

Transformations: Thinking Through Feminism

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London and New York

1 Recognising strangers

I turn around as you pass me. You are a stranger. I have not seen you before. No, perhaps I have. You are very familiar. You shuffle along the foot path, head down, a grey mac shimmering around your feet. You look dirty. There are scars and marks on your hands. You don't return my stare. I think I can smell you as you pass. I think I can hear you muttering. I know you already. And I hold myself together and breathe a sigh of relief as you turn the corner. I want you not to be in my face. I cast you aside with a triumph of one who knows this street. It is not the street where you live.

How do you recognise a stranger? To ask such a question, is to challenge the assumption that the stranger is the one we simply fail to recognise, that the stranger is simply *any-body* whom we do not know. It is to suggest that the stranger is *some-body* whom we have *already recognised* in the very moment in which they are 'seen' or 'faced' as a stranger. The figure of the stranger is far from simply being strange; it is a figure that is painfully familiar in that very strange(r)ness.¹ The stranger has already come too close; the stranger is 'in my face'. The stranger then is not simply the one whom we have not yet encountered, but the one whom we have already encountered, or already faced. The stranger comes to be faced as a form of recognition: we recognise somebody *as a stranger*, rather than simply failing to recognise them.

How does this recognition take place? How can we tell the difference between strangers and other others? In this chapter, I will argue that there are techniques that allow us to differentiate between those who are strangers and those who belong in a given space (such as neighbours or fellow inhabitants). Such techniques involve ways of reading the bodies of others we come to face. Strangers are not simply those who are not known in this dwelling, but those who are, in their very proximity, *already recognised as not belonging*, as being out of place. Such a recognition of those who are out of place allows both the demarcation and enforcement of the boundaries of 'this

place', as where 'we' dwell. The enforcement of boundaries requires that some-body – here locatable in the dirty figure of the stranger – has already crossed the line, has already come too close: in Alfred Schutz's terms, the stranger is always approaching (1944: 499). The recognition of strangers is a means by which inhabitable or bounded spaces are produced ('this street'), not simply as the place or locality of residence, but as the very living form of a community.

In this chapter, I analyse how the discourse of stranger danger produces the stranger as a figure – a shape that appears to have linguistic and bodily integrity – which comes then to embody that which must be expelled from the purified space of the community, the purified life of the good citizen, and the purified body of 'the child'. Such an approach to 'the stranger' considers how encounters between others involve the production and over-representation of the stranger as a figure of the unknowable. That is, such encounters allow the stranger to appear, to take form, *by recuperating all that is unknowable into a figure that we imagine we might face here, now, in the street.*

On recognition

To recognise means: to know again, to acknowledge and to admit. How do we know the stranger *again*? The recognisability of strangers is determinate in the social demarcation of spaces of belonging: the stranger is 'known again' as that which has already contaminated such spaces as a threat to both property and person: 'many residents are concerned about the strangers with whom they must share the public space, including wandering homeless people, aggressive beggars, muggers, anonymous black youths, and drug addicts' (Anderson 1990: 238). Recognising strangers is here embedded in a discourse of survival: it is a question of how to survive the proximity of strangers who are already figurable, *who have already taken shape*, in the everyday encounters we have with others.

A consideration of the production of the stranger's figure through modes of recognition requires that we begin with an analysis of the function of local encounters in public life. As Erving Goffman suggests, 'public life' refers to the realm of activity generated by face-to-face interactions that are organised by norms of co-mingling (1972: ix). Such an approach does not take for granted the realm of the public as a physical space that is already determined, but considers how 'the public' comes to be lived through local encounters, through the very gestures and habits of meeting up with others. How do such meetings, such face-to-face encounters, involve modes of recognition that produce the stranger as a figure?

Louis Althusser's thesis of subjectivity as determined through acts of misrecognition evokes the function of public life. Althusser writes:

ideology 'acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it 'recruits' subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or 'transforms' the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called *interpellation* or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: 'Hey, you there!'

(1971: 162–163)

All individuals are transformed into subjects through the ideological function of interpellation, which is imagined as a commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing. The recognition of the other as 'you there' is a misrecognition which produces the 'you' as a subject, and as subject to the very law implicated in recognition (the subject is suspect in such encounters). Althusser's thesis is clearly to be understood as a universal theory of how subjects come into being as such. However, we might note the following. First, the constitution of the subject through hailing implies that subjectivity is predicated upon an elided 'inter-subjectivity' (see Ahmed 1998a: 143). Second, the function of the act of hailing another, 'hey you', opens out the possibility *that subjects become differentiated at the very same moment that they are constituted as such*. If we think of the constitution of subjects as implicated in the uncertainties of public life, then we could imagine how such differentiation might work: the address of the policeman shifts according to whether individuals are already recognisable as, 'wandering homeless people, aggressive beggars, muggers, anonymous black youths, and drug addicts' (Anderson 1990: 238). Hailing as a form of recognition which constitutes the subject it recognises (= misrecognition) might function to differentiate *between* subjects, for example, by hailing differently those who seem to belong and those who might already be assigned a place – out of place – as 'suspect'.

Such an over-reading of Althusser's dramatisation of interpellation through commonplace hailing suggests that the subject is not simply constituted in the present as such. Rather, inter-subjective encounters in public life continually reinterpellate subjects into differentiated economies of names and signs, where they are assigned different value in social spaces. Noticeably, the use of the narrative of the police hailing associates the constitution of subjects with their subjection to a discourse of criminality, which defines the one who is hailed as a threat to property ('Hey, you there'). If we consider how hailing constitutes the subject, then we can also think about how hailing constitutes the stranger in a relationship precisely to the Law of the subject (the stranger is constituted as the unlawful entry into the nation space, the stranger hence allows Law to mark out its terrain). To this extent, the act of hailing or recognising some-body as a stranger serves to constitute the lawful subject, the one who has the right to dwell, and the stranger at the very same time. It is not that the 'you' is or can be simply a stranger, but that to address some-body as a stranger constitutes the 'you' as

the stranger in relation to the one who dwells (the friend and neighbour). In this sense, the (mis)recognition of strangers serves to differentiate between the familiar and the strange, a differentiation that allows the figure of the stranger to appear. The failure embedded in such misrecognition – rather than the failure of recognition – determines the impossibility of reducing the other to the figure of the stranger: as I will argue in Chapter 2, the singularity of the figure conceals the different histories of lived embodiment which mark some bodies as stranger than others.

By analysing recognition in this way, I am suggesting that the (lawful) subject is not simply constituted by being recognised by the other, which is the primary post-Hegelian model of recognition (see Taylor 1994). Rather, I am suggesting that it is the recognition of others that is central to the constitution of the subject. The very act through which the subject differentiates between others is the moment that the subject comes to inhabit or dwell in the world. The subject is not, then, simply differentiated from the (its) other, but comes into being by learning how to differentiate between others. This recognition operates as a *visual economy*: it involves ways of *seeing the difference* between familiar and strange others as they are (re)presented to the subject. As a mode of subject constitution, recognition involves differentiating between others on the basis of how they 'appear'.²

Given the way in which the recognition of strangers operates to produce who 'we' are, we can see that strangers already 'fit' within the 'cognitive, moral or aesthetic map of the world', rather than being, as Zygmunt Bauman argues, 'the people who do not fit' (1997: 46). There are established ways of dealing with 'the strangers' who are already encountered and recognised in public life. The recognisability of strangers involves, not only techniques for differentiating strange from familiar (ways of seeing), but also ways of living: there are, in Alfred Schütz's terms, 'standardized situations' in which we might encounter strangers and which allow us to negotiate our way past them (1944: 499). Goffman's work on bodily stigma, for example, attends to how the bodies of others that are marked as different, such as disabled bodies, are read in ways which allow the subject to keep their distance (1984: 12). Social encounters involve rules and procedures for 'dealing with' the bodies that are read as strange (Morris 1996: 72–74).

Encounters between embodied others hence involve *spatial negotiations* with those who are already recognised as either familiar or strange. For Schütz, the stranger is always approaching – coming closer to those who are at home (1944: 499). In the sociological analysis of strangers offered by Simmel, the stranger is understood, paradoxically, as both near and far (1991: 146). In the next section, I consider how the determination of social space and imagined forms of belonging takes place through the differentiation between strangers and neighbours in relationships of proximity and distance.

Neighbourhoods and dwelling

How do you recognise who is a stranger in your neighbourhood? To rephrase my original question in this way is to point to the relation between the recognition of strangers and one's habitat or dwelling: others are recognised as strangers by those who inhabit a given space, who 'make it' their own. 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). At one level, this seems to suggest the relativisability of the condition of strangers: any-one can be a stranger if they leave home (the house, the neighbourhood, the region, the nation).³ However, in this section I want to argue that forms of dwelling cannot be equated in order to allow such a relativisation. Some homes and neighbourhoods are privileged such that they define the terrain of the inhabitable world. The recognition of strangers brings into play relations of social and political antagonism that *mark some others as stranger than other others*.

How do neighbourhoods become imagined? In the work of Howard Hallman, neighbourhoods are understood as arising from the 'natural human trait' of being neighbourly, which combines a concern with others and a concern for self (1984: 11). According to Hallman, the neighbourhood is an organic community that grows, 'naturally wherever people live close to one another' (1984: 11). It is both a limited territory – a physical space with clear boundaries – and a social community where 'residents do things together' (1984: 13). The simple fact of living nearby gives neighbours a common social bond. However, according to Hallman, some neighbourhoods are closer and hence better than others. He argues that neighbourhoods are more likely to be successful as communities when people live near 'like people': 'people with similarities tend to achieve closer neighbour relationships' (1984: 24). Hallman defines a close neighbourhood through an analogy with a healthy body, 'with wounds healed, illness cured, and wellness maintained' (1984: 256).

The analogy between the ideal neighbourhood and a healthy body serves to define the ideal neighbourhood as fully integrated, homogeneous, and sealed: it is like a body that is fully contained by the skin (see Chapter 2). This implies that a good or healthy neighbourhood does not leak outside itself, and hence does not let outsiders (or foreign agents/viruses) in. The model of the neighbourhood as an organic community – where a sense of community arises from the simple fact of shared residence – defines social health in terms of the production of purified spaces and the expulsion of difference through ways of living together. Matthew Crenson's consideration of neighbourhood politics hence concludes, 'social homogeneity and solidarity ... may contribute to the defensive capabilities of neighbourhoods, and in fact it may take an external attack upon some of these homogenous neighbourhoods to activate the latent sense of fellow feeling along local residents' (1983: 257). Likewise, David Morris and Karl Hess describe

neighbourhoods as protective and defensive, like 'tiny underdeveloped nations' (1975: 16).

