

Not sporting: Australian identity, the power of the average, and the fear of the (disabled) Other within.

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Abstract:

Recent remarks on Australian radio suggest the power of the average in the day-to-day Australian identity remains potent. This paper analyses the genesis of this reliance on the 'man in the street' and argues that not only is this average bloke decidedly male and white, he is anything but natural. Instead he is a statistical norm, and an icon behind which the fear of the 'Other within' hides. National types were of themselves ideological requirements of, and for, the political consolidations of the nineteenth century. They were also intimately tied to the new distance-defying technologies of the telephone, cinema, railway and radio. With (intellectual) disability, as a 'tool of analysis' similar to 'race', 'gender', 'sexuality', this paper argues for disruption of the superficial homogeneity of the Australian type, reveals its dependent relationship with the concept of measurable intelligence, the interpretations of natural selection and the eugenic notions around fitness. This paper finishes with proposing that further analysis of 'within-race' discrimination is essential in any truly diverse and 'sporting' society.

In August 2007, ABC radio's "The Sport's Factor" addressed the topic of intellectual property in sport. In discussing whether or not he should be allowed to have a photograph of cricket captain, Ricky Ponting, on his own book, interviewee Gideon Haigh made a remark that, had it been voiced about any other 'minority group', would have produced an instant response. He said:

...that anyone who couldn't tell the difference between a book of (his) and a Ricky Ponting tour diary was intellectually subnormal and really undeserving of legislative protection.
(ABC Radio National, 2007, para.43)

In effect, his logic meant that if a person with intellectual disability wants to buy their sister or father a copy of Ponting's diary (2007) for Christmas and ends up instead

with a book of Haigh's (with Ponting as the cover picture), then this person has no redress as, having intellectual disability, they are not deserving of legal protection. This is an astounding claim. However, interviewer Mike O'Regan showed less than sporting finesse and let the remark pass, the interview was repeated unedited that evening, and the following week Ponting's manager was accorded time to answer the implication of selfishness on Ponting's part.

Less than five weeks later Haigh delivered a lecture, commissioned by Sydney PEN. PEN exists to promote the 'freedom to write, freedom to read'. Was Haigh's Radio National comment simply an instance of freedom of speech? As the PEN format didn't allow for audience questions (I attended, in hope), this proposition wasn't tested. Haigh's lecture was based on his essay, 'Facepaint Nationalists'. It was one of a series of three, exploring 'Prejudice'. Dare I say it? He should know.

Sadly, Haigh is in good company. Western nations, perhaps the whole world, have largely forgotten that the Nazi euthanasia programs and the gas chambers themselves were trialed on children with intellectual disabilities (Kevles, 1985, Mostert, 2003); Helga Kuhse and Australian ethicist Peter Singer were hardly less extremist or more aware of human life when, in 1985, they wrote *Should the baby live: The problem of handicapped infants*; more recently J.M Coetzee's (2003) Australian character, Elizabeth Costello, considers a comparison of animals with disabled humans an insult, to the animals (pp. 70, 107/8). However, Haigh is my introduction, not only because his remark should not be left, but because he is so specifically aware of Australian identity: a cricket aficionado who's won prizes for a book supporting the 'working man' (Haigh, 2006)¹, an invited speaker on nationalism and its representation, and a man who can make a throw-away line that condemns people with intellectual disability to a status firmly outside citizenship, if not humanity. What Haigh's comment, and the lack of reaction to it, show us, is that intelligence, or perceived and feared lack of it, is so embedded in the Australian identity that it is secreted as one of what Miriam Dixson (1999a) has called "the imaginary areas of identity downstream of consciousness", areas which "are far too prone to return unbidden and shape our thinking" (p. 2).

¹ Gideon Haigh is the author of numerous books on cricket and business. His 2006 book, *Asbestos House: The secret history of James Hardie*, won a variety of prizes.

Intellectual disability is a constructed, artificial category with definitions, margins, inclusions and exclusions that are culturally, historically contingent, and, as I argue elsewhere, also domestically contingent². In the nineteenth century, idiocy, feeble-mindedness, and later moral deficiency, previously legal, relational, and/or largely non-existent categories, were (re)defined in medical and educational terms and these changes had dramatic effects. However, *people* with intellectual disability, as distinct from the problematic category, live as brothers, aunts, workers, people next door, shoppers, football fans, and in many other roles. I would like to acknowledge the contribution of real people to this paper, and note that the concept here of intellectual disability is not theoretical, but is firmly planted in the day-to-day, that being what makes 'disability', and then admit that I will be seldom referring to an actual person or persons again. Instead what I will do is take up historian Catherine Kudlick's (2003, p. 763) call for disability, (in this case, intellectual), to become, as 'gender', 'race', and 'sexuality' have become, a tool for analysis, rather than remaining the "missing term" (Davis, 1995, p. 2), that which stands waiting, at best the 'object of the gaze', 'made' as the passive recipient of attention³.

