

The First Fleet: Australia's unconscious 'chosen trauma' and its impact on our asylum seeker policies

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'Bloody Boat People'

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Abstract

This paper will use a psychodynamic lens to examine the policies of current and past Australian governments on the treatment of asylum seekers who have reached, and attempted to reach, Australia by boat.

The paper contends that the failure of Australians past and present to adaptively solve the social problems arising from our colonial past - namely the illegal arrival of the First Fleet on

the shores of Botany Bay, the British assertion of *terra nullius*, and the subsequent stolen generation has created an intertwined chosen glory/trauma which has enmeshed itself in the unconscious large group identity of Australians.

The paper references the work of Volkan, who has written extensively on the topic of unconscious chosen glory and trauma, to examine the high level of fear held by Australians at the prospect of asylum seekers arriving on Australia's shores by boat. In doing so, it makes the connection between these fears and the morally challenging policies pursued by the Australian government, with the strong mandate of the Australian people, to deter would-be asylum seekers.

The paper is written in two parts – the first examines how, from an Indigenous Australian perspective, the arrival of the First Fleet has become a chosen trauma that has been transmitted through generations. It also examines how the same historical event is celebrated by the majority of Australians as a celebration of a chosen glory. This event, the paper contends, represents a melting pot of unconscious, unprocessed emotions of guilt, anger, oppression and mourning for all Australians and that the symbol of the boat arriving on the shores of Botany Bay has come to be an object of fear (especially fear of what might happen if the boat is not stopped). The image of the boat, therefore, triggers an unconscious terror that the oppressor may suddenly become the oppressed - that our connection to country, culture, language and shared memory may be irrevocably lost at the hands of whoever arrives on our shores by boat.

The second part of the paper argues that this fear of the boat has given rise to some of the most draconian asylum seeker policies developed by a western government in modern times. It draws a conclusion that these policies arise as a result of our collective failure to adaptively resolve the social problems arising from the arrival of the First Fleet.

The First Fleet

In January 1988, Australia celebrated its Bicentenary. It was 200 years since Captain Arthur Phillip and the First Fleet sailed into Botany Bay, and then Sydney Harbour to create the first European colony in Australia. In celebration of such a momentous occasion, a full scale re-enactment took place. Eleven tall ships sailed into Sydney Harbour surrounded by hundreds of smaller boats to the rapturous applause of proud Australians watching on. It was a celebration of a chosen glory.

The glory was one of the most audacious sea voyages that has ever taken place. Eleven ships carrying crew, 1000 convicts and 200 free settlers embarked on a nine-month voyage to the other side of the world. The fleet reached landfall and set about creating the colony of New South Wales which in time would come to thrive and eventually federate to form the country of Australia.

For Indigenous Australians, however, the same event represents a chosen trauma – an invasion of a foreign power and the beginning of a series of calamitous events that would forever change a proud and ancient culture. And thus, an enmeshed chosen glory / trauma was born.

On the same day as thousands of Australians lined the banks of Sydney Harbour to celebrate this glory, a group of Indigenous Australians led a protest against what they called 'Invasion Day'. They argued that the 'illegal' boat arrival of the First Fleet on the shores of Botany Bay represented the symbolic and real establishment of a series of British (and later Australian) policies which would irrevocably change the wellbeing of Indigenous generations to come.

Australia's Colonial Legacy

The white history of Australia began with the establishment of the colony of New South Wales – a penal colony set up by the British Government for the dual purposes of expanding its colonial empire and dealing with its fast growing prison population. Very soon after arrival, Britain declared Australia to be *terra nullius* - a Latin term meaning the 'land of no one'. The effect of this decree can not be underestimated. Indigenous Australians were effectively rendered invisible – not able to be treated as people with a history, culture and way of life that should be acknowledged or protected, but rather as just a part of the land to be colonised. Indeed, it wasn't until 1965 that Indigenous Australians were guaranteed the same voting rights across all states and territories, and until 1967 that they could be counted as people in the census ('The 1967 referendum - Fact Sheet 150, 2016). The British did not negotiate a settlement with the population, sign a treaty or compensate the Aboriginal population for the wholesale settlement of their land. The mind-set of *terra nullius* enabled the colonisers to legally dispossess the Indigenous people of their land with devastating impact.