Neighbourhoods become imagined as organic and pure spaces through the social perception of the danger posed by outsiders to moral and social health or well-being. So although neighbourhoods have been represented as organic and pure communities, there is also an assumption that those communities will fail (to be). A failed community is hence one which has weak or negative connections: where neighbours appear as if they are strangers to each other. The neighbour who is also a stranger – who only passes as a neighbour – is hence the danger that may always threaten the community from within. As David Sibley argues, 'the resistance to a different sort of person moving into a neighbourhood stems from feelings of anxiety, nervousness or fear. Who is felt to belong and not to belong contributes to an important way of shaping social space' (1995: 3). However, the failure of the community should not just be understood in terms of failed communities. *It is the very potential of the community to fail which is required for the constitution of the community.* It is the enforcement of the boundaries between those who are already recognised as out of place (even other fellow residents) that allows those boundaries to be established. The 'ideal' community has to be worked towards and that labour requires failure as its moment of constitution (to this extent, then, the organic community is a fantasy that *requires* its own negation).

It is symptomatic then of the very nature of neighbourhood that it enters public discourse as a site of *crisis*: it is only by attending to the trauma of neighbourhoods which fail that the ideal of the healthy neighbourhood can be maintained as a possibility (which is then, endlessly deferred as 'the real', as well as endlessly kept in place as 'the ideal', by that very language of crisis). Such failed communities are the source of fascination: they demonstrate the need to regulate social spaces. On British television in 1998, there were a number of programmes dedicated to 'neighbours from hell', neighbours who are dirty, who make too much noise, who steal, and who are 'at war' with each other. On *Panorama's* 'Neighbours from Hell' (30 March 1998), urinating in the street becomes the ultimate expression of the anti-sociality of stranger neighbours. The passing of bodily fluids in public spaces becomes symptomatic of the failure to pass as neighbours. In the United Kingdom, new powers of eviction for local councils give further power to the community to reassert itself against these stranger neighbours. The imaginary community of the neighbourhood hence requires enforcement through Law.

The enforcement of the boundaries which allow neighbourhoods to be imagined as pure and organic spaces can be understood as central to neighbourhood watch schemes. Such schemes began in the United States in the 1970s, and in the United Kingdom in 1982. The National Neighbourhood Watch Association in the United Kingdom (NNWA) describes it as, 'the best known and most effective example of the police and community

working together in partnership to prevent crime, build safer communities and improve quality of life'. In the United Kingdom, there are currently over 161,000 schemes and over 10 million people involved. Neighbourhood Watch brings together the creation of an ideal community as one 'which cares' and the production of safer spaces through the discourse of 'crime prevention'. Its main motto is, 'Crime cannot survive in a community that cares – Neighbourhood Watch works'. In other words, crime only exists when communities fail, when communities do not care. Marginalised or under-valued spaces where there is a high rate of crime against property are hence immediately understood in terms of a *failure to care*.

Neighbourhood Watch schemes are more common in middle-class areas, where residents are more likely to want to co-operate with the police, and where there is more 'property' with value to protect (Hill 1994: 150). The value attached to certain spaces of belonging is enforced or 'watched' through schemes that allow middle-class spaces to become valued: the subject who watches out for crime, is also *maintaining the value of her or his neighbourhood*. The link here between value of spaces, the protection of property, and the maintenance of social privilege helps us to theorise how the defence of social boundaries against unwelcome intrusions and intruders produces certain categories of strangers – those who don't belong in the leafy suburbs – that are socially legitimated and enforced. In Elijah Anderson's work, there is a discussion of how the concern with safety amongst residents means that, 'they join their diverse counterparts in local struggles to fight crime and otherwise preserve the ideal character for the neighbourhood, forming town watches and shoring up municipal codes that might discourage undesirables and encourage others more to their liking' (1990: 4). The production of safe spaces that have value or 'ideal character' involves the expulsion of unlike and undesirable 'characters'. In Anderson's work, these characters have *already* materialised or taken the form of, 'wandering homeless people, aggressive beggars, muggers, anonymous black youths, and drug addicts' (1990: 238).

How does neighbourhood watch work to produce such safe spaces? The literature produced on the Neighbourhood Watch schemes by the Home Office in the United Kingdom certainly links the designation of value to social spaces with the detection of strange events, and the expulsion of strangers. There is a double emphasis on the improvement of community living and on security and crime prevention. So Neighbourhood Watch schemes are described as both providing 'the eyes and ears of the police' and as providing, 'the soul and heart of the community' (Home Office 1997). The NWS link the production of safe spaces with the organic growth of a healthy social body: 'Neighbourhood Watch is not just about reducing burglary figures – it's about creating communities who care. It brings local people together and can make a real contribution to improving their lives. The activity of Watch members can foster a new community spirit and a belief in the community's ability to tackle problems. At the same time, you

feel secure, knowing your neighbours are keeping an eye on your property' (1997). There is a constant shift between an emphasis on a caring community and a safe one: a safe community moreover is one in which you feel safe as your property is being 'watched' by your neighbours. A link is established here between safety (in which safety is associated with property), a discourse on good neighbourliness (looking out for each other) and the production of community as purified space ('a new community spirit'). Hence, 'it is widely accepted that within every community, there is the potential for crime prevention. Neighbourhood Watch is a way of tapping into this and of drawing a community together'. Neighbourhood Watch hence constitutes the neighbourhood as a community through the protection of the property of nearby others from the threat posed by the very proximity of distant others.

In an earlier Neighbourhood Watch pamphlet (Home Office 1992), the reader is addressed more directly, 'Deciding to join your local group means you have made a positive commitment to act against crime in your community. You have also become one of the largest and most successful grass-roots movements in the country.' Here, the reader is praised for her or his community spirit: not only are you a good neighbour – willing to look out for your neighbours – but you are also a good citizen, who has displayed a positive commitment to 'act against crime in the community'. Neighbourhood watch purifies the space of the community *through purifying the life of the good citizen*, whose life becomes heroic, dedicated to fighting against crime and disorder. Significantly, then, the praise given to the reader/citizen involves a form of reward/recognition: 'You can also get lower insurance premiums from some Insurance companies' (1992). The reward demonstrates the value given to social spaces where subjects watch out for the extraordinary sounds and signs of crime, or the sounds and signs of that which is suspect and suspicious.

But how does Neighbourhood Watch involve techniques of differentiating between the ordinary life of the purified neighbourhood and the extraordinary events that threaten to contaminate that space? The Home Office pamphlet is cautious, 'Sometimes it is hard to tell if you are witnessing a crime or not. You must rely on common sense. ... You may also become suspicious if you notice something out of the ordinary. Don't be afraid to call your local police station to report the incident' (1992). Here, common sense should tell the good citizen what they are witnessing. Whatever happens, the good citizen must be a witness: a witness to an event that might or might not be a crime, an *event that unfolds before the patient eye and ear*. The last sentence moves from the importance of differentiating between extraordinary events through common sense (is it a crime?), to the differentiation between ordinary and extraordinary. Here, you might be made suspicious by *something* out of the ordinary. The good citizen is a citizen who *suspects rather than is suspect*, who watches out for departures from ordinary life in the imagined space of the neighbourhood. The good citizen

hence watches out for the one who loiters, acts suspiciously, looks out of place. As a Chief Inspector explains in a letter to *The Independent*, 'Neighbourhood Watch is about looking after your property and that of your neighbours, taking sensible crime prevention action *and reporting suspicious persons to the police*' (Scougal 1996, emphasis added). According to the leaflet given by the Divisional Commander to Neighbourhood Watch coordinators, Neighbourhood Watch 'rests on the concept of good neighbourliness', which means that, 'Neighbours are encouraged to report suspicious persons and unusual events to the police'. With such an exercise in good neighbourliness and good citizenship, the neighbourhood comes to police itself: not only is it 'the heart and soul of the community', but in being the 'heart and soul of the community', it is also *'the ears and eyes of the police'*.

The signifier 'suspicious' does an enormous amount of work in Neighbourhood Watch discourse precisely insofar as it is *empty*. The good citizen is not given any information about how to tell what or who is suspicious in the first place. It is my argument that the very failure to provide us with techniques for telling the difference is itself a technique of knowledge. It is the technique of *common sense* that is produced through Neighbourhood Watch discourse. Common sense not only defines what 'we' should take for granted (that is, what is normalised and already known as 'the given'), but it also involves the normalisation of ways of 'sensing' the difference between common and uncommon. That is, information is not given about how to tell the difference between normal and suspicious, because that difference is already 'sensed' through a prior history of making sense *as* the making of 'the common'. The good citizen knows what they are looking for, because they know what is common, and so what departs from the common: 'You must rely on common sense' (1992). Neighbourhood watch is hence about *making* the common: it makes the community ('the heart and soul of the community') insofar as it looks out for and hears the threat to the common posed by those who are uncommon, or those who are 'out of place' in 'this place' ('the eyes and ears of the police').

In this way, the 'suspicious person' and 'the stranger' are intimately linked: they are both emptied of any content, or any direct relationship to a referent, precisely as they are tied to a (missing) history of seeing and hearing others: *they are both already seen and heard as 'the uncommon' which allows 'the common' to take its shape*. The failure to name those who inhabit the signifier 'suspicious' hence produces the figure of the unspecified stranger, a figure that is required by the making or sensing of 'the common', of what 'we' are, as a form of distinction or value (property). Neighbourhood Watch can be characterised as a form of humanism. Such a humanism – Neighbourhood Watch is 'about creating communities who care' (1992) – conceals the exclusions that operate to allow the definition and policing of the 'we' of the good neighbourhood. The definition and enforcement of the good 'we' operates through the recognition of others as strangers: by seeing those who do not belong simply as 'strangers' (that is, by not naming *who* are the ones

who do not belong in the community), forms of social exclusion are both concealed and revealed (what is concealed is the brute fact of the matter – only some others are recognisable as 'the stranger', the one who is out of place). In this sense, the policing of valued spaces allows the legitimisation of social exclusion by being tied to a heroic 'we' who takes shape against the figure of the unspecified stranger. The production of the stranger as a figure that has linguistic and bodily integrity conceals how strangers are always already specified or differentiated. Neighbourhood Watch becomes definable as a mechanism for ensuring, not only that certain spaces maintain their (property) value, but that *certain lives become valued over other lives*. The recognition of strangers within the neighbourhood does not mean that anybody can be a stranger, depending on her or his location in the world: rather, some-bodies are more recognisable as strangers than other-bodies precisely because they are already read and valued in the demarcation of social spaces.

