

***Border protection between Australia and Un-Australia:
(Or why I am an internally displaced person)***

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Synopsis:

The relationship between Un-Australia and Australia is a tumultuous and porous one. As Australia and Un-Australia share an ever changing, overlapping and continuous physical and cultural border, it is easy to slip between the two without realising.

Over the last few years, people have entered Un-Australia as they have protested against the war in Iraq or demanded Australia meet its refugee obligations. However, many of us quietly slipped back into Australia as mortgage rates again became important.

At the same time, many Australians have also been forcibly displaced from Australia to Un-Australia. These newly displaced Australians (now Un-Australians) no longer recognise their Australia as it has been radically altered. The border has shifted and many of us have ended up in Un-Australia feeling like non-citizens.

This paper attempts to identify the cultural turn that has led to this displacement. It is by understanding this turn that we can attempt to reconcile the emergence of these non-persons.

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Introduction

On a sunny Sunday morning on 31 March 2002, I was among some 1,000 protesters gathered at a train station in Sydney's south-west to raise concerns about the Australian Government's treatment of refugees. We marched the few kilometres from the station to the Villawood detention centre, a 'prison' or 'camp' that is home to a number of refugees as part of Australia's mandatory detention regime. According to the Government, these camps are integral in protecting the borders into Australia. In language reminiscent of a parent speaking to a child about 'hygiene', the Australian Government argues that these borders must not be contaminated by uninvited visitors.¹

Australia's mandatory detention regime and its associated policies, including forced deportation, have resulted in a criminalisation of refugees who are persecuted twice – once in the homeland from which they are fleeing, and a second time as 'illegals' in countries that withhold their claims for asylum. Despite ongoing denials by the government, such policies have led to the brutalisation of refugees and a high degree of mental and physical health problems (Manne 2005).

After walking to the detention centre, we (the protesters) congregated at the gate in full view of the detainees. The refugees gathered together some 50 metres away. I could clearly see the refugees – the men, women and children – who had challenged the purity of Australia's borders by entering without 'valid paper work'.

Between us stood a line of security guards, police on horseback and barbed wire fencing. These are the ‘detention centres’ or ‘camps’ designed to ensure that detainees feel they are part of “not-Australia” (Perera 2002). While facing us, the refugees started chanting ‘*freedom, freedom, freedom*’. Almost in immediate reaction, we responded with the same chant... ‘*freedom, freedom, freedom*’!

The twin chants echoed around the suburb, and the emotion of the two groups increased perceptibly. While the guards and police had initially looked confident that they had the situation under control, there was a visible change in their demeanour. This was despite the fact that the large police and security presence, as well as the structural design of the centre, meant that it was unlikely events would or could escalate.

The determination of both the detainees and protesters appeared to grow. It may sound ridiculous, but it felt that the two groups drew closer together as the chants continued. A number of protesters climbed on top of one of the barricades and started waving placards. The tension increased for approximately 15 minutes before the guards dispersed the refugees and the police increased their presence.

We stayed and chanted for a while longer even though the detainees had been moved beyond our view. About an hour later, we dispersed and headed back to the train station. We walked as a group and, in contrast to the carnival atmosphere on the way to the centre, the crowd was sombre, visibly affected by the experience. At the same time it was clear that while we felt some despondence at the plight of the detainees, there was also an element of hope because it felt as though in some small way we had connected with them – even across the barbed wire, we seemed to have shared hope.

While this was occurring, someone drove along side us, slowed down and yelled “keep the bastards locked up... fucken un-Australians”.

As someone who was born and has lived most of my life in Australia, I fail to understand why this person felt so much animosity towards either the protesters or the refugees. Even more confusing was why this person had accused me of being ‘un-Australian’ – displacing me from Australia and into un-Australia. However, this was neither the first nor last time I would cross this border. Over the last few years, I have moved repeatedly across this border even while unaware of its existence. Each time this happened, I found crossing back into Australia increasingly difficult.

This paper attempts to understand the cultural turn that has seen the emergence of this border between Australia and un-Australia. I argue that this border has been established as a new form of cultural colonialism, displacing those who do not fit some mythical ‘Australian’ ideal based on a set of vague Australian values. While neither this ideal nor these values have ever been defined – and are unlikely to ever be – they are increasingly shaped by what they are not rather than what they are. Those who do not fit in have increasingly been disparaged, banished, disassociated and have become internally displaced people no longer wanted by a nation to which they once belonged. To re-enter, they must commit to a set of ‘values’ that are difficult to understand but are likely to result in cultural homogenisation.