Perhaps the most devastating treatment though, in terms of the destruction of culture, language, history and connection to land, was what is now referred to as the 'Stolen

Generations'. From the beginning of white settlement in Australia, Aboriginal children were forcibly separated from their communities. In the beginning, this was undertaken sporadically as a way to ensure cheap labour, and later as a means to 'inculcate European values and work habits in children, who would then be employed in service to the colonial settlers' (Ramsland 1986, cited in Australian Human Rights Commission, 1996, Colonisation section).

By the late nineteenth century, the forcible removal of children had become government policy in many Australian states and territories with the aim of the program being to separate 'full blooded' Aboriginal people from 'half-castes'. A view was held that 'full-blooded' Aboriginal people were likely to 'die-out' over time and that 'half-castes' should be assimilated into the 'white' Australian community. Government programs were created that forcibly removed young children from their families and placed them in state or church run orphanages and work-houses or with private white families (Bringing them home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families, 1996).

The devastating impacts of the stolen generations were multi-faceted with trauma built on top of trauma. First and foremost, young children were forcibly removed from their parents with little explanation as to what was happening and why. Children were then deliberately kept from their families, and siblings were broken up, meaning that familial relationships were systematically dismantled, denying any of the usual support mechanisms for overcoming such trauma. Worse still, mental, physical and sexual abuse was all too common for these young people who found themselves in situations where predatory adults could take advantage of the most vulnerable. Finally, as adults, the stolen generations found themselves rejected as outsiders from the white culture that sought to inculcate them, and without connectivity to their original families who were now lost to them. Stolen from them was not just their family but their culture, language and connection to country – their very identity (Bringing them home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families, 1996).

As a result of past treatment and trauma, today in Australia, Indigenous Australians lag behind the non-indigenous population in virtually every measureable wellbeing index. Compared with non-Indigenous Australians, Indigenous Australians die on average 10 years earlier, are 25% less likely to finish high school, are 28% less likely to be employed and are fifteen times more likely to be incarcerated (Creative Spirits, 2016; Closing the Gap Prime Ministers Report, 2016).

Chosen Trauma and the Transgenerational Transmission of Trauma.

From the discussion above, it is evident that the colonisation of Australia led to a series of individual traumatic experiences for the Indigenous population, and that these experiences affected a very significant proportion of the population directly. I would now like to turn to the specific concepts of transgenerational transmission of trauma and the creation and perpetuation of chosen traumas on a societal level - both concepts described by Volkan in his considerable body of work dedicated to the application of psychodynamic theory to ethnic conflicts around the world. On chosen trauma, Volkan (1996, p.118) states:

Members of the victimized group, while individually different, possess similar traumatized self representations associated with helplessness, shame, and humiliation pertaining to the traumatic event. The mental representation of the shared trauma is then passed to the next generations through the deposited traumatized self representations. This legacy then links the group members of future generations and influences their group identity. I call the shared trauma a 'chosen trauma'.

Thus, chosen trauma as I will use the concept in this paper, is a single historical traumatic event that has taken place which is chosen by members of the victimised group as being the primary source of their victimhood. Over generations, as the trauma is passed down, the event is bound up with negative emotions such as helplessness and shame.

If we apply these concepts to Indigenous Australians, we can postulate that the traumatized self-representation of successive generations of Indigenous Australians could be the image of a lost person who is disconnected from language, culture and country. We could also imagine that the perpetuation of government policies over generations which sought, as we have learned in the discussion above, to systematically kill-off a people or inculcate a culture into the mainstream, is closely linked to that traumatised self representation. Furthermore, the arrival of the First Fleet – the single event which launched this oppression could be the chosen trauma at the centre of this self-image.

On the concept of transgenerational transmission of trauma, Volkan and Fowler (2009, p.217) state:

When the members of an affected group cannot reverse their shame, humiliation, helplessness, and dehumanization and cannot mourn their losses, they obligate the

subsequent generation(s) through what is known as the transgenerational transmission of trauma, to complete these unfinished psychological processes.