What is also significant about the Neighbourhood Watch concern with seeing and hearing the difference (becoming the eyes and ears of the police), is that it involves the production of a model of 'good citizenship'. The discourse on good citizenship involves an individualising of responsibility for crime (Stanko 1997). This model of the good citizen, which Stanko's work suggests is very much gendered as masculine, takes such responsibility in part through a form of self-policing by, in some sense, *becoming the police*. Certainly in post-Foucauldian work on surveillance, the emphasis is on the shift from public forms of monitoring – where the subject is watched by an anonymous and partially unseen and partially seen Other – to self-monitoring, when *the subject adopts the gaze of the other* (Foucault 1975). My analysis of Neighbourhood Watch might complicate this model of displacement from the gaze of the other to the gaze of the self. The 'eye' of the good citizen is certainly the site of labour – it is this 'eye' that is doing the work. However, that 'eye' does not simply return to the body, as that which must be transformed and regulated as 'the seen', but looks elsewhere, to and at others. In other words, 'the good citizen' is one who watches (out for) suspicious persons and strangers, and who in that very act, becomes aligned, not only with the police (and hence the Law), but with the imagined community itself whose boundaries are protected *in the very labour of his look*.

Furthermore, self-policing communities are inscribed as moral communities, those that care. Caring evokes a figure of who must be cared for, who must be protected from the risks of crime and the danger of strangers. So Neighbourhood Watch 'reassures vulnerable members of the community that you are keeping a neighbourly eye on them' (1992). The construction of the figure of the vulnerable member/body alongside the heroic good citizen provides the moral justification for the injunction to watch; it detaches 'watching out for' from 'busybodying' (1992) by redefining it as 'watching out on behalf of'. The discourse of vulnerability allows self-policing to be readable as the protection of others: the risk posed by suspects and strangers

is a risk posed to the vulnerable bodies of children, the elderly and women. The figuring of the good citizen is built on the image of the strong citizen: in this sense, the good citizen is figurative primarily as white, masculine and middle-class, the heroic subject who can protect the vulnerable bodies of 'weaker others': 'crime cannot survive in a community that cares – Neighbourhood Watch Works' (NNWA).

The 1997 pamphlet also describes the newer scheme 'Street Watch' (there are currently over 20,000 in operation in the United Kingdom) which, 'covers many different activities, ranging from providing transport or escort services for elderly people, to walking a specific route regularly, keeping an eye out for trouble and reporting it to the police'. Here, the good citizen is valued not only for his heart, eyes and ears, but also his feet.⁴ He takes specific routes, but most importantly, according to the Home Secretary responsible for the introduction of the scheme, Michael Howard, he is 'walking with purpose' (Bennetto 1995). Street Watch is described as 'patrolling with a purpose'.

We can consider here Hallman's definition of who and what must be watched in his work on neighbourhoods: 'people who seem to have no purpose in the neighbourhood' (Hallman 1984: 159). Strangers are suspicious because they 'have no purpose', that is, they have no legitimate function within the space which could justify their existence or intrusion. Strangers are hence recognisable precisely insofar as they *do not enter into the exchanges of capital that transforms spaces into places*. Strangers are constructed as an illegitimate presence in the neighbourhood: they have no purpose, and hence they must be suspect. You can recognise the stranger through their loitering gait: strangers loiter, they do not enter the legitimate exchanges of capital that might justify their presence. In contrast, the street watcher is constructed as a heroic figure whose purpose is the very detection of those who are without a legitimate purpose, of those whose purpose can hence only be explained as suspicious, as criminal, as a crime (Young 1996: 5). The stranger's presence on the street is a crime (waiting to happen). The proximity of such loitering strangers in the purified space of the good neighbourhood hence requires that the heroic citizen take a specific route: those who are recognisable as strangers, *whose lack of purpose conceals the purpose of crime*, need to be expelled through purposeful patrolling in order that the value of property can be protected.

Such a construction of the good citizen through the figure of the loitering stranger is clearly subject to forms of social differentiation: in one reading, the good citizen is structured around the body of the dominant (white, middle-class) man, who protects the vulnerable bodies of women and children from the threat of marginalised (black, working-class) men. However, these differences are concealed by the very modes of recognition: the figure of the stranger appears as 'the stranger' precisely by being cut off from these histories of determination (= stranger fetishism). That is, the recognition of strangers involves the differentiation between some others and

other others at the same time as it conceals that very act of differentiation. What is significant about Neighbourhood Watch is precisely the way in which it links the formation of community with safety and the detection of crime: such links produce the figure of the stranger as a *visible danger* to the 'we' of the community, and hence as the necessary condition for making what 'we' have in common.

Stranger danger

If the construction and enforcement of purified spaces of belonging takes place through the production of the figures of the good citizen, the vulnerable body and the loitering stranger, then how is this linked to the social perception of danger? In this section, I examine the discourse of stranger danger as a way of analysing how strangers are already recognised as posing danger to property and person, not just in particular valued dwellings and neighbourhoods, but also in public life as such. I want to consider, not only how the construction of stranger danger is tied to valued and devalued spaces, but also how strangers are read as posing danger *wherever* they are: the projection of danger onto the figure of the stranger allows the definition of the subject-at-home, and home as inhabitable space, as inherently safe and valuable. One *knows again* those whom one does not know by assuming they are the *origin* of danger.

Partly, this concern with public life involves a consideration of urban space and cities as 'a world of strangers' (Lofland 1973). Lofland suggests that cities, in particular public spaces within cities (such as streets and leisure spaces), involve perpetual encounters between people who are not personally known to each other, although they may be known through forms of visual identification and recognition (1973: 15–16). As a result, he argues that cities involve particular kinds of social and spatial encounters. I would not want to refute the premise that there are different kinds of spaces that involve different kinds of encounters between others (such as urban and rural spaces, or such as different forms of the public within urban spaces). However, Lofland's account does involve a form of spatial determinism – these spaces determine these encounters between others – which shifts quickly into a form of cultural determinism – cultures have different spaces and therefore involve different encounters between others.⁵ What I am interested in is how the very encounters that take place between others involve the forming of both cultural and spatial boundaries: that is, how the (mis)recognition of others as strangers is what allows the demarcation of given spaces within 'the public domain', but also the legitimation of certain forms of mobility or movement within the public, and the delegitimation of others.

I am positing here a relationship between dwelling and movement:⁶ spaces are claimed, or 'owned' not so much by inhabiting what is already there, but by moving within, or passing through, different spaces which are

only given value as places (with boundaries) through the movement or 'passing through' itself. The relationship between movement, occupation and ownership is well documented in feminist work: for example, women's restricted movement within public spaces is a result, not only of the fear of crime, but of the regulation of femininity, in which 'being seen' in certain spaces becomes a sign of irresponsibility (Stanko 1997: 489). Women's movements are regulated by a desire for 'safe-keeping': respectability becomes measured by the visible signs of a desire to 'stay safe'. In this sense, movement becomes a form of subject constitution: *where* 'one' goes or does not go determines *what* one 'is', or where one is seen to be, determines what one is seen to be.

Elijah Anderson's work on how communities are established through the concern with safety examines how the fear of crime becomes a fear of strangers. Such a fear produces a way of inhabiting the world, as well as moving through it. He writes, 'Many worry about a figure lurking in the shadows, hiding in a doorway or behind a clump of bushes, ready to pounce on the unsuspecting victim' (Anderson 1990: 5). The danger posed by the stranger is imagined as partly concealed: the stranger always lurks in dark spaces. While the victim is unsuspecting, the safe subject must be suspecting: the safe subject suspects that the suspect is around the corner, always hidden to the gaze, to the watchful eye. The danger of the stranger is hence always there in the imagined future of the subject who is safely at home, the stranger is always lurking as the threat of that-which-might-yet-be. Safety hence requires that the subject must become familiar with the terrain: the safe subject must become 'street wise' and 'alive to dangerous situations' (Anderson 1990: 6). Certain lives become liveable as both safe and valuable insofar as they are *alive to* the danger of strangers.

The discourse of personal safety is not about the production of safe and purified spaces from which strangers are expelled (such as 'the home'), but also defines ways of moving through spaces that are already dangerous given the possibility that strangers are close by, waiting in the shadows of the streets (where good citizens walk only with purpose, living their legitimated lives). The possibility of personal safety for mobile subjects hence requires 'collective definitions' of that which is 'safe, harmless, trustworthy' and that which is 'bad, dangerous and hostile' (Anderson 1990: 216). Such collective definitions provide the subject with the knowledge required to move within the world, allowing the subject to differentiate between familiar and strange, safe and dangerous, as well as to differentiate between different kinds of strangers ('characters').

Clearly, discourses of personal safety involve forms of self-governance that differentiate between subjects. As much feminist research has suggested, safety for women is often constructed in terms of not entering public spaces, or staying within the home (see Stanko 1990). Safety for men also involves forms of self-governance, not in terms of refusing to enter the public space, but in terms of *how* one enters that space. So at one level, the discourse of

personal safety presumes a vulnerable citizen who is gendered as feminine, at another level, it legislates for a form of mobile and masculine subjectivity that is not only a safe form of subjectivity, but also one that is heroic. Such a mobile subject, who can 'avoid' the danger of strangers in public spaces is constructed as 'street wise'. This subject's mobility is legitimated as a form of dwelling: first, in relation to the vulnerable bodies that stay within the home; and second, in relation to the strangers whose passing through public spaces is delegitimated as the 'origin' of danger (the movement of strangers is hence not a form of dwelling; it does not lead to the legitimated occupation of space).

The knowledges embedded in street wisdom are linked by Anderson to a kind of 'field research' (Anderson 1990: 216). The wise subject, the one who knows where and where not to walk, how and how not to move, who and who not to talk to, has an expertise that can be understood as both *bodily and cultural capital*. It is such wise subjects who will prevail in a world of strangers and dangers: "To prevail means simply to get safely to one's destination, and the ones who are most successful are those who are "streetwise" " (Anderson 1990: 231). In this sense, the discourse of stranger danger involves techniques of knowledge that allow wise subjects to prevail: to arrive at their destination, to leave and return home and still maintain a safe distance between themselves and dangerous strangers. Community is not just established through the designation of pure and safe spaces, but becomes established *as a way of moving through space*. Becoming street wise defines the subject in terms of the collective: the wise subject has collective knowledge about what is, 'safe, harmless, trustworthy' and what is 'bad, dangerous and hostile' that gives that subject the ability to move safely in a world of strangers and dangers. The stranger is here produced as a figure of danger that grants the wise subject and community, those who already claim both knowledge and capital, the ability to prevail.