Similarly I am working with a day-to-day notion of Australian identity, assuming that most of us, whether we live in Australia or not, would be able to reel off a set of characteristics that overlap more than they diverge. That many of these characteristics have been interrogated, problematised, or simply debunked seems not to impress public opinion or popular conceptions. Kell (2000), for example, has questioned the supposed inclusivity of our sportiness and 'the myth of the fair go'; Thompson (1994)

² "Contingent" is Licia Carlson's word. Carlson employs a Foucauldian analysis, as do many writers and researchers in 'disability studies' to deconstruct intellectual disability (Tremain, 2005). However, the Foucauldian analysis tends to identify and rest on formal sites or institutions (medical, legal, educational, biological, social). While these are all immensely important, they are 'out-there' and away from the day-to-day lives and experience of people with disability – who may, in their domestic sites occupy a much greater variety of roles. This discussion will be extended in my up-coming PhD thesis: 'Darwin's Curse: how people with intellectual disability came to be unfit'.

³ The notion of the 'object of the gaze' is well known in film theory and comes from Laura Mulvey's 1975 article, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema'. In this article Mulvey argues that women in the cinema (on the screen) are to-be-looked-at, are objects of the (male, powerful) gaze, are, in fact, made or constituted by the gaze, rather than being active speaking, unified subjects. Mulvey's use of psychoanalytic theory was radical at the time. More than 30 years later it has been applied in numerous ways; but never, as far as I know, with people with intellectual disability who, it could well be argued, rarely, if ever, are able to claim the 'I' in narrative and are consequently 'made' by the gaze of the powerful viewer.

has also taken (a version) of the latter to task; Goggin and Newell (2005) have demonstrated that our ready acceptance of sport as iconic only goes so far, and we are very wary of its applicability to or inclusion of the disabled body; Greig, Lewins and White (2003), in questioning egalitarianism, point out that even when the empirical evidence of their own lives clearly contradicts it, most Australians still feel they live in an egalitarian society (p.5). It is important to note, too, that while gender and the body feature strongly in recent analyses of Australian identity⁴, and race, racism, and racialism are seen by many authors as constituent of our identity⁵, (even if we do not acknowledge it), intelligence has remained a given, occasionally associated with the hierarchies of class and wealth (for example, Greig et al, 2003, p. 102), but rarely, if ever, problematised. It is the task of this paper to begin to disrupt the superficial smoothness of the concept of intelligence, and of the Australian relationship with it.

Before proceeding, I would like to acknowledge that I am in agreement with Miriam Dixson (1999b) who has argued that the Australian identity is decidedly male, and I am interrogating a primarily colonial, whitefella identity. This is not deny women's identities or indigenous identity(ies), but we are talking here about power and it is the *whitefella* who mostly has the ball, so it is he we need to tackle.

Historian Alison Bashford (2004) also agrees that there is more to the story of Australia's white identity than is generally recalled. Bashford contextualises Australian policy, specifically the Immigration Act (White Australian Policy), within the much larger international hygiene biopolitics of the time, arguing that the exclusion of non-whites was "more ordinary than extraordinary for the period" but that Australian case remains unique in its "simultaneity of the adoption of such racial exclusion *with the moment of nation-formation*" (p. 138, author's emphasis).

She also cautions:

But to read 'racial health' as securing white identity only ... is to miss the point ... *racial hygiene was about whitening and purifying Australia from the contaminations of the other (but tarnished) whites.* (p. 144, my emphasis)

⁴ For example, Greig et al; the collection of papers by various feminist authors published as *Forging Identities* (1997); the often reprinted book by Dixson (1999): *The Real Matilda*.

⁵ For a recent and detailed example, see Anderson (2007).

The Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 prohibited any “idiot or insane person” and “any person likely ... to become a charge upon the public” (quoted in Bashford and Howard, 2004, p. 103) from entering Australia. Section three was amplified in 1912 and ‘enclosed’ “imbeciles, the feebleminded and epileptics” with idiots and the insane. The requirements to prove an immigrant was healthy were stringent, and after 1920 any person could be deported if they were admitted to a public institution within three years of arrival. The Quarantine Act also enabled easy exclusion of any person thought, by the ship’s captain, any medical officer, or *any one* with *any* authority, to be unfit. Both these Acts remained in place, and effective, until the late 1950s. So, while Canada and South Africa excluded immigrants on the basis of likely conflict in customs, Australia produced the dictation test, a written test that would as easily rule out people with disability as it would any other person who did not speak the language tested. New Zealand had a similar test: significantly, it was not used with Britons, thus making it race-based but not ‘racially hygienic’ in the understanding of the time (Bashford, 2004; Bashford and Howard, 2004).

Fortresses were also constructed internally, some as asylum buildings to house the ‘unruly’ (Finnane, 2003), or to segregate the diseased/contagious (Bashford, 2004), others as ideological and procedural constructs. Intellectual disability could be contained neatly in all three: with respect to the latter, Berreen (1997) demonstrates that in the early 20th century feeblemindedness became a hold-all for the causes of illegitimacy and illegitimacy itself a significant subject in the official and unofficial debates around population (p. 204).

In short, Australia’s enthusiasm for racial hygiene extended far beyond skin colour and the ‘White Australia Policy’ was formulated with both ‘internal enemies’ and ‘foreign bodies’ in mind who were not necessarily Aboriginal or Chinese Australians, but were Anglo men, women and children whose physical, mental and, in the spirit of the time, therefore moral, health was questionable. The image we projected of the young country was wholesome and healthy, just as much as it was white. What, we will now ask, were we hiding?

This paper began with a statement broadcast through on mass media (yes, the ABC is reaching the masses these days). There is not time to elaborate, but it is important,

particularly in the context of this ANZCA conference, to recognize here that both what Richard White (1981) argues is Australia's 'obsession' with national type, and our most vociferous eugenic period, came about in what historian Stephen Kern (1983) has dubbed the "culture of time and space". That is, our national type or identity is intimately tied in with the efficient, distance-defying communication systems that mushroomed in the late nineteenth century. Although nations, as entities, are evasive, (Fitzpatrick, 1995), this was a period when nationhood was increasingly popular as an organizing principle, and at Federation Australia declared itself "the nation for a continent" (Robin, 2007, p. 204). But it was not 'entire of itself' and, in the new world of mass movement, immediate communications, audio, and visual recording, all places and people were see-able, contactable, and know-able. Struggling with a falling birth rate, Australia was compelled to choose an image that was attractive, enticing, convincing of a better life, and one which could easily circulate the globe, resisting the incursions of comparison with older, established countries. In the new world of mass communications we needed differentiation, we needed it quickly, we had to make choices. I want now to turn to some of the restrictions, conscious or not, on the choices, also conscious or not, that were made in establishing the Australian icon, the Aussie brand.

Australia, as we know, came about as the old certainties of religion and social hierarchy were being disrupted, and often replaced, by scientific enquiry, exploration, empiricism, experiment, and individualism in a burgeoning middle class. What is less commonly recognized is that, as the inner parts of Australia were being explored and mapped, intelligence, formerly a concept more often associated with military or court information than with the individual mind, was being energetically enquired into, explored, and would soon be considered quantifiable. Western cultures had long associated 'reason' with personal worth, but it was a very different, reified, thing-like intelligence that conceptually came into being in the years that also saw the establishment of Australia⁶. This intelligence was not a matter of 'maxims' or 'principles'⁷; it was not God-given and did not permeate the soul or souls, but was solid and firmly located in the brain. Mind/body dualism was giving way to Franz-

⁶ For discussion of this reified intelligence see Gould, (1996).

⁷ John Locke's (1690) anti-innate arguments (in *The Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Book I*), centred on maxims and principles, such as the principle of non-contradiction, rather than on intelligence as we now know it.

Joseph Gall's phrenology, where intelligence was not only embodied, but mappable on, and by, the external protuberances of the skull.

Central to today's understanding of intelligence was the application of astronomical and mathematical probability, the law of error or the bell curve, to categorising observations of human behaviour (Davis, 1995; Cianciolo & Sternberg, 2004). Lennard J. Davis (1995) points out that, although seemingly natural and irrefutable now, the concept of 'normal' to describe regularity in humans was new in the 1830s, with the word itself only gaining the meaning of average or the mean during the 1840s. Pioneered by Flemish mathematician Adolphe Quetelet, the advent of the norm, the measured average ensured a precise ranking, an 'above' and a 'below'; the average allowed, indeed necessitated, *deviance*. What is more, Quetelet's average applied to all physical and mental characteristics, so any imperfection or difference in the body, the speech, the gait, or the behaviour, predicted other necessary imperfections. *L'homme moyen*, the average man, was born.