In the recent decades, Australians, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, have begun to attend to these unfinished psychological processes – but there is a long way to go and the nation is still dealing with the trauma inflicted by government policy. I regard that these healing mechanisms on a societal level come in four ways; symbolic reparations, recognition and compensation, reconnecting with lost culture and ‘closing the gap’. Briefly, symbolic reparations include the national apology to the Stolen Generations provided by Prime Minister Rudd in 2009. Recognition and compensation includes ‘native title’ legislation which enables Indigenous Australians who can prove an ongoing connection to areas of Crown land and waters to have their native title rights and interests recognised by the court; or be compensated by the Australian State or Territory for activities that have extinguished or impaired the native title rights and interests of the group (Types of Native Title Claims, 2016). Reconnecting with lost culture is about the enablement of Indigenous people to return to their home lands and learn lost language, traditions and history. Finally, closing the gap refers to the specific actions taken by the Australian Government to monitor and report on the significant gaps between Indigenous and non-indigenous people with regard to health and wellbeing outcomes (such as life expectancy and infant mortality).

Activity is taking place across Australia in all four of these areas but the work remains unfinished: the slow progress toward ‘closing the gap’, and the barely disguised racism displayed toward Aboriginal people (such as in the 2015 booring saga in which former Australian of the Year and Indigenous football player, Adam Goodes, was consistently booed by opposition crowds during an entire football season for no apparent reason at all) shows there is significant work ahead. I believe that there will be no significant progress on these practical matters until the psychological trauma underpinning the gaps that exist can be attended to. I will address this topic later in this paper.

Chosen Glory

I would now like to turn attention to the concept of ‘chosen glory’. Volkan (2013, p.230) describes a chosen glory as ‘shared mental representations of pride and pleasure evoking past events and heroes that are recollected ritualistically’. Like chosen traumas, these ‘glories’ serve a purpose of strengthening group identity. He continues:

Chosen glories are passed on to succeeding generations in parent/teacher–child interactions and through participation in ritualistic ceremonies. They link children of a large group with each other and with their large group, and the

children experience increased self-esteem by being associated with such glories. It is not difficult to understand why parents and other important adults pass the mental representations of chosen glories to their children; this is a pleasurable activity.
(Volkan, 2013, p.230)

Australia Day is one such celebration of a 'chosen glory'. The day celebrates the anniversary of the landing of the First Fleet, and the first time a permanent European Colony was established in Australia. In the modern day, it is used to celebrate all things 'Australian'. Barbeques are held with friends and family, traditional 'Aussie' foods are eaten, people dress in the Australian summer outfit of thongs and shorts and Australian flags are flown and worn everywhere.

And what is the glory? It is complex, but it must surely be tied up with the victory over the land itself. The conquering of foreign soil, the establishment of a British colony and with it, consciously or unconsciously, the subjugation of those that were here before, and the policy of *terra nullius* that enabled that subjugation.

An enmeshed Chosen Glory / Trauma

What is most interesting, however, in relation to Australia Day and the celebration of the 'chosen glory', is that the symbolic event of the glory (the arrival of the First Fleet), is the very same event which catalyses as a chosen trauma for Indigenous Australians. This event, therefore, has become an enmeshed chosen glory / trauma on a national scale.

It is not clear to me how many of these enmeshed chosen glory / traumas may exist around the world (perhaps it is common in nations with colonial pasts) but it is clear that in much of Volkan's writings on the topic, an event is usually held up as a chosen glory or chosen trauma for only one side. Of course, a glory for one side will always be a loss for another, but the morphing of glory into a *chosen* glory, or a loss into a *chosen* trauma is a long and complex process and therefore one could say rarely occurs based on the same event. Nevertheless, Volkan agrees that 'sometimes, chosen traumas and chosen glories are intertwined' (private correspondence with the author).

So far, I have shown that the arrival of the First Fleet is the centre point of an enmeshed chosen trauma/glory. From a psychodynamic perspective, I would further contend that this event represents a melting pot of unconscious, unprocessed emotions of guilt, anger, repression and mourning for all Australians and that the unfinished psychological tasks associated with this trauma / glory makes it impossible to fully attend to healing and

reparation. Speaking as a systems-psychodynamically trained Australian, the 'unfinished task' is palpable in our national culture. It is there in the booing of Adam Goodes. It is there in the white-washed historical texts taught in our schools. It is there in the draping of Australian flags over the white skinned 'Aussies' on Australia Day, and it is there, if we look, in the speeches of our politicians.