The discourse of stranger danger also involves the figuring, not only of the wiser subject who can move through dangerous places (a mobile subject who is racialised, classed and gendered), but also the vulnerable body, the one who is most at risk. Here, 'the child' becomes a figure of vulnerability, the purified body that is most endangered by the contaminating desires of strangers. Indeed, it is the literature on child protection that has familiarised 'stranger danger' as the mechanism for ensuring personal safety. One double page of the Home Office leaflet on crime prevention in the United Kingdom is hence dedicated to 'your family' and, 'to keeping your children safe' (the ideal reader/subject/citizen is always a parent, bound to Law and duty through the demands of parenthood). The pamphlet advises, 'Do not talk to strangers. Most well-meaning adults will not approach a child who is on his own, unless he is obviously distressed or in need. Tell your children never to talk to strangers, and to politely ignore any approach from a stranger. Get them to tell you if a stranger tries to talk to them.' Immediately, strangers are differentiated from 'well-meaning' adults, who would not approach

children. Indeed, the child itself must become 'street wise': one colouring-in book produced by the Lancashire Constabulary in the United Kingdom is entitled, 'Operation Streetwise workbook' and aims 'to provide children with an exciting opportunity to learn and practice personal safety skills'. Here, growing up is narrated in terms of acquiring the wisdom to deal with danger that already stalks in the figure of the stranger.⁷

The figure of the child comes to perform a certain role within the narrative of crime prevention and stranger danger: the innocence of the child is what is most at risk from the proximity of strangers. The child comes to embody, in a narrative that is both nostalgic (returning to an imagined past) and fearful (projecting an unimaginable future), all that could be stolen or lost by the proximity of strangers. The child's innocence and purity becomes a matter of social and national responsibility: through figuring the stranger as too close to the child, the stranger becomes recognisable as an attack on the moral purity of nation space itself. It is over the bodies of children that the moral campaign against strangers is waged.

In recent debates in the press, the paedophile is hence represented as the ultimate stranger that communities must have the power to evict. A change in the law in 1997 allowed the British police force to inform members of the community when a paedophile is in their midst, on a 'need to know' basis. Community action groups, as well as some local councils, have redefined the need to know as *a right to know*: arguing that paedophiles should not be allowed into communities as they pose a risk to children, 'Recent moves include attempts by some councils to ban paedophiles from their communities altogether, and campaigns to keep them in prison longer' (Hilpern 1997). The construction of sex offenders against children as monsters who do not belong in a community is clear in the following statement from John O'Sullivan, from the pressure group, *Parents Against Child Abuse*: 'If there is a wild lion loose in the street, the police would tell us. A paedophile in the neighbourhood is the same. They might not rip the flesh, but they are just as damaging to the mind of a child. We need to know who they are.' The number of vigilante attacks on suspected paedophiles in Britain in the 1990s suggests what this knowledge will be used for.

Significantly, then, the paedophile comes to embody the most dangerous stranger as he poses the greatest risk to the vulnerable and pure body of the child. The community comes together through the recognition of such dangerous strangers: they must expel him, he who is the wild animal, the lion, at loose in the street. The monstrosity of such recognisable strangers is figured through the tearing of the skin of the child. The monsters who must be excluded to keep children safe, prey on children: they require the heroic action of the moral community that cares. The imaginary community is constructed as a safe community where children's bodies are not vulnerable: the moral community itself becomes the child, pure, innocent and free. The recognition of dangerous strangers allows the enforcement of the boundaries

of such communities: a definition of the purity of the 'we' against the monstrous 'it'.

Sally Engle Merry's *Urban Danger: Life in a Neighbourhood of Strangers*, discusses how the fear of crime 'focuses on the threat of the violent attack by a stranger' (Merry 1981: 6). Such a fear means that the familiar is already designated as safe: one is safe at home, unless there is an intrusion from a stranger. One could comment here how such a reduction of danger to the stranger conceals the danger that may be embedded in the familiar: much feminist work, for example, demonstrates how the perception of the rapist as a stranger conceals how most sexual attacks are committed by friends or family. As Elizabeth Stanko argues, 'Danger many of us believe arises from the random action of strangers who are, we further assume, usually men of colour. Yet according to most people's experiences ... danger and violence arise within our interpersonal relationships' (1990: 3). The projection of danger onto the figure of the stranger allows violence to be figured as exceptional and extraordinary – as coming from outside the protective walls of the home, family, community or nation. As a result, the discourse of stranger danger involves *a refusal to recognise how violence is structured by, and legitimated through, the formation of home and community as such*.

The stranger is here figured as the violent monster whose elimination would mean safety for women and children. Such a figuration allows the home to be imagined as a safe haven: an imagining that cannot deal with the violence that is instituted through the social relations within the home. As Merry argues, 'Violence at the hand of the stranger is usually perceived as dangerous, but an assault in the context of a fight with a known enemy or neighbour is rarely viewed in this way' (Merry 1981: 14). The notion of violence as domestic, while now recognised through Law as a result of years of feminist campaigning, remains a difficult one for the social imaginary: the violent husband is then read as a monster underneath, as a stranger passing as husband, rather than as a husband exercising the power that is already legitimated through hegemonic forms of masculinity. According to stranger danger discourse, the stranger husband has intruded into the ideal home: he is not understood as an element *in the ordinary production of domestic space*, and in the formation of relations of power and exchange within that space.

The ultimate violent strangers are hence figured as immigrants: they are the outsiders in the nation space whose 'behaviour seems unpredictable and beyond control' (Merry 1981: 125). Cultural difference becomes the text upon which the fear of crime is written: 'cultural difference exacerbates feelings of danger. Encounters with culturally alien people are defined by anxiety and uncertainty, which inhibits social interaction and reinforces social boundaries' (Merry 1981: 125). The projection of danger onto that which is already recognisable as different – as different from the familiar space of home and homeland – hence allows violence to take place: it becomes a mechanism for the enforcement of boundary lines that almost secure the home-nation as safe haven. On the one hand, the fear of crime

embedded in the discourse of stranger danger allows the protection of domestic, social and national space from the outsider inside, the stranger neighbour, by projecting danger onto the outsider. On the other hand, the stranger only appears as a figure of danger by coming too close to home: the boundary line is always crossed, both 'justifying' the fear and legitimating the enforcement. In doing so, the discourse of stranger danger, not only allows the abdication of any social and political responsibility for the violence that takes place within legitimated spaces, and which is sanctioned through Law, but also becomes a mechanism for the justification of acts of violence against those who are already recognised as strangers.

In this chapter, I have examined how 'the stranger' is produced as a figure precisely by being associated with a danger to the purified space of the community, the purified life of the good citizen, and the purified body of 'the child'. Rather than assuming that the stranger is any-body we don't recognise, I have argued that strangers are those that are already recognised through techniques for differentiating between the familiar and strange in discourses such as Neighbourhood Watch and crime prevention. The 'knowing again' of strangers defines the stranger as a danger to both moral health and well-being. The knowing again of strangers as the danger of the unknown is a means by which the 'we' of the community is established, enforced and legitimated.

2 Embodying strangers

The AA subway train to Harlem. I clutch my mother's sleeve, her arms full of shopping bags, christmas-heavy. The wet smell of winter clothes, the train's lurching. My mother spots an almost seat, pushes my little snow-suited body down. On one side of me a man reading a paper. On the other, a woman in a fur hat staring at me. Her mouth twitches as she stares and then her gaze drops down, pulling mine with it. Her leather-gloved hand plucks at the line where my new blue snowpants and her sleek fur coat meet. She jerks her coat close to her. I look. I do not see whatever terrible thing she is seeing on the seat between us – probably a roach. But she has communicated her horror to me. It must be something very bad from the way she's looking, so I pull my snowsuit closer to me away from it, too. When I look up the woman is still staring at me, her nose holes and eyes huge. And suddenly I realise there is nothing crawling up the seat between us; it is me she doesn't want her coat to touch. The fur brushes my face as she stands with a shudder and holds on to a strap in the speeding train. Born and bred a New York City child, I quickly slide over to make room for my mother to sit down. No word has been spoken. I'm afraid to say anything to my mother because I don't know what I have done. I look at the side of my snow pants secretly. Is there something on them? Something's going on here I do not understand, but I will never forget it. Her eyes. The flared nostrils. The hate.

(Lorde 1984: 147–148)

How do strange encounters, encounters in which some-thing that cannot be named is passed between subjects, serve to embody the subject? How do encounters with the one whom we already recognise as a stranger take place at the level of the body? To what extent do strange encounters involve, not just reading the stranger's body, but defining the contours or boundaries of the body-at-home, through the very gestures that enable a withdrawal from the stranger's co-presence in a given social space?

In the above encounter, recalled as memory, Audre Lorde ends with 'the hate'. It is an encounter in which some-thing has passed, but something she fails to understand. What passes is hence not spoken; it is not a transparent form of communication. The sense that some-thing is wrong is communi-

cated, not through words, or even sounds that are voiced, but through the body of another, 'her nose holes and eyes huge'. What is the woman's body saying? How do we read her body? The woman's bodily gestures express her hate, her fear, her disgust. The strange encounter is played out *on* the body, and is played out *with* the emotions.

This bodily encounter, while ending with 'the hate', also ends with the reconstitution of bodily space. The bodies that come together, that almost touch and co-mingle, slide away from each other, becoming relived in their apartness. The particular bodies that move apart allow the redefinition of social as well as bodily integrity: black bodies are expelled from the white social body despite the threat of further discomfort (the woman now must stand in order that she can keep her place, that is, in order to keep Audre at a distance). The emotion of 'hate' aligns the particular white body with the bodily form of the community – such an emotion functions to substantiate the threat of invasion and contamination in the dirty bodies of strangers. The gestures that allow the white body to withdraw from the stranger's body hence reduce that body to dirt, to 'matter out of place' (Douglas 1996: 36), such that the stranger becomes recognised *as the body out of place*. Through such strange encounters, bodies are both de-formed and re-formed, they take form through and against other bodily forms.

Does Audre's narrative of the encounter involve her self-designation as the body out of place? Certainly, her perception of the cause of the woman's bodily gestures is a misperception that creates an object. The object – the roach – comes to stand for, or stand in for, the cause of 'the hate'. The roach crawls up between them; the roach, as the carrier of dirt, divides the two bodies, forcing them to move apart. Audre pulls her snowsuit, 'away from it too'. But the 'it' that divides them is not the roach. Audre comes to realise that, 'it is me she doesn't want her coat to touch'. What the woman's clothes must not touch is not a roach that crawls between them, but Audre herself. Audre becomes the 'it' that stands between the possibility of their clothes touching. She becomes the roach – the impossible and phobic object – that threatens to crawl from one to the other: 'I don't know what I have done. I look at the side of my snow pants secretly. Is there something on them?' The stranger's lived embodiment hesitates on the question, 'am I the roach?' or, 'am I the dirt that forces me away?'

