pickering writes that:

In the case of asylum seekers, the boundaries [between “us” and “them”] are easily identified by the discrete nation state—not only fixed national and geographic boundaries in the case of Australia but also those of race. In “record arrest”, “swoop”, “incident”, “criminal gangs” and “illegal run”, criminal justice discourse becomes interwoven with that of war: “incursion”, “sustained assault on Australian shores”, “gathering to our north”, “massing in Indonesia”, all to invade the “land of hope.” (2001, 172)

Here again, this “war” that Australia is fighting is actually a siege in which the country is being defended against the invasion of a racial Other that is disorganised, massified and relentless. These people may not be *Muselmänner*, though many of them are Muslims, but they are bare life in that they do not have the protection of any state. They appear, like apocalyptic zombies, as a faceless, unthinking mass of less than human people that accumulates at the border threatening to overwhelm the state’s defences by their sheer pressure and destroy the human beings and the social order inside.

These examples are drawn from work studying the rhetoric used for asylum seekers in Austria and in Australia. The same terms are used across the West. Displaced people, that is those officially classified as illegal immigrants, asylum seekers, refugees and the like, are bare life striving to enter states where they will be given protection. Those states experience them as an unregulated threat to life within the border. As Aihwa Ong writes: “In camps of the disenfranchised or displaced, bare life becomes the ground for political claims, if not for citizenship, then for the right to survive” (2006a, 501). At the same time, in the modern state, bare life is the basis for the treatment even of citizens of the state. The zombie is the mythic expression of bare life striving to enter the state but, at the same time, the zombie is the condition that awaits all of us from whom the state withdraws protection. The zombies besieging the places of sanctuary in zombie apocalypse films can be read as displaced people seeking recognition from the countries of the West. As *Pride and Prejudice and*

Zombies makes clear, they bear the histories of the enslaved whose labour enabled the quality of life at the heart of the colonial empires, and which provided the wealth for the industrial revolution. But, the zombies are also an image of what we, members of the modern state, might become. In the modern state bare life founds the political order. In the neoliberal version of that state, as I described in Chapter 3, where rights are dependent on what people within the border of the state can offer to the economic wellbeing of the state, the degree to which one is reprieved from bare life depends on one's economic worth. In this way, within the state, labour returns as an inverse measure of zombification while, without the protection of the state, bare life equates with the most menial and unprotected forms of labour—exemplified in the zombie as domestic.

In most zombie films it is the population near-to-hand, often from outside the neighbourhood, who are turned into zombies and become the threat to the remaining citizens. While, as I have argued, these zombies can be read as threatening, racially Othered, displaced people, they can also be read as the citizens of the state whom that state no longer finds economically useful. In many recent zombie films one of the more shocking elements is how ordinary the zombies look. They often have little in the way of physical transformation. Any member of the neoliberal state might find themselves turned into a zombie. In *Shaun of the Dead*, Shaun mistakes his local, neighbourhood zombies for the same people whom he had often seen bleakly trudging off to work early in the morning. This sense of how easy it is for the members of the neoliberal state to become zombies is also an aspect of the horror engendered in recent zombie texts. In the American television series, *The Walking Dead*, which began in 2010, Rick Grimes, a deputy sheriff, wakes up from a coma to find that almost everybody in the United States has become a zombie. Neoliberal America has itself imploded in a zombie apocalypse.

Bare life, as I have explained, has a dual meaning. In the first place it refers to the lack of legal protection by the state. Without that protection the person reduced to bare life can become transformed into the second understanding of bare life: the liminal condition of death in life, coma. Indeed such a person can become one of the living dead. This is the existential condition represented in the zombie. The equation of the zombie and the displaced person occurs through the construction of bare life in both aspects of the term. The new fascination with zombie apocalypse films can be understood in relation to, but of course is not limited to, the increasing anxiety of members of Western states founded in the threat that these states feel is posed by displaced people. Both manifestations of bare life are described using the same discursive terms.

The fear of what is perceived to be an external threat from the racialised zombie Other helps those who live in Western states to repress the awareness of how easily their own existence can become reduced to bare life.

CHAPTER EIGHT

PRESERVING WHITE HEGEMONY: SKILLED MIGRATION, “ASIANS” AND MIDDLE CLASS ASSIMILATION*

For three decades asylum seekers arriving by boat have provoked anxiety in Australia out of all proportion to their numbers. As I discussed in Chapter 5, this anxiety was fanned after the election of John Howard’s coalition government in 1996 (McMaster 2001). At the same time, during the time of Howard’s government, Australia rapidly increased its migration program for skilled labour. Historically, since the post–Second World War migration period, there has developed a race-based class system where the middle class has remained predominantly white, indeed Anglo-Celtic. The new skilled migration program, focusing on the development and use of the 457 Visa and on skilled migrants originally coming to Australia as international students, is transforming the racial organisation of the middle class. This chapter brings into Australian usage ideas that have been current for some time in the United States, the notion of a model minority which has been given honorary whiteness, as a way to understand the effects of continuing discrimination, and the emphasis on assimilation, which pervade employment in the skilled, middle-class workforce.

The public discussion of asylum seekers has especially focused on those described as boat people—men, women and children crowded onto small, often only putatively seaworthy fishing boats struggling to make the journey from Indonesia to landfall within the Australian migration zone so

* This chapter was written as an article in 2009. Since then the Labor government of Kevin Rudd made significant changes to the relationship between higher education and the skilled immigration program, making the progression from completed courses to permanent residency considerably harder. I have chosen not to alter the chapter to reflect these changes. As it stands the chapter makes clear the neoliberal, utilitarian approach to higher education as a vehicle for skilled immigration developed by the Howard governments.

that they can ask to be considered for the status of refugees. In 1992 Paul Keating's Labor government introduced mandatory detention for asylum seekers heralding an increase in the number of detention centres across Australia. The Port Hedland Immigration Reception and Processing Centre had been opened the previous year. Woomera and Curtin were both opened in 1999. Through the 1990s and early 2000s politicians and the media ramped up the anxiety of Australians over the "threat" posed by those boatloads of asylum seekers. Yet, the total number of asylum seekers arriving by boat has always been very small. In most years the number has been under 1000. For example, in 1998, just 200 asylum seekers arrived by boat. In 1999 this increased to 3,721 and in 2001 reached a peak of 5,516. In 2006 there were only 60 and, in 2007, there were 148 asylum seeker boat arrivals (Phillips and Spinks 2009). In total, in 2007, around 6,300 people applied for asylum in Australia. To put these figures into perspective, we need to know that in 2006/07, for example, over 148,000 migrants were granted visas giving them permanent residency under the Skills and Family visa groupings and over 493,000 people were allocated temporary entry visas for a variety of purposes from three-year work visas to short-term tourist visas.

Why, then, has such concern been generated over such a comparatively small number of boat arrivals? One answer must be that they serve as a distraction. Australians have a history of anxious dislike of migration. In the post-Second World War era, when governments massively expanded Australia's migration program in order to develop an industrial base, the project was made palatable to Australians still recovering from the fear of a Japanese military invasion in terms of "populate or perish". It had been the right-wing politician, Billy Hughes, who coined the term in a speech in 1937. However, the fear of "Asian invasion" is imbricated in the historical construction of Australia as a nation-state and is as old as federation. As Ruth Balint writes: "[t]he seed of Asian invasion anxiety was sown in the earliest moments of Australian nationhood" (2005, 33). Donald Grant, a Labor senator, typified this anxiety of a white Australia that felt itself beleaguered in this speech in 1949:

I emphasize that Australia is in a precarious position by reason of the fact that as a white people we are surrounded by Asiatics. Therefore, we must increase our population as quickly as possible. I believe that if we fail to increase our population to the maximum within the next twenty years we shall lose this country altogether. . . . It is our duty to welcome migrants and to educate them to the Australian way of life so that, should the necessity arise, they will be prepared to fight alongside us. We must get

the best people of the world to migrate to this country. (Cited in Kendall 2008, 56)

This was the kind of rhetoric also used by Labor's postwar Minister for Immigration, Arthur Calwell, to gain support from the general public and the labour movement for the renovation of the migration program.

The need at that time was for unskilled workers. To take one example, the biggest Australian engineering project was the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme. It was initiated by the *Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Power Act, 1949* and finally completed in 1974. In the words of Grahame Griffin, "it consisted of 16 large dams, 7 power stations (two underground), 80 kilometres of aqueducts and 140 kilometres of tunnels." Griffin explains that:

During the 25 years of its construction, the scheme employed more than 100,000 men and women (the great majority were men) from 30 countries. At its peak the workforce was approximately 10,000, with the Australian-born constituting only one-third of that workforce. In a period of labour shortage in Australia, the Authority was forced to recruit much of its workforce from overseas, including those categorised as Displaced Persons, most of whom were of eastern and southern European extraction. Other workers were recruited from New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Ireland and western and northern Europe, including France, Germany, and Norway. The scheme therefore became a focal point within the broader vision of Australia's post-war immigration policy—a vision encouraged by the slogan of "populate or perish." (2003, 41)

Paul Robertson and Keith Trace write that: "[i]n terms of value-added, the post-war expansion of manufacturing was led by the motor vehicle, chemical, electrical, and metal products industries" (1983, 11). In the four years between October 1945 and Labor's election loss at the end of 1949, Calwell was able to come close to achieving his plan, which was for a net annual population increase of one per cent of the population, or around 70,000 migrants each year. Calwell, and later Ministers of Immigration, succeeded by extending the definition of "white" to include southern Europeans, Maltese, Christian Lebanese and people from eastern Europe. Today, the invasion rhetoric that legitimated the population increase remains in the idea of boat people as a threat, and the understanding of them as being "Asian".

My interest in this chapter, though, is not with boat people or even with asylum seekers more generally. Rather, I am interested in those that the public preoccupation with boat people makes invisible, the skilled migrants. Since the 1970s the increasing ease of communication and

transport has enabled companies to move manufacturing out of Western countries to developing countries where labour costs are lower. John Quiggin has discussed this in the context of technological development. He writes that: “[t]he gradual decline in the proportion of jobs available to unskilled workers in most industries is evidence that the general tendency of technological change has been biased against unskilled labour.” This development has entailed a fundamental shift in Australia’s migration preferences. Quiggin remarks that, “the bias of technological change towards skilled workers has been balanced by an increase in the average education and skill levels of the workforce” (1999). To a significant extent this new balance has been achieved by making entry to Australia easier for those people with skills.

457 Visas

Two changes in particular will concern me in this chapter. The first is the advent of the 457 Visa. Initiated under Keating’s government, the 457 Visa was introduced by John Howard’s coalition government in 1996. One of its key features is that, unlike migrant-driven visas, it is employer-driven. Employers in need of skilled workers find the people they need in other countries and apply for them to be given 457 Visas to work for the employer in Australia. In this sense, the visa typifies the neoliberal understanding of the primacy of the market. Workers can be granted a visa for up to four years. However, the visa is renewable and if the worker can find another employer while onshore then that employer can apply for a 457 Visa to re-employ the person. In this way skilled workers can stay in Australia on a 457 Visa until such time as no employer asks for their services. At a time when there is global competition for skilled workers, making employers responsible for finding and attracting them to Australia ensures a match between supply and demand. However, without appropriate regulation 457 Visas place Australian skilled workers within a global market and drive down Australian wages.

