wog|zombie

*The De- and Re-Humanisation of Migrants,
from Mad Dogs to Cyborgs*

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There are now two paradigms that are used to explain the effects of migration and provide categories for defining the agency of the migrant. Since the late nineteenth century the sociological and political discourse on migration has followed the core assumptions of nationalist ideologies that defined sovereign states as comprising a population that was both settled within a defined territory and in possession of a unique cultural identity. This viewpoint was also premised on a metaphysical claim that the abandonment of a nomadic lifestyle for fixed settlement was a developmental stage in human evolution. It was also framed by a mechanistic understanding of the negative relationship between movement and equilibrium: human movement was thereby seen as a depletion of energy as well as a threat to the integrity of borders and the stability of social entities. Hence, migration was considered a deviation from the normal conventions of settled life, and the migrants (or as Oscar Handlin termed them, the 'uprooted ones'), were at best seen as the victims of external forces or at worst perceived as suspect characters that sought unfair advantage over the residents and posed a threat to the prevailing social order.[1] This tendency is also evident in sociological accounts of migration that express overt sympathy for the needs of migrants but then describe them as 'people with problems'.[2] Even when migration has been acknowledged as a crucial feature of modernisation, it was usually framed as if this process was finite and adjustment was a mere transitional phase.[3] Hence, the 'problem with migrants' begins with the assumption that migration is a disruption to the norm of settled life, and that the desired destiny of a migrant is to become a citizen of the nation.[4] Given these negative assumptions on the effects of migration and the status of migrants, it comes as no surprise that public debates have tended to focus on the degree, rather than the legitimacy, of the imposition of

limitations on immigration, restrictions on political entitlement, and the subjection of migrants to additional tests in relation to their biological and cultural fitness.

In the past decade a paradigm shift has enabled a new discourse on migration and migrants. The state-centric views on belonging have been challenged by new transnational perspectives on the formation of social spaces and a redefinition of the universal definitions of human rights.[5] The teleological claims on social evolution that privileged what Harald Kleinschmidt called 'residentialism' have been discredited,[6] and there is now both a finer appreciation of the complex feedback systems that arise from cross-border movements and an affirmative valuation of the role of cross-cultural interaction in revitalising and ensuring the viability of social structures.[7] From this perspective migration is now seen as a dynamic and often on-going feature of social life. Similarly, migrants are no longer typecast as either passive victims that are 'pushed and pulled' by external forces or deviants that threaten social order. It is therefore more appropriate to consider the way migrants plot their journeys and utilise extensive networks of information as part of the normal and conscientious efforts by which people dignify their lives. In Hardt and Negri's spirited defence of a new form of critical agency migrants are pioneers of what they call the 'multitude'[8] and, as Kleinschmidt argues, the new discourse on migration has the potential to extend the notion of citizenship to 'universalistic principles of human rights irrespective of loyalty to a particular institution of statehood'.[9]

While a clear analytical distinction can be drawn between the tendency towards the de-humanisation of migrants in the old dominant paradigm and a potential for the rehumanisation in the new discourse on migration, the substantive representations of migrant identity continue to be drawn from both human and non-human elements. In both paradigms the representations of migrants contain animalistic, mechanistic and spectral images. The new discourse on migration has not proceeded by eliminating all non-human concepts from its vocabulary. To demonstrate the complexity and contradictory images that are used to portray migrant identity I will commence by offering four snapshots that combine both human and non-human elements.

In the 1970s a large graffito appeared in Melbourne: 'Wogs Run/Turn Cogs'.[10] 'Wog' was the racist name for migrants from Southern Europe, and the graffito underlined their concentration in the work force as industrial labourers, linking their identity to the function of a cog in the machine. During this period it was also commonplace for migrants to describe the location of their identity as being split between two different places. For instance, Con George claimed that the migrant's body was severed from his imagination: 'While his body laboriously is and remains in the country of his involuntary adoption, his mind flies back and remains in the country of his origin.'[11]

In John Berger's classic study of the experience of guest workers in Europe, he begins his account of their arrival as if the migrant is a somnambulist:

> his migration is like an event in a dream dreamt by another. As a figure in a dream dreamt by an unknown sleeper, he appears to act autonomously, at times unexpectedly; but everything he does—unless he revolts—is determined by the needs of the dreamer's mind.[12]

Berger also notes that the repetitive and exhausting gestures undertaken in the industrial workplace lead to an effect whereby the 'body loses its mind in the gesture'.[13] The final image he offers in this penetrating account of the splitting of the migrant's subjectivity is that of a person trapped in a state of bereavement, a state in which 'everything [the bereaved person] sees reminds him of what he can no longer see; and what he is reminded of becomes the essential experience, not what he sees'.[14]

More recently Albert Memmi, one of the pioneering theorists on the psychological dependencies that were forged under colonialism, has reflected on the contemporary impact of what he calls 'unstoppable human waves'[15] of migration on the 'besieged fortress' of Europe.[16] He goes beyond Berger's sympathetic portrayal of the anguish in exile as he traces the difficulties of settlement in French society by highlighting the children's extreme sense of social detachment:

> The son of the immigrant is a sort of zombie, lacking any profound attachment to the soil on which he was born. He is a French citizen, but he does not feel in the least bit French; he only partially shares the culture of the majority of his fellow citizens, and not at all the religion. For all that he is not completely Arab … And in truth, he is from another planet: the ghetto.[17]

Alongside this scornful perspective on the second-generation immigrant I would also pose Arnold Zable's account of a hunger strike by Sri Lankan refugees on Nauru Island against the Australian government's policy of indefinite detention. Zable ends his plea for understanding of the traumatic consequences of indefinite detention by drawing attention to the placards that the refugees composed in which they describe themselves as 'living corpses … walking zombies'.[18]

From wogs/cogs to zombies, these are brief portraits in which migrants and refugees are either compared to mere automata and zombies, or in which they lament the loss of their own sense of belonging and humanity. There is a strong declaration that identity becomes split and alienated when it is out of place. The rhetorical shift in the image of migrant subjectivity, from mechanical to spectral metaphors of dehumanisation, is suggestive of both a diversification in the form, and an increasing mystification over the causes of alienation.

In the 1970s migration was inextricably linked to the process of industrialisation in the West. The identification of the migrant as a cog in the machine led many commentators to conclude that the alienation of migrants was also a metaphor for the general form of dehumanisation under capitalism.[19] Given the recent transformations in both the structures of economic production and the mechanisms for disseminating cultural values, I contend that the stigmatic image of the migrant has been decoupled from the racial/mechanical image of being wogs/cogs in a vast industrial machine, and now draws from a spectral symbolic economy. The American anthropologists Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff have argued that the zombie tropes have been increasingly used as a way of making sense of the uncertainties associated with contemporary migration.[20] They have argued that migrants have always been considered frightening because they usually look different, they sometimes make incomprehensible sounds and, because they are from elsewhere, there is a suspicion that they will not conform to the dominant moral categories. The dread evoked by the migrant is, according to the Comaroffs, akin to the experience of confronting a zombie because it is linked with the feeling of looking into the eyes of an alien being and not knowing whether your own image, thoughts and hopes will be reflected back. The encounter with migrants is thus framed by the problems of sensorial appreciation and non-communication.

Following on from the argument posed by the Comaroffs I will argue that anxiety over the migrant's body, their silence and moral placelessness is linked to the broader transformations of post-industrial society and the global culture of fear.[21] Unlike during the earlier phase of industrialisation, migration is no longer linked to specific economic functions, and the representation of the dehumanisation of migrant subjectivity does not correspond to a notion of commodified alienation. Rather, the spectral logic that compares migrants to ghosts and zombies refers to a kind of abstracted identity that is stripped of national or ethnic markers, and a hijacking of agency by malicious and other-worldly powers.[22] However, for the purposes of this essay I will also argue that the recourse to the zombie trope by commentators such as Albert Memmi and in the self-portrayals by refugees is indicative of both a structural bias in the dominant paradigms on migration and the emergence of a new discourse on migration and human rights. It is worth emphasising from the outset that alongside the refugee's self-portrayal as a zombie there is also a repeated invocation for the world to remember 'that we are not animals, we are not criminals, we are all humans'.

In the dominant paradigm on migration, the available categories for representing migrant subjectivity tend to define it in terms of a victim or monster. As a consequence the basic dimensions of their humanity are distorted. By assuming that all identities need to be both embedded in a given place and to have established long historical links there is the corollary view that migrants will remain in a position of lack. Their subjectivity will be at best incomplete, or at worst suspect. In the new discourse on migration the dynamic between

mobility and stasis, or deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation is not posed as a singular binary. Hence migrant subjectivity is articulated in forms that highlight their role in establishing new transnational social spaces and creating hybrid forms of cultural identity. I will examine the conflicting trajectories of these two paradigms by focusing on representations of migrant identity that combine both human and non-human elements. The recourse to animalistic or monstrous tropes has usually been interpreted as a sign of the migrant's political nihilism and cultural alienation. These images and gestures have been all too easily dismissed as being representative of rhetorical excess or outside the bounds of language. In conclusion, this essay will seek to reveal the blindspot in the language of the dominant paradigm, and acknowledge that the spectral self images and animalistic gestures of resistance expressed by migrants deserve to be understood as part of a new paradigm on migration that is also a process of rehumanisation of migrant identity and the beginnings of an expanded political discourse on human rights.