In this chapter, I will address the role of such 'eye-to-eye' (Lorde 1984) or 'skin-to-skin' encounters in the formation of bodily and social space. As I argued in the introduction to this book, the word 'encounter' suggests a meeting, but a meeting which involves surprise. How does embodiment take shape through encounters with others that surprise, that both establish and shift the boundaries of the familiar, of what is already recognisable or known? By opening with a scene from Audre Lorde's *Sister Outsider*, I have already pointed to how 'the encounter' is mediated through a range of different kinds of texts or, more precisely, different forms of writing. In *Sister Outsider*, Lorde uses the poetics of remembering to dramatise the

operation of racism on her body, in the violence of its particularity. At the same time, we must remind ourselves as readers, that the recalled encounter between herself and an-other is written, and that it functions as an aspect of an argument within a text that shifts between academic, personal and political modes of address. The encounter is lived and written, but it fails to be an event, or even a text, that is simply in the present. The encounter is already recalled and relived in the metonymic slide between different encounters: not only do we have the (re)narrativised encounter between Audre and the white woman, but also we have encounters between Audre's past and present self, between an apparently intimate self and a public life, between the writer and her subject, and between the reader (myself as reader) and the text.

A concern with strange encounters involves a concern with the dialogical production of different bodies and texts. While Audre Lorde's text allows me to address what is at stake in such strange encounters – to dramatise that there is always *some-body* at stake – it does not provide the only means by which I ask the impossible question, 'what about the stranger's body?' The ethics of my own encounter with *Sister Outsider* demands a more responsible reading, a reading which admits to its limits, its partiality and its fragility. I hence do not use the text as an example that simply holds my argument together, as the object of my writing. I move towards and away from her text, *only ever sliding across it*: my encounter with this text allows me to re-encounter different kinds of bodies and texts. Quite clearly, I am touched by Audre Lorde's story – 'being touched' is a way of understanding how encounters always involve, not only a meeting of bodies, but between bodies and texts (the face to face of intimate readings), in which the subject is moved from her place (see Chapter 7).

My concern with the embodied nature of strange encounters requires that we first ask the question, 'what is the body?' I will argue that there is no body as such that is given in the world: bodies materialise in a complex set of temporal and spatial relations to other bodies, including bodies that are recognised as familiar, familial and friendly, and those that are considered strange. My argument will challenge some psychoanalytical and feminist approaches to embodiment by thinking through the function of cultural difference and social antagonism in marking out the boundaries of bodies.

Bodies

Within feminist theory, 'bodies' certainly have become a privileged focus of attention. Partly, this attention can be explained by the feminist recognition that women's marginalisation from philosophical discourses and the public sphere has been produced through the association between masculinity and reason and femininity and the body. The feminist concern with revaluing the body, and undermining such mind/body dualism, has led to an acknowledgment that bodies are not simply given (as 'nature'), that bodies are

differentiated, and that subjectivity and identity cannot be separated from specific forms of embodiment (Bordo 1993). A philosophy that refuses to privilege mind over body, and that assumes that the body cannot be transcended as such, is a philosophy which emphasises contingency, locatedness, the irreducibility of difference, and the worldliness of being. However, despite many appeals to the differentiated body within feminist philosophy, I think there has been less substantive analysis of how 'bodies' come to be lived through being differentiated from other bodies, whereby differences in 'other bodies' already mark 'the body' as such.

Indeed, Kathryn Bond Stockton has argued that 'the body' has achieved an onto-theological status in feminist theory (1994). She suggests that the assumption that 'the body' is already determined, partly in the sense that it is already gendered, reflects an epistemic reliance on the body as in some way prior to, or at least irreducible to, the contingency of linguistic and social relations. I do not go along altogether with her argument as it clearly misses the point that the concern with the body as already determined constitutes an important aspect of a feminist critique of Cartesianism and ideality in general (that the subject gains its identity and distinction from the exclusion of the material, that is, the divisible realm of bodily experience). However, it is interesting to reconsider the status of 'the body' in some recent feminist writings. For while the reflection is on bodies that are clearly differentiated (for example, bodies that are sexed or sexy), the body has also become somewhat of an abstraction, that is, a way of signalling a certain kind of feminist rhetoric as much as the means through which a feminist critique of traditional philosophy proceeds. Take some recent titles of feminist publications: *Bodies that Matter* (Butler 1993), *The Bodies of Women* (Diprose 1994), *Volatile Bodies* (Grosz 1994), *Sexy Bodies* (Grosz and Probyn 1995), *Flexible Bodies* (Martin 1995) and *Imaginary Bodies* (Gatens 1996). Bodies are clearly a matter for feminism, and quite rightly so, but is there something more at stake in the rendering of bodies as objects-in-themselves for feminist analysis?

The appeal to the body as already determined and as differentiated in terms of gender and sexuality, and also race and class, does not always involve in practice an analysis of the particularity of bodies or of subjectivity in general. I admit that it is easy simply to point out that *appeals* to difference do not always involve an *analysis* of difference (those moments where, often in brackets, a theorist will add – and also, race, class, disability etc.). But the appeal to the differentiated body as a rhetorical ploy that does not operate beyond that level has structural implications for the bodies that are discussed and reinscribed in feminist discourse. For example, in Elizabeth Grosz's *Volatile Bodies*, there is little mention of the racialised nature of the multiple and differentiated bodies she dedicates her text to, except in the following quote:

The more or less permanent etching of even the civilised body by discursive systems is perhaps easier to read if the civilised body is decontextualised, stripped of clothing and adornment, behaviourally displayed in its nakedness. The naked European/American/African/Asian/Australian body (and clearly even within these categories there is enormous cultural variation) is still marked by its disciplinary history, by its habitual practices of movement, by the corporeal commitments it has undertaken in day-to-day life. It is in no sense a natural body, for it is as culturally, racially, sexually, possibly even as class distinctive, as it would be clothed.

(Grosz 1994: 142)

Here, Grosz introduces race as a signifier of difference ('European/American/African/Asian/Australian') in order to illustrate her point that there is no natural or indeed real body, that the body is always clothed, that is, always inscribed within particular cultural formations. Race becomes a means by which Grosz illustrates a philosophical shift in thinking about bodies. It appears then (and also disappears) as a *figure* for the differentiated body. In this sense, race is made present only through an act of negation: it is included as a vehicle for the re-presentation of a philosophy of difference rather than as a constitutive and positive term of analysis. This metaphoric reliance on race to signify the differentiated body has quite clear theoretical and political implications. It means that a philosophy of the differentiated body – a philosophy of difference – does not necessarily involve, in practice, a recognition of the violent collision between regimes of difference. A philosophy of difference *can* involve a universalism; a speaking from the place of (for example) the white subject, who reincorporates difference as a sign of its own fractured and multiple coming-into-being.

In order to avoid reading the differentiated body through the figure of race, we need to think through the questions: How do 'bodies' become marked by differences? How do bodies come to be lived precisely through being differentiated from other bodies, whereby the differences in other bodies make a difference to such lived embodiment? Such questions require that we consider how the very materialisation of bodies in time and space involves techniques and practices of differentiation. To differentiate between the familiar and the strange is to mark out the inside and outside of bodily space (to establish the skin as a boundary line). What is required is, not only an analysis of body images or representations of bodily difference, but also an analysis of how bodily habits and gestures serve to constitute bodily matter and form. Judith Butler's consideration of 'bodies that matter' defines 'materialisation', as the production of an 'effect of boundary, fixity and surface' (1993: 9). To examine the function of cultural difference and social antagonism in the constitution of bodily matters is not to read differences on the surface of the body (the body as text), but to account for the very effect

of the surface, and to account for how bodies come to take certain shapes over others, and in relation to others.

At one level, psychoanalysis seems to provide us with such a model of embodiment. In Lacanian psychoanalysis, for example, the child's accession into the realm of subjectivity takes place through the process of assuming a body image. In 'The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I', the child sees itself in the mirror, and misrecognises the image as itself. This act, 'rebounds in the case of the child in a series of gestures in which he experiences in play the relation between the movements assumed in the image and the reflected environment – the child's own body, and the persons and things' (Lacan 1977: 1). This play with an image structures the relation of the child to its body and to others, in the form of an identification, that is, in 'the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image' (Lacan 1977: 2). These processes of identification provide the child with an 'imaginary anatomy'. Lacan's approach allows us to consider how the form of bodies is not given or pre-determined, but involves a temporal and spatial process of misrecognition and projection, whereby the body becomes distinguished from others (the marking out of an inside and outside). The body materialises – takes shape and form – through phantasy (flesh and image are here mutually implicated).

Frantz Fanon takes up the Lacanian model of the mirror stage in an interesting footnote in *Black Skin, White Masks*. He suggests that there is a racialised dynamic to the assumption of the body image: 'When one has grasped the mechanism described by Lacan, one can have no further doubt that the real Other for the white man is and will continue to be the black man. And conversely. Only for the white man The Other is perceived on the level of the body image, absolutely as not-self – that is, the unidentifiable, the unassimilable' (Fanon 1975: 114). Fanon is clearly using the Lacanian theory as a general theory of the psychic mechanisms which institute subjectivity, which he then redefines as already racialised. That is, the encounter through which the subject assumes a body image and comes to be distinguishable from the Other is a racial encounter. The theory of identification which is articulated by Lacan as a *general* theory of the subject (he writes that the 'drama' of the mirror stage will 'mark with its rigid structure the subject's entire mental development' (1977: 4)) is immediately differentiated and divided. The relation of the 'I' to the 'not-I' is determined, not simply by the psychic processes of misrecognition and projection, but by the racialising of the ego (white) in relation to the materiality of other bodies (black).

Lacan's theory defines both the subject and its other in terms of the relation between the play of the assumed image and 'the reflected environment' which includes the child's own body, 'persons and things' (1977: 1). The dialectic of self-othering defined here is abstract: the other is simply that which the mirror presents as beyond the spatial form of the child's body image, which is to say, *any-beyond, to any-body*. Where Fanon's theory is

implicitly challenging the Lacanian model of identification as constituting the subject (and its impossibility) in general, is through the implication that both the embodied subject and the persons and things that are excluded from it are *already* particular and *already* framed and constituted in a broader sociality. The *primary* identification does not then simply take place as such (that act which, according to Lacan, 'rebounds ... in a series of gestures' (1977: 1)). *When assuming a body image, subjects 'take on' the burden of particular bodily others which both precede them and are reinvented by them.* The imaginary relation of the child's body, persons and things hence already carries traces of social antagonism and conflict which differentiate bodies from each other. Fanon's reworking of Lacan implies that the self–other dynamic cannot be abstracted, as it is contingent on bodily differences that are themselves inflected by histories of particular bodily others.