The emergence of Un-Australia

The term ‘un-Australia’ has a long history. According to Judith Ireland (2005), the earliest known use of the word was in 1855, when Mr W. Howitt used the term to describe a landscape as perfectly un-Australian. Rather than an insult, this was meant to be a compliment that at least some section of Australia’s geography resembled England.

Some time later, it seems to have been used to describe behaviour that challenged so-called Australian values though these were not defined. Again Ireland notes that in 1925, Stanley Bruce argued striking seamen were un-Australian. In the 1930s, Joseph Lyons described various groups as un-Australian including communists and the non-British, and argued that they should be prohibited from entering Australia. The aim of identifying the

un-Australian then was to guard Australia's borders from the potential entry of 'un-Australians'.

It seems, however, that it is Australia's current Prime Minister, John Howard, who is responsible for the recent revival of the term. This is a revival which began in the mid-1990s. A Media Monitors survey found that in 1995, the term had been used only 68 times (Ireland 2005). However, this increased to 406 times in 2000, and 571 times in 2004. In 2004, the Prime Minister was responsible for almost a third of the 'un-Australian' accusations (Dawson 2005).

Though no comparable statistics are available for 2005 and 2006, the Prime Minister continues his un-Australian crusade. This crusade to identify the un-Australian included those who overuse the term (Nicholson 2005). Mr Howard noted that "I think the word un-Australian is used too indiscriminately by people who disagree with what somebody else is saying or doing" (quoted in Dawson 2005: 49). The Prime Minister went on to argue that:

I think we should treat the description of our country and our national identity with a bit more common sense than often is the case in political debate and comment. It's not an expression I would use carelessly and I think people who want to criticise the Government should find a rather more appropriate, a rather more genuine expression than that. (ibid)

Exactly what un-Australian describes varies considerably however. Mr Howard has used the term to describe trade unionists in an aggressive protest at parliament house in 1996; striking wharfies in 1998; counter-globalisation protesters who attempted to blockade the World Economic Forum in Melbourne in 2000; hundreds of thousands of anti-war protesters in 2003; and those who think that Australia should leave Iraq before the 'job is done' in 2004. Even skate-board riders who make those around them uneasy were accused of being un-Australian in 2001.

This continued in 2006 when the Prime Minister mocked critics of anti-uranium mining at a gathering of the West Australian Liberal Party.ⁱⁱ Mr Howard argued that such critics believed uranium mining to be ‘un-Australian’.

However, it is not just the conservative side of politics that has used this term. High profile Australian, Dick Smith, argued that it was ‘un-Australian’ to detain Kashmiri asylum seeker Peter Qasim in indefinite detention that resulted in him being placed in an Adelaide psychiatric ward (Mackay 2005). Former federal opposition leader, Mark Latham, also called conservative politician Tony Abbott ‘un-Australian’ repeatedly for his personal attacks on Labor Party politicians. Likewise, the Democrat’s Andrew Bartlett called Pauline Hanson’s immigration policies ‘un-Australian’. However, in contrast to the Prime Minister’s crusade, such attacks seem more like an attempt to regain some control over the ‘Australian values’ debate rather than an organised identification of the ‘un-Australian’.

Defining who is Australian and un-Australian

The term is now so widely used that in 2005 *Macquarie Dictionary* revised its definition (Ireland 2005). The *Macquarie Dictionary* first added the term un-Australian in its 2001 Federation edition and upgraded this definition in its fourth edition released in October 2005. According to the *Macquarie*, ‘un-Australian’ conduct is defined as:

...not conforming to ideas of traditional Australian morality and customs, such as fairness, honesty and hard work. (Quoted in Ireland 2005: 13)

A 2001 research project by Philip Smith and Tim Phillips attempted to decipher what the term meant to a cross section of Australians. Placing participants in focus groups based on their geographical location, Smith and Phillips asked respondents to account for what people, places, values, activities, groups and organisations could be described as un-Australian.