— I

Dogs in polis

During the 2005 French riots, a young unidentified boy from the housing estates in the northern suburbs of Paris was asked by an English journalist if he felt French. He replied:

> We hate France and France hates us. I don't know what I am. Here's not home; my gran's in Algeria. But in any case France is just fucking with us. We're like mad dogs, you know? We bite everything we see.[23]

These bitter words were typical of the comments made by many of the rioting youths for whom police harassment was an everyday occurrence and who also expressed the sense that they had no place in the inner city.[24] In the public debates that followed the riots the actions and statements of the youths were commonly interpreted as evidence of either the state's neglect, or the rioter's savage vandalism.[25] However, this debate missed the most obvious question: why do people now describe themselves as 'mad dogs'?

The 'mad dog' boy was part of a gang when he was interviewed. The 'we' is this gang but also a more generic claim of defiance against the idea that the nation can create a 'people'. He despises that which despises him, but also recognises that this hate leaves him without a place. He does not see himself as being at home in the same place as his parents. He knows that his gran's home is in Algeria, but where does this leave him? His fellow gang members reinforce this opposition against the French nation. It promises freedom, but all it offers is 'Les keufs, man, the cops'. It declares that the republic is an open space, but leaves them stranded in what another gang member, Rachid, calls 'shit, dump'. It presents equality as a right for all, but then his companion, Sylla, reminds the journalist that the former Minister

of Interior and now French President Nikolas Sarkozy 'calls us animals, he says he will clean the cities with a power hose … Every car that goes up, that's one more message for him.' The pyric language is the marker of the deeper loss of faith in the neutrality and integrative power of the state. Republican ideals are seen as a facade that hides the entrenched values of the French. The gang suspects that they cannot enter the 'open' space of the state as they are. The gang is not part of the 'already French', and therefore would feel duped if they entered into such a social contract. Unlike their parents, who saw themselves as cogs in the state machine, these gangs find themselves without any function. They see no potential in a conciliatory dialogue with the state, and as other commentators have observed, the proposition that the migrant must excise their identity in order to participate only inflames their sense of indignation, frustration and anger.[26] Alain Tourraine supports the view that French republicanism was 'riddled with prejudices' and is therefore not surprised that the gangs are forming identities 'based on aggression'. However, he also notes, 'we can no longer pretend that France is the protector of universal value, and that in this mission it has the right to make second-class citizens of anyone who doesn't fit the bill of this ideal "national ego"'.[27]

When the gang is left outside the social contract, they are aware that they are stranded in a no-mans land. They know that when the 'cops' taunt and provoke them their defiance is futile. 'We're sinking in shit and France is standing on our heads. One way or another we are heading for prison. It might as well be for actually doing something.' In their rage they can only become what the state tries to remove from humanity—animality. If France 'hates' them, then the gang threatens to become what France fears most: an animal that is not bound by common ideals, values and laws. By becoming animal, the 'mad dog boy' goes beyond comprehension of not only what he is, but where he is heading. Prison is not seen as the destiny for transgressors or as a space that provides deterrence, but as another marker of his own exclusion from social norms. It exists in parallel—no better, nor worse—to the world in which he already exists.

The violence in becoming an animal is not to be confused with juvenile rage. Juan Goytisolo, in the novel *Landscapes After The Battle*, offers a prescient scenario that is closer to the worldview expressed by this gang. Goytisolo represents the city of Paris as being in a state of turmoil. Overnight an insurgent gang of immigrants had switched all the street signs from French into Arabic. Goytisolo suggests that republican chauvinism, combined with denialism over post-colonial humiliations, produces both an indifference towards the foreigners that live in but are excluded from French culture, and a vacuum that attracts its own violent counterforce.[28] To be excluded from culture leaves the subject in limbo, or renders him as an object that is simply part of nature. The philosopher Giorgio Agamben reminds us of Kojeve's lectures on the limits of civilisation in which he concluded that no animal can

be a snob.[29] Or, put the other way around, the art of not 'biting everything we see' is the achievement of the civilising process. Alain Finkielkraut, a conservative French social commentator and son of Holocaust survivor, takes this civilisational limit point to heart. He not only blamed the youths for the violence that was used against them, but went on to complain that these 'ungrateful immigrants' were leading an 'anti-republican pogrom'.

Slavoj Zizek disputed that youths like the 'mad dog boy' see themselves in competition with the civilised space of the French nation. Zizek stresses that there is no ideological content that drives the assault on republicanism, they are not bearers of alternative worldview, there is just an 'insistence on RECOGNITION'.[30] This observation echoes the precise claim made by the 'mad dog boy': 'We burn because it's the only way to make ourselves heard. … Our parents should understand. They did nothing, they suffered in silence. We don't have a choice.' It is significant that the 'mad dog boy' feels both pity for the suffering and contempt towards the silence of his own parents. At once he elevates and also expels himself from his father's position. Detached, he is alone and confronted by the fear that he has no support. In his eyes the symbolic force of the father has been killed by the nation. He can neither identify with the dead father, nor with the deadly state. He knows that the return to 'my gran's in Algeria' is pointless, just as becoming French is impossible. His own identity is thereby left without a place. It has nowhere to come from and nowhere to head towards. It withdraws into a position from which he can only recoil as an object: 'I don't know what I am.' Or again, as Zizek observed, the identity of the 'mad dog boy' is deadlocked because he is unable to locate the experience of his predicament into a meaningful Whole.[31]

The experience of being entrapped in what the gang called a 'shit dump' space does not end with a rigid form of paralysis. On the contrary, the negative space is riven with tension. While there is no grounding and binding for a social contract in which individual responsibility can take form, there is a paradoxical series of gestures through which the gang grind out a defence of their hooded identity.[32] The spiralling flumes of the burning cars have been interpreted as evidence of the 'self fulfilling sense of exclusion'[33] and 'the monstrous symptom of social and psychological devastation' that is hostile to society and yet expects 'more subsidies'.[34] Yet, these retaliatory and self-destructive gestures are also expressive of the vortex in which a boy becomes a mad dog. This is his way of communicating his sense of place in what Alain Badiou calls the 'worldless' world. He does not seek to redeem himself by extracting some latent image in the national culture, or appeal to an image of a distant self that exists in a different place, but he does defend the space in which his own self is embattled. It is a defensive-aggressive strategy that approximates that of a slave, as envisioned by Lu Hsun: 'He rejects what he is, and at the same time he rejects any wish to be someone other than what he is.'[35] The interview ends with the journalist, looking for

a sign of hope, asking—is there is anyone the gang admires? The 'mad dog boy' points to Thierry Henry, a Black French football star who was the greatest goal scorer for Arsenal, and then pours out this acid comment: 'Henry never scores for France.'

If the 'mad dog boy's' words are dismissed as mere delinquent rage or pointless nihilism, then the deeper questions of belonging and identity are also ignored. The dominant paradigm tended to categorise such as either the fault of the individual or a necessary adjustment phase. This perspective deflects attention away from a recurring tension in the construction of modern subjectivity. Consider an encounter with a street artist in the heart of Paris that was described by the cultural critic Elizabeth Wilson. The location is only a few kilometres away from the ghetto area. People are enjoying their 'time off' as they walk in the squares and among the crowd is a man who impersonates a doll. As the figure jerks into action, Wilson describes the response of the onlookers as a mixture of 'euphoria that the imitation of a lifeless lifelikeness could be so perfect, and disappointment that the moving statue was not a living doll'.[36] This sense of frustration that co-exists with one of glee—as if a dead person could come back to life or a doll become alive—exposes alien wishes that can never be fulfilled. From this banal form of public entertainment Wilson deduces that our fascination with the transformation of a human body into an automaton is a reflection of a more generalised feeling of disassociation.[37]

The limitations in the representation of subjectivity within the dominant paradigm can also found in Agamben's influential essays on alienation in modernity. Agamben begins his project by revisiting the classical philosophical claim that a human life is only worth living if it can transcend its original animal status. He draws out the Aristotelean categories that distinguish between a bare life, *zoe*, which is confined to the animal function of nutrition and reproduction, and human life, *bios*, which proceeds with language and its capacity to develop aesthetic pleasure, moral principles, economic planning and political order. Agamben observes that throughout the history of philosophy there is a consistent argument that humans realise their potential through the process of gaining representation within the law. In modern times, he argues, the sovereign has greater power to decide the conditions upon which the law can be suspended, and thereby to exclude people from the right of being a subject under law. As an outlaw, one's mode of being is reduced to that of a bare life: he or she is excluded from the circuit of language and civilisation.[38] The extreme example of this argument is the figure of the *homo sacer*—a subject under Roman law that could be killed with impunity, and whose existence can only be defined in biological terms. Their life, and more importantly the value of their life, is stripped of any cultural, moral or political value. Agamben provides numerous other examples of historical figures who represent this animal state. Perhaps the most chilling is Primo Levi's description of the camp inhabitant who was ironically named 'The Muslim'. This zombie-like figure 'no longer belongs to the world of men

in any way … Mute and absolutely alone, he has passed into another world without memory and without grief.'[39] He is a being so stunted by fear that neither the threat of pain, nor the promise of pleasure, can register within him. Language no longer impacts upon consciousness. In this apathetic state the camp inhabitant is almost invisible; the guards cannot exert any more power over him, nor can the other inmates reach him. Agamben's evaluation of human life in the current political context is driven by a logic that identifies the negation of will power, the collapse of a moral order, and the stripping away of all rituals that sustain cultural belonging with an inexorable state of bestialisation. He argues that this slide into animality is accelerated and intensified by the monopoly powers of the sovereign. This leaves the subject with no space in which to forge any form of residual or resistant agency.

