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**February 13, 2008, or, the Baleful Enchantments of an Apology**

On February 13, 2008, the Prime Minister of Australia, Kevin Rudd issued a national apology to the indigenous people of Australia for the hurt caused by two hundred years of state-sponsored action against them. More specifically, the apology was for the government's six decades long attempt to enact cultural genocide by removing young half-caste aboriginal children from their families and placing them with white families as part of a deliberate program of forced cultural assimilation. It is estimated that between 1910 and 1970 somewhere between 10% and 30% of indigenous children were forcibly taken from the families and placed into foster care. A National Inquiry into the treatment of Australia's indigenous people was conducted by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission in 1995. Its report, entitled *Bringing Them Home*, recommended a national apology as one of the key steps in moving forward, but it took more than a decade – effectively the length of time the previous Prime Minister John Howard was in power – for it to be acted on. Howard's rationale (as his successor the Opposition Leader Brendan Nelson reiterated in his *Sorry Day* speech) was that the present generation could not be expected to apologise for acts they themselves were not responsible for and did not themselves commit. Reading this event through Derrida's discussion of forgiveness, Agamben's politics of exception, and Deleuze's philosophy of immanence, this paper will explore the complexities of present day indigenous politics.