

The embodied imagination:

affect, bodies, experience

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Signature:

The embodied imagination:

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Abstract

This thesis offers a critical interrogation of the relationship between and co-production of bodies, texts and spaces. It introduces and develops the concept of the embodied imagination through the philosophy of Spinoza and recent Spinozist thinkers as a way of informing a materialist account of the production of experience. The embodied imagination, as material and affective, can supplement a Foucauldian account of subjectivation through its ability to offer an account of experience ‘after the subject’ – of experience as the surface effects of the movement of affect through and across bodies, texts and spaces that are productive of transsubjective social imaginaries. This can contribute to a fuller account of subject production and to a formulation of embodied politics based on a political analytic of feeling.

These conceptual arguments are mobilised through exemplars from ethnographic fieldwork based on the geographical concerns of landscape, embodied practice and place imaginaries. In particular, I point to specific outdoor practices, techniques and regimes that, in their imbrication in certain imaginaries, contribute to a sense of place and belonging. Through a ‘thoroughly materialist’ approach to these concerns, bodies’ involvement in material relations with other bodies and with the world are shown to be central to experience-production. I argue too that this approach can expose the relations of power that produce the very materialities of bodies, and as such can shed light on the politics of the nonrepresentational and its centrality to the production of embodied subjectivities. In doing so, a postfoundational sociology of embodied experience is formulated that operates according to a politics of radical contingency. This postfoundational perspective foregrounds an ontology of the encounter over presence: an ontogenetic account of the emergence of bodies, texts and spaces from their material imbrication in a world charged with affective resonance.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Bodies, texts and spaces.

Cornwall, June 2010. A body moves through the landscape, and is moved by the landscape. As it moves, it gazes at some fishermen working on their nets on a rocky Cornish beach. Romantic and melancholic yearnings well up at the sight of the fishermen's bodies, boats and nets. What moves this body to melancholy and to loss? To feel it as tightness in the chest, as a sense that something is gone. Where does this feeling come from, this feeling of a lost way of life?

Student demonstration, Parliament Square, London, December 2010. We are kettled by the police. News reports and the disjuncture between representation and experience. "They're charging at us". There is screaming, charging horses, huge legs and hooves. An exhilaration as intensities and excitement builds. Someone has a shield in the shape of a book: the book is Derrida's Specters of Marx. We feel a slipping away of faith in the police to protect us. We feel the fatigue of hunger, cold and exhaustion as we face the police lines. We feel panic moving through the group. We feel excited, and angry, and protective, and charged.

In these two examples, bodies participate in worlds materially, affectively, and politically. As I will demonstrate in this thesis, this participation involves affections that move to affects, feelings and imaginaries, loop over and increase intensity and move to embodied performance that then contributes to the ongoing production of imaginary and embodied forms of life and experience: the body imagines.

This investigation is directed towards a number of questions: how are bodily affects sedimented into positions, articulations and enactments of politics? How are they involved in the production of certain subjectivities, and why are these subjectivities more likely to emerge than others? Further questions then arise from these questions: how can we think experience after the subject? What does materialist cultural analysis look like after the critique of ideology and through an ontology of radical contingency? In an attempt to address and engage with these questions, as central concerns of cultural theory and cultural geography, the concept of the embodied imagination is developed and mobilised. The embodied imagination is considered here in terms of the ways in which experience is produced through bodies as they are involved in material relations with other bodies and

with the world. In doing so I develop a materialist cultural analysis that focuses on the body as a 'decentred site' – a site of the human after humanism. Through this, I consider also the relationship between the text and the body. If we are to suggest, as Foucault does, that discursive formations produce and position bodies in particular ways, then what does this mean in terms of the body itself? How can the space between text and body be sutured in cultural theory (if indeed it can be, or should be)? And, if we are to consider the role of experience in the production of the subject, then what does subjectivation feel like?

Through 2009 and 2010, I conducted fieldwork on the South West Coast Path, in South West England, walking around half of its 630 mile length on my own and with other people; reading, thinking and reflecting, as well as analysing archival records produced by research participants and other organisations.¹ During this time I practiced an approach to research based on the concept of 'self-conscious materialism' proposed by the Spinoza scholar Stuart Hampshire, discussed in chapter five. My approach refuses a neat line between the theoretical and the empirical, or a distinction between the library and the field, arguing for the ongoing process of thought-production as taking place in and out of the academy, the field and elsewhere. The examples I discuss in the second part of the thesis demonstrate how, through adopting this particular approach to embodied practice (including the embodied practice of thinking about concepts), and particularly to the affective movements that embodied practice brings about, I am able to say something about affect, the body, the imagination and the subject that exemplifies, supplements and works through the conceptual arguments.

My concerns with and contribution to cultural geography in this thesis have emerged from two desires. Firstly, to think through how recent work in nonrepresentational theory can contribute to a more traditional sociological analysis of subject-production. During the thesis I demonstrate how a focus on the nonrepresentational and on an analysis of affect can be highly critical and are useful ways of thinking about the processes through which politics and culture are intertwined. Secondly, this thesis makes a critical contribution to the recent move in cultural geography towards phenomenological accounts of embodied

¹ The thesis was funded through an AHRC collaborative doctoral award in partnership with the South West Coast Path team, with the proposed aim to explore the cultural geographies of the South West Coast Path. It is for this reason that the fieldwork took the form it did, and that the concerns of landscape and embodied practice are central to the examples used during the thesis. This then raises the question of whether the specific materialities of the fieldwork space and mode of engagement had an effect on the theoretical content of the thesis: the extent to which *geography matters*.

practices that, I suggest, do not engage sufficiently with difference, or consider how those accounts might have emerged from specific historical, cultural and institutional relations. Here, I set out to decentre the phenomenological subject through an account of experience as that which emerges from materially affective fields within which bodies are imbricated rather than from the body alone, and is explicitly concerned with experience-production as social and transsubjective.² In pursuing these aims, I argue for a solid and rigorous engagement with theoretical texts to show how politics is at the heart of the nonrepresentational: that a materialist analysis of the production of bodies and experience can expose the relations of productive power that move affective relations. At the same time, I demonstrate that this analysis is about difference – the differential production of contingent bodies. In doing so, I demonstrate how a concern with the nonrepresentational can be useful for and indeed vital to a critical approach to society and culture.

As a central concern of cultural geography, the concept of landscape became a useful means to interrogate cultural theory from a geographical perspective. This thesis addresses and works with recent cultural geographies of landscape, especially the work of John Wylie and Mitch Rose, who use landscape as a way of thinking about theory. Their approaches to theory through landscape have informed this thesis, particularly through their concern with embodied practice and experience of landscape. During the second half of the thesis, where examples from fieldwork and textual analysis are discussed, I comment on the production of experience of particular outdoor leisure practices, through which landscape emerges as a key organising principle for the theorising of experience.

Although it can be read as a direct contribution to recent work in cultural geography, and indeed was produced in the context of a geography department, I have written this thesis to be transdisciplinary:³ the sources, language and approach employed in this research speak to scholars working through and across a number of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. The thesis consists of two parts: the first is a lengthy theoretical discussion of the

² This critique is not addressed at phenomenology per se, which I discuss in chapter two, but at scholars who employ phenomenological methods in order to produce somewhat solipsistic accounts of themselves and the world.

³ The term transdisciplinary rather than interdisciplinary is used here in relation to an event attended at the Institut Francais, and run by the then Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy at Middlesex University, entitled "From Structure to Rhizome: Transdisciplinarity in French Thought, 1945 to the Present: Histories, Concepts, Constructions". I find the concept of transdisciplinarity more useful than interdisciplinarity since it implies a cutting through and across disciplines, and in doing so erasing those boundaries that can be cemented in interdisciplinary work, which implies the existence of disciplines that can talk to each other rather than communicating at a level beneath the disciplinary boundary.

themes of the thesis, developing the concept of the embodied imagination as a way of thinking about these themes. The second part of the thesis consists of essays/chapters that work through and exemplify the theoretical modes and approaches discussed in the first part. Separately, these essays provide evidence and exemplars for the ways in which the ideas contained in the first half of the thesis can be mobilised through directed enquiry. The ideas play through the examples that I bring to them, developing them and moving them forward in the process. Read together, their effect is cumulative: each focuses on particular aspects of the production of experience and their relation to the concept of the embodied imagination, and together they build on each other to consolidate the conceptual framework of the thesis. What these chapters all have in common is the attempt to intermesh a broadly Foucauldian hermeneutics of the subject with a Spinozist account of the imagination, in order to consider how thinking with Spinoza can supplement a Foucauldian analytic of experience as that which is produced affectively outside of and through bodies and is productive of subjects. Between the two parts is an 'interlude': written in more of a polemical and less discursive style, it pauses to look back at what has gone before, and prepares the reader for what is to come through a discussion of how the theory of the first part can inform a particular approach to scholarly enquiry.

The questions posed at the beginning of this introduction can be elaborated into a number of interrelated conceptual themes which I will briefly outline below, and which run through the main body of the thesis.

The embodied imagination and the politics of affect

The embodied imagination is a concept that emerged from a consideration of Spinoza's *Ethics*, and particularly his understanding of the imagination as a form of knowledge. Here, this concept is developed in order to explain how differently historied bodies come to experience and engage with the world in different ways. It positions experience as always rooted in the history of the materiality of bodies, and suggests that bodies make sense of their engagement with the world through the production of imaginary associations that are tied to their own histories, which are produced in and through their participation in social life. The idea of the embodied imagination also leads to a discussion of the concept of the social imaginary as a way of conceptualising the collective production of sense. Central to my discussion of the production of imaginaries is their affective resonance – the way in

which, due to their being produced by bodies that are always affective, the analysis of affect is implicit in this concept.

Throughout the thesis I argue that a focus on the affective relations between bodies, things, spaces and imaginaries can lead to an account of *what is at work* within a particular field of enquiry. In doing so, I argue that a consideration of the embodied imagination and of the politics of affect is a useful way of thinking about experience, and about the embodied practices through which we come to know the world and act within it. An engagement with the politics of affect is most clear in chapters four, six and seven, where I consider the way in which feelings are produced through regimes of experience-production that affect bodies materially and as a result affectively in historically specific ways, and in doing so, expose those most ‘natural’ moments in lived experience as contingent and rooted in material and social relations.⁴ A focus on affect and the embodied imagination can shed light on the way in which bodies produce oscillations between the presubjective and the subjective: how affects register on bodies, are processed by those bodies and, in the course of that processing, loop forward and backwards through memory and embodied histories that lead to the production of the ongoing movement of experience.

The structuring of experience and the historicity of the body

One of the aims of this thesis is to begin to formulate an account of experience after the critique of the subject. This involves thinking about experience as that which is produced and structured through relations, rather than that which “comes from within”. In order to do this, I turn to an account of the historicity of the body, which is addressed most explicitly in chapter two, where I consider two genealogical traditions in social theory in order to move towards a postfoundational account of embodied experience. This chapter, too, sets out what is meant by ‘experience’ in this context. In particular, I aim to work towards a means of conceptualising bodies that positions them as always already social, yet neither objectivises nor subjectivises, that rejects the possibility of foundation and depth, yet lets both in as effects of the structuring of experience, that troubles the idea of the subject, yet understands that the idea of subjectification is central to this task. A theory that

⁴ I use the term ‘feeling’ here as a way of describing the recognition in the body of an affect, but a recognition that is not coterminous to perception alone, since it also incorporates the doubling and looping over of the feelings that one is feeling, of the relays of memory and association that are set off in the imagination through the feelings that tie the body into relations that produce the effect of culture and social life. Feeling, then, encompasses the material, the affective, the symbolic and the imaginary.

never totalises, that acknowledges that which lies outside the possibility of representation, that refuses closure, yet recognises those desires and forces that long for closure. The thesis operates at certain points to pull apart, to undo, and this occurs firstly in the pulling apart of the idea of the body in order to expose the aporia which is its inside. As such, I offer a critique of naïve biologism in conceptualisations of the body and my use of the work of Judith Butler is central to this. In undoing the body and the self, in considering its production through the sociality that brings it to being, the idea of experience as the property of a sovereign subject is called into question. It is through this lens that I am able to speak of experience as structured through particular material relations, through particular rationalities within which embodied performativity and the production of bodies take place. This situating of experience outside of the subject, and tying it to regimes of subjectivation contributes to the critique of phenomenology that is central to post-1968 continental theory. This critique works throughout the text of the thesis, where different layers of experience-production are tugged at, unsettled and questioned in the positioning of experience as that produced through the imbrication of bodies within relations of movement and affect.

Working with Spinoza, and with the concepts of affect and the embodied imagination has informed the development of what I consider a *thorough materialism*⁵ – a material analysis of the world that also incorporates texts,⁶ ideas and imaginaries into its definition of the material. In response to cultural analyses that focus on textual content alone, my approach considers texts in terms of their material *encounters* with bodies, and in terms of the ideas and imaginaries moving between and through bodies that those texts engender. These ideas are central to the claims that this thesis makes about its contribution to cultural theory, particularly in terms of the way in which spatiality and textuality are reconfigured through a focus on how bodies and texts enter into material relations of modification that affectively resonate and produce an excess of association through the encounter. As such I focus on the way in which bodies and texts encounter each other and move each other through that encounter. The concept of the embodied imagination, which holds that associations are made during a modification of the body (for example the reading of a text), is central to the way in which I analyse the textual encounter, and contribute to a materialisation of cultural theory through drawing attention to the affective capacities of texts to work through

⁵ See Anderson and Wylie (2009) for a discussion of this term.

⁶ 'Text' is considered here in its broadest form: as that which signifies, and therefore includes literature, images, clothing, utterances and TV programmes.

bodies, altering their histories and their material composition.

The geographies of radical contingency and the impossibility of presence or connection

The second part of the thesis, where I consider specific fieldwork examples, pursues and discusses what I refer to as a ‘connective imaginary’, an imagined feeling of connection that ties bodies to places, landscapes and other bodies through particular practices and imaginary associations. This sense of connection, produced through various practices, discursive regimes and techniques, makes itself visible through bodies in terms of *feeling*. For example, in chapter six feelings of belonging and identity are discussed with reference to specific outdoor practices such as walking that, through their imbrication in particular imaginaries, contribute to the production of a sense of place and belonging.

In chapter eight, the imaginative production of a sense of ‘lost connection’ associated with modernity is discussed. In the critique of the idea of a lost connection, I set out to undo some of the ways in which connection to place, nature, God or the nation are seen as foundational. I argue, through the philosophy of Jean-Luc Nancy, for an exposure of the immanent production of foundations and for an ontological *a priori* of spacing rather than connection, as part of the process of positing a politics of radical contingency. This chapter, then, involves an undoing of what we ‘hold to be true’, a melting into air of the solid foundation in order to pave the way for a postfoundational thinking and politics. As such, it engages with the themes of this thesis through a slightly different theoretical lens: working with Nancy brings new ways of thinking about the themes explored, but nevertheless works to supplement the deconstructive moves made during the rest of the text in its refusal of any kind of foundation.

Chapter summaries

Given that the thesis deals with a number of complex conceptual arguments, the remainder of this introduction summarises each chapter in order to provide the reader with a clear map of the thesis structure and content.

Chapter 2, ‘Towards a postfoundational sociology of embodied experience’ considers

the idea of the body in social and philosophical thought. This chapter acts as a literature review of the work of key thinkers who have been involved in theorising embodied experience, and also poses some problems that I address through the course of the thesis, particularly through an engagement with the production of experience. A lengthy chapter, it comprises of two parts. The first discusses the intellectual history of the 'social body' as an object of thought, from Bourdieu and the early Foucault, through Butler to the later Foucault and to Deleuze's writing on Foucault. This part offers a critique of the notion of internality and of the originary subject, considering the concepts of bodily inscription and iterative performativity as more useful in thinking about the production of bodies. The second part of the chapter focuses on phenomenological accounts of embodiment and how they can contribute to the production of experience. Drawing on feminist critiques of phenomenology, it argues for a theory of embodiment that refuses the body as origin. The chapter moves the argument from a focus on the body as object to the body as lived, drawing on the work of Merleau-Ponty and Iris Marion Young in particular.

These thinkers are discussed in order to inform a conceptualisation of bodies as material, and as imbricated in material relations of production that are performative of forms of life,⁷ while at the same time paying attention to the way in which experience, too, is grounded in these embodied engagements. I attempt to undermine biologist thinking that positions a materiality of the body outside of the social, and suggest that the materiality of bodies *takes place through the social*. By drawing on Deleuze, Foucault and Butler, on the phenomenology of Young and Merleau-Ponty and the sociology of Bourdieu, I argue for a *materialisation of experience* and a theorisation of bodies that allows no possibility of an inside to the subject, and no possibility for an outside to the social. Chapter two, however, leaves us with a sense that there are two genealogical traditions, still related but with a caesura between them, between a consideration of the body as product of social relations and the body as subjective centre of experience. It is as a result of this caesura that I move to Spinoza.

Chapter 3, 'Spinoza and the embodied imagination' introduces the philosophy of

⁷ The term 'form of life' is used throughout the thesis to describe the specific ways in which body-subjects emerge ontogenetically from material relations that define how life can be thought, understood and experienced: the way in which these subjects perform, experience, develop, interact and move results from the form of life through which they come into being. The term has its roots in Foucault's accounts of biopolitics, in Agamben's writing and also in Wittgenstein, who equates the form of life with "the whole of logical space" that makes language possible (Wittgenstein 2001:22). This term is used since it incorporates those cogent concepts such as 'subject' or 'culture', refuses a human foundation and considers life not just at the personal but also at the population level.

Spinoza, particularly through the *Ethics*. Through an introduction to and discussion of his radical monism, it demonstrates how his understanding of the imagination can be used in order to address many of the questions opened up in the previous chapter. Spinoza's philosophy of mind and body, and of forms of knowledge are considered, before a discussion of the way in which these ideas have been mobilised by more recent thinkers to explore the relationship between consciousness, power, embodiment and the text. In particular, I turn to the work of Genevieve Lloyd and Moira Gatens, as well as Gilles Deleuze's and Etienne Balibar's writings on Spinoza's *Ethics*, and those of the political theorist Caroline Williams. Specifically, my concern is with the way in which Spinoza's ideas can outline a radically immanent materialism which enables us to consider the imagination as a way of knowing which is *embodied*, *affective* and *material*. In this chapter I develop the concept of the embodied imagination which is one of the central concepts in this thesis. I argue that the embodied imagination can provide thinkers with new ways of attending to the subjects of memory, experience, affect and sensation that enable a more *sociological* account of these topics. Finally, I turn back to the work of Moira Gatens, who interprets Spinoza for a feminist project of considering how the idea of the social imaginary, as configured through a Spinozist account of a supersubjective imagination, an imaginary of the multitude, can work to produce ways of life, subjects and bodies through gendered power relations. I argue that Gatens' work on imagination as central to perception can elucidate the relationship between discourse and experience, and begin to flesh out the ways in which attention to the process of imagining can lead to a closer analysis of processes of subjectivation and bodily inscription.

Chapter 4 , 'New materialisms' moves on from the previous chapters by considering how the ideas contained therein can act as foundations upon which to build a 'new materialist' approach to cultural geography and cultural theory. Focusing on what I call 'new materialist' scholarship, and particularly recent scholarship influenced by Spinoza, I consider the contributions of Massumi, Connolly and Protevi to the development of a way of thinking about bodies and affects that can contribute to a critical analytic of experience. In this chapter, I discuss an expanded definition of thought that includes cognitive and non cognitive aspects: the representational and the nonrepresentational. In doing so, I draw attention to the role that the nonrepresentational can play in the production, and indeed undoing, of the subject, particularly through Deleuze and Guattari's concept of micropolitics. In this way, a consideration of the vacillation between affective and subjective

registers is introduced. This chapter also begins to articulate the way in which Foucault and Spinoza can be effectively brought together such that they are able to articulate the relationship between thought, the body and affect. A further theme discussed in this chapter is the way in which a materialist account of bodies and affects can lead to a new way of approaching spaces and texts: a perspective that focuses on the movement of affect between human and nonhuman bodies that undoes traditional approaches through a focus on the encounter as site of historical and cultural production, rather than the space or the text itself.

Chapter 5: 'Interlude'

After the development of theoretical arguments set forward in the first half of the thesis, the interlude forms a shorter 'breathing space' – a section where the previous half of the thesis is addressed in terms of how it relates to what is to come. Concern with the body, affect and materialism are moved into a specific approach to scholarly engagement with the world which is developed and worked through in the second part of the thesis. In particular, the interlude affords the opportunity to take things further – to move through theory and practice and to address the question of the subject through this move. In this section the rupture between the theoretical and the empirical is addressed, and I argue for its dissolution in favour of a self-conscious materialist perspective that recognises the value of the researcher in engaging, thinking and practicing in the course of enquiry.

Chapter 6: 'Landscape, place and the embodied imagination' works together with chapter seven in an investigation of landscape experience, and points to the way in which the configurations of materialities that produce ways of engaging with and knowing place can be considered through the concept of the embodied imagination. Here, I explore how particular modes of engaging with space are understood - and experienced - as 'natural', and through this *conceal* the contingency that lies beneath them. Chapter seven, on the other hand, suggests that the feeling body can also *reveal* the politics of the encounter through an interrogation of the affective register.

This chapter speaks directly to cultural geographies of landscape, and particularly to what have become known as 'imaginative geographies'. As an account of the production of landscape cultures and place identities, it focuses on the way in which the themes of David Matless' Foucauldian *Landscape and Englishness* can be reconsidered through a Spinozist

lens. I bring the concept of the embodied imagination to bear on ideas of nation, of belonging and of connection with the land, considered as imaginaries that are produced affectively and felt bodily. I argue that, through certain practices, experiences are produced that augment these ideas and feed back into the rationalities through which they arise. The chapter traces a series of textual and embodied actualisations that point to the existence of particular imaginaries as constellations of ideas that materialise in their movement through and between bodies and technologies in the production of forms of life. In doing so, I focus on the embodied imagination as it produces and works on imaginaries backlit with affective resonance that give rise to experience.