How far apart is the life of a camp inmate and that of the 'mad dog boy' in the Parisian suburbs? Agamben would claim that they are closer than one might imagine. They both inhabit the non-space of bare life. From Agamben's perspective it is not the 'mad dog boy's' transgressive acts of violence that have cast him beyond the law, but the prior fact of being in a state of abandonment. The 'mad dog boy' does not simply disagree with French values; he sees himself as being outside the space of French culture. By being excluded from the functions that constitute a human life, he has passed over to the indistinguishable zone of animal.[40] Similarly, Agamben stresses that the *homo sacer* is not the extreme figure that only exists in the margins, but rather the exemplification of a generalised state of abandonment that everyone is subjected to in contemporary politics. Politics, he claims, begins with the threat of being held in this state of limbo, and he argues, in 'the most profane and banal ways', we are all virtually *homines sacri*.[41] The spectacle of detention—which Agamben reminds us occurs not only in remote zones, but also in suburban sporting stadia and within the transit zones of metropolitan airports—is an expression of the power over the other that actually undermines the foundations of security and integration in society. For Agamben, the space in which the detainee is suspended is similar to the complex topology that the 'mad dog boy' claims for himself: it is both inside and outside society, the place where sovereign power is exerted to the maximum, but also where the rule of law is reduced to a bare minimum. This doubled location also exposes a threshold point from which, Agamben concludes, the citizen's worst fears emerge: the camp has subsumed the home and the city. The detainee is suspended in the camp not just to protect the citizen but also to display the possibility that everyone can be abandoned. As the logic of the camp stretches over the whole of society, Agamben concludes that the integrity of the boundary between human and animal is 'taken away forever'.[42]

Before moving onto further examples of dehumanisation, I want to note a significant discrepancy between the mad dog boy's words and Agamben's philosophical account of subjectivity. While there is a neat overlap between the philosopher's account of the dehumanising

effects of modern power and the mad dog boy's sense of moral abandonment and cultural dislocation, the resultant passage into the zone of animal is not universally conducted in passive silence. The 'mad dog boy' distinguishes his response from the silent alienation endured by his parents. They were the cogs in the machine; and the cog is the industrial variant on the beast of burden. In Berger's account of the migrant as 'a seventh man'—a person who carries a small portion of his own self-portrait photograph, either with the intention that one day he will return home to reunite the fragments and become whole again or with the dream that by posting back the small portion of himself he will announce his rebirth. In both versions there is the assumption that the migrant was prepared to make a tactical play at the part of being a cog. Silence was meant to be temporary. The migrant, according to Berger was prepared to become a mute in order to exchange his closed destiny for an open future.

The 'mad dog boy' does not share this fantasy. He does not see his journey in life as being en route towards anything positive. He says he is in limbo and will 'bite at anything', and for Agamben this declaration is evidence of his lot humanity. From Aristotle to Agamben, philosophers have distinguished man from animal by stating that animals do not have language. And did any tiger complain that his tigritude was impugned by association with these 'sub-humans'? Of course not, because the point of the distinction is intra-human. It is only when one group of humans fails to distinguish the symbols expressed by another that they are transferred to a category of being that is less than human and more like animals. The 'mad dog boy' declares himself to be in opposition to the dominant definition of humanity, but unlike Agamben I do not see his words and gestures as markers of his expulsion. To return the 'mad dog boy' to the status of speaking subject is neither to redeem nor excuse his actions. My concern is not with justifications but rather with an examination of the available categories for representing humanity that go beyond the dominant paradigm's tendency of denigrating and banishing the outsiders. The distortions and 'blackholes' in the conceptual language for representing others is nowhere more evident than in the official language that is now used to refer to refugees and terrorists.

— Living dead

As part of the covert intelligence operations in the 'war on terror', there have been mass arrests of fleeing refugees and the profiling of migrants who are suspected of being Al Qaeda supporters.[43] Among the countless people who have been arrested, many have vanished. Then suddenly some of them reappear, telling bizarre stories of being abducted by hooded men, stripped, dressed in a nappy and overalls, handcuffed and transported to remote sites where they were tortured. They were plunged into the legal black hole that is known as 'rendition'.[44] The US government has consistently denied that it is involved in renditions. However, by compiling information gathered from human rights lawyers, plane spotters,

customs officials and airline traffic controllers, the investigative journalist Stephen Grey has now gathered sufficient evidence to confirm the stories of people who claimed to have returned from the dead. Stephen Grey begins his analysis of the history of rendition with a detailed map of the numerous flights taken by 'ghost planes', and a glossary of the dissembling vocabulary that was invented to portray these prisoners as ghosts.[45] He noted that the apprehension of the suspects is referred to as 'snatching'; their transfer, usually by means of an outsourced network of private Gulfstream jets, and piloted by people who refer to themselves as 'taxi drivers'. These 'ghost prisoners' have been sent to such destinations as the infamous prison in Syria known as the 'Grave' because its cells are little larger than coffins. Just as Grey was able to correlate the stories of the prisoners by following the trail of information left by planes that were outsourced by the CIA, it is also possible to trace the contours of dehumanisation in the spectral vernacular that is used to define the subjects that were entangled in these events.

The need to shroud the secrecy of the renditions in a language that conjures up ghosts is at one level consistent with a historical tendency to efface the enemy. The confusion of 'who is the enemy?' usually takes a more pernicious twist as it is recast as 'what is the enemy?'. In the war on terror, the adversary has been stripped of all human intelligence, and whatever sign of stealth and strength remains is now coded in a new spectral vocabulary. For instance, the fear of the terrorist as a 'sleeper' lies in the dual image that during this phase of covert operations he is not only the walking dead, but also a mobile death-making body. Thus, all those around the zombie-terrorist, those who think they are living, are brought side-by-side with the fear that they may become one of the dead.[46] The resemblance of detainees in the 'war on terror' to zombies is also repeated by US prison guards who describe the common appearance of detainees shortly before suicide: 'They have lost hope in life. They have no hope in their eyes. They are ghosts and they want to die. No food will keep them alive.'[47]

The zombie image is not confined to the official descriptions of suspected terrorists. It also recurs in many of the portrayals of alienation experienced by migrants and refugees.[48] Mohammed Sagar, an asylum seeker who was held for seven years in an offshore camp, pleaded with a journalist that he convey to the well wishers, who expressed the hope that his plight may have a happy ending: 'I don't want to be happy, I just want my life back … whether it would be happy or sad doesn't matter. I just want it back. I want to be alive, that's all, because now I'm feeling like a dead living thing.'[49] The fantasy of release from detention is therefore bound by the desire to return to the place of the 'living'. However, even this modest hope is presented as a chimera in refugee Richard Okao's account of his own zombie-like existence. With grievous clear-sightedness over the 'success' of being granted asylum, he declares that his new home, Melbourne, 'is the city of the dead for me because it is the

city where I realised that I was dead; that I wasn't living'.[50] Amal Masry, who survived the SIEV X disaster, in which 353 people drowned when a people-smuggling boat sank on its way to the Australian territory of Christmas Island, later campaigned to tell the story of what she called the 'the poor people's *Titanic*'. This included her own experience of the twenty-two hours she endured in stormy seas, most of which she spent clinging to a floating corpse. After Masry was granted residency in Australia, her mission turned to being reunited with her son who lived in exile. During her final visit to her son in Iran, he recorded a video inter-view in which, with a shudder in her voice and a trembling hand placed softly over her heart, she recalled the horror of looking into the faces of the other refugees and thinking, 'the color of their skin was bad, they were living but they were dead, like zombies'.[51]

— Dead Europe

Mad dogs, ghost prisoners and zombie refugees—these are some of the names used for people who are seen as opponents, or about themselves by people who feel that they are excluded from society. Stigmatic appellations have been an ancient form of addressing the enemy, foreigner, and even the deviant that lives within society.[52] However, it is now difficult to place the mad dogs, ghost prisoners and zombies on the same continuum as the wogs that turned the cogs. These new names shift the position and the integrity of the boundary between humans and non-humans. Even when the wog migrant was reduced to a cog there was a begrudging admission of utility, and every migrant hung on to the hope that one day he would either return home to become a whole man again or that his own child's entry into society would redeem his sacrifice. At some point, the migrant wog imagined completeness. The self-image of the migrant as zombie introduces a new level of dehumanisation. At one level it demonstrates the loss of faith in the dream of becoming one with the dominant society. At another level it also issues a call for a new discourse on humanity.

I would suggest that this new spectral hybrid is formed out of these competing paradigms on belonging and migration. The 'wog zombie' is the product of the contradictory sources of pagan fears of demonic forces and the modern fantasy of the migrant as part ghost and part zombie. While the migrant-as-wog featured as a stigmatic figure in the nation building narrative, the wog zombie languishes and then erupts as the ultimate threat to the nation. In fact, the wog zombies are now being blamed for the destruction of the will to build a nation. This spectral image of the migrant as both a victim and the nation's victimiser recurs throughout Christos Tsiolkas novel *Dead Europe*.[53] Throughout his career Tsiolkas has focused on the subjectivity of migrants. Critics have both celebrated the dynamic energy and con-demned the nihilistic rage that Tsiolkas portrays.[54] In *Dead Europe* Tsiolkas provides a more disturbing image of the migrant as a ghost and vampire. The tension generated by this spectral

logic provides a new perspective on the limitations of the dominant construction of migrant subjectivity.