457 Visas gained popularity rapidly. In 1996/97, the first year they were available, 8,463 were issued. By 2001/02 that number had increased to 15,646 (these figures come from Khoo et al. 2003, 29). By 2005/06, in a jump of over 40 per cent from the previous year, this figure rose to around 40,000 (Kinnaird 2006, 49). These figures are for first entry, that is they do not include applications for further 457 Visas for people already in Australia on 457 Visas. It is also possible for people already in Australia on other forms of temporary visa to acquire a 457 Visa. These combined with the reissuing of 457 issues to previous holders, raised the total

number of 457 Visas issued in 2003/04 to 40,124 (Khoo et al. 2007, 178). It should be clear from these figures that, with the government's encouragement, 457 Visas have become an increasingly important component in Australia's skilled migration program. Indeed, writing in 2006, Bob Kinnaird remarked that: "[i]n 2006-07, for the first time in Australia's migration history, there will probably be more temporary skilled 457 visas granted than skilled permanent visas." It is significant that, as of 2006, as Kinnaird notes: "[t]here is no cap on the number of 457 visas issued each year," unlike the General Skilled Migration (GSM) program. Indeed, as Kinnaird asserts: "The 457 visa rules involved a radical deregulation of Australia's temporary entry regime" (2006, 49). In 2007/08 the number of people arriving in the Skilled Migration program was 108,540. In the same period, 58,050 were people granted 457 Visas.

It is possible that the Australian government is deliberately favouring the 457 Visa class over the GSM program which offers permanent residency. The context here is, again, the neoliberal idea of the primacy of the market. One increasingly favoured economic practice in large firms is to attempt to decrease the numbers of staff on long-term contracts. That way, the argument goes, the firm becomes more flexible and cheaper to run. Staff can be laid off when demand decreases and staff can be employed in specific areas as the need arises. Outsourcing is a different practice with a similar effect. In both cases the firm is also able to reduce its entitlement obligations to its staff. With the 457 Visas, the country functions in much the same way as the firm I have just described. The 457 Visa holder is the responsibility of the firm that employs them. Australia offers little in the way of the kinds of entitlements that citizens or permanent residents have. For example, Medicare is only available to those from countries with a reciprocal arrangement, so most 457 Visa holders are required to take out private health insurance; in New South Wales fees are charged for children in state schools; no entitlements to social security and welfare benefits. Crucially, when the visa expires the holder has 28 days to be re-sponsored, and therefore get another 457 Visa, or leave the country. Thus, while 457 Visa holders may stay in Australia for many years because they can be given more than one 457 Visa, they have few entitlements or citizenship rights.

There is, though, it should be added, a pathway from the 457 Visa to permanent residency. The point, however, is that from the point of view of the marketised state the 457 Visa holder is the ideal worker. They enter with guaranteed employment and contribute in this way to the economic wellbeing of the state. They are the economic responsibility of the employer. The employee costs the state only a minimum amount and,

when the employee becomes unemployed, they are forced to leave the country. There is here no sense of a state's moral responsibility to those it has accepted within its borders. There is only a market-based relationship.

The Commodification of Higher Education

The second change that I want to address is the marketisation of higher education as a pathway to permanent residency for skilled overseas students. This development has taken place in two stages. The first involved the rapid inclusion of the Australian universities in the market economy. This began under Bob Hawke's Labor government with its most obvious sign being the introduction of student fees in the form of the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) in 1989. As a part of its more general marketised revisioning of higher education, the Howard government restructured HECS, increasing fees by an average of 40 per cent and creating a three-tier system of cost depending on the perceived value of the course. However, what is more important for the argument I am making here is the massive decrease in the public funding of universities enacted by the federal government:

The 1996 budget immediately cut direct public funding of universities: between 1996 and 1999, public-sourced funds per student dropped by a massive 20.1 percent. The government also implemented a 12 percent staff reduction at the federal education department. (Berman et al. 2003, 262)

This decrease in funding initiated a rapid turn to recruiting fee-paying international students as a way of making up the shortfall in public funding. Simon Marginson (2007) tells us that:

In 1985 30,000 international visitors arrived in Australia for education. . . .
Twenty years later in 2005 there were 375,000 educational visitors. . . .
The number of foreign students in the world multiplied by three but in Australia it multiplied by 12. In 2005 there were 164,000 international students onshore in higher education.

Marginson notes that: “[i]n 2005 the [education] industry generated \$11.3 billion in fees and other spending by [international] students, with more than \$4 billion in fees, two-thirds in higher education.” International students provided 15 per cent of university funding overall in 2005 (Marginson 2007). More than this, education has become Australia's third-largest export earner behind only the primary industries of coal and iron ore. In 2007/08 it was worth \$13.7 billion to the Australian economy

through “tuition fees, goods and services related to living in Australia and tourism associated with visits from relatives” (“The Value of International Education to Australia” n.d.). An Access Economics report gives even higher figures suggesting that the general contribution of international students to the Australian economy is \$14.1 billion and that these students create a further \$12.6 billion in value-added goods, services and jobs (cited in Slattery 2009, 5).

The second step has been the transformation of higher education into a means towards permanent residency for many of this increased number of fee-paying inshore international students. As Marginson (2007) remarks: “[m]ore than a third [of 2005’s 164,000 international students] could be expected to later obtain permanent residence.” This has been achieved through changes in the points system used to judge an applicant’s eligibility for a visa granting permanent residency in the General Skilled Migration program. In July 2001 new onshore points-tested visa subclasses were introduced to enable international students studying in Australia to apply for a Skilled Migration Program Visa without leaving the country. A document put out by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (“Skill Migration” 2003) explains how the points system works:

The points-test recognises a range of skill-related factors. The number of points prescribed for each factor reflects the relative importance of an applicant’s potential contribution to Australia. The skill, age, English language and work experience components earn the highest number of points. Other recognised factors include Australian qualifications, spouse skills, Migration Occupation in Demand list (MODL) occupation, work experience obtained in Australia and fluency in a community language other than English.

The same document notes that in 2002/03 “more than 50 per cent of successful General Skilled Migration (points tested) applicants claimed points for an Australian qualification” (“Skill Migration” 2003). From the point of view of higher education the key requirement is a qualification which needs the equivalent of two years study in Australia, completed in not less than eighteen months.

It is worth considering this eighteen months minimum for a moment. It means that, setting aside the higher-education skill-acquisition process, the applicant for permanent residency will already have eighteen months of cultural and linguistic acculturation into Australian society. This is of particular pertinence because, as Geoffrey Brahm Levey puts it, there was a “retreat from multiculturalism” in Australia during the eleven years of the Howard government (2008, 18). In January 2007, the Department of

Immigration and Multicultural Affairs had Citizenship substituted for Multicultural Affairs. More significantly, as Levey notes, “federal reforms include a new citizenship test that emphasizes the English language proficiency and knowledge of Australian values and way of life” (2008, 19). Levey writes that:

[a]ccording to the government’s announcement, the concern seems to be that talk of “multiculturalism” has sent the wrong signals to individuals and groups, that it has encouraged “separatism” and the idea that “anything goes”. The hope is that the language of “citizenship” and “integration” and a renewed emphasis on “core Australian values” will arrest those perceived trends. (2008, 19)

Within this context it is not surprising to find that the vast majority of international students come from non-English speaking, and indeed non-Western, countries. In 2007 the largest group came from China, 107,071 (a growth of 18.9% on 2006), followed by India, 63,604 (a growth of 63.9% on 2006), Republic of Korea, 34,674 (a growth of 11.3% on 2006), Thailand, 19,987 (a growth of 11.9% on 2006), Malaysia, 19,874 (a growth of 4% on 2006), Hong Kong, 19,742, Japan, 16,077, Indonesia, 14,919, Brazil, 12,545. After Brazil comes the United States which contributed 11,822 international students.¹ This totals to a figure considerably higher than the 2005 one used by Marginson and quoted earlier. Kieran James and Setsuo Otsuka, writing about the racism faced by international students who gain Australian degrees in accountancy, note that their interviewees report being asked if they had gone to high school in Australia. James and Otsuka (n.d.) write that:

[i]t appears that employers in Australia are especially reluctant to hire graduates who did not complete their high school, or a substantial part of it, in Australia. The reason appears to lie in the Marxist view of schools in capitalist countries being accepted socialisation agents to both train workers in the narrow technical skills required for their future occupation, and in the social behaviours expected in the workplace.

It seems that employers are less sanguine about international students’ ability to assimilate Australian values than the government. I will address the way that Australians think of cultural difference in terms of race, and racism, later in this chapter.

This shift to a market-based understanding of higher education has contributed to a perception that no longer sees it as a right, an entitlement, a good that helps raise the quality of life of all members of the state but, rather, constructs it from the state’s perspective as an institution through

which the state can manage the population. In this instance, by increasing the points in the MODL depending on what skills and professions the state considers are required in Australia, higher education becomes a channel of entry into the Australian state at a time when there is global competition for skilled and professional labour. The border which is so clearly demarcated and patrolled with such rigour and military force to stop a few thousand asylum-seeking boat people entering Australia becomes permeable and almost invisible for international students, especially if they are studying for qualifications in areas in which Australia has needs.

International Students and Permanent Residency

In such a circumstance it is no surprise that many international students view Australian higher education as pragmatically as the state. A Chinese international student in Australia, Feifei Guo, comments in her blog that “many [Chinese students] see overseas study as an immigration ticket” (2008). Guo quotes Danny Wong, a study-abroad advisor with the Study Abroad Service Centre of Beijing Language and Cultural University:

Australia is one of the most popular destinations for Chinese students. Not only because the good quality of higher education attracts Chinese students, but also the immigration policies. Almost every student who wants to study in Australia comes to my office with their parents to ask questions about the relationship between their study choices and the immigration policy. (Guo 2008)

In a study conducted in early 2006, Moli Yang asked 200 Chinese why they were considering studying outside China, and where. Thirty-seven per cent were considering Australia compared with 24 per cent looking to the United States and Canada, and 17 per cent the United Kingdom. Of the students who wanted to study in Australia: “[t]he analysis revealed that over 49% of those students were influenced most by Australia’s high quality of education and future migration opportunities after graduation” (2007, 6). In the global competition, skilled labour predominantly moves from developing countries to developed, Western countries which, provided one is able to access it, have a more elaborated social infrastructure (Gera et al. 2005). Guo (2008) quotes a Chinese student in Australia:

[y]ou can’t deny that Australia has a much better living environment than China. Compared with Australia, the population of China is huge. Also

Australia has a better social welfare system. Once you get permanent residency, life will become easier.

The final sentence here signals the increase in social security, welfare and other entitlements available to those with permanent residency visas as compared with the entitlements available to international students. For example, international students are allowed to work only twenty hours a week during the period of their course and are not entitled to Medicare.

It is clear that Australia's greater success in attracting international students, assuming that the United States and Britain are also thought to have high quality higher education, lies in the ease with which international students who have studied in Australia can gain permanent residency. From a marketised, cost-benefit point of view, the extraordinary thing about the streamlined Australian system is that, while it makes Australia attractive to large numbers of potential international students, it provides the Australian state with skilled professionals in areas of need at no cost to the state. Indeed, because the students fund their own education, they also help, as we have seen, support the Australian university system and make a very significant contribution to the broader Australian economy. It does need to be added, however, that such a use implies a fundamental transformation in the meaning and practice of higher education.

However, one very significant consequence of this use of higher education as a permeable border, a site of entry into the Australian state, is the increasing tendency of international students to take courses purely for the opportunity they offer for gaining permanent residency. As Bob Birrell et al. write:

[w]hen the reforms advantaging overseas students trained in Australia were introduced in mid-1999 and mid-2001, it was not anticipated how enthusiastically overseas students and Australia's universities would respond to the new migration rules. In the case of the overseas students, a majority have since enrolled in courses which are believed to provide a relatively assured permanent resident outcome. (2006, 30)

There is no guarantee that an international student who gains an Australian degree in, say, accounting, which scores high points on the MODL, will want to go on to practice accountancy once they have acquired permanent residency. Rather differently, there is no guarantee, as we shall see, that someone who has arrived as an international student, and gained a degree in accountancy, will be able to find a position with an accountancy firm in Australia.

