

Introduction: Feel Your Way

Every day of every year, swarms of illegal immigrants and bogus asylum seekers invade Britain by any means available to them . . . Why? They are only seeking the easy comforts and free benefits in Soft Touch Britain. All funded by YOU – The British Taxpayer! (British National Front Poster)¹

How does a nation come to be imagined as having a ‘soft touch’? How does this ‘having’ become a form of ‘being’, or a national attribute? In *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, I explore how emotions work to shape the ‘surfaces’ of individual and collective bodies. Bodies take the shape of the very contact they have with objects and others. My analysis proceeds by reading texts that circulate in the public domain, which work by aligning subjects with collectives by attributing ‘others’ as the ‘source’ of our feelings. In this quote from the British National Front, ‘the others’, who are named as illegal immigrants and bogus asylum seekers, threaten to overwhelm and swamp the nation. This is, of course, a familiar narrative, and like all familiar narratives, it deserves close and careful reading. The narrative works through othering; the ‘illegal immigrants’ and ‘bogus asylum seekers’ are those who are ‘not us’, and who in not being us, endanger what is ours. Such others threaten to take away from what ‘you’ have, as the legitimate subject of the nation, as the one who is the true recipient of national benefits. The narrative invites the reader to adopt the ‘you’ through working on emotions: becoming this ‘you’ would mean developing a certain rage against these illegitimate others, who are represented as ‘swarms’ in the nation. Indeed, to feel love for the nation, whereby love is an investment that should be returned (you are ‘the taxpayer’), is also to feel injured by these others, who are ‘taking’ what is yours.

It is not the case, however, that anybody within the nation could inhabit this ‘you’. These short sentences depend on longer histories of articulation,

which secure the white subject as sovereign in the nation, at the same time as they generate effects in the alignment of 'you' with the national body. In other words, the 'you' implicitly evokes a 'we', a group of subjects who can identify themselves with the injured nation in this performance of personal injury. Within the British National Front, the 'we' of the nation is only available to white Aryans: 'We will reinstate the values of separatism to our racial kindred. We will teach the youth that one's country is the family, the past, the sacred race itself . . . We live in a nation that is historically Aryan'.² This alignment of family, history and race is powerful, and works to transform whiteness into a familial tie, into a form of racial kindred that recognises all non-white others as strangers, as 'bodies out of place' (Ahmed 2000).³ The narrative is addressed to white Aryans, and equates the vulnerability of the white nation with the vulnerability of the white body. 'YOU' will not be soft! Or will you?

What is so interesting in this narrative is how 'soft touch' becomes a national character. This attribution is not specific to fascist discourses. In broader public debates about asylum in the United Kingdom, one of the most common narratives is that Britain is a 'soft touch': others try and 'get into' the nation because they can have a life with 'easy comforts'.⁴ The British Government has transformed the narrative of 'the soft touch' into an imperative: it has justified the tightening of asylum policies on the grounds that 'Britain will not be a soft touch'. Indeed, the metaphor of 'soft touch' suggests that the nation's borders and defences are like skin; they are soft, weak, porous and easily shaped or even bruised by the proximity of others. It suggests that the nation is made vulnerable to abuse by its very openness to others. The soft nation is too emotional, too easily moved by the demands of others, and too easily seduced into assuming that claims for asylum, as testimonies of injury, are narratives of truth. To be a 'soft touch nation' is to be taken in by the bogus: to 'take in' is to be 'taken in'. The demand is that the nation should seal itself from others, if it is to act on behalf of its citizens, rather than react to the claims of immigrants and other others. The implicit demand is for a nation that is less emotional, less open, less easily moved, one that is 'hard', or 'tough'. The use of metaphors of 'softness' and 'hardness' shows us how emotions become attributes of collectives, which get constructed as 'being' through 'feeling'. Such attributes are of course gendered: the soft national body is a feminised body, which is 'penetrated' or 'invaded' by others.

It is significant that the word 'passion' and the word 'passive' share the same root in the Latin word for 'suffering' (*passio*). To be passive is to be enacted upon, as a negation that is already felt as suffering. The fear of passivity is tied to the fear of emotionality, in which weakness is defined in terms of a tendency to be shaped by others. Softness is narrated as a proneness to

injury. The association between passion and passivity is instructive. It works as a reminder of how ‘emotion’ has been viewed as ‘beneath’ the faculties of thought and reason. To be emotional is to have one’s judgement affected: it is to be reactive rather than active, dependent rather than autonomous. Feminist philosophers have shown us how the subordination of emotions also works to subordinate the feminine and the body (Spelman 1989; Jaggar 1996). Emotions are associated with women, who are represented as ‘closer’ to nature, ruled by appetite, and less able to transcend the body through thought, will and judgement.

We can see from this language that evolutionary thinking has been crucial to how emotions are understood: emotions get narrated as a sign of ‘our’ pre-history, and as a sign of how the primitive persists in the present. The Darwinian model of emotions suggests that emotions are not only ‘beneath’ but ‘behind’ the man/human, as a sign of an earlier and more primitive time. As Darwin puts it:

With mankind some expressions, such as the bristling of the hair under the influence of extreme terror, or the uncovering of the teeth under that of furious rage, can hardly be understood, except on the belief that man once existed in a much lower and animal-like condition. (Darwin 1904: 13–14)

Such an evolutionary model allows us to return to the ‘risk’ of emotions posited through the attribution of ‘soft touch’ as a national characteristic. The risk of being a ‘soft touch’ for the nation, and for the national subject, is not only the risk of becoming feminine, but also of becoming ‘less white’, by allowing those who are recognised as racially other to penetrate the surface of the body. Within such a narrative, becoming less white would involve moving backwards in time, such that one would come to resemble a more primitive form of social life, or a ‘lower and animal like condition’.

The hierarchy between emotion and thought/reason gets displaced, of course, into a hierarchy between emotions: some emotions are ‘elevated’ as signs of cultivation, whilst others remain ‘lower’ as signs of weakness. The story of evolution is narrated not only as the story of the triumph of reason, but of the ability to control emotions, and to experience the ‘appropriate’ emotions at different times and places (Elias 1978). Within contemporary culture, emotions may even be represented as good or better than thought, but only insofar as they are re-presented as a form of intelligence, as ‘tools’ that can be used by subjects in the project of life and career enhancement (Goleman 1995). If good emotions are cultivated, and are worked on and towards, then they remain defined against uncultivated or unruly emotions, which frustrate the formation of the competent self. Those who are ‘other’

to me or us, or those that threaten to make us other, remain the source of bad feeling in this model of emotional intelligence. It is not difficult to see how emotions are bound up with the securing of social hierarchy: emotions become attributes of bodies as a way of transforming what is 'lower' or 'higher' into bodily traits.

So emotionality as a claim *about* a subject or a collective is clearly dependent on relations of power, which endow 'others' with meaning and value. In this book, I do not want to think about emotionality as a characteristic of bodies, whether individual or collective. In fact, I want to reflect on the processes whereby 'being emotional' comes to be seen as a characteristic of some bodies and not others, in the first place. In order to do this, we need to consider how emotions operate to 'make' and 'shape' bodies as forms of action, which also involve orientations towards others. Emotions, for the British National Front, may pose a danger to the national body of appearing soft. But the narrative itself is an emotional one: the reading of others as bogus is a reaction to the presence of others. *Hardness is not the absence of emotion, but a different emotional orientation towards others.* The hard white body is shaped by its reactions: the rage against others surfaces as a body that stands apart or keeps its distance from others. We shouldn't look for emotions 'in' soft bodies.⁵ Emotions shape the very surfaces of bodies, which take shape through the repetition of actions over time, as well as through orientations towards and away from others. Indeed, attending to emotions might show us how all actions are reactions, in the sense that what we do is shaped by the contact we have with others. In Spinoza's terms, emotions shape what bodies can do, as 'the modifications of the body by which the power of action on the body is increased or diminished' (Spinoza 1959: 85).

So rather than asking 'What are emotions?', I will ask, 'What do emotions do?' In asking this question, I will not offer a singular theory of emotion, or one account of the work that emotions do. Rather, I will track how emotions circulate between bodies, examining how they 'stick' as well as move. In this introduction, my task will be to situate my account of the 'cultural politics' of emotion within a very partial account of the history of thinking on emotions. I will not offer a full review of this history, which would be an impossible task.⁶ It is important to indicate here that even if emotions have been subordinated to other faculties, they have still remained at the centre of intellectual history. As a reader of this history, I have been overwhelmed by how much 'emotions' have been a 'sticking point' for philosophers, cultural theorists, psychologists, sociologists, as well as scholars from a range of other disciplines. This is not surprising: what is relegated to the margins is often, as we know from deconstruction, right at the centre of thought itself. In the face of this history, my task is a modest one: to show how my thinking has been informed by my contact with some work on emotions.

EMOTIONS AND OBJECTS

One way of reflecting on this history of thinking about emotion is to consider the debate about the relation between emotion, bodily sensation and cognition.⁷ One could characterise a significant ‘split’ in theories of emotion in terms of whether emotions are tied primarily to bodily sensations or to cognition. The former view is often ascribed to Descartes and David Hume. It would also be well-represented by the work of William James, who has the following formulation: ‘The bodily changes follow directly the perception of the exciting fact . . . and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur IS the emotion’ (James 1890: 449). Emotion is the feeling of bodily change. The immediacy of the ‘is’ suggests that emotions do not involve processes of thought, attribution or evaluation: we feel fear, for example, *because* our heart is racing, our skin is sweating. A cognitivist view would be represented by Aristotle, and by a number of thinkers who follow him (Nussbaum 2001: 10). Such theorists suggest that emotions involve appraisals, judgements, attitudes or a ‘specific manner of apprehending the world’ (Sartre 1962: 9), which are irreducible to bodily sensations. Some theorists have described emotions as being judgements (Solomon 1995), whilst others might point to how they involve judgements: the emotion of anger, for example, implies a judgement that something is bad, although we can be wrong in our judgement (Spelman 1989: 266). Of course, many theorists suggest that emotions involve sensations or bodily feeling as well as forms of cognition. But as Alison M. Jaggar has suggested, the shift towards a more cognitive approach has often been at the expense of an attention to bodily sensations (Spelman 1989: 170). Or when emotions are theorised as being about cognition as well as sensation, then these still tend to be presented as different aspects of emotion (Jaggar 1996: 170).

To begin a rethinking of the relation between bodily sensation, emotion and judgement we can turn to Descartes’ ‘The Passions of the Soul’. Whilst this little book may be full of problematic distinctions between mind and body, its observations on emotions are very suggestive. Descartes suggests that objects do not excite diverse passions because they are diverse, but because of the diverse ways in which they may harm or help us (Descartes 1985: 349). This is an intriguing formulation. Some commentators have suggested that Descartes argues that emotions are reducible to sensations insofar as they are caused by objects (Brentano 2003: 161; Greenspan 2003: 265). But Descartes offers a critique of the idea that objects have causal properties, suggesting that we don’t have feelings for objects because of the nature of objects. Feelings instead take the ‘shape’ of the contact we have with objects (see Chapter 1). As he argues, we do not love and hate because objects are good or bad, but rather because they seem ‘beneficial’ or ‘harmful’ (Descartes

1985: 350). Whether I perceive something as beneficial or harmful clearly depends upon how I am affected by something. This dependence opens up a gap in the determination of feeling: whether something is beneficial or harmful involves thought and evaluation, at the same time that it is 'felt' by the body. The process of attributing an object as being or not being beneficial or harmful, which may become translated into good or bad, clearly involves reading the contact we have with objects in a certain way. As I argue in Chapter 1, whether something feels good or bad *already* involves a process of reading, in the very attribution of significance. Contact involves the subject, as well as histories that come before the subject. If emotions are shaped by contact with objects, rather than being caused by objects, then emotions are not simply 'in' the subject or the object. This does not mean that emotions are not read as being 'resident' in subjects or objects: I will show how objects are often read as the cause of emotions in the very process of taking an orientation towards them.