In the 1820s George Coombs studied "deficient" Aboriginal brains (Anderson, 2007, p. 103), and twenty years later J.C Byrne studied the phrenology of the Australian convicts (White, 1981, p. 23); Quetelet also measured criminal propensities, and the belief that criminal traits were inherent in certain populations (the poor, the Irish) seemed to be proven when Italian criminologist Lombroso successfully promulgated the idea of the 'born criminal'. In Lombroso's formulation, criminality could be seen in the facial and cranial characteristics; it was material, largely immutable, and atavistic⁸. Part of the job of the new, enlightened age was to keep such deviance and decrepitude away from those whom it might infect. As Quetelet (quoted in Davis, 1995) put it:

(O)ne of the principal acts of civilisations is to compress more and more the limits within which the different elements relative to man oscillate. The more that enlightenment is propagated, the more will the deviations from the mean diminish....The perfectability of the human species is derived as a necessary consequence of all our investigations. Defects and monstrosities disappear more and more from the body. (p. 28)

⁸ Halliwell (2004) demonstrates the rapidity and efficacy of the communication of such theories, exploring in detail several images of idiocy, in Victorian fiction and in later film and fiction, which he links with Lombroso's theories.

Enter Charles Darwin, who brought with him both threats and promises of great magnitude. The fear that human beings might not be made in God's image or made by God at all (and might therefore lose their edge) was offset with the promise, often ignored today, at the end of *The Origin*:

Hence, we may look with some confidence to a secure future of great length. And as natural selection works solely by and for the good of each being, all corporeal and mental endowments will tend to progress towards perfection. (Darwin, 1952, p. 243)

This promise *could* work well for an emerging 'race' of Australians: in fact our environment was so extreme, and we made sure the world knew it, that there was a good chance we could be the fittest, the best adapted, the most successful in the fight that Darwin imagined as ensuring species survival. *The Descent of Man* (Darwin, 2003), however, made it clear that there were exceptions to progress. These were not 'other' races, but within-race examples of reversion, those with vestigial characteristics that linked them with lower species. Darwin's *Descent*, as John Locke's anti-nativist/pro *tabula rasa* argument had, employed 'idiots' as examples. Unlike Locke, whom even critic Chris Goodey (2006) credits with an "unwitting inclusiveness" (p. 401), Darwin firmly placed his 'idiots' on the downside of humanity, with monkeys and "ordinary quadrupeds", as "imitators" who, with their hairiness, animal natures and pointed ears are listed under cases of "reversion". He also made sure his readers knew idiocy was written on the body, and firmly biological; Darwin's idiots were physically 'abnormal', microcephalic, with small heads and tiny brains⁹.

Mining the same deep veins of (changing) belief around the social, the biological, the natural, 'idiocy' was scooped up by both medical and educational discourses where it sat with apparent comfort as the object of scientific research and appropriate social concern. Medically it was, naturally (and I use the term advisedly) associated with illness or pathology, while 'acceptance' into the bosom of education meant pass/fail and an increasing interest in behaviour management. As this was happening, Darwin's cousin, Francis Galton introduced 'pedigree studies' of families of 'eminence' in *Heredity Genius* first published in 1865. Genes were unknown but Darwin and Galton

⁹ References to 'idiots', with much of the information supplied by Dr Langdon Down who is remembered in the name, Down or Down's Syndrome, occur in Chapters, II and III in *The Descent of Man*. All three chapters concern the emergence of humankind from a lower form.

experimented together to find a mechanism for inheritance (in the exchange of blood in rabbits). By 1883 Galton had coined the term 'eugenics', meaning well-born, and was strenuously promoting the reproduction of the 'fit'.

Intelligence was fast becoming a separate, identified characteristic, tied to the biological individual, imagined as heritable (Privateer, 2006). It was also quantifiable, and could be represented on a graph. Idiocy, at the other end of the graph, was confirmed as the tail end of humanity, the last remnant in a divided continuum, carefully sliced and sectioned by 'standard deviations'. Statistically, 'idiocy' must exist; like intelligence it became thing-like, a counter-balance, as far to the other side of the norm as Plato was from his slaves, gold from the cheapest alloy.