The invisibility and permeability of the Australian border for skilled workers is, in large part, made possible by the focus placed on boat people. This preoccupation with the exclusion of this small group has the advantage for the state of minimising public awareness and possible public concern over the general migration program.² As compared with the hundreds, or low thousands, of boat people who are picked up each year attempting to reach Australia, in 2006/07 the total intake under the Migration Program was 158,630. Of these, 108,540 were accepted through what is called the Skills Stream. This includes those on 457 Visas who are applying for permanent residency as well as, of course, those international students who completed their courses and have successfully applied for permanent residency.

It is important to note here that permanent residency is not the same thing as Australian citizenship—a term I am using here in the technical sense in relation to the legal category of Australian citizen. Crucially, for its conceptual importance as a signification of membership of the Australian nation-state, as well as for its practical implications, a permanent resident is unable to vote in Australian political elections. There is one exception to this rule, those people who held British subject status and permanent residency in Australia before 26 January 1984, when the law was changed to exclude such people from the franchise. Also a permanent residency visa can be revoked by the Minister for Immigration under certain circumstances such as the holder's conviction for serious crimes. Citizenship, however, under the *Australian Citizenship Act 2007*, can only be revoked for crimes committed before citizenship was granted or for the provision of misleading information that enabled the granting of citizenship. Thus, citizenship has both a political and legal difference from permanent residency. While the two statuses are usually grouped together in Australian residency statistics, permanent residents exist outside of the political system and their presence in Australia, as with other visa holders, is subject to the Executive, in the person of the Minister, rather than to the legal system. As we shall see later in the case of Dr Mohamed Haneef, who was on a 457 Visa, the Executive's decision remains, to some extent, subject to judicial review.³

Boat People and Unskilled Workers

For Australians, boat people have come to represent the *lumpen* unskilled racial Other attempting to breach Australia's border. Discussing the way the Howard government handled the attempt by the MV *Tampa* to unload

the asylum seekers at Christmas Island that it had picked up from their sinking boat in 2001, Suwendrini Perera describes how:

[t]he Australian government's attempts to draw a line in the sea against the incursions of international law . . . are also being played out in a recognisably colonial and highly racialised register. The phobias and hatreds that emerged in Australian public life in the spring of 2001 open the door to a much older storehouse of images, narratives and representations. (Perera and Stratton 2009, 18)

Elsewhere, writing about Howard's government's decision to send troops to Solomon Islands to provide support for that country's government, Perera comments that: "[t]he Prime Minister's language firmly positions Australia within the lineage of imperial whiteness" (2007c, 128). In "Borderline Anxieties" I argued that, "from the start, the borders of the Australian state, initiated at Federation, served a double purpose: to define that state, and the white, modern nation within it; and to function as part of a larger wall keeping out unwanted 'coloured' peoples, the colonised of Asia and of Africa and the American/Caribbean from Europe and its colonial outposts" (Stratton 2004, 235). In an article on Australia's racialised reaction to boat people, Sonia Magdalena Tascón writes that, "our borders have become more rigid rather than more elastic in relation to them" (2002). This happened at the same time, in the 1990s and early 2000s, that the new visa regulations that I have been discussing, the advent of the 457 Visa and the changed conditions for international students to apply for permanent residency, were being put in place.

As I have already indicated, the boat people have not only been racialised they have also been classed—that is, they have been constructed as unskilled and by implication either *lumpen* or, at best, lower working class. To give one example, the Democrat senator, Andrew Bartlett, in an article in 2007 sympathetic to the plight of incarcerated boat people, wrote that:

[m]any hundreds of refugees—most of them from Afghanistan and Iraq—were sent to Nauru by Australia in 2001, and after tens of millions of dollars spent by the Australian government over four or five years trying to create the false impression these people were undesirables who should be kept out they were acknowledged to be refugees and brought back to Australia. Many of them immediately started working in jobs such as in the meatworks and agricultural industries, in states all over Australia—the same jobs I keep being told we can't find enough workers for. Every year Australia allows in more than 100,000 people on Working Holiday visas,

which our government promotes as a way to fill labour market gaps in seasonal and unskilled work. (2007)

It was Bartlett's idea that asylum seekers could make a worthwhile contribution to the community they wished to join by being allowed to take up these unskilled jobs. The reclassified asylum seekers that Bartlett refers to were people granted Temporary Protection Visas, a new category of visa with limited rights and entitlements, including a review of the person's status as a refugee after three years, created by the Howard government in 1999 for asylum seekers who had been given refugee status. As it happens, many asylum seekers are highly skilled. On a "Facts and Stats" page discussing both asylum seekers and refugees—the former are simply people not yet officially classified as the latter—the Refugee Council of Australia explains that:

[i]t is a myth that all refugees are illiterate peasants. The majority that come to Australia are educated middle class people—whose education, profession or political opinions have drawn them to the attention of the authorities and resulted in their persecution. (Refugee Council of Australia n.d.)

Nevertheless, it is indeed a persuasive myth that asylum seekers are unskilled. The myth functions as part of a structural transformation of the modern binary distinction between civilised and primitive, white and coloured. In this case the opposing term to unskilled is, of course, skilled. The kinds of jobs identified by Bartlett are ones which, as he implies, those in Australia, Australian citizens or permanent residents, when they have a choice, prefer not to take. These are the jobs that, in the United States and many European countries, are now done by illegal migrants or guest workers—that is, people who, in one way or another, do not have a status as members of the state. These people are raced as non-white. It is worth noting that Australia does not have a pool of illegal migrants to take up these unpopular jobs. As we shall see, often these jobs are now done by international students, or those international students who have gained permanent residency but have failed to be employed in the jobs for which they are now skilled.

In Australia, after the Second World War, as I have already discussed, the migrants were channelled into unskilled and low-skilled, working-class jobs. At that time Australia broadened its definition of who was white with the result that large numbers of the migrants who would previously have been excluded as non-whites were now accepted. As I have argued in Chapter 5, this produced a longstanding, racialised class structure in

Australia where ethnicity became a category used to describe those identified as white but still discriminated against because they were not fully white, not as white as the people who could trace their heritage to Britain or northern Europe, and possibly Ireland. When multiculturalism was introduced in the late 1970s as a population management policy (Stratton 1998) it was mapped onto the established racialised class structure. Thus, middle-class hegemony in Australia remained, essentially, Anglo-Celtic, northern European and, above all, white. The racialised boat people on the other side of the border function to unify the still predominantly working-class and marginalised not-fully-white ethnics with the Anglo-Australian white middle-class.

Skilled Workers and Australian Values

The boat people also distract from the changes that are taking place in the composition of the middle class. In 2007/08, 28,029 migrants arrived in Australia from the United Kingdom. This represented 17.7 per cent of the total migration program. Britain remains the largest source of migrants, and we can assume that the vast majority of these are white. This percentage of the total migration program is in decline from a peak in 2005/06 of 22.5 per cent. This, though, is not a steady decrease in percentage. In the late 1990s, the percentage of migrants drawn from Britain had declined to less than fifteen per cent. The percentage increases again after 2001/02, that is, at the time of the introduction of the 457 Visa. Looked at from the other way round, in March 2006, there were 12,186 people from the United Kingdom in Australia on 457 Visas. This represents 26.6 per cent of all holders of these visas. The next highest percentage of holders comes from India representing only 7.4 per cent or 3,393 people (Kinnaird 2006, 55). Now, 457 Visa holders already have skills, professional qualifications, so it is not that surprising that these people should be drawn predominantly from developed countries where there are many people with the relevant training and qualifications. At the same time, the 457 Visa is, as we have seen, employer-driven, so it seems that, given the choice, which there was, Australian employers still prefer to employ Britons over any other national group. The effect of this, as I have just shown, is to increase the Anglo, white component of the Australian middle class.

This is particularly important because Australians have come to think of race in terms of culture. In *Race Daze* I discussed this development in relation to the right-wing populist politician, Pauline Hanson:

Hanson typifies the new kind of racist, really espousing a kind of *culturalism*, in which particular cultures are considered to be incompatible with, in this case, what is claimed to be Australian national culture and this claimed fundamental cultural difference is visibly marked by race. In this thinking, culture is not reduced to race, race works as a signifier of it and, as a consequence, as Hanson insists, small numbers of racially different people can be allowed into the country provided that they actively acculturate to Australian culture. (1998, 13–14)

Cultural difference has come to signify racial difference. Since it is assumed that cultural norms are founded in religion—for example, the claim that Australian culture is a consequence of the country’s Judeo-Christian heritage—then religious difference signifies cultural difference which, in turn, signifies racial difference. It is this logic which founds the mis-identification of Muslims as a race and, with the claim that the majority of boat people are Muslim, suggests that they have different values from Australians. Tascón (2002) gives recent examples of this culturalist way of thinking:

culture continues to be invoked today, to mark the irreconcilable differences between “us” and “them”. In an interview on ABC’s Four Corners (13 September 2001), the Minister for Immigration related the self-harm of the detainees in Port Hedland Detention Centre to their “culture”: “the sorts of things people from those parts of the world are used to doing.” . . . During the “children overboard affair” in 2001 when asylum seeker children were supposedly thrown into the ocean from their boat by their parents, Mr Howard as Prime Minister and Mr Ruddock as Minister for Immigration, spouted their horror at “the sorts of things these people were capable of doing.”

Tascón’s examples show how asylum-seeking boat people have been constructed as having fundamentally different, and morally wrong, cultural values when compared with Australian, for which we need to read white, values. British migrants, however, are thought to reinforce the longstanding British grounding of Australia’s hegemonic culture, and its founding values, while simultaneously reinforcing Australia’s whiteness.

Supplementing the 26.6 per cent of British 457 Visa holders is a further 22.3 per cent drawn from countries Australians have traditionally thought of as white, including three British settler colonies: the United States, Canada and South Africa. The United States contributed five per cent as did South Africa (given the racial structure of South Africa we can presume these skilled visa holders to be white), Ireland contributed 4.1 per cent and Germany 3.4 per cent. Canada contributed 2.8 per cent. White

countries with close ties to Euro-American modernity, and especially to Britain, therefore, made up 49.9 per cent of the total 457 Visa holders in 2006. These people helped to reinforce the whiteness, and by implication the traditional values, those, for example, held by Ruddock and Howard, of the Australian middle class.

I have already noted that India contributed the second highest number of 457 Visa holders with a comparatively small 7.4 per cent. One possible reason for India's relatively high contribution may be its history of British colonisation which has had the consequence that many of the middle class speak English as a first or second language. India was followed by China with five per cent, Japan with 4.9 per cent and the Philippines with 4.1 per cent. Malaysia, another country colonised by the British and where English continues to be generally spoken, came in last out of the top twelve countries contributing 1.8 per cent or 810 people. We should note that there is no Middle Eastern, or for that matter no Latin American, country in this twelve and, bearing in mind white Australian anxieties over Muslims, Malaysia is the only country of the twelve where Islam is the dominant religion.