If the contact with an object generates feeling, then emotion and sensation cannot be easily separated. A common way of describing the relation between them is as a form of company: pleasure and pain become companions of love and hate, for example, in Aristotle's formulation (2003: 6, see also Spinoza 1959: 85). The idea of 'companions' does not do the trick precisely, given the implication that sensation and emotion can part company. Instead, I want to suggest that the distinction between sensation and emotion can only be analytic, and as such, is premised on the reification of a concept. We can reflect on the word 'impression', used by David Hume in his work on emotion (Hume 1964: 75). To form an impression might involve acts of perception and cognition as well as an emotion. But forming an impression also depends on how objects impress upon us. An impression can be an effect on the subject's feelings ('she made an impression'). It can be a belief ('to be under an impression'). It can be an imitation or an image ('to create an impression'). Or it can be a mark on the surface ('to leave an impression'). *We need to remember the 'press' in an impression.* It allows us to associate the experience of having an emotion with the very affect of one surface upon another, an affect that leaves its mark or trace. So not only do I have an impression of others, but they also leave me with an impression; they impress me, and impress upon me. I will use the idea of 'impression' as it allows me to avoid making analytical distinctions between bodily sensation, emotion and thought as if they could be 'experienced' as distinct realms of human 'experience'.

So how do we form such impressions? Rethinking the place of the object of feeling will allow us to reconsider the relation between sensation and emotion. Within phenomenology, the turn away from what Elizabeth V. Spelman calls the 'Dumb View' of emotions (Spelman 1989: 265), has

involved an emphasis on intentionality. Emotions are intentional in the sense that they are ‘about’ something: they involve a direction or orientation towards an object (Parkinson 1995: 8). The ‘aboutness’ of emotions means they involve a stance on the world, or a way of apprehending the world. Now, I want to bring this model of the object as ‘about-ness’ into dialogue with the model of contact implicit in Descartes.⁸ Emotions are both about objects, which they hence shape, and are also shaped by contact with objects. Neither of these ways of approaching an object presumes that the object has a material existence; objects in which I am ‘involved’ can also be imagined (Heller 1979: 12). For example, I can have a memory of something, and that memory might trigger a feeling (Pugmire 1998: 7). The memory can be the object of my feeling in both senses: the feeling is shaped by contact with the memory, and also involves an orientation towards what is remembered. So I might feel pain when I remember this or that, and in remembering this or that, I might attribute what is remembered as being painful.

Let’s use another example. The example that is often used in the psychological literature on emotions is a child and a bear.⁹ The child sees the bear and is afraid. The child runs away. Now, the ‘Dumb View’ would be that the bear makes the child afraid, and that the bodily symptoms of fear are automatic (pulse rate, sweating, and so on). Functionalist models of emotion, which draw on evolutionary theory, might say that the fear has a function: to protect the child from danger, to allow survival. Fear in this situation could be an *instinctual reaction* that has enhanced successful adaptation and thus selection.¹⁰ Fear would also be an action; fear would even be ‘about’ what it leads the child to do.¹¹ But the story, even in its ‘bear bones’, is not so simple. Why is the child afraid of the bear? The child must ‘already know’ the bear is fearsome. This decision is not necessarily made by her, and it might not even be dependent on past experiences. This could be a ‘first time’ encounter, and the child still runs for it. But what is she running from? What does she see when she sees the bear? We have an image of the bear as an animal *to be feared*, as an image that is shaped by cultural histories and memories. When we encounter the bear, we already have an impression of the risks of the encounter, as an impression that is felt on the surface of the skin. This knowledge is bodily, certainly: the child might not need time to think before she runs for it. But the ‘immediacy’ of the reaction is not itself a sign of a lack of mediation. It is not that the bear *is* fearsome, ‘on its own’, as it were. It is fearsome *to* someone or somebody. So fear is not in the child, let alone in the bear, but is a matter of how child and bear come into contact. This contact is shaped by past histories of contact, unavailable in the present, which allow the bear to be apprehended as fearsome. The story does not, despite this, inevitably lead to the same ending. Another child, another bear, and we might even have another story.

It is not just that we might have an impression of bears, but ‘this bear’ also makes an impression, and leaves an impression. Fear shapes the surfaces of bodies in relation to objects. Emotions are relational: they involve (re)actions or relations of ‘towardness’ or ‘awayness’ in relation to such objects. The bear becomes the object in both senses: we have a contact with an object, and an orientation towards that object. To be more specific, the ‘aboutness’ of fear involves a reading of contact: the child reads the contact as dangerous, which involves apprehending the bear as fearsome. We can note also that the ‘reading’ then identifies the bear as the cause of the feeling. The child becomes fearful, and the bear becomes fearsome: the attribution of feeling to an object (I feel afraid because you are fearsome) is an effect of the encounter, which moves the subject away from the object. Emotions involve such affective forms of reorientation.

Of course, if we change the bear to a horse, we might even get to the father.¹² If the object of feeling both shapes and is shaped by emotions, then the object of feeling is never simply before the subject. How the object impresses (upon) us may depend on histories that remain alive insofar as they have already left their impressions. The object may stand in for other objects, or may be proximate to other objects. Feelings may stick to some objects, and slide over others.¹³ In this book, I offer an analysis of affective economies, where feelings do not reside in subjects or objects, but are produced as effects of circulation (see Chapter 2). The circulation of objects allows us to think about the ‘sociality’ of emotion.

INSIDE OUT AND OUTSIDE IN

What do I mean by the sociality of emotion? Before I can answer this question, we must firstly register what might seem too obvious: the everyday language of emotion is based on the presumption of interiority. If I was thinking about emotions, I would probably assume that I need to look inwards, asking myself, ‘How do I feel?’ Such a model of emotion as interiority is crucial to psychology. Indeed, the emergence of psychology as a discipline had significant consequences for theories of emotion: by becoming an ‘object lesson’ for psychology, emotions have been psychologised (White 1993: 29). In a psychological model, I have feelings, and they are mine. As K. T. Strongman states, ‘Above all, emotion is centred internally, in subjective feelings’ (Strongman 2003: 3). I may express my feelings: I may laugh, cry, or shake my head. Once what is inside has got out, when I have expressed my feelings in this way, then my feelings also become yours, and you may respond to them.¹⁴ If you sympathise, then we might have ‘fellow-feeling’ (Denzin 1984: 148). If you don’t understand, we might feel alienated from each other

(Scheff 1994: 3).¹⁵ The logic here is that I have feelings, which *then* move outwards towards objects and others, and which might then return to me. I will call this the ‘inside out’ model of emotions.

In critiquing this model, I am joining sociologists and anthropologists who have argued that emotions should not be regarded as psychological states, but as social and cultural practices (Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990; White 1993: 29; Rosaldo 1984: 138, 141; Hochschild 1983: 5; Kemper 1978: 1; Katz 1999:2; Williams 2001: 73; Collins 1990: 27). I want to offer a model of sociality of emotion, which is distinct from this literature, as well as informed by it. Take Durkheim’s classic account of emotions. He argues in *The Rules of Sociological Method* that sociology is about recognising constraint: ‘Most of our ideas and our tendencies are not developed by ourselves but come to us from without. How can they become a part of us except by imposing themselves upon us?’ (Durkheim 1966: 4). Here, the sociological realm is defined as the imposition of ‘the without’ on the individual subject. This demarcation of ‘the sociological’ becomes a theory of emotion as a social form, rather than individual self-expression. Durkheim considers the rise of emotion in crowds, suggesting that such ‘great movements’ of feeling, ‘do not originate in any one of the particular individual consciousnesses’ (Durkheim 1966: 4). Here, the individual is no longer the origin of feeling; feeling itself comes from without. Durkheim’s later work on religion suggests that such feelings do not remain ‘without’. As he notes: ‘This force must also penetrate us and organise itself within us; it thus becomes an integral part of our being and by that very fact this is elevated and magnified’ (Durkheim 1976: 209). For Durkheim, then, emotion is not what comes from the individual body, but is what holds or binds the social body together (Collins 1990: 27).

This argument about the sociality of emotions takes a similar form to the psychological one, though with an obvious change of direction. The ‘inside out’ model has become an ‘outside in’ model. Both assume the objectivity of the very distinction between inside and outside, the individual and the social, and the ‘me’ and the ‘we’. Rather than emotions being understood as coming from within and moving outwards, emotions are assumed to *come from without and move inward*. An ‘outside in’ model is also evident in approaches to ‘crowd psychology’, where it is assumed that the crowd *has* feelings, and that the individual gets drawn into the crowd by feeling the crowd’s feelings as its own. As Graham Little puts it: ‘Emotions run the other way, too: sometimes starting “out there” – and Diana’s death is a prime example of this – but linking up with something in us so that we feel drawn in and become personally involved’ (Little 1999: 4). The example of Diana’s death is useful. An outside in model might suggest that feelings of grief existed in the crowd, and only then got taken on by individuals, a reading which has led to accusations that such grief was inauthentic, a sign of being ‘taken in’.¹⁶

Indeed the ‘outside in’ model is problematic precisely because it assumes that emotions are something that ‘we have’. The crowd becomes like the individual, the one who ‘has feelings’. Feelings become a form of social presence rather than self-presence. In my model of sociality of emotions, I suggest that emotions create the very effect of the surfaces and boundaries that allow us to distinguish an inside and an outside in the first place. So emotions are not simply something ‘I’ or ‘we’ have. Rather, it is through emotions, or how we respond to objects and others, that surfaces or boundaries are made: the ‘I’ and the ‘we’ are shaped by, and even take the shape of, contact with others. To return to my argument in the previous section, the surfaces of bodies ‘surface’ as an effect of the impressions left by others. I will show how the surfaces of collective as well as individual bodies take shape through such impressions. In suggesting that emotions create the very effect of an inside and an outside, I am not then simply claiming that emotions are psychological *and* social, individual *and* collective. My model refuses the abbreviation of the ‘and’. Rather, I suggest that emotions are crucial to the very constitution of the psychic and the social as objects, a process which suggests that the ‘objectivity’ of the psychic and social is an effect rather than a cause.

In other words, emotions are not ‘in’ either the individual or the social, but produce the very surfaces and boundaries that allow the individual and the social to be delineated as if they are objects. My analysis will show how emotions create the very surfaces and boundaries that allow all kinds of objects to be delineated. The objects of emotion take shape as effects of circulation. In suggesting emotions circulate, I am not offering a model of emotion as contagion (see Izard 1977: 106). The model of emotional contagion, which is often influenced by Silvan S. Tomkins’ work, is useful in its emphasis on how emotions are not simply located in the individual, but move between bodies.¹⁷ After all, the word ‘contagion’ derives from the Latin for ‘contact’. In this model, it is the emotion itself that passes: I feel sad, because you feel sad; I am ashamed by your shame, and so on. In suggesting that emotions pass in this way, the model of ‘emotional contagion’ risks transforming emotion into a property, as something that one has, and can then pass on, as if what passes on is the same thing. We might note that the risk is not only a theoretical one. I have experienced numerous social occasions where I assumed other people were feeling what I was feeling, and that the feeling was, as it were, ‘in the room’, only to find out that others had felt quite differently. I would describe such spaces as ‘intense’. Shared feelings are at stake, and seem to surround us, like a thickness in the air, or an atmosphere. But these feelings not only *heighten tension*, they are also *in tension*. Emotions in their very intensity involve miscommunication, such that even when we feel we have the same feeling, we don’t necessarily have the same relationship to the feeling. Given that shared feelings are not about feeling the same

feeling, or feeling-in-common, I suggest that it is the objects of emotion that circulate, rather than emotion as such. My argument still explores how emotions can move through the movement or circulation of objects. Such objects become sticky, or saturated with affect, as sites of personal and social tension.

