Sara Ahmed
Readings

2 – 25   'Queer Feelings' from *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*

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Please get in touch if you would like any more reading material, or if you have any questions.

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Queer Feelings

> As the immigrant makes visible the processes of production, she also
> exemplifies the idea that the family is in need of protection because
> it is losing its viability, increasingly posed in the horrors of the
> imaginary as needing ever more fierce strategies of security to ensure
> its ideal of reproducing itself. It is this connection that is hidden – a
> relation between the production of life (both discursive and
> reproductive) and global production. (Goodman 2001: 194)

As I argued in the previous two chapters, the reproduction of life itself, where
life is conflated with a social ideal ('life as we know it') is often represented
as threatened by the existence of others: immigrants, queers, other others.
These others become sources of fascination that allow the ideal to be posited
as ideal through their embodiment of the failure of the ideal to be translated
into being or action. We might note that 'reproduction' itself comes under
question. The reproduction of life – in the form of the future generation –
becomes bound up with the reproduction of culture, through the stabilisa-
tion of specific arrangements for living ('the family'). The family is idealis-
able through the narrative of threat and insecurity; the family is presented
as vulnerable, and as needing to be defended against others who violate the
conditions of its reproduction. As Goodman shows us, the moral defence of
the family as a way of life becomes a matter of 'global politics'. I have already
considered how the defence of the war against terrorism has evoked 'the
family' as the origin of love, community and support (see Chapter 3). What
needs closer examination is how heterosexuality becomes a script that binds
the familial with the global: the coupling of man and woman becomes a
kind of 'birthing', a giving birth not only to new life, but to ways of living
that are already recognisable as forms of civilisation. It is this narrative of
coupling as a condition for the reproduction of life, culture and value
that explains the slide in racist narratives between the fear of strangers and

immigrants (xenophobia), the fear of queers (homophobia) and the fear of miscegenation (as well as other illegitimate couplings).

These narratives or scripts do not, of course, simply exist 'out there' to legislate the political actions of states. They also shape bodies and lives, including those that follow and depart from such narratives in the ways in which they love and live, in the decisions that they make and take within the intimate spheres of home and work. It is important to consider how compulsory heterosexuality – defined as the accumulative effect of the repetition of the narrative of heterosexuality as an ideal coupling – shapes what it is possible for bodies to do,[1] even if it does not contain what it is possible to be. Bodies take the shape of norms that are repeated over time and with force. The work of repetition involves the concealment of labour under the sign of nature. In this chapter, I want to argue that norms surface *as* the surfaces of bodies; norms are a matter of impressions, of how bodies are 'impressed upon' by the world, as a world made up of others. In other words, such impressions are effects of labour; how bodies work and are worked upon shapes the surfaces of bodies. Regulative norms function in a way as 'repetitive strain injuries' (RSIs). Through repeating some gestures and not others, or through being orientated in some directions and not others, bodies become contorted; they get twisted into shapes that enable some action only insofar as they restrict capacity for other kinds of action.

I would suggest that heteronormativity also affects the surfaces of bodies, which surface through impressions made by others. Compulsory heterosexuality shapes bodies by the assumption that a body 'must' orient itself towards some objects and not others, objects that are secured as ideal through the fantasy of difference (see Chapter 6). Hence compulsory heterosexuality shapes which bodies one 'can' legitimately approach as would-be lovers and which one cannot. In shaping one's approach to others, compulsory heterosexuality also shapes one's own body, *as a congealed history of past approaches*. Sexual orientation is not then simply about the direction one takes towards an object of desire, as if this direction does not affect other things that we do. Sexual orientation involves bodies that leak into worlds; it involves a way of orientating the body towards and away from others, which affects how one can enter different kinds of social spaces (which presumes certain bodies, certain directions, certain ways of loving and living), even if it does not lead bodies to the same places. To make a simple but important point: orientations affect what it is that bodies can do.[2] Hence, the failure to orient oneself 'towards' the ideal sexual object affects how we live in the world, an affect that is readable as the failure to reproduce, and as a threat to the social ordering of life itself.

Of course, one does not have to do what one is compelled to do: for something to be compulsory shows that it is not necessary. But to refuse to

be compelled by the narratives of ideal heterosexuality in one's orientation to others is still to be affected by those narratives; they work to script one's orientation as a form of disobedience. The affects of 'not following' the scripts can be multiple. We can consider, for example, the psychic as well as social costs of loving a body that is supposed to be unloveable for the subject I am, or loving a body that I was 'supposed to' repudiate, which may include shame and melancholia (Butler 1997b; Braidotti 2002: 53; see Chapter 5). The negative affects of 'not quite' living in the norms show us how loving loves that are not 'normative' involves being subject to such norms precisely in the costs and damage that are incurred when not following them. Do queer moments happen when this failure to reproduce norms as forms of life is embraced or affirmed as a political and ethical alternative? Such affirmation would not be about the conversion of shame into pride, but the enjoyment of the negativity of shame, an enjoyment of that which has been designated shameful by normative culture (see Barber and Clark 2002: 22–9).

In this chapter, I could ask the question: How does it feel to inhabit a body that fails to reproduce an ideal? But this is not my question. Instead, I wish to explore 'queer feelings' without translating such an exploration into a matter of 'feeling queer'. Such a translation would assume 'queerness' involves a particular emotional life, or that there are feelings that bodies 'have' given their failure to inhabit or follow a heterosexual ideal. Of course, one can feel queer. There are feelings involved in the self-perception of 'queerness', a self-perception that is bodily, as well as bound up with 'taking on' a name. But these feelings are mediated and they are attached to the category 'queer' in ways that are complex and contingent, precisely because the category is produced in relation to histories that render it a sign of failed being or 'non-being'.[3] In examining the affective potential of queer, I will firstly consider the relationship between norms and affects in debates on queer families. I will then discuss the role of grief in queer politics with specific reference to queer responses to September 11. And finally, I will reflect on the role of pleasure in queer lifestyles or countercultures, and will ask how the enjoyment of social and sexual relations that are designated as 'non-(re)productive' can function as forms of political disturbance in an affective economy organised around the principle that pleasure is only ethical as an incentive or reward for good conduct.

(DIS)COMFORT AND NORMS

It is important to consider how heterosexuality functions powerfully not only as a series of norms and ideals, but also through emotions that shape bodies as well as worlds: (hetero)norms are investments, which are 'taken on' and

'taken in' by subjects. To practise heterosexuality by following its scripts in one's choice of some love objects – and refusal of others – is also to become invested in the reproduction of heterosexuality. Of course, one does not 'do' heterosexuality simply through who one does and does not have sex with. Heterosexuality as a script for an ideal life makes much stronger claims. It is assumed that all arrangements will follow from the arrangement of the couple: man/woman. It is no accident that compulsory heterosexuality works powerfully in the most casual modes of conversation. One asks: 'Do you have a boyfriend?' (to a girl), or one asks: 'Do you have a girlfriend?' (to a boy). Queer subjects feel the tiredness of making corrections and departures; the pressure of this insistence, this presumption, this demand that asks either for a 'passing over' (a moment of passing, which is not always available) or for direct or indirect forms of self-revelation ('but actually, he's a she' or 'she's a he', or just saying 'she' instead of 'he' or 'he' instead of 'she' at the 'obvious' moment). No matter how 'out' you may be, how (un)comfortably queer you may feel, those moments of interpellation get repeated over time, and can be experienced as a bodily injury; moments which position queer subjects as failed in their failure to live up to the 'hey you too' of heterosexual self-narration. The everydayness of compulsory heterosexuality is also its affectiveness, wrapped up as it is with moments of ceremony (birth, marriage, death), which bind families together, and with the ongoing investment in the sentimentality of friendship and romance. Of course, such sentimentality is deeply embedded with public as well as private culture; stories of heterosexual romance proliferate as a matter of human interest. As Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner argue: 'National heterosexuality is the mechanism by which a core national culture can be imagined as a sanitised space of sentimental feeling' (Berlant and Warner 2000: 313).

We can consider the sanitised space as a comfort zone. Normativity is comfortable for those who can inhabit it. The word 'comfort' suggests well-being and satisfaction, but it also suggests an ease and easiness. To follow the rules of heterosexuality is to be at ease in a world that reflects back the couple form one inhabits as an ideal.[4] Of course, one can be made to feel uneasy by one's inhabitance of an ideal. One can be made uncomfortable by one's own comforts. To see heterosexuality as an ideal that one might or might not follow – or to be uncomfortable by the privileges one is given by inhabiting a heterosexual world – is a less comforting form of comfort. But comfort it remains and comfort is very hard to notice when one experiences it. Having uncomfortably inhabited the comforts of heterosexuality for many years, I know this too well. Now, living a queer life, I can reflect on many comforts that I did not even begin to notice despite my 'felt' discomforts. We don't tend to notice what is comfortable, even when we think we do.

Thinking about comfort is hence always a useful starting place for

thinking. So let's think about how it feels to be comfortable. Say you are sinking into a comfortable chair. Note I already have transferred the affect to an object ('it is comfortable'). But comfort is about the fit between body and object: my comfortable chair may be awkward for you, with your differently-shaped body. Comfort is about an encounter between more than one body, which is the promise of a 'sinking' feeling. It is, after all, pain or discomfort that return one's attention to the surfaces of the body *as body* (see Chapter 1). To be comfortable is to be so at ease with one's environment that it is hard to distinguish where one's body ends and the world begins. One fits, and by fitting, the surfaces of bodies disappear from view. The disappearance of the surface is instructive: in feelings of comfort, bodies extend into spaces, and spaces extend into bodies. The sinking feeling involves a seamless space, or a space where you can't see the 'stitches' between bodies.

Heteronormativity functions as a form of public comfort by allowing bodies to extend into spaces that have already taken their shape. Those spaces are lived as comfortable as they allow bodies to fit in; the surfaces of social space are already impressed upon by the shape of such bodies (like a chair that acquires its shape by the repetition of some bodies inhabiting it: we can almost see the shape of bodies as 'impressions' on the surface). The impressions acquired by surfaces function as traces of bodies. We can even see this process in social spaces. As Gill Valentine has argued, the 'heterosexualisation' of public spaces such as streets is naturalised by the repetition of different forms of heterosexual conduct (images on billboards, music played, displays of heterosexual intimacy and so on), a process which goes unnoticed by heterosexual subjects (Valentine 1996: 149). The surfaces of social as well as bodily space 'record' the repetition of acts, and the passing by of some bodies and not others.

Heteronormativity also becomes a form of comforting: one feels better by the warmth of being faced by a world one has already taken in. One does not notice this *as a world* when one has been shaped by that world, and even acquired its shape. Norms may not only have a way of disappearing from view, but may also be that which we do not consciously feel.[5] Queer subjects, when faced by the 'comforts' of heterosexuality may feel uncomfortable (the body does not 'sink into' a space that has already taken its shape). Discomfort is a feeling of disorientation: one's body feels out of place, awkward, unsettled. I know that feeling too well, the sense of out-of-place-ness and estrangement involves an acute awareness of the surface of one's body, which appears *as* surface, when one cannot inhabit the social skin, which is shaped by some bodies, and not others. Furthermore, queer subjects may also be 'asked' not to make heterosexuals feel uncomfortable by avoiding the display of signs of queer intimacy, which is itself an uncomfortable feeling, a restriction on what one can do with one's body, and another's body, in social space.[6]

The availability of comfort for some bodies may depend on the labour of others, and the burden of concealment. Comfort may operate as a form of 'feeling fetishism': some bodies can 'have' comfort, only as an effect of the work of others, where the work itself is concealed from view.[7]

It is hence for very good reasons that queer theory has been defined not only as anti-heteronormative, but as anti-normative. As Tim Dean and Christopher Lane argue, queer theory 'advocates a politics based on resistance to all norms' (Dean and Lane 2001: 7). Importantly, heteronormativity refers to more than simply the presumption that it is normal to be heterosexual. The 'norm' is regulative, and is supported by an 'ideal' that associates sexual conduct with other forms of conduct. We can consider, for example, how the restriction of the love object is not simply about the desirability of *any* heterosexual coupling. The couple should be 'a good match' (a judgement that often exercises conventional class and racial assumptions about the importance of 'matching' the backgrounds of partners) and they should exclude others from the realm of sexual intimacy (an idealisation of monogamy, that often equates intimacy with property rights or rights to the intimate other as property). Furthermore, a heterosexual coupling may only approximate an ideal through being sanctioned by marriage, by participating in the ritual of reproduction and good parenting, by being good neighbours as well as lovers and parents, and by being even better citizens. In this way, normative culture involves the differentiation between legitimate and illegitimate ways of living whereby the preservation of what is legitimate ('life as we know it') is assumed to be necessary for the well-being of the next generation. Heteronormativity involves the reproduction or transmission of culture through how one lives one's life in relation to others.