Where all the "white" countries are thought to share to a large extent a similar set of fundamental values, and indeed Christianity in various forms as a dominant religion, the non-Western, non-white countries are all considered to have quite diverse cultures with little in common. They cannot, therefore, be considered as a more or less unitary block like the white grouping except in white Australian terms as the "Asian" racial/cultural other. We can see then, that the introduction of the 457 Visa has had the possibly unexpected consequence of reinforcing the white Australian middle class, and its hegemonic Anglo-Celtic Australian culture, at the same time that the Howard government moved Australia away from multiculturalism and towards a renewed emphasis on "Australian values" and the Australian way of life—which, in reality, meant white, Anglo-Celtic Australian culture. Indeed, since October 2007, all applicants for a 457 Visa, like all applicants for visas granting permanent residency, and applicants for some temporary visas, have had to sign an Australian Values Statement.⁴ In the words of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship's webpage: "[t]he statement requires applicants to confirm that they will respect the Australian way of life and obey the laws of Australia before being granted a visa" ("Living in Australia" n.d.). At the same time as this reinforcement of white hegemony, and this is a point to which I shall return shortly, we need to remember that just over 21.2 per cent of 457 Visas out of the top twelve

countries were granted to people from a wide variety of Asian cultural backgrounds.⁵

After Britain, the two source countries that contributed the most migrants in 2007/08 were India with 14 per cent or 22,146 people and China with 13 per cent or 20,729 people. In 2006/07 China contributed slightly more than India. Between them Britain, India and China contribute just under 50 per cent of Australia's migrants, a total of 70,904 annually with, in 2007/08, South Africa considerably further back on 7,178 and the Philippines on 6,721. These figures are gross, that is, they do not take into account those people from those countries who leave, mostly to return to their country of origin. When these are included, the net overseas migration figures for 2006/07 show China as the biggest contributor on 23,000 followed by Britain with 22,840 and India with 17,410.⁶ In broad terms, since around 1990, that is around the time that anxiety was beginning to be ramped up about the boat people asylum seekers with mandatory detention being introduced in 1992, there has been a significant increase in migration from China and India with each country's contribution beginning to match or surpass migration from Britain. Indeed, as the Department of Immigration and Citizenship's *Report on Migration Program 2007/08* puts it:

[i]n terms of regions the Indian sub-continent [which includes Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Nepal] now provides 19.9 per cent of the Migration Program (an increase from 18.6 per cent in 2006/07). North Asia [which includes China, Republic of Korea, Hong Kong, Japan, Vietnam and Taiwan] provided 21.14 per cent of the 2007/08 Migration Program. (Australian Government: Department of Immigration and Citizenship n.d.)

To put it differently, and using the conventional Australian understanding of "Asian", which would include both these figures, Asian migration for 2007/08 would be thought of as just over 41 per cent of the total.

We need to relate this figure to the directedness of post-1980s migration towards skills. While, as we have seen, the 457 Visa has had the effect of proportionally increasing British migration, much of the Asian migration that I have just identified comes from international students seeking permanent residency after qualifying. I have already mentioned Marginson's informed estimate that over a third of international students subsequently apply for permanent residency. On Marginson's 2005 figure of 164,000, which is considerably lower than the numbers I have quoted for 2007, this suggests a minimum of around 55,000 international students, some with spouses and children, achieving permanent residency. We can

see that this would form the majority of the migration intake from China and India. In other words, the bulk of the Asian-identified migration intake since the 1990s, and especially since the changes allowing international students to apply for permanent residency onshore, has been skilled, trained in Australia and already residing in Australia for a minimum of eighteen months before applying for permanent residency.

We now need to remember the structural organisation of Australian society that I outlined earlier. The not-fully-white Australians and their descendants who arrived as unskilled workers after the Second World War remain, in large numbers, in the working class. Middle-class Australia, the Australia of skills, professional qualifications and salaried positions in business and politics, remains preponderantly the province of the Anglo-Celtics, the so-called mainstream Australia which is the source for “Australian values” and the hegemonic Australian culture. What, then happens to these Asian-identified migrants as they find themselves in this white Australian middle class? The first thing to remember here is how Australian multiculturalism works—that is, as I have mentioned elsewhere in this book, with a core and periphery structure (see also Stratton 1998, 34–40). The core is the Anglo-Celtic culture, which is primarily middle class with a large working-class component. The periphery is composed of those described in terms of ethnic and racial difference but thought of in terms of cultural diversity. This multicultural periphery is, generally speaking, working class. It is, at the least, suggestive that the Howard government’s retreat from multiculturalism, which, after all, had been put in place in response to the lack of assimilation by those not-fully-white Greeks, Lebanese, Maltese, southern Italians and other groups of unskilled, or at least classified as unskilled, post-Second World War migrants, should come as significant numbers of skilled, Asian-identified migrants are positioned within the hegemonic Anglo-Australian middle class.

Honorary Whiteness and Model Minority Status

In multiculturalism, the celebration of ethnic differences has also been a way of establishing distance from middle-class, white, Anglo-Celtic Australia. The problem for this group now is, in the first instance, how to incorporate this new Asian-identified flow of people in such a way as to preserve their invisibility. Elsewhere, in a discussion of Jews, I have written about invisibility as a tactic of the oppressed group:

[t]his is as a subaltern tactic to escape the threat posed to you by the dominant population. Again, I want to emphasise that this way of thinking is not unique to the Ashkenazi Jews, it has been a characteristic of many migrants, and minority groups, in circumstances where they have not been accepted for what they are, but attacked for their difference. It is, to coin a phrase, the attempt to become *invisible* to the host population. (2000, 101, emphasis in original)

This also applies to minority groups in Australian middle-class, hegemonic whiteness. However, here, because of the pervasive racial organisation of Australian society, there is, in addition, a need on the part of the white middle class to make the new Asian-Australians invisible through a process of assimilation, couched in terms of the acceptance of Australian values and the provisional attribution of honorary whiteness. The fear would be that, were these people to be visible, there would be a generalised racist backlash aimed, in particular, at Asian-identified migrants.

Aihwa Ong has written about the Chinese-background middle class in California:

[e]thnic Chinese command of the transnationalized electronics industry has placed them at the top of the ethnic hierarchy in California as ideal border-crossing and enterprising citizens vital to American business. The new status of the cyberhero (think of Jerry Yang of Yahoo) has recoded ethnic Chinese, endowing them with an honorary whiteness that represents a new form of exclusion, in the way that the model minority citizen initially excluded non-Asian Americans. (2006b, 127)

From its earliest usage, probably by the Jewish humourist and travel writer George Mikes in his account of Jamaica published in 1967, *Not by Sun Alone*, honorary whiteness is a term that is increasingly used, especially in the United States, to describe groups who, in particular, usually national, contexts are allowed the status of whiteness while there is continuing recognition that the members of the group are not white. It is a term that has not, to my knowledge been used in Australia. In the quotation above, Ong emphasises the exclusionary aspect of the granting of honorary whiteness. In the context of the new presence of significant numbers of people identified as Asian in the Australian middle class I want to start by emphasising the term's inclusive aspect. Given the anxiety about "Asians" that permeates the Australian national imaginary, those identified as "Asian" in the Australian middle class are already excluded. However, they are given a conditional acceptance into the middle class, a granting of honorary whiteness provided they accept "Australian values" and the Australian way of life. Thinking of this in terms of honorary whiteness is a

way of acknowledging their difference while preserving the integrity of white, Anglo-Australian hegemony.

At this point we need to note that there are differences in the ways that middle-class Asian-Australians are perceived by the white middle class, that those Asians who have arrived through the international student channel tend to be less accepted than those born in Australia—and whose marker of Australianness is often an Australian accent and a first-language grasp of Australian English. The latter are able to make themselves more invisible. A female colleague, who has a Chinese background, emailed me to say that honorary whiteness “reminds me of one of my high school friends telling me he didn’t particularly like Asians but didn’t think of me as Asian. I wasn’t sure whether to be flattered to be called an honorary white or to be offended.” This story typifies a particular form of racism where the known person is distinguished from the general group against which the individual is prejudiced. It is often used by members of the dominant group to grant honorary membership. In England in the 1960s my father would distinguish the “good” West Indian he employed as against West Indians as a group against whom he was racially prejudiced. While the individual in the narrative above fits this category, the context of Australian multiculturalism adds a further inflection. It is highly likely that the “Asians” that this individual “didn’t particularly like” were those who celebrated their ethnicity according to the organisation of Australian multiculturalism; that is, my colleague was acceptable not only because she was known but also because she appeared to be assimilated into (middle-class) Australian values.

Nevertheless, middle-class Asian-Australians remain identified and excluded, as the term honorary whiteness signifies—and as my colleague implies by her ambivalence after being granted it by a white arbiter. The tenuousness of this inclusive acceptance is apparent in what happens to those who do not appear to accept Anglo-Australian, middle-class values. One high-flying, and as it happens non-Asian, example is the American, Sol Trujillo. Trujillo was appointed Chief Executive Officer of Telstra in 2005. In 2009 he stood down and returned to the United States where he complained about Australian racism in an interview with the BBC (see Lane 2009). In Australia, Trujillo’s brashness and bluntness alienated him, as did the large remuneration he was given. He was perceived not to have Australian values. Trujillo is the son of Mexican migrants and, as the Australian dislike of him increased, so his background became increasingly highlighted—not that he was American but that he was Hispanic. This included, for example, cartoons of Trujillo in a sombrero, waving guns around, in the image of a stereotypical Mexican bandit.

Nevertheless, the Australian media reacted strongly to Trujillo's claim of racism. Discussing the case, in an article titled "Sol Was Right: We Are Racist," Ezequiel Trumper (2009), at *newmatilda.com*, has argued that:

[r]acial stereotypes in the media abound not just in the domain of tabloid journalism but also in those parts of our media with pretensions to quality. Australian financial commentators, supposedly well educated people, had no qualms about using a wide range of Spanish words to refer to Trujillo and his executives disparagingly. Trujillo's complaints over the way he was portrayed by the media in Australia were not new. He had said the same thing about his Australian experience to the *Financial Times* in the middle of his tenure.

When told on camera that Trujillo had left the country, the prime minister, Kevin Rudd, waved and, with a smile, said, "Adios." The Australian middle-class rejection of this not-fully-white overseas appointment (he would have been on a 457 Visa) was expressed in the withdrawal of his honorary whiteness and the corresponding emphasis on his racial/cultural difference.

Dr Mohamed Haneef provides another, this time "Asian", example. Haneef trained as a doctor in Bangalore. After working in Britain he obtained a 457 Visa and started work at the Gold Coast Hospital in 2006. On 2 July 2007, Haneef was arrested at Brisbane Airport on the way to India to see his wife who had neo-natal jaundice after just giving birth to their daughter. Haneef was accused of being a terrorist and helping his cousins who attacked Glasgow Airport by giving them a SIM card before he left Britain for Australia. It was subsequently ascertained that Haneef's SIM card was not used in the bombing, as had been claimed. However, without any proof, Haneef was treated as a terrorist. On 16 July, Haneef was freed on bail. The Minister for Immigration, Kevin Andrews, immediately revoked Haneef's visa on character grounds—the Executive, here, challenging the rule of law. Haneef chose not to post bail as doing so would have seen him immediately taken to Villawood detention centre. On 27 July, the charges against Haneef were dropped. However, Andrews refused to rescind his decision to revoke Haneef's visa. On the same day Haneef's passport was returned to him. Without a visa he had no option but to leave the country which he did on 28 July. The Federal Court reinstated Haneef's visa on 26 December. In spite of an inquiry headed by retired New South Wales Supreme Court Judge John Clarke finding that Haneef had been wrongly charged and wrongly detained, the Rudd federal government has refused to apologise on the grounds that the previous government was responsible for the wrongful actions—which seems

illogical given that Rudd did apologise for the wrongs previous governments had inflicted on the Aborigines of the Stolen Generations.

Haneef's invisibility, his conditional honorary whiteness as a member of the middle class, was removed when he was thought to be a possible terrorist. Haneef has said that, "he had never experienced any racism from colleagues or patients while working at the Hospital and his idea of Australia as a fair country had not been changed" ("I Was Targeted" 2008). At the time of his arrest, however, he became a highly visible Muslim Indian. As he himself insightfully said, that he was targeted "might be just because I am an Asian Muslim" ("I Was Targeted" 2008). The claim of terrorism was used to justify the subsequent actions against him but it was his identification as a Muslim Indian, triggering white Australian anxieties about Muslims and about Asians, which allowed the increasingly questionable actions, from both a moral and legal perspective, to go relatively unchallenged by white Australians.