Emotions are after all moving, even if they do not simply move between us. We should note that the word ‘emotion’ comes from the Latin, *emovere*, referring to ‘to move, to move out’. Of course, emotions are not only about movement, they are also about attachments or about what connects us to this or that. The relationship between movement and attachment is instructive. What moves us, what makes us feel, is also that which holds us in place, or gives us a dwelling place. Hence movement does not cut the body off from the ‘where’ of its inhabitation, but connects bodies to other bodies: attachment takes place through movement, through being moved by the proximity of others. Movement may affect different others differently: indeed, as I will suggest throughout this book, emotions may involve ‘being moved’ for some precisely by fixing others as ‘having’ certain characteristics. The circulation of objects of emotion involves the transformation of others into objects of feeling.

My argument about the circulation of objects draws on psychoanalysis and Marxism (see Chapter 2). I consider, for example, that the subject does not always know how she feels: the subject is not self-present and emotions are an effect of this splitting of experience (Terada 2001: 30). From Freud onwards, this lack of self-presence is articulated as ‘the unconscious’. Working with Freudian psychoanalysis, I will show how objects get displaced, and consider the role of repression in what makes objects ‘sticky’. But I also suggest that the lack of presence does not always return to the subject, or to the ‘scene’ of trauma (castration), upon which much psychoanalytic theory rests. Drawing on Marx, I argue that emotions accumulate over time, as a form of affective value. Objects only seem to have such value, by an erasure of these histories, as histories of production and labour. But whilst Marx suggests that emotions are erased by the value of things (the suffering of the worker’s body is not visible in commodity form), I focus on how emotions are produced.¹⁸ It is not so much emotions that are erased, as if they were already there, but the processes of production or the ‘making’ of emotions. In other words, ‘feelings’ become ‘fetishes’, qualities that seem to reside in objects, only through an erasure of the history of their production and circulation.

Holding together these different theoretical traditions is a challenge.¹⁹ There is no glue, perhaps other than a concern for ‘what sticks’. Indeed, the question, ‘What sticks?’, is one that is posed throughout this study. It is a reposing of other, perhaps more familiar, questions: Why is social transfor-

mation so difficult to achieve? Why are relations of power so intractable and enduring, even in the face of collective forms of resistance? This book attempts to answer such questions partially by offering an account of how we become invested in social norms. The work to which I am most indebted is the work of feminist and queer scholars who have attended to how emotions can attach us to the very conditions of our subordination (Butler 1997b; Berlant 1997; Brown 1995). Such scholars have shown us how social forms (such as the family, heterosexuality, the nation, even civilisation itself) are effects of repetition. As Judith Butler suggests, it is through the repetition of norms that worlds materialise, and that 'boundary, fixity and surface' are produced (Butler 1993: 9). Such norms appear as forms of life only through the concealment of the work of this repetition. Feminist and queer scholars have shown us that emotions 'matter' for politics; emotions show us how power shapes the very surface of bodies as well as worlds. So in a way, we do 'feel our way'.

This analysis of how we 'feel our way' approaches emotion as a form of cultural politics or world making. My argument about the cultural politics of emotions is developed not only as a critique of the psychologising and privatisation of emotions,²⁰ but also as a critique of a model of social structure that neglects the emotional intensities, which allow such structures to be reified as forms of being. Attention to emotions allows us to address the question of how subjects become *invested* in particular structures such that their demise is felt as a kind of living death. We can see this investment at work in my opening quote: the nation becomes the object of love precisely by associating the proximity with others with loss, injury and theft (see also Chapter 6). The presence of non-white others is even associated by the British National Front with death: 'Britain is Dying: How long are you just going to watch?'²¹ To become the 'you' addressed by the narrative is to feel rage against those who threaten not only to take the 'benefits' of the nation away, but also to destroy 'the nation', which would signal the end of life itself. Emotions provide a script, certainly: you become the 'you' if you accept the invitation to align yourself with the nation, and against those others who threaten to take the nation away.

THE EMOTIONALITY OF TEXTS

But there is still more. For a book on emotions, which argues that emotions cannot be separated from bodily sensations, this book may seem very orientated towards texts.²² I offer close readings of texts, with a concern in particular with metonymy and metaphor: my argument will suggest that 'figures of speech' are crucial to the emotionality of texts. In particular, I examine

how different ‘figures’ get stuck together, and how sticking is dependent on past histories of association that often ‘work’ through concealment. The emotionality of texts is one way of describing how texts are ‘moving’, or how they generate effects.

I will also consider the emotionality of texts in terms of the way in which texts name or perform different emotions. Naming emotions often involves differentiating between the subject and object of feeling. When we name an emotion we are not simply naming something that exists ‘in here’. So a text may claim, ‘the nation mourns’. We would pause here, of course, and suggest the ‘inside out/outside in’ model of emotion is at work: the nation becomes ‘like the individual’, a feeling subject, or a subject that ‘has feelings’. But we would also need to ask: *What does it do to say the nation mourns?* This is a claim both that the nation has a feeling (the nation is the subject of feeling), but also that generates the nation as the object of ‘our feeling’ (we might mourn on behalf of the nation). The feeling does simply exist before the utterance, but becomes real as an effect, shaping different kinds of actions and orientations. To say, ‘the nation mourns’ is to generate the nation, *as if it were a mourning subject*. The ‘nation’ becomes a shared ‘object of feeling’ through the orientation that is taken towards it. As such, emotions are performative (see Chapter 4) and they involve speech acts (Chapter 5), which depend on past histories, at the same time as they generate effects.

When we talk about the displacement between objects of emotion, we also need to consider the circulation of words for emotion. For example, the word ‘mourns’ might get attached to some subjects (some bodies more than others represent the nation in mourning), and it might get attached to some objects (some losses more than others may count as losses for this nation). The word ‘mourns’ might get linked to other emotion words: anger, hatred, love. The replacement of one word for an emotion with another word produces a narrative. Our love might create the condition for our grief, our loss could become the condition for our hate, and so on (see Chapter 6). The emotion does its work by ‘reading’ the object: for example, others might get read as the ‘reason’ for the loss of the object of love, a reading which easily converts feelings of grief into feelings of hate (see Chapter 7).

So I am not discussing emotion as being ‘in’ texts, but as effects of the very naming of emotions,²³ which often works through attributions of causality. The different words for emotion do different things precisely because they involve specific orientations towards the objects that are identified as their cause. As such, my archive is full of words. But the words are not simply cut off from bodies, or other signs of life. I suggest that the work of emotion involves the ‘sticking’ of signs to bodies: for example, when others become ‘hateful’, then actions of ‘hate’ are directed against them (see Chapter 2). My archive is perhaps not ‘an archive of feelings’ to use Ann Cvetkovich’s beau-

tiful formulation. Cvetkovich's method involves 'an exploration of cultural texts as repositories of feelings and emotions' (2003b: 7). Feelings are not 'in' my archive in the same way. Rather, I am tracking how words for feeling, and objects of feeling, circulate and generate effects: how they move, stick, and slide. We move, stick and slide with them.

The texts that I read circulate in the public domain, and include web sites, government reports, political speeches and newspaper articles. Although the book involves close readings of such texts, it is not 'about' those texts. They do not simply appear as texts in my reading. Clearly, I have chosen these texts and not others. The texts evoke what we could call 'cases'. Three cases inform my choices of texts: reconciliation in Australia (Chapters 1 and 5 on pain and shame); responses to international terrorism (Chapters 3 and 4 on fear and disgust), and asylum and immigration in the UK (Chapters 2 and 6 on hate and love). Each of these cases shows us the very public nature of emotions, and the emotive nature of publics.²⁴ They are also cases in which I am involved, which matter to me, in my contact with the world.

To name one's archive is a perilous matter; it can suggest that these texts 'belong' together, and that the belonging is a mark of one's own presence. What I offer is a model of the archive not as the conversion of self into a textual gathering, but as a 'contact zone'. An archive is an effect of multiple forms of contact, including institutional forms of contact (with libraries, books, web sites), as well as everyday forms of contact (with friends, families, others). Some forms of contact are presented and authorised through writing (and listed in the references), whilst other forms of contact will be missing, will be erased, even though they may leave their trace. Some everyday forms of contact do appear in my writing: stories which might seem personal, and even about 'my feelings'. As a 'contact writing', or a writing about contact, I do not simply interweave the personal and the public, the individual and the social, but show the ways in which they take shape through each other, or even how they shape each other. So it is not that 'my feelings' are in the writing, even though my writing is littered with stories of how I am shaped by my contact with others.²⁵

The book has a shape of its own, of course. It does not take shape around each of these cases, as if they could be transformed into objects, or moments in the progression of a narrative. I have instead taken different emotions as points of entry. Even though I am challenging the idea that there simply 'are' different emotions, 'in here', or 'out there', I also want to explore how naming emotions involves different orientations towards the objects they construct. In this sense, emotions may not have a referent, but naming an emotion has effects that we can describe as referential. So each chapter takes a different emotion as a starting point, or point of entry, and does not 'end' with the emotion, but with the work that it does.

The book begins with pain, which is usually described as a bodily sensation. I begin here in order to show how even feelings that are immediate, and which may involve ‘damage’ on the skin surface, are not simply feelings that one has, but feelings that open bodies to others. My analysis introduces the concept of ‘intensification’ to show how pain creates the very impression of a bodily surface. I also consider how pain can shape worlds as bodies, through the ways in which stories of pain circulate in the public domain, with specific reference to the report on the stolen generation in Australia, *Bringing Them Home*. The second chapter turns to hate, exploring how feelings of injury get converted into hatred for others, who become read as causing ‘our injury’. In examining this conversion, I consider how hate circulates through signs, introducing the concept of ‘affective economies’. I show how hate works by sticking ‘figures of hate’ together, transforming them into a common threat, within discourses on asylum and migration. My analysis examines how hate crime works within law, and asks how the language of hate affects those who are designated as objects of hate.

The following four chapters work to refine and develop these concepts about emotions in embodiment and language, showing how fear, disgust, shame and love work as different kinds of orientations towards objects and others, which shape individual as well as collective bodies. In Chapter 3, I show how fear is attributed to the bodies of others, and how fear is intensified by the possibility that the object of fear may pass us by. My analysis examines the spatial politics of fear and the way fear restricts the mobility of some and extends the mobility of others. Responses to terrorism work as ‘an economy of fear’, in which the figure of the terrorist gets associated with some bodies (and not others), at the same time as the terrorist ‘could be’ anyone or everywhere. In Chapter 4, I analyse how disgust works to produce ‘the disgusting’, as the bodies that must be ejected from the community. Working with a model of disgust as stickiness, I suggest that disgust shapes the bodies of a community of the disgusted through how it sticks objects together. My analysis examines speech acts, which claim ‘that’s disgusting!’ in response to September 11, exploring how cohesion (sticking together) demands adhesion (sticking to), but also how the object of disgust can get unstuck.

In Chapters 5 and 6 on shame and love, I show how objects of emotion not only circulate, but also get ‘taken on’ and ‘taken in’ as ‘mine’ or ‘ours’. In Chapter 5, I examine how expressions of shame, in speech acts of ‘apologising’, can work as a form of nation building, in which what is shameful about the past is covered over by the statement of shame itself. Shame hence can construct a collective ideal even when it announces the failure of that ideal to be translated into action. With reference to reconciliation in Australia, and the demand that governments apologise for histories of slavery

and colonialism, I also show how shame is deeply ambivalent: the exposure of past wounds can be a crucial part of what shame can do. In Chapter 6, I examine how love can construct a national ideal, which others fail. By considering how multiculturalism can work as an imperative to love difference, I show that love can work to elevate the national subject insofar as it posits the other's narcissism as the cause of injury and disturbance. Love is conditional, and the conditions of love differentiate between those who can inhabit the nation, from those who cause disturbance. In both these chapters, I examine how the objects of emotions can be 'ideals', and the way in which bodies, including bodies of nations, can take shape through how they approximate such ideals.

The final two chapters ask how emotions can work within queer and feminist politics, as a reorientation of our relation to social ideals, and the norms they elevate into social aspirations. Different feelings seem to flow through these chapters: discomfort, grief, pleasure, anger, wonder, and hope. The focus on attachments as crucial to queer and feminist politics is itself a sign that transformation is not about transcendence: emotions are 'sticky', and even when we challenge our investments, we might get stuck. There is hope, of course, as things can get unstuck.