For queer theorists, it is hence important that queer lives do not follow the scripts of heteronormative culture: they do not become, in Judith Halberstam's provocative and compelling term, 'homonormative' lives (Halberstam 2003: 331). Such lives would not desire access to comfort; they would maintain their discomfort with all aspects of normative culture in how they live. Ideally, they would not have families, get married, settle down into unthinking coupledom, give birth to and raise children, join neighbourhood watch, or pray for the nation in times of war. Each of these acts would 'support' the ideals that script such lives as queer, failed and unliveable in the first place. The aspiration to ideals of conduct that is central to the reproduction of heteronormativity has been called, quite understandably, a form of assimilation.

Take, for instance, the work of Andrew Sullivan. In his *Virtually Normal* he argues that most gay people want to be normal; and that being gay does not mean being not normal, even if one is not quite as normal as a straight person (to paraphrase Homi Bhabha, 'almost normal, but not quite'). So he

suggests that one can aspire to *have* a heterosexual life without *being* heterosexual: the only difference would be the choice of one's love object. As he puts it:

> It's perfectly possible to combine a celebration of the traditional family with the celebration of a stable homosexual relationship. The one, after all, is modelled on the other. If constructed carefully as a conservative social ideology, the notion of stable gay relationships might even serve to buttress the ethic of heterosexual marriage, by showing how even those excluded from it can wish to model themselves on its shape and structure. (Sullivan 1996: 112)

Here, gay relationships are valued and celebrated insofar as they are 'modelled' on the traditional model of the heterosexual family. Indeed, Sullivan explicitly defines his project as a way of supporting and extending the ideal of the family by showing how those who are 'not it' seek to 'become it'. Gay relationships, by miming the forms of heterosexual coupling, hence pledge their allegiance to the very forms they cannot inhabit. This mimicry is, as Douglas Crimp (2002) has argued, a way of sustaining the psychic conditions of melancholia insofar as Sullivan identifies with that which he cannot be, and indeed with what has already rejected him. As Crimp remarks, Sullivan is 'incapable of recognising the intractability of homophobia because his melancholia consists precisely in his identification with the homophobe's repudiation of him' (Crimp 2002: 6). Assimilation involves a desire to approximate an ideal that one has already failed; an identification with one's designation as a failed subject. The choice of assimilation – queer skin, straight masks – is clearly about supporting the violence of heteronormative distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate lives.[8]

As Judith Butler has argued, one of the biggest problems in campaigns for gay marriage is precisely the way that they may strengthen the hierarchy between legitimate and illegitimate lives. Rather than the hierarchy resting on a distinction between gay and straight, it becomes displaced onto a new distinction between more and less legitimate queer relationships (Butler 2002: 18). As she asks, does gay marriage 'only become an "option" by extending itself as a norm (and thus foreclosing options), one which also extends property relations and renders the social forms for sexuality more conservative'? (Butler 2002: 21). In other words, if some of the rights of heterosexuality are extended to queers, what happens to queers who don't take up those rights; whose life choices and sexual desires cannot be translated into the form of marriage, even when emptied of its predication on heterosexual coupling? Do these (non-married) queers become the illegitimate others against which the ideal of marriage is supported?

Of course, the question of gay marriage remains a political dilemma. For not to support the extension of the right of marriage to gay relationships could give support to the status quo, which maintains the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate lives on the grounds of sexual orientation. As Judith Butler (2002) argues, the social and psychic costs of not having one's relationship recognised by others (whether or not the recognition is determined by law) are enormous especially in situations of loss and bereavement (see the following section). I want to enter this debate by considering how the political choice of being queer or straight (or an assimilated queer) can be contested. Butler herself contests the choice through adopting a position of ambivalence. Whilst I recognise the value of such ambivalence, I want to suggest that more reflection on queer attachments might allow us to avoid positing assimilation or transgression as choices.

To begin with, we can return to my description of what we might call a queer life. I suggested that 'ideally' such lives will maintain a discomfort with the scripts of heteronormative existence. The reliance on this word is telling. For already in describing what may be queer, I am also defining grounds of an ideality, in which to have an ideal queer life, or even to be legitimately queer, people must act in some ways rather than others. We need to ask: How does defining a queer ideal rely on the existence of others who fail the ideal? Who can and cannot embody the queer ideal? Such an ideal is not equally accessible to all, even all those who identify with the sign 'queer' or other 'signs' of non-normative sexuality. Gayatri Gopinath (2003), for example, reflects on how public and visible forms of 'queerness' may not be available to lesbians from South Asia, where it may be in the private spaces of home that bodies can explore homo-erotic pleasures. Her argument shows how queer bodies have different access to public forms of culture, which affect how they can inhabit those publics. Indeed, whilst being queer may feel uncomfortable within heterosexual space, it does not then follow that queers always feel comfortable in queer spaces. I have felt discomfort in some queer spaces, again, as a feeling of being out of place. This is not to say that I have been *made* to feel uncomfortable; the discomfort is itself a sign that queer spaces may extend some bodies more than others (for example, some queer spaces might extend the mobility of white, middle-class bodies). At times, I feel uncomfortable about inhabiting the word 'queer', worrying that I am not queer enough, or have not been queer for long enough, or am just not the right kind of queer. We can feel uncomfortable in the categories we inhabit, even categories that are shaped by their refusal of public comfort.

Furthermore, the positing of an ideal of being free from scripts that define what counts as a legitimate life seems to presume a negative model of freedom; defined here as *freedom from norms*. Such a negative model of freedom idealises movement and detachment, constructing a mobile form

of subjectivity that could escape from the norms that constrain what it is that bodies can do. Others have criticised queer theory for its idealisation of movement (Epps 2001: 412; Fortier 2003). As Epps puts it: 'Queer theory tends to place great stock in movement, especially when it is movement against, beyond, or away from rules and regulations, norms and conventions, borders and limits . . . it makes fluidity a fetish' (Epps 2001: 413). The idealisation of movement, or transformation of movement into a fetish, depends upon the exclusion of others who are already positioned as *not free in the same way*. Bodies that can move with more ease may also more easily shape and be shaped by the sign 'queer'. It is for this reason that Biddy Martin suggests that we need to 'stop defining queerness as mobile and fluid in relation to what then gets construed as stagnant and ensnaring' (Martin 1996: 46). Indeed, the idealisation of movement depends upon a prior model of what counts as a queer life, which may exclude others, those who have attachments that are not readable as queer, or indeed those who may lack the (cultural as well as economic) capital to support the 'risk' of maintaining anti-normativity as a permanent orientation.

Queer lives do not suspend the attachments that are crucial to the reproduction of heteronormativity, and this does not diminish 'queerness', but intensifies the work that it can do. Queer lives remain shaped by that which they fail to reproduce. To turn this around, queer lives shape what gets reproduced: in the very failure to reproduce the norms through how they inhabit them, queer lives produce different effects. For example, the care work of lesbian parents may involve 'having' to live in close proximity to heterosexual cultures (in the negotiation with schools, other mothers, local communities), whilst not being able to inhabit the heterosexual ideal. The gap between the script and the body, including the bodily form of 'the family', may involve discomfort and hence may 'rework' the script. The reworking is not inevitable, as it is dependent or contingent on other social factors (especially class) and it does not necessarily involve conscious political acts.

We can return to my point about comfort: comfort is the effect of bodies being able to 'sink' into spaces that have already taken their shape. Discomfort is not simply a choice or decision – 'I feel uncomfortable about this or that' – but an effect of bodies inhabiting spaces that do not take or 'extend' their shape. So the closer that queer subjects get to the spaces defined by heteronormativity the more *potential* there is for a reworking of the heteronormative,[9] partly as the proximity 'shows' how the spaces extend some bodies rather than others. Such extensions are usually concealed by what they produce: public comfort. What happens when bodies fail to 'sink into' spaces, a failure that we can describe as a 'queering' of space?[10] When does this potential for 'queering' get translated into a transformation of the scripts of compulsory heterosexuality?

It is important, when considering how this potential is translated into transformation, that we do not create a political imperative; for example, by arguing that all lesbian parents should actively work to interrupt the scripts of compulsory heterosexuality. As Jacqui Gabb shows, some lesbian parents may perceive their families to be 'just like other families' (Gabb 2002: 6; see also Lewin 1993). Now, is this a sign of their assimilation and their political failure? Of course, such data could be read in this way. But it also shows the lack of any direct translation between political struggle and the contours of everyday life given the ways in which queer subjects occupy very different places within the social order. Maintaining an active positive of 'transgression' not only takes time, but may not be psychically, socially or materially possible for some individuals and groups given their ongoing and unfinished commitments and histories. Some working-class lesbian parents, for example, might not be able to afford being placed outside the kinship networks within local neighbourhoods: being recognised as 'like any other family' might not simply be strategic, but necessary for survival. Other working-class lesbian parents might not wish to be 'like other families': what might feel necessary for some, could be impossible for others. Assimilation and transgression are not choices that are available to individuals, but are effects of how subjects can and cannot inhabit social norms and ideals.[11] Even when queer families may wish to be recognised as 'families like other families', their difference from the ideal script produces disturbances – moments of 'non-sinking' – that will require active forms of negotiation in different times and places.

To define a family as queer is already to interrupt one ideal image of the family, based on the heterosexual union, procreation and the biological tie. Rather than thinking of queer families as an extension of an ideal (and hence as a form of assimilation that supports the ideal), we can begin to reflect on the exposure of the failure of the ideal as part of the work that queer families are doing. As Weeks, Heaphy and Donovan suggest, we can consider families as social practices, and 'more as an adjective or, possibly, a verb' (Week, Heaphy and Donovan 2001: 37). Families are *a doing word and a word for doing*. Indeed, thinking of families as what people do in their intimate lives allows us to avoid positing queer families as an alternative ideal, for example, in the assumption that queer families are necessarily more egalitarian (Carrington 1999: 13). Queer lives involve issues of power, responsibility, work and inequalities and, importantly, do not and cannot transcend the social relations of global capitalism (Carrington 1999: 218). Reflecting on the work that is done in queer families, as well as what queer families do, allow us to disrupt the idealisation of the family form.

This argument seems to suggest that queer families may be just like other families in their shared failure to inhabit an ideal. But of course such an argument would neutralise the differences between queer and non-queer

families, as well as the differences between queer families. Families may not 'be' the ideal, which is itself an impossible fantasy, but they have a different relation of proximity to that ideal. For some families the ideal takes the shape of their form (as being heterosexual, white, middle-class, and so on). The 'failure' to inhabit an ideal may or may not be visible to others, and this visibility has effects on the contours of everyday existence. Learning to live with the effects and affects of heterosexism and homophobia may be crucial to what makes queer families different from non-queer families. Such forms of discrimination can have negative effects, involving pain, anxiety, fear, depression and shame, all of which can restrict bodily and social mobility. However, the effects of this failure to embody an ideal are not simply negative. As Kath Weston has argued, queer families often narrate the excitement of creating intimacies that are not based on biological ties, or on established gender relations: 'Far from viewing families we choose as imitations or derivatives of family ties created elsewhere in their society, many lesbians and gay men alluded to the difficulty and excitement of constructing kinship in the *absence* of what they called "models"' (Weston 1991: 116, see also Weston 1995: 93). The absence of models that are appropriate does not mean an absence of models. In fact, it is in 'not fitting' the model of the nuclear family that queer families can work to transform what it is that families can do. The 'non-fitting' or discomfort opens up possibilities, an opening up which can be difficult and exciting.

There remains a risk that 'queer families' could be posited as an ideal within the queer community. If queer families were idealised within the queer community, then fleeting queer encounters, or more casual forms of friendship and alliance, could become seen as failures, or less significant forms of attachment. Queer politics needs to stay open to different ways of doing queer in order to maintain the possibility that differences are not converted into failure. Queer subjects do use different names for what they find significant in their lives and they find significance in different places, including those that are deemed illegitimate in heteronormative cultures. The word 'families' may allow some queers to differentiate between their more and less significant bonds, where significance is not assumed to follow a form that is already given in advance. For others, the word 'families' may be too saturated with affects to be usable in this way. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's vision of the family, for instance, is 'elastic enough to do justice to the depth and sometimes durability of nonmarital and/or nonprocreative bonds, same-sex bonds, nondyadic bonds, bonds not defined by genitality, "step"-bonds, adult sibling bonds, nonbiological bonds across generations, etc' (Sedgwick 1994: 71). But hope cannot be placed simply in the elasticity of the word 'family': that elasticity should not become a fetish, and held in place as an object in which we must all be invested. The hope of 'the family' for queer subjects

may exist only insofar as it is not the only object of hope (see Chapter 8, for an analysis of hope). If we do not legislate what forms queer bonds take – and presume the ontological difference between legitimate and illegitimate bonds – then it is possible for queer bonds to be named as bonds without the demand that other queers return those bonds in the form of shared investment.