Isaac, the narrator in *Dead Europe*, travels to Greece, the homeland of his parents, and then across Europe in a quest for the feeling of cultural completeness that he has grown up believing is lacking in Australia. In each of the major cities—Venice, Prague, Berlin, Cambridge and London—there is an opportunity to witness the sites of the stories about culture, politics and art that his father and other male mentors passed on to him. However, his experience in these cities is a steep descent into disillusionment. Europe is presented as being in a state of ideological ruin. The unfettered forces of capitalism have transformed the imagined place of culture into a form of hell that is filled with ghosts and zombies. The citizens appear to be gripped by the vices of greed and lust. The collapse of communist regimes is also seen as precipitating a deeper moral malaise, leaving everyone with no other option than the frenetic pursuit of debauched opportunism. Almost all the migrants in the novel are described as possessing desperate groping eyes, and appear condemned to a desolate life of prostitution and violent crime.

It is during his furtive effort to connect with the dispossessed that Isaac notices a peculiar transformation occurring in his own body. After a clumsy struggle with a blind Jew in the Venetian ghetto, he notices that the old man's teeth marks leave 'raw pink wounds' but 'no blood'.[55] Isaac subsequently notes the vampiric urges in his body as he leads a young graphic design student from São Paolo into a train toilet cubicle. As he performs oral sex and 'her blood is pumped through' his belly he also observed the thrill of rejuvenation: 'I knew I was alive.'[56] Isaac's final European destination is England. He visits a former teacher, who left Australia after being charged as a pederast, but Isaac is more repulsed by the dinner-table political idealism that he regards as typical of the pretentious and aloof culture of Cambridge. Throughout his journey Isaac considers himself a solitary figure who walks 'among strangers and takes photographs feeling no connection with anyone'.[57] And yet, when he examines the photographs he discovers that: 'In print after print, there appeared the same reptilian face. The dark, ghoulish boy, his face sometimes leering, sometimes grinning, always emaciated, always hungry, always reaching out grimly towards my gaze.'[58] His alienation and vampiric transformation reaches its cataclysmic limit in London. Desperate for replenishment in the city that he feels is built on 'layers and layers of shit', he turns to a prostitute.[59] A pang of conscience interrupts his murderous desire and he returns to the hotel room of his most recent travelling companions, an American and a Russian businessmen. As he enters he finds the Russian drunk and splayed on the bed. The American, in his messianic post-coital bliss, orders Isaac to rape and kill. Isaac sniffs the air, finds traces of an intoxicating brew of cosmetics, hallucinogens, jewels and minerals; he pauses as he reflects on the 'stink

of Him', and then plunges into a flesh-tearing frenzy.[60] Elated and once again virile, he lies down: 'The last sound I hear before blessed sleep is the violent, delighted laughter of the boy as he comes to lie next to me, wrapping his legs and arms around me.'[61]

The spectral figure of the 'ghoulish boy' in *Dead Europe* does more than unsettle, disturb and ultimately consume the narrator. It also provides the metaphoric references for the broader narrative of moral and political corruption. The boy first appeared on Isaac's arrival in his mother's village, and then recurs as Isaac becomes progressively haunted by a family curse. The narrative of Isaac's journey becomes interwoven with passages that reveal the mother's feelings of guilt towards a murdered Jewish boy who was entrusted to her family's care. As he proceeds through Europe, Isaac's delirious conversion into a vampire becomes a metaphor of his tethering to his mother's curse and the severing of his paternal bonds. Isaac's father is a Greek-born, Paris-educated communist who fled persecution in his homeland, struggled to support his family while holding various factory jobs in Australia and finally died from a heroin overdose. Throughout his life he was fiercely secular and displayed a disdainful attitude towards what he regarded as the shallow and complacent Australian political culture. The story of Isaac's father's haughty superiority and fatal end is contrasted with the mother's earthy attachments and her entrapment in the vortex of supernatural powers. She was born in a Greek village that was mired in superstitious beliefs. Her exotic beauty is shadowed by the appearance of a demonic ghost. As the figure of the father disappears into the urban debris and the collapse of any vestige of civil life, Isaac's vampiric transformation is coupled with the mother's return to her earthy and pre-modern belief systems. The trinity of father/city/culture marks the death of Europe, while the other trinity of mother/nature/spirit announces the renewal of a brutish Europa. The novel ends with Isaac in a catatonic state. His mother returns to Europe to save her son by making a pact with the devil to sacrifice her soul. The accursed power of a pagan spirit emerges triumphant.

After its publication, much of the novel's critical attention focused on its portrayal of the violent mistreatment of Jews. One of Australia's most prominent cultural critics judged the book to contain anti-Semitic writing.[62] This critique overlooked the bigger question over the sources of energy that drive the narrative. The novel proceeds by expressing contempt for the decline of Western political culture and ends by embracing the atavistic pre-modern forces. The energy that drives the novel to its conclusion is not exclusively sourced from a deep-seated racist hatred towards the Jews. The interweaving of the stories of the father's death and a mother's damnation embody a larger destruction in the moral and political worldview. Male authority, monotheism and the whole enlightenment project are pronounced dead. European values are presented as either hollow or defunct. The civic and political ideologies are represented as if they were rulers that capitulated in shameful circumstances and the only successor to this void is a pagan devil with ghosts and zombies at his command.

As Isaac is reclaimed in the monstrous maternal space, this not only gives rise to disturbing fantasies about the figuration of woman, but also suggests that the process of becoming a fatherless son is like being in a world where there is no rational explanation of cause and no basis for hope in ideals. Tsiolkas's novel ends with the alienating conclusion that supernatural forces have the ultimate power over human destiny.

It is worth recalling that the emergence of ghost stories in the modern era is linked to the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. The Age of Reason sought to banish capricious myths, malevolent superstitions and irrational belief systems. It sought to construct a transparent system of governance that was based on rational modes of explanation. It is now well accepted by cultural historians that the emergence of the ghost genre is a vehicle for expressing both the mysteries that exist at the edges of the illuminated spaces of reason and the passions that elude the powers of rationality.[63] The end of enlightenment principles is not only evident in fiction. After 9/11 the rhetoric employed by the Bush administration was increasingly defined in terms of what Bush's advisers framed as imperial realism. From this perspective there was the firm belief that global reality could be shaped by American dreams.[64] Hence, when faced with the nightmarish image of Osama bin Laden, Bush's response was structured by a phantasmagoric 'search for monsters and ghosts'.[65] In Tsiolkas's adoption of the ghost genre we witness another level of this loss of faith in the rationalist worldview. Isaac, at first, rejects the ghost stories as 'peasant shit'.[66] He sees himself as the son of a rationalist, and his criticism of the fears and vices in Europe is a measure of the failure to realise its own values. However, he is slowly confounded and transfigured by demonic forces. Hence his political complaint is eventually overwhelmed by the creeping return of supernatural forces that are represented as if they were always lurking within his own body. This shift challenges the border between rational order and monstrous passions, as it suggests not only that the passions co-exist with reason, but also that they enjoy ultimate power. In his earlier novels, Tsiolkas conveyed the rage against social inequality and moral corruption in political terms.[67] The appeal to the supernatural represents a significant departure in the source of moral authority. It is both a concession over the loss of faith in rational political argument, and a submission that a demonic sovereign has transformed society into a swirling vortex. As an astute observer of the migrant condition, Tsiolkas is offering much more than an escapist fantasy, he is also utilising the ghost genre to depict the general form of dehumanisation.

— The process of zombification

In the literary and horror film genre the status of zombies is not confined to aliens that haunt the borderlands, but also encompasses figures that enact the suppression of the Other under capitalism.[68] In anthropological accounts, there is the similar observation that the depiction of migrants as zombies not only provides convenient scapegoats but also heightens the

vulnerability of social laws, norms and values.[69] Their mobility is presented as if it were a liberation from the rules that bind people to the laws of a place. Hence the anxiety over the migrant's arrival is not confined to the initial transgression at the border, but extends to an unbounded fear that migrants, like zombies, possess an insatiable appetite and predatory behaviour will destroy all forms of social control. It is therefore worth pausing to consider the link between the dehumanising image of wog zombies and what the American anthropologists Jean and John Comaroff call the 'experiential anomalies and aporias'[70] in the dominant sources of power.