The repression of feelings associated with chosen trauma

One such example can be found in a psychodynamic reading of Prime Minister Keating's Redfern Address in 1992. This speech is considered a landmark speech for Indigenous Australians – as it was the first time an Australian leader had acknowledged the impact of colonial policies on Australia's Indigenous population. He said:

Isn't it reasonable to say that if we can build a prosperous and remarkably harmonious multicultural society in Australia, surely we can find just solutions to the problems which beset the first Australians...It begins, I think, with that act of recognition. Recognition that it was we who did the dispossessing. We took the traditional lands and smashed the traditional way of life. We brought the diseases. The alcohol. We committed the murders. We took the children from their mothers. We practised discrimination and exclusion. It was our ignorance and our prejudice. And our failure to imagine these things being done to us. (Keating, 1992)

It would be easy to assume that such recognition must surely be at the heart of reconciliation and healing, and that Keating's speech should have been a big step forward for the completion of the unfinished psychological tasks. However, further into the speech, Keating continued:

Down the years, there has been no shortage of guilt, but it has not produced the responses we need. Guilt is not a very constructive emotion. I think what we need to do is open our hearts a bit. All of us. Perhaps when we recognise what we have in common we will see the things which must be done - the practical things. (Keating, 1992).

I am particularly interested in this part of the speech, and I would like to view it through the lens of Klein's psychoanalytic theory – particularly that of the paranoid schizoid position, splitting and projection. Klein (1946) contended that in the paranoid schizoid position in the infant child, a type of Good/Bad split occurs in which the infant splits off the 'bad' parts of themselves (bound up in the early part of life with the feelings of frustration, of unfulfilled desire and persecutory fear) and seeks to project these bad parts into the Mother. Klein describes

this in her work as the idea of the Good Breast and the Bad Breast - the good is nourishing, always plentiful and associated with love. The bad may withhold or ignore, be unfulfilling and is associated with hate. In the paranoid schizoid position, the infant will seek to introject the Good, and project the Bad (Klein, 1946).

Klein also wrote about the depressive position, in which the infant becomes able to hold both Good and Bad at the same time. The Good Breast and the Bad Breast can, in normal development, be understood by the infant to be of the same Mother, and thus the infant can learn to hold Love and Hate, Good and Bad at that same time. Through adulthood, we move between the two positions – seeking to expel the bad (through common defensive mechanisms) in the former and being able to acknowledge and hold the Bad parts of ourselves, to recognise them as ours in the latter.

From the above, I contend that what Keating does in this speech, both for himself personally and on behalf of Australians as a whole, is split the 'good' parts of ourselves – the part in which we seek to make reparations for past wrongs, and make 'practical' differences to Indigenous Australians, from the 'bad' parts – that part of us that feels guilt, remorse and fury at the policies of past Australian governments. Contrary to his statement, I do not believe there has been 'no shortage of guilt' on the part of non-Indigenous Australians. I believe we have worked very hard to remain psychologically free from guilt. Yet progress of the kind that Volkan refers to when he calls for attending to the unfinished psychological tasks, must surely be impossible without moving to the depressive position of being able to hold the 'good' desire to right the wrongs of the past and the 'bad' feelings of guilt and shame associated with what caused such trauma in the first place.

So what is the bad part that we cannot hold? I think it can be explained best by Indigenous journalist Stan Grant who, in a 2015 speech, highlighted the inherent racism which sits at the heart of this unfinished psychological task:

The Australian Dream is rooted in racism. It is the very foundation of the dream. It is there at the birth of the nation. It is there in terra nullius. An empty land. A land for the taking. Sixty thousand years of occupation. A people who made the first seafaring journey in the history of mankind. A people of law, a people of lore, a people of music and art and dance and politics. None of it mattered because our rights were extinguished because we were not here according to British law. (Grant, 2015)

Grant's speech gets to the heart of the split. The Good parts that all Australians wish to keep is this land of immense beauty and opportunity. A land that we can all rejoice in and

celebrate. The Bad parts of course, are that part of us that enabled *terra nullius* – the lie that this land was no ones and was waiting to be colonised – and that in doing so inflicted a disastrous set of policies on the Indigenous people.

And so the work surrounding the current plight of Indigenous Australia seems now to focus on ‘closing the gap’ (those practical solutions that Keating invited us to focus on), and less on attending to the continuing repression of feelings associated with what caused that gap in the first place. We are left with unfinished psychological tasks with no mechanism with which to ‘finish’ them.