Haneef already had his medical qualification when he came to Australia. However, the provisionality of honorary whiteness also applies to international students. Michiel Baas is an anthropologist who studied a group of Indian students in Melbourne. He found that "by far the largest group of Indian students" are studying in Australia in order to be eligible for permanent residency:

[m]any claim to have come to Australia for a "better lifestyle", which refers both to basic things like clean air, good infrastructure, a safer society and better public facilities, as well as to better opportunities on the job front and generally more money. Interesting though, it is this . . . group which often seems to end up in jobs such as a taxi driver, security guard or petrol pump attendant. (Baas 2006, 21)

It would seem that, when not moving into the middle-class jobs associated with their qualifications, these skilled permanent residents end up in jobs the status of which is not much higher than the jobs which Andrew Bartlett was recommending for detained asylum seekers. These are the kinds of jobs taken by students, and especially international students, to make some extra money. Often, this is because of the 20 hours limit per week on paid work that I mentioned earlier—many of these jobs are off the books enabling the students to work longer hours. Baas's point is that many Indians in Australia continue in this employment after gaining the qualifications that enable them to attain permanent residency. Baas comments that:

[t]he money the students will make, even as taxi drivers, or security guards in a local shopping mall, will always be more than what they saw themselves making in India. In this sense they have got exactly what they wanted. (2006, 22)

They have not, however, given white Australia what it wanted from them, their skilled labour, and so their honorary whiteness has been withdrawn. The jobs they achieve are those associated with racialised groups such as asylum seekers and, in other countries, guest workers.

Sometimes honorary whiteness is withheld through the racism of employers. Many Asians who gain permanent residency after successfully completing courses that score highly on the MODL are unable to find work in their chosen career. James and Otsuka in their study of the racism in the employment of international students who gain accountancy degrees in Australia, write that:

[I]nternational students typically mail out large numbers of job applications to Australian firms with very little success . . . Many high-achieving Chinese graduates, after failing to find suitable accountancy-related work, accept cleaning, labouring and sales jobs in Australia and/or quietly return to China. (n.d.)

James and Otsuka go on to write that: “Indian, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan and Chinese graduates, according to one interviewee, are working in sales jobs at petrol kiosks and convenience stores, creating something of a marginalised underclass.” A study by Alison Booth, Andrew Leigh and Elena Varganova enables us to put this discrimination in context. Booth et al. sent out 5,000 fictional job applications for advertised positions in four different categories of job: waitstaff, data entry, customer service and sales. They were able to identify the employers as Anglo-Saxon—that is, white in Australian terms. For each type of job they sent the same application, only varying the name to signal a particular racial/ethnic background. The backgrounds they chose were Anglo-Saxon (their term), Indigenous, Italian, Middle Eastern and Chinese. They found that, for men and women combined:

[f]or Anglo-Saxon-sounding names, the mean callback rate was 35 percent. However, names connoting the four minority groups received a lower callback rate, with Indigenous applicants obtaining an interview 26 percent of the time, Chinese 21 percent of the time, Italian 32 percent of the time, and Middle Eastern 22 percent of the time. (Booth et al. 2009, 9)

We can see here a racial/ethnic hierarchy operating in the context of employment, a hierarchy that places people with Chinese and Middle Eastern backgrounds as the least desirable employees. Booth et al. found that the greatest amount of discrimination was for waitstaff and data entry jobs where, for waitstaff, “[a] Chinese and Middle Eastern person . . . must submit fully twice as many applications in order to get as many interviews as an Anglo-Saxon applicant” (2009, 10). They go on to write that:

[c]uriously, the one job in which the level of discrimination appears to be lower is customer service, in which there is no statistically significant discrimination against any of the minority groups. This is also the one occupation in which those with more education were more likely to receive an interview. (2009, 12)

From the point of view of my argument this is not curious: the greater the amount of education the more likely that the applicant would be perceived to be middle class. They would then be attributed honorary whiteness.

We should note the apparent relative lack of discrimination against people with Italian-identifiable names. Booth et al. also conducted another study in which they sent out over 2,000 letters to “wrong” addresses. The envelopes had names linking the addressee with one of the five groups already listed. The study sought to ascertain if there was a variation in return rate attributable to the name-based identification of the addressees. What they found was that there was a three to five per cent drop in the return rate of all letters addressed to people with non-Anglo-Saxon names. This included those with Italian names. What this suggests, I would argue, is that, while white employers are prepared to employ people identified as having Italian backgrounds, probably because they are thought to be second or third generation and therefore to have “Australian values”, Anglo-Australians are less prepared to deal with Italian-background people socially—indeed as less-prepared as they are to deal with people with Chinese or Middle Eastern backgrounds. It also seems that Italian-background employers “appear to be significantly less likely to call back job candidates with Italian names” (Booth et al. 2009, 12). It seems that Italian-background employers have internalised the dominant, white middle-class racial/ethnic prejudices.

In an article on the online essay site, *Helium*, Anthony Mukwita, writing about the racism faced by African students in Australia, describes how John Banda, working the graveyard shift in an all-night fast food restaurant in Perth, is asked by a customer: “[h]ow come there are so many blacks here . . . shouldn’t they be working at the farms shearing sheep or picking tomatoes or something?” (Mukwita 2007). In the Australian

racialised job hierarchy, these jobs rank below the working-class manufacturing and construction jobs that typified the work of the ethnicised, not-fully-white migrants, some of whom were very well qualified, of the post-Second World War period.⁷

William Petersen coined the term “model minority” in a *New York Times* editorial in 1966 to describe the success of Japanese-Americans in American society. The key to model minority status is the acceptance of the fundamental values and goals of the dominant, white culture. This implies the kind of assimilation asked for in the Howard government’s “Australian values” campaign. In the terms of the multicultural organisation of Australian society, the reward for such assimilatory behaviour is not being included in the multicultural celebrations of ethnic difference—which are actually an acknowledgement of the ethnic/racial fracture on which white Australian hegemony depends. The Indians, Chinese, Vietnamese and other Asian migrants who arrived in the 1970s and early 1980s, often with few skills, many of them as it happens as boat people seeking asylum, and who joined the ethnicised working class like the Italians, Greeks, Lebanese and other southern and eastern European groups who arrived in the 1940s and 1950s, also joined this “celebration” of multiculturalism. In a book on whiteness in Britain, Steve Garner argues that:

[p]eople who are not white can be absorbed into honorary whiteness in particular circumstances, yet this invariably involves othering different groups. In fact this othering appears constitutive of the process of redrawing of the boundary of whiteness in terms of values, so that it embraces British black or Asian people, depending on the context. In confirming shared values both the groups that share and do not share them are defined. (2007, 78)

In Australia since the 1980s the conditional inclusion of skilled “Asians” in the white middle class, with the assimilatory claim of their adoption of Australian values, has been reinforced by the racialisation of asylum seekers and the assertions that “they” do not share “our” culture and values. It is these skilled, middle-class “Asians”, many of whom have arrived as international students paying for their own education, who are offered to a greater or lesser degree honorary whiteness and who, in accepting the values of white, Anglo-Australia, form an invisible model minority in the hegemonic white middle class, conditional on that acceptance.

ENDNOTES

Introduction

1. There is now a considerable literature on the racial aspects of Howard's government. See, e.g., Hage (1998); Perera and Pugliese (1997); Stratton (1998).
2. On many of these changes see Summers (2003).
3. A background to the Australian intervention in Solomon Islands can be found in Kabutaulaka (2004).
4. On the problematic whiteness of the Irish in Australia see Stratton (2004).
5. For a discussion on the reception of the burqa in Australia see Hussein (2007).
6. See Stratton (1998). In that book I acknowledge Jamrozik, Boland and Urquhart (1995) as possibly the first to use the core-periphery model as a way of understanding Australian multiculturalism.
7. The quotations about the gypsy come from Martin (1989).
8. It is unclear from the description of the project whether the advertisements were Australian in content or simply being shown on Australian television.
9. A worry about the results of this survey is that Higgs and Milner appear to think that 7 per cent of the Australian population is black African.
10. The actual figure for the number of people identifying as Muslim in Australia's prisons seems impossible to come by. What we do know is that in England, where around 2.8 per cent of the population identifies as Muslim, 11 per cent of the prison population makes this identification (see Cooper 2008).

Chapter One

1. Notoriously, Todd Russell is reported subsequently to have said: "That Sustagen, I wouldn't feed it to my dog" and "Whatever you do kids, don't drink Sustagen."
2. In 1985 the (white) Neil Murray wrote a very successful song called "(My) Island Home". It was written for George Burarrwanga, whose home was Elcho Island, which is off Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory. Murray co-founded the pioneering Aboriginal rock group, the Warumpi Band. Burarrwanga sang with the group. "(My) Island Home" is on the group's second album, *Go Bush!*, released in 1987. Having worked with Murray, the Torres Strait Islander, Christine Anu, recorded the song in 1995 and it became a very big mainstream hit, winning the Australian Recording Industry award for the best single of that year. It is also on her album *Stylin' Up* released in 1995. Anu subsequently sang the song in the closing ceremony of the Sydney Olympics in 2000. While she was born in Cairns, her mother comes from Saibai Island, just off the Papua New Guinea coast, and her father is from

Mabuiag Island near the centre of the Torres Strait. Increasingly the song has been taken by settler Australians to be about Australia itself. Unfortunately, there is no space here to unpack this fascinating history of the song, its singers and its relationship to indigenous Australians, to white Australians, and to Australian islands any further (for one discussion see McMahon 2003, 190–93). I cannot resist one anecdote, however. When I was in Honolulu, Hawai‘i, in 1994, I heard the song sung on the radio by a local group using it to assert native Hawaiian identity.

Chapter Two

1. There is, of course, a long history of cultural film analysis in Australia. Perhaps most relevant to my arguments here are Graeme Turner’s *National Fictions: Literature, Film, and the Construction of Australian Narrative*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1986; Susan Dermody and Elizabeth Jacka’s two volumes *The Screening of Australia*, Currency Press, Sydney, 1987–88; and *The Imaginary Industry: Australian Film in the Late ’80s*, Australian Film, Television & Radio School, North Ryde, NSW, 1988; and Tom O’Regan’s *Australian National Cinema*, Routledge, London, 1996.
2. Quoted here from the blog of John Quiggin, Professor of Economics at Queensland University (Quiggin 2002). Quiggin takes the quotation, in Spanish, from the Spanish newspaper, *El Pais*, 22 June 1999. The translation is his.
3. It is worth considering the word “foreignness” here. It suggests that, in Lawrence’s thinking, those included in Australian society by way of multiculturalism remain different and more excluded than the “non-foreign” Anglos.
4. For a detailed account, see Trinca and Davies (2000).
5. For a more sympathetic reading of *The Castle*’s use of *Mabo* see Collins and Davis (2004, 116–23).
6. For a general discussion see Culler (1975).
7. On detention centres and violence see Pugliese (2002).

Chapter Three

1. An American-oriented discussion of workfare is Peck (2001).
2. After the calling of the 2010 federal election Get Up!, a group describing itself as “an independent, grass-roots community advocacy organisation” (see <http://www.getup.org.au/about/>) sponsored a legal challenge in the High Court, now known as *Rowe v The Electoral Commissioner*. This sought to overturn the Howard government’s limitations on the time during which a person might register to vote. The challenge was successful. Get Up! claim that this enabled an extra 98,138 people to register to vote (see Get Up! 2010).

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3. For a more complete outline, see Australian Government: Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (n.d.).
 4. On the WorkChoices legislation see Hall (2006).
 5. See the discussion by Perera and Stratton (2009).

Chapter Four

1. The further details also come from Kevin (2004).
2. When I lived in Darwin in the late 1980s there was a much retold urban myth circulating. It seems the Northern Territory government had employed at great expense a hot-shot advertising company from either Sydney or Melbourne to develop a campaign to encourage Territorians to be more friendly and helpful to tourists. The tagline of the campaign the company mounted was: “Tell a tourist where to go”.
3. Joseph Pugliese writes that: “In the context of Australia’s refugee prisons, law’s power of mandatory, indeterminate detention of refugees is exercised through and across the bodies of its human targets. In the context of these refugee prisons, however, every act of self-harm simultaneously marks an attempt to transliterate law from its linguistic and discursive register to its corporeal articulation and effects, thereby rendering visible its complex order of violence” (2002, 24). The most extreme act of self-harm here is suicide. The government refuses to release the figures for those detained who have died by their own hand.
4. One discussion of Australia as utopia can be found in McMahon (2003).
5. On the Milat case see Whittaker and Kennedy (2001).
6. On the Falconio and Lees case see Bowles (2005).
7. Howden’s research, though, was faulty. She claims six, rather than seven, British backpackers were killed in the Childers fire and that Stuttle was murdered in 2004 not 2002.