Chapter 7: 'Affective bodies and the interruption'

Following from the arguments built in the previous chapter, this section considers how nonrepresentational aspects of thought can expose the sociality and social relations through which they are produced, and in doing so can call into question some residual biologisms that may be associated with the nonrepresentational. Here, I draw on the work of Probyn and Bennett in order to produce an approach to the body that considers how the 'naturalness' of affective response belies the conditions through which that response is produced. Using the concept of the 'interruption'⁸ I suggest that bodies can be used as 'litmus papers' insofar as they can be mobilised reflexively to consider the deep foldings of sociality that shape our visceral, noncognitive and emotive responses to practices, places and bodies. This chapter deploys three examples from my own fieldwork in order to consider how the interruption plays out in practice and how the researcher can adopt this mode of interrogation of her own and others' bodies in order to work through what bodies can reveal. In this chapter, I argue that the politics of subject production can be 'read off' from specific junctural moments where bodies experience a shock, or a hiatus, or a breakdown in 'normal' response. Read in conjunction with the previous chapter, then, I demonstrate how a specific focus on the affective capacities of the body can reveal the politics of subjectivation through its precognitive reactions, and as such continue to supplement Foucault with Spinoza to contribute to an analysis of experience-production.

Chapter 8: 'Techniques of the self and the embodied imagination' discusses Foucault's work on techniques of the self in order to further critique the concept of internality (of the

⁸ I do not use this term in the Rancièran sense, but in my own sense, explained in chapter 7.

body and of the subject) discussed in chapter two. Here, I explore the way in which Foucault positions selves as effects of reflexive and nonreflexive techniques and practices. Using examples from fieldwork I show how embodied techniques of the self are crucial to this production of self-relation as surface effect.

The chapter also considers temporality as central to the production of experience of self. The concept of the embodied imagination here is mobilised in order to consider how certain practices, techniques and technologies are incorporated through bodies in order to produce specific relations of the self to the self, for example through the production of time, and the imaginary 'doubling' of bodies through time. I also consider how nonhuman technologies are imbricated in this production, specifically through their role in past and future memory, calling on the concept of the prosthetic to draw attention to how the problem of memory, and of 'holding on' to experience is attempted to be surmounted through the use of specific recording and playback technologies, a concept that Foucault draws attention to in his essay on 'self-writing'. The chapter, then, works towards developing an account of techniques of the self of the later Foucault that attempts to engage more fully with the production of experience.

Chapter 9: 'Landscape, Foundation, Testimony: geographies of disconnection'

This chapter forms the last part of this radical deconstruction of experience. Theoretically, it moves away from the arguments put forward in the rest of the thesis in order to perform what one might consider as a further 'undoing'. Throughout the second half of the thesis, practices of 'connection' are discussed – ways in which bodies work to experience themselves as part of something more than themselves. In reading Spinoza and other 'relational' thinkers, I was concerned that the idea of relationality can lead one to imagine an ontological base of connection positing that 'everything is connected' and that this can contribute to the production of discursive regimes that position a foundational, ontological connection, for example, through tropes of community, religion and nature. I suggest that there is a danger in this imaginary that connection and relation are constructed as overly determinist; that in the radical immanence of substance there can be nothing more – just the becoming of nature. By introducing a reading of Jean-Luc Nancy at the end of the thesis that posits an *a priori* spacing, I attempt to undo this final ground, this final centre. In doing so, this effectively opens a space, via Nancy, for a rethinking of politics through a radical declaration of the impossibility of connection, and the possibility of reconfiguration

or rewiring those various ideas of community, of nature, of god, that is propounded through the idea of connection and the politics of spacing.

Chapter 10: 'Conclusion'

The conclusion to this thesis pulls out the themes of the thesis and summarises the main claims of its contribution. The themes discussed in this introduction are returned to in order to demonstrate how the thesis speaks to current debates in cultural and political theory, and in cultural geography. I also attempt to identify what cogent lines of enquiry fell outside the constraints of space, and to suggest paths for future exploration.

As shown by the chapter outlines above, I have structured this thesis in order to assist the reader in engaging with and following its sometimes densely theoretical arguments. In this way, I invite the reader to pursue this particular theoretical journey and hope that it offers a new and engaging contribution to both cultural geography and cultural theory.

Chapter 2: Towards a postfoundational sociology of embodied experience

“They will fight for their servitude as if for salvation”

Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* p.51

This chapter poses a number of problems that I set out to address through the course of the thesis, and begins to conceptualise how social relations work with and through the body. Here, the body is considered in terms of its capacities that are produced through regimes of force and relation, and in doing so, the concept of an *a priori* body is called into question. I discuss one intellectual history of the sociality of the body in order to *prepare the ground* for further enquiry, by providing an introductory context and premise for the exploration of concepts later on in the thesis. As much explicatory as analytical, then, this chapter provides the basis to many of the arguments I go on to discuss, and is more of a literature review and somewhat more schematic in structure than the rest of the thesis. The first part provides an account of the history of what can be considered as the ‘social body’⁹ – a genealogically linked set of writings that privileges the role of embodied *practice* in the production of social relations and attempts to move towards a materialist social theory through the imbrication of bodies in the production of social life. This interest in practice in social theory in the twentieth century is followed through a discussion of the work of Bourdieu, Foucault and Butler. In examining these writers, the possibility of thinking about the body and society as a dualism (in terms of an inside and an outside of the body) is questioned, as is the concept of *depth* in thinking about the body and the self. In doing so, the notion of a stable, coherent subject perpetuated through what Butler calls (from Nietzsche) the “metaphysics of substance” (Butler 2006:27) is called into question. The second part of this chapter considers the concepts of embodiment, the ‘lived body’ and the influence of Merleau-Ponty on social and cultural enquiry, and describes a set of related perspectives that move towards providing an account of embodied experience. The chapter concludes by suggesting that an account of the production of the subject that allows for a consideration of the fullness of experience, yet at once enables us to consider bodies as involved in ongoing processes of production and transformation is necessary in order to consider the sociality of bodies. As such, I move towards a postfoundational account of bodies that refuses to allow a conception of them prior to their imbrication in social

⁹ This term refers to Nick Crossley’s book *The Social Body* (Crossley 2001).

relations, and consider how these perspectives can inform the questions that are addressed in the rest of the thesis.

Part I: Practice

Central to all of the discussions below are a) a critique of the idea of the body as the site of internalisation of social structure,¹⁰ and b) a troubling of the distinction between internality and externality. In this distinction, the 'inside' of the self or subject, narrated or thought with reference to, for example, the soul, the bones, the viscera or the self, is contrasted with the outside, the environment in which the body is subject to various restraints and which acts on the flesh. In troubling the dualism of inside/outside, I also question other binaries such as self and world, individual and society. To consider the body as a repository for social relations implies that there was once a body devoid of these, which in turn suggests that the materiality of the body is capable of standing outside of such relations. The dualism of mind and body leads inevitably to the dualism of materiality and ideality, where social relations inhabit a symbolic realm which is considered ideological, immaterial, and capable of 'overlying' the body. Yet, as deconstruction has taught us, the other always has ingress into the selfsame; the outside is always immanent to the inside and is a function of the working of the inside.¹¹ In tracing a historical course through the ideas of practice and the social body as a response to dualist conceptions of the subject and the body, I intend to show that dualism never truly escapes. To write outside of this history of dualism is impossible; nevertheless I will attempt to undo those grounds through a textual journey, a performance of embodied social theory which leads to a particular form of materialism that works towards a political analytic of the production of embodied social life.

The question of the sociality of bodies - the idea of bodies as produced within and through material and social relations, as always embedded - calls for a critique of any thinking of the

¹⁰ This view, of course, has been particularly central to functionalist sociology, for example, the work of Talcott Parsons (Parsons 1951).

¹¹ Derrida's reading of Marx on the commodity in *Specters of Marx* can help us to understand this: he discusses how Marx considers use-value as stand-alone - as a reduction into the thing itself, how it is only through the possibility of exchange value that the spectre of capital appears. For Derrida, however, there is no pure moment of use-value - of the in-itself. There are always spectres; the outside of capital always haunts the object. This haunting, as an inescapable feature of the object, is also true of the body. We are ghosts, ghosts of our histories and others' histories. This does not tail us, hail us or address us. We are already ghosts, and cannot escape this ontological necessity (Derrida 1994:187-205).

body as consisting of an essential core or a shell into which sociality is poured.¹² In thinking through an *originary* sociality, the possibility for this kind of reductionism can be escaped. Dualistic thinking that allies the body with nature and the mind with culture also works to feminise embodiment,¹³ and leads to understandings of the body as what Butler describes as “mute facticity”, where the body is considered as raw, pre-social, void, fallen, natural and so on (Butler 2006:176). In discussing the work of various writers, I set out a problematic that I work through during the remainder of the thesis. This problematic involves the formulation of a postfoundationalist, materialist sociology of the body. By this, I mean an understanding of the body as that which is materially involved in the ongoing and relational production of the world and of sociality. I argue for a conceptualisation of the body as produced through and producing these relations, yet at the same time that denies this understanding of the body any transcendental foundations. In doing so, bodies are considered in terms of what we might consider a politics of *radical immanence*. Through a consideration of the work of Bourdieu, Foucault and Butler in particular, I start to consider what a postfoundational sociology of the body might look like. As a result, the first section of this chapter acts as a sort of ‘excavation’ of the foundations of what we think of as the body, starting with the binary opposition of body/society, then moves towards an excavation of the self and the subject, while finally turning to the materiality of the body itself. The intention of this section, then, is to peel away at the ways in which bodies are conceptualised until all we are left with is *surfaces*.

The choice of thinkers in this chapter arises from their usefulness in understanding how to move from a conceptualisation of social and cultural life in terms of signifiers (as arguably much structural-functionalist anthropology can be seen to do) towards a consideration of the *materiality* of culture through a focus on the body and on embodied *practices*. This turn to practice perhaps first emerged in Marcel Mauss’s “Techniques of the Body”, published in 1935.¹⁴ Bourdieu, Foucault and Butler have been central to the instituting of a view of the

¹² These spatially influenced metaphors of either essential innerness, or empty exteriority have the effect of setting up a separate space for the social, either as surrounding the core, or filling the husk. Essentially, they spatialise dualism and in doing so, reinforce it.

¹³ For further discussion of the nature/culture dualism and its role in the constitution of gender relations see (Ortner 1974).

¹⁴ In “Techniques of the Body”, first published in 1935, Mauss introduces the notion of *l’homme total*, comprising of psychological, sociological and physiological elements, and suggests that any human practice can only be understood in relation to these three aspects. He points to the inextricability of these through a discussion of the curvature of the lower legs in Neanderthal man as a result of a lifetime of sitting in a squatting position. The body is thus conceived as being engaged in an active process of becoming through its actions: “a certain form of the tendons and even of the bones is simply the result of certain kinds of posture and repose” (Mauss 2006:84). For Mauss, the body is lived, can never be a ‘flesh’ alone: the body performs culturally specific practices which then shape its very materiality. The main

body, particularly in sociology, as a set of socially constituted practices (Turner 1996).

Pierre Bourdieu played an important role in introducing ideas of embodiment to social theory, and has been influential on subsequent sociologies of the body. While his central concern lay with the ways in which social order and social relations are maintained, this concern is understood through a focus on how subjective meanings and understandings impact on action and how social relations are played out materially through the body. The influence of Merleau-Ponty, and also of structural-functionalist anthropology in his work, is central to the way in which Bourdieu has approached these problems. Bourdieu shows how practice is important, how historical and material relations produce those practices, and how practice shapes experience.

In Bourdieu's work, all social life is seen as essentially practical. Doing and knowing are practices that are learned and performed in and through everyday life. In *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, he asserts that we can only know through doing (Bourdieu 1977). His practical logic – having a “feel for the game” (Bourdieu 1990a:64) places the individual firmly within a social milieu through a focus on learned and situated behaviours. The actor (and here he echoes Erving Goffman),¹⁵ acts according to prior experience of similar interaction situations (Goffman 1959). Hence presentation of self and interaction are based on familiarity, observation and previous experience. Practice and recognition allow the actor to make *choices within constraints*.¹⁶ In the theory of practice we have a focus on the embodied social agent acting out specific practices and reinstituting social norms through the performance of those practices. An understanding of bodies as signifiers, as agents of social reproduction, and as making up the social world, is clearly apparent.

Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* is an attempt to reconcile subjectivism and objectivism: to understand the relationship between these dichotomies, whilst still retaining them as conceptual tools. *Habitus* relates his focus on embodied practice to that which *generates*

contribution to social science of this aspect of Mauss's work has been his explicit focus on body techniques as learnt and as an object of study, leading to a recognition by anthropologists and other social scientists that a focus on these practices are central to the production of anthropological knowledge.

¹⁵ Bourdieu moves away from Goffman, however, and in doing so allows an element of flux into his ideas, in *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, where he specifically draws our attention to the fluidity of practical logic, and to the role of the actor as performing “necessary improvisation” – rather than Goffman's more fixed notion of roles (Bourdieu 1977).

¹⁶ We can compare this to Marx's assertion in the *18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852) that “Men make history, but they do not make it just as they please” (Marx 1994:187).

practice, to the formation of those subjective drives to act in certain ways and not others, those drives which are firmly rooted in a materialist conception of history. This moves a discussion of class domination away from an analysis of coercion and towards an analysis of the way in which class inequalities are largely self-organised through the practices of ‘internalisation’ involved in the *habitus*. For Bourdieu, *habitus* involves “an acquired system of generative structures objectively adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is constituted” (Bourdieu 1977:29). ‘Generative’ refers to the power of the *habitus* to *dispose* the embodied actor towards the world, according to the objective conditions through which it itself was produced. The *habitus* becomes a way of thinking about the effect of socialisation, the availability or not of particular resources (material, cultural and social) and the effect that this has on producing desires, preferences and dispositions in the subject. As such, Bourdieu understands the body as marked and shaped by history. The *habitus* is described in terms of the “active schemes of perception, thought and action” inhabiting the body, and comprises

embodied history, which surfaces in order to place limits on action and generate particular responses ... The *habitus*, a product of history, produces individual and collective practices – more history – in accordance with the schemes generated by history (Bourdieu 1990b:54–6).

As an internalised representation of social relations which inhabits and shapes the body of the actor, the *habitus* encourages certain dispositions and discourages others. Bourdieu expressly states that it is the “site of the internalisation of reality and the externalisation of internality” (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977, quoted in Jenkins, 1992:79). Rather than being somehow external to the individual, it is conceptualised as being embedded *within* the social body as an integral part of its behaviour. It is ‘thoughtless’ insofar as it does not necessarily require actors to be reflexive, since the idea of practical logic, the way in which particular body techniques, and ways of acting become ‘second nature’, enables the *habitus* to structure action in an unreflexive manner. Through the embedding of *habitus* in practice - through repeated action - pathways are forged which make specific ways of acting and feeling come to be seen as inevitable and unquestioned. This positions a *dialogical* relationship between individual and society, with the *habitus* playing a mediating role, and where learned behaviours and cognitive structures are played out in the interaction of everyday life and through that playing out reiterate the patterning of behaviours learned through social interaction. This dialogism sets the individual and society as pre-given: despite their mutual shaping and honing, the entities are separable and treated as such.

The concept of bodily *hexis* develops Bourdieu's theorisation of the habitus. Bodily deportment, for Bourdieu, just as it was for Mauss, is social, and constitutes and is constituted through the *habitus*. Body style thus becomes a location for the internalisation of objective conditions for the performance of the acting subject within social relations. Dispositions that are learned in early years are inscribed in bodily *hexis* through practice, codifying social relations into embodied action. Bourdieu's understanding of *hexis* adds to the concept of the habitus an inextricable connection between body positioning and the experience of emotion. *Hexis* is perhaps most succinctly described as "a durable manner of standing, speaking and therefore of *feeling* and *thinking*" – a description which indicates how Bourdieu conceives the relationship between mind and body – one brings on the other in an inextricable connection, yet keeping the terms separate (Bourdieu 1990b:n). Elsewhere, he suggests that "it is the simple act of replacing the body in an overall posture which recalls the associated feelings" (Bourdieu 1990b:69). Here, motion adds intensity to an action, supplementing it in order to render it with added significance. It seems to come second to physical bodily deportment, indicating both his fundamentally dualist understanding of mind/body but also his view of emotive response as overlaying the body, rather than something which has its origins and its ends in the lived body: "The body believes in what it plays at: it weeps as it mimes grief" (Bourdieu 1990b:73).¹⁷ Here, then, Bourdieu inadvertently privileges one aspect of embodied experience over another, to suggest a successional relationship and imply cause and effect, creating a false dichotomy between the mutually constituting process of acting, and feeling and meaning within the lived body. However, his focus on embodied social relations brings to cultural theory an ability to think outside of culture as a system of signs that operate in a symbolic, disembodied world, as structural-functionalist anthropology can suggest. To think of culture in terms of bodies and what they *do*, *feel* and *desire* serves to some extent to dissolve some of the dualisms that exist between text and practice, body and language. This is explored further in chapter four, where I discuss a new materialist approach to these problems that refuses to demarcate between text and practice. Bourdieu discusses the body as a "living memory pad" (Bourdieu 1990b:68), where past experiences and actions become written into the structuring structure of the habitus and allow subjects to make sense of new situations and adapt their actions to new social forms. He provides a materialist account of symbolism and classification, due to his insistence on their embeddedness in material

¹⁷ As the following chapter demonstrates, this understanding of the relationship between practice and experience is central to the way in which Spinoza understands mind and body, and to the way in which I mobilise Spinoza's philosophy during the course of this thesis.

economic relations, and through his account of how these structures work *through bodies*, setting out a critique of ideology through a discussion of the materiality of embodiment, where culture is “rooted in the necessary physical embodiment(s) of its producers, male and female” (Jenkins 1992:37). His materialism is also, of course, apparent in his stress on what he sees as the ‘objective conditions’ of social existence. Bourdieu is important and interesting to the sociology of the body precisely because he explains how bodies are inscribed upon by the material conditions that surround them. The fact that he does not find a way out of the subject/object dichotomy, and moreover, that he does not fully articulate the subjective side of this dichotomy or indeed explore in depth how these felt and lived relations are produced and maintained, has however led to a number of critiques, e.g.(Jenkins 1992; King 2000; Atkinson 2008), which have argued that further depth is needed in terms of a focus on either subjectivity or group interactions. This has led Wacquant, and other Bourdieusian scholars, to take the idea of the habitus forward in order to think it through lived experience (McRobbie 1995; Probyn 2004; Skeggs 2004; Wacquant 2004; Monteiro 2008). These scholars have attempted to join aspects of ethnography, autoethnography and observant participation such that *lived experience is subjected to a scholastic point of view*¹⁸ (Bourdieu 1990c), is subjected to reflexive motions that can elucidate the sorts of concerns that Bourdieu was grappling with. They aim to understand and articulate some of the hopes, fears, joys and shames that are felt and are intrinsically connected to relations and capacities between bodies and bodies and bodies and worlds, and contribute to the performing of particular ways of life.

Loïc Wacquant, in particular, has taken Bourdieu’s ideas forward in a way that engages directly with the more embodied aspects of his work, most famously by learning to box in an inner-city Chicago gym. He writes a deeply sensuous and affective account of the lives of those boxers with whom he trained and sparred, informed of course by the pains, hardships and bodily transformations he himself endured whilst training there (Wacquant 1989; Wacquant 1995a, 1995b, 1998, 2004, 2005). What Wacquant describes so eloquently in his various discussions of this period is the *felt* seduction of boxing, the experience of living within a particular set of moral, spiritual and corporeal realities that shape bodies and dispose them towards particular capacities, yet never losing sight of the material deprivations that produce in those bodies a set of opportunities, hopes and frustrations

¹⁸ Bourdieu defines the scholastic point of view as a in institutionally and socially situated perspective that calls to be interrogated, but which nevertheless enables a critical reflection on practice, through the modes of attending that one schooled in the critical social sciences mobilises in the course of reflexive enquiry.

through which their pugilistic identities circulate. Wacquant's writing 'from the body' communicates these embodied experiences, and as such consolidates the way in which the sorts of questions asked by Bourdieu can be demonstrated through an undertaking such as this, and moreover, how a sensitive, politically informed, sensual account of the sensual body can be written (Wacquant 2005:446). This is clear in his wish to

vivisect the manufacturing of prize-fighters in an effort to elucidate the workings of a bodily craft, that is, a sociocultural competency residing in prediscursive capacities that illumine the embodied foundations of all practice" (Wacquant 2005:446).¹⁹

In Wacquant's approach to fieldwork there is no naïve claim to a "native's point of view" (Geertz 1973) but rather a carefully considered reflexive journey into different corporealities, and into the (racialised, gendered and classed) way in which those corporealities are produced and maintained. Wacquant has been seminal in advocating what he calls "carnal sociology," "*une sociologie charnelle, c'est prendre au sérieux le fait que l'agent social est incorporé, un être de chair qui avant tout «souffre»*": a phenomenologically informed focus on the body as it affects and is affected by social relations (Wacquant 2003).²⁰ Carnal sociology is characterised by an analysis of social inequalities as lived and felt. Wacquant states, drawing on the work of Drew Leder, that he wished, in his book, *Body and Soul*, to

engage, exemplify and test empirically the notion of habitus by disclosing in considerable detail how a particular type of habitus is concretely fabricated – how ... understanding, knowledge and yearning is collectively made into 'flesh and blood' (Wacquant 2005:453).

Contemporary feminist writers, too, have mobilised Bourdieu for a consideration of bodily difference (Butler 1988; Skeggs 1997; Adkins 2004; Adkins and Skeggs 2004; McNay 2004; Skeggs 2004; Butler 2006). Adkins lays out four reasons why Bourdieu's ideas and concerns are still central to feminist theory: its foci on the embodiment of social action, on the generative nature of social action, on power as it works through the body and on cultural power and authority (Adkins 2004:5). These theorists and social scientists have worked with Bourdieu as a way of thinking about what Benjamin calls the "structuring of experience" (Benjamin 2002, 2007), and it is this experience of living in a world shaped by material, affective forces, and on the body as locus of sedimented history which recurs in practice, that I am particularly interested in, and which forms the foundation for my move towards thinking about the relationship between the body, affect and the imagination. This is of central concern to Bourdieu, as it is to Foucault and Butler, alongside a recognition that an understanding of experience can only take place with reference to the body as locus of

¹⁹ I understand the term 'prediscursive' as what one might consider to be prior to representation – the "more than representational" (Lorimer 2008).

²⁰ See also Crossley (1995).

experience, a body not objectified or foundational, but one which thinks, feels, responds as part of an ongoing ontogenesis of substance. I shall explore this in more detail in my discussion of the philosophy of Spinoza in the next chapter.