Finally, without the ability to move to the depressive position - to process and own the part of our history that began with the arrival of the First Fleet, and all that it entailed for the Indigenous people of Australia - we remain a nation in denial – that is, in a paranoid schizoid state, hating the colonising, destructive parts of our selves and seeking a path to project that part that is intolerable. So what better way to ‘project’ that part of ourselves (that arrived by boat, denies the prior existence of an Indigenous people and a way of life, culture, language and belief system) than to find another outsider to project our anxiety- better still, an outsider who looks different, speaks a foreign language, believes in a foreign God and who, most importantly of all, arrives by boat, on these shores we now call our own?

Australia’s treatment of boat-faring Asylum Seekers from 1976 – 2016

In this section of the paper, I will argue that recent generations of Australians hold a fear of people who may arrive on Australia’s shores by boat - in Australia these are colloquially known as ‘Boat People’ – which is born of the paranoid schizoid state and the desire to project the colonising parts of ourselves onto another. Furthermore, I argue that this fear has been tapped into by Australian governments of all political sides in recent decades.

Since 2001, Australian Governments of both political sides have led a war against Boat People, using some of the harshest and draconian laws and policies by any western democratic government. Successive governments have sought to politicise and strengthen laws to prevent anyone from reaching Australia by boat, and have largely succeeded in doing so (Marr and Wilkinson, 2004 McAdam and Chong, 2014).

The first wave of Boat People in modern times arrived in Australia in April 1976. The Boat People at this time were Vietnamese refugees. They were mostly political asylum seekers, opposed to the communist party who had successfully ousted Western forces from Vietnam

the previous year. Governmental policy toward Boat People at this time was generous and welcoming. Although public opinion was generally in favour early on, over time some anti-Boat People sentiment emerged which was particularly prevalent in the 1977 national election (Phillips and Spinks, 2011).

Despite public opinion being at best mixed, government policy continued to be open and generous throughout the years leading up to 2001. The reasons for the maintenance of open and generous government policies toward Boat People up until this time are multi-faceted.

They include:

- Strong government sentiment toward people fleeing communist rule (after all, Australia had spent a number of decades fighting openly or in cold war alliances against communist rule in Asia).
- Low numbers of Boat People actually arriving - even in 1977 which the single biggest year of migration by boat to Australia during this early period, only 868 people arrived, and this quickly fell to be zero by 1980. This can be compared to more than 5,500 people arriving by boat in 2001 (Phillips and Spinks, 2011).
- The fact that whilst public sentiment was mixed, Boat People were not daily headlines and political pressure to act was not really an issue.

Finally, I would also suggest that there was present a kind of 'containing' political leadership offered by the Government of the time. The 1970s in Australia has widely been regarded as a time of progressive politics and, rather than exploit public fears, the Fraser Government chose to lead through progressive government policy. I will touch more on this kind of socio-political containment in the conclusion of this paper.

A turning point in the differentiation of treatment of Boat People (as compared with asylum seekers arriving by other means) began with the Tampa Affair. By the late 1990's, Australia had begun to experience an upswing in the number of 'unauthorised' people arriving on Australia's shores by boat with the principle purpose of seeking asylum. Due mainly to 'push' factors associated with the Taliban's rule of Afghanistan, would-be asylum seekers had created a pathway from south and central Asia to south-east Asia, in particular Indonesia. Indonesian 'people smugglers' had set up operation and, for a price, were offering to transport hopeful asylum seekers by boat to Australia. Before 2001, once asylum seekers reached the northern island outposts of Australia, they would be transported to a relevant facility on the Australian mainland, assessed and, assuming their status as a refugee could be verified (which it almost always was), they were inevitably settled in Australia.

In August 2001, the Norwegian merchant vessel 'Tampa' was sailing between Fremantle and Singapore when it responded to a request for assistance from the Australian Maritime Safety Authority. An Indonesian fishing vessel carrying 438 mainly Afghan asylum seekers was floundering on the open seas. The vessel was taking on water and there was a danger that people on board would drown. The captain of the Tampa initiated a rescue mission to save the 438 people on board. Despite initially setting sail for Indonesia to unload the asylum seekers, under some pressure from the asylum seekers who desperately wanted to go to Australia, the Captain of the Tampa requested permission from the Australian Government to unload the asylum seekers at Christmas Island (an Australian Island in the Indian Ocean, which also contains a facility that was set up to receive and process refugee applications). This request set off a period of intense political activity, which included an international diplomatic incident in which Norway accused Australia of acting illegally and culminated in the passing of the *Border Protection Act 2001* and the implementation of the Pacific Solution ('Norway reports refugee boat crisis to international bodies', 2001).