It is, after all, the bonds between queers that 'stop' queer bodies from feeling comfortable in spaces that extend the form of the heterosexual couple. We can posit the effects of 'not fitting' as a form of queer discomfort, but a discomfort which is generative, rather than simply constraining or negative. To feel uncomfortable is precisely to be affected by that which persists in the shaping of bodies and lives. Discomfort is hence not about assimilation or resistance, *but about inhabiting norms differently*. The inhabitance is generative or productive insofar as it does not end with the failure of norms to be secured, but with possibilities of living that do not 'follow' those norms through. Queer is not, then, about transcendence or freedom from the (hetero)normative. Queer feelings are 'affected' by the repetition of the scripts that they fail to reproduce, and this 'affect' is also a sign of what queer can do, of how it can work by *working on* the (hetero)normative. The failure to be non-normative is then not the failure of queer to be queer, but a sign of attachments that are the condition of possibility for queer. Queer feelings may embrace a sense of discomfort, a lack of ease with the available scripts for living and loving, along with an excitement in the face of the uncertainty of where the discomfort may take us.

QUEER GRIEF

The debate about whether queer relationships should be recognised by law acquires a crucial significance at times of loss. Queer histories tell us of inescapable injustices, for example, when gay or lesbian mourners are not recognised as mourners in hospitals, by families, in law courts. In this section, I want to clarify how the recognition of queer lives might work in a way that avoids assimilation by examining the role of grief within queer politics. There has already been a strong case made for how grief supports, or even forms, the heterosexuality of the normative subject. For example, Judith Butler argues that the heterosexual subject must 'give up' the potential of queer love, but this loss cannot be grieved, and is foreclosed or barred permanently from the subject (Butler 1997b: 135). As such, homosexuality becomes an 'ungrievable loss', which returns to haunt the heterosexual subject through its melancholic identification with that which has been permanently cast out. For Butler, this ungrievable loss gets displaced:

heterosexual culture, having given up its capacity to grieve its own lost queer-ness, cannot grieve the loss of queer lives; it cannot admit that queer lives are lives that could be lost.

Simply put, queer lives have to be recognised as lives in order to be grieved. In a way, it is not that queer lives exist as 'ungrievable loss', but that queer losses cannot 'be admitted' as forms of loss in the first place, as queer lives are not recognised as lives 'to be lost'. One has to recognise oneself as having something before one can recognise oneself as losing something. Of course, loss does not simply imply having something that has been taken away. The meanings of loss slide from 'ceasing to have', to suffering, and being deprived. Loss implies the acknowledgement of the desirability of what was once had: one may have to love in order to lose. As such, the failure to recog-nise queer loss *as* loss is also a failure to recognise queer relationships as sig-nificant bonds, or that queer lives are lives worth living, or that queers are more than failed heterosexuals, heterosexuals who have failed 'to be'. Given that queer becomes read as a form of 'non-life' – with the death implied by being seen as non-reproductive – then queers are perhaps even already dead and cannot die. As Jeff Nunokawa suggests, heteronormative culture implies queer death, 'from the start' (Nunokawa 1991: 319). Queer loss may not count *because it precedes a relation of having.*

Queer activism has consequently been bound up with the politics of grief, with the question of what losses are counted as grievable. This politicisation of grief was crucial to the activism around AIDS and the transformation of mourning into militancy (see Crimp 2002). As Ann Cvetkovich puts it: 'The AIDS crisis, like other traumatic encounters with death, has challenged our strategies for remembering the dead, forcing the invention of new forms of mourning and commemoration' (Cvetkovich 2003a: 427). The activism around AIDS produced works of collective mourning, which sought to make present the loss of queer lives within public culture: for example, with the Names Project Quilt, in which each quilt signifies a loss that is joined to others, in a potentially limitless display of collective loss. But what are the political effects of contesting the failure to recognise queer loss by display-ing that loss?

In order to address this question, I want to examine public forms of grief displayed in response to September 11 2001. As Marita Stukern has argued, the rush to memorialise in response to the event not only sought to replace an absence with a presence, but also served to represent the absence through some losses and not others. On the one hand, individual losses of loved others were grieved, and surfaced as threads in the fabric of collective grief. The individual portraits of grief in the *New York Times*, and the memorials to individual losses posted around the city, work as a form of testimony; a way of making individual loss present to others. Each life is painted in order to

transform a number into a being, one who has been lost to someone; so the person who is lost *is not only missing, but also missed*. But at the same time, some losses more than others came to embody the collective loss. Sturken suggests that a 'hierarchy of the dead' was constructed: 'The media coverage of September 11 establishes a hierarchy of the dead, with, for instance, the privileging of the stories of public servants, such as firefighters over office workers, of policemen over security guards, and the stories of those with economic capital over those without, of traders over janitors' (Sturken 2002: 383–4). Whilst some losses are privileged over others, some don't appear as losses at all. Some losses get taken in (as 'ours'), thereby excluding other losses from counting as losses in the first place.[12]

Queer losses were among the losses excluded from the public cultures of grief. As David L. Eng has argued, the public scripts of grief after September 11 were full of signs of heteronormativity: 'The rhetoric of the loss of "fathers and mothers", "sons and daughters", and "brothers and sisters" attempts to trace the smooth alignment between the nation-state and the nuclear family, the symbolics of blood relations and nationalist domesticity' (Eng 2002: 90). It is because of this erasure that some queer groups have intervened, by naming queer losses. The president of the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association,[13] for example, names queer loss both by naming individual queers who were lost in September 11, and by describing that event as a loss for the queer community. What is interesting about this response is how it addresses two communities: the nation and the queer community, using inclusive pronouns to describe both. The first community is that of all Americans: 'This unimaginable loss has struck at the very core of our sense of safety and order.' Here, September 11 is viewed as striking 'us' in the same place. But even in this use of inclusive language, the difference of GLBT Americans is affirmed: 'Even on a good day, many GLBT Americans felt unsafe or at least vulnerable in ways large and small. Now, that feeling has grown even more acute and has blanketed the nation.' The feelings of vulnerability that are specific to queer communities are first named, and then get extended into a feeling that blankets the nation, covering over the differences. The extension relies on an analogy between queer feelings (unsafety, vulnerability) and the feelings of citizens living with the threat of terrorism (see Chapter 3). The narrative implies that the nation is almost made queer by terrorism: heterosexuals 'join' queers in feeling vulnerable and fearful of attack. Of course, in 'becoming' queer, the nation remains differentiated from those who 'are' already queer.

This tension between the 'we' of the nation and the 'we' of the queer community is also expressed through the evocation of 'hate': 'Like others, our community knows all too well the devastating effects of hate.' This is a complicated utterance. On the one hand, this statement draws attention to

experiences of being hated that trouble the national imaginary, which assumes a distinction between tolerant multicultural subjects who 'love' and fundamentalists and racists who 'hate' (see Chapter 6). By showing how queers are a community 'that is hated' by the imagined nation, the statement breaches the ideal image the nation has of itself ('America can hate others (queers), as well as be hated by others'). But at the same time, this narrative repeats the dominant one: the tragedy of the event is the consequence of 'their hate' for 'us' ('Why do they hate us?'). The construction of the queer community as a hated community, which splits the nation, slides into a construction of the nation as 'being' hated by others. The nation is reinstalled as a coherent subject within the utterance: together, we are hated, and in being hated, we are together.

Within this queer response, mourning responds to the loss of 'every life', which includes 'members of our own community'. Individual names are given, and the losses are named as queer losses: 'They include an American Airlines co-pilot on the flight that crashed into the Pentagon; a nurse from New Hampshire; a couple travelling with their 3-year-old son.' Furthermore, the losses are evoked through the language of heroism and courage: 'Father Mychal Judge, the New York Fire Department chaplain, who died whilst administering last rites to a fallen fire fighter, and Mark Bingham, a San Francisco public relations executive, who helped thwart the hijackers'. Certainly, the call for a recognition of queer courage and queer loss works to 'mark' the others already named as losses. That is, the very necessity of identifying some losses *as* queer losses reveals how most losses were narrated as heterosexual losses in the first place. The apparently unmarked individual losses privileged in the media are here marked by naming these other losses *as* queer losses. The risk of the 'marking' is that queer loss is then named as loss *alongside* those other losses; the use of humanist language of individual courage and bravery makes these losses *like the others*. Hence, queer loss becomes incorporated into the loss of the nation, in which the 'we' is always a 'we too'. The utterance, 'we too', implies both a recognition of a past exclusion (the 'too' shows how the 'we' must be supplemented), and a claim for inclusion (we are like you in having lost). Although such grief challenges the established 'hierarchy between the dead' (Sturken 2002: 384), it also works as a form of covering; the expression of grief 'blankets' the nation. Queer lives are grieved *as* queer lives only to support the grief of the nation, which perpetuates the concealment of other losses (such as, for example, the losses in Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine).

So whilst the NLGJA response to September 11 challenges the way in which the nation is secured by making visible some losses more than others, it allows the naming of queer losses to support the narrative it implicitly critiques. But our response cannot be to suspend the demand for the recog-

nition of queer grief. We have already registered the psychic and social costs of unrecognised loss. The challenge for queer politics becomes finding a different way of grieving, and responding to the grief of others. In order to think differently about the ethics and politics of queer grief, I want to reconsider the complexity of grief as a psycho-social process of coming to terms with loss.

Freud's distinction between mourning and melancholia might help us here. For Freud, mourning is a healthy response to loss, as it is about 'letting go' of the lost object, which may include a loved person or an abstraction which has taken the place of one (Freud 1934b: 153). Melancholia is pathological: the ego refuses to let go of the object, and preserves the object 'inside itself' (Freud 1934b: 153). In the former 'the world becomes poor and empty', whilst in the latter, 'it is the ego itself' (Freud 1934b: 155). Melancholia involves assimilation: the object persists, but only insofar as it is taken within the subject, as a kind of ghostly death. The central assumption behind Freud's distinction is that it is good or healthy to 'let go' of the lost object (to 'let go' of that which is already 'gone'). Letting go of the lost object may seem an ethical as well as 'healthy' response to the alterity of the other.

But the idea that 'letting go' is 'better' has been challenged. For example, the collection *Continuing Bonds*, 'reexamines the idea that the purpose of grief is to sever the bonds with the deceased in order to free the survivor to make new attachments' (Silverman and Klass 1996: 3). Silverman and Klass suggest that the purpose of grief is not to let go, but lies in 'negotiating and renegotiating the meaning of the loss over time' (Silverman and Klass 1996: 19). In other words, melancholia should not be seen as pathological; the desire to maintain attachments with the lost other is enabling, rather than blocking new forms of attachment. Indeed, some have argued that the refusal to let go is an ethical response to loss. Eng and Kazanjian, for example, accept Freud's distinction between mourning and melancholia, but argue that melancholia is preferable as a way of responding to loss. Mourning enables gradual withdrawal from the object and hence denies the other through forgetting its trace. In contrast, melancholia is 'an enduring devotion on the part of the ego to the lost object', and as such is a way of keeping the other, and with it the past, alive in the present (Eng and Kazanjian 2003: 3). In this model, keeping the past alive, even as that which has been lost, is ethical: the object is not severed from history, or encrypted, but can acquire new meanings and possibilities in the present. To let go might even be to kill again (see Eng and Han 2003: 365).

Eng and Han's work points to an ethical duty to keep the dead other alive. The question of how to respond to loss requires us to rethink what it means to live with death. In Freud's critique of melancholia, the emphasis is on a

lost external object, that which is other to me, being preserved by becoming internal to the ego. As Judith Butler puts it, the object is not abandoned, but transferred from the external to the internal (Butler 1997b: 134). However, the passage in grief is not simply about what is 'outside' being 'taken in'. For the object to be lost, *it must already have existed within the subject*. It would be too narrow to see this 'insideness' only in terms of a history of past assimilation ('taking in' as 'the making of likeness'), although assimilation remains crucial to love as well as grief, as I have already suggested. We can also think of this 'insideness' as an effect of the 'withness' of intimacy, which involves the process of being affected by others. As feminist critics in particular have argued, we are 'with others' before we are defined as 'apart from' others (Benjamin 1995). Each of us, in being shaped by others, carries with us 'impressions' of those others. Such impressions are certainly memories of this or that other, to which we return in the sticky metonymy of our thoughts and dreams, and through prompting either by conversations with others or through the visual form of photographs. Such 'withness' also shapes our bodies, our gestures, our turns of phrase: we pick up bits and pieces of each other as the effect of nearness or proximity (see Diprose 2002). Of course, to some extent this proximity involves the making of likeness. But the hybrid work of identity-making is never about pure resemblance of one to another. It involves a dynamic process of perpetual resurfacing: the parts of me that involve 'impressions' of you can never be reduced to the 'you-ness' of 'you', but they are 'more' than just me. The creation of the subject hence depends upon the impressions of others, and these 'impressions' cannot be conflated with the character of 'others'. The others exist within me and apart from me at the same time. Taking you in will not necessarily be 'becoming like you', or 'making you like me', as other others have also impressed upon me, shaping my surfaces in this way and that.