The concepts of *habitus*, *hexis* and practice do much to inform debates about embodiment and subjective emotional and affective responses vis-à-vis social relations. Bourdieu allows us to understand the way in which history and experience play a part in determining dispositions and reactions towards others and the world. Although his attempt to reconcile subjectivism and objectivism is problematic insofar as he recurses to a “residual positivism”, where he “privileges the ‘objective’ pole of the subjective-objective opposition” (Jenkins 1992:60-61), his notion of embedded social relations as experienced through the lived body, clearly influenced by Merleau-Ponty, allows us to understand sociologically the relationship between dispositions, affects and observable behaviour. Despite the usefulness of the concept of *habitus* for social theory, Bourdieu’s “internalisation of externality” (Bourdieu 1977:72) perpetuates a false dichotomy between the subject and society which leads to a conceptualisation of the possibility of a pre-social subject, of a ‘natural body’ as the site of internalised dispositions, which then becomes ingrained through mimesis and through socialisation processes. *Habitus* shows how the movement of history becomes inscribed on bodies through the production of their very materialities and desires: in terms, for example, of the muscle and fat content of bodies, as regulated through dietary preferences and labour and leisure pursuits. As a means of considering the way in which bodies enact and produce history, the habitus at once gives us a convincing solution. Bourdieu provides a clear and reasoned account of the relationship between the body and history, and a constant reminder of the imprinting of history on the body. In his later work *In Other Words*, he effectively sets out a phenomenology of social space, whereby experience is effectively mapped onto social space, and bodily inscription as generative of particular modes of experience can be considered through this lens (Bourdieu 1990a). The concept of a “relational phenomenology” has been discussed by McNay in thinking through a theory of gender as a lived relation (McNay 2004), where she suggests that thinking of social relations as lived rematerialises them, yet at the same time positions that materialisation in a world of experience that is neither solipsistic nor dependent upon a false-consciousness model. I will return to this argument in the second part of this chapter.

Bourdieu and Bourdieusian scholarship attempt to understand the fleshiness, and the embodiment of social relations and social practice. Bourdieu's materialism is most apparent in his understanding of practice, as social life embodied and performative of itself, enabling the possibility of thinking of social life as *arrangements* of things and bodies rather than something that *happens* to things and bodies. However, it is in the concept of *habitus* that things get problematic, not so much in terms of a dualism between nature and culture, but in terms of the way in which the *habitus* is described and imagined through the notion of internalisation. The *habitus* is embodied through invoking the language of internality, and in doing so, of socialisation. While it is unclear whether Bourdieu staked out an inside in terms of the body's interior as psyche, he operated within a dualistic language which means that those binaries are brought into play at the very moment that they are elided. Bourdieu's repeated attempts to undermine the binaries of objectivity and subjectivity, convincingly realised through the notion of the *habitus*, are reintroduced through his epistemological and methodological approach which ultimately rests on the assumption of a durable subject and measurable object. Moreover, Bourdieu cannot dispense with the subject, much as he attempts to question subjectivism. The subject, while seen as a product of regimes of practice and performance, ultimately exists through that practice as an agent within particular structures of limitation. As a result, Bourdieu does not completely evade the critique of dualistic thought.

In my discussion of Bourdieu, I have explained his attempt to undo the binaries between bodies and society, through a focus on *habitus* and practice. While I also argue that he is not entirely successful in this endeavour, this focus is useful in thinking about how these binaries can start to be unpicked. I now turn to a discussion of some of Foucault's work, and particularly his consideration of the relationship between power and the body, which can achieve similar aims to those of Pierre Bourdieu but is less reliant on ideas of subjectivity and objectivity, and on the external and the internal. To this end, I show how Foucault deliberately subverts the discourse of internality and sets out to expose the aporia of the internal. In doing so, I undertake the second part of my excavation of the body, this time through Foucault's hermeneutics of the self and of the subject. This section provides a brief outline to the contribution that Foucault has made to thinking about the body, and also focuses on Foucault's early work: the period during which a particular set of ideas about the production of bodies through power, and the production of power relations through bodies, was formulated and elaborated. In particular I consider Foucault's troubling of

culture/nature through his destabilisation of the origin, and also his critique of interiority and depth, which I argue is necessary to the establishment of a postfoundational theorisation of the body.

Whereas Bourdieu was primarily interested in practice in terms of the development of a materialist analysis of capital and class, Foucault's concern was more with the way in which a focus on practices and bodies can attempt to pull apart the ideas of subject and power. In Foucault, the body is positioned as the site through which power relations are played out, providing a 'more materialist' way of understanding power than a focus on ideology:

I wonder whether, before one poses the question of ideology, it wouldn't be more materialist to study first the question of the body and the effects of power on it. Because what troubles me with these analyses which prioritise ideology is that there is always presupposed a human subject on the lines of the model provided by classical philosophy, endowed with a consciousness which power is then thought to seize on (Foucault 1980a:58).

Foucault's concern with the body lay with the production of knowledge about the body, and through those apparatuses of knowledge, the production of the body itself. His quest to lay bare the particular apparatuses of power and knowledge, technologies and bodies that make up particular fields of enquiry (sex, punishment) is firmly rooted in the impossibility of the origin, in the recognition that that central recurring trope of Western philosophy, the foundational subject, can no longer be considered to be an independent variable in the pursuit of philosophical knowledge. Therefore, this approach to the body is both a *more materialist* way of conceiving power, and also becomes a way of thinking outside of the foundational subject, since the subject emerges as one of the objects – and a subject – of power itself. In other words, the subject and the body are considered as embroiled within an apparatus (*dispositif*) which is *productive* of knowledge rather than preventative of freedom (Foucault 1980a, 1980b). The relationship between the power/knowledge nexus and the idea of the body as subject and object of that knowledge is clear in the following passage:

Far from preventing knowledge, power produces it. If it has been possible to constitute a knowledge of the body, this has been by way of an ensemble of military and educational disciplines. It was on the basis of power over the body that a physiological, organic knowledge of it became possible (Foucault 1980a:59).

A particular kind of somatic materialism is also apparent which is evocative of Bourdieu's writings on the body and its imprints of history:

descent attaches itself to the body. It inscribes itself in the nervous system, in temperament, in the digestive apparatus; it appears in faulty respiration, in improper diets, in the debilitated and prostrate bodies of those whose ancestors committed errors (Foucault 1984a:82).

While being less overtly focused than Bourdieu on class in his desire to expose the historicity of the flesh, this emphasis on the somatisation of history is clear in most of Foucault's writings, and comprises a materialism focused on the body which I take forward for much of this thesis as a way of dealing with notions of materiality, the imagination and the text. In Foucault's discussion of discipline, and of the production of docile bodies in *Discipline and Punish*, we see the way in which body techniques as objects of enquiry, similar to those in Mauss, are analysed in terms of how they are produced in the service of power, for example on the military training field where particular marching styles are entrained, and in prisons, hospitals, schools and factories where spatio-temporal arrangements of bodies are controlled in the production of docile and efficient bodies (Foucault 1979). In *The History of Sexuality Part 1*, the body as object of inquiry is a body produced through technologies and regimes of power which bring it into being as a subject (Foucault 1978). It is a body that has no origin outside of those immanent structures of power:

the body is the inscribed surface of events (traced by language and dissolved by ideas), the locus of a dissociated self (adopting the illusion of a substantial unity), and a volume in perpetual disintegration. Genealogy, as an analysis of descent, is thus situated within the articulation of the body and history. Its task is to expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history's destruction of the body (Foucault 1984a:83).

Through considering power relations as productive as well as restrictive, bodies are seen as produced through practice:

the body is moulded by a great many distinct regimes; it is broken down by the rhythms of work, rest, and holidays; it is poisoned by food or values, through eating habits or moral laws; it constructs resistances (Foucault 1984a:87).

In positioning power as what produces bodies, Foucault critiques the idea of the subject and in doing so attempts to free the "history of thought from its subjection to transcendence" (Merquior 1985:17). The subject is destabilised and repositioned as an *effect of processes of subjectification*. Foucault's Nietzschean destruction of the truth of the origin through recognition of the radical immanence of the subject also enables a break from thinking of the process of subjectification as that of internalisation. If one is to remove the spectre of the foundational subject from a discussion of the body, or even the body as natural receptacle for cultural content through the erasure of dualism and critique of the subject, then a space opens up for a thinking of the body as an effect of its sociality, and of the various regimes of subjectification, discipline and surveillance that produce it as they restrain it. There is moreover a clear progression in Foucault's work towards antifoundationalism, from his earlier writings on the body through his later work on the

self, which is discussed in chapter eight of this thesis, to his final work on biopolitics and parrhesia.

In 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History' Foucault lays out his method for genealogical analysis as the search for *herkunft* – for relations of descent – through piecemeal relationships of resemblance between practices, discursive formations and technologies which gather together to effect something more solid (Foucault 1984a). Again, the body is positioned as an object of enquiry – as signifier and nodal point in power relations. Where Foucault discusses his rationale for this focus on the production of bodies in the service of power, we see the desire to subvert any possibility of considering an origin or 'natural state', and a consideration of the way in which individual bodies are incorporated into bodies politic. Genealogy "opposes itself to the search for origins" thus, rather than searching for a relationship between power and a presocial body, the genealogical project focuses on the body as product of immanent power relations (Foucault 1984a:77). This is why Foucault is so important for the development of a postfoundational sociology of the body – he attempts to eradicate foundation from his work through the concept and practice of genealogy.

Foucault's work on the body effectively provides a critique of *internality*: of an inside, an essence or a core to the subject. Instead, through his various discussions of the technologies involved in producing relations to the self, sexualities and modes of discipline, he shows how the *effect* of the foundational subject is perpetuated through these technologies, obscuring its illusory status. Where Bourdieu writes of internalisation, then, Foucault writes of *inscription*, in a move away from the language of internality towards a conception of a body subject comprising of *surfaces*: surfaces which write themselves through the workings of power and signify as they do; surfaces that enfold in order to achieve the effect of an interior, yet rely on those constant inscribings to maintain their effect. Foucault's critique of the foundational subject and of a pure interior to the subject focuses on the body not as originator of ways of being and acting but as a node, or point of contact in networks of power relations: bodies as part of technologies of control that can be analysed accordingly, and whose pleasures too are produced in the service of power. It is Deleuze who perhaps most clearly discusses this surfacing in Foucault's work, when he writes that

the outside is not a fixed limit but a moving matter animated by peristaltic movements, folds and foldings that together make up an inside: they are not something other than the outside, but precisely the inside of the outside (Deleuze 1988a:80).

Later Deleuze describes Foucault in these terms:

the inside as an operation of the outside: in all his work Foucault seems haunted by this theme of an inside which is merely the fold of the outside, as if a ship were a folding of the sea (Deleuze 1988a:81).

It is as if the relations of the outside, folded back to create a doubling, allow a relation to oneself to emerge, and constitute an inside which is hollowed out and develops its own unique dimension: ‘*enkrateia*’, the relations to oneself that is self-mastery (Deleuze 1988a:83).

In Foucault’s later work we really get a sense of his doing away with the inside, of the process of subjectification as the production of insides through the *folding of outsides*. Foucault’s work is central to the understanding of the body and the subject that I develop through this thesis, partly because of his belief in the body as containing the material mark of history, but also because of the way in which he advocated attention to the “microphysics of power”, the body as objectified effect of various manoeuvres, strategies and technicities which make themselves known and felt at capillary level (Foucault 1979). His “effective history” takes as its method and object a sort of micropolitics of the body – a turning of attention towards the nervous system, the body, the digestion, in order to expose how

the body is also directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs. This political investment of the body is bound up, in accordance with complex reciprocal relations, with its economic use; it is largely as a force of production that the body is invested with relations of power and domination; but, on the other hand, its constitution as labour power is possible only if it is caught up in a system of subjection (in which need is also a political instrument meticulously prepared, calculated and used); the body becomes a useful force only if it is both productive body and a subjected body (Foucault 1979:25-6).

This is perhaps clearest in his often cited discussion of the soul as subjectification in *Discipline and Punish*: the soul as effect of an apparatus that surveys, supervises, coerces and regulates, an effect of a “certain technology of power over the body” that is produced

out of methods of punishment, supervision and restraint... [and that] inhabits [the subject] and brings him (*sic*) to existence, which is itself a factor in the mastery that power exercises over the body. The soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body (Foucault 1979:29).

Here, the soul emerges as a surface effect that effaces the idea of the inside. Foucault moves towards a consideration of the body as materialising power in a way that disrupts the foundational subject of Western thought through analyses of the processes through which subjects are produced - the techniques and technologies of subjectivation (*assujétissement*) - and at the same time that does away with the possibility of positing an outside to the power/knowledge relations that are produced through and produce materialities. He finds a way to escape any attempt to “grasp the ineffable moment of origin, the primitive intention of authors” (Foucault 1972:138-40), instead positioning the subject as *always already*

embedded in relations of power (Foucault 1982). Where Bourdieu focuses on practice and disposition as materialised through bodies, and through internalisation, Foucault focuses on the apparatuses and technologies that produce certain types of bodies through processes of subjectification and the production of the *idea* of an internalised core. My discussion of Foucault, then, has continued the excavation of the body through a thorough destabilising of the idea of the subject and of the self. Internality, a key feature of Bourdieu's sociology of practice, is denied through its replacement with the concept of the fold. However, as I shall show, the writing of Judith Butler can help us to excavate further, to undo even more those foundational outsides through which sense is made of the idea of the body.

Butler's work on bodily inscription, and her focus on practice and performativity can further elucidate an understanding of the body as produced through its own sociality, and also an understanding of the way in which bodies are central to the production of social life. *Gender Trouble* was an attempt to rethink gender for feminist political praxis and address some of the problems with second-wave feminist theory through an engagement with poststructural texts, particularly through the critique of the subject in Foucault and through deconstruction in Derrida. Central to her critique of second-wave feminism is her deconstruction of the sex/gender distinction, a distinction whose political purpose was to untie gender differences from biological determinism through the positing of gender as a social and cultural 'overlying' onto the sexed body. Instead, Butler argues that the binary opposition of sex/gender not only suggests that it is possible to think of the body as natural, prediscursive and a "mute facticity" which can only ultimately lead to a recourse to biological determinism, but also that the reification of binary sexual difference through a foundationalist understanding of the sexed body actually *undermines* the project that it wishes to challenge. Butler demonstrates how the nature/culture distinction (implicitly bound up with ideas of gender difference, as Sherry Ortner pointed out) is reiterated through the sex/gender distinction, and in doing so reifies the position of women's subordination as connected to a foundational biological difference, which forecloses a possibility for feminist political praxis (Ortner 1974). Butler's project to dissolve the sex/gender distinction focuses on how

feminist critique ought also to understand how the category of 'women', the subject of feminism, is produced and restrained by the very structures of power through which emancipation is sought (Butler 2006:4).

In other words, through deploying these binary oppositions of man/woman, sex/gender, nature/culture, feminism actually mimics the strategy of the oppressor. The exaggeration

of and polarisation of sexual difference and sexing of the body through the construction of normative heterosexuality produces difference as much as it attempts to erase it. The body is constituted as outside of culture, as nature, and it is the power of this discourse of naturalisation (of course deeply enculturated) that sediments gender difference. Instead, she argues, the concept of the sexed body is better placed as the object of feminist enquiry since, “always already a cultural sign, the body sets limits to the imaginary meanings that it occasions, but is never free of an imaginary construction” (Butler 2006:96). Thus the limits of the real are produced in the naturalised heterosexualisation of bodies. Bodily sites of pleasure are an effect of the discursive sexualising of the body, rather than a pregiven natural fact: the very materiality of the body, and, by extension, of experience, is an effect of its embeddedness within the discursive regimes through which it has significance. Butler discusses how the materiality of sexed bodies themselves should be the object of feminist thought, considering them as formed through “a process of materialisation that stabilises over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity and surface we call matter” (Butler 1993:9). Echoing through this phrase (in particular “*we call*”) is the essence of what it is that Butler is trying to get at – namely that the in-itself is unthinkable. There is no outside to the social body, no pre-existing facticity. We can only encounter the materiality of the body through the way in which it appears within systems of meaning construction that are complicit with and immanent to our embodied experience of the world. Matter itself, the stuff of bodies, can no longer constitute a foundational outside. It is through the body’s incorporation into those systems that its matter takes shape. This is not to recourse to idealism or projection, however. Materialities of bodies and things are involved in processes, are shaped by other materialities and are produced through and produce the technologies and discursive practices that recognise them as subjects.

This erasure of gender as the discursive or cultural means through which the idea of ‘natural sex’ is produced and comes to be seen as ‘natural’ or ‘prediscursive’ leads us to consider the sexed body as produced relationally: “perhaps this construct called ‘sex’ is as culturally constructed as gender; indeed, perhaps it was always already gender” (Butler 2006:9). The separation of gender, and the idea of natural sex, then, works to conceal the way in which sex and gender are both discursively produced. Indeed, Butler writes how bodies “cannot be said to have a signifiable existence prior to the mark of gender” (Butler 2006:12), and later, sex is “what qualifies a body for life within the domain of cultural intelligibility” (Butler 1993:2).

If the sexed body itself is conceived as a product of those relations we call gender, then this clearly has implications for any understanding of the subject. Through a Nietzschean critique of the ‘metaphysics of substance’, Butler calls into question the unity of the psychological person, which is instead seen as a grammatical construction afforded artificial unity through its construction in language. The subject, as with Foucault, is an effect of subjectification, a “foundationalist fiction” (Butler 2006:150). Indeed, Butler’s antifoundationalist identity politics suggests that there is no “doer behind the deed”– the doer is constructed in and through the deed. There is no existence to the subject prior to the cultural field, since existence is only recognisable within the field of meaning generation (Butler 2006:195). The critique of the foundational subject enables thinking about bodily practices through the lens of processes of subjectivation, the processes through which bodies come to be recognised as subjects. Butler positions the deconstruction of the subject within the realm of gender relations, allowing a denaturalisation of the body and foreclosing the possibility of subjectification as a result of discursive practices overlaying a foundational, prediscursive ‘body in nature’: a deadened materiality over which a veil of culture and meaning is placed. In other words, subjectivation is a material process, and Butler, through her deconstruction of the sex/gender distinction, questions the very matter of bodies as a foundation. Her critique of biologism marks the final undoing of the body, the final revealing of the body as a play of mirrors, a shimmering of surface effects that we hold to be more than that.

Central to this is an understanding of *performativity* as bodily inscription, as that which takes place on the surfaces of bodies which can never themselves be prior to inscription. There is no surface prior to inscription: inscription is the process of surfacing – it *makes surfacings happen*. Through a critique of internality and internalisation Butler shapes a theory of performativity which has bodily inscription as a central tenet, elucidated through a reading of *Discipline and Punish*, where Butler considers the inscription of power on the surfaces of bodies leading to the effect of depth or internality (Butler 1989). Despite positioning the body firmly within a nexus of power relations, however, Butler points out how Foucault sometimes reinstates a raw, precultural body onto which power relations are played out. This can be seen in passages such as “the social body is an effect not of consensus but of the materiality of power operating on the very bodies of individuals” (Foucault 1980a:55). The term “very”, with its Latin root in *veritas*, indicates that there is a

residual urge in Foucault to assign a foundational truth to the idea of a body prior to any workings of power.

Acts, gestures and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this as a surface of the body, through the play of signifying absences that suggest, but never reveal, the organising principle of identity as a cause...identity and essence are revealed as fabrications/fictions sustained through corporeal signs and gendered bodies... [the gendered body] has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality (Butler 2006:185).

Butler comments on how, in 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History', Foucault describes the body as the "inscribed surface of events", in a way that implies that there was something *prior* to the inscription. She compares this with the torturing machine in Kafka's 'In the Penal Colony', which destroys the body that it writes on, which of course implies a body prior to its inscription by the instrument of torture (Butler 1989).

If the possibility of a gendered subject prior to discourse is taken away, then we are left with illusions of gender and of subjectivities which are maintained through the continued actions of bodies. Gender is a process, an ongoing effect which is brought about through signifying performances, rather than emerging from a 'core' within the subject, which is revealed too as an effect of social, discursive and normative relations: "gender is not a noun, but neither is it a set of free-floating attributes....[it is] a doing" (Butler 2006:34), and again, "[g]ender is the repeated stylisation of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being (Butler 2006:45). What this effectively means is that the very possibility of internality as stable core is exposed as a surface effect, and that the inside can only be understood in terms of aporia: "gender is a complexity whose totality is permanently deferred, never fully what it is at any given juncture in time" (Butler 2006:22). The denial of origins prior to discursive signification and prior to gendered sex, as well as the denial of an outside from Butler's use of the Derridean concept of deferral enables us to understand the impossibility of gender as anything other than an indeterminable master signifier whose meaning can never be fixed or sutured, is always out of reach and is definable only in terms of blurred and shared meaning systems rooted in the practice of everyday life.

A central concept in Butler's work, and one which has been heavily drawn upon in the social

sciences, is the performative. This concept positions bodies in constant processes of citational practice which give substance to that which they name. Some criticisms of Butler seem to stem from a misreading of the concept of performativity, based on confusion between the terms performance and performativity.²¹ The performative speech act, discussed in J.L. Austin's *How to Do Things With Words* refers to the speech act that brings something into existence through the utterance itself, for example in a declaration: a pronouncement of marriage, an apology, a naming (Austin 1962). The performative brings into existence that which it names: it does something with words. Through a reading of Derrida's essay on Austin, Butler develops her own concept of citational performativity with reference to processes of sexed subjectivation. In 'Signature, Event, Context', Derrida shows how the power of the performative lies in its citational reference to existing technologies of authority rather than originating in the subject (Derrida 1988). The power of the act lies not with the subject of the action (the judge, vicar, gendered subject) but with the discursive regimes that the performative act enables and augments through its citation as authoritative:

the judge who authorizes and installs the situation he names invariably cites the law that he applies, and it is the power of this citation that gives the performative its binding or conferring power. And though it may appear that the binding power of his words is derived from the force of his will or from a prior authority, the opposite is more true: it is through the invocation of convention that the speech act of the judge derives its binding power (Butler 1993:225).

What Butler brings to an understanding of the social body, other than her focus on practice as citational and performative of the structures that it names, is a move away from the idea of the self or the subject formed through processes of internalisation of durable dispositions. Instead, the subject is produced - and also fragmented - as an effect of processes of repetitive doings and therefore becomings that are illustrated through discussion of the articulation of gender: the process of gender *making itself*.²² In this section, I have shown how a focus on body practices as signifiers and as effects of material conditions have become important to the social sciences, and introduced the concept of practice as a way of thinking about the continual performativity of social life. I have

²¹ The term 'performativity' has become ubiquitous in cultural geography and is often mistakenly used to describe performance, or used generally to mean some kind of action.