While the research was conducted before many of the abovementioned events occurred, some of the responses are telling when judging the accuracy of the *Macquarie Dictionary*. Smith and Phillips identify nine normative dimensions of ‘un-Australian’ and two foreign dimensions (these are summarised in Table 1).

Table 1: Dimensions of being ‘Un-Australian’

Normative dimensions	‘Foreign’ dimensions
Violence	Americanisation (including one-sided sports crowds and litigation)
Intolerance	The ethnic (not learning English)
Racism	
Waste (including single mother handouts, and Aboriginal funding)	
Divisiveness (including Pauline Hanson, and street marches)	
Extremism	
Selfishness	
Separatism (including ethnic enclaves and failure to learn English)	
Immodesty	

Sourced from Smith and Phillips (2001: 336).

The table highlights the contradictory nature of many of the responses. For example, while the respondents felt racism was un-Australian, they also showed suspicion of ethnic groups that did not do enough to pick up Australian values. Likewise, while divisiveness was criticised, so was the financial waste that respondents associated with ‘Aboriginal funding’ and ‘single-mother handouts’.

These broad responses lead Smith and Phillips to draw on Zygmunt Bauman for their conclusions, arguing that rapid global change and feelings of insecurity result in a nationalist orientation that leans towards “boundary maintaining behaviour” (2001: 337). Changes have led to perceived threats to Australia’s “ontological security” (Giddens 1984). In other words, the processes of globalisation have occurred at such a speed that people are increasingly uncomfortable in a changing world and seeking stability in the things and people around them.

By combining the research of Smith and Phillips with the various guises of the term used by the Prime Minister, we can conclude that the *Macquarie Dictionary* definition is simultaneously too narrow and far too broad. It is too narrow by limiting examples of what is un-Australian to display fairness, honesty and hard work. For there are other values that are un-Australian including a refusal to fit in or un-Australian actions such as the disruption of traffic and a failure to learn English.

Likewise, the term is too broad, because it includes the belief that Australian customs and values have been defined. That is, the very concept of 'un-Australian' does not rely on defining what 'Australian' is and highlighting the opposite. Rather, it is identifying what Australian 'is not' and creating a boundary between that and the rest of us. In this way, the term has emerged as a way of establishing a 'values benchmark' by which to judge Australian citizenship against. However, this benchmark is not defined nor is it ever likely to be, resulting in a moving boundary.

This values benchmark has emerged around the issue of undefined 'Australian values' which has recently come to dominate the Australian political landscape. Both the inability and unwillingness to identify exactly what these values mean was fittingly highlighted by the *Sydney Morning Herald's* Adele Horin (2006) in comparing the acceptance of the religious sect, the Exclusive Brethren, with the intolerance shown towards Muslim Australians. Horin highlights how the benchmark of 'Australian values' is constantly moving and selectively applied. It is this benchmark that appears to establish the political border between Australia and un-Australia.

Political borders between Australia and Un-Australia

According to West (2006) then, the use of the term un-Australian has increasingly become a political one. It is now used to describe political values which are to be excluded, allowing a border to be established between the Australian and un-Australian. That is, it is now used as a way of displacing those with political positions which are not

wanted. But like Sandro Mezzadra's (2003) discussion of today's complex European borders, we see the border between Australia and un-Australia constantly shift.

I believe that the term can be considered as having two political aspirations. The first is to exclude those outsiders who are unlikely to ever qualify as Australian. These would include refugees who have been labelled 'queue jumpers'. Such refugees have been tarnished as violent, ungrateful and willing to throw their 'children overboard'. This political aspiration reflects the original use of the word discussed above as it aims to exclude those outsiders who do not reflect Australian values.ⁱⁱⁱ

The second political aspiration that this term takes is the displacement of Australian citizens who are no longer wanted because they now fail to meet the 'benchmark' of Australian values. In this way it can be thought of as a new wave of internal colonialism, this time we are witnessing a form of 'cultural colonialism'. Those who do not fit the political ideal according to the Prime Minister's conservative agenda and the selectively applied values benchmarks are being branded as 'un-Australian'. These un-Australians no longer fit in and are not recognised as being 'like us'. To achieve this then, borders need to be established between Australia and un-Australia and routinely patrolled.