An analysis of strange encounters as bodily encounters suggests that the marking out of the boundary lines between bodies, through the assumption of a bodily image, involves practices and techniques of differentiation. That is, bodies become differentiated not only *from each other or the other*, but also through differentiating *between others*, who have a different function in establishing the permeability of bodily space. Here, there is no generalisable other that serves to establish the illusion of bodily integrity; rather the body becomes imagined through being related to, and separated from, particular bodily others. Difference is not simply found in the body, but is established as a relation between bodies: *this suggests that the particular body carries traces of the differences that are registered in the bodies of others.* In the next section of this chapter, I consider how different bodies come to be lived through the establishment of boundaries and contours between the inside and the outside, in which the very habits and gestures of marking out bodily space involve differentiating 'others' into familiar (assimilable, touchable) and strange (unassimilable, untouchable). As I will suggest, such a consideration requires that we begin to think through the skin, rather than taking 'the body' as our point of entry.

Bodies with skins

Why is it necessary to think through the skin in a consideration of how strange encounters take place at the level of the body? If we address the role of skin in marking out bodily spaces, then we can refuse to accept that the contours or boundaries of bodies are given. A consideration of the subject as 'skinned' is not then a question of thinking about bodies as having inherent ends or limits (bodies do not necessarily end at their skins). The skin is not simply invested with meaning as a visual signifier of difference (the skin as coloured, the skin as wrinkled, and so on). It is not simply implicated in the (scopophilic) logic of fetishism where the visual object, the object which *can* be seen, becomes the scene of the play of differences. The skin is also a border or boundary, supposedly holding or containing the subject within a

certain contour, keeping the subject inside, and the other outside; or in Frantz Fanon's terms, the skin becomes *a seal* (1975: 9). But, as a border or a frame, the skin performs that peculiar destabilising logic, calling into question the exclusion of the other from the subject and risking the subject's becoming (or falling into) the other. Hence, Jean-Luc Nancy discusses the skin as an *exposure* to the other, as always passing from one to the other (1994: 30). The skin may open out a moment of undecidability which is at once a rupture or breakage, where the subject risks its interiority, where it meets and leaks into the world at large.

The skin is not simply matter in place, but rather involves a process of materialisation; it is the effect of surface, boundary and fixity (Butler 1993: 9). The skin allows us to consider how boundary-formation, the marking out of the lines of a body, involves an affectivity which already crosses the line. For if the skin is a border, then it is *a border that feels*. In the work of Jennifer Biddle, for example, the skin, 'as the outer covering of the material body', is where the intensity of emotions such as shame are registered (1997: 228). So while the skin appears to be the matter which separates the body, it rather allows us to think of how the materialisation of bodies involves, not containment, but an affective opening out of bodies to other bodies, in the sense that the skin registers how bodies are touched by others. Sue Cataldi's concern with skin as an 'ambiguous, shifting border' centres on the question of how our skin 'paradoxically protects us from others and exposes us to them. How we touch and how we are touched affects us' (1993: 145). The skin provides a way of thinking about how the boundary between bodies is formed only through being traversed, or called into question, by the affecting of one by another.

But is there danger that we might fetishise the skin as having a peculiar form and logic of its own, just as 'the body' can become fetishised as the lost object of philosophical discourse? I do not want to suggest here that the skin contains a logic which provides us with the means of rearticulating the relation of self and other *in general*. Rather, I want to think of how the skin, as the border that feels, functions as a mechanism for social differentiation. Take Anthony Smith's description of the skin in *The Body*:

The only unprotected tissue which has the living body on one side and the outside world on the other is the skin. Taken as a whole it is the body's largest organ; it is enormously versatile; it keeps out foreign agents; it keeps in body fluids.

(1974: 482)

Here, 'the skin' marks and polices the difference between inside and outside. It is a boundary that guarantees a separation. Its task is to ward off the danger of the foreigner, to keep out the other, to protect the self from the unruliness of others. Its task is not simply one of policing the outside. Its

task is also, at one and the same time, to keep in, that is, to prevent the inside from becoming outside and to prevent the self from becoming other.

This construction of the skin as a mechanism for keeping out foreign agents might suggest a relationship between the individual body and the body-politic. The individual body is *like* the body politic; a mechanism for ensuring the integrity of the body by warding off foreigners. However, we need to question the status of this analogy. What is the relationship between the individual body and the body politic? In Moira Gatens's work, the construction of the body politic is modelled on a particular construction of the human body. The human body appears unmarked, but it is marked by privilege; it is, for example, a white, male, middle-class, heterosexual body. The unmarked body is the body that appears contained, enclosed and separate. We can consider such an unmarked body as a body which is *at-home* or *in-place*. Bodies that are marked as different from the human body, bodies that are (although in different ways) out of place, are hence excluded from the body politic: 'Slaves, foreigners, women, the conquered, children, and the working class, have all been excluded from political participation, at one time or another, by their bodily specificity' (Gatens 1991: 82).

The relationship between the integrity of the 'human body' and the body politic is not best expressed through analogy. Rather, there is a metonymic relation between the apparently unmarked body and the body politic; a relation of proximity or closeness. This suggests that the forming of the boundaries of 'unmarked' bodies – bodies-at-home or bodies-in-place – has an intimate connection to the forming of social space – homeland. The containment of certain bodies in their skin (bodily space) is a mechanism for the containment of social space. We can recall here how the white woman's refusal to touch the black child does not simply *stand for* the expulsion of blackness from white social space, but actually re-forms that social space through re-forming the apartness of the white body. The re-forming of bodily and social space involves a process of *making the skin crawl*; the threat posed by strange bodies to bodily and social integrity is registered on the skin.

The metonymic relation between the individual body-at-home – the body that appears not to be marked by difference – and the body politic, suggests an intimate connection between the particular body and sociality, or the imaginary social body. The particular body is often discussed in terms of the body one inhabits, that is, the personal body, or *my* body: 'Perhaps we need a moratorium on saying "the body". For it's also possible to abstract the "body". I see nothing in particular. To write "my body" plunges me into lived experience, particularity. ... To say "the body" lifts me away from what has given me primary perspective' (Rich 1986: 215). Here, the particular body is the body that I experience as lived, and is defined against any abstract or general notion of 'the body'. There is an equation here between lived experience, the privatised realm of 'the my', and particularity. I would

suggest that 'my body' is possible in its particularity only through encountering other bodies, 'your body', 'her body' and so on. In other words, we need an understanding of embodiment as lived experience which moves beyond the privatised realm of 'my body'. Such an understanding of embodiment can be theorised in terms of *inter-embodiment*, whereby the lived experience of embodiment is always already *the social experience of dwelling with other bodies*. Or, as Gail Weiss puts it, 'To be embodied is to be capable of being affected by other bodies' (1999: 162).

Such an approach would appear to borrow heavily from the phenomenological tradition in which 'this body' no longer belongs to me, but opens out into a fleshy world of other bodies (Merleau-Ponty 1968; Vasseleu 1998). Merleau-Ponty theorises the fleshiness of such intercorporeality through considering the reversibility of touch:

While each monocular vision, each touching with one sole hand has its own visible, its tactile, each is bound to every other vision, to every other touch; it is bound in such a way as to make up with them the experience of one sole body before one sole world, through a possibility for reversion, reconversion of its language into theirs, transfer and reversal. Now why would this generality, which constitutes the unity of my body, not open it to other bodies? The handshake too is reversible; I can feel myself touched as well and at the same time as touching.

(1968: 142)

Merleau-Ponty suggests that the very experiences that make the body 'my body', as if it were a 'sole body before a sole world' are the very same experiences that open my body to other bodies, in the simultaneous mutuality of touch and being touched, and seen and being seen. In this sense, 'my body' does not belong to me: embodiment is what opens out the intimacy of 'myself' with others. The relationship between bodies is characterised by a 'with' that precedes, or is the condition of possibility for, the apartness of 'my body'. This 'with' is the fleshiness of the world that inhabits us and is inhabited by us – flesh, not understood simply as matter, but as the very sensibility of the seen, and the very sight of the sensible.

While I find these arguments powerful and suggestive, they remain limited insofar as they remain tied to a general theory of inter-embodiment which transforms 'my body' into 'our body': '*my body* is at once phenomenal body and objective body. ... It is thus, and not as the bearer of a knowing subject, that *our body* commands the visible for us' (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 136; emphasis added).¹ This curious conjoining of signifiers, 'our body', with its plural pronoun and singular noun is suggestive: it suggests that many inhabit, and are inhabited by, the body, as that which exceeds the singularity of 'me' yet also includes that me in the sense that it is lived through or as it. Rather than simply pluralising the body (there are many bodies), this approach emphasises *the singular form of the plural*: that is,

sociality becomes the fleshy form (body) of many bodily forms (our). However, I want to consider the sociality of such inter-embodiment as the impossibility of any such 'our'. What I am interested in, then, is not simply how touch opens bodies to other bodies (touchability as exposure, sociality as body) but how, in that very opening, touch differentiates between bodies, a differentiation which complicates the corporeal generosity that allows us to move easily from 'my body' to 'our body'.

Rosalind Diprose takes from the phenomenological approach, the basis for a theory of corporeal generosity in which bodies 'borrow' from other bodies ways of inhabiting the world: 'the self is produced, maintained and transformed through the socially mediated inter-body transfer of movements and gestures and body bits and pieces. Just as through the look and the touch of *the other's body*, I feel *my difference*, it is from the same body that I borrow my habits and hence my identity without either body being reducible to the other or to itself' (1996: 258; emphasis added). The relationship that is posited here, as the basis of a generous corporeality, is between 'my difference' and 'the other's body', which *together* form an 'inter-body' that is not reducible to one body or the other. Although this inter-body is not simply the coming together of my difference, that is *my body as difference* with the other's body (my difference is not mine; it is taken from the other's body), it nevertheless positions both bodies *together*. They are together precisely insofar as they are not one. Corporeal generosity, the giving between bodies, does not lead to two bodies which are positioned in the same way, but it does lead to a new form of inclusivity, in which what is shared is the very failure to be self-identical or proper ('our bodies' is hence possible given the very impossibility of having a body that belongs to me or to you – 'me' and 'you' are aligned here as impossible gifts to the other). My body is *with* the other's body, insofar as each other's body makes the other's body.

In contrast, I want to consider inter-embodiment as a site of differentiation rather than inclusion: in such an approach 'my body' and 'the other's body' would not be structurally equivalent (even as impossible bodies), but in a relation of asymmetry and potential violence. Beyond this, inter-embodiment would not just involve the inter-bodily transfer between my body and the other's body: rather, it would involve different modes of transfer between 'this body' and other bodily others. We need to complicate what it means to be 'with', such that 'with-ness' is a site, not of shared co-habitation, but of differentiation (= sociality as differentiation). In other words, in the inter-bodily movements that allow bodies to be formed (as well as de-formed), *bodies are touched by some bodies differently from other bodies*. Not only could we ask the question, 'which bodies are touched by which bodies?', but we could also ask about the different ways in which bodies 'touch' other bodies, and how those differences are ways of forming the bodies of others. We could differentiate, for example, between the caress, the shake, the beating, and so on (see also Chapter 7), in terms of the affect they

have on the living out of one's bodily relation to others. We could consider how some forms of touch have been means of subjugating others, or of forming the other as a place of vulnerability and fear (colonial and sexual histories of touch as appropriation, violation and possession). We could also begin to deal with the relationship of touch implicit in the very fear of touching some others: such a refusal of touch is also a means of forming and de-forming some bodies in relationship to other bodies. I am calling here for a phenomenological analysis of corporeal generosity to be supplemented by an understanding of the *economics of touch*.