²² This marks a clear break from Bourdieu in the move from structuralism to poststructuralism, and also in the denial of an interior to the subject. However, the genealogical links are clearly apparent, and Butler discusses in a footnote to the preface of the 1999 version of *Gender Trouble* how it was only after writing the book that she realised the resonance that the idea of citational performativity had with Bourdieu's theory of practice. She addresses this omission in *Excitable Speech*, which acknowledges these similarities, yet recognises the differences in the way in which Bourdieu conceives of the subject, for example, through an insistence on the importance of subject positions that are more fixed than in Butler's and Derrida's formulation (Butler 2006:156-158).

attempted to chart a narrative of the social body, in order to set the foundation for my own discussions of the embodied imagination and its relation to the concept of affect, which I will explore in the following two chapters. Effectively, I have tried to show how the body, as always already social, has been thought as such mainly as a response to the dualisms which pervade language and thought, and which constantly emerge as barriers to attempts to undermine these dualisms, and as a result often reinstates them. In discussing Bourdieu, I showed how a focus on body practices as signifiers and as effects of material conditions have become important to the social sciences but that the concept of internalisation has been subsequently problematised.

In moving to Foucault's work on bodies and knowledge, internalisation is replaced by the concept of inscription, which I then elaborated through Deleuze's concept of the fold. This move has also shifted focus onto a critique of the subject as a way of considering how bodies are produced through regimes of power, which helps us to reconsider and trouble the notions of externality and internality that pervade Bourdieu's work. Finally, in discussing Butler's work on citational performativity and inscription, and her deconstruction of biological sex, I have shown how her nonfoundational (aporetic) approach to the sexed social body recognises the contributions of the former thinkers while also working within a more deconstructionist framework. This contextual discussion now enables us to continue from the premise that the body is considered in terms of its ongoing production, becoming or ontogenesis, and that it is at birth imbricated in various regimes of power that act on it and produce it in particular ways. In the second part of this chapter, I attempt to expand on some of these theorisations through a focus on phenomenological discussions of the lived body. In other words, I move from thinking about the body as object of enquiry, as site of *practice*, to a specific concern with embodied subjectivity, as site of *experience*.

Part 2: Embodiment and experience

The problem of embodied experience – the question of how we can figure experience after the subject – is considered here in terms of the endeavour of moving towards a postfoundational account of embodied experience. This endeavour is discussed through the idea of the 'lived body': a concept that follows a different but related genealogy of embodiment that has its roots in phenomenology, and specifically in the writings of Merleau-Ponty. Beginning with Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, this section attempts to

gradually undo some of its more problematic ideas in an attempt to think experience without the positioning of a foundational subject of that experience.

Taking as a given an understanding of the sociality of the body, inscribed and produced through lived practice discussed above, I now move towards a closer analysis of the way in which embodied experience has been approached in the social sciences. In part one, the work of Pierre Bourdieu was discussed through a genealogy of structuralist and poststructuralist social theory, and little emphasis was placed on the influence of Merleau-Ponty on Bourdieu's writings. I now explore a different genealogy of thinking of the body through a focus on experience and on the *lived* rather than the *social* body.²³ I summarise some of the main areas of focus in order to tell a specific story of the lived body, in particular of how ideas of embodiment and the lived body have been taken forward and critiqued by feminist thinkers in order to make sense of the experience of sexed embodiment. In this way, feminist theory is again used as a way of thinking through these particular approaches to bodies, in order to consider the materialities of different bodies and the way in which these are embedded in and are the materialisations of social relations; on the enfolded moment through which power takes hold. In other words, to propose a materialist view of bodies, affects and the imagination it is necessary to ground all of these relations through a body whose very materiality is their medium and their effect. Feminist phenomenologies have emerged on the one hand in order to avoid the critique of (masculinist) universalism of the phenomenological subject, and on the other hand to find tools with which to explore the specific potentialities and restrictions of sexed embodiment. I attempt to move through these lines of thought in order to theorise what Lois McNay calls a relational phenomenology (McNay 2004), and what I consider to be a historically materialist phenomenology. This is undertaken in a move towards thinking embodied experience relationally, through and after the critique of the subject. I focus on the sexed body, as previously, in order to think about the way in which differently historied bodies can be thought in contemporary social theory, without resorting to a model of bodily difference which relies on fixed subject positions.

²³ There is an alternative genealogy of thinkers on embodied practice and habit which is germane but not explored here: this can be traced through the work of Erving Goffman and Harold Garfinkel, whose work on symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology was concerned with everyday practices, where social mores were considered to be embedded within bodies and who focus on those unthought habituations and enculturations, the ways in which sense is made of the social world through lived experience of practice and interaction (Goffman 1959; Garfinkel 1984). This genealogy has reached geography most explicitly through the work of Eric Laurier (e.g. Laurier 2001; Laurier 2004).

There has been a move towards the consideration of *embodiment* rather than the body in social theory, considered as a response to the perceived ‘disembodiment’ of theory, where a poststructuralist focus on discursive regimes, on signification and on the text is perceived to have sidestepped materiality through a concern with a supposedly abstract symbolic realm (e.g. Csordas 1994; Turner 1996; Stoller 1997; Welton 1999). Concern with abstractions like ‘social structure’ have led social scientists towards a consideration of embodiment and experience as a way of grounding current theoretical debates and positioning them in something more ‘concrete’²⁴ and tangible. This move towards embodiment, then, can be seen as a specific response to the ‘immaterialities’ of literary theory as applied in the social sciences and the ‘cultural turn’.²⁵ Counter to these claims, I posit that the discursive or the symbolic always involves materiality, specifically because of the way in which the discursive and the symbolic necessarily play on and through bodies. As I shall explore in more depth in chapter four, I consider the distinction between materiality and textuality to be false, and argue for a *materialisation* and *spatialisation* of the text itself. The binary of text/practice is implicitly connected with other binaries, for example of inside/outside, structure/agency, nature/culture, and, accordingly for this project, its deconstruction is welcome. The “turn toward the body” (Csordas 1994:xi) and in particular the interest in embodiment and experience in the social sciences can be considered in part as a response to Foucault, even while, ironically, Foucault’s own work can be figured as a response to Merleau-Ponty. Firstly, Foucault’s concentration on the body as site of power relations effectively enabled the body to be considered as central to social science, and secondly, Foucault’s early work on docile and disciplined bodies, while problematising and historicising the body and deconstructing its ‘natural’ being, has led to a response and critique that has moved theory towards a more detailed consideration of embodied experience. Terence Turner, for example, considers Foucault’s body as an “anti-body” theory –where the body is considered to be passive and malleable, where discourse is simply substituted for structure and the body’s potential is ignored, suggesting that Foucault depoliticises the body’s potentials through a denial of agency (Turner 1994). While there is no space here to explore these criticisms at length, it is sufficient to suggest that, as Dreyfus and Rabinow point out, Foucault is interested in the “social effects rather than the implicit meaning of everyday

²⁴ Although a caveat must be added here about the ‘concreteness’ of bodies. For more on this see Massumi’s introduction to *Parables for the Virtual: ‘Concrete is as concrete doesn’t’* (Massumi 2002).

²⁵ Feminist theory, in particular, has charged social sciences with a lack of embodiment, a neglect of the visceral and the sensuous. For example, Irigaray suggests that masculinist social science perspectives are disembodied, through their lack of the “fluid” sensibilities that she associates with the female (Irigaray 1985). In geography, non-representational theory as well as the influence of actor-network theory has produced research that attempts to think more materially, and to consider the prediscursive, the precognitive aspects of material and embodied existence (Thrift and Dewsbury 2000; Dewsbury, Harrison et al. 2002; Anderson 2008b; Lorimer 2008:122). As Donn Welton points out, Descartes’ epistemological reduction has produced “ontological reductions”, where being is considered as disembodied, and embodied aspects of existence are somehow supplementary to that being (Welton 1999).

practices” (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982: xxvii). These critiques of the body as object of discourse and of the inscriptions of power have led to a turn towards thinking of embodiment rather than bodies. Embodiment involves a consideration of the experience of *being a body*, rather than a consideration of ‘the body’ as object.

Thomas Csordas describes the difference between the concepts of the body and of embodiment by considering the body as “a biological, material entity, and embodiment as an indeterminate methodological field defined by perceptual experience and mode of presence and engagement in the world” (Csordas 1993:135; Csordas 1994:12). As such, Csordas *complicates* embodiment, refusing its reduction and arguing for an approach to embodiment that is “reducible neither to representations of the body, to the body as an objectification of power, to the body as a physical entity or biological organism, nor to the body as an inalienable centre of individual consciousness” (Csordas 1994:xi). Donn Welton describes embodiment as “corporeality understood in terms of human action upon, and involvement with, the world” (Welton 1999:3). As Drew Leder points out, the body is often absent from our experience precisely because of the constancy of its presence: “the body’s own structure leads to its own concealment” (Leder 1990a:127). A focus on the body as the site of experience, then, is a conscious move away from the dualist thinking that erases the body from experience. Embodiment, then, involves a consideration of the body as a moving, feeling organism, materially oriented in the world and capable of affecting and being affected by the world.²⁶

This move towards embodiment has led to a renewed interest in phenomenology. Phenomenological approaches explore and attempt to understand experience, and specifically attempt to understand the relation between body and world. The consideration of the body as site of experience allows for an understanding of the body as *lived*. Husserl’s distinction between *leib* and *körper*, the body as lived and the body as described, as “meat” is perhaps helpful in considering what the lived body is: *leib*, the untranslatable “live-body-self-subject for which no equivalent exists in English” (cited in Csordas 1994:16). This distinction, in common use in the German, allows us to recognise a fundamental distinction between those perspectives that enliven, or deaden, the body: a body as lived in, as subject to experience and sensation, versus a body as object, as inhabited and ‘driven’ by a disembodied

²⁶ C.f. Massumi 2002:1.

consciousness, such as Decartes' body, described by Ryle in mechanistic terms and by Leder as a "corpse" (Leder 1998).²⁷

The body, rather than the mind or consciousness, as the site of experience is perhaps most famously and seminally discussed by Merleau-Ponty, who considered the lived body – the *corps propre* – as the site of the human relation with the world. For Merleau-Ponty, the lived body provides a "zero point" of orientation (Steinbock 1999): a point from which everything *makes sense*. Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of embodiment can be read, once more, as a response to dualism. The body is not merely a vehicle through which our experiences are mediated, rather, the body is that which enables us to experience: we are no longer subjects but body-subjects. "The unity of soul and body ... is enacted at every instant in the movement of existence" (Merleau-Ponty 1962:102). This distinction at once materialises being, since it makes it impossible to think of being without the necessity of its embodiment. The only way in which it is possible to know ourselves and the world is as a body.

In *The Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty's ontology is based on "being-in-the-world": a presubjective, preobjective state through which subjects and objects emerge. Merleau-Ponty understands perception as always embodied, as being a consequence of having a body: "in order to perceive things, we need to live them" (Merleau-Ponty 1962:379). Embodiment, then, *is* existence. Being cannot be understood outside the 'in-the-world':

the body expresses total existence, not because it is an external accompaniment to that existence, but because existence comes into its own in the body. This incarnate significance is the central phenomenon of which body and mind, sign and significance are abstract moments (Merleau-Ponty 1962:148).

²⁷ One way of understanding the lived body as a refutation of dualism, and in particular of the mechanistic view of the body discussed by Ryle is through a consideration of the raider in the recent reimagining of the TV series *Battlestar Galactica*. The raider looks like a space ship, but is in fact a space creature, a black, carbon fibre shell within which is flesh, as if the creature grew to fit in the shell, or the hybrid creature is the shell as well, like a space beetle. The raider is flesh, yet not modelled upon the human form, since it is more perfect, more wholly adapted to space battles. The cylon creature models human technology *and* flesh – and in doing so manifests the inadequacies of the dualist human. The raider needs no pilot since it *is* its own pilot, as it propels itself through space, its brain immanent to its capacity as living ship. We think the raiders are ships until Starbuck, in series 1, finds a crashed raider on a deserted planet. Running short of oxygen, she severs the connection to its neural system, located an oxygen tube, climbs into its stinky, fleshy insides and flies it home, *körper* once more, controlled by the Cartesian human. The hybrid raiders are not hollow inside, they are full with flesh, with neurons, with internal respiratory systems. Starbuck squeezes inside the raider and masters the controls of the fleshy beast, yet there is always the possibility that, at one remove, the inevitable delay will make her a less than perfect pilot. The perfection of the raider as a machine for moving through space – its sleek form, internal mechanisms to homeostasis and control are counter to the imperfections through which the humans know the world through technology.

Therefore the body is the medium of and possibility for existence:

The body can symbolise existence, because it brings it into being and actualises it...it transforms ideas into things, and my mimicry of sleep into real sleep (Merleau-Ponty 1962:146).

Hence Merleau-Ponty sees all existence as ultimately experienced and brought into being through the lived body – through its materiality, its senses, its memories and its capabilities. And, like Bourdieu, he recognised that this bodily way of knowing the world is not always reflexive or aware: “movement is not thought about movement, and bodily space is not space thought about or represented” (Merleau-Ponty 1962:122). For Merleau-Ponty, the body knows the world through varying levels of self-awareness, and he posits practical knowledge or *praktognosia* as central to the way in which bodies operate. This concept is very similar to Bourdieu’s practical consciousness – the unreflective habitual way in which practice is performed, and of course reflects Merleau-Ponty’s significant influence on Bourdieu’s sociology. Merleau-Ponty writes: “Our bodily experience of movement...provides us with a way of access to the world and the object, with a *praktognosia* which has to be recognised as original and perhaps as primary” (Merleau-Ponty 1962:162).

The concept of the “visceral” is suggested by Leder as a supplement to Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology, considering the visceral not as something that belongs to the subject, but something that “traverses me, granting me life in ways I have never fully willed or understood” (Leder 1990b:203). This is taken up later in the discussion of these bodily states that are beyond consciousness:

my surface powers rest on deeper vegetative processes, and the unconscious depths of pre-natal and sleep. More than just a cluster of ‘consciousnesses’, my body is a chiasm of conscious and unconscious levels, a viscerally-aesthesiological being (Leder 1990b:204).

This focus on the visceral points to and foregrounds the agency of the unconscious body, for example in hunger, where the body’s summons emerges as a surface effect of conscious desire and wilful action. The visceral as articulated in Leder’s essay is similar to the sort of embodied micropolitics I will explore later with reference to Spinoza and various Spinozist thinkers, including Gatens and Deleuze and Guattari, and as such it is a useful metaphor for thinking through a materialisation of affect – its presubjective movement through bodies that produces what it names.

Central to Merleau-Ponty's philosophy is an account of perception which provides a clear critique of the subject/object relation and suggests a more blurred boundary between self and world. He argues that it is *through the process of perception* that the subject and the object of perception are produced. This is not to argue that the body and world do not exist prior to the moment of perception, rather that perception involves a productive relation – a joining of body and world which produces subject and object as an effect of that relation. Phenomenology involves the “essential correlation between mind and world” (Moran 2002:5). In his later work, *The Visible and the Invisible*, he posits the idea of the flesh as the medium through which the world makes sense to us, through which the body and world are revealed. Flesh is a way of thinking about how subject and object are conjoined through the phenomenological revealing: intertwined as a result of their mutual participation in the flesh of the world.

As a way of understanding the relationship between self and world, Merleau-Ponty offers a distinctly embodied being-in-the-world – an understanding that I am my body and that my body is the basis of all of my experience. Considered in this way, through the body as concrete mode of experience, dualism is rendered unhelpful to an understanding of experience and being. His account of being in the world also enables a consideration of how bodies interact with other bodies, as intersubjectivity:

The phenomenological world is not pure being, but the sense which is revealed where the paths of my various experiences intersect, and also where my own and other people's intersect and engage each other like gears. It is thus inseparable from subjectivity and intersubjectivity, which find their unity when I either take up my past experiences in those of the present, or other people's into my own (Merleau-Ponty 1962:xix-xx).

Through his account of the flesh, and of the chiasmic relation of intertwining of self and world, Merleau-Ponty posits a world of connection, of reciprocity (Merleau-Ponty 1968). His ontology is very much relational, and, unlike Nancy's post phenomenological ontology of spacing²⁸, which I shall turn to in the final chapter of this thesis, Merleau-Ponty's metaphor of “flesh” implies a substance that binds - a being part of the very substance of the world that dissolves boundaries and gathers together. In both his earlier and later work he posits this, arguing that “every perception is a communication or a communion... a coition, so to speak, of our body with things” (Merleau-Ponty 1962:373).

This perspective is fundamentally humanist, since his ontology relies on a human-centred

²⁸ See Nancy, 2000.

approach to the consideration of social relations, and posits a sometimes troubling lack of distance between self and world. As a result, it has been criticised by postphenomenological thinkers, for example those from the speculative realist school of object-oriented philosophy, who argue that its humanism and its correlationism ignore the possibility of thinking a world that does not manifest itself to the human subject (Harman 2004; Brassier 2007; Meillassoux 2008; Romanillos 2008; Harman 2009). To think the outside, the possibility of a world that exists before and after the human, before and after the possibility of the phenomenological correlation and the co-presencing that phenomenological thought implies, then, opens up a space for non-correlation, and a lack of intertwining. Others have critiqued the phenomenological collapse of self and world – the idea that phenomenological thought can do away with the separation of self and world so often mourned as lost through modernity, and instead suggested that an ontology that recognises non-relation, distance and spacing may also be valid (Nancy 2000; Harrison 2007a; Wylie 2009b). I explore this idea in more depth in chapter nine of this thesis.

Research from the perspective of the lived body effectively enables a consideration not only of the relation between subject and object but also the extent to which subjective experience produces different spatialities and temporalities. For example, Scarry's powerful *The Body in Pain: the making and unmaking of the world* explores how phenomenological worlds experienced through pain and torture differ significantly from those experienced by bodies free from pain – what Leder calls the 'absent' body (Scarry 1985; Leder 1990a). Similarly, in geography, Joyce Davidson explores the way in which Merleau-Ponty's account of lived space can be useful for the understanding of spatialities and temporalities that emerge from affectively saturated encounters (Davidson 2000). Fearful space can be experienced as a limiting, or as a distortion, or inversion of other forms of spatiality. Davidson refers to the way in which agoraphobics narrativise their experience spatially, often in terms of ruptures between self and world – a sense of explosion or implosion that disrupts normal spatial experience and augments panic. In Scarry, the bodily experience of pain, as untraversable, unspeakable and incommunicable provides a radical dissolution of self and world such that the world contracts. To describe pain is impossible, since

physical pain does not simply resist language but actively destroys it, bringing about an immediate reversion to a state anterior to language, to the sounds and cries a human being makes before language is learned (Scarry 1985:4).

The impossibility of understanding or feeling pain described by Scarry, however, also makes imperative the drive to attempt to write it, to understand the embodied encounter through

the experience itself, to attempt to breach the insurmountable space between the body with and without pain. To understand the way in which techniques like torture work on the body, and the means through which specific relations are produced through such techniques, the analysis of self/world relation and spatialities and temporalities of experience need to be placed as central. Scarry writes how, in torture,

the prisoner experiences an annihilating negation so hugely felt throughout his own body that it overflows into the spaces before his eyes and in his ears and mouth; yet one which is unfelt, unsensed by anyone else (Scarry 1985:36).

This dissolution of self clearly can only be understood from a perspective of experience, and even then only to the extent to which we can represent it using language or other signifying means. The experience of pain is a secret which can never fully escape the body. It is contained within it as scar and memory through the impossibility of its translation.

To understand the way in which subjects are produced *through* their bodies, then, a perspective that valorises experience and provides tools for thinking about how embodied experience produces specific spatialities and temporalities is necessary. The body's capacity to move and feel is what makes it a body and what allows it to become a subject. These phenomenological accounts of the destabilising of the self /world relation disturb the notion of a foundational subject existing prior to and outside of its specific position in relation to the world. Moreover, their attention to the way in which embodied perception produces subject-object relations enables a new way of thinking about bodily inscription and the way in which it can work through what Althusser describes as interpellation – the naming of subject and object as such, and the answering to their call (Althusser 2001). I now move to consider the way in which phenomenological perspectives have been adopted and critiqued in feminist thought, as a way of thinking about how the concept of the lived body can be aligned with the concept of the social body such that it enables the specificities of embodied experience to be considered alongside those matrices of power through which subjectivation occurs. I specifically turn to a feminist phenomenology here, as a means of considering the way in which embodied experience needs to take into account bodily *difference*, and the way in which the specificities of different bodies directly emerge from and affect experience.

Feminist thought often adopts a more embodied perspective for three reasons. Firstly, the notion of the personal as political has been central to feminist projects since the beginning

of second-wave feminism, and this has accordingly led to an increase in which practices and spaces are considered as suitable objects for social scientific investigation (Gavron 1966; Friedan 1971; Firestone 1972; Oakley 1976, 1979). As a result, the analysis of experience has been important to thinking about how the minutiae of private and intimate life are both spheres through which subjugation occurs and a political battlefield for feminist praxis. Secondly, women's bodies are central signifiers in their sexed subjectification: they have been subjected to symbolic and material appropriation, exploitation and violence, and moreover have been associated with an essential femininity through biological reductionism that the feminist project encounters at every turn. A move towards thinking about gendered embodiment, then, provides a way to make this more apparent. Thirdly, phenomenology, and particularly the work of Merleau-Ponty specifically encourages dissolution of binary thought through his refusal of the mind/body and subject/object dualisms. For feminisms that consider the basis of knowledge in dualisms as one of the fundamental problems with sexist society, Merleau-Ponty provides some useful tools. However, feminist engagements with Merleau-Ponty's work have not been without criticism.