So, where did all this situate the emerging nation of Australia? In our favour we had the novelty of our flora and fauna, the potential for discovery, and the pretence of what is retrospectively known as Terra Nullius, a blank slate; but the beginning of the nineteenth century had seen us a tiny coastal enclave peopled with hungry, "vice-ridden, depraved...fecund, promiscuous women and drunken violent men" as the *Edinburgh Review* painted it (quoted in White, 1981, p. 24). Those, such as the Wentworths, who were determined to make Australia both increasingly economically productive and self-governing tried to counter the impression of a disorderly, depraved population with the egalitarian ideas of democracy; these, too, required new classificatory systems to determine who could vote and who not¹⁰. Furthermore, we lacked any traditional social images, and by the latter part of the nineteenth century still had only limited educational and cultural resources, and few of the families of eminence Galton made so much of. We lived in a hostile climate, particularly in the subtropics, and had a history as a penal colony in a world in which criminality was still largely viewed as disease-like, contagious, and potentially nation-threatening. We were, in many ways, "nervous moderns" in an "anxious nation" (Murphy, 2005, p. 218).

The 'out' we had was the new, nineteenth-century emphasis on the external, on-the-

¹⁰ Goggin and Newell (2005) point out that persons of 'unsound mind' were excluded from the franchise from the moment of nationhood. Criminals and people with intellectual disability remain, and the latter with least controversy, the most likely individuals to be excluded from voting.

body representation of character and its association with intelligence. We quickly (and resourcefully) turned this to our best advantage, and soon after the end of transportation began sending sporting teams and big, strong brave men to the outside world. Beating the British at cricket became a national obsession and a means of making a separate nation (White, 1981; Wyndham, 2003). Even without official contingents, Australians fought in The Sudan, the Crimean War, and thousands went with the British to New Zealand in 1860 to quell Maori (something we prefer to forget today), all the time promoting our physical strength and prowess, and therein clearly showing the world the absence of the defining traits of criminality and stupidity on our bodies.

Very fortunately for us, too, while Galton dismissed the average as mediocre and banged on about regression, Quetelet was effective in setting up the average man as the new, and by implication egalitarian, ideal, and as more or less divorced from his cultural, social, geo-political worlds; he could be anyone, living anywhere. For Australia, there was a promise of freedom in this; worthiness was measured in the breadth of the chest, rather than by association with family, class, historical antecedent or country of origin. We made an extraordinary virtue out of being average, and as a consequence of these definitional forces, our 'average bloke' is very different from the British and wider European 'Everyman'. Our man does not inherit the past, is not a struggling soul, beset by the opposing forces of good and evil, not the universal man of the morality play. Our average man is the working man, the man in the street or ploughing the paddocks, minding his own business, the democratic man, who bears with no extreme, whose worth lies in being the point that all else refers to, the anchor that holds all others in place. And he is ours because he was made possible at the same time 'we', a gaggle of people who call themselves Australian, were made possible.

The trouble was that while we might, with a shrug of our strong shoulders, a wipe of our no-nonsense aprons, ignore the 'ideal man' and marginalise intellectual debate as old and worn, our "purity and sanity" was under far greater threat than in any other emerging nation: we had a very recent and very criminal past to deal with (White, 1981). We extended the already vague and over-inclusive category 'insanity' to include convicts, who were, "Rogues and Fools in equal proportions" (Wright, 2001,

p.42), “the pest and gangrene of the colonial society”, and “lower than the brutes, a disgrace to all animal existence” (James Mudie, 1837, quoted in Ihde, 2007, p.133). Evidence of the link between criminal behaviour and insanity was sought on the body, an 1867 discussion of photographs of convicts found that:

...some of the faces remind me of another series of photographs...of insane persons, and suggest to us the connection between diseased morals and diseased minds, criminality and insanity. (McPherson, 2006, p. 70)

This was consistent with the time which did not readily separate ‘lunacy’ and ‘idiocy’, and at least two of the six ‘insanity’ cases cited in McPherson’s article, quoted above, were of ‘weak intellect’¹¹. As far as I can see, our ‘treatment’ of the ‘idiot’ and ‘insane’ was no worse, nor better, than elsewhere, but we did come up with a clever, cost-effective resolution of the problem of housing, one which clearly demonstrated where we thought those with disability belonged: we recycled our excess goals into asylums and workhouses, underlining the ‘carceral’ nature of health space in this country (Bashford, 2004). People with intellectual disability and/or mental illness effectively replaced the convict as the corrupt, the degenerate, the canker on an emergent nation.