Chapter Five

1. There was considerable reluctance among European migrants to Australia in the post–Second World War period to apply for citizenship—a status which only acquired a legal existence after the passing of the *Nationality and Citizenship Act* in 1948, which came into force on Australia Day, 1949. Ann-Mari Jordens writes that: “In 1956 the Department [of Immigration] calculated that only 77,670 (35.2%) of the 220,380 aliens who were registered in June 1951 had applied to become citizens” (1997, 180).

Chapter Six

1. All these box office figures come from Dale (2007).

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2. Olivia Khoo has made a similar point. She writes that: “Despite the proliferation of categories for the nation’s cast of marginal characters, there is a reluctance, or an inability, to make space for Asians within such a seemingly leveling discourse of marginality. It is not that prominent films recounting the stories of Asians in Australia, or of Australians in Asia, do not exist. Rather, this silence is perhaps due to the fact that the Asian Australian relationship is one that is difficult for many Australians to dream or conceive of fully yet” (Khoo 2008, 45–6).
 3. There is now a large literature on neoliberalism. See, for example, Harvey (2005) Saad-Filho and Johnston, ed. (2005).
 4. In English law the idea of the alien goes back to the 15th century, see Kim (2000).
 5. In 2008 a similar scene of border protection was narrated as bathos. Here is the event described in a news release from the office of the Shadow Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Dr Sharman Stone: “Happy Campers, the new front-line border protection: Stone. The role of campers in detaining 12 Sri Lankan men, some of whom swam through shark-infested waters yesterday to illegally enter Australia, shows Federal Labor’s border regime to be failing, the Shadow Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Dr Sharman Stone, has said” (Stone 2008). I owe this reference to Kristen Phillips.
 6. The first Vietnam Moratorium march, held in May 1970, saw around 100,000 people take to the streets of Melbourne and up to another 100,000 march in other cities in Australia. See Gerster and Bassett (1991, 46) for a discussion of the Melbourne march.

Chapter Seven

1. David Punter and Glennis Byron in *The Gothic* write that: “Early vampires are not only aristocrats, but also seducers, and from the start the vampire has been associated with sexuality” (2004, 269).
2. I have no room to discuss *Dead Set* here but, in short, it is a classic zombie apocalypse siege film but this time on the set of a reality television show. The zombies, who are easily read as the show’s audience, lay siege and the series ends by them killing and eating the show’s cast. Once again, though, the zombie siege can also be read as an expression of British anxiety about the threat of displaced people pressing on Britain’s border.
3. For reviews of *Fido* see, for example, Biodrowski (2008); Bracken (2008) and Cinerina (2007).
4. It is not the first Australian zombie film; that would seem to be *Zombie Brigade*, released in 1986. In this film the zombies are Vietnam War veterans risen from the dead to take revenge on the attempt by Japanese developers to build a theme park on the site of the war memorial. The anxieties here would seem to connect with longstanding Australian fears of Asian invasion.

Chapter Eight

1. These figures come from the Australian Government's "2007 Annual International Student Statistics" (2007).
2. In 2009, when I wrote the paper that became this chapter, there was increasing concern among Indian students in Melbourne about racially motivated attacks. For the most detailed discussion to date see Healy (2009). See also Perera and Stratton (2009). This article is the Introduction to a special section of this issue of *Continuum* which focuses on the Australian treatment of asylum seekers.
3. The range of judicial review, however, has been increasingly limited over the last twenty years. In 1989, to take an important example, the Labor government, tightening up the border regime, introduced mandatory deportation of unlawful non-citizens, mostly visa overstayers, regardless of their time in Australia or their circumstances. See Nicholls (2007, especially chap. 9: "Mandatory Deportation and Detention").
4. The Australian Values Statement reads in part:

"I confirm that I have read, or had explained to me, information provided by the Australian Government on Australian society and values. I understand:

 - Australian society values respect for the freedom and dignity of the individual, freedom of religion, commitment to the rule of law, Parliamentary democracy, equality of men and women and a spirit of egalitarianism that embraces mutual respect, tolerance, fair play and compassion for those in need and pursuit of the public good;
 - Australian society values equality of opportunity for individuals, regardless of their race, religion or ethnic background;
 - the English language, as the national language, is an important unifying element of Australian society. I undertake to respect these values of Australian society during my stay in Australia and to obey the laws of Australia."
5. All these figures derive from Kinnaird (2006). Kinnaird also notes that 6.7 per cent of granted 457 Visas have inadequately described countries of origin.
6. These figures come from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 Census data, see Australian Bureau of Statistics (2008). In all these calculations I have left out the high numbers of New Zealanders who move to Australia. In 2006/07 there was a net overseas migration of New Zealanders to Australia of 21,420.
7. There is a story that I have been told about a migrant who came in the 1960s. Before she left her country of origin she asked if, in Australia, there were jobs for librarians. She was told that there were. When she arrived in Australia she realised that she had been misunderstood—that there were jobs for labourers but not librarians. This story sounds to me like an urban myth. It is a story that explains, from a migrant perspective, why migrants did not get the skilled positions for which they had the training.

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INDEX

References are to Australia unless otherwise indicated.

- 457 Visas
 - British 210, 211
 - Indian 212
 - market-basis 201–2, 207
 - numbers issued 200–1
 - ‘white’ holders 211–12
- Aboriginal languages 46
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission(ATSIC)
- abolition 13, 51
- see also* Torres Strait Regional Authority
- Aboriginals’ Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act* (1897) 48, 50
- Aborigines
 - confinement 49
 - in prison 88
- advertisements, whiteness in 19, 27
- African-Americans, in prison 24
- Agamben, Giorgio 9, 23, 25, 93, 100, 120, 139, 143, 188
 - on bare life 181–2
 - Homo Sacer* 137, 181, 182
 - Remnants of Auschwitz* 183, 185–6
 - on sovereignty 95, 137, 182, 183
- Al-Qaeda 21
- Alien* 155
- Allen, Francis 22
- Althusser, Louis 135, 136
- Andrews, Kevin 217
- Anglicans 7, 8, 20
- Anidjar, Gil 184, 185
- Anzac Day, memorialisation 36
- Arendt, Hannah, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* 99
- Army Community Assistance Program 71
- Arthur, George, Lieutenant-Governor 39, 42–3
- ‘Asian invasion’, fear of 157, 160, 198
- Asian-Australians 216
- assimilation
 - as genocide 108
 - and honorary whiteness 215, 221
 - and multiculturalism 113
 - policies 1, 12, 91, 107
- asylum seekers
 - anxieties about 155
 - Cambodian 152, 160
 - detention of 5, 131, 132
 - and Fraser government 15
 - and Gothic terror 155–6
 - increase 170
 - Iraqi 160
 - Lucky Miles* 159, 160, 164, 165
 - meaning 147–8
 - numbers, decline 134, 198
 - rhetoric about 192–3
 - and Temporary Protection Visas 96, 209
 - treatment 40
 - unskilled, myth 209
 - Vietnamese 15
 - see also* refugees
- Auerbach, Nina, *Our Vampires, Ourselves* 172

- Austen, Jane
Mansfield Park 178
Pride and Prejudice 177
 and Seth Grahame-Smith, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* 169, 178–9, 193–4
- Australasian Correctional Services 23
- Australia
 and Christianity 8–9
 as dangerous place 122–3
 prison population, numbers 25
 as secular state 7, 8
- Australian Citizenship Act* (2007) 81, 207
- Australian Citizenship Amendment (Citizenship Testing) Bill (2007) 89
- Australian Citizenship Council 88
- Australian community concept 52
- Australian Constitution, ‘races power’ 48
- Australian Fair Pay Commission 101
- Australian history, Howard on 3
- Australian Human Rights Act*, failure to enact 48
- Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) 100
- Australian Labor Party (ALP) 114, 134
- ‘Australian values’ 214
 and honorary whiteness 215–16
 vs multiculturalism 212
- Australian Values Statement 90
- Australian Workplace Agreement 13, 64, 134
- Australianness, and whiteness 49
- Australo-British nationalism 16
- authoritarianism 61, 135
- Baas, Michiel 218–19
- Babacan, Hurriyet 158
- backpackers
 as boat people 125, 126
 deaths 121, 122, 123
- Baker, Bill 114, 115, 117
- Bakhtin, Mikhail, *Rabelais and His World* 74
- Ballache, Pierre, *The Town of Expiations* 41
- bare life concept
 Agamben on 181–2
 aspects 170–1
 and exclusion 93–5
 meanings 194
 as the norm 183–4, 193
 and zombies 170, 188
- Barthes, Roland 74
- Bartlett, Andrew 208–9
- Bauert, Paul, Dr 71
- beach
 as border 106, 107
 and Cronulla riots (2005) 106
 myth of 105
- Beazley, Kim 43, 44, 120
- Bellamy, Richard 82, 84
- Bello, Walden 140–1
- Bendel, Peggy 114, 115, 117
- Bentham, Jeremy 9
Panopticon versus New South Wales 38
- Betts, Katharine 84
- Bill of Rights, common law countries 48
- biopower, Foucault on 11
- Birrell, Bob 84, 206
- Bishop, Kyle 174
- boat people 53, 96, 105, 115, 117, 153, 164, 208
 backpackers as 125
 and borders 208
 cultural values, ascribed 211
 fear of 121, 149, 197
 nationalities 166–7
 numbers, decline 198

- Boigu Island 53
 Booker, Charlie 189
 Border Protection Bill (2001) 119–20, 127
 borders
 and boat people 208
 and capitalism 136
 Children of Men 158
 European 142–3
 Lucky Miles 161–2, 167
 militarisation 61–2
 as neoliberal filter 141, 142, 144
 in the neoliberal state 136
 security 117–21
 and state of exception 138
 transformative power of 136, 154
 Botting, Fred, on Gothic terror 155
 Bouma, Gary 19, 20
British Nationality Act (1948) 82
 Britishness, and citizenship 83
 Bronte, Charlotte, *Jane Eyre* 176
 Brubaker, Rogers 99
 Bruce, John 50
 Bryant, Martin 36, 37
Buffy the Vampire Slayer 172
 Burchell, David 80
 Burke, Anthony 61
 burqa, media treatment 9
 Bush, George W. 70
 Butler, Judith, on the gendered subject 154

 Caffentzis, George 69–70
 Calwell, Arthur 82, 199
 Cameron, Clyde 14
 Campbell Committee 11
Canadian Citizenship Act (1946) 82
 Cannon, JoAnn 186
 capitalism
 and the border 136
 crisis 140
 carnivalesque, in *Kenny* 74
 Carpi, Aldo, *Diario di Gusen* 186
 Carter, Paul 44

 Carver, Raymond 55
 Casares, Cindy 181
The Castle 72
 Castles, Stephen 145, 146
 Catholics 7, 8, 20
Children of Men 162, 170
 and borders 158
 illegal immigrants 157
 and neoliberalism 152, 156–7
 theme 158
 Chomsky, Noam 60
 Christianity
 and Australia 8–9
 and whiteness 7, 8, 9, 20
 Christians 20
 Christmas Island 208
 citizenship
 applications 90
 Australian 84
 and Britishness 83
 and *Citizenship Act* (2007) 88–9
 contractualisation of 84, 85
 and Cronulla riots (2005) 100
 eligibility 91
 and exclusion 67
 and the nation-state 66, 82
 Nuremberg Laws (1935) 99
 and residency 207
 and social contract 66
 take-up, low 147
 test 89–90
 and voting rights 86
 Citizenship Act (2007) 83
 and citizenship 88–9
 as site of exclusion 88
 class warfare, and neoliberalism 72
 Clinton, Bill 85
 Colic-Peisker, Val 17, 18
 Collins, Jock 25, 26
 Collins, Joe 10
 Collins, Tom (Joseph Furphy), *Such is Life* 159, 165, 166
 colonialism
 and paranoia 117–18
 and zombies 175–6
 Comaroff, Jean & John 175–6, 179