Judith Butler has primarily levelled her critique at one chapter in *the Phenomenology of Perception*: "the body in its sexual being", suggesting that it contains and performs a normative heterosexualisation and objectification of the female body. While this is certainly the case, the danger lies not in positing a particular sexualisation of the subject but in universalising that sexualisation and not positioning it within relations of subjection and subjectification which produce and sex subjects and objects of sexual desire. What Merleau-Ponty fails to do successfully in this chapter is argue for the specificity of his account of perception. This critique has been echoed or rejected by others who have debated the extent to which Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology can be a useful tool for feminist theory (Alcoff 1997; Sullivan 1997; Stoller 2000). However, despite Merleau-Ponty positing a male sexual subject in this chapter, and his unfortunate universalisation of him, the logic and sentiments of his argument have much to offer a feminist phenomenology, which can then work with the tools at hand to position gendered experience more centrally and more saliently.²⁹ However, Elizabeth Grosz, in her discussion of Merleau-Ponty and feminism, argues that Merleau-Ponty is "one of the few more or less contemporary theorists committed to the

²⁹ Luce Irigaray too critiques phenomenological thought, suggesting in particular that the relationship between vision and visible - seer and seen - can be reimagined in such a way as to preclude the necessary dominance of seer/toucher. She suggests instead a rethinking of the visible and invisible through the metaphor of two lips touching as a way of considering the relation of mutuality yet separation between different bodies and parts of bodies (Irigaray 2004).

primacy of experience [and] is thus in a unique position to help provide a depth and sophistication to feminist understandings, and uses, of experience in the tasks of political action” (Grosz 1993:4). She suggests that a concern with embodiment can be pivotal in the disruption of binaries of self and other and nature and culture (Grosz 1994:236-248). However, she argues that a feminist phenomenology needs to ensure that the ‘facticity’ of what a body *affords* is central to its description and analysis of embodiment. What Grosz, and feminist theorists such as Irigaray, Haraway and Butler can offer is the indissoluble fact that subjectivity is corporeal, that it involves the materiality of bodies in a way that can no longer be separated from ‘discourse’, ‘power’, ‘structure’ or ‘text’. It is in the work of Iris Marion Young, however, that the clearest account is given of embodied gender specificity and its production of material and experiential difference.

Young uses the concept of the lived body to rethink gender through a concern with sexed embodiment. As such, she focuses specifically on the facticity of what sexed bodies afford, particularly through her discussions of having breasts, experiencing pregnancy and female motility (Young 2005). Instead of positing a sex/gender distinction that doesn’t make sense of her understanding of bodies and their capacities, Young moves towards a theorisation of spatiality and motility that positions the production of differentiated bodies in a way that does away with gender as a purely symbolic (if that were possible) entity. Specifically, Young develops Merleau-Ponty’s focus on the orientation of the body towards things and towards its environment from a feminist perspective, and adopts the idea of the lived body to explain how sexed bodies are trained from birth to move, feel and act in ways that inscribe themselves materially:

the body as lived is always enculturated: by the phonemes a body learns to pronounce at a very early age, by the clothes the person wears that mark her nation, her age, her occupational status, and what is culturally expected or required of women (Young 2005:17).

In her essay ‘Throwing Like a Girl’, Young suggests that, in sexist society, a female body acquires a “discontinuous unity with its surroundings”, meaning that actions and practices are coloured through bodily self-reference, and through the positioning of woman as other or as object, meaning that the bodily self is experienced vicariously through the male projected gaze turned in on the self (Young 2005:35). Drawing on de Beauvoir, she argues that the *materiality* of women’s and men’s bodies is formed through the living-out of spatial relations and capacities. In doing so, she provides a clear and well-argued exegesis for the

concern with the sexed body as *produced* through those specific materialisations that we call gender, discussed by Butler in *Gender Trouble* and *Bodies That Matter*, and also what Mauss observed in his 'Techniques of the Body' (Butler 1993, 2006; Mauss 2006). In articulating this discussion of the materiality of the sexed body as gender, Young refers to a specific example – the compartment, motility and sense of space of girls and women – as a way of explaining how it is that different senses of embodiment formed through the living out of life in a world structured through gender difference actually leads to quite different bodies – bodies differently muscled, nourished, cared for, sexualised, pushed, encouraged and abused. It is because of this concern with materiality that she argues in favour of Toril Moi's call to replace the term 'gender' with 'lived body', in order to detract from the levels of abstraction that always go with an objectifying account of the body. The lived body can act as a critique of any concern with identity, instead drawing on bodies with different features, capacities and desires (Young 2005:18). 'Throwing Like a Girl' argues that many female bodies inhabit a "constricted space" (p34) and their bodies are experienced as objects, as fragile and in need of protection, rather than as the medium through which things are achieved. In this way, they perform an 'inhibited intentionality' (p36-7) where the body is lived *hesitantly* (Young 2005:34-7).³⁰ This gendered phenomenology places material embodied subjectivities as produced through historically grounded practices as the point of phenomenological analysis. Effectively this removes the focus from both 'woman' as gendered category and from the possibility of a foundational subject prior to gender. Despite the numerous citations of Young's article across various disciplinary fields, it stands alone in the power and simplicity of its exemplification of the idea of the social body and the lived body. The troubling of the subject/object relation of the body posed by Merleau-Ponty exposes the extent to which his account of experience, which emphasised the subjective aspect of the body over its object status, as well as the body as capacity rather than as subject to pressures that limit capacity, is an implicitly gendered account of male embodied subjectivity. While her work, and that of Butler and Irigaray in no way discredit Merleau-Ponty's focus on the lived body and his account of phenomenological space as a way of thinking about subject and object, body and world, it does point to the specificity of the phenomenological manoeuvre and the danger of positing a subject that could in any way be universalised.

³⁰ My own experiences as a female body who has at times been involved in various physically demanding jobs alongside men (labouring, landscaping) testifies to this sense of hesitancy and objectification of the self. Most clearly in my memory was the moment when I realised why, despite my strength and fitness, I was so much less effective at digging holes in the ground: it was because I had never put my whole body and all my effort into it. Watching my male colleagues work alongside me helped me to understand sexual difference through modalities of bodily movement.

Another possible approach to the theorisation of gendered embodiment is sketched out by Lois McNay, who draws on Bourdieu's 'phenomenology of social space', where social space is plotted relationally as space as experienced (Bourdieu 1990a; McNay 2004). In adopting this model she argues for phenomenology as a "relational rather than an ontological style of enquiry" - a way of theorising the body that considers its production through relation rather than as a way of thinking about experience in terms of a universal account of being (McNay 2004:184). In this way, the concept of the lived body is able to communicate its relation to power and to others through the "uncovering of immanent structures contained in the contingent" (McNay 2004:184).³¹ A relational phenomenology enables a consideration of emotion and modes of experience in terms of the relations between bodies and other bodies and bodies and worlds and how they surface in the experience of the individual body, moving away from the possibility of thinking subjectivity in ways that universalise or refuse the contingency of that experience. McNay argues specifically for a consideration of gender as lived relation as a way of finding some middle ground between materialist and cultural feminists, with a focus on the way in which lives bound by gender and class relations are lived out and experienced (McNay 2004).³²

The concept of the lived body is a necessary supplement to a concern with body practices, since its change of approach angle, and focus on the subject of experience allows us to consider new ways of thinking about the relationship of body and world. In this section I have charted how this turn has been influenced by Merleau-Ponty and also by those who have taken up his ideas. I have then addressed various feminist critiques of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, which argue that it can fall foul of ignoring bodily difference, particularly as articulated through differently sexed bodies. I have argued for a consideration of the lived body in terms of a "relational phenomenology", where bodily inscription through matrices of domination and power are explored through experience – through a focus on the body itself rather than the technologies and techniques that produce such bodies. In this way I argue for the lived body as the *site* of the social, suggesting that sociality is felt viscerally, and its subjective position in relation to others is experienced bodily. Due to common-sense understandings of the body as natural or absent, these visceral feelings

³¹ In particular, she refers to fieldwork undertaken by Beverley Skeggs, where lived experience of gendered and classed shame and insecurity is attended to with reference to the dominant norms of femininity that circulate through bodies and produce those embodied, emotional responses (Skeggs 1997).

³² In this way, she provides a way of considering emotion from a feminist perspective that is also clear in the work of Sara Ahmed, whose theorisation is more closely aligned with Bourdieu than with poststructuralist theory to produce a more sociological approach to the question of the subject (Ahmed 2004).

serve to present contingent social relations as natural. While feminist phenomenologies such as those above have necessarily posited the specificities of sexual difference as experienced at the centre of a phenomenologically informed social science, humanism and foundationalism still haunts the phenomenological subject. In chapters four, five and seven I will explore how attention to these sensations can be highly productive as a mode of exploring the processes through which subjects are produced, and in doing so, can help to draw attention to this residual humanism and foundationalism.

Conclusion

In the first part of the chapter the concept of practice in social theory was explored, through a theorisation of the body as always-already social, as produced through performative practices that shape the materiality of (sexed) bodies as they produce those relations within which these materialities make sense. This reading was based on a Foucauldian conception of the relationship between the body and power, and as such focused on the way in which bodies are produced as subjects through various techniques, practices and technologies. In the second part of the chapter the focus on the body moved towards the idea of embodiment. The body as site of social relations is taken as a given at this stage, and the focus instead moved towards a consideration of embodied practice and the body as lived. Here, questions about the production of particular types of bodies, capable of different things, is discussed at the level of embodied experience and as such provides an account of subjectivity considered as an effect of processes of subjectification. Both of these sections have positioned the genealogies of their conception in terms of responses to dualisms, especially mind-body dualism.

Together, the two parts of this chapter have effectively paved the way for this thesis to begin to contribute to a rethinking of the politics of the body: a focus on bodies as a means through which power is exercised, and on the way in which power moves not only through the 'objective' realities of what bodies do, but through the production of experience that then pushes bodies towards certain actions and away from others. In this chapter I have attempted to summarise some of the most significant contributions to social theory that attempts to address these questions. Through a discussion of the social body, I have pointed to the way in which bodies are involved in an ongoing process of production that performatively produce themselves and social relations as they practise, and produce bodily

difference as a result of those practices. Through a discussion of embodiment I have attempted to argue how experience needs to be considered as an important aspect of an analytic of the subject. Central to this thesis, then, is the way in which particular modes of experiencing the world are produced that sustain particular forms of life. As such, I am interested in the possibility of conceptualising experience in a way that does not rely on a sovereign subject, but instead recognises the way in which subjects are produced through material relations between bodies, the way in which they are shaped and shape the technologies and practices through which life is constituted.

The concept of experience is of course, highly contested, and it is necessary to elaborate further here on what is meant by ‘experience’ in this instance. Martin Jay’s *Songs of Experience* identifies a number of convergent and and divergent “songs” of experience whose genealogical lineage he traces (Jay 2005). For example, Benjamin, Adorno and Peter Bürger among others have considered the notion of authenticity as a foundational means of thinking about what experience is. Benjamin’s essay “The Storyteller”, in particular, argues that modernity has led to a decline in experience in favour of information, figured as that which is ephemeral and without depth (Benjamin 1969). Experience then, comes to be understood as something authentic, and also that which involves the subject directly in its production.

My own position sits perhaps more comfortably with a poststructuralist critique of experience as that which is immediate, or authentic, and relies on the impossibility of authenticity, and moreover, actively seeks to reconsider authenticity as that which is produced through particular regimes of truth. Against this, then, my discussion of experience involves asking the question of how particular moments/modes of engaging *come to be felt as authentic*. In this thesis, I understand the concept in terms of and in relation to the particular phenomenological tradition discussed above – the feeling of a moment. As

such, this conceptualisation of experience always takes place through the body, and involves, as I shall show, a complex vacillation between the affective and the subjective registers. Experience, as figured here, is the “feeling of what happens”, and the attempt to theorise experience is thought in terms of a consideration of the regimes and forces through which bodies are produced and enabled to feel what happens as they do. This necessarily involves both a recognition of the histories of specific bodies, as discussed above, and of the body as a conduit for affect, as discussed in the following chapter. During the thesis I refer to the notion of experience “outside of the subject”. Borrowed from and inspired by Caroline Williams’ work on Spinoza as a way of thinking about politics beyond the subject, I use this term in order to consider how, in the light of deconstructive critiques of the subject, we can begin to think and write about something which is commonly held to be the property of a subject (Williams 2009). In moving towards a postfoundational account of embodied experience, I am attempting to elucidate further the way in which regimes of productive power through which subjects are produced work through the affective capacities of bodies and in doing so, produce particular embodied and imagined ways of experiencing the world. While all experience is necessarily lived and embodied, thinking about experience outside of the subject enables an analytic of experience that recognises that what the body feels is not the same as what the subject recognises (see my discussion of affect and emotion in chapters four and ten for further clarification on this). Rather, experience is produced through the oscillatory movement of the affective and subjective registers that take place in historicised bodies such that the feeling of what happens emerges

from that taking place. So, in terms of this thesis, I am interested in what happens to bodies in the phenomenological moment: what is felt where feeling is a recognition of the changes taking place in bodies and how it is made sense of through both affective and symbolic/discursive registers. In other words, I am interested in the conditions of possibility of the specificities of embodied experience.

Through my analysis of the two related approaches to the body discussed in this chapter, then, I have attempted to open up a space to think about how these approaches can be built on in order to produce a fuller account of how bodies are involved in the ongoing production of social life, and moreover, how the way in which those bodies experience social life is a necessary aspect of a critique of the subject. In this way, I provide an account of social theory that moves towards a postfoundational sociology of embodied experience. The chapter addresses, as well as opens up a number of questions:

How can we think the body without recourse to dualisms of inside/outside, subjective/objective?

How can we think the subject after the critique of humanism as an effect of forces while still enabling the body to persist as a subject of experience?

How are forms of life sustained and modes of experience produced?

How do the different histories of bodies contribute to the structuring of experience?

With these questions shaping my subsequent enquiry, I now move to the project of thinking of the body and of embodied subjectivity *after the subject*. In doing this, I turn to the work of Baruch (or Benedict) de Spinoza (1632-1677), and various recent Spinozist thinkers who have worked with his ideas, since, as I shall demonstrate, his writing can help us think through many of the questions above. The next two chapters will address these questions through a consideration of the contribution of Spinoza and Spinozist thought to this understanding and to cultural theory, and specifically through a discussion of the 'embodied imagination'.

Chapter 3: Spinoza and the embodied imagination

“To be a follower of Spinoza is the essential commencement of all philosophy” (Hegel, Haldane et al. 1974:257)

Introduction

In an attempt to answer the questions posed at the end of the last chapter, I now set up a different foundation from which to explore the body, and in doing so, take a conceptual step backwards, an archaeological excavation of some of the ideas considered earlier. While the line of genealogical concern with the body I explored has been fruitful in setting up a line of enquiry, I attempt to move outside of that line in order to think about how to rethink these questions of bodies and embodiment from a position of radical immanence, from a space that precludes the possibility of thinking in terms of transcendents, foundations, or insides. Spinoza’s philosophy is posited as a means of resolving at an ontological level some of the key questions that the previous chapter explored. This ‘starting again’, or return to the ontological level, attempts to add richness and conceptual detail to the resolutions of these questions and to prepare the grounds for further exploration of how thinking about bodies can address and indeed *undo* the relationship between text and practice, material and ideal, nature and culture. These questions are addressed during the thesis through an embodied materialism which focuses on and addresses the specificities of the body as that which thinks, dreams and feels, without suggesting that these thoughts, dreams and feelings are the possessions of a subject. It is for this reason that a consideration of Spinoza and Spinozist ontologies of embodiment and knowledge can provide fruitful theoretical input, since Spinoza’s ontology of Substance and his understanding of the affects allow a consideration of a presubjective, precognitive movement through bodies, and allow the possibility of thinking subjectivity *beyond the subject*. As such, they can offer a way of exploring embodied experience that surpasses the subject as origin of knowledge. In order to outline and elaborate a theory of the embodied imagination, this chapter discusses this problematic in detail, turning to Spinoza’s *Ethics* as well as to Spinozist scholars such as Gatens and Lloyd, Deleuze and Hampshire. Here, I argue for the consideration of the imagination as *material, embodied* and *affective* in its approach to a political analytic of lived experience.³³ Working from the premises of the social and the lived body as a way of

³³ Politics here refers to an attempt to theorise what *is*, whilst ethics refers to a theorising of what *could be* on the back of those politics.

overcoming foundationalist thought, I discuss Spinoza's account of substance and knowledge in order to suggest that a Spinozist account of the body and of imagination can inform an account of bodies that is able to move beyond the subject, yet recognises the way in which processes of subjectification work to produce specific relations within and between bodies.

This chapter outlines Spinoza's ontological stance and, through a consideration of his radical monism, discusses the way in which his understanding of the imagination can be used in order to address many of the questions opened up in the chapters so far. As such it involves a consideration of his ideas of mind and body, and of adequate and inadequate forms of knowledge as discussed in the *Ethics*. I then move on to discuss the way in which these ideas have been mobilised by Spinozist thinkers to explore the relationship between consciousness, power, embodiment and the text. As such I discuss the work of Genevieve Lloyd and Moira Gatens, as well as Gilles Deleuze, Etienne Balibar and Caroline Williams. In particular, my concern is with the way in which Spinoza's ideas can outline a radically immanent materialism which enables us to consider the imagination as a way of knowing which is *embodied*, *affective* and *material*. This account of the embodied imagination can provide theorists with new ways of thinking about memory, experience, affect and sensation. Finally, I turn back to Gatens, who interprets Spinoza for a specifically feminist project: a consideration of how the idea of the social imaginary, as configured through a Spinozist account of a supersubjective imagination, an imaginary of the multitude, can work to produce ways of life, subjects and bodies through gendered power relations. Gatens' work suggests that a focus on the imagination as being central to perception can elucidate the relationship between discourse and experience. Here I begin to flesh out the ways in which attention to the process of imagining can lead to a closer analysis of processes of subjectivation and bodily inscription. This aspect of the enquiry is then explored in greater length in the next chapter, which explores the idea of affect through these ontological lenses.

This exploration and theorisation of the embodied imagination through contemporary feminist and political thought is an attempt to *reclaim* the imagination as central to the way in which embodiment and experience are theorised. As such, I want to retrieve a notion of the subject as a *body that imagines* - a body that imagines itself and others - and suggest that

processes of dreaming, thought and imagination are central to thinking about the subject *after* the subject.³⁴ Moreover, I argue that the embodied imagination opens up a conceptual space ‘between seeing and speaking’ (Deleuze 1988a:78) in a materialisation of the text that I argue is demanded by recent cultural theory. This will be explored more specifically in chapters 4 and 5. This section, then, focuses on the capacities of bodies to dream and imagine – and calls to centre stage the idea of the embodied imagination. It necessarily includes an exegesis of Spinoza’s ideas, since Spinoza posits a specific metaphysics and ontology which I then mobilise through critical and cultural theory.

Spinoza today

The recent interest in Spinoza has been plausibly described in terms of a response to those modernist conceptions of the subject and reason that have been undermined by post-1968 theory (Norris 1991). In his discussion of Spinoza’s influence on critical theory, Christopher Norris suggests that Spinoza holds a particular attraction for those who trouble these foundations, since he offers an *embodied* account of practice and activity, which can effectively address the immediacy of experience outside of the circuits of representation. As such, he compares this interest in Spinoza with Barthes’ later writing which explores bodily encounters with texts through moments of loss, through the power of the text to enthrall or to affect, and the articulation of meaning as somatic impulses and desires (Norris 1991:52-3). Norris suggests, then, that it is the focus on the body that make Spinoza interesting for postfoundational theorists, and this is particularly salient, perhaps, in the way in which his writing has been taken up by Deleuze and Guattari, most specifically in *Anti-Oedipus*, where the body operates as locus of desire, forces and affect, yet this body is *not a subject* (Deleuze and Guattari 1977). Norris refers to the “radical countercultural appeal” of Spinoza through his interest in the precognitive aspects of embodied experience, and in particular his interest in dreaming and somnambulism, quoting the note in the third part of the *Ethics* which states that “the body can by the sole laws of its nature do many things which the mind wonders at” (cited in Norris 1991:59).³⁵

Spinoza provides contemporary postfoundational theorists with tools and a vocabulary for thinking about bodies, their capacities, experiences and forces such that, while the subject is

³⁴ “After the subject” here refers to a discussion of the subject after and in specific reference to the critique of the subject that has been central to post-1968 continental philosophy.

³⁵ See also the writing of Balibar and Negri for further ways in which Spinoza has been productively mined in contemporary leftist political thought (Negri 1991; Balibar 1998).

bypassed, subjective experience is still available to analysis, and is thought in terms of *relation* rather than solipsistically, or in terms of origin. Caroline Williams, for example, refers to how Spinoza's "ontology of encounter" precludes a boundary-limited theory, through its consideration of the agency of bodies in new ways that open up the possibility of thinking between and through individuals, in a manner that operates both extensively - therefore refusing the possibility of entertaining a nature/culture, human/nonhuman divide - and intensively through its concern with fluidity, vacillation, intensity and affective relations (Williams 2009). As such, this thinking forecloses any ontologies of interiority, of boundary and containment. The relation of the encounter referred to here does not imply a link or connection between bounded entities, but rather that which *produces* something that did not exist before: "the body will always exceed or overflow its current state - it will always include other bodies" (Williams 2009). The individual is thus opened out, and may be subject to infinite variability and possibility, as well as being fundamentally *in relation* to other individuals, all of whom, as shall be made clear, are modes of the same substance and are experienced through the mind, as Spinoza makes clear: "the human mind perceives the nature of a great many bodies together with the nature of its own body" (Spinoza 1996:45).

Spinoza's contemporary appeal also lies in the way in which he works with and through different types of knowledge. Like Descartes and Leibniz, he believed in the possibility of a pure knowledge of Nature which humans could access, and which could be expressed through forms of expression such as logic and mathematics. As a rationalist, he privileged knowledge which is arrived at through reason over that based on imagination and the association of ideas, and this is apparent in the 'geometric' structure of the *Ethics*, a structure based on Euclid's geometry and comprising a logical sequence of definitions, axioms, propositions, corollaries and demonstrations, through which he "wished to be entirely effaced as individual and author, being no more than the mouthpiece of pure Reason" (Hampshire 1951:25). However, the text leaves space for contemporary interpretations to consider and appraise other forms of knowledge. For example, Gatens and Lloyd are interested in the way in which imagination and reason work together and are worked on in the production of common notions and adequate knowledge. Deleuze suggests, too, that it is possible to undertake a "double reading" of Spinoza's *Ethics*, through the logical, geometrical style of the definitions, axioms, propositions and so on, which he likens to a river, "carrying everything along in its grandiose wake" or through the affective capacities, where one is "carried along or set down, put in motion or at rest, shaken or

calmed, according to the velocity of this or that part” (Deleuze 1997:20). This affective reading is generally attributed to the scholia, which comment on the text, use a more engaging prose and which, according to Deleuze,

operate in the shadows, trying to distinguish between what prevents us from reaching common notions and what, on the contrary, allows us to do so, what diminishes and what augments our power, the sad signs of our servitude and the joyous signs of our liberations (Deleuze 1997:27).

The scholia are those aspects of the *Ethics* that intersect and reintersect with the rest, illustrating, explaining and in doing so enabling an affective reading and informing us of what Spinoza is doing in terms of our own bodies. According to Deleuze, this enables Spinoza to be understood on many levels, whether the reader has a background in philosophy or not. “The river would not have so many adventures without the subterranean action of the scholia” (Deleuze 1997:28).