'The Tampa Affair', as it came to be known, was the beginning of a systematic government-initiated demonization of Boat People and a set of increasingly draconian policies aimed at punishing them in an effort to deter others from attempting the journey. These policies included:

- (i) **The Border Protection Act 2001** which formalised third country 'offshore processing' (known as the Pacific Solution) meaning that any asylum seekers coming to Australia by boat would automatically be transferred to a third country - either Nauru or Papua New Guinea (Phillips, 2011).
- (ii) **The Migration Amendment Bill 2001** effectively excised Australia's islands from the Australian Migration Zone meaning that asylum seekers reaching these islands by boat would have no rights to seek asylum in Australia (Phillips, 2011).
- (iii) **Temporary Protection Visas** were actually in place from 1999, but were heavily used in the period after the Tampa Affair. These visas were issued to people who had arrived by boat once they were found to be valid refugees. Refugees on these visas were not actually granted residency in Australia, but were instead provided a temporary visa which was available for a period of only three years (Phillips, 2011).

- (iv) **Mandatory Detention** – also in place prior to 2001, these policies meant that asylum seekers would be mandatorily detained until such time as their application for asylum could be assessed. Although not new, in the period after 2001, detention times for people arriving by boat escalated significantly – to years rather than days or months (Phillips, 2013).

- (v) **Operation Sovereign Borders** – was a set of policies that were enacted in 2013 and 2014 following the election of the Liberal National Coalition Government. The election was fought strongly on ‘border protection’ and Liberal National Opposition leader Abbott’s promise to ‘stop the boats’ was a very strong part of the campaign. The Government re-instated Temporary Protection Visas (which were dismantled under the previous Labor Government), and significantly boosted Australia’s newly named ‘Border Force’. Boat turn-backs (in which asylum seekers were forced back to Indonesia in Orange Life Boats after their own boats were sunk) were common. Furthermore, Immigration Minister Scott Morrison enforced a media blackout by refusing to comment on government operations at sea.

- (vi) **The No Settlement Directive** restated a policy announced by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd in the last days of his Labor Government. The policy provided that no person who arrived by boat would ever be granted asylum in Australia, irrespective of their status as a proven refugee. Under the ‘no settlement’ rules, even asylum seekers proven to be refugees cannot be settled in Australia and are left to languish in detention with no clear path out, creating the heart-breaking choice for proven refugees; return home to your country of origin (in spite of the fact that you have been proven to be a refugee which means you have successfully demonstrated that your life will be threatened if you return) or remain in indefinite detention in a third world nation. This policy has effectively closed the border to Boat People.

In recent times a third choice has been offered: Australia struck a deal with Cambodia and Papua New Guinea who have agreed to resettle refugees for a price. Unsurprisingly, very few have taken up this offer. There are also reports of Australia rejecting the offer of New Zealand to resettle up to 150 refugees a year from offshore detention. The fear cited is that New Zealand is too attractive a place for refugees and if people believe they have the chance of being resettled in New Zealand, they are more likely to take the chance of coming by boat (Davidson and Doherty, 2015).

Australia's treatment of asylum seekers since 2001, and particularly since 2013 has been internationally condemned. In 2015, the United Nations' Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, Juan E. Méndez, reported to the United Nations Human Rights Council that Australia had breached the Convention against Torture. He cited specific and ongoing concerns over indefinite detention of refugees, detention of children, forced repatriation of genuine refugees and the dangerous conditions of the detention centres following riots at the Manus Island detention facility (Mendez, 2015). Also in 2015, Amnesty International concluded that Australia's boat turn back policy was tantamount to people smuggling, and the Australian Human Rights Commission condemned the mandatory detention of children, and found that this treatment was detrimental to their mental and physical health (Maguire, 2016).

This condemnation was ignored by the Australian Government and was met with apathy by the Australian people. Faced with the above criticism, Tony Abbott, Australia's then Prime Minister, responded that Australians were 'sick of being lectured to by the United Nations', and that the Australian Human Rights Commission report into children in detention was nothing more than a 'political stitch-up' (Cox, 2015).