The zombie is a figure that appears to be alive but is also dead. In folkloric and anthropological literature it has been noted that the figure of the dead coming back to seek revenge against the living has recurred in almost all cultures. Archetypically, the zombie can move but has neither memory nor will. Their primary senses have been either mutilated—the tongue is cut and the voice seems to come from the nose; or stunned—the eyes are open but the stare is remote. Deprived of these senses, they lack the means for communication. The image of the zombie often oscillates between the dead person who has returned to life, and a body whose soul has been stolen and forced to work for an evil master. Even the meaning of the word is uncertain. It is akin to the Kongo word nzambi, meaning 'god'. However, it could be derived from either the French word for shadows, *les ombres,* or traced back to the West Indian term for ghost, *jumbie*.[71]

In postcolonial literature the appearance of zombies has been linked to the sudden upheaval of social structures, collapse of traditional forms of moral authority, and the rapid collisions between different worldviews such as colonialism, industrialisation and the Great Wars. Most recently, Jean and John Comaroff have noted an unprecedented increase in the reports on the existence of zombies in the turbulent post-Apartheid period in South Africa. The reports ranged from tales and rumours that circulate in small communities, to journalistic claims and state commissions that investigated the motivations for outbursts of violence against migrant labourers. In line with earlier associations between zombies and violent social rupture, the Comaroffs posited a link between the proliferation of these reports and the social and moral implosion caused by neoliberal capitalism. They argue that both the imagery of zombies and the flows of capitalism are governed by a spectral logic. The increasingly 'opaque, even occult' conditions for the production of wealth in contemporary society have, according to the Comaroffs, left people unable to find a rational understanding of the social change and led people to draw on supernatural imagery as a form of social explanation.[72]

The Comaroffs argue that the experiential conditions of neoliberal capitalism are framed by a spectral logic because the 'hand' of capital is not only invisible, it is also the omnipotent force for social change—no-one can point to 'it', but 'it' is the only thing that makes things happen. The mysterious presence and force of this 'it' has beggared any model of explanation

that relies on a direct connection between cause and consequence. The Comaroffs claim that radical shifts in the process of economic production, and the new forms of conspicuous wealth, have disrupted traditional modes for explaining the exchange value between human labour and human life. Hence the proliferation of 'the disquieting figure of the zombie'[73] is an attempt to explain the otherwise inexplicable contradictions in social value. In short, when the traditional and rational systems for defining exchange value have been rendered defunct, the allure of zombie narratives gains greater currency. These writers also make the more general claim, and this is consistent with Tsiolkas's recourse to the zombie trope, that the zombie is not just an instance of eccentric and local fears, but also an index of a broader cultural anxiety. In each instance, the Comaroffs argue that:

> The living dead comment on the disruption of an economy in which the productive energies were once visibly invested in the reproduction of a situated order of domestic and communal relations; an order through which the present was, literally kept in place. And the future was secured.[74]

By focusing on the reportage of zombies the Comaroffs are seeking to address the broader cultural upheavals that arise from the transition of an industrial to a post-industrial society. During the period of heavy industrialisation, the place and function of the workplace was, in large measure, defined by reference to the heavy tools and solid structures of the machine age. It was no coincidence that the graffito 'wogs turn cogs' also protested against the alienation of the migrant in the language of the machine. In the post-industrial phase the imagery of the workplace has switched toward light practices, or what Bauman calls the 'liquid' flows of capital.[75] The goals of capital have thereby shifted from the concentration of energy into a unified system, to the generation of multiple platforms for the dissemination of energy flows. The place of production and the determination of a company culture are no longer fixed to the territory or norms of a specific place, but unleashed into a global field of perpetual reinvention. In this field no-one has the promise of being a lifelong cog in the machine. For when global capital pursues its objective of maximising surplus and minimising cost, it should come as no surprise that it is also responsible for provoking a violent competition between the mobile and immobile agents.

The process of zombification that the Comaroffs observed in post-Apartheid South Africa is used as a metaphor for the pattern of dehumanisation that characterises the neoliberal world order. As mobility and uncertainty become the dominant features of everyday life, the Comaroffs argue that society tends towards an apocalyptic scene in which there is a total rupture of the symbolic bonds and the reduction of humans to senseless zombies. This process of dislocation is represented as it were of a different order to migrants' experience of alienation in the era of industrial labour. As a consequence the counter-reactions are represented as

wilder. Unlike the wogs that turned the cogs—who, as 'mad dog boy' pointed out, 'suffered in silence'—the zombie has the potential for demonic and unpredictable reaction against the machine. The fear of the zombies lies in the fact that it is perceived to be beyond animal, for it not only 'bites' but also needs to 'eat human flesh'. Zombification becomes a metaphor for the neoliberal order because in this era the migrant has no hope of being permanently re-settled and the global economic forces have severed any link between productive energy and cultural meaning. In this context the Comaroffs present the melancholic conclusion that migrants are irreversibly dehumanised and also imply that by 'becoming' zombie the migrant may wreck neoliberal capitalism and thereby rescue everyone from its nightmare.

While Agamben defined the essence of humanity in relation to the articulation of will, the Comaroffs stress that human value is forged in the integration of productive energy within an embedded cultural context. Both perspectives assume a territorialised vision of human life and thereby identify the value of a migrant life in a negative binary. From this perspective, there is not only a dehumanising logic but also a fatalistic account of the consequences of mobility. All the examples of wogs as cogs or zombies have a negative presumption against the forces that have catapulted people out of their previous state of security and certainty. For while each of these images captures the extent to which the migrant sees his or her body as an entity whose motion is controlled by an external force, they also conceal the possibility that energy is also emitted from the 'bodies' of the automaton, beast and living dead. Central to the argument posed by Agamben, the Comaroffs, and also to Tsiolkas' narrative, is the claim that neoliberal capitalism is an incomprehensible process of change because its operating forces are remote, obscure and volatile, and as a result no form of coherent agency can survive in its wake. The spectral figure of the monstrous enters when rational principles and civilisational institutions everywhere are in ruins. Against this plaintive conclusion I want to turn to a different view on the relation between mobility and identity, and then suggest an alternative reading of the metaphor that couples migrants and zombies.

— II

Cyborg wog

After the 2005 riots in Paris, immigrant activist Nico Sguila declared: 'I am a migrant. I do not want to integrate. I want to be who I am.'[76] It is precisely the kind of comment that makes cultural conservatives and progressive multiculturalists panic. The rejection of integration is immediately seen as either a failure of the state to offer a stronger basis for national affili-ation or the inability of multiculturalism to generate more inclusive modes of cultural belong-ing. When Nico Sguilia declares 'I want to be who I am', he could be seen as threatening to oppose the national demand for solidarity and dismissing the civic promise of equality. Media critics like Melanie Phillips would be quick to see this as evidence of the growing cultural

malaise and moral decadence in mainstream society.[77] To reroute identity back onto the process of mobility, rather than towards a fixed bond with the state, would be seen as a dangerous gesture that undermines the traditional authority structures and promotes the fantasy of moral relativism and narcissistic individualism. Even informed scholars like Olivier Roy worry about second- and third-generation immigrants because, like Albert Memmi, he fears that they now languish in a moral void.[78]

Sguilia's comment at first glance seems to justify the fear that there is now a generation of youth that has turned its back on the state. They neither seek to gain access to more of its resources nor reform its operational logic. On the contrary, they are creating new imagined communities that have no relation to the territorial and bounded form of a national society. Sguilia's declaration is both a rejection of the state and a proclamation that there is an alternative space for the realisation of the self. He already claims possession of the fullness of the 'who I am' while also protesting against the forces that block the wish of the who 'I want to be'. His identity proceeds by rejecting the city and nation as places in which identity is formed by coming together—'I do not want to integrate'—and proclaims an identity that is perpetually in motion: 'I am a migrant.' These paradoxical declarations also occur in the context of both a fightback against the populist backlash that minorities now experience and an assertion of their awareness of the state's dependency on foreign labour and investment.[79] However, this claim of rejecting integration and demanding the autonomy of identity is also expressive of an agency that occupies a complex topology.

Nico Sguilia was born in Argentina and now lives in Spain. He is a member of the project Indymedia Straits of Gibraltar, a group composed of activists, artists and cross-disciplinary thinkers.[80] The codename for the project is Fadaiat, which means in Arabic 'through space', 'satellite dish' and 'space ship'. Located in a medieval castle on the edge of the militarised south-eastern border of the European Union, this project sees itself as a 'mirror-territory of the transformations taking place in the world'. The idea of the project is both utopian and instrumental. Through its coalition of artists and activists it has created a No-Border media laboratory that is engaged in mapping border flows, critiquing the new militarised border economies and developing links with both local protests on migration issues and international human rights organisations.

Throughout the diverse actions of the Fadaiat, the free flow of information is seen as the 'connector' between people from different places, and for people on the move. Given linguistic differences between the various members, the project has also embarked on an ambitious effort to devise a communication system based on universal spatial–visual symbols. This project has set out to learn from and hijack the symbolic codes that have been developed to promote global capital, and to redirect them towards the interests of migrants. While this collective is opposed to the existing modes of regulating migration, their method of opposition

is not an outright confrontation with global capitalism, but a form of resistance that reassigns value back to the activities that migrants execute in their everyday lives. This method of resistance draws from a system that is generated by diasporic networks and in this new social space the collective claims to forge a 'new territory for global democracy'. This rejection of the state is thus creating a space that is very different from the void in which only zombies can roam. The ambivalence of place that Sguilia articulates within his identity is in fact a consequence of what Ulrich Beck calls the zombification of the state.[81] As Sguilia claims to be *in* but not *of* the place he simultaneously affirms the identity that comes in the context of mobility and asserts a right to define his human value in terms that exceed state-centric parameters. Sguilia decrees his right to preserve identity as a universal right. This proclamation takes a double twist: he claims to have the access to the rights that are defined by the state, but also insists that his identity rests on rights that are above and beyond the state. By rejecting integration into the mechanisms of the state, Sguilia does not disavow the hope of realising his identity in the context of others; he simply rejects the claim that the context of his community is confined to the co-ordinates of the nation-state.