Substance

Spinoza’s metaphysics form a radical monism that sees mind and matter as different attributes of the same indivisible “Substance”. Substance, or “God, or Nature” (*Deus sive Natura*), is an immanent totality, and is the cause of itself, since there can be no outside to it (*causa sui*), borne out of an attempt to think God through logical reasoning rather than associative images. This is outlined in part one of the *Ethics*. Nature is both active creator (*natura naturans*) and passive created (*natura naturata*), since its cause and effect are immanent to itself (Spinoza 1996:20-1). It comprises of an infinite number of attributes, which are the essential nature of God as it *presents itself* to the intellect: “by attribute I understand what the intellect perceives of a substance as constituting its essence” (Spinoza 1996:1). Of this infinite number, we as humans have knowledge of two attributes – thought and extension.³⁶ All objects and bodies are *modes* of the totality of substance. What this effectively means is that Spinoza constructs a *radically immanent* metaphysics – where the possibility of an outside is foreclosed through his totalising of God.

If individual bodies are modes of the infinite variability of substance, this can lead to a radical rethinking of the bounded nature of things and bodies: it enables a *relational* ontology, where individuals are perceived as part of a totality (Nature), and as such precludes any dualistic thinking of, for example, nature and culture, or individual/society,

³⁶ These terms, of course, are also used in Descartes and are associated with the rationalists.

since all are simply modes of the same Substance.³⁷ If the body is considered as a mode of Substance, dualisms of nature/culture immediately lose their meaning. It is for this reason of course that poststructuralists have mined so productively from Spinoza, following Deleuze and Balibar, for example in attempting to undermine dualist thought and position ontologies of relation rather than of essence. Post-Nietzschean deconstructionists, such as Derrida, who question foundation and truth can find in Spinoza a radical immanence that does not appeal to a false outside for any fundamental *telos*. In Spinoza, individuals can be individual bodies, they can be parts of bodies or they can be assemblages of many bodies. They are recognisable as such through their *conatus*, rather than through any clear boundary. The unfettering of the concept of the individual from the body makes it possible to adopt a super or sub- subjective position in approaching the body, whereby knowledge may be sought above, below and alongside the subject and in doing so to think about how embodied processes of subjectivation lead to the subject.

If nature consists of an immanent totality, and bodies become modified through their interrelation with other bodies, this metaphysics manages to radically bypass traditional notions of subject, object and individual, since all individuals are conceived of as varying modes of substance. Individuals are defined as such through particular relations of speed and slowness, and through their *conatus* which is considered as the essence of their being. It is this radical undoing of individuality, too, that perhaps appeals most to postfoundational thinkers. In Spinoza, individual bodies can be any “more or less stable configuration” at the level of the organism, the body politic or smaller (Hampshire 1951:74). The etymological idea of the individual – as that which is not divisible – then, is undone – we may conceive the whole of Nature as one individual, the parts of which (that is to say, all bodies), change in infinite ways, without any change of the whole individual (Spinoza 1996:43).

Motion and rest

Motion is central to Spinoza’s understanding of individualisation within and between modes of substance, revealing the fundamentally temporal or durational aspect of his metaphysics, which has since been celebrated by Deleuze. Bodies differentiate themselves from and communicate with other bodies through their differential relations of speed and

³⁷ Here, relational refers to the way in which parts, or modes, of substance, interact in the ongoing movement of substance as a whole.

slowness – an idea glossed by Hampshire in terms of changing configurations and relations of energy within a mechanical system (Hampshire 1951:71). Spinoza’s monism, then, leads to an understanding of individual modes as those which operate according to different relations between motion and rest: through variation in energy rather than as separate beings (Spinoza 1996:41-3). Individuals emerge from Substance as ratios of speed to slowness – as ‘rhythm’: as such Spinoza’s metaphysics provides a way of rethinking structures and individuals such that “structure is rhythm” (Deleuze 1997:24), and bodies emerge through their relation with other bodies. Deleuze makes this clear:

if I learn to swim or dance, my movements and pauses my speeds and slownesses, must take on a rhythm common to that of the sea or my partner, following a more or less durable adjustment (Deleuze 1997:24).

Bodies are continually affected by different forces, for example, of gravity, of other bodies, of wind, of light. These affects push and pull bodies, varying their ratio of speed and slowness, while the individual persists to a greater or lesser extent in its striving – in its *conatus* (Deleuze 1988b).

Conatus

In Spinoza’s metaphysics, Individuals are defined through their *conatus*, their striving to persist. *Conatus* is an individual’s endeavour to maintain itself in terms of its own individuality. Traceable back to the Stoics, the *conatus* is interpreted by Spinoza as not so much an instinct possessed by an individual as *that which makes it such*. “The striving by which each thing strives to persevere in its being is nothing but the actual essence of the thing” (Spinoza 1996:75). So the essence of an individual is its *conatus*, its striving to persist, to increase its power and energy, and as Levinson points out, “it is best understood as a physical principle rather than an ethical one” (Levinson 2007:377). Understood in this way, without its being imbued with a will in the subjective sense, Spinoza can allow for those wilful actions that seem at a disjuncture to the *conatus*. For Spinoza, all individuals can have a *conatus* – rocks, animals, trees, forests, families and bodies, and the *conatus* can be considered as a sort of internal field that holds a thing together, an energetic field that attempts to keep the individual in its current form, while other bodies may attempt to destroy it through their own *conatus* that moves them to persist and increase their power and energy. The *conatus* is central in Spinoza’s explanation of how individualisations can be conceptualised and is fundamental to his discussion of the affects. It can also be used to consider how Spinozist thinking can be turned to a concern with the different capacities of bodies and as a way of reconciling a theory of power with Spinozist metaphysics. It has a

clear affinity with a Nietzschean will to power, yet without imputing any kind of subjectivity. In addressing this problematic, Williams' reading of the *conatus* recognises its potential *vulnerability*. She suggests that within the structure of the *conatus* are the conditions with which it may undo itself, for it is not necessarily that strong - it is "fractured" (Williams 2009). The *conatus* is figured as a sort of force-field through which affections pass, arguing that the *conatus* does not always prevent affects from diminishing our power, even when they seem as though they increase our vectors of joy. In arguing for this definition of the *conatus*, she quotes the Preface to the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*: the observation quoted in the epigraph to the previous chapter, that "men fight for servitude as if for salvation", and suggests we consider the *conatus* as a "fractal field" of relations, rather than a primary drive, which in combination with the imagination can actually work to undo or decompose the subject. The *conatus* is thus considered more as a "relational site of production that twists or unravels that which it produces" (Williams 2009). Lloyd, too discusses how

the body of which I am the idea can be rendered passive or destroyed by the rival conatus. It can also have its powers enriched through interaction with congenial conatus in good patterns of sociability, without ceasing to be distinguishable as the individual body it is (Lloyd 1996:97).³⁸

As such, the *conatus* provides the key to the politics of the body in Spinoza's work – the relationships between bodies with greater or lesser capacities to act.

Mind and Body in Spinoza

The two attributes which are considered available to the limited intellect of humans are thought and extension: *res cogitans* and *res extensa*. We can only know the world as thought, or as matter extended in space and time. These attributes are parallel to each other; they are both attributes of the same Substance, i.e. both ways of knowing the same thing, yet they can never cross over – they are complete in themselves. "The mind and body are one and the same individual, which is conceived now under the attribute of thought, now under the attribute of extension" (Spinoza 1996:48). Spinoza uses these terms borrowed from Descartes in order to reconsider the problems of Descartes' understanding of the universe as containing two separate and self contained systems. By suggesting that thought and extension are both *ways of knowing the same thing*, Spinoza radically overcomes some of the problems of dualism, as Hampshire explains:

³⁸ Spinozist metaphysics can also be traced in the work of the Romantics in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, who placed supreme value on the imagination and on feeling, and deified and celebrated nature. Marjorie Levinson suggests how Wordsworth's poem "A slumber did my spirit seal" can be read through Spinoza, in terms of the way in which he considered the changing nature of bodies in life and death, read through individuations and the totality of substance: "when Lucy no longer persists in her 'endeavour' to be a (she)... she perishes as that individual but assumes another conatus: part of the planet's rolling course, entering into new relations, and thus becoming another ratio of motion to rest" (Levinson 2007:391).

to conceive thought and extension as two substances is logically to preclude the possibility of strictly causal interaction between them in the old rationalist sense of 'cause'; a change in the world of extended things cannot be the cause of a change in thought, at least in the sense in which one modification of extension may be the cause of another modification of extension (Hampshire 1951:63).

By precluding the possibility of their separation and therefore the possibility of a causal interaction, and positing thought and extension instead as ways of knowing, Spinoza posits a new way of thinking mind and body, where any connection or correspondence between the two *does not need to be explained*, since there are not two orders to be correlated.³⁹

Thought and extension, as attributes of Substance, are different *ways of knowing*. For every idea that exists in the attribute of thought, there is an *ideatum* which is the object of that idea expressed through the attribute of extension (Spinoza 1996:35). The *ideatum* cannot be accessed through the attribute of thought, only the idea. Since the attributes of thought and of extension are not separate, and therefore can have no causal connection, mind needs to be considered as having some ideatum in the attribute of extension for its existence to be thought. Spinoza overcomes this through his proposal that the mind is the *idea of the body*. In other words, the mind is the idea to which the body, in its varying state, is its ideatum. "A mode of extension and the idea of that mode are one and the same things, but expressed in two different ways" (Spinoza 1996:35).

The lack of causal connection between mind and body as conceived by Descartes means that it is no longer possible to think that bodily changes will cause mental changes and vice versa. Instead, mental changes *are* bodily changes understood through the attribute of thought⁴⁰. This of course has huge implications in terms of thinking about those 'immaterial' aspects of bodies such as emotion, dream, imagination and mood, since all of these must necessarily be considered as embodied and therefore material, just as in the previous chapter we considered the lived body as the material site of social relations. When changes in bodies occur, the change is reflected in a corresponding change in the idea that the mind has of the body. The bodily modification is then the ideatum of the idea that registers it in the attribute of mind. When objects are perceived through the senses, the body is modified and the experience of this modification in the attribute of thought is therefore what constitutes embodied experience. Awareness of other bodies takes place only as awareness of modifications of one's own body. This enables a radical reconsideration of materiality and materialism, such that the material could be considered in terms of that

³⁹ One way of thinking about this is to consider the different ways in which one may view a word processing file, or a computer game: for example, in Microsoft Word, one may view the document in web layout, in outline view, in page layout view etc. The document remains the same, but we come to know it in different ways.

⁴⁰ For more discussion on the relation of mind and body in Spinoza, see also the work of W. Kiever (Kiever 1990).

which modifies one's body: "the human mind has no knowledge of the human body, nor does it know it to exist, save through ideas of modifications by which the body is affected" (Spinoza 1996:47).

Affect

The concept of affect has been a central way in which Spinoza has been drawn upon in the social sciences.⁴¹ In the *Ethics*, affections are described as modifications to the body. Those modifications may take place through motion, perception, memory, breathing, moving, or even through the effect of gravity on the body. These modifications are experienced through the attribute of thought: through the mind having an idea of the body. Those bodily modifications which are affects will either increase or decrease the *capacity* of an organism, and in doing so will correspond to a sensation of an increase or decrease in joy (*laetitia*) and sadness (*tristitia*) in the body. Changes in the body's power are necessarily experienced in the mind in terms of the affects of joy and sadness. Deleuze explains how affections are different from affects insofar as affects are *vectorial* – they consist of “passages, becomings, rises and falls, continuous variations of power (*puissance*) that pass from one state to another” (Deleuze 1997:22). As such they are durational – they are inextricably tied to a sense of motion between states. This vectorial approach to the study of affect is clear in the preface to part 3 of the *Ethics*, when Spinoza asserts: “And I shall consider human actions and appetites just as if it were a question of lines, planes and bodies” (Spinoza 1996:69). The vectorial nature of the affects appears in the body's recognition of them as that which *increases or decreases* capacities. Affects are figured as a subdivision of affections – some affections are affects but all affects are affections. In thinking about affect as both vectorial and embodied, Deleuze argues for an *optical* reading of what he calls signs (affections) – as

shadows that play on the surface of bodies, always between two bodies. The shadow is always on the border. It is always a body that casts a shadow on another. We know bodies only through the shadow they cast upon us, and it is through our own shadow that we know ourselves, ourselves and our bodies (Deleuze 1997:23).

This description is interesting in terms of its relationship to earlier discussions of bodily inscription (in Butler, Foucault, Young etc), as a metaphorical term for the way in which bodies are produced through social relations and practices. Here, the concept of inscription is treated in an even more fluid way, through the metaphor of a play of shadows. Starting

⁴¹ The concept of affect can be traced in the social sciences on the one hand through Spinoza, Deleuze and Massumi, and on the other through psychologists such as Sylvan Tomkins, who take a slightly different approach. I will discuss the *Spinozist* concept of affect in more detail in the *next* chapter.

with a metaphysical monism, Spinoza can successfully consider inscription through the concept of affection without having to posit any pre-social subject or even body. Rather, the subject is conceptualised as emerging through a 'back-forming', through the shadow produced as a result of the affective encounter.⁴²

Spinoza's radically immanent monism enables a rethinking of the relations between bodies and individuals. His conception of individuals as emerging through processes of individualisation, whether at the level of the body, or below or above the body allow a questioning of the processes through which boundaries are drawn in the sense-making of the world, which, of course, is why he is so important to read in the light of deconstruction. A consideration of the modification of bodies by other bodies, as finite modes of infinite Substance, enable a specific and fluid way of thinking about how bodies relate to each other, affect each other and how these affects are understood and known. In terms of its relevance to poststructuralist theory, it disallows the possibility of an outside to its immanent totality and questions the divisions that we make, for example between nature and culture, body and mind, man and animal, my body and your body. For those who, following Nietzsche, Derrida and Foucault, wish to do away with an outside save considering it as the product of an inside which remains within an immanent totality, Spinoza's metaphysics can provide a clear foundation. With Spinoza, as Levinson points out:

we are pitched into a universe that is radically relativist but at the same time, thoroughly embodied and determined, not in advance, however, but through the mechanically interactive play of contingencies (Levinson 2007:380).

In the light of the previous discussion of affect, the next section addresses the three forms of knowledge in Spinoza, and in doing so introduces the idea of the embodied imagination and the materialisation of the imagination, which I suggest is particularly useful as a way of reconsidering materialism in the light of postfoundational thought.

Forms of knowledge

The *Ethics* discusses three ways in which knowledge can be gained: through the imagination, through reason and through intuition. As a rationalist, Spinoza privileges reason as that which is necessary to form "adequate" ideas, which follow logically and necessarily from previous ideas.⁴³ The third route to knowledge, intuition, is that through

⁴² This term is taken from Brian Massumi's discussion of the way in which matrices of gender, race and sexual orientation emerge from the ontogenetic passage and "back-form" reality (Massumi 2002:8).

⁴³ This is of course apparent in the geometric structure of the *Ethics*.

which, when reached through consideration of a problem through reason, or through both of the other forms of knowledge worked on together, one can gain knowledge of the essences of singularities, of the “intellectual love of God” (Lloyd 1996:109-114).

Knowledge gained by intuition appears as a “flash” and proceeds by leaps “somewhat like a dog searching rather than a reasonable man explaining” (Deleuze 1997:30). This section focuses in depth on Spinoza’s understanding of the imagination as a source of knowledge and as such proposes a Spinozist understanding of the embodied imagination, and suggests its usefulness to critical theory.

As outlined above, Spinoza positions mind as an idea of which the body is the *ideatum* – in other words, the body as perceived through the attribute of thought. This means that any modifications of the body – any affects or signs – are perceived through the attribute of thought, as ideas. The ideas that we have of other bodies are gained through the modifications that those other bodies effect on our own bodies: they “indicate the condition of our own body more than the nature of the external bodies” (Spinoza 1996:45). These ideas, as recognitions of body modifications in the attribute of thought, are forms of knowledge gained through the imagination. All sensory knowledge is gained through the imagination, through the ideas formed in the attribute of thought as a result of bodily modifications – the *ideata* of which there is a corresponding idea. As Stuart Hampshire explains, “perceiving, entertaining images, feeling an emotion or having a sensation, are all cases of having an idea which is an idea of some bodily modification” (Hampshire 1951:94). The imagination, then, is the way in which we understand bodily modifications as things in the world. It is what enables us to construct a world from our bodies: “Imagination is the idea wherewith the mind contemplates a thing as present; yet this idea indicates rather the present disposition of the human body than the nature of the external thing” (Spinoza 1996:176). What this means, fundamentally, is that all experience of other bodies, and of our own bodies in their preceding states – indeed all sensory experience - takes place through the imagination, and, moreover, all of our imaginative capacities, our dreams, daydreams, thoughts and memories, are embodied. Thought, as considered through the imagination, is inseparable from imagined embodied experience.

Imaginariness

Spinoza’s account of the imagination can lead into thinking about the production of

imaginaries. Spinoza asserts that ideas about concepts or objects form through a process of repeated experiences of bodily modifications in relation to an idea of an object. The general idea or “universal notion” (*notio universalis*) is a sort of amalgamation and blurring together of past embodied experiences that have modified the body in similar ways, and as such operates on a lateral plane of association. These ideas of objects are known as *imaginatioes*. The universal notion or *imaginatioe* can only form if we accept that the affection that is a bodily modification will leave a trace on the body, which has a correspondent trace in the attribute of thought. Thus “it is in the nature of the human mind that every idea of the imagination is stored in the mind, ready to be revived” (Hampshire 2005:78). The idea of the bodily trace, then, can be seen to reconcile Butler’s theories of corporeal inscription with Spinoza’s theory of knowledge and of Substance as the leaving of traces which perform and produce particular bodily configurations. These configurations contribute their own repeated manifestation through particular embodied practices and materialities and as such are not dissimilar from Butler’s own arguments about citational performativity and corporeal inscription. By trace, I refer to the constant and ongoing inscription through which bodies are produced, for example, as memory, scars, muscular growth or wastage, trauma and the forging of neural pathways. These traces are discussed in more detail later in this chapter, and throughout the thesis. Thus they are central to my argument that the imagination is material.

In Spinoza, the *notio universalis* is contrasted with the common notion (*notion commune*), a means of acquiring *adequate* knowledge through reason rather than through the imagination alone. Spinoza’s rationalism demands that knowledge gained through the senses can only be judged as true in terms of its relation to other more or less coherent systems of thought, since any ideas based on the senses cannot constitute true knowledge, which is only gained through logical reasoning, or through intuition. As such, it forms a fiction or contingency, necessarily inadequate, but the stuff upon which most knowledge is based.⁴⁴ The universal notion, which comes from the imaginative capacity of mind, relates to “individual things represented to the intellect mutilated, confused, and without order and also things which we remember through having read or heard certain words” (Spinoza 1996:57). It can produce only that which is accepted as true, due to its relationship with existing systems of knowledge gained from bodily encounter and to its having been worked

⁴⁴ It is worth considering here Spinoza’s view of the multitude, as stated in the preface to the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* who “are wavering between the emotions of hope and fear” (Spinoza 1989:49) due to their lack of reason, which is elsewhere translated as “they vacillate wretchedly between hope and fear” (cited in Curley 1990:135).

on through reason.

In attempting to formulate a Spinozist account of the embodied imagination, and its significance for thinking about social imaginaries as shared ideas that are drawn on in social life, it is necessary to square the idea of the imagination and the capacity to imagine with Spinoza's relational ontology which precludes any clear thinking about boundaries and an internalised, Kantian individual. The concept of affect, as that which flows through bodies and encounters the imagination can support this understanding of the imagination which is able to transgress the limits of the body and refuse to be 'owned'. Spinoza's relational ontology relies on the presence of other bodies to constitute knowledge of one's own body. His concern with traces left on bodies questions presence and absence in the function of the imagination: "Although the external bodies by which the human body has once been affected neither exist nor are present, the mind will still be able to regard them as if they were present" (Spinoza 1996:45). Effectively, the imagination is an embodied capacity for knowledge that is only produced through the presence of other bodies and the traces that they leave on the body itself.

Etienne Balibar's approach to this problem is to formulate a *transindividual* approach to imagination and reason, whereby each is posited as *process* and individuals as moments in a process, bestowing upon the imagination the capacity to have an existence not outside of the body, but *through bodies*, enabling a consideration of the imagination as taking forms that traverse bodies and their individual traces that give them substance, yet comprise of a whole that exceeds the imaginative capacity of that body alone (Balibar 1998).

Spinoza's account of the collective production of knowledge is based on what he considers as the imitation of the affects (*imitatio affectuum*), and it is this affinity in sensation that enables communication and community to take place: "If we imagine a thing like us, toward which we have had no affect, to be affected with some affect, we are thereby affected with a like affect" (Spinoza 1996:84). This mimetic and empathic power of the body to 'feel' the affects of others contributes to the affective networks that pass through bodies, and serve to deepen the power of the imagination as a "*conductor* of the affects" (Williams 2007:357).

As Spinoza goes on to explain in the scholium to this proposition, this imitation of the affects is that which turns another's sadness into our pity. It also leads to a collective understanding of the multitude as that which produces general ideas and collective imaginings. However, the concept of the imitation of affects does not to me give an adequate enough account of the collective production of knowledge, since I am not sure that it effectively allows for the reason why some affects are imitated more closely than others, or how responses to the affects of others that cannot be seen as imitation can emerge. Balibar's *Spinoza and Politics*, using a close reading of the *Ethics* alongside the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* and the *Tractatus Politicus*, identifies a way of considering the collective through the notion of the *transindividual* running through the course of Spinoza's oeuvre. Balibar discusses this with respect to the idea of *communication* rather than imitation alone, and in terms of the collective production of knowledge as a transindividual process. It is worth paying attention to the following quote in order to consider what Balibar means by this:

When an individual is passive, it is because his (sic) soul has been subjugated by the circulation of the affects and by the 'general ideas' that inhabit the collective imagination... His body too will have been simultaneously subjugated by the unrestrained influence of all the surrounding bodies. When an individual is active, there is on the contrary a coherent order structuring the encounters between his body and other bodies, and the ideas that are in his soul follow on from one another according to 'common notions' – in the double sense of common to all men and common to both men and nature as a whole, that is to say, objective. In both cases, we are dealing with modes of communication: the very form which individuality takes is thus the result of a given mode of communication (Balibar 1998:94-5).