So to lose another is not to lose one's impressions, not all of which are even conscious. To preserve an attachment is not to make an external other internal, *but to keep one's impressions alive*, as aspects of one's self that are both oneself and more than oneself, as a sign of one's debt to others. One can let go of another as an outsider, but maintain one's attachments, by keeping alive one's impressions of the lost other. This does not mean that the 'impressions' stand in for the other, as a false and deadly substitute. And nor do such 'impressions' have to stay the same. Although the other may not be alive to create new impressions, the impressions move as I move: the new slant provided by a conversation, when I hear something I did not know; the flickering of an image through the passage of time, as an image that is both your image, and my image of you. To grieve for others is to keep their impressions alive in the midst of their death.

The ethical and political question for queer subjects might, then, not be

whether to grieve but *how* to grieve. In some queer responses to September 11, the public display of grief installs queer loss as an object, alongside other losses, and in this way constructs the nation as the true subject of grief. But queer subjects can also share their impressions of those they have lost without transforming those impressions into objects that can be appropriated or taken in by the nation. For some, this was precisely the work of the Names Project Quilt, despite the reservations theorists such as Crimp have expressed about the way it sanitised loss for the mainstream audience (Crimp 2002: 196). As Ken Plummer has argued, the Project might matter not because of how it addresses the nation, as an imagined subject who might yet take this grief on as its own, but because of the process of working through loss with others. He suggests that 'stories help organise the flow of interaction, binding together or disrupting the relation of self to other and community' (Plummer 1995: 174). Perhaps queer forms of grief sustain the impressions of those who have been lost by sharing impressions with others. Sharing impressions may only be possible if the loss is not transformed into 'our loss', or converted into an object: when the loss becomes 'ours', it is taken away from others. Not to name 'my' or 'your' loss as 'our loss' does not mean the privatisation of loss, but the generation of a public in which sharing is not based on the presumption of shared ownership. A queer politics of grief needs to allow others, those whose losses are not recognised by the nation, to have the space and time to grieve, rather than grieving for those others, or even asking 'the nation' to grieve for them. In such a politics, recognition does still matter, not of the other's grief, but of the other as a griever, as the subject rather than the object of grief, a subject that is not alone in its grief, since grief is both about and directed to others.[14]

It is because of the refusal to recognise queer loss (let alone queer grief), that it is important to find ways of sharing queer grief with others. As Nancy A. Naples shows us in her intimate and moving ethnography of her father's death, feeling pushed out by her family during her father's funeral made support from her queer family of carers even more important (Naples 2001: 31). To support others as grievers – not by grieving for them but allowing them the space and time to grieve – becomes even more important when those others are excluded from the everyday networks of legitimation and support. The ongoing work of grief helps to keep alive the memories of those who have gone, provide care for those who are grieving, and allow the impressions of others to touch the surface of queer communities. This queer community resists becoming one, and aligned with the patriotic 'we' of the nation, only when loss is recognised as that which cannot simply be converted into an object, and yet is with and for others. Here, your loss would not be translated into 'our loss', but would prompt me to turn towards you, and allow you to impress upon me, again.

QUEER PLEASURES

Of course, queer feelings are not simply about the space of negativity, even when that negativity gets translated into the work of care for others. Queer politics are also about enjoyment, where the 'non' offers hope and possibility for other ways of inhabiting bodies. How do the pleasures of queer intimacies challenge the designation of queer as abject, as that which is 'cast out from the domain of the liveable' (Butler 1993: 9), or even as the 'death' made inevitable by the failure to reproduce life itself? This is a risky question. Whilst queers have been constructed as abject beings, we are also sources of desire and fascination. Michael Bronski explores the tension between 'heterosexual fear of homosexuality and gay culture (and the pleasure they represent) and the equally strong envy of and desire to enjoy that freedom and pleasure' (Bronski 1998: 2). Žižek also examines the ambivalence of the investment in 'the other' as the one 'who enjoys', and whose enjoyment exceeds the economies of investment and return (Žižek 1991: 2). The racist or homophobe tries to steal this enjoyment, which he assumes was taken from him, through the aggression of his hatred (see also Chapters 2 and 6). To speak of queer pleasure as potentially a site for political transformation risks confirming constructions of queerness that sustain the place of the (hetero)normative subject.

Equally though, others can be envied for their lack of enjoyment, for the authenticity of their suffering, their vulnerability, and their pain. I have examined, for example, how the investment in the figure of the suffering other gives the Western subject the pleasures of being charitable (see Chapter 1). Within the Leninist theory of the vanguard party, or the work of the Subaltern Studies group, there also seems to be an investment in the pain and struggle of the proletariat or peasant. Here the investment allows the project of speaking for the other, whose silence is read as an injury (Spivak 1988). In other words, the other becomes an investment by providing the normative subject with a vision of what is lacking, whether that lack is a form of suffering or deprivation (poverty, pain), or excess (pleasure, enjoyment). The other is attributed with affect (as being *in* pain, or *having* pleasure) as a means of subject constitution. I will not suggest that what makes queers 'queer' is our pleasure (from which straight subjects are barred), but will examine how the bodily and social practices of queer pleasure might challenge the economies that distribute pleasure as a form of property – as a feeling we have – in the first place.

In mainstream culture, it is certainly not the case that pleasure is excluded or taboo (there are official events and places where the public is required to display pleasure – where pleasure is a matter of being 'a good sport'). Indeed within global capitalism the imperative is to have more pleasure (through the

consumption of products designed to tantalise the senses). And yet along-side this imperative to enjoy, there is a warning: pleasures can distract you, and turn you away from obligations, duties and responsibilities. Hedonism does not get a good press, certainly. Pleasure becomes an imperative only as an incentive and reward for good conduct, or as an 'appropriate outlet' for bodies that are busy being productive ('work hard play hard'). This imperative is not only about having pleasure as a reward, but also about having the right kind of pleasure, in which rightness is determined as an orientation towards an object. Pleasure is 'good' only if it is orientated towards some objects, not others. The 'orientation' of the pleasure economy is bound up with heterosexuality: women and men 'should' experience a surplus of plea-sure, but only when exploring each other's bodies under the phallic sign of difference (pleasure as the enjoyment of sexual difference). Whilst sexual pleasure within the West may now be separated from the task or duty of reproduction, it remains tied in some way *to the fantasy of being reproductive*: one can enjoy sex with a body that it is imagined one *could be* reproductive with. Queer pleasures might be legitimate here, as long as 'the queer' is only a passing moment in the story of heterosexual coupling ('queer as an enjoy-able distraction'). The promise of this pleasure resides in its convertability to reproduction and the accumulation of value.

We might assume that queer pleasures, because they are 'orientated' towards an illegitimate object, will not return an investment. But this is not always or only the case. As Rosemary Hennessy has argued, 'queer' can be commodified, which means that queer pleasures can be profitable within global capitalism: the pink pound, after all, does accumulate value (Hennessy 1995: 143). Hennessy argues that money and not liberation is crucial to recent gay visibility. As she puts it: 'The freeing up of sensory-affective capacities from family alliances was simultaneously rebinding desire into new com-modified forms' (Hennessy 2000: 104). The opening up of non-familial desires allows new forms of commodification; the 'non' of the 'non-norma-tive' is not outside existing circuits of exchange, but may even intensify the movement of commodities, which converts into capital (see Chapter 2). Global capitalism involves the relentless search for new markets, and queer consumers provide such a market. The production of surplus value relies, as Marx argued, on the exploitation of the labour of others. The commodifica-tion of queer involves histories of exploitation: the leisure industries that support queer leisure styles, as with other industries, depend upon class and racial hierarchies. So it is important not to identify queer as outside the global economy, which transforms 'pleasures' into 'profit' by exploiting the labour of others.

Such an argument challenges the way in which sexual pleasure is idealised – as almost revolutionary in and of itself – within some versions of queer

theory. For example, Douglas Crimp offers a vision of gay male promiscuity as 'a positive model of how sexual pleasures might be pursued' (Crimp 2002: 65), while Michael Warner defines sexual autonomy as 'access to pleasures' (Warner 1999: 7). Michael Bronski sees the 'pleasure principle' as the reason for the fear of homosexuality and also for its power: 'Homosexuality offers a vision of sexual pleasure completely divorced from the burden of reproduction: sex for its own sake, a distillation of the pleasure principle' (Bronski 1998: 8). This idealisation of pleasure supports a version of sexual freedom that is not equally available to all: such an idealisation may even extend rather than challenge the 'freedoms' of masculinity. A negative model of freedom is offered in such work, according to which queers are free to have pleasure as they are assumed to be free *from* the scripts of (hetero)normative existence: 'Because gay social life is not as ritualised and institutionalised as straight life, each relation is an adventure in nearly uncharted territory' (Warner 1999: 115; see also Bell and Binnie 2000: 133). Ironically, such a reading turns queer pleasure into a discovery narrative that is not far off genres that narrated the pleasures of colonialism: as a journey into uncharted territory. Who is the explorer here? And who provides the territory?

And yet, despite the way in which queer pleasures can circulate as commodities within global capitalism, I want to suggest that they can also work to challenge social norms, as forms of investment. To make this argument, we need to reconsider how bodies are shaped by pleasure and take the shape of pleasures. I have already addressed the phenomenology of pain (see Chapter 1), arguing that pain reshapes the surfaces of the body through the way in which the body turns in on itself. Pleasure also brings attention to surfaces, which surface as impressions through encounters with others. But the intensification of the surface has a very different effect in experiences of pleasure: the enjoyment of the other's touch opens my body up, opens me up. As Drew Leder has argued, pleasure is experienced in and from the world, not merely in relation to one's own body. Pleasure is expansive: 'We fill our bodies with what they lack, open up to the stream of the world, reach out to others' (Leder 1990: 75).

Pleasures open bodies to worlds through an opening up of the body to others. As such, pleasures can allow bodies to take up more space. It is interesting to consider, for example, how the display of enjoyment and pleasure by football fans can take over a city, excluding others who do not 'share' their joy, or return that joy through the performance of pleasure. Indeed, the publicness of pleasure can function as a form of aggression; as a declaration of 'We are here.' Beverley Skeggs (1999) shows how the display of pleasure by heterosexuals in queer space can also work as a form of colonisation; a 'taking over' of queer space, which leaves queer subjects, especially lesbians, feeling unsettled, displaced and exposed. These examples demonstrate an important spatial relation between pleasure and power. Pleasure involves not only the

capacity to enter into, or inhabit with ease, social space, but also functions as a form of entitlement and belonging. Spaces are claimed through enjoyment, an enjoyment that is returned by being witnessed by others. Recalling my argument in the first section of this chapter, the display of queer pleasure may generate discomfort in spaces that remain premised on the 'pleasures' of heterosexuality. For queers, to display pleasure through what we do with our bodies is to make the comforts of heterosexuality less comfortable.

Further, pleasure involves an opening towards others; pleasure orientates bodies towards other bodies in a way that impresses on the surface, and creates surface tensions. But pleasure is not simply about any body opening up to any body. The contact is itself dependent on differences that already impress upon the surfaces of bodies. Pleasures are about the contact between bodies that are already shaped by past histories of contact. Some forms of contact don't have the same effects as others. Queer pleasures put bodies into contact that have been kept apart by the scripts of compulsory heterosexuality. I am not sure that this makes the genitals 'weapons of pleasure against their own oppression' (Berlant and Freeman 1997: 158). However queer pleasures in the enjoyment of forbidden or barred contact engender the possibility of different kinds of impressions. When bodies touch and give pleasure to bodies that have been barred from contact, then those bodies are reshaped. The hope of queer is that the reshaping of bodies through the enjoyment of what or who has been barred can 'impress' differently upon the surfaces of social space, creating the possibility of social forms that are not constrained by the form of the heterosexual couple.