There is much more to it, of course, but for brevity this paper now returns to the Immigration Restriction Act: our national declaration, at the moment of nation formation, that ‘unreason’ or deviance, in whatever manifestation, was never welcome. The Act was our emblem of purity, our white flag in the battle for survival of the fittest. Combined with the Quarantine Act, it was also a clear statement of intent or perhaps ‘fighting words’: we were showing the world that to avoid the stain of idiocy and lunacy we were prepared to take action.

So, this is what I am suggesting: that the core symptoms of Australian-ness, those characteristics which seem to hold no matter what, were necessitated by our newness, our penal past *and were made in relation to the similarly new, mathematical, and by*

¹¹ The opposition reason/unreason, and its relation to Enlightenment concepts of human nature and to the confinement of those considered lacking in reason, has become familiar since Foucault’s *Madness and Civilisation* and *The Birth of the Clinic* were published in the 1960s and 1970s. Foucault does not tease out – in fact tends to perpetuate – the subsuming of the experience of, and beliefs around, people with intellectual disability from the more vocal experience and discourse of ‘insanity’. This lumping together of all those regarded as ‘unreasonable’ was characteristic of the nineteenth century.

implication therefore scientific, average. Woodward (2003), in a collection of papers titled *Discourse, Identity and the Body* has noted that the western world in general is now “the society of the statistic” (p. 225); Berreen (1997) has demonstrated the particular use of statistics in the conflation of feeble-mindedness, illegitimacy and the problems of population in Australia in the early twentieth century. Statistics are very powerful tools. We packaged our statistical man to appeal to a mass, global audience, sending off the sporting man, polite enough to play cricket, more than able to protect against the nature which threatened our farms and our beaches, one who was prepared, with a broad brimmed hat and his individual features hidden, to go off to war, to both dig and defend the trenches of others. The trouble is that the good bloke is its own terrible confinement. Quetelet’s average man was average in *every* characteristic, physical, mental, behavioural. Any difference from the norm was not only negative in itself, but also a prediction of associated and/or further deviance. As a consequence, our ‘fair go’, our being ‘sporting’ is strictly limited by, *and to*, this average; we are terrified of any eccentricity, far more so when it is ‘ours’, that is, ‘racially’ internal. Recent political-speak exemplifies how strongly this fear is embedded in the national psyche: we can be Australian or we can be un-Australian. Neumann (2007) has argued that the category ‘un-Australian’ is vague and exists as only a “spectre” (p. 482): it is indeed the latter and the consistency that Neumann missed in his own ‘research’, was that being un-Australian is not to be unpatriotic or even of another country or religion; it is being in some way, any way, ‘un-average’, in behaviour or attitude; being un-Australian is to be marginal, to be ‘queer’, deviant. At the end of Neumann’s 2007 paper he, like Haigh, unwittingly betrays Dixon’s (1999a) aforementioned “imaginary areas of identity” which, “downstream of consciousness...return unbidden and shape our thinking” (p. 2). Neumann says:

It would be a mistake to assume that incoherent usage (of the term unAustralian) could be put down to either *dumbness* or a conspiracy (p. 482, my emphasis.)

Our fear has not been soothed: we know that admitting to our ranks anyone ‘sub-normal’, as Haigh put it, would drag us back to the rotting hulks, the lashing punishments, and the infectious poverty of many of our forebears. And, in the statistical world, it would guarantee a future of failure.

As Anderson (2007) has similarly suggested in relation to race and humanism in the

Australian context, my contention is that it would have been difficult for it to have been otherwise, in the time, geographic and communication spaces in which 'we' came about. We were new, the average was new: it was a case of true 'fitness'. The terrible problem with 'fitness' is that, as World War II amply demonstrated, it has genocidal tendencies, and these are not always 'external' (remember that the gas chambers were first used on the disabled; remember that many of the Jews were Germans). It is not enough now, in 2008, to ignore or dismiss 'racial abuse' when it is internal. Like domestic abuse, we must examine and acknowledge the forces which have allowed it, we must do the work to understand how it came about that we excluded and continue to exclude groups of people from being Australian, not on the basis of their skin colour, or cultural background, but because they are other than average. And, to be(come) sporting, we need to do something with this understanding.

Intellectual disability as a tool of analysis allows us to see, and disrupt, the superficial homogeneity of the Australian identity: hopefully we will soon begin to see that valuing diversity is not only a matter of engaging with 'Others', but begins with acknowledgement of, and respect for, those within.

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