This book focuses on emotions. But that does not make emotions the centre of everything. Emotions don't make the world go round. But they do in some sense go round. Perhaps, unlike the saying, what goes round does not always come round. Focusing on emotions is what will allow me to track the uneven effects of this failure of return.

NOTES

1. The poster was downloaded from the following web site:
http://members.odinsrage.com/nfne/nf_bogus_asylum_nfne.a6.pdf The British National Front web site can be found on: <http://www.nf.co.uk> Accessed 30 September 2003.
2. See <http://www.nfne.co.uk/intro.html> Accessed 21 February 2004.
3. In *Strange Encounters* (2000), I offer an approach to 'othering' by examining how others are recognised as strangers, as 'bodies out of place', through economies of vision and touch. I will be building on this argument in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, by focusing on how relations of othering work through emotions; for example, othering takes place through the attribution of feelings to others, or by transforming others into objects of feeling. In making such claims, I am drawing on a long history of Black and critical race scholarship, which contests the model of race as a bodily attribute, by examining discourses of racialisation in terms of othering (hooks 1989; Lorde 1984; Said 1978; Fanon 1986; Bhabha 1994).
4. We might assume that in government rhetoric in the UK, the nation is not imagined as being white in the way that it is in the British National Front, especially given the

official endorsement of a policy of multiculturalism. The differences between fascism and neo-liberalism should be acknowledged, but we should not assume the difference is absolute. As I will argue in Chapter 6, the nation is still constructed as 'being white' in multiculturalism, precisely as whiteness is reimagined as the imperative to love difference ('hybrid whiteness').

5. It also follows that we should not look for emotions only where the attribution of 'being emotional' is made. What is posited as 'unemotional' also involves emotions, as ways of responding to objects and others. I will not be equating emotionality with femininity. See Campbell (1994) for an important critique of how women are 'dismissed' through being seen or 'judged' as being emotional.
6. I can direct you to the following texts, which I found useful. For an interdisciplinary collection on emotions see Lewis and Haviland (1993). For an interdisciplinary approach to emotions see Lupton (1998). For a review of psychological approaches, see Strongman (2003). For sociological collections on emotions, see Kemper (1990) and Bendelow and Williams (1998). For an anthropological approach to emotions see Lutz (1988). For a philosophical collection see Solomon (2003). And for a historical approach to emotions, see Reddy (2001).
7. The analysis in this paragraph simplifies the debate for the purpose of argument. I should acknowledge that the meaning of each of the crucial terms – sensation, emotion, affect, cognition and perception – is disputed both between disciplines and within disciplines.
8. Solomon argues that emotions are caused (as reactions), but that objects of emotion must be distinguished from the cause (Solomon 2003: 228). I am making a different claim, which is made possible by my distinction of 'contact' from the attribution of causality: the object with which I have contact is the object that I have a feeling 'about'. *The 'aboutness' involves a reading of the contact.*
9. This is a 'primal scene' in the psychology of emotions (for a recent review of this literature see Strongman 2003). The fact that the subject of the story is a child is crucial; the figure of the child does important work. 'The child' occupies the place of the 'not-yet subject', as the one whose emotions might allow us to differentiate between what is learnt and what is innate. The investment in the child's 'innocence' is vital to this primal scene. See Castañeda (2002) for an excellent reading of how the figure of 'the child' is produced within theory.
10. My critique of the 'Dumb View' of emotions, which follows from the work of Alison Jaggar (1996) and Elizabeth V. Spelman (1989) is also a critique of the assumption that emotions are innate or biological. I have avoided positioning myself in the debate between biological determinism and cultural or social constructionism, as the posing of the debate along these terms had delimited the field by creating false oppositions (aligning the biological with what is fixed, universal and given, and the cultural with what is temporary, relative and constructed). I would argue that emotions involve the materialisation of bodies, and hence show the instability of 'the biological' and 'the cultural' as ways of understanding the body. See Wilson (1999) for an interesting account of the importance of the biological to understanding emotions. Whilst I offer a different approach, which does not identify 'the biological' or 'the cultural' as separate spheres, I support her emphasis on the importance of the bodily dimensions of emotions, which she elaborates through a careful reading of Freud's model of the role of somatic compliance in hysteria.
11. To this extent, functionalist approaches would share my preference for the question, 'What do emotions do?', rather than 'What are emotions?' (Strongman 2003: 21–37). In

such approaches, which consider emotions in terms of their physiological effects, the function of fear may be flight, and with it, the survival of the individual organism, and the survival of the species. In my account, however, the 'doing' of emotions is not reducible to individual actions (though it involves action) and is not governed by the logic of reproduction of the human.

12. In Freud's reading of the little Hans case, the fear of the horse is read as a displacement of the fear of the father (see Chapter 3).
13. It may be useful to compare my approach on the relation between emotions and objects to Tomkins' (1963) theory of affect. As others have commented, Tomkins' attention to affect as opposed to drive emphasises the 'freedom' of emotion from specific objects (Izard 1977: 52; Sedgwick 2003: 19). I am also suggesting that emotions are 'free' to the extent that they do not reside within an object, nor are they caused by an object. But the language of 'freedom' is not one I will use in this book. I will argue instead that the association between objects and emotions is contingent (it involves contact), but that these associations are 'sticky'. Emotions are shaped by contact with objects. The circulation of objects is not described as freedom, but in terms of sticking, blockages and constraints.
14. My critique of the 'inside out' model is also an implicit critique of the expressive model of emotions, which assumes that emotional expressions comprise the externalisation of an internal feeling state, which is distinct and given (see Zajonc 1994: 4–5).
15. Both Denzin and Scheff are writing about emotions as social and not psychological forms. Despite this, both use an 'inside out' model. The former suggests emotions are 'self-feelings' (Denzin 1984: 50–1), even though others are required to experience the feeling. Scheff has a very problematic account of the sociality of emotions. He describes emotions in terms of the social bond, and suggests pride involves a 'secure bond' and shame a 'damaged bond'. He uses war and divorce as examples of alienation (see Chapter 5, and the conclusion to this book, which critique this idealisation of the social bond). Scheff's model not only idealises the social bond, but also creates a model of 'the social' premised on a liberal model of the self, as 'being whole', or 'at one with itself'.
16. The critique of the inauthenticity of grief for Diana was clear in public commentary around her death as Graham Little (1996) shows in his analysis of public emotions. As he argues, such critiques are also by implication critiques of femininity and hysteria, in which women in particular are seen as having been 'taken in'. It is important to note here that 'the crowd' is itself an unstable object: early work on crowds considers the crowd as a mob, which is physically co-present 'on the street'. More recent work considers 'the crowd' not necessarily as a physical mass, but as the perception of a mass, which is affected by the media, and other technologies of connection, which allow 'feelings with', without physical proximity. For a summary of debates in crowd psychology, see Blackman and Walkerdine 2002.
17. See Gibbs (2001) for an excellent example of the use of 'emotional contagion' to understand political affect.
18. In his early writings, Marx describes 'man's feeling' as 'truly ontological affirmations of his essence' (Marx 1975: 375). In this view, alienation is a form of estrangement: the transformation of labour into an object (the objectification of labour) hence effects an estrangement from the material realm of feelings. See Cvetkovich (1992) for a reading of Marx and emotion.
19. The challenge is also to work across or between disciplines, many of which now claim emotions as a sub-discipline. It is a rather frightening task. Doing interdisciplinary

- work on emotions means accepting that we will fail to do justice to all of the intellectual histories drawn upon by the texts we read. It means accepting the possibility of error, or simply getting some things wrong. For me, this is a necessary risk; emotions do not correspond to disciplinary objects (the social, cultural, historical and so on), and tracking the work of emotions means crossing disciplinary boundaries.
20. Emotions are also relegated to the private sphere, which conceals their public dimension and their role in ordering social life. For an excellent analysis of the publicness of emotions see Berlant (1997).
 21. 'Britain Suffers from Alien-Made Laws – the Flame', <http://www.nfne.co.uk/aleinlaws.html> Accessed 12 January 2004.
 22. It might be tempting to contrast this model of 'the emotionality of texts' with sociological, anthropological or psychological research, which involves interviewing people about their emotional lives. A good example of such work is Katz (1999). The difference between my research and interview based work is not that I am reading texts. It is important to state that interviewing people about emotions still involves texts: here, interviewees are prompted to talk before an interviewer ('the interview'), as a form of speech that is translated or 'transcribed' into a written text; the researcher then becomes the reader of the text, and the writer of another text about the text. The distinction between my research and interview based research on emotions is in the different nature of the texts generated; the texts I read are ones that already exist 'out there' in the public, rather than being generated by the research itself. My own view is that research on emotions should embrace the multiple ways emotions work, whether in public culture or everyday life, and this means working with a range of different materials, which we can describe in different ways (as texts, data, information). We need to avoid assuming that emotions are 'in' the materials we assemble (which would transform emotion into a property), but think more about what the materials are 'doing', how they work through emotions to generate effects.
 23. Importantly, words that name a specific emotion do not have to be used for texts to be readable in terms of that emotion. The 'publicness' of emotions means that we learn to recognise their signs, which can include actions, gestures, intonation. So my opening quote did not have to name its rage: the physicality of how the statement 'rejects' the presence of others, and names that presence as injury, is a performance of rage. In particular, Chapter 4 on disgust explores how words can involve forms of action, by showing how statements of disgust are physical acts of recoiling from alien bodies.
 24. But just as I argue that we shouldn't look for emotions in soft bodies, I would also suggest we shouldn't assume emotional publics are a particular kind of public; emotional publics are not only publics that display emotions in ways that we recognise as emotional. So, for instance, it is not that publics become emotional when politicians cry or 'express their feelings'. Publics organised around the values of thought or reason, or indeed of 'hardness' or detachment, also involve emotional orientations towards objects and others.
 25. Thanks to Mimi Sheller for encouraging me to think again about the personal nature of archive.

The Contingency of Pain

Landmines. What does this word mean to you? Darkened by the horrific injuries and countless fatalities associated with it, it probably makes you feel angry or saddened. *I'm sure you will be interested in the success stories that your regular support has helped to bring about . . .*

Landmines. Landmines are causing pain and suffering all around the world, and that is why Christian Aid is working with partners across the globe to remove them . . . *Landmines.* What does this word mean to you now? I hope you feel a sense of empowerment. (Christian Aid Letter 9 June 2003)¹

How does pain enter politics? How are lived experiences of pain shaped by contact with others? Pain has often been described as a private, even lonely experience, as a feeling that I have that others cannot have, or as a feeling that others have that I myself cannot feel (Kotarba 1983: 15). And yet the pain of others is continually evoked in public discourse, as that which demands a collective as well as individual response. In the quote above from a Christian Aid letter, the pain of others is first presented through the use of the word 'landmines'. The word is not accompanied by a description or history; it is assumed that the word itself is enough to evoke images of pain and suffering for the reader.² Indeed, the word is repeated in the letter, and is transformed from 'sign' to the 'agent' behind the injuries: 'Landmines are causing pain and suffering all around the world.' Of course, this utterance speaks a certain truth. And yet, to make landmines the 'cause' of pain and suffering is to stop too soon in a chain of events: landmines are themselves effects of histories of war; they were placed by humans to injure and maim other humans. The word evokes that history, but it also stands for it, as a history of war, suffering and injustice. Such a letter shows us how the language of pain operates through signs, which convey histories that involve injuries to

bodies, at the same time as they conceal the presence or ‘work’ of other bodies.