While I am unconvinced by Balibar's (Spinoza's) distinction between passive and active individuals, since the very notions of activity and passivity are always already conjoined within the concept of affect, his interest in communication as productive of forms of individuality and the necessity of the general ideas and common notion to that production, is important.

Later on, Balibar discusses how the singularity of the individual occurs through a process of singularisation, and to the desire to continue oneself in one's present form (*the conatus*).

Only individuals exist, in the strong sense of the term. But this nominalism has nothing to do with atomistic individualism: to say that all individuals are different (or better, that they act and suffer in different ways) is not to say that they can be isolated from one another. The idea of such isolation is simply another mystificatory abstraction. It is the relationship of each individual to other individualities and their reciprocal actions and passions which determine the form of the individual's desire and actuate its power. Singularity is a trans-individual function. It is a function of communication (Balibar 1998:108).

To understand Spinoza from a transindividual perspective is to recognise how individual thoughts and imaginings arise from a collectivity that exists prior to their imaginations, a sociality that always precedes the individual. Hence

the true matter of politics is the mass. When individuals represent their interests to themselves, that is, when they think and act, they do so in imaginary forms that are always already collective forms (stories that bear the hopes and fears of a group) (Balibar 1998:120, original emphasis).

Balibar suggests that rather than thinking the collective or the multitude from an axiomatic of the individual, we need to consider individuals as singularities that emerge from a transindividuality that will always lead to individualisations. Spinoza's philosophy is transindividual – it cuts through bodies insofar as it is driven by the relations of affect that constitute the transindividual plane.

Similarly, Williams attempts to consider the multitude through a relational perspective focusing on the affective relationships of which it comprises, referring to relationships of

'overlapping individuality' and the binding together of individuals by the common affects of friendship, community and shared knowledge while never being reduced to sameness and conformity (Williams 2007:363).

In Williams, the possibility of an imagination that transcends the bodies of individuals seems to work through its equation with affect, and in terms of that which "galvanises" affect, which I understand as referring to the analogic translation of affects into signs that happen as they move through bodies and enable imagined relations between bodies to thrive. Both approaches have the effect of producing a transsubjective account of the imagination that can be used to discuss the concept of an imaginary as shared constellations of imaginings through which bodies politic inhabit communities of meaning, which are linked to their varying capacities to act.⁴⁵ The sociality of imaginaries is possible due to similarities between bodies:

All human bodies are of roughly the same structure and react in similar ways to similar external influences; the formation of their ideas must be correspondingly similar (Hampshire 1951:93).

The imagination enables bodies to make associations between similar modifications, leading to specific associative resonances that play in the experience of particular bodily modifications. These may be based on past experiences or textual encounters that are intimately tied to and performative of historically situated interpersonal relations of entitlement and restriction on a much larger scale. This relationship between idea and history is perhaps most clear in the following proposition:

If the human body has once been affected by two or more bodies at the same time, then when the mind subsequently imagines one of them, it will immediately recollect the others also (Spinoza 1996:46).

⁴⁵ The term 'constellation' here is taken from the work of Giorgio Agamben's commentary on St Paul's letter to the Romans (Agamben 2005).

Spinoza then goes on to illustrate this more clearly in the scholium to this proposition, writing:

For example, a soldier, having seen traces of a horse in the sand, will immediately pass from the thought of a horse to the thought of a horseman, and from that to the thought of war, etc. But a farmer will pass from the thought of a horse to the thought of a plow, and then to that of a field, etc. And so each one according as he has been accustomed to join and connect the images of things in this or that way, will pass from one thought to another (Spinoza 1996:47).

Within this scholium is an explicit consideration of the way in which institutional and cultural practices inform and socialise these associations through the organising of bodies and the structuring of embodied experience. The imaginative capacity of thought, then, maintains the imprint of history through the embodied trace, and allows the moment of perception to be coloured through particular social imaginaries considered in terms of constellations of association. These associations, as recollections of previous bodily modifications, are dependent on the specific materialities involved in the encounter, and as such contain an element of indeterminacy that is vital to their operation. It is the indeterminacy of association that gives the subject of imagination its agency or potentiality for difference (see also Gatens and Lloyd 1999:25). Williams considers the imagination in Spinoza in aporetic terms, considering the ambivalence contained in Spinoza's idea of the *fluctuatio animi* in terms of a vacillation in affects which operates according to a "logic of ambivalence that opens up his theory of knowledge... imagination produces a visceral antagonism at the heart of the political that cannot be neutralised or contained completely" (Williams 2007:359, 361). What this means is that integral to the way in which the body imagines is an indeterminacy, a possibility of movement between affective associations that are linked in the process of gaining an idea of something. The indeterminacy of the imagination allows play, agency or difference, allows the possibility of the new to emerge.

Most knowledge and understanding of the world comes from these sensory forms and from the production of general understandings through the "order and connections of the affections of the human body" rather than the "intellect" (Spinoza 1996:47). It is based on embodied habits and memories, and on appearance rather than logical consideration (for example, the sun, in Spinoza's famous example, appears as a small disc 200 feet from us, and persists in such appearance despite our knowledge that it is not as it appears). The associative capacities of the imagination are shown to have a limit point, however, and Spinoza makes a particular case for the interruption that appears in the experience of the sublime, or the uncanny: "wonder is an imagination of a thing in which the mind remains fixed, because this singular imagination has no connection with the others" (Spinoza

1996:105). The limit point of sensible perception, the inability for normal associative imaginings to come up with a familiar response based on past encounters is manifest through the sensation of the new.

The embodied imagination

Knowledge gained through the imagination must always be considered as affective since it necessarily involves some bodily modification, and as such takes place *through* affect, through the movement towards greater or lesser capacities of bodies. The imagination can thus be viewed as the mechanism through which modifications are imbued with affect. Affects are tied to imaginaries through past experience of similar imagined bodily modifications, and these memory-traces inscribe themselves on bodies at the point when similar modifications occur. These associative capacities of the imagination lead to whole systems of desires and aversions – part associations with that which offers increased or decreased vitality, and cannot be separated from their affective registers. Deleuze’s reading of Spinoza in particular celebrates the affective aspect of knowledge insofar as it enables access to a precognitive, prelinguistic theorising of the body which reaches beneath what he calls the discourse of the concept in order to think about those aspects of bodies that escape signifying regimes or “the discourse of the concept” (Deleuze 1997:27). Deleuze too attempts to resurrect the primacy of affect to thinking about knowledge, and bemoans the lack of credibility that Spinoza gives to the imaginative and affective matrices (Deleuze 1988b, 1997). While imaginative and affective knowledge is viewed in Spinoza as inadequate, what Deleuze rather confusingly calls signs (which we might call affects) form a sort of knowledge that is

an experience in which one randomly encounters the confused ideas of bodily mixtures, brute imperatives to avoid this mixture and seek another, and more or less delirious interpretations of these situations. Rather than a form of expression, it is a material and affective language, one that resembles cries rather than the discourse of the concept. It seems then that if signs-affects intervene in the *Ethics*, it is only to be severely criticised, denounced, and sent back to their night, out of which light either reappears or in which it perishes (Deleuze 1997:25).

The next two chapters will explore in more detail the relationship between affect and the embodied imagination in terms of the new materialism in cultural theory.

While Spinoza, the rationalist, considers knowledge gained by the senses and through the imagination to be inadequate, more recent scholars of Spinoza have discussed the usefulness of the concept of the imagination to political and social thought, and have particularly celebrated the way in which Spinoza formulates the imagination through specific reference to bodily modification which effectively materialises it and ties it to a politics of the body. In

Genevieve Lloyd's reading of the *Ethics*, which is an example of this reappropriation of the imagination, imagination and reason are worked on together, where the body's capacity to reason enables it to work on universal notions towards the formulation of a common notion:

the order of imagination is not the order of reason. But reason can come to an understanding of the associations which operate between images, of the ways in which they are affected by emotion, and of the ways in which those interactions of imagination and emotion are themselves affected by the collectivities into which human beings are drawn through interaction with bodies similar to their own (Gatens and Lloyd 1999:24).

Insisting on the necessary interaction between the forms of knowledge, she states that "repeated encounters... leave traces in the body which, though initially ideas in the imagination, later become the basis for the formation of common notions" (Gatens and Lloyd 1999). These "adequate" common notions then circulate through language and other forms of communication and participate in an economy of signs, never determinate nor fixed, but nevertheless capable of contributing to shared social imaginaries.

In a conceptual move away from the body that imagines towards an understanding of the social imaginary, Gatens describes the materiality of the social imaginary thus:

imaginative constructions of who and what we are, are 'materialised' through the forms of embodiment to which those constructions give rise. The imagination may create fables, fictions or collective 'illusions', which have 'real' effects, that is, which serve to structure forms of identity, social meaning and value, but which considered in themselves, are neither true nor false (Gatens 1996; Gatens and Lloyd 1999:123).

Later, she refers to how

The social imaginary is constituted by 'those images, symbols, metaphors and narratives that help structure forms of embodied identity and belonging, social meaning and value, and which, because they appeal to the imaginative faculty, attract strong affective investments (Gatens 2008:161).

The power of imaginaries emerges through their affective capacities and through their durability.

The strength of the social imaginary is that it constructs a logic of its own- a logic which cannot be shaken or undermined simply by demonstrating the falsity of its claims, its inherent contradictions or its aporias. The social imaginary is constitutive of, not merely reflective of, the forms of sociability in which we live. The imaginary endures through times and so becomes increasingly embedded in all our institutions, our judicial systems, our national narratives, our founding fictions, our cultural traditions (Gatens and Lloyd 1999:143).

The affective, social and material registers of the imagination are here brought to bear on the concept of the social imaginary. Moving away from a more traditional view of social imaginaries (Castoriadis 1987; Taylor 2002) Gatens and Lloyd's Spinozism invites a conception of imaginaries as nebulous, overlapping aggregations of images, recalled

memories, associations and traces which emerge during and colour the embodied experience of the world. Agamben's understanding of "constellations" of ideas echoes this, in their repeated juxtapositions which serve to add weight to the associations which comprise the imaginary (Agamben 1993c), recalling Benjamin's working of the dialectic in his discussion of the image in terms of "that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation" (Benjamin 1999:462). Imaginaries come to be social through the transsubjective nature of affect and the imagination, and are shared insofar as they traverse bodies and work through the capacities of bodies for empathy and mimesis. The *way* in which the object is imagined is entirely specific to the individual body due to its singularity. However, similar bodies do imagine objects in similar ways, and these patterned imaginaries are evident and reflect different institutional practices, hence what we might consider the sociality of the imagination and the possibility of the social imaginary as a sort of composite, an overlapping and movement of different imaginings through bodies. The social imaginary is constitutive of, not merely reflective of, the forms of sociability in which we live. Imaginaries, through being affectively invested in, write themselves on and through bodies, operating as a "kind of anonymous conductor of affects circulating within and between bodies" (Williams 2009), producing body-subjects as those bodies contribute to their own production.

Given the "inadequacy" of the *notio universalis* in Spinoza, it may be argued that knowledge produced by the imagination is all the more important for the social scientist, because it allows thinking about the "conditions of there being a real" for us (Lennon 2004:107) - the processes and associations - historically informed and produced, which bodies inhabit and in doing so imaginatively experience the world. It also points to the ways in which we come to form *ideata* based on previous bodily knowledge of the affective capacities of other bodies on our own bodies, as well as through our bodies' own preceding states, which successfully links practice and perception to history, both individual and cultural, through affective relations that leave traces on bodies through their encounter. Kathleen Lennon writes succinctly on the way in which worlds as experienced are imaginary, insofar as they are based on associative capacities of bodies in relation to present and past experience, suggesting that the work of the imagination that is undertaken in the production of worlds should not be dismissed, since the workings of the imagination form the basis of social life: "imaginary worlds...require imaginary bodies and such imaginary bodies constitute our sense of ourselves and of others" (Lennon 2004:115)

The concept of the embodied imagination is a way of considering the interrelationship between bodies, affect and materiality which refuses any subjectivist or objectivist readings and yet enables a consideration of those relations of power and force that produce subjects with certain capacities and not others. In this way, this discussion builds on the previous chapters, which have focused on the body in its subjective and objective states, by considering the *production* of subjectivity and objectivity as taking place as an effect of affective interrelations between bodies that give rise to certain bodies through their relation, and importantly, through the specific capacities of bodies to imagine such a way that they form associations and larger patterns of imagination. Moreover these associations are shown to be indeterminate, capable of vacillation and as such can never be pinned down: “the mind’s capacity for imagination and memory, although a precondition for reason, is also a source of instability – or a lack of fixity” (Lloyd 1996:97). Williams describes the imagination posited in part II of the ethics as a “sort of corporeal awareness *connecting* affects to understanding” (Williams 2007:355, original emphasis), and, elsewhere, as “the vehicle through which the experience of affect is galvanised” (Williams 2009).

The politics of affect

These affective and imaginary relations between bodies are central to the process of subjectivation and can tell us much about the politics of affect. To summarise so far - the experience of bodily modifications always takes place through the imagination, a capacity of thought. Any form of imagining is therefore a body modification considered through the attribute of thought, and any body modification is by definition affective. If we are to consider that the attribute of thought is one of the many attributes of an immanent substance, and that there are correspondences to those bodily modifications in the attribute of extension, then it follows that those bodily modifications which are thoughts, or imaginings, or memories, must be considered as substantial, or material. It is for this reason that I argue for a consideration of the embodied imagination as *affective* and *material*. Spinoza’s thoroughly materialist stance excludes the possibility of anything which modifies the body, whether external or internal to the body’s (albeit blurry) boundaries, from being considered as immaterial. He effectively rescues the distinction of material and immaterial from itself, and as such opens up the possibility for a materialist reading of all of those aspects of life considered immaterial: dreams, hopes, texts and images. His historicising of

the imagination through the body's past encounters, coupled with the body's capacity to dream otherwise, lays the foundations for a rethinking of the politics of imagination.

Reclaiming the imagination

While in Spinoza, the imagination is considered in terms of “confused ideas, sensuous impressions, metaphors mistaken for concepts”, contemporary thinkers have attempted to resurrect his concept of the imagination as invaluable in considering the way in which intersubjective politics and ethics can emerge (Norris 1991:26). A consideration of the embodied imagination as central to experience can serve to rescue those phenomenological accounts of experience where the *sociality* of experience is less than fully engaged with, and moreover enables a clear understanding of the way in which bodily experiences and the affects are always social and material. The imagination is repositioned and recentred as the locus of embodied experience, leading to both a materialist reading of embodied practice and a recognition of its intersubjective aspects. As such, a reading of Spinoza can serve to reclaim the status of imagination. As Agamben points out in his account of the decline of the value of the imagination in the production of knowledge:

from having been the subject of experience the phantasm becomes the subject of mental alienation, visions and magical phenomena, in other words, everything that is excluded by real experience (Agamben 1993b:25).

A Spinozist and therefore thoroughly materialist account of the imagination, replaces the body as the site of the thinking subject, the body that had been displaced by Descartes' reduction of the subject into what Agamben describes as “nothing more than the subject of the verb, a purely linguistic-functional entity” (Agamben 1993b:22).

A focus on the imagination, and on the body that imagines, positions culture as a *phenomenon* rather than an object: culture as comprised of the stabilising categories through which we come to know and understand the world – the expressions of a will to presence. This allows us to think experience *through its deconstruction*: through the complex practices, imaginings and desires that are mobilized in our making-present of the world. This focuses attention onto the body's capacity to imagine and produce itself as a subject, but as a *dreaming subject* – a subject deconstructed and destabilized by postfoundational thought, the subject as effect of forces, registers, affects, materialities, stripped clean of agency as the origin of action, yet a subject that still thinks, dreams and imagines...a body that works through and imaginatively processes sensorial inputs and outputs, experiencing pain, anger, grief and

hope and acting upon others in and through those experiences.

To rethink the body through a Spinozist materialism where imagination is *embodied, affective* and *material* serves a useful role in linking accounts of embodied practice into wider matrices of subjectification. The social aspects of the imagination here are addressed through a critical appraisal of the concept of the social imaginary. In considering the embodied, affective and material aspects of the imagination, I also attempt to contribute to what we might consider a ‘new materialism’, an approach which I will elaborate in the following chapter.⁴⁶ This offers the possibility of moving phenomenological and non-representational geographies further towards the field of social and political analysis. This rematerialisation of thought and of the imagination and its products is perhaps best summed up by Levinson: “Spinoza’s reason is literally a practice of the body; it has no need for transcendental *bona fides*” (Levinson 2007:381).

Moira Gatens, in particular, discusses the importance of the imagination in terms of its relation to the opening up of political agency. She writes of “imagination as a necessary, permanent and vital role in ethical as well as political life”, suggesting that it is crucial to the formulation of a moral code (Gatens 2009). Because of the necessary involvement of imagination in experience, imagination and fictions are inescapable, and moral codes are always products of the imagination. She argues that fictions, as produced through the imagination, should not be seen in terms of falsity so much as hypotheses, suggesting that we judge scripture and philosophy not in terms of their truth value but as “more or less adequate hypotheses of the conditions under which human life might flourish”, or as speculative attempts to think a better life (Gatens 2009). If ethics are fictions, produced through these speculative attempts, then the human capacity to imagine, to speculate and to dream is central to politics and philosophy. Moreover, these capacities to imagine are also necessarily grounded in experience. Gatens sees in the novels of George Eliot how “imagination and memory mingled with affect are the materials from which individual and community identity are built”, suggesting that it is through embodied practices and embedded beliefs experienced through the imagination that bodies are bound together and ways of life are formed (Gatens 2009). Spinoza’s materialism

points towards new formulations of egalitarian ideals, grounded in the recognition of differences between the powers of socialised bodies, rather than the transcending or assimilation of difference in a universalised sameness (Lloyd 1996:24).

⁴⁶ See, for example, recent work by Anderson and Wylie and Woodward and Lea: (Anderson and Wylie 2009; Woodward and Lea 2009)

It allows for variation in bodies, and the potential for new subjectivities to form through affective relations between bodies:

Very often it happens that while we are enjoying a thing we wanted, the body acquires from this enjoyment a new constitution, by which it is differently determined, and other images of things are aroused in it; and at the same time the mind begins to imagine other things and desire other things (Spinoza 1996:103).

The embodied imagination in practice

Spinozist accounts of the embodied imagination have been most successfully directed towards social analysis by Moira Gatens (Gatens 1996; Gatens and Lloyd 1999; Gatens 2008, 2009), for example in her discussions of the way in which sexed bodies are imagined in *Imaginary Bodies*, and in her discussion of bodies politic. Spinoza writes that “imagination does not disappear through the presence of the true” (Spinoza 1996:118) - they endure just as those bodily modifications that enable them to endure remain in place. To consider the power and durability of particular imaginaries, or to attempt to change them, it is necessary to consider how imaginaries, as transpersonal products of the embodied imagination, work across and through bodies, by means of the specific modification of which they are part. This is demonstrated through Gatens’ discussion and analysis of the founding fiction of Australia as *tabula rasa*, where this imaginary lives on in the present through practices and memory, despite various attempts to refute its accuracy. She suggests that, while imaginaries are inescapable, they are not fixed, and it is in the shifting of the ways in which relations are imagined that freedom from imaginaries that restrict bodies can be achieved. She shows how indigenous and non-indigenous law both involved ways of knowing and being that conflicted and exposed the other as fiction, and as such require a shift in the way in which laws are imagined and embodied if reconciliation is to be reached.

The collective transformation of the social imaginary cannot be ‘thought’ voluntaristically or relativistically as pure (re)invention of the past. Rather, it must be thought collectively, which is to say it must be thought and negotiated with actually existing different others in historical time (Gatens and Lloyd 1999:147).

This refers to how imaginaries, as social, must be transformed socially too. Moreover, insofar as they are emotionally invested in, they cannot be simply thought differently, in the sense of cognition alone:

whether or not it is coherent to speak of women’s bodies as *anatomically* ‘lacking’, is irrelevant to the imaginary apprehension of women’s bodies as ‘begging the question’ of their completion by a man and/or child...Protesting the anatomical ‘completeness’ of a woman’s body will do little to change these attitudes since they are not, in any straightforward way, receptive to rational argument (Gatens 1996:xii).

While imaginaries are essentially contested (Gatens and Lloyd 1999) and aporetic

(Williams 2007) and certainly involve vacillation (Spinoza 1996), the durability of their effects and their specific modes of incorporation clearly remain important areas for enquiry. In *Imagined Communities*, Anderson famously writes that “communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the *style* in which they are imagined” (Anderson 1984:6, my emphasis). Conceptualising subjects, spaces and bodies as phenomena - in terms of the *way* in which they are imagined - perhaps allows us to consider their social significance more fully. Unlike Anderson, however, I suggest that the realm of the imagination does not oppose something that exists outside of the imagined (in Anderson’s view, the ‘true’ community of face-to-face interaction) but instead becomes the way in which bodies make and experience the world. As Kathleen Lennon writes:

the notion of imaginary existence is not, as in many theories of the imagination, to be contrasted with the real, but rather to be taken as a condition for there being a real for us (Lennon 2004:107).

Instead of thinking the social imaginary as an object of enquiry, which perhaps risks assuming a finished, complete subject whose imaginative capacities are based on received and internalised tropes, the process of imagining itself needs to be attended to. Social imaginaries need to be thought as nebulous products of similar imaginings – as entities in process that work through bodies and which “galvanise...the affects” (Williams 2009). Instead of being based on a binary between institutionally produced meaning and the dreaming subject, imaginaries exist in the circulation of ideas and imaginings through affective engagements between bodies and worlds. They produce the idea of the real, and are as such constitutive of our experience of the world. As such, a Spinozist account of the imagination leaves considerable scope for cultural theory *after the subject*:

The circulation of images and affects through an increasingly international mass media present interesting possibilities...for developing and extending Spinoza’s views on the imagination, the contagiousness of the affects and the interconnectedness of all things (Gatens and Lloyd 1999:137).

Through a detailed focus and exploration of Spinoza’s *Ethics*, through which I have developed my concept of the embodied imagination, I have set up the basis for my further investigations into the relationship between embodiment, affect and the imagination. This chapter has tried to demonstrate how, using Spinoza’s philosophy, and particularly the concept of the embodied imagination, it is possible to contribute to some of the debates explored in the previous chapter. I have argued that Spinozist metaphysics can be considered in terms of setting up an ontological foundation from which to consider how bodies and worlds are constituted through relations that are imaginary, embodied and affective. In doing so, I have attempted to reclaim the imagination for cultural theory. In the

following chapter I move on to explore the ways in which these theoretical foundations can be mobilised in order to explore a political reading of affect (chapter four) and a materialist approach to cultural studies that *incorporates* texts as embodied practices (chapter five).