Queer pleasures are not just about the coming together of bodies in sexual intimacy. Queer bodies 'gather' in spaces, through the pleasure of opening up to other bodies. These queer gatherings involve forms of activism; ways of claiming back the street, as well as the spaces of clubs, bars, parks and homes. The hope of queer politics is that bringing us closer to others, from whom we have been barred, might also bring us to different ways of living with others. Such possibilities are not about being free from norms, or being outside the circuits of exchange within global capitalism. *It is the non-transcendence of queer that allows queer to do its work.* A queer hope is not, then, sentimental. It is affective precisely in the face of the persistence of forms of life that endure in the negative attachment of 'the not'. Queer maintains its hope for 'non-repetition' only insofar as it announces the persistence of the norms and values that make queer feelings queer in the first place.

NOTES

1. I borrow this phrase, of course, from Adrienne Rich. I am indebted to her work, which demonstrates the structural and institutional nature of heterosexuality.

2. A queer phenomenology might offer an approach to 'sexual orientation' by rethinking the place of the object in sexual desire, attending to how bodily directions 'towards' some objects and not others affects how bodies inhabit spaces, and how spaces inhabit bodies.

3. To reflect on queer feelings is also to reflect on 'queer' as a sticky sign. As Butler points put, the word 'queer' is performative: through repetition, it has acquired new meanings (Butler 1997c). Queer, once a term of abuse (where to be queer was to be not us, not straight, not normal, not human) has become a name for an alternative political orientation. Importantly, as a sticky sign, 'queer' acquires new meanings not by being cut off from its previous contexts of utterance, but by preserving them. In queer politics, the force of insult is retained; 'the not' is not negated ('we are positive'), but embraced, and is taken on as a name. The possibility of generating new meanings, or new orientations to 'old' meanings, depends on collective activism, on the process of gathering together to clear spaces or ground for action. In other words, it takes more than one body to open up semantic as well as political possibilities. Furthermore, we should remember that queer still remains a term of abuse, and that not all those whose orientations we might regard as queer, can or would identify with this name, or even be able to 'hear' the name without hearing the history of its use as an injurious term: 'Now, the word *queer* emerges. But other than referring to it in quotations, I will never use the term *queer* to identify myself or any other homosexual. It's a word that my generation – and my companion, who's twenty-five years younger than I am, feels the same way – will never hear without evoked connotations – of violence, gay-bashings, arrest, murder' (Rechy 2000: 319). What we hear when we hear words such as 'queer' depends on complex psycho-biographical as well as institutional histories.

4. See Chapter 5 on shame, where I discuss the way in which normative bodies have a 'tautological' relation to social ideals: *they feel pride at approximating an ideal that has already taken their shape.*

5. My analysis in Chapter 8, section 2, of the relation between wonder and the departure from what is ordinary takes this argument forward.

6. Of course, heterosexual subjects may experience discomfort when faced by queers, and queer forms of coupling, in the event of the failure to conceal signs of queerness. A queer politics might embrace this discomfort: it might seek to make people feel uncomfortable through making queer bodies more visible. Not all queers will be comfortable with the imperative to make others uncomfortable. Especially given that 'families of origin' are crucial spaces for queer experiences of discomfort, it may be in the name of love, or care, that signs of queerness are concealed. Thanks to Nicole Vittelone who helped me to clarify this argument. See also Chapter 5 on shame for a related discussion of queer shame within families.

7. Global capitalism relies on the 'feeling fetish' of comfort: for consumers to be comfortable, others must work hard, including cleaners as well as other manual workers. This division of labour and leisure (as well as between mental and manual labour) functions as an instrument of power between and within nation states. But the 'work' relation is concealed by the transformation of comfort into property and entitlement. We can especially see this in the tourism industry: the signs of work are removed from the commodity itself, such as the tourist package, as a way of increasing its value. See McClintock (1995) for an analysis of commodification and fetishism and Hochschild (1983: 7) for an analysis of the emotional labour that is required for the well-being of consumers.

8. I am, of course, paraphrasing Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*. The analogy has its limits: assimilation into whiteness and assimilation into straightness cannot be assumed to be equivalent, partly given the different relation of race and sexuality to signs of visibility. See Lorde 1984.

9. Thanks to Jackie Stacey whose astute comments during a conversation helped me to formulate this argument.

10. Of course, some queer bodies can pass, which means passing into straight space. Passing as a technology entails the work of concealment: to pass might produce an effect of comfort (we can't see the difference), but not for the subject who passes, who may be feeling a sense of discomfort, or not being at ease, given the constant threat of 'being seen' or caught out. See Ahmed (1999).

11. The debate about queer families has also been defined in terms of the opposition between assimilation and resistance (Goss 1997; Sandell 1994; Phelan 1997: 1; Weston 1991: 2; Weston 1998).

12. Of course, a question remains as to whether 'others' would want collective grief to be extended to them. What would it mean for the ungrieved to be grieved? The other might not want my grief precisely because such a grief might 'take in' what was not, in the first place, 'allowed near'. Would Iraqis, Afghanistanis want the force of Western grief to transform them into losses? Would this not risk another violent form of appropriation, one which claims their losses as 'ours', a claim that conceals rather than reveals our responsibility for loss? Expressions of nostalgia and regret by colonisers for that which has been lost as an effect of colonisation are of course mainstream (see hooks 1992). Recognising the other *as* grieving, as having experienced losses (for which we might have responsibility) might be more ethically and politically viable than grieving for the other, *or claiming their grief as our own*. See my conclusion, 'Just Emotions', for an analysis of the injustice that can follow when the ungrievable is transformed into the grieved.

13. The National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association 'is an organization of journalists, online media professionals, and students that works from within the journalism industry to foster fair and accurate coverage of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues. NLGJA opposes workplace bias against all minorities and provides professional development for its members.' Their web site is available on: http://www.nlgja.org/ Accessed 22 December 2003.

14. The political and legal battle for the recognition of queer partners in claims for compensation post September 11 is crucial. However, so far no such recognition has been offered. Recognising queer losses, and queers as the subjects of grief would mean recognising the significance of queer attachments. Bill Berkowitz interprets the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund, which leaves the determination of eligibility for compensation to states, as follows: 'In essence, in a rather complicated and convoluted decision, families of gays and lesbians will not be given federal compensation unless they have wills, or the states they live in have laws recognizing domestic partnerships, which of course most states do not.' 'Victims of 9/11 and Discrimination', http://www.workingforchange.com/article.cfm?ItemId=13001 Accessed 6 January 2004.

5   Multiculturalism and the proximity of strangers

> Multiculturalism is much more than the provision of special services to minority ethnic groups. It is a way of looking at Australian society, and involves living together with an awareness of cultural diversity. We accept our difference and appreciate a variety of lifestyles rather than expect everyone to fit a standardised pattern. Most of all it requires that we each can be 'a real Australian', without necessarily being 'a typical Australian'.
>
> (Australian Council on Population and Ethnic Affairs 1982)

How does multiculturalism reinvent 'the nation' over the bodies of strangers? How does the act of 'welcoming the stranger' serve to constitute the nation? How is the 'we' of the nation affirmed through the difference of the 'stranger cultures', rather than against it?

In the above definition, the proximity of different ethnic groups becomes integral to the definition of the nation space. Multiculturalism is defined, not as providing services for 'specific ethnic groups', but as a way of imagining the nation itself, a way of 'living' in the nation, and a way of living *with* difference. Significantly, the role of difference in allowing or even establishing a national imaginary presupposes the proximity of those who are already recognisable as strangers as well as the permanence of their presence: living together is here simply a matter of being aware of cultural diversity. The strangers become incorporated into the 'we' of the nation, at the same time as that 'we' emerges as the one who has to live with it (cultural diversity) and by implication with 'them' (those 'specific ethnic groups'). By suggesting that multiculturalism is *not* about the provision of services to specific ethnic groups, and then defining multiculturalism in terms of cultural diversity, this statement powerfully evokes and then erases particular histories of racial differentiation: racial difference, already construed as ethnic difference, is redefined in terms of cultural diversity, that is, in terms that erase any distinctions between groups. The 'acceptance' of difference actually serves to conceal those differences which cannot be reduced to 'cultural diversity'. In such a story of 'multicultural Australia', the differences and antagonism between white settler groups, Asian immigrants and Indigenous peoples are hidden from sight.

The tension between the incorporation and refusal of that which is different is clear in the final two sentences. Difference is immediately 'our difference': it is a difference that belongs to the inclusive 'we' of the nation. The claiming of difference as that which 'we' have involves the erasure of differences that cannot be absorbed into this 'we'. Furthermore, differences become immediately defined in terms of 'lifestyles', ways of being in the world that find easy commodification in terms of an aesthetics of appearance (appearing as different might make no difference to the difference that is ours: in such a fantasy, we might seek to glimpse almost white skin or an almost human heart beating underneath the stranger's dress).

The acceptance of a variety of lifestyles is defined against the expectation that everyone fits into a 'standardised pattern'. Is such an acceptance, an acceptance of those who don't fit? Or does the welcoming of the strange culture's difference itself require that culture *fit into this model of cultural diversity as a normative model of who 'we' already are*? To accept that which is different from the 'standard' is already, in some sense, to accept difference *into* the standard. Those who do not fit into a standardised pattern must still fit into the nation: they fit, not by being the standard, but by being defined in terms of their difference. The nation still constructs itself as a 'we', not by requiring that 'they' fit into a 'standardised pattern', but by the very requirement that they 'be' culturally different (that they 'not be' typical Australians). The strangers who do not fit such a pattern are still fitting into such a nation space: they fit into the nation precisely because they allow the nation to imagine *itself* as heterogeneous (to claim their differences as 'our difference').

The final sentence in this statement maintains this critical tension around the question of difference: 'we each can be "a real Australian", without necessarily being "a typical Australian" '. In the first instance, the use of the inclusive pronoun – '*we* each can be' – works to conceal further the differences that the first sentence of this statement had set up (however precariously through reference to 'specific ethnic minorities'). This 'we' is both the 'we' of each individual Australian as it alludes to the 'we' of Australia. The double possibility of the 'we' relates to the distinction set up between real and typical Australians. The implication is that any-body in Australia can *be* a real Australian even if they are not typically Australian, even if, that is, they appear to be different. The notion that any-body can be a real Australian is extremely powerful: it imagines a neutral national space in which authenticity itself is inclusive: it is open to all; it *sees no difference*. The failure to see any difference involves a form of individuation: there is a slip from the 'we' of the authentic nation to the 'we' of the abstract individual, the any-body who can be a real Australian (the *any-body* who might conceal *some-bodies* who are already recognised as 'typical Australians'). Such a narrative in which anyone can be a real Australian hence fails to take account of social differences at the level of group formation, at the same time as it claims to do justice to (individual) differences by not allowing such

differences to define who has the right to be an Australian (a model of justice which erases its own object). It is the collapse between the individual and nation that allows the narrative to imagine the multicultural nation as singular and inclusive in its very difference.

In this chapter, I want to examine how nations become imagined and contested through the recognition of strangers. Much work has been done on how nations define themselves against strange cultures by finding means of keeping strangers out (see Cohen 1994). It has been assumed that strangers are found at the borderlines or 'frontiers' of nation spaces. Certainly, we can consider how nations are invented as familiar spaces, as spaces of belonging, through being defined against others who are recognised, or known again, as strange and hence strangers. In some sense, the stranger appears as a figure, as a way of containing that which the nation is not, and hence as a way of allowing the nation to be. As Michael Dillon argues, 'with the delimitation of any place of dwelling, the constitution of a people, a nation, a state, or a democracy necessarily specifies who is *estranged from* that identity, place or regime' (1999: 119, emphasis added). The stranger appears as a figure through the marking out of the nation as dwelling, as a space of belonging in which some bodies are recognised as out of place.

I want to consider what happens to the construction of nationhood in the context of multiculturalism: what happens to the nation when 'strange cultures' are not only let in, but are redefined as integral to the nation itself? The strangers would not simply be those who, as I argued in Chapter 1, are already recognised as out of place, and as the origin and cause of danger. Rather, in the multicultural nation, the strangers would come to have a place in the nation: this in-place-ness would be made possible given that the strangers, as in the case of immigrants, have already arrived from-another-place (being out-of-place would become, in this framework, its own place). My analysis will examine how multiculturalism involves stranger fetishism: the act of welcoming 'the stranger' as the origin of difference produces the very figure of 'the stranger' as the one who can be taken in. I hence support Ien Ang's argument that othering can take place by acts of *inclusion* within multicultural discourse (1996: 37). I will also suggest that multiculturalism can involve a double and contradictory process of incorporation and expulsion: it may seek to differentiate between those strangers whose appearance of difference can be claimed by the nation, and those stranger strangers who may yet be expelled, whose difference may be dangerous to the well-being of even the most heterogenous of nations.