The letter is addressed to ‘friends’ of Christian Aid, those who have already made donations to the charity. It focuses on the emotions of the reader who is interpellated as ‘you’, as the one who ‘probably’ has certain feelings about the suffering and pain of others. So ‘you’ probably feel ‘angry’ or ‘saddened’. The reader is presumed to be moved by the injuries of others, and it is this movement that enables them to give. To this extent, the letter is not about the other, but about the reader: the reader’s feelings are the ones that are addressed, which are the ‘subject’ of the letter. The ‘anger’ and ‘sadness’ the reader should feel when faced with the other’s pain is what allows the reader to enter into a relationship with the other, premised on generosity rather than indifference. The negative emotions of anger and sadness are evoked as the reader’s: the pain of others becomes ‘ours’, an appropriation that transforms and perhaps even neutralises their pain into our sadness. It is not so much that we are ‘with them’ by feeling sad; the apparently shared negative feelings do not position the reader and victim in a relation of equivalence, or what Elizabeth V. Spelman calls co-suffering (Spelman 1997: 65). Rather, we feel sad *about* their suffering, an ‘aboutness’ that ensures that they remain the object of ‘our feeling’. So, at one level, the reader in accepting the imperative to feel sad about the other’s pain is aligned with the other. But the alignment works by differentiating between the reader and the others: their feelings remain the object of ‘my feelings’, while my feelings only ever approximate the form of theirs.

It is instructive that the narrative of the letter is hopeful. The letter certainly promises a lot. What is promised is not so much the overcoming of the pain of others, but the empowerment of the reader: ‘I hope you feel a sense of empowerment.’ The pain of the other is overcome, but it is not the object of hope in the narrative; rather, the overcoming of the pain is instead a means by which the reader is empowered. So the reader, whom we can name inadequately as the ‘Western subject’, feels better after hearing about individual stories of success, narrated as the overcoming of pain as well as the healing of community. These stories are about the lives of individuals that have been saved: ‘Chamreun is a survivor of a landmine explosion and, having lost his leg, is all the more determined to make his community a safer place in which to live.’ These stories of bravery, of the overcoming of pain, are indeed moving. But interestingly the agent in the stories is not the other, but the charity, aligned here with the reader: through ‘your regular support’, you have ‘helped to bring about’ these success stories. Hence the narrative of the letter ends with the reader’s ‘empowerment’. The word ‘landmines’, it is suggested, now makes ‘you’ feel a sense of empowerment, rather than anger or sadness.

This letter and the charitable discourses of compassion more broadly show us that stories of pain involve complex relations of power. As Elizabeth V. Spelman notes in *Fruits of Sorrow*, ‘Compassion, like other forms of caring, may also reinforce the very patterns of economic and political subordination responsible for such suffering’ (Spelman 1997: 7). In the letter, the reader is empowered through a detour into anger and sadness about the pain of others. The reader is also elevated into a position of power over others: the subject who gives to the other is the one who is ‘behind’ the possibility of overcoming pain. The over-representation of the pain of others is significant in that it fixes the other as the one who ‘has’ pain, and who can overcome that pain only when the Western subject feels moved enough to give. In this letter, generosity becomes a form of individual and possibly even national character; something ‘I’ or ‘we’ have, which is shown in how we are moved by others. The transformation of generosity into a character trait involves fetishism: it forgets the gifts made by others (see Diprose 2002), as well as prior relations of debt accrued over time. In this case, the West gives to others only insofar as it is forgotten what the West has already taken in its very *capacity* to give in the first place. In the Christian Aid letter, feelings of pain and suffering, which are in part effects of socio-economic relations of violence and poverty, are assumed to be alleviated by the very generosity that is enabled by such socio-economic relations. So the West takes, then gives, *and in the moment of giving repeats as well as conceals the taking*.

But is the story ‘about’ pain, whether in the form of ‘our sadness’ or the other’s suffering? My reading of this letter has involved reading *claims* to pain as well as sadness and suffering. But what does it mean to be *in* pain or indeed to *have* it? It is difficult to talk about the experience of pain. As Elaine Scarry suggests in her powerful book, *The Body in Pain*, pain is not only a bodily trauma, it also resists or even ‘shatters’ language and communication (Scarry 1985: 5). So that which seems most self-evident – most there, throbbing in its thereness – also slips away, refuses to be simply present in speech, or forms of testimonial address. And yet, as we have seen, claims to pain and suffering on behalf of myself or others are repeated in forms of speech and writing. There is a connection between the over-representation of pain and its unrepresentability. So, for example, I may not be able to describe ‘adequately’ the feelings of pain, and yet I may evoke my pain, again and again, as something that I have. Indeed, I may repeat the words ‘pain’ or ‘hurts’ precisely given the difficulty of translating the feeling into descriptive language. The vocabularies that are available for describing pain, either through medical language that codifies pain (see Burns, Busby and Sawchuk 1999: xii) or through metaphor that creates relations of likeness (see Scarry 1985), seem inadequate in the face of the feeling.

What claims of pain are doing must be linked in some way to what pain does to bodies that experience pain. Rather than assuming that pain is unrepre-

resentable, this chapter explores how the labour of pain and the language of pain work in specific and determined ways to affect differences between bodies. I will return to the question of how pain enters politics after reflecting on the lived experiences of pain.

PAIN SURFACES

We could begin by asking: What is pain? What does it mean to be in pain? Pain is usually described as a sensation or feeling (Cowan 1968: 15). But it is of course a particular kind of sensation. The International Association for the Study of Pain has adopted the following definition:

(a) pain is subjective; (b) pain is more complex than an elementary sensory event; (c) the experience of pain involves associations between elements of sensory experience and an aversive feeling state; and (d) the attribution of meaning to the unpleasant sensory events is an intrinsic part of the experience of pain. (Chapman 1986: 153)

This definition stresses how pain, as an unpleasant or negative sensation, is not simply reducible to sensation: how we experience pain involves the attribution of meaning through experience, as well as associations between different kinds of negative or aversive feelings. So pain is not simply the feeling that corresponds to bodily damage. Whilst pain might seem self-evident – we all know our own pain, it burns through us – the experience and indeed recognition of pain *as pain* involves complex forms of association between sensations and other kinds of ‘feeling states’.

In medical discourse, it is taken for granted that there is not a simple relationship or correspondence between an external stimulus and the sensation of pain (leading to the development, for example, of the gateway theory of pain) (see Melzack and Wall 1996). Pain is not only treated as symptomatic of disease or injury: for instance, chronic pain is treated as a medical condition with its own history (Kotarba 1983). There are many instances when the relationship between the intensity of pain and the severity of injury is not proportional (Melzack and Wall 1996: 1). In the classic medical textbook on pain, *The Challenge of Pain*, Melzack and Wall suggest that pain:

is not simply a function of the amount of bodily damage alone. Rather, the amount and quality of pain we feel are also determined by our previous experiences and how well we remember them, by our ability to understand the cause of the pain and to grasp its consequences. (Melzack and Wall 1996: 15)

If pain is not simply an effect of damage to the body, then how can we understand pain?

Rather than considering how the feeling of pain is determined (by, for example, previous experiences), we can consider instead what the feeling of pain *does*. The affectivity of pain is crucial to the forming of the body as both a material and lived entity. In *The Ego and the Id*, Freud suggests that the ego is ‘first and foremost a bodily ego’ (Freud 1964b: 26). Crucially, the formation of the bodily ego is bound up with the surface: ‘It is not merely a surface entity, but is itself the projection of a surface’ (Freud 1964b: 26). Freud suggests that the process of establishing the surface depends on the experience of bodily sensations such as pain. Pain is described as an ‘*external and internal perception*, which behaves like an internal perception even when its source is in the external world’ (Freud 1964b: 22, emphasis added). It is through sensual experiences such as pain that we come to have a sense of our skin as bodily surface (see Prosser 1998: 43), as something that keeps us apart from others, and as something that ‘mediates’ the relationship between internal or external, or inside and outside.

However, it is not that pain *causes* the forming of the surface. Such a reading would ontologise pain (and indeed sensation more broadly) as that which ‘drives’ being itself.³ Rather, it is through the flow of sensations and feelings that *become* conscious as pain and pleasure that different surfaces are established. For example, say I stub my toe on the table. The impression of the table is one of negation; it leaves its trace on the surface of my skin and I respond with the appropriate ‘ouch’ and move away, swearing. It is through such painful encounters between this body and other objects, including other bodies, that ‘surfaces’ are felt as ‘being there’ in the first place. To be more precise *the impression of a surface is an effect of such intensifications of feeling*. I become aware of my body as having a surface only in the event of feeling discomfort (prickly sensations, cramps) that become transformed into pain through an act of reading and recognition (‘it hurts!’), which is also a judgement (‘it is bad!’). The recognition of a sensation as being painful (from ‘it hurts’ to ‘it is bad’ to ‘move away’) also involves the reconstitution of bodily space, as the reorientation of the bodily relation to that which gets attributed as the cause of the pain. In this instance, having ‘felt’ the surface as hurtful, I move my toe away from its proximity to the surface of the table. I move away from what I feel is the cause of the pain, and it feels like I am moving away from the pain.

Such an argument suggests an intimate relationship between what Judith Butler has called ‘materialisation’ – ‘the effect of boundary, fixity and surface’ (Butler 1993: 9) – and what I would call *intensification*. It is through the intensification of pain sensations that bodies and worlds materialise and take shape, or that the effect of boundary, surface and fixity is produced. To say

that feelings are crucial to the forming of surfaces and borders is to suggest that what ‘makes’ those borders also unmakes them. In other words, what separates us from others also connects us to others. This paradox is clear if we think of the skin surface itself, as that which appears to contain us, but as where others *impress* upon us. This contradictory function of skin begins to make sense if we unlearn the assumption that the skin is simply already there, and begin to think of the skin as a surface that is felt only in the event of being ‘impressed upon’ in the encounters we have with others. As Rose-lyne Rey puts it: ‘Through his [sic] skin – the boundary between the self and the world . . . every human being is subject to a multitude of impressions’ (Rey 1995: 5).

This surfacing of bodies involves the over-determination of sense perception, emotion and judgement. It is through the recognition or interpretation of sensations, which are responses to the impressions of objects and others, that bodily surfaces take shape. I am not saying here that emotions are the same thing as sensations, but that the very intensity of perception often means a slide from one to another, as a slide that does follow as a sequence in time. Hence whilst sensation and emotion are irreducible, they cannot simply be separated at the level of lived experience.⁴ Sensations are mediated, however immediately they seem to impress upon us. Not only do we read such feelings, but how the feelings feel in the first place may be tied to a past history of readings, in the sense that the process of *recognition* (of this feeling, or that feeling) is bound up with what we *already know*. For example, the sensation of pain is deeply affected by memories: one can feel pain when reminded of past trauma by an encounter with another. Or if one has a pain one might search one’s memories for whether one has had it before, differentiating the strange from the familiar. Indeed, even before I begin my search, the sensation may impress upon me in a certain way, bypassing my consciousness. Only later will I realise that the hurt ‘hurts’ *because* of this or that. Even though pain is described by many as non-intentional, as not ‘about’ something, it is affected by objects of perception that gather as one’s past bodily experience. Indeed, Lucy Bending suggests that although pain may not be about something, it is still ‘because something’, and this ‘because’ involves acts of attribution, explanation and narration, which function as the object of pain (Bending 2000: 86). It is not just that we interpret our pain as a sign of something, but that how pain feels in the first place is an effect of past impressions, which are often hidden from view. The very words we then use to tell the story of our pain also work to reshape our bodies, creating new impressions. The slide between sensations of pain and other kinds of ‘negative feeling states’ is bound up with the work that pain is doing in creating the very surfaces of bodies.

It may seem counter-intuitive to say that pain is crucial to the formation of the body as a perceiving surface. For example, don't I already have a sense of where my body is *before* I feel it as 'being hurt'? Isn't that knowledge necessary to the very ability to feel that pain *as* a pain in different parts of the body? How else would it be possible for me to say, 'I have pain in my toe'? Of course, in some ways I do already have a sense of my body surface. After all, life experience involves multiple collisions with objects and others. It is through such collisions that I form a sense of myself as (more or less) apart from others, as well as a sense of the surfaces of my body. Such a sense of apartness may be crucial for bodily survival (for those who lack the ability to feel pain-like sensations, the world is very dangerous),⁵ though it may be felt differently by different bodies. So I do have a sense of myself as body, before I encounter an object. But what is crucial is that although I have a sense of my body before each new encounter, my body seems to *disappear from view*; it is often forgotten as I concentrate on this or on that.