- Commonwealth of Australia,
establishment 51
- Commonwealth Naturalisation Act*
(1903) 46
- Connell, R.W. 14
- Corrigan, Chris 71
- Costar, Brian 87
- Cottle, Drew 10
- Council of Australian Governments
61
- crisis exploitation
Falklands War (1982) 133
and neoliberalism 133–4
- Crocodile Dundee (character) 72,
124
- Crocodile Dundee* (film) 110, 114,
125
tourist image 115–17
- Cronulla riots (2005)
and Australian flag 80–1, 101,
108–9
and the beach 106
causes 97–9
and citizenship 100
Perera on 108–9
racism, denial of 79–80
- cultural difference, and racial
difference 211
- Curruthers, Avril 55
- Curtin detention centre 133, 198
- Dale, David 151
- Dauvergne, Catherine 135–6, 148,
156, 157
- Davidson, Alastair 83, 91
- Davis, Angela 24, 25
- Dayan, Joan, on zombies 175
- Dead-Set* 189
- Deakin, Alfred 145
- death, and migration 108–13
- Dendle, Peter 173, 174, 174–5
- despotism
and Muslims 184
as political form 184
- detention centres 15, 16
Curtin 133, 198
established 120, 198
as places of exception 143
Port Hedland 152, 198
prisons as 28
privatisation 23
- Dillon, Michael 71
- displaced people, as zombies 16,
169, 170, 175, 189–92, 193–4
see also asylum seekers;
refugees
- Dixon, Robert 157
- Dodson, Mick 108
- Doherty, Ben 86–7
- Douglas, John 49, 50
- Downey, Anthony 171
- Dutton, David 82, 84
- Ebert, Roger 180
- El Refaie, Elisabeth 192
- Electoral Integrity Act* (2006)
consequences 86–7
disenfranchisements 87–8
- employment, racial/ethnic hierarchy
219–21
- English language
competency test 45
status 45
- Esch, Betty 101
- Esquemelin, Alexander, *Bucaniers
of America* 187–8
- Essed, Philomena, *Understanding
Everyday Racism* 34–5
- ethnicity 4, 8
criminalisation of 22
and Islam 22–3
and religion 21
- Evans, Chris 133
- exclusion
and bare life concept 93–5
and citizenship 67
Indigenous 71
and neoliberalism 94

- Fair Pay Commission 13
- Falklands War (1982), crisis
exploitation 133
- Faulkner, John 112
- federal parliament, sovereignty
locus 95
- Ferdinand, Marilyn 164
- Fido* 190, 192
- films, neoliberalism in 57–8
- Flinders Island 42–3, 50
- folk-devil, Arab 7
- Forsyth, Frederick, *The Day of the Jackal* 103
- Foucault, Michel 22, 127, 183
on biopower 11
works
Discipline and Punish 38
History of Sexuality 11
Madness and Civilization 38
- Fozdar, Farida 89, 90
- Fraser government, and asylum
seekers 15
- Fraser, Malcolm 2, 11, 110, 113
- freedom, Hayek on 60
- French, Philip 62
- Frow, John 36–7
- Fulci, Lucio, *Zombi* 2 180
- Garland, David, *The Culture of Control* 22
- Garner, Steve 221
- gated communities 121
- gendered subject, Butler on 154
- General Skilled Migration (GSM)
program
numbers 201
points system 203
- genocide, assimilation as 108
- Giannacopoulos, Maria 60–1
- Gillard, Julia 126
- Giroux, Henry 63
on neoliberalism 58–9
- Goldberg, David Theo 11, 70, 140,
142
on race 143–4
- Gomez, Ricardo J. 68–9
- Gopalkrishnan, Narayan 158
- Gore, Mike 121
- Gothic terror
and asylum seekers 155–6
Botting on 155
- Goulding, Dot 25, 26
- Grace, Helen 152
- Grant, Donald 198–9
- The Great Escape* 35–6
- Grundy-Warr, Carl 136, 138, 154
- Gulf War
First (1991) 160
Second (2003) 160
- Hage, Ghassan 40, 117
- Haitian culture, and zombies 175
- Hamako, Eric 181, 187
- Haneef, Mohamed, Dr 217–18
- Hansen, Randall 82
- Hanson, Pauline 45, 101, 210–11
- Harriott, Anthony 63
- Harris, Charlaïne, *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* 172
- Harvey, David 60, 61, 134–5, 141
- Hawke, Bob 1, 2, 114, 117, 131,
151, 153
- Hawker, Philippa 151
- Hayek, Friedrich 57, 58, 67, 157
on freedom 60
The Constitution of Liberty 60
- Haynes, Roslynn 125
- Herron, John 70
- Higgs, Bronwyn 19
higher education
commodification 202–5
international visitors 202
and permanent residency 203
revenue 202–3
see also universities
- Higher Education Contribution
Scheme (HECS) 202
- Hindess, Barry 156–7

- Hobbes, Thomas
Leviathan 59, 138, 154
 sovereignty 157
 state of nature 59, 62, 138, 139,
 144, 154
- Hockensmith, Steve & Patrick
*Arrasmith, Pride and Prejudice
 and Zombies: Dawn of the
 Dreadfuls* 169
- Hogan, Michael 8
- Hogan, Paul, tourism
 advertisements 114–15
see also Crocodile Dundee
- Hollingworth, Peter 21
- Holocaust literature 186–7
- 'homeland', and September 11
 (2001) events 80
- Horne, Donald, *The Lucky Country*
 153
- Howard governments
 anti-Muslim rhetoric 158
 and Christian right 9
 neoliberalism 2–3, 57, 151
 and role of state 14
- Howard, John 1, 2, 31, 43, 44, 79,
 120
 on Australian history 3
 conservatism 4
 Hobbesian sentiments 61
- Hughes, Billy 198
- Hughes, Robert 38, 40, 106
- Hurricane Katrina 99
 military involvement 70, 71
- Ignatieff, Michael 22
- Immigration Restriction Act* (1901)
 46, 105
- Indigenous Australians
 discrimination against 27–8
 genocide 3
 in prison 26
see also Aborigines
- individualism 12
 and neoliberalism 58–62, 65, 76
- Industrial Relations Commission 13
- Intervention 6, 26, 134, 161
- Irish migrants 7
 whitening of 111
- Islam
 conversion to 10
 and ethnicity 22–3
- Islamophobia 7
- James, Kieran 204, 219
- Jardine, Alice 117–18
- Jarratt, John 124
- Jessop, Bob 84
- Jindabyne* 55, 57, 64, 68, 75–7, 162
 multiculturalism 68
- Jordens, Ann-Mari 47, 47–8, 52
- Juchau, Mireille 75
- Kabir, Nahid 21
- kangaroos
 symbolic eating of 128
 as vermin 128
- Kant, Immanuel, *Observations on
 the Feeling of the Beautiful and
 the Sublime* 155
- Kaplan, Amy 80
- Keating, Paul 1, 2, 131, 152, 153
- Kenny* 56–7, 58, 65, 72, 73–4
 carnivalesque in 74
- Kevin, Tony 111
- Keynes, John Maynard 140
- Khmer Rouge 161–2, 165
- Kiernan, Ben 165
- Kinnaird, Bob 201
- Klein, Naomi, *The Shock Doctrine*
 133
- Klocker, Natascha 132
- Kozlowski, Linda 116
- Kropotkin, Peter, *Mutual Aid* 70
- LaCapra, Dominick 137, 139
- Lake, Marilyn 145
- Lane, William, *The Workingman's
 Paradise* 159
- law, and state violence 61
- Lawrence, David 45
- Lawrence, Errol, *The Empire Strikes
 Back* 34

- Lawrence, Helen Reeves 45
 Lawrence, Ray 57
 Lazarus, Emma, "The New Colossus" 104
 Leach, Michael 96
 Lebanon
 migrants 92
 refugees 15
 Lemke, Thomas 73
 on neoliberalism 76
 Lempriere, Thomas 42
 Levey, Geoffrey Brahm 203–4
 Levi, Primo, *If This Is a Man* 185
 Leyton, Elliott, *Compulsive Killers* 76, 122
 Liberal Party 13
 Liberal-National coalition
 government 1
 liminality, and rebirth 107
 Loe, Thomas 177
 London Missionary Society 31, 50
 Long, Robert 122
Lucky Miles
 asylum seekers 159, 160, 164, 165, 191
 borders in 161–2, 167
 and neoliberalism 151, 152
 nostalgia 153, 158–9, 166, 167
 pre-neoliberalist times 165
 reception 151, 163
- Mabo, Eddie 44, 51
 Mackellar, Michael 113
 McLean, Greg 124
 McMahan, Elizabeth 41, 42
 McMaster, Don 48
 McNevin, Anne 15, 16
 Macpherson, C.B., *Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* 59, 138
Mad Max 110, 111, 112, 113, 119, 121
 Maddox, Marion, *God under Howard* 9
- Magalhães, António M. 67
 Mansouri, Fethi 96
 Mares, Peter 14, 97, 113, 132, 142, 148, 152, 162–3
 Marginson, Simon 202, 204, 213
 Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) 71–2
 Marr, David 112, 113
 mateship 43–4, 53, 126, 166
 Medibank scheme 11
 Menzies, Robert, *Afternoon Light* 120
 Mer (Murray) Island 44
 ambiguous status 51, 52
 land rights claim 45
 reserve island, designation 50
 Meriam Mir language 45
 migrants
 Asian 213–14
 British 210
 Chinese 205–6
 Greek 7–8
 illegal, *Children of Men* 157
 Indian 213
 Irish 7, 111
 Italian 7
 Lebanese 15, 92
 Maltese 92
 numbers 213
 origins 92
 skilled, need for 132, 197
 temporary 147
 tourists as 109
 migration
 and death 108–13
 global, increase 141
 Migration Act (1958) 91, 120
 Migration Amendment Act (1992) 120, 152
 Migration Occupation in Demand List (MODL) 203, 205, 206, 219
 migration zone 52
 Mikes, George, *Not by Sun Alone* 215

- Milat, Ivan 121–2
- militarization
 borders 61–2
 and neoconservatism 135
- Miller, Mark 146
- Mills, Dale 98
- Milner, Laura 19
- mine rescue (May 2006) 35–44
 Anzac Day, resonance 36
 as ‘great escape’ 35, 37
 reportage 29, 30–1, 33–4
 whiteness of narrative 36
- Mitropoulos, Angela 136, 144
- ‘model minority’ 221
- Monica (Cyclone) 29–30
- Montesquieu, *De l’esprit des lois* 184
- Moonlight*, tv series 172
- More, Thomas, *Utopia* 41–2, 50
- Morris, Meaghan 105, 109, 112, 116, 123
- Morrison Piehl, Anne 23
- Mount Pelerin Society 67
- multiculturalism 1
 aim 146–7
 and assimilation 113
 vs ‘Australian values’ 212
- basis 20–1
 and British heritage 12
 core-periphery model 12, 21, 214
 everyday, and everyday racism 6
- Jindabyne* 68
 population management 12, 110, 146, 210
 and religion 7
 retreat from 204
- Murray Island *see* Mer (Murray) Island
- Muselmänner*
 in concentration camps 185, 188
 as living dead 186
 threshold state 188
 as zombies 171, 186, 187
- Muslims 15
 anti-Muslim rhetoric 158
 and despotism 184
 discursive construction of 184
 as zombies 187
- Nakata, Martin 46
- nation-state, the
 and citizenship 66, 82
 and state of exception 137
- Nationality and Citizenship Act* (1948) 40, 47, 51, 82
- alien, definition 47–8, 83
- Native Title Act* (1993) 45
- Nazi Germany, state of exception 100, 120, 137
- Neal, David 38–9
- neoconservatism 57
 and militarization 135
 social theory 134
- neoliberalism 1, 10–14
 and the border 14–16
 and *Children of Men* 152, 156–7
 and class warfare 72
 and crisis exploitation 133–4
 definition 2
 and exclusion 94
 in films 57–8
 Giroux on 58–9
 Howard governments 2–3, 57, 151
 impact 2
 and individualism 58–62, 65, 76
 Lemke on 76
 and *Lucky Miles* 151, 152
 nature of 141
 and prisons 10, 22–8
 and *The Proposition* 63
 and race 16–19, 144
 and religion 19–22
 and social contract 59
 and state of exception 139–40, 141
- New Zealand, prisons, Maoris 25
- Nicolacopoulos, Toula 12