Nations and strangers

How are nations invented and imagined? The work of Benedict Anderson is crucial for an understanding of how 'the nation' is imaginary or fantastic. According to Anderson, both nationalism and nationhood are 'cultural artefacts' (1983: 13), with their own particular 'style in which they are

imagined' (1983: 15). Such an approach allows us to recognise that the boundaries of nations are not simply geographical or geopolitical (though they take both these forms), but also discursive. The nation does not refer to something that simply exists: nations are produced and constructed as places and communities in which 'a people' might belong. Of course, to say that nations are imagined is not to say that they are not real. The question of nationhood cannot be properly addressed without a recognition of the political economy of modern nation-states. An entity can be imagined and real at the same time: in some sense, the opposition between imaginary and real must be suspended if we are to understand how the nation comes to be *lived* as an 'organic community'. The imagining of the nation as a space in which 'we' belong is not independent of the material deployment of force, and the forms of governmentality which control, not only the boundaries between nation states, and the movements of citizens and aliens within the state, but also the repertoire of images which allows the concept of the nation to come into being in the first place.

To think of the nation as simultaneously imaginary and real (the nation as both fantasy and material effect) is also to think of the processes of identification which allow the nation to be secured as one of the organising assumptions of 'public life' (Goffman 1972: ix). What forms of identification are produced with the nation? How does 'the nation' come to be produced as a form of identification? In other words, we need to examine how the invention of the nation as a bounded space requires the production of a *national identity* which can be *claimed* by the individual ('I am ... ') through reference to the apparent transparency and coherence of the nation itself. The *investment* of the individual in being or having a nation suggests that the discourse of nationhood operates at both a psychic and social level. The individual, who encounters others in daily life, comes to identify as not only *having* but *being* a nationality, through referring to public symbols and expressions which themselves tell stories of what it means to be that nationality (the fleshing out of the 'national character'), and also through identifying with other individuals with whom such stories can be shared. The production of the nation involves not only image and myth-making – the telling of 'official' stories of origin – but also the everyday negotiations of what it means 'to be' that nation(ality). The production of the nation involves processes of self-identification in which the nation comes to be realised as belonging to the individual (the construction of the 'we' as utterable by the individual).

Crucially, then, the production of nations constitutes individuals as belonging to the nation: the work of 'the nation' is done as much through the everyday encounters in public life, as it is done through the political machinery of the nation-state. But the production of the nation also involves imagining the nation *space*: it involves the projection of boundaries (nationhood as cartography), and the telling of stories about the authentic landscape (for example, in travel writing and tourism), and the production of

interiority (imagining 'the heart of the nation'). The construction of the nation space takes place alongside the production of national character as instances in which 'the nation' itself is fleshed out *as place and person*. The nation becomes imagined as a body in which personhood and place are precariously collapsed. Through a metonymic elision, the individual can claim to embody a nation, or the nation can take the shape of the body of an individual ('bodyscape').

But how do the complex and multiple sites of the production of nationhood involve the reification of the figure of the stranger? As I pointed out in my introduction, the formation of a dwelling or place of residence involves a definition of who or what does not belong (estrangement). At one level, such distinctions between the familiar and the strange take place in everyday encounters. The self-identification with the nation also involves the recognition of others as belonging to the 'same' community. If we return to my discussion of recognition in Chapter 1, we can consider how the act of hailing or recognising some-body as a shared member of a community serves to produce or flesh out that community through or against the bodies of strangers. For example, the recognition of another as belonging to the same nation when travelling abroad relies on techniques for reading and telling the difference between that which is familiar and strange. The recognition of the other as from a shared nation requires a rehearsal of a public discourse of nationhood (shared memories of the nation space, the use of jokes, reference to sporting events or national achievements). The recognition of others as being from the same nation, or as sharing a nationality, hence involves an everyday and much rehearsed distinction between who does and does not belong within the nation space.

The production of the nation, in such a model, requires some-body or some-where to not-be in order for it to be. This demarcation of spaces of belonging through estrangement is central to Said's now classical theory of Orientalism: the Occident comes into being as a material place through the creation of an ontological distinction between it and the Orient. The Orient comes to embody that which the Occident is not. That is, the Orient creates Europe (or the Occident) as a bounded space in the very event of being positioned as its Other. The fascination with the Orient within Western imperial culture is a fascination which, in Said's terms, creates an idea of Europe, 'a notion collectively identifying "us against the non-Europeans" ' (1978: 7). Orientalism creates *an imaginary geographical divide* based on the binarism of Occident/Orient. In this sense, the creation of a space of belonging (the 'we' that remains unspoken, or is spoken only through the claiming of the right to speak) requires that which is strange in order to be.

The nation is one such space of belonging. Robin Cohen's reflection on the discourse of nationhood emphasises how national identity is produced through the differentiation between familiar and strange: 'a complex national and social identity is continuously constructed and reshaped in its (often antipathetic) interaction with outsiders, strangers, foreigners and

aliens – the "others". You know who you are, only by knowing who you are not' (1994: 1). In Cohen's model, strangers are not external to the formation of national identity: the nation requires strangers in order to exist. Despite this, the formation of identity is defined in terms of *frontiers:* strangers are the ones who are encountered at the border, and whose proximity threatens the coherence of national identity. Féher and Heller's consideration of nations poses an analogy between 'the nation' and the 'house': 'a country has a certain number of inhabitants who are supposed to close the doors behind them, not to let in any casual stranger without a preliminary agreement; however it can also open its doors' (1994: 143). Here, the question of the stranger in the nation is a question of opening or closing the doors: the stranger can either *be let in or kept out*. What I want to suggest in contrast is that the definition of the nation as a space, body, or house *requires the proximity of 'strangers' within that space*, whether or not that proximity is deemed threatening (monoculturalism) or is welcomed (multiculturalism).

A key problem in this literature on nationhood is the use of the model of 'generalisable other', in which national identity is simply defined through and against an other, as such (Cohen 1994: 1). What is demanded is a much more contextual and nuanced understanding of the role of differentiated others in the demarcation of national identity. In Chapter 2, I examined how bodily integrity is produced, not simply through or against a generalisable other, but by differentiating between others, who have a different function in establishing the permeability of bodily space. The very habits and gestures of marking out bodily space involve differentiating 'others' into familiar (assimilable, touchable) and strange (unassimilable, untouchable). While I would not want to imply that we can make a simple analogy between bodies and nations, I think we can understand how bodily and social spaces leak into each other, or inhabit each other (see also Chapter 4). The nation becomes imagined and embodied as a space, not simply by being defined against other spaces, but by being defined as close to some others (friends), and further away from other others (strangers). In this sense, only some others are read as strangers within the nation space. The proximity of strangers within the nation space – that is, *the proximity of that which cannot be assimilated into a national body* – is a mechanism for the demarcation of the national body, a way of defining borders within it, rather than just between it and an imagined and exterior other.

As Christine Inglis demonstrates, the encountering of cultural difference within the fantastic nation space allows the work of nation formation to be sustained: strangers, those who are not recognised as 'typical' of a nation, might allow the question of what it means to be a nation to be posed (again and again). Inglis argues that, 'Many nations are having to confront the issue of how they respond to these "strangers" in their midst and how they incorporate them within their existing society and institutions. In so doing, the issue of national identity as a symbolic and legal issue inevitably comes to the fore' (1997: 204). The proximity of strangers requires the nation to

respond: there is a constant process of adjustment and transformation. The nation is not secured in the process of keeping strangers out: the stranger's proximity is required if the stranger is to be known as the limit of 'the nation'. National identity emerges as a site of social conflict: there is a constant redefinition of who 'we' are through the very necessity of encountering strangers within the nation space. As Zygmunt Bauman puts it, the question is not, 'how to get rid of strangers and the strange, but how to live with them – daily and permanently' (1997: 55). National identity is unstable, and emerges through multiple encounters between those who assume themselves to be natives and those recognised as strangers, as out of place, in this place. The response to strangerness in the discourse of nationhood is hence built around the question of what it means to be 'in place'.

The assumption that strangers only populate the borders of the nation is in danger of reifying those borders: rather we need to understand the process of negotiation between identity and strangerness as ongoing, and as moving across different spatial formations (the body, home, the neighbourhood, the city, the country, the region, the nation, the globe). Immigration policy and border controls are not the only places in which the question of 'the stranger' is posed for and by the nation. National identity is metonymically related to other sites of identity formation: through marking out spaces of dwelling, spaces which are familiar and inhabitable, subjects are interpellated into multiple regimes. Like other forms of identity, nationhood is constantly renegotiated, and that negotiation is crucially dependent on encountering those who are recognisable as strangers, and who demand a response from the citizen: who are they? do they belong here? who am I? who are we? The distinction between native and stranger within a nation is not simply enforced at the border: rather, that distinction determines different ways in which subjects inhabit – which involves both dwelling and movement (see Chapter 1) – the space of the nation. The figure of the stranger is also constructed at the level of governmentality as the 'origin' of the very question of national identity: how do we live together, as one or many (= the strategic question of monocultural or multicultural government policy)? Or even, who is the 'we' of the nation if 'they' are here to stay?

Inventing the multicultural nation

Thinking about multiculturalism must begin, therefore, with an understanding that the coherence of the 'we' of the nation is always imaginary and that, given this, such a 'we' does not abolish cultural difference, but emerges through it. Multiculturalism is always contested, whether at the level of government policy, or whether in critical scholarship and resistant political activity. Multiculturalism is one of many historically specific negotiations of 'the nation'. There are key national and regional differences in how a discourse of multiculturalism emerges and is contested (see Rystad 1997). As

Theo Goldberg argues, 'Multiculturalism and commitments to cultural diversity emerged out of the conflictual history of resistance, accommodation, integration and transformation' (1994: 7). Multiculturalism can name a range of activities in education, as well as in grass roots political campaigns, which are based on the revaluing of minority cultures, and hence on the promotion of differences that are not accommodated within the official discourses of nationhood (Gunew 1994: 5). But, in other instances, multiculturalism works as an 'official' discourse: that is, it involves the setting of governmental agendas on what it should mean to be 'a nation'.

In this section, I will avoid speculating about what multiculturalism *is*, as it can clearly refer to contradictory forms of political mobilisation. As I am interested in *how* nations get constructed, I will analyse an example of 'official multiculturalism'. I will examine how multiculturalism works as a set of official 'responses' to cultural diversity in Australia. I will concentrate on Australia as an example, partly as this is where I first came to think about the implications of identifying a nation *as* multicultural, but also because Australia is an interesting example of how nationhood can be redefined through rather than against difference. In order to do this, I will read the *National Agenda for Multicultural Australia*, a policy framework document produced by the office of Multicultural Affairs when Paul Keating's Labor Government was still in office in 1989 (Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs 1989). This document is very much about setting an agenda, rather than making specific commitments to policy. It was widely circulated within the public domain and is still available on the Internet. I will also consider the more recent *Multicultural Australia: The Way Forward* (Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs 1997), which is an issues paper prepared by the National Multicultural Advisory Council since the election of John Howard's Liberal government, and is also available on the Internet. Although the former has received a lot of critical responses from academics in Australia, there has not been much close attention given to how the document is written. I want to read this document closely *as a text*, that is, *as a construction of multiculturalism, rather than as a response to it*. Such political documents are important instances in the forming of the national imaginary: as they describe the nation, they actively produce it. Rather than discuss the politics of multiculturalism at a general level, we need to look at the very 'grammar' of multiculturalism, in specific instances, in order to consider how it constructs the nation through mobilising a rhetoric of difference.

The *National Agenda* begins by assuming the descriptive power of the term, multiculturalism. It opens with the question, 'what is multiculturalism?', to which it answers, 'multicultural is simply a term which describes the cultural and ethnic diversity of contemporary Australia. We are, and will remain, a multicultural society.' As a descriptive term, multiculturalism refers to that fact that there are many cultures in the nation space. As such, multiculturalism is defined as an accurate description of what Australia

already is. Australia is defined *as* a multicultural nation: 'we' are and will be so. Immediately, the use of the term, 'multiculturalism', to describe the nation allows cultural diversity to reinforce, rather than undo, the fantastic inclusiveness of the nation: what 'we' are is not 'one', but 'many'. What binds Australia together as a 'we' is the fact of our differences: differences that belong to us, and that allow Australia 'to be' as a nation.

The second response to the opening question, 'what is multicultural Australia?', is as follows: 'As a public policy, multiculturalism encompasses government measures designed to respond to that diversity. It is a policy for managing the consequences of cultural diversity in the interests of the individual and society as a whole.' Multiculturalism comes to stand for a set of official responses to cultural diversity. Multiculturalism is both a name for cultural diversity and a name for government responses to cultural diversity. In the second sense, multiculturalism refers to a response to itself; it responds to itself. By using the same term to describe diversity and particular government approaches to diversity, the *National Agenda* closes a gap between description and prescription. The effect of this closure is to give the prescription – the response to difference – the status of description: the response to difference hence comes to refer to the 'real' of Australia.