This process is described beautifully by Drew Leder in *The Absent Body*. He suggests that 'the body is "absent" only because it is perpetually outside itself, caught up in a multitude of involvements with other people' (Leder 1990: 4). And so, experiences of dysfunction (such as pain) become lived as a return to the body, or a rendering present to consciousness of what has become absent: 'Insofar as the body tends to disappear when functioning unproblematically, it often seizes our attention most strongly at times of dysfunction' (Leder 1990: 4). The intensity of feelings like pain recalls us to our body surfaces: pain seizes me back to my body. Leder also suggests that pain can often lead to a body that *turns in on itself*, while pleasure tends to open up bodies to other bodies (Leder 1990: 74–5; see also Chapter 7). Indeed, bodies in pain might come to our attention in this very process of turning in; their 'forming' is a 'reforming'. Bodily surfaces become reformed not only in instances when we might move away from objects that cause injury, but also in the process of *moving towards the body and seeking to move away from the pain*. In my experiences of period pain,⁶ for example, I feel a dull throbbing that makes me curl up. I try and become as small as possible. I hug myself. I turn this way and that. The pain presses against me. My body takes a different shape as it tries to move away from the pain, even though what is being moved away from is felt within my body.

However, I would not use the terms 'absent' and 'present' to describe embodiment as Leder does, as it implies the possibility that bodies *can* simply appear or disappear. Rather, I would point to the economic nature of intensification, and suggest that one is more or less aware of bodily surfaces depending on the range and intensities of bodily experiences. The intensity of pain sensations makes us aware of our bodily surfaces, and points to the *dynamic nature of surfacing itself* (turning in, turning away, moving towards,

moving away). Such intensity may impress upon the surfaces of bodies through negation: the surface is felt when something is felt 'against' it. As Elaine Scarry suggests, the experience of pain is often felt as negation: something from outside presses upon me, even gets inside me (Scarry 1985: 15). When there is no external object, we construct imaginary objects or weapons to take up their empty place: we might use expressions like 'I feel like I have been stabbed by a knife' (Scarry 1985: 55). It is this perceived intrusion of something other within the body that creates the desire to re-establish the border, to push out the pain, or the (imagined, material) object we feel is the 'cause' of the pain. Pain involves the violation or transgression of the border between inside and outside, and it is through this transgression that I feel the border in the first place.

In the example of period pain discussed above, I also create an imagined object. The pain is too familiar – I have felt it so many times before. I remember each time, anew. So I know it is my period, and the knowledge affects how it feels: it affects the pain. In this instance, the blood becomes the 'object' that pushes against me, which presses against me, and that I imagine myself to be pushing out, as if it were an alien within. I want the pain to leave me; it is not a part of me, even though it is in my body that I feel it. So pain can be felt as something 'not me' within 'me': *it is the impression of the 'not' that is at stake*. It is hence not incidental that the sensation of pain is often represented – both visually and in narrative – through 'the wound' (a bruised or cut skin surface). The wound functions as a trace of where the surface of another entity (however imaginary) has impressed upon the body, an impression that is felt and seen as the violence of negation.

It is these moments of intensification that define the contours of the ordinary surfaces of bodily dwelling, surfaces that are marked by differences in the very experience of intensities.⁷ As pain sensations demand that I *attend* to my embodied existence, then I come to inhabit the surfaces of the world in a particular way. The tingles, pricks and then cramps return me to my body by giving me a sense of the edge or border, a 'sense' that is an experience of intensification and a departure from what is lived as ordinary. The ordinary is linked in this way to the absence of perception, rather than the absence of the body (see Chapter 8). As Elizabeth Grosz puts it, in the case of pain: 'The effected zones of the body become enlarged and magnified in the body image' (Grosz 1994: 76). Such enlarged sensations of the limits of our bodies may also involve an impression of the *particularity* of how they occupy time and space. In other words, I become aware of bodily limits *as* my bodily dwelling or dwelling place when I am in pain. Pain is hence bound up with how we inhabit the world, how we live in relationship to the surfaces, bodies and objects that make up our dwelling places. Our question becomes not so much what *is* pain, but what *does* pain do.

Notably, Jean-Paul Sartre describes pain as ‘a contingent attachment to the world’ (Sartre 1996: 333). For Sartre, the lived experience of pain as ‘being there’ is dependent on what bodies are doing (reading, writing, sleeping, walking) on *how they might be arranged*. Or, in my terms, pain sensations might rearrange bodies, which huddle or shudder into different shapes, shapes that take shape here or there, in this place or that. So the experience of pain does not cut off the body in the present, but attaches this body to the world of other bodies, an attachment that is contingent on elements that are absent in the lived experience of pain.

The contingency of pain is linked both to its dependence on other elements, and also to touch. The word ‘contingency’ has the same root in Latin as the word ‘contact’ (Latin: *contingere*: *com*, with; *tangere*, to touch). Contingency is linked in this way to the sociality of being ‘with’ others, of getting close enough to touch. But we must remember that not all attachments are loving. We are touched differently by different others (see Ahmed 2000: 44–50) and these differences involve not just marks on the body, but different intensities of pleasure and pain. So what attaches us, what *connects us* to this place or that place, to this other or that other is also what we find most touching; it is that which makes us feel. The differentiation between attachments allows us to align ourselves with some others and against other others in the very processes of turning and being turned, or moving towards and away from those we feel have caused our pleasure and pain.

For example, to be touched in a certain way, or to be moved in a certain way by an encounter with another, may involve a reading not only of the encounter, *but of the other that is encountered as having certain characteristics*. If we feel another hurts us, then that feeling may convert quickly into a reading of the other, such that *it* becomes hurtful, or is read as *the impression of the negative*. In other words, the ‘it hurts’ becomes, ‘you hurt me’, which might become, ‘you are hurtful’, or even ‘you are bad’. These affective responses are readings that not only create the borders between selves and others, but also ‘give’ others meaning and value in the very act of apparent separation, a giving that temporarily fixes an other, through the movement engendered by the affective response itself. Such responses are clearly mediated: materialisation takes place through the ‘mediation’ of affect, which may function in this way as readings of the bodies of others.⁸

THE SOCIALITY OF PAIN

Such a model of pain as contingent, as that which attaches us to others through the very process of intensification, might seem counter-intuitive. As I pointed out in the opening of this chapter, pain is often represented within

Western culture as a lonely thing (Kleinman, Das and Lock 1997: xiii). For example, Kotarba describes how pain experience is ‘inherently private and remains unnoticed by others unless actively disclosed by the sufferer’ (Kotarba 1983: 15). But even when the experience of pain is described as private, that privacy is linked to the experience of being with others. In other words, it is the apparent loneliness of pain that requires it to be disclosed to a witness. Melzack and Wall suggest that: ‘Because pain is a private, personal experience, it is impossible for us to know precisely what someone else’s pain feels like’ (Melzack and Wall 1996: 41). We can see that the impossibility of inhabiting the other’s body creates a desire to know ‘what it feels like’. To turn this around, it is because no one can know what it feels like to have my pain that I want loved others to acknowledge how I feel. The solitariness of pain is intimately tied up with its implication in relationship to others.

So while the experience of pain may be solitary, it is never private. A truly private pain would be one ended by a suicide without a note. But even then one seeks a witness, though a witness who arrives after the anticipated event of one’s own death. Perhaps the over-investment in the loneliness of pain comes from the presumption that it is always ‘my’ pain that we are talking about – a presumption that is clear, for example, in the phenomenological and existential writings on pain (Merleau-Ponty 1962; Sartre 1996). But we can ask Wittgenstein’s (1964) question: What about the pain of others? Or, how am I affected by pain when I am faced by another’s pain? Because we don’t inhabit her body, does that mean that her pain has nothing to do with us? For me, these are personal questions. I would say that my main experiences of living with pain relate to living with my mother’s pain. My mother was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis just after I was born. I was sent away to Pakistan and they thought she was dying. I lived in Pakistan for over a year (there are pictures of me with grandparents I now struggle to recall), while my mother pulled through. She lived, she lives on. In fact, decades later they realised they had got it wrong and they changed her diagnosis to transverse myelitis. It meant that her illness isn’t degenerative. But it doesn’t mean an end to her pain. And the change in diagnosis gave her a different kind of pain.

You might note that I said ‘living with’ my mother’s pain. You might question this. It is my mother who has pain. She has to live with it. Yet, the experience of living with my mother was an experiencing of living with her pain, as pain was such a significant part of her life. I would look at her and see her pain. I was the witness towards whom her pleas would be addressed, although her pleas would not simply be a call for action (sometimes there would be nothing for me to do). Her pleas would sometimes just be for me to bear witness, to recognise her pain. Through such witnessing, I would grant her pain the status of an event, a happening in the world, rather than just the

‘something’ she felt, the ‘something’ that would come and go with her coming and going. Through witnessing, I would give her pain a life outside the fragile borders of her vulnerable and much loved body. But her pain, despite being the event that drew us together (the quiet nights in watching classical movies; it was a life together that hummed with sentimentality), was still shrouded in mystery. I lived with what was, for me, the unliveable.

Pain, which is often experienced as ‘already there’, is difficult to grasp and to speak about, whether in the event of talking about pain in the past or pain in the present. When we talk of the experience of pain we assume it is ‘my pain’ because I cannot feel the other’s pain. I may experience my pain as too present and the other’s as too absent. And yet, others are in pain; I *read* her body as a sign of pain. I see you grimace, or your face, white and drawn. I watch sadly as your body curls up, curls away. I want to reach you, to touch you. Love is often conveyed by wanting to feel the loved one’s pain, to feel the pain on her behalf (see Chapter 6 for an analysis of love). I want to have her pain so she can be released from it, so she doesn’t have to feel it. This is love as empathy: I love you, and imagine not only that I can feel how you feel, but that I could feel your pain *for you*. But I want that feeling only insofar as I don’t already have it; the desire maintains the difference between the one who would ‘become’ in pain, and another who already ‘is’ in pain or ‘has’ it. In this way empathy sustains the very difference that it may seek to overcome: empathy remains a ‘wish feeling’, in which subjects ‘feel’ something other than what another feels in the very moment of imagining they could feel what another feels.⁹

The impossibility of feeling the pain of others does not mean that the pain is simply theirs, or that their pain has nothing to do with me. I want to suggest here, cautiously, and tentatively, that an ethics of responding to pain involves being open to being affected by that which one cannot know or feel. Such an ethics is, in this sense, bound up with the sociality or the ‘contingent attachment’ of pain itself. Much of the thinking on pain, however, contrasts the ungraspability of the other’s pain with the graspability of my own pain. Elaine Scarry makes this contrast in her analysis of pain and torture (1985: 4). Certainly, there is something ungraspable about the other’s pain, and this is not just because I do not feel it. But my pain, even when I feel it, is not always so graspable. So in some sense, as I respond to this other’s pain, as I touch her cheek, I come to feel that which I cannot know. It is the ungraspability of her pain, in the face of the thereness of my own, that throws me into disbelief. But it is not her pain that I disbelieve. I believe in it, more and more. I am captured by the intensity of this belief. Rather it is my pain that becomes uncertain. I realise that my pain – it seems so there – is unliveable to others, thrown as they are into a different bodily world. The ungraspability of her pain calls me back to my body, even when it is not in pain, to feel

it, to explore its surfaces, to inhabit it. In other words, the ungraspability of my own pain is brought to the surface by the ungraspability of the pain of others. Such a response to her pain is not simply a return to the self (how do I feel given that I don't know how she feels?): this is not a radical egoism. Rather, in the face of the otherness of my own pain, I am undone, before her, and for her.