Sguilia's affirmation of his identity as a migrant, and his desire to define his being in the ongoing process of becoming mobile is not just an expression of narcissistic individualism but corresponds to a new discourse of migrant subjectivity.[82] The homepage of Indymedia describes migration as a result of a complex interplay of forces, rather than the product of linear or mechanistic structures. The group argues that migrants are not simply pushed or pulled by one command, or driven out of their homes by the structural imbalances in the world system. On the contrary, they see migrants as autonomous political agents who are also self-organising in relation to specific pressures. There is no singular or over-determining force that regulates—'decides for'—the direction or destiny of the migrant. They are all engaged in complex decision-making processes. Rather than being 'cogs' in the machine, they move in order to 'dignify their life conditions'. This experience of mobility, informality and volatility that is accentuated in the migrant condition is, they argue, also a feature that is becoming common in working life. It is from this perspective that they claim, everyone is 'becoming migrant', and conclude that the paranoid metaphors of 'Fortress, USA, Europe, Australia' are misleading because they are dependent on the illusion of splendid isolationism.

Sguilia's depiction of his identity and this new discourse on migration is an example of what Harald Kleinschmidt calls a shift from the 'residentialist' sources to the regional relations that define the self.[83] Identity is no longer connected to an exclusive territory, or the product of a unified community, but rather it arises from a process of interaction with diverse influences and exists within an elastic border. The Fadaiat collective rejects the conventional definition of the border as simply a demarcation point that separates different entities. It is not just an imaginary line that becomes a geo-political division, but rather a

'crossed-place', where mixtures intensify and new 'social practices put pressure on established limits'. Hence the border is not a fixed location where one form ends and another begins, but a 'threshold' in which transformation occurs in multiple and unpredictable ways. This vision of the border identity is linked to the ambition of hijacking the info-capital networks in order to create a new ecology between bodies and communication systems. In this utopian model, the Fadaiat collective claims that agency is shaped by the freedom of the cyborg: 'Our modernity has its own mobile borders, which, as always, are in search of the other: the external other that we call nature, and the internal other—subjectivity, ourselves in plural.'

Much of the discussion on the cyborgian transformation of subjectivity has revolved around the unhelpful category of 'post-human'. The incorporation of technology to extend communication is often interpreted through a sci-fi vision of the machine becoming one with the flesh. It resurrects the fantasy that Elizabeth Wilson explored so exquisitely in relation to the childish wish that dolls can become alive and the fear that humans can slip into mechanical states.[84] I would argue that the use of new communicative technologies does not announce a break but rather extends the struggle for the realisation of humanity. If the central feature of humanity is the capacity for language, then the search for a common language and the means to communicate with everyone marks the most profound humanist ambition. A universal language and the free flow of information is the necessary but never realised dream of humanism. It is a dream that is forever born in multiple and incommensurable translations. Barbara Creed has also argued that the banal reality of globalisation has also presented a new ground for thinking about the political and ethical relations in global communication networks.[85] The perception of the world as an interconnected place and the use of new media, have, she claims, not only proliferated the flow of information and heightened the awareness of global forces; they have also transformed the individual's perception of the self. In Creed's view this transformation has led to a politicisation of the self. Individuals are more likely to search for an understanding of the causes and consequences of social problems, and they are seeking explanations that can relate the local conditions to the global forces. She argues that by tracing the complex contours of social issues, and comparing them to distant situations, individuals now see themselves as being at the crossroads of multiple sources of information. This has led to new categories, perspectives and standards for the understanding of specific events. Creed concludes that this engagement with information that connects people in the virtual world, but also requires direct intervention within local contexts, has produced a new 'global self'.[86] She sees this transformation in subjectivity as a positive force that will overcome the cultural chauvinism and petty territoriality of the nationalist self, as well as offering an alternative to the imperialistic view that globalisation will only strengthen tribalism.

Creed's claim that the internet and the new 'global self' will lead to a genuine cosmopolitanism is one of the most optimistic voices in the new discourse on identity and belonging. This reclamation of cosmopolitan values and humanist desires is also central to Paul Gilroy's argument that a new 'planetary humanism' is evident in the contingent and multicultural interactions that have transformed both the conditions of everyday urban conviviality and the rise of trans-local human rights movements.[87] The Fadaiat project is one of many collective art projects that have emerged in the context of neoliberal society.[88] A common characteristic in many collectives from this period has been the identification of the transversal relationship between subjectivity and location. The fullness of subjectivity is no longer presented as an achievement that can only be gained after the overcoming of alienation, or even in the process of being connected between different places, but rather it is posed as occurring the midst of the subject's movement across and through space.[89] Hence, the forms of solidarity that emerge in these encounters follow from a prior commitment that cross-cultural communication can produce a recognition of mutual human worth, rather than proceeding from the quasi-mystical assumption that being born in a specific place and having acquired specific cultural traits is the basis of one's exclusive identification with 'a people'. It is no longer where you are *from*, or even where you are *at*, which matters; it is more about the way we communicate with others. The new paradigm of migration is, from this perspective, not a nostalgic reclamation of a previous form of belonging, nor is it attempting to assert its validity within the existing terms of the national citizen. It announces a new and radical form of identity that defines itself through its mobility and interactivity with others.

— The diaspora: at home outside its home

Speaking at the opening of Refugee Week in Melbourne, John Pandazopoulos, a former state minister responsible for multiculturalism, connected the plight of the refugees held in detention with the experiences of earlier migrants who had arrived in Australia.[90] He spoke with moral indignation against the then-federal policies on border protection, and with genuine empathy for the plight of people, like his own parents, who were forced to leave their homes. He observed a deeper moral connection with refugees and believed that this would lead to more than a plea for tolerance towards outsiders. He claimed that 'the wheel has turned on these issues', and concluded that as a consequence most people now see the refugee's story as being part of the nation's historical narrative. Pandazopoulos was able to acknowledge the refugee story by first establishing a commonality with the founding myths of the nation. This connection both allays the guilt over the harm done to the refugee, and reinstates hospitality as a central feature of the national narrative. By contrast John Howard, the former prime minister of Australia, consistently denied that guilt was a necessary emotion for either reviewing the legacies of the past or establishing a connection with refugees. His stance on

immigration focused on defending the absolute priority of national security over humanitarian concerns. He also pushed an agenda that reduced the social services and dismantled the cultural policies that were previously directed towards promoting a multicultural society. In general, he insisted that migrants should integrate into mainstream society and rejected multiculturalism as a dangerous and divisive experiment. This position encouraged his ministers to make pejorative remarks about the so-called 'mushy' principles of multiculturalism[91] as well as singling out for ridicule the grandmothers that dressed in black and refused to learn English.[92]

The response to the federal government's complaints about the immigrant community that arose on talkback radio was described by one host as a 'wailing' anger'.[93] One old and frail woman who had emigrated from Mexico said: 'We came here with nothing. My English is still bad. However, I did what I could, and with my now dead husband worked very hard to bring up a good family.' Even at the age of seventy-five, presumably alongside her 'now dead husband', she also expressed great pride in her children, who are both doctors: 'They cure people now', she said. In response to the suggestion that her failure to learn English was a sign of unwillingness to join into mainstream society and expressive of disdain of common values, she turned the challenge back to the prime minister: 'Just ask him to come to my place to teach me about values. I'll teach him where he should go.'[94]

Even with her 'bad' English, from whence is she offering to teach the prime minister a lesson on values? It is not from outside or elsewhere, but from within 'my place'. This place is her home. By placing the values lesson in her home, this woman also claims both her equal place inside the nation, and her equal right as a person who can speak the language of human values. The language and place from which she enters this debate may seem uncanny to the sovereign who assumes a monopoly over defining national values; yet, it is this assertion of relative autonomy that is the seat of its anxiety, and a glimpse of a value system that privileges the human above any other category. The government's complaint about the failure of immigrants to integrate is contradicted by the response from this old woman, who believes she has succeeded in retaining her human dignity. In her opposition there is both a rejection of the sovereign authority and an assertion of her own cultural value as an absolute human right. She reinstates that she is the master of her own house. The prime minister is warned that she remains unmoved by his authority.