The response to difference is defined in terms of the management of the consequences of difference. The term 'management' implies that differences themselves need to be contained and given a shape or coherence by government policy, and that without such policy, differences would be unmanageable (they would have problematic and unpredictable conse-quences for 'the individual and society as a whole'). The emphasis on the *consequences* of differences posits differences as originary: they simply and already exist. Such a positing of originary difference works to fetishise difference: what is concealed is precisely the histories of determination in which differences come to mark out terrains, subjects and bodies. Rather than 'differences' themselves being the 'consequences' of social processes, the document posits 'differences' as only *having* consequences. The detachment of differences from the social relations in which they are embedded allows the *National Agenda* to define itself as an agenda for dealing with differences, as such. Such an agenda then immediately becomes a question of 'interests'. Differences will be dealt with 'in the interests of' the individual and the undifferentiated nation. As a result, dealing with differences becomes a matter of concealing any differences that cannot be contained within the discourses of individualism and nationhood. That is, dealing with differences is a matter of refusing any differences that cannot be recognised as in the interests of the disembodied individual or the unified nation.

The *National Agenda* then defines three dimensions of multicultural policy. They are: cultural identity, social justice and economic efficiency. Cultural identity is defined in terms of 'the right of all Australians, within carefully defined limits, to express and share their individual cultural heritage, including their language and history'. Noticeably, cultural identity

is defined as an *individual right* available to 'all Australians'. Later in the document, the term 'all Australians' is repeated, and the policies of multiculturalism are defined as applying 'equally to all Australians'. What is noticeable, then, is that the right to cultural identity is both individuated (it is something an individual owns, possesses or has) at the same time as it is universalised, such that it does not recognise any differences between social groups within Australia, but instead establishes what is 'common' to 'all Australians'. The *National Agenda* concludes, 'Fundamentally, multiculturalism is about the rights of the individual – the right to equality of treatment; *to be able to express one's identity'* to be accepted as an Australian without having to assimilate to some stereotypical model of behaviour' (emphasis added). The right to express 'one's cultural heritage' becomes a mechanism for re-establishing the 'we' of the nation as commonality, made up of individual Australians, whose differences are neutralised under the banner of 'equality' and under the assumption that being (accepted as) an Australian is the proper telos of different forms of cultural expression.

What is at stake here is a certain definition of culture as something that one simply has, and something one seeks to express. Not only is culture defined as possessive and expressive, but it is immediately associated with 'heritage', that is, with a fixed notion of 'the past'. The mixing of different cultures is here given an awkward temporality: the here and now of the nation space does not clash with the individual expressions of cultural difference. Such expressions of difference can be contained within the temporality of the nation insofar as they can only return 'us' into a static and uncontestable past which belongs elsewhere (not only to another time, but to another place). In this sense, 'cultural differences' are assumed to be static and fixed, something that can be displayed in the present, but that do not present difficulties for the cultural imaginary of 'all Australians'.

These 'stranger cultures' are not only to be fixed in the past *as heritage*, but they are also presented as objects that are self-contained, free from contradiction and difference. Those cultures that are different are hence assumed to be self-identical, as lacking any differences within. As Jon Stratton and Ien Ang argue, 'the very validation of cultural diversity tends to hypostatise and even fetishise "culture", which suppresses the heterogeneities existing within each "culture" ' (1994: 153). To some extent, the coherence of multicultural Australia is made possible by defining difference purely in terms of the difference between self-identical cultures that inhabit the national landscape and the culture of Australia itself: these stranger cultures are a 'gift' to all Australians, something to be 'expressed' and 'shared', and I would add, consumed (see Chapter 6).

The way in which official versions of multiculturalism define culture has been one of the most contentious issues in the critical literature on multiculturalism, in Australia and elsewhere. For example, Laksiri Jayasuriya (1997) discusses how the expressive definition of culture implicit in this version of multiculturalism restricts culture to the private domain.

The emphasis on culture over and above issues of political economy – or at least the refusal to understand culture as a site of a struggle that is also political and economic – means that multiculturalism neutralises the differences that it apparently celebrates: 'the social accommodation afforded through cultural pluralism avoided the potential of social disharmony by channelling the social and economic strivings of migrants into the private domains of their cultural needs' (Jayasuriya 1997: 23). This restriction imposed by such a definition of culture can be related to my earlier point about how national identity can be claimed through turning 'their' differences into 'our' difference: those who are 'culturally different' from the 'typical Australians' can display their difference, but only in such a way that it supplements *what is already assumed to be the coherence of culture itself.* As John Frow and Meaghin Morris conclude in their introduction to *Australian Cultural Studies*:

> it is always possible for the category of culture with which it operates to remain at the decorative level of folklore ethnic markers detached from substructures of real and agonistic difference; conversely it tends to reproduce imaginary identities at the level of the ethnic 'community' and thereby to screen differentiations and contradictions within the community.
>
> (1993: x)

The *National Agenda* later comments:

> Multiculturalism is concerned to encourage all Australians, including those from non Anglo-Celtic backgrounds, to share their diversity of culture, rather than excluding one another or being forced into separate enclaves. It seeks to make it clear that colour or language, style of dress or mode of worship, are no indication of the degree of personal commitment to the future of our nation. Being an Australian has nothing to do with outward appearance.

In this extraordinary statement, the right to cultural identity is again about sharing diversity amongst all Australians: it is a difference that not only belongs to, but must *return to*, 'the nation'. Cultural identity is defined in terms of 'outward appearance': one can appear culturally different, but still 'be' an Australian. The narrative works through the displacement of a binary opposition: cultural difference is set up against being 'Australian' through an opposition between appearance and being. Such a narrative reduces 'culture', understood in terms of 'cultural difference', to an outward appearance that actually conceals an Australian being. Here, multiculturalism is about accepting differences at the level of appearance in the assumption that they conceal a unified core or 'Australian being'. Being an Australian – and being committed to Australia – is hence 'nothing to do

with outward appearance', nothing to do, that is, with the expression of one's cultural identity. As long as one is truly Australian underneath one's dress one can appear as different. Culture is reduced to a matter of style or dress and any cultural differences that question what it means 'to be' Australian are excluded from the concept of cultural identity altogether.

As Gillian Bottomley puts it, 'Australia's official policy of multicultural-ism advances a kind of repressive tolerance towards cultural practices of the large immigrant population. But some cultural forms are more acceptable than others' (1992: 49). Those cultural forms that are 'more acceptable' are precisely those that may look different, *but are in fact the same underneath*. As a result, this multicultural nation accepts those differences that do not threaten the 'we' of an Australian being: the differences that cannot be reduced to mere appearance become *the unassimilable*. Those others who are (like) natives underneath their dress are assimilated into the 'we' of the nation (they do not have to be *culturally assimilated*, but must assimilate at the level of being), while those others who are strange beings define the limits to what or who can be assimilated (the unassimilable would be evoked by a figure of a stranger who refuses to be 'a real Australian' underneath).

The implicit differentiation between others who are more and less famil-iar and strange functions as a way of defining the potential and limits of the multicultural nation. The 'we' of the nation can expand by incorporating some others, thus providing the appearance of difference, while at the same time, defining other others, who are not natives underneath, as a betrayal of the multicultural nation itself (such other others may yet be expelled from the national body). Alternatively, what we have in operation in this multicultural discourse is two figures of 'the stranger' who are constructed through their different degrees of proximity to the white Australian 'native'. In one figure, the stranger appears different, but is the same underneath; this stranger can be assimilated, and even welcomed, insofar as it enables *the nation itself to appear as different*. In the other figure, the stranger's dress can reveal only a strange being; this *stranger stranger* cannot be assimilated. The stranger stranger, however, cannot simply be understood as the unas-similable other: rather, such strangers are assimilated precisely *as* the unassimilable and hence they allow us to *face* the 'limit' of the multicultural nation ('we' are open to some strangers, but not stranger strangers, who refuse to be 'native' underneath).

Multiculturalism as an official discourse hence involves narratives of partial assimilation or incorporation (through which the 'we' of the nation can appear different) as well as narratives of partial expulsion (through which the 'we' of the nation defines the limits of what it 'can be'). Both the narratives of incorporation and expulsion involve differentiating *between* others, which produces simultaneously, two figures of 'the stranger', including the one who can be taken in (the other who *appears* as a stranger), and the one who might yet be expelled (the other who *is* a stranger). This double construction of the 'we' of the nation in relation to the figures of the

stranger reminds me of Ghassan Hage's consideration of the difference between 'being' and 'having' difference within multiculturalism (1998: 140). Hage suggests that Australian multiculturalism tends to define 'difference' as something that the 'we' of the nation 'has' rather than 'is': such a narrative still keeps in place the difference between that 'we' and those different others whom the nation 'has'. I am suggesting that the 'we' of the nation has a more complex and ambivalent relationship to difference, precisely because the multicultural nation remains predicated on a prior act of *differentiating between differences*. The multicultural nation claims 'to be' different, insofar as it incorporates those others whose difference is a matter of appearance. It hence takes on their difference (*becomes* different) by requiring that they *appear* different. At the same time, the multicultural nation claims to 'have' difference, insofar as the 'we' that becomes 'different' is still differentiated from those that simply *are* different. Hence, in the very same moment, the multicultural nation can claim *to be* and *to have* difference. The figure of the familiar stranger *appears* as that which allows us to be(come) different and to have difference, while the figure of the stranger stranger (who is nevertheless still familiar in its very strangerness), *disappears* as that which the 'we' cannot 'be' or 'have'.

The second key aspect of multiculturalism in the *National Agenda* is social justice, defined as, 'the right of all Australians to equality of treatment and opportunity, and the removal of barriers of race, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, gender or place of birth'. Here, we have a clear statement of multicultural justice within the liberal framework of equality of opportunity (with its negative model of freedom) and individualism. The markers of difference are defined as *barriers* that restrict the movements and capacities of essentially disembodied individuals. The commitment to social justice is defined through a neo-liberal discourse: multiculturalism can be just in this framework, *only insofar as it refuses to recognise the differences that it supposedly not only describes but also manages*. Again, such differences are not only managed, but erased under the signifier of individual freedom, the individual who embodies the justice of Australian 'multiculturalism for all'.

The final key aspect of multiculturalism is economic efficiency, 'the need to maintain, develop and utilize effectively the skills and talents of all Australians *regardless of their background*' (emphasis added). Later, in the section on human resources, the following statement is offered:

> People, as much as machines, are a crucial input to economic performance and growth. Effective and efficient development and utilisation of our human resources is essential if Australia's economic potential is to be realised fully. … Multicultural policies seek to maximise the contribution – the experience, job skills and entrepreneurial talents of all Australians to the economic life of the community.

The term 'all Australians' is qualified by the phrase, 'regardless of their background'. This suggests that the goal of economic efficiency in multicultural Australia is partly about making the most of the resources and skills offered by those 'real' but not 'typical' Australians (despite the sustained emphasis on the blanket term, 'all Australians').

We can refer back to my discussion of global nomads in Chapter 4, where I argued that they become highly commodifiable as skilled workers in a global or transnational economy of difference. Likewise, within the modern late capitalist nation-state, multiculturalism can also be about the production of a better workforce who can deal with the multiple networks and forms of exchange in global capitalism. This is what makes most sense of Paul Keating's declaration, 'I am Asian', and his description of Australia as a 'multicultural nation in Asia'. Here, multiculturalism is about achieving a workforce that is better equipped to trade with nearby Asian countries: it is about the maximisation of profit in the interest of 'the Australian economy'. Such a discourse of economic efficiency, at the very same time, conceals the class and racial stratification of the Australian workforce: it conceals, for example, how migrant workers tend to occupy lower paid and unskilled positions. This narrative defines multiculturalism as a better form of management and use of 'the resources' of those from a non-English speaking background,[1] at the very same time as it conceals *the historical determination of difference as profit* (by explicitly defining multiculturalism in terms of *human* resources). Lisa Lowe's comments on multiculturalism in the United States have a clear resonance here: 'the production of multiculturalism at once "forgets" history, and in this forgetting, exacerbates a contradiction between the concentration of capital within a dominant class group and the unattended conditions of a working class increasingly made up of heterogeneous immigrant, racial, and ethnic groups' (1996: 86)

The *National Agenda* also attempts to define 'the limits to Australian multiculturalism'. In the first instance, the limits are that all Australians should have an 'overriding and unifying commitment to Australia, to its interests first and foremost'. Here, there is a clear assumption of the importance of a 'common culture' to a 'multicultural nation': while other Australians do not have to assimilate fully (to become 'typical Australians'), their difference cannot be a justification for not 'being Australian', that is, for not being committed to 'Australia' as such. The nation is clearly imagined as a singular and unified space: those untypical Australians must 'fit in' by expressing their difference only given a prior attachment and loyalty to the 'future of the nation'.