So we are faced with the following facts: successive Australian Governments have increasingly toughened policies aimed at deterring boat people at practically any cost. Politicians of both major political parties are prepared to conduct potentially dangerous on-water 'turn-backs' in which asylum seeker boats are sunk at sea and people are pushed back in life boats, indefinitely detain people (including children, pregnant women, and the sick) in third world detention camps, actively block their potential settlement in first world nations such as New Zealand, and forcibly repatriate genuine refugees to their home country, despite their legally genuine status as refugees fearing for their lives. They are prepared to pursue a 'no exceptions' policy even for pregnant women and infant children. Furthermore, they are prepared to stand judged by the international human rights community as having engaged in torture and having practised policies which breach all manner of international standards on the treatment of refugees. Whatever one feels about the Australia's treatment of Boat People, it is clear that policies of the Australian Government are deliberately cruel and have been increasingly toughened as a harsh, albeit effective, deterrent to potential asylum seekers who would have otherwise attempted to come to Australia by boat.

Finally, and perhaps most interestingly of all, the Australian Government continues to only apply these policies to a narrow subset of asylum seekers who happen to have arrived by boat. The above policies, enacted since 2001, largely do not apply to asylum seekers who enter Australia through another channel (such as claiming asylum after arriving at an airport, or arriving by regular visa and then claiming asylum afterward). Furthermore, this differentiation takes place despite the fact that, when their claims are tested, Boat People are overwhelmingly found to be genuine refugees, compared with asylum seekers who arrive by air (McAdam and Chong, 2013).

To the outsider, the deliberate differentiation of the application of migration policies depending on method of arrival by the person would seem bizarre. Arguments for the differentiation have been provided by various governments to be the prevention of deaths at sea, but, as most Australians understand, Operation Sovereign Borders is not about dissuading asylum seekers from embarking on dangerous journeys. It is primarily about closing the borders to any would-be boat people full stop. In former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's own words 'any asylum seeker who arrives in Australia by boat will have no chance of being settled in Australia as refugees' (Rudd, 2013), and in the words of former Prime Minister John Howard '...we will decide who comes to this country and the circumstances in which they come' (Howard, 2001). We must also recognise that inside Australia's domestic political arena, the policies remain popular. Politically, the Abbott (and now Turnbull Government) is widely credited with having 'stopped the boats'. As history has shown us, time and again since 2001, any government that promises draconian, harsh and even illegal treatment of boat people will be rewarded with votes.

To turn back now to the central hypothesis of this paper. So far, I have established that the first Boat People were actually British colonials who forever changed and subjugated the original inhabitants of the land, and that this arrival constitutes an enmeshed chosen glory/trauma for Australians; a trauma which has yet to be fully psychologically processed. In the section of the paper above, I have suggested that, today, Boat People are harshly treated by draconian government policies that openly seek to differentiate those who arrive by boat from those who arrive by other means. Finally, I will turn now to offer a hypothesis about the deep fear that drives the draconian asylum seeker policies – the fear of the coloniser being the colonised.

The heart of our Fear

It is almost impossible to find a political speech about Boat People that is not bound up in feelings of their 'otherness'. One significant example can be found in former Prime Minister Tony Abbott's recent Margaret Thatcher Lecture. In his address (Abbott, 2015), he said:

Naturally, the safety and prosperity that exists almost uniquely in Western countries is an irresistible magnet. These blessings are not the accidents of history but the product of values painstakingly discerned and refined, and of practices carefully cultivated and reinforced over hundreds of years. Implicitly or explicitly, the imperative to "love your neighbour as you love yourself" is at the heart of every Western polity...It's what makes us decent and humane countries as well as prosperous ones, but – right now – this wholesome instinct is leading much of Europe into catastrophic error. All countries that say "anyone who gets here can stay here" are now in peril...no country or continent can open its borders to all comers without fundamentally weakening itself. This is the risk that the countries of Europe now run through misguided altruism.