The power of the sovereign has in the modern period increasingly defined by its ability to encroach into the private lifeworld of subjects. Inside the government's complaint about the old migrant stuck in their ghetto is another fear—that it is failing to gain influence over these communities as they are gaining new connections with other worlds. With satellite dishes pointing elsewhere, there is a new fear of the death of national culture as it is bypassed and even vilified in the pursuit of an imaginary life in diasporic cultures. This

fear that the nation will fragment into antagonistic ghettoes, alongside the supposed inter-generational gulf that is evident in the righteous indignation of the old woman from Mexico and the nihilistic rage of the 'mad dog boy', is indicative of what Albert Memmi calls a new social divide.[95] Sociologists have always recognised that that the corollary of modernisation is detraditionalisation.[96] However, as James Rosenau argues, the fragmentation of traditional forms of authority is also a stimulus for the reintegration into new social collectives and a redistribution of individual rights.[97]

Rosenau's 'optimistic' approach towards the crisis in authority is consistent with the new paradigm of migration that adopts a transnational and complex feedback perspective. This perspective is not a utopian promise to overcome alienation, but it does offer an alternative to the melancholic disposition towards the decline of the nation-state and it avoids the denigration of subjects as figures of death and destruction. This is a more nuanced view on the dynamics that produce social change and it follows a dialectical process.[98] In Hegelian dialectics the borderline separating life and death is not an impermeable boundary. It presumes that contradictory elements are in a state of interplay, whereby one is constantly absorbing the other within itself. The incorporation of that which is outside itself is always a process of effacing the other while also drawing the self into a third space. And so it is for mad dogs, zombies and cyborgs: like the archetypal figure of death—the old lady dressed in black—they know they must make themselves at home outside their home. 'Now Australia is my country, I can't go back where I came from. I don't like this but I am not going anywhere.' For this 'poor Mexican migrant' who admits that she 'speaks with an awful accent', there is the realisation that there is no home to return to, and that life is to be drawn from the very landscape that is foreign to them, even if in this landscape there are voices that condemn her as being among the dead ones. In a letter to the photographer Frederic Brenner Jacques Derrida noted that 'the diaspora is at home outside its home, it remains outside its home at home, at home at the other's'. The 'mad dog boy' in Paris, the artists in the new collectives, and the old woman from Mexico may respond to the challenge in different ways, but they all proceed from the same insistence: I am who I am, and the national values are not the absolute containers of my humanity. Let us now return to the image of old grandmothers who are perceived as zombies, but who have the power to not only talk back about human values, but to also give birth to doctors.

In July 2007, just days after two British-based doctors attempted to become suicide bombers in Glasgow airport, Australian-based doctor Mohamed Haneef was arrested at Brisbane airport. He claimed to be rushing back to India because his wife had just given birth to their daughter. The Australian Federal Police wanted to detain him in relation to his association with the alleged terrorists in the UK. After twelve days it was revealed that he had previously given a SIM mobile phone card to one of his second cousins, who was himself linked

to the doctors who had been charged over the Glasgow bombing. Dr Haneef was then charged with recklessly providing material support to a terrorist organisation. He protested his innocence and a magistrate rejected the government's claim that bail should be denied. Fearing his release into society, Minister for Immigration Kevin Andrews cancelled his visa. The minister claimed that Dr Haneef failed a character test and should therefore, if he was released on bail, be immediately transferred to a detention centre for illegal immigrants. While listening to a government barrister who presented the case for Dr Haneef's further detention, Jeffrey Spender, a Federal Court judge, interjected:

> 'Unfortunately, I wouldn't pass the character test on your statement.'
> 'You're not a non-citizen,' was the Government barrister's reply.[99]

For the Federal Court judge, the minister's ruling over Dr Haneef's character was 'astounding' because it set the parameters of the test so low and it also cast the sphere of investigation beyond the sovereign borders of the nation-state. However, equally chilling is the distinction between the character test for the citizen as opposed to the non-citizen. Does this reveal, yet again, the less than human character of the non-citizen doctor? Representatives from Muslim communities in Australia responded by saying this ruling gave form to the fear that their character is always considered suspect. If the state regards an Indian-born doctor, with an impeccable record at a Gold Coast hospital, as a conspirator or a sleeper in a terrorist network, then what are the characteristics that any immigrant needs to demonstrate in order to be considered as an equal human?

I can imagine that the old woman with her 'still bad' English would defend Dr Haneef's character. However, would she have to prove that he has 'acquired' a right to fair defence because he has settled in Australia, or is it sufficient to reinstate his value as a human being? Since the publication of Charles Taylor's essay on the politics of recognition there has been considerable debate on the limits of liberal societies to address cultural differences.[100] Taylor reinscribed the dominant paradigm on migration as he stressed that migrants acquired cultural rights after they settled. Post colonial critics noted that his criteria of settlement reinforced a hierarchy that excluded the cultural traditions that came from the peripheries, and which migrants claimed that they could not let go because they 'cling' to the body 'like ghosts'.[101] Similarly, Homi Bhabha was critical of the way Taylor's conceptual framework marginalised the status of emergent and hybrid cultural practices that were formed in the moments of transition.[102] Let me repeat the warning issued by the old woman to the prime minister: 'Just ask him to come to my place to teach me about values. I'll teach him where to go.' Like the 'mad dog boy' she is angry at the lack of respect. She also proclaims that she has the moral authority to 'teach him where to go'. But what is the positive content of her lesson? It remains unstated. That does not mean there is nothing there. She

may lack a formal language to articulate her rights, but she does not doubt her equality as a human. The tension between the available language for self-representation and the embodied rage against the discourse of dehumanisation highlights the needs for a new discourse on migrants and subjectivity.

In his final publication Derrida argued in favour of an expanded notion of the concept of sovereignty.[103] He widened the concept of sovereignty from its governmental definition to also refer to the authority that everyone has to determine one's identity, choices and be the master of his or her house. At a time when the leaders of the new world order were denouncing the regimes in what they called 'rogue' states, Derrida argued that sovereignty, selfhood and liberty are always co-relational. Derrida also elaborated on the significance of the etymological link in French between 'rogue' and werewolf. This mythical creature, like the 'mad dog boy', is meant to be part man and part beast. I do not believe in werewolves, zombies and cyborgs. However, I can see that in the extreme levels of exclusion people are being treated as if they were zombies. I also see that the cyborg is an imaginary state that has redefined the forms of freedom. It is also clear that the rhetoric of nationalism, as it seeks to put multiculturalism back in its place, is predicated on constructing the 'wog-grandmother' as the image of death. The 'wog grandmother' is singled out as this deathly force that must be eliminated in order to preserve the integrity of the nation. And yet, she turns the image of death and life in and around each other. It may have been a translation error, when she boasted that alongside 'my now dead husband I worked very hard to bring up a good family', but it is this linguistic error that reveals the interplay between death and life in the diasporic imaginary.

Here lies the paradox that was first touched upon in Marx's understanding of alienation: it is those who were regarded as mad dogs, mutes and zombies that now make a stand for all humanity. They are not asking for their dignity to be returned, or for greater access into the national imaginary. They recognise the futility of both requests, and are making a more perplexing summons for the recognition of a humanity that is already embodied in their presence but not yet represented. They are not justifying their equal right because they believe that they are already like, or want to become like, those who possess national citizenship —rather, they issue this plea from a bodily claim of equal human existence. Their body is already here. He or she has a singular existence that needs to be acknowledged as being part of a whole. If the body is the only possession, the only means by which the excluded can make themselves visible and audible in public space, then it is also the body that must become the site upon which the protest occurs. By being in a place, he or she exists in relation to others. As bodies, with inherent biological functions and human values, the real and fictional figures that I have explored in this essay do not simply represent the depths of dehumanisation but also express a process of rehumanisation. In the struggle to make themselves heard

they are articulating a form of political resistance that Zizek calls the 'embodiment of society as Such, as the stand-in for the Whole of Society in its universality, against the particular power interests'.[104]

Even in this reaching phrase by Zizek we can see the struggle that theorists encounter when they seek to give form to the complex interplay between de- and rehumanisation. Agamben traced the totalitarian tendencies in modernity that led to the bestialisation of the human, but remained silent over the agency that starts at the edges of language and politics. The projection of images such as a cog, mad dog, ghost or zombie onto the subjectivity of migrants may externalise the danger and produce relief for the subjects that Ghassan Hage described as 'paranoid nationalism',[105] but this mechanism also relies on a prior chain of denial towards aggressivity. Melanie Klein reminds us that even the desire for hospitality exists in interplay with the guilt over the harm that the other has experienced.[106] From Agamben and Klein we can gain a great deal of insight into the process of dehumanisation. However, it is in those who have been labelled and rendered as mad dogs, ghosts and zombies that we see an expression of a language that demands the recognition of all humans as equals.

The effort to dehumanise the Other always reveals much about the fears that lurk in the self. From the examples I have surveyed in this essay we can witness the way migrants are perceived as automata, animals and zombies. As Hayden White has argued, this 'ostensive self-definition by negation' is an ancient strategy.[107] It is a paltry attempt to achieve superior dignity by impugning the identity of the other. However, it is also worth recalling that this strategy is pushed to its most extreme limits during times of heightened vulnerability. The suspicion, contempt and hostility now projected toward migrants are testament to a deeper ambivalence towards mobility. The fear of the migrant is always expressed through the suspicion that they cause harm and then move on. However, underlying this fear is a presumption that the migrant has rejected the settled life and the citizen then is forced to consider: what sort of a human wants to be on the move, and to what extent is society dependent on mobility? The challenge of living together is averted by answering that only cogs, animals and zombies live on the move. A human on the move is threatening to the citizen not only because of the initial transgression at the border, but because the possibility of ongoing mobility renders the totality of the experience and every future encounter uncertain. This uncertainty cannot be resolved by the migrant pinning their identity back to the place of origin. The dread toward the migrant is not confined to the fact that he or she is someone who is from somewhere else, but is increasingly linked to the anxiety that they and everyone else must exist in an unbounded state of global roaming. So who are they and what will happen to us if they enter? What would it mean to accept that they too are humans with bodies and dreams?