We can return to my notion of the metonymic relation between particular bodies and sociality, as well as between the body-at-home and the body-politic. We can theorise that relation in terms of touch – touch operates precisely as a *fleshy metonymy*. There is a relation of closeness and proximity between particular bodies and the 'body' of the social in that each comes into a precarious being only through being touched by the other. However, the particular body is touched by the social body in a much stronger sense. For what is meant by the social body is *precisely the effect of being with some others over other others*. The social body is also an imaginary body that is created through the relations of touch between bodies recognisable as friendly and strange; who one allows near, who is further away, and so on. Bodies with skins, while they are already touched in the sense of being exposed to others, are touched differently by near and far others, and *it is this differentiation between others that constitutes the permeability of bodily boundaries*. The differentiated relation between 'this body' and 'other bodies', or between 'this' or 'that' other body, can be understood as the metonymic slide of touch; through touch, bodies slide into each other, in such a way that aligns some bodies with other bodies, engendering the perpetual re-forming and de-forming of both bodily and social space.

Strange encounters are hence tactile as well as visual: just as some others are 'seen' and recognised as stranger than other others (as I suggested in Chapter 1, recognition involves a visual economy), so too some skins are touched as stranger than other skins. It is in this specific sense that touch is economic. Rather than thinking of skin as always exposed and touchable, we can think about how different ways of touching allow for different configurations of bodily and social space. Friendship and familial relation involve the ritualisation of certain forms of touch, while the recognition of an-other as a stranger might involve a refusal to get too close through touch.² But the stranger's body cannot be reified as the untouchable. For example, although the white woman refuses to touch Audre's clothes which have been touched by Audre's skin, she is still touched by Audre; her bodily gestures express precisely the horror of being touched. In other words, to withdraw from a relation of physical proximity to bodies recognised as strange is precisely to be touched by those bodies, in such a way that the subject is moved from its place. In this sense, the stranger is always in proximity: a body that is out of place because it has come too close. The

contours of bodies – the skin – are de-formed and re-formed precisely through being touched by bodies that are recognisable as strange and untouchable.

In Paul Schilder's *The Image and Appearance of the Human Body*, there is a recognition that bodily contours – or the postural model of the body – are always shrinking and expanding in the bodily encounter with other bodies (1970: 210). The permeability of bodily space is produced through the connectedness between bodies: 'A body is necessarily a body amongst other bodies' (Schilder 1970: 281). However, different forms of connection have different effects on that permeability: 'There is no doubt that the far distant body will offer less possibility of interplay' (Schilder 1970: 235). Bodies that are close by may be taken in by, or incorporated into, the body image, hence expanding the contours of the body, while bodies that are further away, are less likely to offer this expanded sense of the body. We could perhaps even suggest that further away bodies – and this sense of distance is irreducible to physical distance – may serve to contract or shrink bodily space, producing discomfort and resistance.⁵

We can build on Schilder's work by considering how familiar bodies can be incorporated through a sense of community – being together as like bodies – while strange bodies are expelled from bodily space – moving apart as unlike bodies. Both incorporation and expulsion serve to re-form the contours of the body, suggesting that the skin, not only registers familiarity and strangeness, but is touched by both differently, *in such a way that the skin becomes the locus for social differentiation*. As such, 'like bodies' and 'unlike bodies' do not precede the tactile encounters of incorporation or expulsion: rather, likeness and unlikeness as 'characteristics' of bodies are produced through these encounters. As bodies move towards and away from each other, in relationships of proximity and distance, both bodily space (the shape of the skin) and social space (the skin of the community) expand and contract. Rosalind Diprose suggests that 'the ease of an encounter with another is limited by the extent to which you already have gestures in common. Faced with a stranger, with a different cultural history and hence a different corporeal schema, one's own lived body may exhibit intolerance or resistance to the encounter' (1994: 122). Although I would question the assumption that the stranger is the one who 'has' difference *on* her body, Diprose does draw our attention to how encounters with others who are already recognised as strange(rs), as out of place in this place, involve forms of discomfort and resistance, that are felt on the skin.

Strange bodies

How do the processes of incorporation and expulsion produce assimilable and unassimilable bodies? In this section, I want to consider how 'strange bodies' or bodies that cannot be assimilated into a given social space are, in some sense, already read and recognisable through the histories of determi-

nation in which such bodies are associated with dirt and danger. Such histories of determination that define the parameters of the bodies that are marked as different from the familiar body – the body which is mere home for the white masculine thinker and viewer – inform the strange bodily encounters that take place between subjects, though in such a way that the encounters are not fully determined.

How does the reconfiguration of bodily space through strange encounters evoke such histories of the stranger's body, the body which is already recognisable as strange? In order to deal with such a difficult question, I will firstly examine Kristeva's theories of abjection, as a model which gives primacy to the bodily encounter with dirt and filth. In *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, Kristeva argues that, 'There looms, within abjection, one of those violent, dark revolts of being, directed against a threat that seems to emanate from an exorbitant outside or inside; ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable' (1982: 1). The abject relates to what is revolting, to what threatens the boundaries of both thought and identity: 'The abject has only one quality of the object – that of being opposed to I' (Kristeva 1982: 1). At one level, the abject is a jettisoned object that is excluded, or cast out, from the domain of the thinking subject. The abject is expelled – like vomit – and the process of expulsion serves to establish the boundary line of the subject. At the same time, the abject holds an uncanny fascination for the subject, demanding its attention and desire: 'from its place of banishment, the abject does not cease challenging its master' (Kristeva 1982: 2). The abject both establishes and undermines the border between inside and outside: 'It is as if the skin, a fragile container, no longer guaranteed the integrity of "one's own and clean self" ' (Kristeva 1982: 53).

Kristeva's approach to abjection emphasises the physicality of emotions that threaten to pulverise the subject and cross the boundary line. Such physicality is directed towards filth, defilement and pollution, though these are not themselves abject. Rather, they define the crisis posed by abjection insofar as they threaten to undermine the integrity of the subject by passing between the inside and outside. The abject is not reducible to a particular object or body: the abject relates precisely to the border which becomes the object (Kristeva 1982: 4). In the encounter between the white woman and Audre, when the white woman withdraws with horror and disgust at the black body, the border that is threatened by their skin and clothes touching is itself turned into an object of abjection: the roach. It is through a complex sliding of signifiers and bodies, that the roach becomes the black body, and the black body becomes the border which is hence transformed into an object of abjection (rather than an abject object). To this extent, black lived embodiment is, as Frantz Fanon has argued, 'sealed into that crushing objecthood' (1975: 77).

The relation between the physical emotions of horror and disgust, the function and effect of dirt and pollution, and the production of strange

bodies as objects, is determined through the 'border': strange bodies threaten to traverse the border that establishes the 'clean body' of the white subject. It is the function and effect of the border – which we can again theorise in terms of the skin – that allows us to think about how the bodily exchange between subjects reopen the histories of encounter that both substantiate and subjugate strange bodies, here constructed as black bodies. However, the association of strange bodies with the border that establishes the inside and outside – and here we can think of both bodily and social space – requires a more proper historicisation than Kristeva's psychoanalytics of abjection will allow. We need to ask: how is it that some bodies are recognised as stranger than others and come to be liveable as unliveable, as the impossible object that both establishes and confounds the border (to return to the stranger's question, 'am I the dirt that forces me to move away?'). What is required is not simply a psychoanalytical approach to how identity *as such* gets established and contested, *but how bodies are differentiated through the metonymic association of some bodies (and not others) with the border that confounds identity.*

In *Bodies that Matter*, Judith Butler considers how abjection functions to produce a domain of unthinkable and unliveable bodies. She writes, 'This exclusionary matrix by which subjects are formed thus requires the simultaneous production of a domain of abject beings, those who are not yet "subjects", but who form the constitutive outside to the domain of the subject' (Butler 1993: 3). Such a domain of abject beings inhabit the 'unliveable' and 'uninhabitable' zones of social life. The unliveable and uninhabitable zones of social life are, at the same time, 'densely populated by those who do not enjoy the status of the subject' (Butler 1993: 3). How can bodies populate zones which are uninhabitable? The marking out of the border which defines the subject – the constitutive outside – is the condition of possibility for the subject, the process through which it can come into being. *This* subject is precisely the subject who determines the formation of home – the space one inhabits as liveable – and whose access to subjectivity is determined through being at home – the centre from which other beings are expelled. The subject who can act and move in the world with ease – the white, masculine, heterosexual, subject – does so through expelling those other beings from this zone of the living (although the expulsion always leaves its trace). One does not then live *in* abjection: abject bodies are precisely the bodies that are not inhabited, are not liveable as such, or indeed, are not at home.

To account for strange bodies is to account for the historical determination of his white body as the body which becomes home: *the body that comes to matter through the reduction of other bodies to matter out of place* (= strange bodies). However, we need a model of how his body is determined as (at) home, without assuming a structural equivalence between those others who are expelled from the domain of the liveable. There are different forms of expulsion, all of which also involve prior acts of incorporation. We need to

examine how the processes of 'taking in' and 'expelling' (which involve the transformation of the border into an object) allow some bodies to be lived as (at) home.

Strange bodies do not exist as such, as they can only be assimilated as the unassimilable within the home of the white masculine subject: his being is here *and* there, secured as a dwelling that allows him to occupy and move within space. And yet, strange bodies are also over-represented and perpetually encountered as the impossible border that both establishes and threatens his identity and home: 'A fear of difference is projected onto the objects and spaces comprising the home or locality which can be polluted by the presence of non-conforming people, activities or artefacts' (Sibley 1995: 38). The different value given to homes or localities discussed in Chapter 1, slides into the different value given to bodies: the most privileged white masculine body is at home in the spaces which themselves are privileged (his body = his home = the world). In some sense, the domain of the white masculine subject is established by the equation of his body with home as such: his body transcends itself to become simply where he lives (= the knowable, inhabitable world).