But this relationship between Australia and un-Australia is a tumultuous, movable and porous one. Again returning to Horin's discussion of the Australian values that create this moving border, it is noted how values are argued to be "not-optional" for some, but optional for others (2006: 33). As a result, Australia and un-Australia share an ever changing, overlapping and continuous physical and cultural border which is easy to slip between without realising. Just where one stands on any day may depend on the political aspirations of the (self-appointed) keepers of Australian values.

Consequently, it is just as easy to quietly slip back into Australia as it is to be forcibly displaced into un-Australia. For example, the polls conducted by Newspoll found that in late 2002, 61 percent of Australians were against a US led invasion of Iraq. These

respondents obviously included many of those described by Mr Howard as ‘un-Australian’ in their protests against the war and were seen at the time as a threat to the Coalition’s re-election chances. However, within two years, many of these un-Australians had slipped back into Australia in their overwhelming endorsement of Mr Howard’s policies by re-electing him to a fourth term. Newspoll found that by December 2004 almost 60 percent of Australians felt ‘satisfied’ with the performance of John Howard as Prime Minister. At this point, it seems that some of the un-Australians were allowed to re-enter Australia.

This ever changing border is no accident as it reflects the ongoing project of cultural colonialism which encourages a homogenisation of what it means to be Australian. Many Australians have been forcibly displaced from Australia to un-Australia. This is a place that looks and feels like Australia but is ‘not-Australia’ (Perera 2002). These newly displaced Australians (now un-Australians) no longer recognise their Australia as it has been radically altered. The border has shifted and many of us have ended up in un-Australia feeling like non-citizens. Before discussing this in more detail, however, it is important to investigate how this border is established and how it leads to both exclusion and displacement.

Exclusion and displacement of un-Australians

The emerging question then, is how can this process of ‘cultural colonialism’ be explained? On the one hand, the globalised world has created record levels of wealth in Australia and allowed Australians to freely travel and experience cultures once portrayed only in adventure movies. Simultaneously, we have also seen a growth in the ontological insecurity noted above. This insecurity has led to attempts to create a sense of stability by excluding not just outsiders, but those insiders who are seen to threaten Australian values.

I believe that this can be understood through different interpretations of what an ‘authentic’ community involves. Specifically we need to look at the orthodox understanding of community. This can be explained by analysing Hegel’s conception of a

dialectical struggle and ‘recognition’. According to Oliver (2001), ‘recognition’ dominates contemporary theory and practice regarding ‘community’. This view defines community through ideas of shared identity, recognition and social formations arising out of mutual beliefs, understandings and practices – all are seen to create a stable sense of identity (Taylor 1994). That is, we form communities only with those that we recognise as being ‘like us’. In this case those who are considered to be Australian and, consequently, accept Australian values even if these are not defined.

It is from this position that the related communitarian and libertarian schools of community have arisen. Though there are a large number of communitarian theorists including Taylor (1994) and Sandel (1998), my focus here is Fukuyama’s (1989; 1992) interpretation of recognition and community. This is because Fukuyama links community with both the modern liberal state and neoliberal economic policies which closely interact to create the ontological insecurity that Smith and Phillips (2001) argue has fuelled the emergence of un-Australian.

In *The end of history and the last man*, Fukuyama combines ‘recognition’ with free markets and presents them as the ‘twin pillars’ of community.^{iv} In the process Fukuyama sets these ‘twin pillars’ within the democratic nation and the universalisation of Western liberalism and consumer culture to declare the end of ideological history. As a result, alternative understandings of community are dismissed. Reflecting the same point, Taylor argues that liberal democracy has also reached the pinnacle of history as it has “ushered in a politics of equal recognition” (1994: 27). In addition, Fukuyama (1992) relies on expanding markets to extend both recognition and freedoms more generally.

Fukuyama’s first pillar of community involves recognition. Fukuyama argues that ‘man’ has passed through a series of primitive stages of consciousness on ‘his’ path to the present.^v Fukuyama turns to Alexandre Kojève’s interpretation of Hegel to argue that no real ideological progress has been made since the time of the French revolution. Fukuyama’s account of the evolutionary process begins with an analysis of the ‘first

man' and his battle for recognition. This need for recognition leads to a battle between 'men': winners come to dominate while the losers submit as slaves. The master/slave relationship causes a contradiction, however, as the master is only recognised by the slave who the master considers 'less than human'. Accordingly, this drives historical development as the slave works and innovates in search for recognition.