These questions haunt the national imaginary because they reveal a subject that claims to possess an identity that is both fully formed and unsettled. This subject appears both full in its proclamation of humanity, and spectral because it does not seek to be regrounded in the form of the national citizen. I began this essay with the graffito of 'wogs turn/run cogs'. Under the conditions of national capitalism the migrants' alienation was expressed as their labour was appropriated from their body and rendered as a cog in the machine. Marx argued that the alienated man is torn from his own body, nature, productive capacities and human essence. The emancipation of man is also a successive 'return' to a state of 'species being' where the individual man has absorbed in himself a state of being in a politically equal society and possessing an equal humanity.[108] According to Marx it was this negation of identity that also created the class of proletariat that he saw as the agent of change. Under global capitalism the migrant's alienation appears like a ghost in search of the machine. Hardt and Negri have extrapolated the Marxian axiom to argue that the new deterritorialised proletariat will become the agent of freedom in the name of a global humanity. This is a big call and I do not reject it as mere idealism, because at the centre of the stories on automata, animals and zombies that I have surveyed in this essay is the dialectic between alienation and freedom. In these narratives there are traces of the yearning and the demand for the migrant's right to be here that relies on nothing more or less than his or her humanity.

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18. Arnold Zable, 'Australia's Very Own Devil's Island', *Age,* 7 September 2007, p. 13.

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29. Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, translated by Kevin Attell, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2000, p. 9.

30. Slavoj Zizek, 'Some Politically Incorrect Reflections on Urban Violence in Paris and New Orleans and Related Matters', *Urban Politics Now*, BAVO (ed.), NAi Publishers Rotterdam, 2007, p. 13.

31. Zizek, p. 24.

32. As Jacques Rancière has noted, 'During the riots in the Parisian banlieu in the fall of 2005, these hoods covering the heads of Arab and black youth, became stigma: they were compared to both terrorists' masks and to Muslim girls' veils. The hoods became the symbol of a population locked up inside its own idiocy. Now in Chris Marker's film "Revenge of the Eye" (2006) they transform the young people into medieval monks.' Jacques Rancière, 'Art of the Possible', in *Artforum*, XLV, no. 7, March 2007, p. 266.

33. Olivier Roy, quoted in Schneider, p. 529.

34. Daniel Binswange, *Die Weltwoche*, 10 November 2005.

35. Quoted in Rustom Bharucha, *Another Asia*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2006, p. 65.

36. Elizabeth Wilson, *Hallucinations: Life in the Post-Modern City*, Radius, London, 1988, p. 38.

37. See also Georg Simmel's classic sociological essay on the theme of alienation and splitting that arises from the intensification of signs in the modern city: 'The Metropolis and Mental Life', *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, translated and edited by Kurt H. Wolff, The Free Press, New York, 1950, pp. 409–24.

38. Agamben proposes three chilling theses that haunt the norms of liberty, governance and belonging: first, the constitutive force in politics is expressed in relation to the ban; second, the fundamental activity of sovereign power is the production of bare life; third, the camp has subsumed both the polis and the home as the paradigmatic space of biopolitics. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1998, p. 181.

39. Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, p. 185.

40. Malcolm Bull provides a useful analysis of this alienating passage between human and animal in 'Vectors of the Biopolitical', in *New Left Review*, no. 45, May/June, 2007, p. 10.

41. Agamben, *The Open*, pp. 114–15.

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43. Xan Rice, 'Africa's Secret Trail of "Ghosts" ', *Guardian Weekly*, 27 April – 3 May 2007, p. 3.

44. Rachel Meeropol (ed.), *America's Disappeared: Secret Imprisonment, Detainees and the 'War on Terror'*, Seven Stories Press, New York, 2005.

45. Stephen Grey, *Ghost Plane: The True Story of the CIA Torture Program*, St Martins Press, New York, 2006.

46. This fear has already become the subject of numerous literary works. See Richard Flannagan, *The Unknown Terrorist*, Picador, Sydney, 2006.

47. David Rose, 'How US Hid the Suicide Secrets of Guantanamo', *Guardian Weekly*, 23–29 June 2006, p. 3.

48. See the collection of letters from refugees in which the very first letter, cited by QC Julian Burnside in his introduction, ends with the line, 'Please do not forget us—we are humans.' Janet Austin (ed.), *From Nothing to Zero: Letters from Refugees in Australia's Detention Centres*, introduction by Julian Burnside, Lonely Planet Publications, Melbourne, 2003, p. v.

49. Quoted in Michael Gordon, 'Living in Limbo', *Age,* (Insight Section), 30 September 2006, p. 1.

50. Richard Okao, 'Black Heart', *Big Issue*, no. 256, 19 June – 4 July 2006, p. 16.

51. This quote is taken from a documentary film titled *Hope: A Documentary Film about Amal Basry and the SIEV X Disaster*, directed by Steve Thomas, Flying Carpet Films, 2007.

52. Hayden White argues that this practice 'arises out of the need for men to dignify their specific mode of existence by contrasting it with those of other men, real or imagined, who merely differ from themselves'. In his brief history of the figure of the wild man, he notes that while this figure recurs in history its meaning shifts. Hayden White, 'The Forms of Wildness', *Tropics of Discourse*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1978, pp. 150–82.

53. Christos Tsiolkas, *Dead Europe*, Vintage, Sydney, 2005.

54. For an overview, see Nikos Papastergiadis, 'The Boredom with Cultural Identity and the Ecstasy of Transculturalism', in Nikos Papastergiadis, (ed.), *Complex Entanglements*, Rivers Oram Press, London, 2003.

55. Tsiolkas, p. 153.

56. Tsiolkas, p. 258.

57. Tsiolkas, p. 309.

58. Tsiolkas, p. 336.

59. Tsiolkas, pp. 374, 376

60. Tsiolkas, p. 381.

61. Tsiolkas, p. 382.

62. Robert Manne, 'Dead Disturbing: A Bloodthirsty Tale that Plays with the Fire of Anti-Semitism', *The Monthly*, June 2005, pp. 50–3.

63. Timothy Roberts, 'Dead Ends: The Spectre of Elitism in the Zombie Film', *Philament: Liminal*, December 2006, p. 75. For a more general discussion of the appeal of natural authority and supernatural forces as a negation of humanist perspectives, see Kenan Malik, *Man, Beast and Zombie: What Science Can and Cannot Tell Us About Human Nature*, Rutgers University Press, Rutgers, 2002.

64. Roger Burbach and Jim Tarbell, *Imperial Overstretch: George Bush and the Hubris of Empire*, Zed Books, London, 2004.

65. Richard Devetak, 'The Gothic Scene of International Relations: Ghosts, Monsters, Terror and the Sublime after September 11', in *Review of International Studies*, vol. 31, 2005, p. 622. See also Cynthia Weber, 'Flying Planes Can be Dangerous', *Millenium: Journal of International Studies*, vol. 31, no. 1, pp. 129–47. This shift in vocabulary and its relation to social transformation is also evident in Boris Frankel's concluding volume in his trilogy on Australian politics. See Boris Frankel, Zombies, *Lilliputians and Sadists: The Power of the Living Dead and the Future of Australia*, Curtin University Books, Freemantle, 2004.

66. Tsiolkas, p. 134.

67. See Christos Tsiolkas, *Loaded*, Vintage, Sydney, 1995 and *The Jesus Man*, Vintage, Sydney, 1999.

68. Robin Wood, *Hollywood: From Vietnam to Reagan*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1986, p. 213.
69. Comaroff and Comaroff, 'Alien-Nation', p. 796.
70. Comaroff and Comaroff, 'Alien-Nation', p. 796.
71. Hans Ackerman and Jeanine Gauthier, 'The Ways and Nature of the Zombi', *The Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 104, no. 414, Autumn 1999, pp. 466–94.
72. Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, 'Occult Economies and the Violence of Abstraction: Notes from the South African Postcolony', *American Ethnologist*, vol. 26, 1999, pp. 279–301.
73. Comaroff and Comaroff, 'Alien-Nation', p. 782.
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75. Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2000.
76. Nico Sguilia, *Transit Migration*, International Symposium, Kolnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, 10–13 November 2005. All further references to the Fadaiat project are drawn from <http://observartorio.fadaiat.net/tiki> and <http://www.aminima.net/fadaiateng.htm>.
77. Melanie Phillips, *Londonistan: How Britain is Creating a Terror State Within*, Gibson Square, London, 2005.
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80. For new critical accounts of similar collectives see Gerald Raunig, *Art and Revolution: Transversal Activism in the Long Twentieth Century*, Semiotexte, New York, 2007; Blake Stimson and Gregory Sholette (eds), *Collectivism After Modernism: The Art of Social Imagination After 1945*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2007 and Grant H. Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community + Communication in Modern Art*, University of California, Berkeley, 2004.
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85. Barbara Creed, *Media Matrix: Sexing the New Reality*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2003.
86. Creed, p. 193.
87. Paul Gilroy, *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture*, Routledge, London, 2004, p. 28.
88. See Grant H. Kester, *Conversation Pieces, Community + Communication in Modern Art*, University of California Press, London, 2004; Stimsom and Sholette, (eds.), *Collectivism After Modernism*.
89. Gerald Raunig, *Art and Revolution: Transversal Activism in the Long Twentieth Century*, Semiotexte, Los Angeles, 2007.
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    Paper, *Australian Citizenship: Much More than a
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102. Homi Bhabha, 'Culture's In-between Concept of
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103. Jacques Derrida, *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*,
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105. Hage.
106. Melanie Klein, 'On the Theory of Anxiety and
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