Abbott implored European democracies to follow the Australian example – to close borders, turn back boats and create 'holding camps' lest she be 'fundamentally [weakened]' (Abbott, 2015). But rather than asylum seeker policy, at the heart of the speech sits a fear – a fear that stems from the unfinished psychological tasks born in the chosen glory/trauma of the arrival of the First Fleet. For here, Abbott lays bare a fear that our culture (our idealized Western values, religion, history and prosperity) may be destroyed. He does not just issue a lesson about border protection. He issues a lesson from history about what happens when too many unauthorized foreigners turn up by boat and ruin your way of life. And he speaks, as a white Australian, with a unique insight - he speaks of a fear that the coloniser may suddenly become the colonised and that the country he leads will, at least in some way, be declared *terra nullius* by the Boat People invaders and that the Australian way of life will never be the same again.

Taking a psychodynamic lens, we can analyse Abbott's speech in multiple ways. In one analysis, we can understand that Abbott is stuck in the paranoid schizoid position in much the same way that Keating, his prime ministerial predecessor, was in the Redfern Speech, cited earlier. Abbott's fear, elucidated in his Margaret Thatcher address, is born in a state in which the Good and the Bad cannot be held at that same time – a state where we love our country and celebrate its chosen glory but seek to expel the colonising part of ourselves that set out to systematically destroy an entire culture.

Jessica Benjamin's work (Benjamin,2004) in relation to the intersubjective view of thirdness is also useful in the analysis of Abbott's speech and the broader state of the nation in relation to Boat People. Benjamin invites us to understand that it is possible for two people to be stuck in the 'twoness of complementarity' - a position in which a 'doer-done to' dynamic emerges and in which no third position by which they might begin to see their own actions and reactions can emerge (Benjamin, 2004). It seems that the Australian psyche is stuck in a double twoness of complementarity in which we are both the perpetrator of Indigenous trauma and the potential victim of a similar future crime – the loss of our very 'Australian-ness' at the hands of Boat People.

Toward a better future

Psychoanalytic theory is rich in suggesting ways to move out of the paranoid schizoid state. Indeed, the work of the analyst and the patient is so often centred on the move away from this state, in which the analyst offers a containing space and an invitation for the patient to observe the dynamics at play in hope that they may be shifted. This draws us to the question of "what kind of containment may be necessary at a societal level that would allow a shift away from the 'doer/done to' politics of mass migration?"

The kind of containment necessary in these times should come from political leadership and I would venture two kinds of containing political leadership that could emerge. Firstly, a resistance on behalf of political leaders to join the group in its paranoid schizoid state by fanning the flames of fear. All too often in recent times we have witnessed political leaders exploit fear and engage in the politics of demonization. The sad reality is that every 'tough on boats' policy that has been rolled out since 2001 by Australian political leaders (of both parties) has resulted in a boost in political fortune – and it is a fact well known and exploited by politicians.

Secondly, and perhaps less obviously, is the recognition and action on the problem that is becoming all too apparent to social commentators in the second decade of the twenty-first century that fear of migration and being stuck in the 'doer/done to' psychological state is closely linked with feelings of missing out on hitherto promised economic prosperity.

A socio-political critique of the rise of Trump and the Tea Party in the United States, Brexit in Europe and the rise of right-wing national political movements in the West in general, has been the failure of Neo-Liberal policy to genuinely lift the living standards, and economic security of citizens. It stands to reason that if citizens feel insecure in their economic

security, they will absolutely be concerned that what they have may also disappear. Issues like 'precarious employment' (the loss of ongoing full-time jobs and the rise in casualization of the workforce), welfare austerity, privatization of state assets, and trade liberalisation (resulting in the loss of manufacturing) all are embedded in the Neo-Liberal ideal which Australian politicians have aggressively pursued since the early 1980s.

The impact of the removal of the kind of economic and psychological containment provided by now defunct ideals like 'a job for life' and large state owned institutions, combined with the failure of the private sphere to provide this containment (we need look no far that the recent Global Financial Crisis to see how private interests can erode citizen prosperity and destroy public confidence) must surely have contributed to the current state of public opinion on immigration.

If a kind of 'good enough' containment could be provided, it may be possible to move to a position where our shared chosen glory/trauma can be acknowledged, and the powerful emotions it contains worked through, releasing the nation from fear. Once released, we may finally move toward a depressive position in which the very real challenges of international migration in the twenty-first century can be properly attended to in all of their complexity, and a fair set of policies, free from racist rhetoric and demonization, and in keeping with international standards can emerge.

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