This leads to an ongoing dialectic between the master and slave, and results in historical development which finds an end point (or pinnacle) in the modern liberal nation-state. That is, the contradiction is resolved as recognition is achieved or granted through 'citizenship' – most notably for us, Australian citizenship is meant to achieve this form of 'recognition' and solve conflict within the nation-state. In part, this confirms for Fukuyama that the liberal democratic state cannot be improved upon – it has resolved all prior contradictions because, as citizens, all human needs for recognition are satisfied.

Fukuyama's second pillar is that of 'rational' self interest and materialist desires. This is also achieved through the success of the liberal nation-state and associated liberalised markets. Expanding markets driven by self interest provide the opportunity to fulfil all the material desires of individuals.

The nation-state that appears at the 'end of history' rests on these 'twin pillars' of recognition and free-market economics. These facilitate both recognition through citizenship and wealth accumulation. Fukuyama's position is that the liberal state builds an effective and *functioning community* because it both *recognises* all citizens since they are 'human beings', and allows them to pursue their *rational self interest*. This permits an elucidation of the relationship between liberal economics, advanced industrialisation and liberal politics.

According to Fukuyama, this functioning community is homogeneous insofar as it creates a classless society based on the abolition of the distinction between master and slave. It

overcomes this previously established division by granting and also protecting the rights of citizens. Such rights are only problematic if they ever become self-contradictory.

However, as noted above, this recognition is based on an undefined set of Australian values. These values are not only undefined, but are also unstable and contested, and are applied selectively, often in contradiction to each other (Horin 2006). Rather than promoting an ‘authentic’ community, these values allow the establishment of borders based on ‘recognition’ which allows the exclusion and displacement of those deemed to be un-Australian – both inside and outside the nation.

Recognition and cultural colonialism

I believe that there are a number of fundamental insights that Fukuyama’s twin pillars of recognition and markets provide in understanding the cultural colonialism that has led to the emergence of un-Australia. For the sake of brevity, I place these insights into four broad categories. While these arguments tend to be aimed at Fukuyama directly, they also apply to the communitarian school more generally.

i. Exclusion – accepting only those we recognise as ‘like us’

The first insight is that ‘recognition’ establishes an inside for the privileged and an outside for ‘others’. This is because such a privileged community only comes to accept those who it can relate to and recognise. Consequently, while Fukuyama argues that recognition by peers fulfils the first of the ‘twin pillars’ of community, others remain sceptical. For Hage (2001; 2003) and Diprose (2003) rather than being a key to social harmony, recognition simply promotes exclusion.

Both Hage and Diprose’s concerns can be illustrated by reviewing the Australian Government’s position on refugees. In analysing this policy, conservative political commentator Gerard Henderson (2004) observes that John Howard’s position can be simply understood because the Prime Minister lacks any ‘understanding’ of the plight of asylum seekers – that is, he fails to ‘recognise’ their predicament. Henderson also

reminds us that this echoes Howard's position towards 'Asians' a number of years earlier when he remarked that Asian immigrants needed to be limited to ensure the maintenance of social harmony and cohesion. Such an interpretation of community is continuously used by Western governments to protect the "values and security" of their own identity (Diprose 2003: 37) – something that Henderson confirms in his analysis of the Howard Government's position.

A similar lack of recognition leads to the exclusion and displacement of un-Australians. The lack of recognition seems to emerge when people express a suite of values that challenge the ideal of Australia. Those, for example, who offer the hand of friendship to refugees, are seen as challenging the purity of Australian borders and encouraging 'queue jumping' – a term used by the Prime Minister to describe refugees arriving by boat. And in this sense, supporting those who are not willing to 'wait their turn' is seen as an un-Australian act.