The second defined limit is even more important: 'multicultural policies require all Australians to accept the basic structures and principles of Australian society – the Constitution and the rule of law, tolerance and equality, Parliamentary democracy, freedom of speech and religion, English as the national language and equality of the sexes'. Here, the institutions, language and discourse of Australia, as a Western nation state, provide the

framework in which all differences must be negotiated. As Jayasuriya argues, 'all statements of Australian multiculturalism from the Whitlam to the Keating era … sought to accommodate difference and plurality strictly within a uniform and monistic political and social framework' (1997: 5). What is not acknowledged in the *National Agenda* is how these institutions themselves require an assimilation to a set of values that have historically been linked to colonialism and other forms of domination. There is an organising assumption that these institutions are themselves neutral and can not only accommodate differences, *but can become a mechanism for their advancement*.

The inclusion of 'the equality of the sexes' as a 'limit of multiculturalism' is hence extremely important. In this first instance, one can consider how a version of liberal feminism is easily accommodated into the universalist premises of 'the common culture'. Such a feminism can be accommodated precisely insofar as it is set up as *beyond difference*. However, the relationship between the limits of multiculturalism and feminism is more complex than this precisely because of the failure of gender to appear elsewhere (as an explicit category). The abstract individual who is privileged as the true subject of multicultural Australia (the *body* which is *any-body*) is clearly gendered: its lack of a gender is a mark of its masculinity. The incorporation of a version of liberal feminism functions to conceal the privileged relationship between the masculine subject and the multicultural nation. Such a nation is imagined as gender neutral, and then supplemented through reference to the discourse of liberal feminism as that which 'transcends' the limits of cultural difference. In this sense, feminism can be incorporated into the multicultural nation only through *a double concealment*: first, the already gendered nature of the multicultural subject is concealed, and second, by *reducing* feminism to a liberal discourse of equality that is our 'common culture', the cultural differences which cannot be reconciled into liberalism are concealed (which then allows feminism to be constructed *simultaneously* as a limit of multiculturalism and as advanced by multiculturalism).

The way in which multiculturalism assumes the inherent neutrality of that which is marked by differences is clear in the case of the law. The discussion paper from the Australian Law Commission on multiculturalism and the criminal law suggests that: 'The fact that Australia is a multicultural society does not mean that different standards of criminal behaviour should be applied to different groups. Communities within Australia have distinctive religious or cultural values which may influence what is right or wrong and what should be punished. However, while people are free to follow their own beliefs and have their own values, the imposition of standards by the power of the state should apply equally to all' (ALRC 1991: 4). What is noticeable here is that law can accommodate only some differences given the assumption that its standards must apply equally to all. Any element of another culture which contradicts the assumed neutrality of

the legal standard, despite the recognition of points of difference, is hence *outlawed* within multicultural Australia.[2] The reliance on the uniformity of standards and institutions that have historically been linked to forms of domination, suggests that multiculturalism can only allow those differences that can be neutralised and accommodated within 'one' culture: *it sets up unassimilable differences as a failure or betrayal, not just of the Australian nation, but of the discourse of multiculturalism itself.*

Any real conflicts of value are mediated by a framework that presents its values as neutral. John Horton suggests that, 'multiculturalism becomes a problem when conflicts between groups about values or their interpretation cannot be comfortably accommodated within a particular social structure' (Horton 1993: 3). In contrast, I would suggest that multiculturalism is the solution to conflicts that cannot be accommodated: by presupposing that differences must be reconciled within a common culture, multiculturalism *excludes any differences that challenge the supposedly universal values upon which that culture is predicated.* Or, to put it more strongly, the official discourse of multiculturalism implies that differences *can be* reconciled through the very legislative framework which has historically defined Western values as neutral and universal. This use of difference as a form of reconciliation is possible because 'differences' have already been set up as simply expressive, private or a matter of appearance; they are not defined in terms of difference in values or ways of being. What we have then is a *disavowal of differences that are incommensurable*: a fantasy that, through the very legislative mechanisms of law, language and the polity, differences can be reconciled into a unified being-with-strangers-for-the-nation.

Multiculturalism and common culture

The *National Agenda* has been followed by other official documents defining Australia's commitment to multiculturalism. The National Multicultural Advisory Council produced an issues paper, *Multicultural Australia: The Way Forward* in 1997. This document endorses the principles of the *National Agenda*, but provides a different history of the coming-into-being of 'multicultural Australia' and a different – or perhaps more explicit – narrative of the proper goals of multiculturalism (there is also a list of more specific policy shifts which I do not have the space to discuss here). In the first instance, the narrative is prefaced with a message from the Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Philip Ruddock, who begins the story of multiculturalism with a display of patriotism (sustained throughout the document). He suggests, 'We have been able to build upon the richness and strengths of many cultures to create a nation of which we can justifiably be proud.' Here, multiculturalism is an achievement of the 'nation': 'we' were able to combine the best of 'many cultures' to create a superior *multiculture* that remains ours. The 'we' is asserted as heroic, as being able to combine and build on others to create a better culture. Noticeably, such a

'we' is located outside culture, defined in terms of cultural difference. The 'we' is the subject of history that authorises itself as a subject precisely by telling the story of how it came to be through the appropriation or 'mixing' of those who are culturally different. In this sense, the 'we' *claims hybridity*, by assigning others to the category of pure difference, which 'it' alone can mix into something that is not one or the other.[3]

The story of multiculturalism as 'our' national achievement is sustained throughout the report. Indeed, the ability to build upon 'many cultures' is linked to a peculiarly 'Australian' set of values: 'As a community we have and support core values, principles and institutions which, while shared with many countries, have a special Australian quality. These include a "fair go".' The emphasis on 'fair go' as a core value throughout the report is extremely important: 'fair go' has historically been the utterance of the *typical Aussie battler*, the ordinary bloke, upon which the myth of an egalitarian society rests. Importantly, then multiculturalism is defined as the outcome of a core value which confirms the place of the typical (white, male) Australian in the origin of 'the nation'. According to such a narrative, multiculturalism exists, not as a way of breaking the relationship between Australian national identity and the typical Australian, *but as an outcome of that very relationship*: it is the ordinary values of typical Australians that have allowed 'us' to become a 'multicultural nation'. In this sense, the document makes explicit that the *any-body* who can be a real Australian in multicultural Australia still takes the shape of the body of the ordinary bloke, the white masculine hero of Australian settler history.

By evoking the figure of the ordinary Australian, *Multicultural Australia* actually prefigures the monocultural narratives offered by the extreme right-wing party One Nation, led by Pauline Hanson.[4] In *Multicultural Australia* the ordinary or typical Australian is represented as a hero for his ability to welcome and incorporate others. In One Nation rhetoric, the figure of the 'ordinary Australian' who embodies the values of 'mainstream Australia' is also central (see Stratton 1998: 76–84; Hanson 1997). However, in the narratives offered by One Nation, *'the ordinary Australian' is transformed from hero to victim* (or rather his heroism made him a victim of those incoming others he once welcomed). One Nation represents the figure of the ordinary Australian as the victim of multiculturalism itself, which they represent as privileging those who are marginal at the expense of the mainstream (Hanson 1997). Both One Nation and *Multicultural Australia* hence evoke the figure of the ordinary Australian in order to call for a politics in which difference should not threaten the common culture and 'ordinary values' of the nation.

The identification of core values with the figure of the typical Australian does an enormous amount of historical work in the report, *Multicultural Australia*. Throughout, the emphasis is on taking pride in 'our' history of tolerance and openness to newcomers: 'we should build upon our proud record of compassion and concern which has made ours a welcoming and

caring society'. This writing of the history of the Australian nation as predicated on openness, tolerance and a 'fair go' could be considered a direct attempt to overcome the national discourse of shame about the historical dispossession of Indigenous peoples.[5] Ironically, the diversity of Indigenous peoples is mentioned, or indeed claimed, as part of 'our' history of cultural diversity, alongside the diversity of migrant cultures: 'Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have many cultures and languages and our migrants have come from all parts of the globe'.[6] The use of the term 'our' is quite astonishing in its violence. As 'our' possessions, these natives and strangers have allowed 'us' to be 'culturally diverse'. Such a narrative not only overlooks histories of violence, but it also performs its own violence: it signals an-other appropriation of 'strangers' into the achievement of multiculturalism itself ('they' have allowed us 'to be').

Not surprisingly, then, in the account of the goals of multiculturalism more emphasis is placed on unity: throughout the document, the aim of multiculturalism is defined as 'ensuring that cultural diversity *is a unifying force*'. The document asks us to question any impression 'that multicultural policy has been primarily concerned with migrants': 'We believe that multicultural policy must become more inclusive by embracing and being relevant to all Australians.' The term 'all Australians' erases any differences between white settler groups, migrants and Indigenous groups: the celebration of difference must bring us together. Such a story of multiculturalism is a story of an *inclusive multiplicity*: a multiculturalism that includes all of us, that unites us together as 'fellow' natives. In this story, multiculturalism is not even about unity-in-diversity – which is how we could read the narrative offered in the *National Agenda* (see Stratton and Ang 1994). Rather, it is about unity-from-diversity. The definition of a multicultural nation takes place through the use of a monocultural framework: multiculturalism can be described as a cultural diversity that, at least to some extent, must be overcome or, to put it better, must be transformed into a unifying force. In this framework, differences that cannot be assimilated into the white, masculine core of the Australian being (the typical Australian who calls for a 'fair go') are defined as a betrayal of the multicultural nation. At the same time, cultural differences that have historically been sites of struggle and antagonism are appropriated and neutralised as a sign of 'our' history.

In such multicultural constructions of the nation space, strangers become a means of defining 'who' we are, not by being represented as 'outside' that we (although some strangers are known in this way), but by being incorporated as elements in the 'making' of the 'we' that can be uttered by the national subject. I hence broadly support Ghassan Hage's argument that multicultural tolerance and monocultural intolerance are structured around a similar fantasy of the national subject who alone is afforded the will to define who should and should not inhabit the nation space (1998: 17). However, unlike Hage, my argument is not simply that both multicultural-

ism and monoculturalism involve white supremacy (1998: 232). My argument has attended to the grammatical specificity of the construction of the multicultural nation by considering how the 'we' of the nation is established by an act of differentiating *between* those stranger others who have already entered the nation space.

Multiculturalism, by defining difference purely in terms of appearance, can only value the differences that, beyond the level of culture, can be incorporated into the 'ordinary values' of 'fair go', or the institutional and political frameworks of neo-liberalism itself. Indeed, in some multicultural constructions of the nation, the 'we' itself emerges through the very *gesture of claiming difference*. Those who appear as different are incorporated *as* difference – a process that allows the nation to imagine *itself* as heterogeneous (to claim their differences as 'our difference'). This process of incorporation also involves acts of differentiation. While some strangers can be assimilated, as their strangeness is 'seen' as only a matter of appearance, other strangers can only be assimilated *as* the unassimilable. Their strangeness is represented as a matter of being, and hence betrays the very *appearance* of difference within the discourse of multiculturalism itself. These strangers hence disappear and reappear as embodying the danger of the one *who does not want to become 'a real native' underneath the appearance of difference*. The strangers who refuse to receive the gift of multiculturalism by being natives, in the very act of appearing as different, hence function to define the limits of multicultural hospitality.[7] We can only welcome those others who allow us to be ourselves and be different, at one and the same time.

At one level, it might be assumed that the emergence of new (or not-so-new) forms of right-wing populism that organise their narratives through constructing strangers as phobic objects, might lead us to endorse multiculturalism as a way of opening ourselves to strangers, or as a way of imagining a more heterogeneous sociality. But for me, the emergence of extreme monocultural agendas, in Australia as well as elsewhere (most notably, in the United States and France), calls for a different response. It calls me to ask how we can turn an opposition to monoculturalism into a mobilisation of a different politics of multiculturalism, and a better form of hospitality towards others (see Chapter 7). Such a politics would refuse to celebrate the figure of the stranger as the origin of difference: it would also be concerned with how the 'we' of the nation can violently reproduce itself in the name of liberal inclusion. Such a politics would attend to how incorporation and expulsion can both work *simultaneously* to fetishise the stranger as the origin of difference. Such an oppositional politics may hence find 'a place' for *that which refuses to be assimilated into the heterogeneous 'we' of the nation*.