The histories of determination of 'strange bodies' as an impossible object that establishes the domain of the privileged subject (his bodily world), also produce such bodies as dangerous, uncontrollable, dirty, engulfing and *over-reaching space itself*. In Stallybrass and White's *The Poetics and Politics of Transgression*, for example, there is an examination of how marginalised bodies are associated with the grotesque, and are seen as being multiple and bulging (1986: 9). Strange bodies are also represented as bodies that are incomplete, that threaten to leak and contaminate, and that have open orifices (Stallybrass and White 1986: 9). The over-representation of strange bodies as grotesque already positions the bodies of those that are not yet subjects, as out of place precisely in their refusal to be contained by place. The threat of contamination posed by strange bodies is precisely that those bodies already exceed the place in which they come to be encountered as such.

This exceeding of the out-of-place-ness of strange bodies opens out the temporality of the bodily encounter: rather than simply understanding strange bodies as produced in the present encounter with an-other we recognise as strange, we can now theorise that such encounters slide not only through space (bodily space leaks into social space), but also through time (the present encounter reopens past encounters). The over-determination of the local encounter by the historical and social production of ideal, contained and closed bodies suggests that strange bodies remain threatening: they not only make possible the designation of the body-at-home, but also, at the same time, confirm the impossibility of such a body being at home, in the present, as such. The strange body can only become a material 'thing' that touches the body-at-home, or a figure that can be faced in the street, through a radical forgetting of the histories of labour and production

that allow such a body to appear in the present. The strange body becomes a fetish which both conceals and reveals the body-at-home's reliance on strangers to secure his being – his place – his presence – in the world.

This production of unliveable or unassimilable strange bodies involves contingent and over-determined regimes of difference that are concealed in the very forms of stranger fetishism (the production of the stranger as a figure with bodily integrity). In the encounter discussed in this chapter, the strange body becomes the black body, a strange body in relation to the liveable domain of the white female subject. The antagonism between white and black femininities is here determined through a bodily encounter: an encounter which involves the refusal to share social space, to touch each other, a refusal of co-habitation that contains the black body *as body*, and allows the white body to move away, even away from itself. Other forms of power differentiation intersect in the recognition of bodily strangeness: while the white female body can become lived as the body-at-home by the withdrawal from proximity to the strange black body, the white female body becomes uninhabitable and unliveable in relation to the formation of the masculine body. What is required is precisely an analysis of how abjection – the unstable constitution of the domain of the liveable – brings into play multiple forms of social antagonism. The relationship between the processes of incorporation and expulsion which produce the abject and the marking of, and withdrawal from, particular bodily others as strange bodies, is hence *contingent* rather than necessary: there is a metonymic sliding across different borders, objects and bodies within such strange encounters.

Strange bodies are precisely those bodies that are temporarily assimilated *as* the unassimilable within the encounter: they function as the border that defines both the space into which the familiar body – the body which is unmarked by strangeness as its mark of privilege – cannot cross, and the space in which such a body constitutes itself as (at) home. The strange body is constructed through a process of incorporation and expulsion – a movement between inside and outside, which renders that the stranger's body has already touched the surface of the skin that appears to contain the body-at-home. The economy of xenophobia – the production of the stranger's body as an impossible and phobic object – involves, not just reading the stranger's body as dirt and filth, but the re-forming of the contours of the body-at-home, through the very affective gestures which enable the withdrawal from co-habitation with strangers in a given social space. The withdrawal remains registered on the skin, on the border that feels.

3 Knowing strangers

{H}ave you not observed that it is characteristic of a well-bred dog to behave with the utmost gentleness to those it is used to and knows, but to be savage to strangers ... it is a trait that shows real discrimination and a truly philosophical nature ... for the dog distinguishes the sight of a friend and foe simply by knowing one and not knowing the other.

(Plato 1970: 111)

How do you know the difference between a friend and a stranger? How do you know a stranger? Such questions challenge the assumption that the stranger is the one who is precisely *not* the object of knowledge. For in such a question, knowledge is staged as constitutive, not only of what is familiar, what is already known or indeed knowable, but also of what is strange, and who is the stranger. As I argued in the previous two chapters, the stranger is not *any-body* that we have failed to recognise, but *some-body* that we have already recognised *as* a stranger, as 'a body out of place'. Hence, the stranger is *some-body* we know as not knowing, rather than *some-body* we simply do not know. The stranger is produced as a category within knowledge, rather than coming into being in an absence of knowledge. The implications of such a rethinking of the relationship between knowledge and strangers are far reaching: it suggests that knowledge is bound up with the formation of a community, that is, with the formation of a 'we' that knows through (rather than against) 'the stranger'.

In the above quotation, knowing the difference between friend and enemy, or between friend and stranger,¹ reflects 'a truly philosophical nature'. So we might guess that philosophers have good noses. And we might guess that having a good nose means being able to smell the difference. Smelling the difference is here a way of knowing that establishes the border between the familiar and the strange: do you smell like a friend or stranger? Should the philosopher let you in? I can just see it: philosophers and guard dogs at the door, busy, smelling, smelling you as you all come in. You might get a gentle lick from the philosopher's tongue if you smell familiar, and you might get bitten if you don't: the philosopher's teeth may bite deeply into your already scarred not-quite-human flesh. You may of

local at the expense of the structural and general, leads to his own privileging of the structural and general at the expense of the local. His suggestion that 'globalized capitalism' is 'the totality within which local cultural encounters take place' (Dirlik 1997: 9) is in danger of reifying the forms of globality itself, and of making 'it' appear as if it comes from nowhere. I want to argue that the global is itself an effect of local encounters, as well as affecting those encounters. My concern with how the local and the global become mutually determined (and are hence not fully determined) is a direct critique of both localism and what we can call theoretical globalism.

1 Recognising strangers

- 1 To the extent that I am challenging the assumed opposition between strange and familiar (and also in Chapter 4, between home and away), I am following Freud, whose model of the uncanny emphasises how the strange leads back to the familiar. He also suggests that homely (*das Heimliche*) and unhomely (*das Unheimliche*) are intimately linked (Freud 1964: 225–226). However, Freud explains this intimacy of apparent opposites through a model of repression: 'this uncanny is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through a process of repression' (1964: 241). In contrast, I am seeking to explain the familiarity of the stranger by considering the *production* rather than repression of that which is strange: the stranger is produced as an effect of recognition and as a category of knowledge (see Chapter 2), and is henceforth familiar in its very strangeness. When we look out 'for strangers' we already know what we are looking for.
- 2 In Chapter 2, I consider how the recognition of strangers involves an economy of touch, as well as a visual economy. We can also note here that recognition has become an important part of political struggle – marginalised groups struggle to be recognised, or *to be seen*, by mainstream politics, which is also a struggle against forms of misrecognition (Taylor 1994; Fraser 1997). A key debate has emerged within feminism on the limits of the politics of recognition (see also Brown 1995; Skeggs 1999). Although I can't enter these debates here, my analysis of how recognition operates as a visual economy in everyday life and social encounters between others might suggest some limits to a politics of recognition, although it might also suggest the difficulties of simply overcoming recognition. In Chapter 6, I complicate this model of recognition as 'seeing the difference' by considering the implications of the structural possibility that the difference might not be seeable as the subject may be passing as it 'passes through' the community.
- 3 For a discussion of the relationship between migration and strangers see Chapter 4. Here, I argue that migration does not allow us to relativise the condition of strangeness.
- 4 Alene Branton, secretary to the steering committee of the National Neighbourhood Watch Association in the UK, is reported to have said, 'We were set up to be the eyes and ears of the police. We never expected to be the feet as well' (Bennetto 1995).
- 5 He contrasts the modern proximity of strangers with 'primitive cultures' where strangers are more at a distance.
- 6 I also consider the relationship between dwelling and movement in chapters 4 and 8 where I develop the notion of 'global nomadic citizenship'.
- 7 Importantly, stranger danger discourse attempts to define the stranger as anybody we don't know; it seeks to contest what I have called the recognisability of strangers, and the assumption that 'strangers' only look a certain way. As James

Brewer puts it, 'Who are the bad guys? How can you recognise them before its too late? ... What do the bad guys look like? They look like *YOU*' (1994: 15, 17). What this reveals, despite itself, is precisely the ways in which strangers are already recognised as looking unlike 'YOU': the discourse of stranger danger seeks to contest the very familiarity of strangers, but can only do so, by first confirming that familiarity, and the 'common-sense' assumption that danger is posed only by certain bodies, who are marked by their difference from the everyday of the neighbourhood.

2 Embodying strangers

- 1 Feminist critiques of Merleau-Ponty have drawn attention to how his approach to embodiment has been based around an elided masculinity (Irigaray 1993; Young 1990). What I want to suggest is that the failure to address (sexual) difference is structural to his model of inter-embodiment as a generalised 'sharing between bodies'. Difference is here not what is already marked on bodies (such as male or female bodies), but is what is constituted through the very forms of inter-embodiment, or bodily exchange, that Merleau-Ponty draws our attention to, in his powerful descriptions of his own bodily dwelling.
- 2 In Chapter 6, I further complicate this analysis by examining how bodies can take shape through the recognition of 'the strange' as assimilable. In the desire to assimilate that which has already been recognised as strange, there is also a desire to get closer to 'the stranger's body', or even to inhabit that body. I demonstrate that such a desire for proximity does not fully expand the contours of the *body-at-home* to incorporate the stranger's body: what is confirmed is precisely the difference between the one who is the stranger, who becomes reduced to the body, and the one who *temporarily* becomes or passes as the stranger, by moving through the body.
- 3 This idea of expanding and contracting skins is further developed in Chapter 4, where I consider how migration involves skin sensations and skin memories.

3 Knowing strangers

- 1 There is an intimate relationship assumed here between 'foe' and stranger. In Latin, the word for 'stranger' was the same as the word for 'enemy' (Walzer 1989: 32). This conflation of stranger and enemy survives powerfully in the stranger danger discourses discussed in the previous chapter. However, the broader argument of this book is that the identification of stranger as a friend still relies on the same discursive mechanisms (which I have theorised as 'stranger fetishism') as the identification of the stranger as an enemy. In this chapter, the stranger is known again precisely as the one who is different from 'us', yet also familiar in that difference. The accumulation of knowledge about strangers hence functions to establish an epistemic community.
- 2 See also Chapter 8 for a further exploration of these issues.
- 3 I have put 'co-author' in quotation marks because it is this description of Topsy Napurrula Nelson's contribution to the article that is precisely in dispute. Huggins *et al.* suggest that naming Nelson as co-author rather than chief informant involves an appropriation of her voice, while Bell argues that naming her as chief informant rather than co-author would involve a denial of her voice.
- 4 This letter was eventually published in 1991, with the following names: Jackie Huggins, Jo Willmot, Isabel Tarrago, Kathy Willetts, Liz Bond, Lillian Holt, Eleanor Bourke, Maryann Bin-Salik, Pat Fowell, Joann Schmider, Valerie Craige and Linda McBride-Levi. It was printed along with another response from Diane Bell (who always seems to be given the last word) and an editorial which