We can contrast this with those remote figures we 'recognise' such as Donald Trump, Richard Branson and other CEOs who we are unlikely to ever meet (Haigh 2003). As a result, we may even aspire to emulate their feats by accumulating wealth. But our neighbours with the funny hats, strange religions, different language and extended family – who Hage refers to as "black bastards" to make his point – remain unfamiliar and unrecognisable (2001: 4). Likewise, the 'Anglo' families who interact with such people and show empathy for those who are willing to 'throw their children overboard', are also strangers and fail to subscribe to Australian values.

ii. Who does the recognising and establishes the borders

The second insight provided by Fukuyama is that 'recognition' revolves around one individual or community judging whether another is *worthy* to be recognised and, therefore, accepted. Cornell (1992) and Diprose (2003) remind us that it is usually the dominant group doing the recognising and, thus, the judging. For Oliver (2001), this is a symptom of oppression as it reinforces hierarchies since one group is making *all* the

judgements. Those wishing to be recognised must ensure that they meet the value judgements of the dominant group.

As an example, we can turn to the work of communitarians such as Taylor (1994), who argue that the presumption that all cultures have equal worth is by no means unproblematic. This position allows Taylor to set a 'value hierarchy' by which to judge different cultures. This also allows Taylor to shift the emphasis from what may be problematic about the internal workings of a 'community', to what criteria we can use to judge 'other' communities and, therefore, who to allow in from the outside.

This translates to a values hierarchy which establishes a border between Australia and un-Australia. Those charged with recognition are also responsible for establishing and patrolling the borders into Australia, which are complex and subject to change without notice. It is the dominant discourse which decides what is Australian and un-Australian, and to whom it applies (Schwarz 2003).

Both Young (2000) and Cornell (1992) argue that this process of one group 'recognising' another ultimately leads to 'exclusion'. If you make decisions on who to include then you are making decisions on who to exclude. That is, by establishing a 'value hierarchy' with regard to different communities, it is possible for communitarians such as Taylor to limit entry to only those who are judged worthy. Recognition then, not only limits community, it also displaces those inside who no longer fit the ideal – forcibly displacing many of us into un-Australia.

iii. Recognition and homogenisation

The third insight extends the two above and relates to the 'homogenisation of difference'. Since the dominant group judges and reinforces its position, both Oliver (2001) and Cornell (1992) argue that such a process ultimately homogenises and defaces differences.

This echoes earlier work by Adorno (1989), who raised concerns about the homogenisation process of those already on the inside. Specifically discussing the issue of the ‘non-conformist’, Adorno sees the ‘citizen’ who diverges from the norm or dominant subjectivity as being under threat. The result is the attrition of the non-conformist, leading Cornell to conclude that the result is the “annihilation of individual difference and... the end of the dissenter” (1992: 46).

This concern about the uniformity of subjectivity is extended by Diprose, who argues that recognition is based on the concept of “forging commonality through rational minds” (2003: 37). That is, there is an assumption that the body of community is already “unified and coherent” *prior* to the arrival of ‘some outsider’ who then threatens this stability (ibid). Analysing the ‘children overboard’ incident, Diprose notes that those supporting the communitarian position would see the refugees as having a subjectivity that threatens the “stable and singular subjectivity” of the Australian nation (ibid).

The result is that there is no acknowledgment that meanings expressed by either the individual or the community can be multifaceted and open. That is, communities are never stable and always changing (Brent 2004). In contrast, Australia’s set of values are seen to be uniform across the community and those who do not ‘fit’ should be excluded. This includes those already on the inside – the protester, activist, dissident, those supporting or undertaking civil disobedience – who challenge the single set of values. These are the un-Australians who must be displaced to ensure that the homogenous and stable Australian community continues to function appropriately.

iv. The liberal nation-state, exclusion and displacement

A fourth insight provided by Fukuyama’s twin pillars idea can be found in its reliance on the liberal nation-state which, according to Connelly (1999), further explains the process of exclusion and homogenisation. Though not discussing Fukuyama’s work, Connelly appears to challenge his position on the classless nation-state by drawing a direct link between the liberal state, homogenisation and exclusionary politics.

Connelly reminds us that the nation was originally related to “biological race” (1999: 74). It is hardly surprising then that race is invoked when there are calls for national unity or when the aspirations of a nation are threatened (Schwartz 2003). With race now dismissed as a myth or fable, the stability of what holds a nation-state together must also be questioned. As a result, Fukuyama’s assertion that the nation-state is the pinnacle of recognition has questionable foundations.