- Nicoll, Fiona 36
 Nolan, Mark 88
 Northern Territory National
 Emergency Response *see*
 Intervention
 nostalgia, *Lucky Miles* 153, 158–9
 Nuremberg Laws (1935),
 citizenship 99
- ockerism 114, 126
 One Nation Party 45, 101
 Ong, Aihwa 66, 69, 139–40, 193,
 215
 Neoliberalism as Exception 67
 O’Regan, Tom 114, 115
 Osama bin Laden 21
 Other
 racialized 154–5
 Torres Strait Islanders as 50
 vampires as 173
 zombies as 194
 Otsuka, Setsuo 204, 219
 Outreach, Operation 134
- Pacific Solution 5, 16, 23, 52, 119,
 131, 134, 154, 167, 191
 Packer, Frank 159
 Palombo, Lara 94
 Papastergiadis, Nikos 157
 Papua 47
Papua Act (1905) 46
 Papua New Guinea 51
 paranoia, and colonialism 117–18
 Partington, Geoffrey 165–6
 Passi, Dave 44
 Passi, Sam 44
Passport to Pimlico 189
 Paterson, Banjo, “Tom Collins” 159
 Patterson, Andrew 108
 Pegg, Simon 173, 189
 see also Shaun of the Dead
 penal colonies 38, 39
 living conditions 39–40
 Port Arthur 41
 Van Dieman’s Land 38, 39
- Perera, Suvendrini 23, 25, 62, 80,
 94–5, 106, 111, 112, 143, 208
 on the Cronulla riots 108–9
 Our Patch 95
 on sovereignty 127
 Perkins, Maureen 49
 Permanent Protection Visas 96
 permanent residents
 growth 89
 sources 89, 92
 Petersen, William 221
 Petrow, Stefan 39
 Pickering, Sharon 192–3
 Pinochet, Augusto, General 67, 157
 Poe, Edgar Allan, “The Premature
 Burial” 37
 Pomeranz, Margaret 163
 population, under eighteen 91
 Port Arthur
 massacre (1996) 36, 37
 penal colony 41
 as utopia 42
 Port Hedland, detention centre 152,
 198
 Porter, Elisabeth 160
 Poynting, Scott 79
 Bin Laden in the Suburbs 7
 Price, Charles, *The Great White
 Walls Are Built* 142
 Prince, Peter 47
 prison populations
 Aborigines 88
 Australia, numbers 25
 Europe, numbers 24
 Indigenous Australians 26
 New Zealand, Maoris 25
 USA
 African-Americans 24
 numbers 23–4
 voting rights 87–8
 prisons 9–10
 as detention camps 28
 and neoliberalism 10, 22–8
 purpose, changing 27
 and rehabilitation 22–3

- The Proposition* 56, 75
 as Australian Western 62
 and neoliberalism 63
 social contract, absence of 63–4
 pub, as white England 189
 Pusey, Michael 10–11
- Queensland 47
Queensland Coast Islands Act
 (1879) 46
 Quiggin, John 200
- race
 Goldberg on 143–4
 hierarchy 18
 and neoliberalism 16–19, 144
 ‘races power’, Australian
 Constitution 48
 racial difference, and cultural
 difference 211
 racism
 everyday 5, 34–5
 and multiculturalism 6
 and Torres Strait Sea Rescue 54
 Rajaram, Prem Kumar 136, 138,
 154
 Ramsay, Guy 46
 RAMSI (Regional Assistance
 Mission to Solomon Islands) 6,
 71, 208
 Randell-Moon, Holly 8
 refugees
 Afghan 16
 increase 169–70
 Indochinese 113
 as invaders 192
 Lebanese 15
see also asylum seekers
 Relx, Operation 111, 119, 125–6,
 131, 134, 153
 religion
 Christians 20
 and ethnicity 21
 and multiculturalism 7
 and neoliberalism 19–22
 residency, and citizenship 207
- Resident Evil* (film/game) 169
 Reynolds, Henry 145
 Rhys, Jean, *Wide Sargasso Sea* 176
 zombie motif 177
 Rice, James 45
 Robb, Andrew 89–90
 Robertson, Paul 199
 Roediger, David 101
 Romero, George A.
Dawn of the Dead (1978) 180
Land of the Dead (2005) 174,
 189
Night of the Living Dead (1968)
 170, 174, 175, 176, 187
 ghouls 180, 181
 title change 180
 Rubenstein, Kim 88
 Rudd, Kevin 2, 10, 217
 Ruddock, Philip 22, 103, 112, 118,
 132, 142, 148, 156
 Rule, Annie 109
 Ryan, Lyndall 43
- Said, Edward 177, 178
 St John, Warren 171–2
 Scarry, Elaine 186
 Schmitt, Carl 93
 Schnukal, Anna 46
 September 11 (2001) events 7, 170
 and ‘homeland’ 80
 and zombies 173–4, 187
 serial killers 122
 films 55–6
Shaun of the Dead 173, 189, 190,
 194
 Shaw, A.G.L. 38
 Shaw, Wendy 97–8
 Shelley, Mary, *Frankenstein* 155
 Shute, Neville, *On the Beach* 105
 SIEV X sinking 119, 164
 possible government
 involvement 111–12, 118
 Simons, Margaret 15
 slavery
 England 178
 and zombies 179

- Smit, Jack 15
- Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme, workforce 199
- social contract
 absence, in *The Proposition* 63–4
 and citizenship 66
 vs individual contract 64
 and neoliberalism 59
 and the state 60
- society
 and state of nature 144
 Thatcher on 12–13, 58
- Solomon Islands *see* RAMSI
- Somers, Margaret 81–2, 85–6, 94, 99, 100
Genealogies of Citizenship 84
- South Africa, zombies 175, 179
- sovereignty
 Agamben on 95, 137, 182, 183
 in federal parliament 95
 Hobbes 157
 Perera on 127
- Spittles, Brian 89, 90
- Stallybrass, Peter 74
- Stapleton, Christine 72
- state of exception 9, 23, 25, 93, 94, 95, 101
 and the border 138
 and the nation-state 137
 Nazi Germany 100, 120, 137
 and neoliberalism 139–40, 141
 and rule of law 137–8, 148
 ubiquity of 139
- state of nature
 Hobbes 59, 62, 138, 139, 144, 154
 and society 144
- state, the
 entry regulation 144–5
 and social contract 60
see also nation-state
- state violence, and the law 61
- Stephenson, Peta, *Islam Dreaming* 10
- Stoer, Stephen R. 67
- Stolen Generation 76, 108, 218
- Stonehouse, John 103–4, 107, 108
Death of an Idealist 104
- Stratton, David 163
- Stratton, Jon, *Race Daze* 6, 20, 34, 210
- students, international
 honorary whiteness 218–19
 residency 205–7
 sources 204
- Suburban Mayhem* 56, 57, 58, 64–5, 65–6, 68
 post-feminism 65
- Tampa* affair 118–19, 131, 134, 153, 191, 208–9
- Tascón, Sonia Magdalena 208, 211
- Tasmania, as utopia 41
- Tavan, Gwenda 112
- Te and Dang* case 52
- Temporary Protection Visas 81
 and asylum seekers 96, 209
 and bare life 96–7
 holder's rights 96
- Thatcher, Margaret, on society 12–13, 58
- Tilbury, Farida 17, 18
- Torres Strait Islanders 5, 47
 as British subjects 49
 as Indigenous people 50, 51
 as Other 50
- Torres Strait Islands 46
- Torres Strait Protection Zone 51, 53
- Torres Strait Regional Authority 51
- Torres Strait Sea Rescue (2006)
 and everyday racism 54
 reportage 30, 31–2, 33, 52
 and white Australian anxieties 53–4
- Torres Strait Treaty (1978) 51
- Tourism Australia, campaign 129–30

- tourists, as migrants 109
 Trace, Keith 199
 transportation
 death during 106
 as death penalty substitute 106–7
 origins 38
Transportation Act (1718) 38
True Blood, tv series 172
 Trujillo, Sol 216–17
 Trumper, Ezequiel 217
 Turner, Victor 107
Twilight series (books/film) 172

Undead 190–2
 unfair dismissal laws, abolition 13
 Uniting Church 20
 universities, public funding,
 decrease 202
 Unseem, Bert 23
 utopia
 More's 41
 Port Arthur as 42
 Tasmania as 41

The Vampire Diaries, tv series 172
 vampires
 as Other 173
 popularity 172
 Van Dieman's Land, penal colony
 38, 39
 Vanstone, Amanda 52, 53
 Vassilacopoulos, George 12
 Vasta, Ellie 145
 Vietnam War 164, 165
 violence, indirect 68–9
 Voloder, Lejla 21
 voting rights, and citizenship 86

 Wacquant, Loic 24, 25
The Walking Dead, tv series 194
 War on Terror 80, 91, 127, 153
 Ward, Russel, *The Australian Legend* 43
 Watson, Irene 128

 Weir, Peter, *The Cars That Ate Paris* 109
 Wells, Mike 72
 Wells, Steven 171
 werewolf, liminal status 182–3
 White, Allon 74
 White Australia Policy 8, 14, 17, 19, 113, 145–6
 end of 153, 161
 White, Richard, *Inventing Australia* 159
 whiteness 5
 in advertisements 19, 27
 and Australianness 49
 and Christianity 7, 8, 9, 20
 honorary 18–19, 20
 and assimilation 215, 221
 and 'Australian values' 215–16
 international students 218–19
 of mine rescue narrative 36
 Whitlam, Gough 2, 14, 153
 Wilkinson, Marian 112, 113
 Williamson, Alan 50
Wolf Creek 55, 76, 110, 128–9, 162, 191
 binaries 125, 126
 Indigenous characters, absence of 128
 plot 124
 Wong, Danny 205
 Woodley, Bruce, 'I am Australian' 16
 Woodward, Dennis 57
 Woomeera, detention centre 198
 Work for the Dole scheme 13–14
 WorkChoices 13, 100, 101, 134
 Workfare State 85
 'workingman's paradise' 159
Workplace Relations Act (1996) 13, 100, 134
Workplace Relations Amendment Act (2005) 134
 Wright, Will, *The Wild West* 63

- Yang, Moli 205
- Zizék, Slavoj 158
- zombie motif, *Wide Sargasso Sea* 177
- zombies
- American interest in 174–5
 - and bare life 170, 188, 194–5
 - and colonialism 175–6
 - Dayan on 175
 - as displaced people 16, 169, 170, 175, 189–92, 193–4
 - essence of 174
 - films about 169, 170, 187, 189, 190
 - see also* under Romero
 - and Haitian culture 175
 - Muselmänner* as 171, 186, 187
 - Muslims as 187
 - popularity 171–6
 - as racial Other 194
 - and September 11 (2001) events 173–4, 187
 - and slavery 179
 - South Africa 175, 179