The sociality of pain – the 'contingent attachment' of being with others – requires an ethics, an ethics that begins with your pain, and moves towards you, getting close enough to touch you, perhaps even close enough to feel the sweat that may be the trace of your pain on the surface of your body. Insofar as an ethics of pain begins here, with how you come to surface, then the ethical demand is that I must act about that which I cannot know, rather than act insofar as I know. I am moved by what does not belong to me. If I acted on her behalf only insofar as I knew how she felt, then I would act only insofar as I would appropriate her pain as my pain, that is, appropriate that which I cannot feel. To return to my introduction to this chapter, it is the very assumption that we know how the other feels, which would allow us to transform their pain into our sadness.

THE POLITICS OF PAIN

Pain involves the sociality of bodily surfaces (including the surfaces of objects) that 'surface' in relationship to each other. Some of these encounters involve moments of collision. Here, the surface comes to be felt as an intense 'impression' of objects and others. Not all pain involves injuries of this sort. Even in instances of pain that is lived without an external injury (such as psychic pain), pain 'surfaces' in relationship to others, who bear witness to pain, and authenticate its existence.

But to talk about the lived experiences of pain in such general terms may seem problematic. Isn't there a danger of 'flattening' out the differences in pain experience, or turning the sociality of pain into a new form of universalism? In this section, I want to talk about the politics of pain: how pain is involved in the production of *uneven* effects, in the sense that pain does not produce a homogeneous group of bodies who are together in their pain. A political model of pain cannot gather together all the different pain experiences (this is my point). In the first instance, I want to restrict my model of pain to its association with 'injury' and thereby link what you might consider rather banal experiences of injury from an external object, with experiences of feeling injured by others.

How does pain enter politics? Does pain become political only through speech, or through claims for compensation? Pain has been considered

by some as a very problematic ‘foundation’ for politics. Working with Nietzsche’s model of *resentiment*, for example, Wendy Brown argues that there has been a fetishisation of the wound in subaltern politics (Brown 1995: 55, see Nietzsche 1969). Subaltern subjects become invested in the wound, such that the wound comes to stand for identity itself. The political claims become claims of injury against something or somebody (society, the state, the middle classes, men, white people and so on) as a reaction or negation (Brown 1995: 73). Following Nietzsche, Brown suggests that reactions to injury are inadequate as a basis of politics since such reactions make action impossible: ‘Revenge as a “reaction”, a substitute for the capacity to act, produces identity as both bound to the history that produced it and as a reproach to the present which embodies that history’ (Brown 1995: 73).¹⁰ Brown’s reworking of Nietzsche shows how an over-investment in the wound, ‘come[s] into conflict with the need to give up these investments’ (Brown 1995: 73).

I agree that the transformation of the wound into an identity is problematic. One of the reasons that it is problematic is precisely because of its fetishism: the transformation of the wound into an identity cuts the wound off from a history of ‘getting hurt’ or injured. It turns the wound into something that simply ‘is’ rather than something that has happened in time and space. The fetishisation of the wound as a sign of identity is crucial to ‘testimonial culture’ (Ahmed and Stacey 2001), in which narratives of pain and injury have proliferated. Sensational stories can turn pain into a form of media spectacle, in which the pain of others produces laughter and enjoyment, rather than sadness or anger. Furthermore, narratives of collective suffering increasingly have a global dimension. As Kleinman, Das and Lock argue, ‘Collective suffering is also a core component of the global political economy. There is a market for suffering: victimhood is commodified’ (Kleinman, Das and Lock 1997: xi). This commodification of suffering does not mean that all narratives have value or even equal value: as I show in Chapters 6 and 7, following Judith Butler (2002b), some forms of suffering more than others will be repeated, as they can more easily be appropriated as ‘our loss’. The differentiation between forms of pain and suffering in stories that are told, and between those that are told and those that are not, is a crucial mechanism for the distribution of power.

We can reflect critically on the culture of compensation, where all forms of injury are assumed to involve relations of innocence and guilt, and where it is assumed that responsibility for all injuries can be attributed to an individual or collective. The legal domain transforms pain into a condition that can be quantified as the basis for compensation claims. The problem of wound fetishism is the equivalence it assumes between forms of injury. The production of equivalence allows injury to become an entitlement, which is then equally available to all others. It is no accident then that the normative

subject is often secured through narratives of injury: the white male subject, for example, has become an injured party in national discourses (see Chapter 2), as the one who has been ‘hurt’ by the opening up of the nation to others. Given that subjects have an unequal relation to entitlement, then more privileged subjects will have a greater recourse to narratives of injury. That is, the more access subjects have to public resources, the more access they may have to the capacity to mobilise narratives of injury within the public domain.

How should we respond to this transformation of injury into an entitlement that secures such forms of privilege? I would suggest that our response should not simply be to critique the rhetorical use of injury or wounds, but to attend to the different ways in which ‘wounds’ enter politics. Not all narratives of pain and injury work as forms of entitlement; so for example, to read the story of white male injury as the same as stories of subaltern injury would be an unjust reading. Whilst we cannot assume that such differences are essential, or determined ‘only’ by the subject’s relation to power, we also cannot treat differences as incidental, and as separated from relations of power. The critique of wound culture should not operate as generalised critique, which would mean ‘reading’ different testimonies as symptomatic. As Carl Gutiérrez-Jones argues, the critique of injury needs to recognise the different rhetorical forms of injury as signs of an uneven and antagonistic history (Gutiérrez-Jones 2001: 35).

So a good response to Brown’s critique would not be to forget the wound or indeed the past as the scene of wounding. Brown does ‘part company’ with Nietzsche by suggesting that ‘the counsel of forgetting . . . seems inappropriate if not cruel’ for subjugated peoples who have yet to have their pain recognised (Brown 1995: 74). I would put this more strongly: forgetting would be a repetition of the violence or injury. To forget would be to repeat the forgetting that is already implicated in the fetishisation of the wound. Our task might instead be to remember how the surfaces of bodies (including the bodies of communities, as I will suggest later) came to be wounded in the first place. Reading testimonies of injury involves rethinking the relation between the present and the past: an emphasis on the past does not necessarily mean a conservation or entrenchment of the past (see Chapter 8).¹¹ Following bell hooks, our task would be ‘not to forget the past but to break its hold’ (hooks 1989: 155). In order to break the seal of the past, in order to move away from attachments that are hurtful, we must first bring them into the realm of political action. Bringing pain into politics requires we give up the fetish of the wound through different kinds of remembrance. The past is living rather than dead; the past lives in the very wounds that remain open in the present.

In other words, harm has a history, even though that history is made up of a combination of often surprising elements that are unavailable in the form

of a totality. Pain is not simply an effect of a history of harm; it is the *bodily life of that history*. To think through how pain may operate in this way we can consider the document, *Bringing Them Home*, which is a report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families (1996). *Bringing Them Home* reports on the Stolen Generation in Australia, a generation of indigenous children who were taken away from their families as part of a brutal and shocking policy of assimilation. Generations of indigenous children grew up with little or no contact with their families, or with their community and culture. They were often taken from their homes in a violent manner.

When considering the damage to the bodies of indigenous Australians, we can think about not just the individual's skin surface, but the skin of the community. The violence was not simply inflicted upon the body of the individual who was taken away, but also on the body of the indigenous community, which was 'torn apart'. Here, the community is damaged insofar as 'attachments' with loved ones are severed. As Kai Erikson suggests, collective trauma involves 'a blow to the basic tissues of social life that damages the bonds attaching people together' (Erikson 1995: 187). The skin of the community is damaged, but it is a damage that is felt on the skin of the individuals who make up that community. *Bringing Them Home* is made up of individual testimonies of this pain of separation, this hurt, this bereavement, and this loss from which recovery is so difficult. The testimonies were gathered together, and together form the document.

Such stories of pain must be heard. But what are the conditions of possibility for hearing them? Within the context of Australian politics, the compiling of this document does not necessarily mean that the stories of pain are heard. Or, if they are being heard, it does not mean that they are being heard justly. *Bringing Them Home* is concerned with a process of healing, in which the 'wound' caused by the invasion of Australia and tragedies of the Stolen Generation is healed: 'That devastation cannot be addressed unless the whole community listens with an open heart and mind to the stories of what has happened in the past and, having listened and understood, commits itself to reconciliation.'¹² The document emphasises the importance of recovering rather than forgetting the traumas of the past, which are defined as both 'personal' and 'national'.

Importantly, the testimonies given by indigenous men and women are introduced by the document as demanding national shame rather than personal guilt:

That is not to say that individual Australians who had no part in what was done in the past should feel or acknowledge personal guilt. It is simply to assert our identity as a nation and the basic fact that

national shame, as well as national pride, can and should exist in relation to past acts and omissions. (Governor-General of Australia, *Bringing Them Home*, 1996)

The question of who is doing the healing and who is being healed is a troubling one. The preface suggests that the response to the pain of indigenous Australians should be the shame of the white nation, which is, paradoxically, not made up of white individuals. The burden of the document falls unequally: indigenous Australians tell their personal stories, but white readers are allowed to disappear from this history, having no part in what was done. Reconciliation becomes, in this narrative, the reconciliation of indigenous individuals into the white nation, which is now cleansed through its expression of shame (see also Chapter 5). As Fiona Nicoll (1998) has argued, reconciliation has a double meaning. It can suggest coming to terms with, but it can also refer to passivity, in which one seeks to make the other passive (to reconcile her to her fate). In Australian politics, the narrative of reconciliation – and with it, of hearing the other's pain – is too often bound up with making indigenous others fit into the white nation or community.

In the expression of emotional responses to the stories, the non-indigenous hearings of indigenous testimonies can involve forms of appropriation. The recognition of the wound of the stolen generation provides, in the terms of the document, 'our identity as a nation'. The acknowledgement of their pain hence slides easily into the claiming of national pain. In this way, the healing of wounds is represented as the healing of the nation: the covering over of the wound caused by the theft of indigenous Australians allows the nation to become one body, sealed by its skin. In such forms of responding to pain, the national body takes the place of the indigenous bodies; it claims their pain as its own. As I have already argued, to hear the other's pain as my pain, and to empathise with the other in order to heal the body (in this case, the body of the nation), involves violence. But our response to how the other's pain is appropriated as the nation's pain, and the wound is fetishised as the broken skin of the nation, should not be to forget the other's pain. Our task instead is *to learn how to hear what is impossible*. Such an impossible hearing is only possible if we respond to a pain that we cannot claim as our own. Non-indigenous readers do need to take it personally (we are part of this history), but in such a way that the testimony is not taken away from others, as if it were about our feelings, or our ability to feel the feelings of others.

So I read through the document. Admittedly, it hurts to read the words, they move on me and move me. The stories, so many of them, are stories of grief, of worlds being torn apart. So cruel, this world. It is a world that I lived in. I remind myself of that. Yet I also lived in a very different world. Each story brings me into its world. I am jolted into it. I try and turn away,

but you hold my attention. These are stories of separation and loss. These are stories of pain. My response is emotional: it is one of discomfort, rage and disbelief. The stories hit me, hurtle towards me: unbelievable, too believable, unliveable and yet lived.

Knowing that I am part of this history makes me feel a certain way; it impresses upon me, and creates an impression. Of course, these impressions are not only personal. It is not just me facing this, and it is certainly not about me. And yet, I am 'in it', which means I am not 'not in it'. Here I am, already placed and located in worlds, already shaped by my proximity to some bodies and not others. If I am here, then I am there: the stories of the document are shaped by the land I had been taught to think of as my own. The 'knowledge' of this history as a form of *involvement* is not an easy or obvious knowledge. Such knowledge cannot be 'taken in' – it cannot be registered as knowledge – without feeling differently about those histories, and without inhabiting the surfaces of bodies and worlds differently. I cannot learn this history – which means unlearning the forgetting of this history – and remain the same. Knowing one's implication in this history is about accepting the violence as a form of 'un-housing'. The house in which I grew up, and to which I am attached through memory, is on indigenous land. To 'feel' differently about this land, as belonging to others, is not about generosity; it is not premised on giving up one's home, but on recognising that where one lived was not one's home to give or to give up in the first place (see Ahmed 2000: 190). The reading cannot then be about my feelings: to be affected by the story as a form of 'un-housing' is to be affected by that which cannot be 'taken' or 'taken back' as 'mine'.