The result for Connelly is that the nation can only be “kept pure” through “selective memory” (1999: 75). That is, the ‘myth’ represented by the ‘pure’ nation is constantly ‘polluted’ by events which must be ignored. This usually involves the population embracing a sense of forgetfulness, particularly of any violent and exclusionary past, and homogenising a complicated and diverse history. This can then be used to exclude those who threaten visions of unity and a single, stable Australian set of values and subjectivity.

In many ways Secomb’s (2002) ‘haunted community’ echoes this point. Secomb describes communities that are haunted, troubled and ultimately preoccupied by a past they refuse to reconcile or even acknowledge. It is possible to speculate on links between Howard’s treatment of refugees and his Government’s refusal to apologise to Australia’s indigenous community for past crimes and injustices caused by colonialisation and subsequent government policies such as assimilation and protectionism. Despite attempts to ensure a national amnesia, many work to stir up these memories ‘best forgotten’ which remind us of Australia’s uncomfortable past. These Australians threaten the stability of the nation as well as the single subjectivity and set of values discussed above – they are un-Australian because they tarnish Australia’s image both internally and internationally (Schwartz 2003). Consequently, they must be displaced and discredited to limit the potential damage that can be done.

If we extend Henderson's (2004) arguments about Howard's lack of recognition towards refugees to include Aboriginal Australians, we may also be able to gain an insight into his refusal to apologise to them. The Aboriginal community may be seen as a threat to the stability of Australia's history, which has been seen as being one of 'mateship' and 'peaceful settlement' (Reynolds 2001).

All this takes on greater significance under conditions of globalisation and the "accelerated tempo" that brings faster and even great changes to nation-states (Connelly 1999: 85). Under such conditions, Connelly sees the purity of the nation – both its image and its borders – as constantly under challenge. Here, Connelly argues that this purity, and therefore the nation, is found to be hollow. This leads to escalating demands on the mythologies that are meant to bind a nation together, and an increasingly violent response to those that threaten either the nation's mythologies or perceived purity.

Such a position supports the conclusions of Smith and Phillips (2001) and Schwartz (2003), who argue it is the insecurity created by rapid global change that has seen the emergence of the un-Australian. The internal dissenters must then be identified and their political positions displaced so as not to threaten the ideal of the nation. Consequently, we have seen un-Australians become the (political) non-people of today – an internally displaced people.

A conclusion of sorts: Australian Un-Australians – the non-people of today

This paper has attempted to provide some guidance in understanding the cultural turn that has led to the emergence of un-Australian Australians. These un-Australians threaten the purity of the Australian nation and must be displaced and excluded. This has led to a form of colonialism which I have identified as cultural colonialism.

The result is that we have a new group of (political) non-people who are not recognised by their fellow citizens and no longer represented by any major political party.

Consequently, these Australian un-Australians live in a nation which they themselves no longer recognise. While some of these non-people continue in their pursuit of social justice and an alternative set of ‘Australian values’, many also withdraw from the political process or have accepted the single, dominant subjectivity. In many ways, this completes the colonial project and displacement of the un-Australians, as we vacate our political imagination and no longer can imagine alternatives despite our despair.

Those who refuse to accept their displacement continue in their attempts to articulate alternative and diverse visions of Australia. As one of these Australian un-Australians, I look to the 2007 federal election in the hope of a dramatic change in attitudes that embrace rather than exclude diversity. In this way, I hope to be recognised, and hope to recognise those around me.

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ⁱ For example, the Attorney General, Philip Ruddock, interview transcript in his Washington visit in January 2004. Sourced from:
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ⁱⁱ Sourced from: <http://www.pm.gov.au/news/speeches/speech2046.html> - accessed September 2006.

ⁱⁱⁱ The 'children overboard' incident refers to the claims made by the Howard federal government that a group of asylum seekers had thrown their children over board in order to ensure that the Australian navy intervened to provide asylum and safe passage to Australia. This statement was made during the federal election campaign and was, in part, responsible for the re-election of the Howard government. For a detailed analysis and description of these events, see Marr and Wilkinson (2004).

^{iv} Importantly, though Fukuyama has reviewed his position a number of times particularly after the New York terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001, the essence of his argument remains the same (see Fukuyama 2002a; 2002b).

^v Throughout his work, Francis Fukuyama uses the term 'mankind' and 'man' – rather than humankind and humanity – which I believe is reflective of the 'exclusionary' nature of his arguments.