The testimonies of pain that gather in the form of the document involve more than one story: many stories, placed alongside each other, weave the document together. Each story is readable, as the story of this other, a singular other, as a singularity that is irreducible to 'the one'. This other is touched by other others, and other stories of pain and suffering. So one story, I will read with you, but I will not read this story *as* one. It is Fiona's story.¹³ That is all I have to start with, your first name. I say it out, quietly, softly. Fiona. I say it again, even more gently, Fiona. You start with a date: '1936 it was. *I would have been five.*' You draw me into a past, into a time and space I have not inhabited before. You say *would have been* not *was*. This wording makes your past seem open. Would have been. *What would you have been if you hadn't been taken away?* The question shocks me. The past is no longer past, but the theft of a different kind of future. What would you have been? I move uneasily. I cannot help but read on: '*We had been playing all together, just a happy community and the air was filled with screams because the police came and mothers tried to hide their children and blacken their children's faces and tried to hide them in caves.*' The event unfolds before me. I close my eyes. It becomes

a scene. But the desperation of the mothers who are about to lose their children cuts through the scene and obscures it. I blink. I cannot see this before me. As I close my eyes, I come to hear. Sounds, screams. My ears tremble with the force of hearing those screams. Hearing the screams makes me shudder. The sounds of Fiona being taken away. The cries of Fiona's mother. She is addressed as such by the poetics of this testimony:

My mother had to come with us . . . I remember that she came in the truck with us curled up in the foetal position. We can understand that, the trauma of knowing that you're going to lose all your children? We talk about it from the point of view of our trauma but – our mother – to understand what she went through, I don't think anyone can really understand that.

Already, in telling the story of her mother, the daughter tells of a pain she cannot understand; she cannot write the story from the point of view of the mother's trauma. Even the daughter cannot be with her. There is a gulf that cannot be overcome by empathy, even by somebody in the story, connected by a bond of love; even by the daughter whose pain is also part of the story, whose pain throbs the story into its difficult life. The impossibility of communicating this loss is echoed in the life of these bodies, curled as they are into their different bodily worlds, shuddering with the intensity of a pain that surfaces as loss: '*curled up in the foetal position*'. Bodies, kept apart, moving away from each other, from the reader: '*We got there in the dark and then we didn't see our mother again. She just kind of disappeared into the darkness.*' The pain of this mother's disappearance takes the shape of a darkness that overwhelms. The darkness is the edge of the story, signalling what the reader cannot see and feel.

The daughter's story, Fiona's story, is one of a body being reformed, being made into another body. She surfaces differently, made white as another form of violence: '*From there we had to learn to eat new food, have our heads shaved.*' It is a story of violence, in which the body is turned into an instrument. Words can only tell the story in a way that confirms the violence: '*You forbid us to speak our own language.*' But it is not an embittered story. Indeed, the others who committed this violence – the missionaries, the state – on the body of the community and on Fiona's body are treated with a care that is a torture to read: '*You hear lots and lots of the criticisms of the missionaries but we only learnt from being brought up by missionaries. They took some of that grief away in teaching us another way to overcome the grief and the hurt and the pain and the suffering.*' Faced with this, my anger unfolds and refolds before you. I want to hear your rage; I want you to allow me to be angry with them. They did this. They did this. I want you to say it. But no 'them' appears to allow

me the safety of such projection. You refuse to blame those whom I feel caused your injury. And yet, in that refusal, you do not express the language of forgiveness. Rather, you just say that those who were responsible, and they are evoked in such terms, were responsible for more than the experience of pain, but also for your ability to move away from it, to allow it to be taken from you, in the way you were taken from them. My anger at this story, at the possibility of this story, does not find an object; it cannot be contained by an external object. In not having a 'them' to blame in the story, my anger seeps outwards, towards all that makes the story possible.

To those who were responsible for your pain, you can express only a certain kind of attachment. This does not replace your grief, nor does it resolve it. You don't forget the hurt. But they do not become the other against which you define yourself. They become part of the body you now inhabit – the different body, the different community made up of bodies that are with other bodies, and with them in a certain way. Even though this body confirms the loss of 'what would have been', it is a body which speaks to your survival. But your mother is not with you in this body. Your survival is afforded in the pain and violence of this loss. The injury surfaces in the forming of a different kind of body. The scars on your skin both attach you to a past of loss and a future of survival. This is not a healing. But you've moved on.

And so, throughout, it is your mother's loss that you address; it is her loss that keeps open the wound of being taken away:

I guess the government didn't mean it as something bad but our mothers weren't treated as people having feelings. Naturally a mother's got a heart for her children and for them to be taken away, no-one can ever know the heartache. She was still grieving when I met her in 1968.

The mother's feelings. They are announced from the perspective of the daughter who is now a mother herself. They are the feelings that were negated by those who committed the injustice; they are the feelings that made that injustice so unjust. And yet still, before her mother, Fiona recognises the limits of her own feelings and the impossibility of feeling the feelings of others: 'no-one can ever know the heartache'. The mother's pain is here evoked as unfeeling both for those who are with her, and for those who read the story. We can't feel her pain, her ache; and yet, we are moved by the story. It is a hurt that refuses to keep us apart, but also does not bring us together. I know enough of this pain to know the limits of what I can know, reading as I am in this time and this place, with this body, arranged as it is, here, now. And then: 'All the years that you wanted to ask this and ask that, there was no way we could ever regain that. It was like somebody came and stabbed me with a

knife.' The experience of pain – the feeling of being stabbed by a foreign object that pierces the skin, that cuts you into pieces – is bound up with what cannot be recovered, with something being taken away that cannot be returned. The loss is, in some sense, the loss of a 'we', the loss of a community based on everyday conversations, on the coming and goings of bodies, in time and in space: '*every morning as the sun came up the whole family would wail*'. Out of the cutting of this body and this community, surfaces a different body, formed as it is by the intensity of the pain. A community that cries together, which *comes together in this gesture of loss*, and which comes together in the painful feeling that togetherness is lost. The language of pain aligns this body with other bodies; the surface of the community comes to be inhabited differently in the event of being touched by such loss.

The testimonies of pain by indigenous Australians work not as appeals to sympathy; they give flesh to feelings that cannot be felt by others. The stories of pain that cover these pages are stories of separation, of losses that cannot be undone. In Fiona's testimony, the pain takes the form of the separation of mothers from daughters, daughters from mothers. The pain of such women is not evoked or sentimentalised as the true burden of community, but moves the story on, as a sign of the persistence of a connection, a thread between others, in the face of separation. The connection is not made as a form of fellow-feeling, and it is not about feeling the other's pain. Pain is evoked as that which even our most intimate others cannot feel. The impossibility of 'fellow feeling' is itself the confirmation of injury. The call of such pain, as a pain that cannot be shared through empathy, is a call not just for an attentive hearing, but for a different kind of inhabitation. It is a call for action, and a demand for collective politics, as a politics based not on the possibility that we might be reconciled, but on learning to live with the impossibility of reconciliation, or learning that we live with and beside each other, and yet we are not as one.

NOTES

1. Thanks to Sarah Franklin who brought this letter to my attention.
2. In due course I will examine how words have associations that do not need to be made explicit as key to the emotionality of language. I will consider such words as 'sticky signs' in Chapters 2, 3 and 4.
3. In fact, psychoanalysis offers a radical critique of the model in which pain and pleasure become individual and social 'drivers'. We can identify this model as utilitarian. Take Bentham's classic formulation: 'Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do' (cited in McGill 1967: 122). My emphasis on sensation as crucial to the surfacing of bodies is not about making pain and pleasure 'sovereign masters'. I am suggesting that pain and pleasure cannot be

separated from the attribution of value to objects, but that the value of objects is not determined by sensation. So whilst pain and pleasure may affect how bodies are orientated towards others, this does not mean we simply calculate pain and pleasure as if they were properties, as if they 'have', or even 'are' value.

4. I am hence departing from the recent tendency to separate sensation or affect and emotion, which is clear in the work of Massumi (2002). Certainly, the experience of 'having' an emotion may be distinct from sensations and impressions, which may burn the skin before any conscious moment of recognition. But this model creates a distinction between conscious recognition and 'direct' feeling, which itself negates how that which is not consciously experienced may itself be mediated by past experiences. I am suggesting here that even seemingly direct responses actually evoke past histories, and that this process bypasses consciousness, through bodily memories. Sensations may not be about conscious recognition and naming, but this does not mean they are 'direct' in the sense of immediate. Further, emotions clearly involve sensations: this analytic distinction between sensation or affect and emotion risks cutting emotions off from the lived experiences of being and having a body. Pain may be a very good example to challenge the distinction between sensation and emotion: it has regularly been described as both, or as a special category between sensation and emotion. See Trigg (1970) for an analysis of pain as both sensation and emotion and Rey for a critique of this distinction in models of pain (Rey 1995: 6).
5. People who do not experience the sensation of pain – who suffer from *congenital analgesia* – are prone to injuries, which can be serious, and indeed are often fatal (Melzack and Wall 1996: 3). This reminds us that some pain sensations can function as warnings as well as reactions that help bodies to navigate their way through the world.
6. Period pain is not a pain that has been written about within the context of existentialism or phenomenology, even by feminists working in these traditions. Yet many women suffer from period pain in a way that affects what they can do with their lives. It is important to write the lived experience of period pain into our theorising of embodiment. The discomfort we might feel in writing such pain into a philosophical body is like many discomforts: it is caused by not quite fitting the body (in this case, the philosophical body) we inhabit. See Chapter 7 for an analysis of discomfort.
7. Of course, with chronic pain, the intense sensation becomes not a departure from the ordinary (which defines the ordinary in the event of the departure), but the ordinary itself. As such, attending to the body surface becomes part of the structure of ordinary experience (see Kotarba 1983).
8. Given the emphasis here on the subject's perceptions and readings in the making of objects and others, is this a radical form of subjectivism? It is important for me to indicate how this argument is not subjectivist, but one that undermines the distinction between the subject and the object. I am suggesting that 'no thing' or 'no body' has positive characteristics, which exist *before contact with others*. So it is not that a subject 'gives' meaning and value to others. Rather, subjects as well as objects are shaped by contact. Such forms of contact do not make something out of nothing: subjects as well as objects 'accrue' characteristics over time (a process which shows precisely how these characteristics are not a positive form of residence) that makes it possible to speak of them as prior to contact. So my argument that the subject's perception and reading of objects and others is crucial does not necessarily exercise a radical form of subjectivism; it does not posit the subject's consciousness as that which makes the world. The subject materialises as an effect of contact with others and has already materialised given such histories of contact.

9. There are different forms of what Robert C. Solomon has called ‘fellow-feeling’ (1995, see also Denzin 1984: 148; Scheler 1954: 8–36). They include compassion, as well as empathy, sympathy and pity. These different forms cannot be equated. For example Spelman differentiates between compassion, as suffering *with* others, from pity, as sorrow *for* others (Spelman 1997: 65). All of these forms of fellow-feeling involve fantasy: one can ‘feel for’ or ‘feel with’ others, but this depends on how I ‘imagine’ the other already feels. So ‘feeling with’ or ‘feeling for’ does not mean a suspension of ‘feeling about’: *one feels with or for others only insofar as one feels ‘about’ their feelings in the first place.*
10. See Chapter 8 for a critique of the distinction between reaction and action.
11. Although Brown refuses to echo Nietzsche’s call to forget, her conclusion is to replace the language of being (‘I am’) with the language of desire (‘I want’). I suggest that we should also challenge Nietzsche’s presumption that the future is open, and that the past – and the present – is what holds or binds the subject. We need to think about how the past remains open in the present, such that the story of the ‘I am’, or ‘how did I come to be’, is a story that also opens up the future of the subject. See also Chapter 8.
12. The report is available on the following web site:
<http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/special/rsjproject/rsjlibrary/hreoc/stolen/> Last accessed on 20 February 2004.
13. Confidential evidence, Case 305. My copy of the report does not have page numbers, but Fiona’s testimony is the last one in Chapter 8 on South Australia.