Chapter 4: New materialisms

Introduction

In the previous chapter I discussed how the philosophy of Spinoza can lead to ways of thinking about bodies in terms of their capacities to imagine and to affect. I now move on to consider what I refer to as 'new materialist' theory: recent social, cultural and political theory that draws on and elaborates Spinozist thought, particularly through the concept of affect. These new materialisms enable a way of thinking about the materiality of bodies and their relations with the world in terms of the affective flows that move through them. These approaches are discussed here as foundations upon which to build a theoretical approach to key debates in cultural geography and cultural studies. In this chapter I demonstrate how the concept of affect can elucidate some of the ways in which power works through bodies by means of the formation of a materialist cultural theory that does not stop at the limit of the text and that enables a relational sense of ongoing subjectivation that pays attention to the affective register. As such, I outline the work of some key thinkers associated with this theoretical move, and then discuss how this line of thinking can inform understandings of materiality and spatiality, can rethink the relationship between the body and the text, and can offer a reconsideration of the human after posthumanist critique.

Various recent thinkers have attempted to show how changes that take place within the body and in the affective registers are intrinsically social, and also related to but not the same as intersubjective registers. As such they attempt to consider social, political and cultural theory through the somatic effects of relations between bodies and also on the way in which affective response may operate outside of subjectivity, but never outside of sociality. A focus on bodily changes that bypass the subject has been particularly embraced by post-Deleuzian thinkers, and in geography, by nonrepresentational theory (e.g. Thrift and Dewsbury 2000; Dewsbury, Harrison et al. 2002; McCormack 2003; Thrift 2004; Wylie 2005; Thrift 2007; Anderson 2008b; Anderson and Harrison 2010; McCormack 2010). As I explored in the previous chapter, Spinoza's influence on critical theory has been particularly clear in the work of those writers who are keen to accentuate the pre-subjective bodily modifications which take place in practice (Norris 1991). Recent interest in neuroscience and thought has focused on the relationship between the functions of the brain and social life, and this is particularly clear in the work of Bill Connolly, but also through the influence of Antonio Damasio on recent cultural theory (Damasio 1995, 2000; Connolly 2002; Massumi

2002; see also Thrift 2004).⁴⁷ The concern with affect in the social sciences is broadly related to an increase in attention to the work of Deleuze and Guattari, and through secondary readings of their work. Some critiques of research into affect, however, rely on a less than secure reading of Spinoza (or Deleuze and Guattari) and a lack of recognition that a focus on affect can lead to a progressive or critical geography, and indeed may lead to a more *thoroughly* critical and rigorous geography than previous cultural geographies (e.g. Pile). My selective drawing on Spinozist political theorists such as Gatens, Williams, Balibar and Lloyd in the previous chapter has in part been a deliberate attempt to place critical politics at the centre of nonrepresentational theory. I am of course not alone in this endeavour: the following thinkers, among others, fall into a category that can be called the ‘new materialism’: Bill Brown, Jane Bennett, William Connolly, Michel Serres, Michael Taussig, Karen Barad, Brian Massumi, John Protevi and Brian Cantwell Smith.⁴⁸ This new materialism is also associated with a converging of critical theory with work in artificial intelligence, in complexity theory, in science and technology studies, in cognitive science, and neuroscience, in a way that embraces a renewed interest in Spinozist ontology and metaphysics. In such a broad field, this chapter necessarily limits its scope through a focus mainly on the work of Massumi, Connolly and Protevi in its discussion of new materialist thought, since I suggest that these writers show how bodies are thoroughly political, how texts work through the materiality of bodies and that they point to an expanded definition of thought, that I argue is central to an understanding of the way in which power produces bodies. These writers further articulate how a Spinozist focus on affect and on the affective capacities of bodies can lead to a political and cultural theory that is able to place critique at the heart of those ‘embodied’ aspects of knowledge that are still considered by some to stand outside of the political.

John Protevi uses the term “bodies politic” as a way of marking the intersection between the social and the somatic: the incorporation of the political and the politicisation of the body. New materialist perspectives such as Protevi’s, while still at a working stage, attempt

⁴⁷ This exchange has also gone both ways, with a growth in interest in cultural neuroscience (for example, Wexler 2006; Seligman and Kirmayer 2008; Choudhury 2009) .

⁴⁸ Any discussion of materialism needs to consider what is meant by the term, and of course its relationship to not only recent discussions of materiality but to its Marxian heritage. In the preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, and in *The German Ideology*, Marx discusses the materialist conception of history and the centrality of the “material conditions of existence” (Bottomore and Rubel 1961:36) . Marx’s materialism is not incommensurate with the kind of materialisms I am discussing here, although of course he makes the distinction between material conditions and forms of consciousness, a distinction which these arguments go some way towards erasing (see “the materiality of thought”, this chapter). However, the relationship between macro and micropolitics discussed in this chapter, and the *incorporation* of the social are all implied but not perhaps as thoroughly articulated in Marx’s philosophy.

to rewrite materialist accounts of the body in a nondeterminist manner that nevertheless recognises and places value on the body's relationship to its material others and to its own materiality. As such, they offer a focus on registers that operate through the body's autonomic, or prelinguistic modes, and the relation between them and other modes. Drawing on poststructuralist and postphenomenological perspectives, this movement in cultural theory attempts to think politics after the displacement of the originary subject,⁴⁹ and also after the destabilisation of structures of language and culture. As such, they rely often on a primal sociality, a pre-subjective ontology of the social that exists before the subject of thought and of speech. Protevi calls this a "primary corporeal inter-ipseity", where the body-self is considered to precede the subject, while Massumi discusses a "sociality without determinate borders" (Massumi 2002:9). The influence of phenomenology, such as through Merleau-Ponty's ontology of "flesh", and concern with pre-subjective intercorporeality is central here, and one can trace a genealogy of thinkers who position this collective being as prior to individualisation (e.g. Merleau-Ponty 1968; Deleuze and Guattari 1977, 1988; Simondon 1995; Balibar 1998; Nancy 2000; Simondon 2007 and 1989; Nancy 2010). In his discussion of a Deleuzian ontology of the virtual, Massumi describes the body as "an immediate, unfolding relation to its own nonpresent potential to vary" (Massumi 2002:4). This approach denies any possibility of fixed position, only a passing or becoming. This chapter, then, explores the way in which an understanding of the affective registers can be highly elucidating and perhaps necessary for contemporary cultural theory. In this reading, affect is central to political theory and praxis, as bodies are part of and produced by an ecosocial intercorporeality that renders the ways in which they affect and are affected by other bodies patterned in terms of wider processes and capacities. Affect is *never* outside of the political: it is produced by and through bodies politic.

Affect after the subject.

Spinozist ontologies demand a focus on affect. Attention to affect can produce ways of thinking about politics, culture and society which provide an alternative and fruitful line of enquiry and movement for critical theory after the critique of ideology and the critique of the subject, and allows for a politics of deconstruction – the emergence of a postfoundational cultural theory which would only be possible through the deconstructionist impulse. As Caroline Williams points out, Spinoza is well placed to provide a postsubjectivist ontology and political theory – a way of thinking "beyond the

⁴⁹ By this I mean the subject as rational origin of experience, as sovereign.

subject” (Williams 2009). Spinoza’s concern with affect and the affections have been and can be mobilised in order to think outside the subject as a basis for this political, social and cultural theory.

In his introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus*, Massumi describes affect in terms of “a prepersonal intensity”. He writes,

affect (Spinoza’s *affectus*) is an ability to affect and be affected. It is a pre-personal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution in that body’s capacity to act.” (Deleuze and Guattari 1988:xvii).

Referring to Spinoza’s concern with substance in terms of varying degrees of capacities for speed and slowness, and of bodies being individual, collective or sub-individual, this “theory without bounds”,⁵⁰ relying on affective relations between bodies and through bodies rather than on subjective response is clearly a way around the problem of the subject. While I do not wish to deny the existence of the subject or of subjectivity as a *surface effect* (see chapter two), the transsubjective flows of affect that cut through bodies and subjects, producing and reproducing them as they go, can offer up a useful ontology for thinking outside of the subject. Following Spinoza’s discussion of the affections – the *affectus*, Deleuze writes of affect as the *feeling* of an affection – as the body’s registering of its vectorial planes that increase or decrease a body’s capacity to act (Deleuze 1988b, 1997).⁵¹ In other words, some affections or body modifications are not felt as affects, while all affects are affections. This means that Deleuze’s take on Spinoza sees a less than parallel correspondence between the attributes of thought and extension, since there are some affections which are not recognised in the attribute of thought. I would suggest also that some affections perhaps make themselves known at a later time – they store themselves up and appear later on, or perhaps in a different form, but nevertheless do appear to the mind as affects, for example, in the progress of a disease, or in the later emergence of symptoms of trauma.

Spinozist understandings of affect enable thinking of the ways in which bodies are connected to other bodies in ways that *exceed that which can be named* – that exceed cognitive recognition. As such, bodies can affect other bodies materially, and that affect is substantially different from the feedback of feeling that recognises that affect in a cognitive or linguistic register. Deleuze and Guattari draw attention to the way in which affective assemblages of

⁵⁰ This term is a paraphrase of the University of Minnesota Press’s *Theory Out of Bounds* series.

⁵¹ See the previous chapter for more detail on the relationship between affections and affects, and on the difference between Deleuze and Spinoza.

bodies take shape through the ways in which they relate through affect, redrawing the limits of the body according to relations of affective intensity. The recognition of the excess of affect provides a clear challenge to the sovereign subject, and calls into play other registers whereby the materialities of bodies interact with other bodies and other ways of making sense. Affect works *prior to the subject*; its impact on the body comes before its recognition, which occurs as feedback, as what Massumi calls “retroduction” (Massumi 2002:10). The difference between affect and emotion lies in emotion's status as retroductively formed, linguistically coloured affect, which then of course may feed forward into the experience of affect, but nevertheless relies at the first instance on a second order ‘backforming’ in its naming as such. Affect operates, on the other hand, in the presubjective sociality of the virtual, from which actualities form in the naming of subject and object. Affects work through registers that exist beyond language, beyond fixity, in what Massumi calls the “field of emergence”, which he describes thus: “a space-time continuum...an ontogenetic dimension prior to the separating out of space and time” (Massumi 2002:15).

Affect and emotion are substantially different. Affects belong to a different register from emotions, and indeed are experienced differently from emotions. While all emotions are of course in some way affective, not all affects are emotions. Brian Massumi explains the difference thus:

emotion and affect – if affect is intensity – follow different logics and pertain to different orders...an emotion is a subjective content, the sociolinguistic fixing of the quality of an experience which is from that point onward defined as personal. Emotion is qualified intensity, the conventional, consensual point of insertion of intensity in to semantically and semiotically formed progressions...it is *intensity owned and recognised* (Massumi 2002:28, my emphasis).

In other words, then, thinking about affect involves thinking about bodies in a fundamentally different way from thinking about emotion. Thinking about affect does not necessitate a subject, moreover subjects are only able to emerge through a recognition of affect. In Massumi's definition, emotion kicks in as a feeding back, at the level of recognition, of cognition and of ownership. It is a subjective reflexive interpretation of affect that can only operate at the level of the subject. A discussion of emotion and the impact of emotion on social and cultural life is still important. However emotion needs to be approached as a cultural form in itself – as culture rather than ontology. Emotion emerges in a *naming* of affect, and therefore operates according to the logic of naming. As the object of cultural studies, this logic is still of interest, however attending only to emotion, only to a cultural feedback effect of a particular affective/material movement, risks a partial reading of a situation, as that which operates according to different but interrelated (affective)

registers is missed. Massumi's *Parables for the Virtual* is perhaps the most considered and informed account of the application of affect in cultural theory, arguing for the need to "put matter unmediatedly back into cultural materialism, along with what seemed most directly corporeal back into the body... and find a semiotics willing to engage with continuity" (Massumi 2002:4).

To demonstrate the difference between affect and the subjective quality of emotion, Protevi discusses moments of pure affect, for example, of rage and panic, that *evacuate* the subject, leaving merely a body-agent (Protevi 2009:46). He writes how during these moments, "agency and subjectivity are split; affect extends beyond feeling; the body does something, is the agent for action, in the absence of a subject" (Protevi 2009:50). As he points out, at these points, there is no 'me':

at the peak of a towering rage, humans no longer speak, they only howl and spit and growl. If we assume, as seems reasonable, that subjectivity and language are intimately linked, then we are no longer able to relate these acts to a personal memory; that is, they no longer seem to have come from 'me' (Protevi 2009:149).

He suggests looking "above, below and alongside the subject" (Protevi 2009:3), where neurological and physiological processes are considered as ingredients of social processes that work to produce emergent subjectivities. Despite his almost Parsonian desire to construct categories and boxes around a theory that is particularly resistant to this way of thinking, his central questions provide an outline approach to how to explore the relationship between the social and the somatic, although his recourse to complexity theory to explain this is perhaps not as necessary. His examples do demonstrate effectively, however, how affect as nonrepresentational, or perhaps prerepresentational, by referring to what bodies *do* in a situation rather than the representation they make of a situation. The motif of looking "above, below and alongside the subject" is carried forward in the second part of this thesis, and informs some of the analysis contained therein.

The materiality of thought

Spinoza's writing on knowledge can help to bring *thought* to the forefront of theorising affect. As I discussed in the previous chapter, Spinoza considers thought as always embodied and material: modifications of the body are felt through the attribute of thought.

Conceiving of thoughts as affects, or as affects in transformation (just as, as I later argue, we can conceive of language), can help to place the body's capacity to think, to imagine and to dream at the centre-stage of cultural theory. These capacities, described by Spinoza in

terms of the three kinds of knowledge that human bodies can access (imagination, reason and intuition), are all inflected with affect, and these capacities allow a consideration of affect, as it is *processed* in the human body, as more than just a flow or movement between bodies.⁵² To this end, I consider the capacities of the body to think, dream and imagine as central to a Spinozist account of cultural theory, positioning the body as akin to a ‘dreaming machine’, which works on affects through thought. While clearly resonating with the work of Deleuze and Guattari, this concept situates bodies as sites through which affects - as thoughts and ideas - pass and may undergo change. Massumi refers to the body as a transducer – a local organiser of forces. He writes that

transduction is the transmission of an impulse of virtuality from one actualization to another and across them all... the transmission of a force of potential that cannot but be felt, simultaneously doubling, enabling, and ultimately counteracting the limitative selections of apparatuses of actualization and implantation (Massumi 2002:43).

In this account, then, affects are imbricated in the complex materialities of the body in a system of transformation, feedback, feedforward and resonance which precludes any simple notion of the “transmission” of affect (Brennan 2004). This is illustrated in an account of a TV football game as catalyst for domestic violence, discussed later in this chapter in terms of new affective spatialities: “the male body, sensing the potential, transduces the heterogeneity of the elements of the situation into a reflex readiness to violence”(Massumi 2002:80). Transducers in an electrical circuit change the type of energy going in and out of them: the body, and its capacity to think, to dream, to process information, to move and to speak, acts as a transducer for affections, mastering them, considering them, working on them and through them, relating them to other affections, and as such acting as a node in the flow of affect where *creativity* and *change* may occur. Affects may be stored and surface later.⁵³ Their intensive power may be reduced or increased. Anger may lie dormant in a body for years, then emerge in unexpected ways. To discuss bodies using the language of the machine is not so much to echo the desiring machine of *Anti-Oedipus*, as to refer to their position as complex converters, transducers and amplifiers in the flow of affect through and across bodies. Central to this role, then, is thought.

In order to understand the pivotal role of thought in the body’s capacities to transduce affects, it is necessary to outline an *expanded* definition of thought: an understanding of thought as *excessive* to cognitive representational thought alone. The body’s capacities for

⁵² I use the term human here advisedly – see my discussion of posthumanist theory later in the chapter.

⁵³ In his discussion of the Australian artist Stelarc’s installation “The Body Obsolete”, Massumi describes how Stelarc’s body does not transduce, it resonates. It is at the limit of its functionality: suspended, literally, from hooks, it cannot act, but it can. think and store affects without current outputs (Massumi 2002:106).

thought process affect, and this processing may occur before, during and after the arrival of the subject. An expanded definition of thought can be considered in terms of that which the body processes, rather than as cognition. Thought, then, may involve a direct reaction from the spinal cord, may involve a preverbal flash - for example in Damasio's somatic marker theory - or may involve a deliberate and considered verbal processing of material (Damasio 1995). Connolly discusses the excess of affect and thought to consciousness: thought is *always affective*, containing an excess of affect, some of which

becomes available to consciousness as feelings and concept-imbued emotions, but other thought-imbued energies find symptomatic expression in the timbre of our voices, the calmness or intensity of our gestures, our facial expressions, the flush of our faces, the rate of our heartbeats, the receptivity, tightness, or sweatiness of our skin, and the relaxation or turmoil in our guts. Moreover the play of affect on some registers is not always entirely consonant with its play on others (Connolly 2002:75).

Aspects of thought and thinking that lie outside of and in excess to cognitive representational thinking can be considered as *embodied ways of knowing*. For example, Massumi points to proprioceptive sensing as one such way of knowing, describing proprioception as “where the infolded limits of the body meet the mind's externalised responses and where both rejoin the quasi-corporeal and the event” (Massumi 2002:59). We can also think about a *visceral* sensibility, where the enteric nervous system, the “brain in the gut”, registers affections before the brain processes into cognitive thought as another such way of knowing (Gershon 2001). Non-specific anxiety, felt in the contractions of the gut, irritable bowel syndrome and other enteric responses are all embodied ways of knowing that do not have to be a response to representational thinking. The enteric nervous system is not controlled by the brain, but contains between 200 and 600 million neurons that process affects prior to cognitive response (Furness 2006). A further example of embodied knowledge is illustrated in the “half second rule”, which suggests that skin responds to stimuli around half a second before a representational action is formulated (Libet 1996; Massumi 2002). Massumi discusses galvanic skin response as an *autonomic* response to image and preverbal representations, arguing that “intensity is embodied in purely autonomic reactions most directly manifested in the skin – at the surface of the body, at its interface with things” (Massumi 2002:25). Language and linguistic cognitive functioning operate at a different register from these autonomic ways of knowing.

This is not to suggest that the different embodied ways of thinking and knowing happen separately. Indeed we can consider them as working together in order to form a *sense of something*. The point here is that there are ways of knowing that operate before

representational thinking, and that these ways of knowing are pertinent to critical enquiry as much as is representational thought. As Massumi points out with reference to the enteric nervous system: “our body thinks with pure feeling before it acts thinkingly” (Massumi 2002:61n). Thinkers such as Massumi, Connolly and Protevi argue for sensation to be considered as a *form of thinking*, and embodied knowledge as part of an *expanded knowledge*. This perspective runs counter to those who consider affect to be unthought, and suggests that, moreover, precognitive registers as thought, are opened up to the social as much as the linguistic and cognitive registers. Sensation is

the immanent limit at which perception is eclipsed by a sheerness of experience, as yet unextended into analytically ordered, predictably reproducible, possible action ... a state in which action, perception and thought are so intensely, performatively mixed that their in mixing falls out of itself (Massumi 2002:97–8).

Connolly’s *Neuropolitics* discusses how recent research in neuroscience is moving towards an understanding of thought as *embodied* and *embedded*, in other words, of the neurological aspects of thought as already implicated in intersubjective aspects of life. He posits that

the unconscious dimension of thought is at once *immanent* in subsisting below the direct reach of consciousness, *effective* in influencing conduct on its own and also affecting conscious judgment, *material* in being embodied in neurological processes, and *cultural* in being given part of its shape by previous inscriptions of experience and new experimental interventions (Connolly 2002:84).

and asks:

What happens if we set the half-second delay not in a supersensible domain but in the corporealisation of culture and cultural inscriptions of corporeal processes? What if many messages flowing between multiple brain regions of differential capacities in the same person are too small and fast to be identified by consciousness but are, nonetheless, amenable to some degree to cultural inscription, experimental research and technical intervention? (Connolly 2002:84).⁵⁴

This statement points to a recognition that cultural inscription works not only at the level of representation, and moreover, that intersubjective regimens of power, capability and control incise deep into the presubjective affective response systems of the body. They inscribe into these neural pathways and affective systems and sculpt them in the production of particular types of bodies that have specific capacities to think. Deleuze positions thought in the “interstices, or the disjunction between seeing and speaking” (Deleuze 1988a:72). An expanded account of thinking can resonate with this, where thought is considered as a ‘middle ground’ of affect transmission, imagination, response, and feedback. Thought is multiply *layered*, yet its layerings are always infused with affective intensities and cultural inscription. Affect plays out in thinking; it moves across human and nonhuman bodies and via technologies that transmit affect – those bodies may move and be moved in

⁵⁴ The “half-second delay” refers to what was described as the “half second rule” above: the delay between a bodily reaction and the cognitive recognition of that reaction as a choice to react (Libet 1996; Massumi 2002).

cinemas, in text or in photographs too.

In addition, Connolly discusses how the work of Damasio can show how history and culture are always caught up in nonrepresentational forms of thought and experience. Damasio's somatic marker hypothesis supports Spinoza's and other Spinozists' approaches to perception and the imagination, where the production of knowledge through the imagination is considered in terms of the affective colouring of the present with the history of previous encounters. Damasio's writing is indebted to Spinoza's philosophy, suggesting that the brain produces images of possible future scenarios which operate prior to the cognitive processes through which we make representations of the world, and through which we reason. The somatic marker is involved in decision-making: we need to think about the future in order to decide what to do. In Damasio's theory, these images are always laden with affect: they flash up as intensities, and enable quick decisions to be made, without resorting to reason. They are

made of multiple imaginary scenes, not really a smooth film, but rather pictorial flashes of key images in those scenes, jump cut from one frame to another, in quick juxtapositions (Damasio 1995:170).

These markers are short cuts to action: somatic markers are not experienced as representational images, (although they may be), but nevertheless are *felt* through the body and experienced through its affective registers prior to any recognition of this feeling as emotion or as clear and logical thought process. They surface as pleasant or unpleasant gut feelings. These could be the basis for what Spinoza calls intuition, another level of reasoning which employs affective intensities to make judgments based on what 'feels right'.

Of course these images produced by the brain and manifest in the body are inseparable from the histories of bodies. Bodies learn, through primary or secondary experience, what scenarios have positive outcomes and what have negative (and of course, different bodies will experience the same scenario as positive or negative depending on their histories and inscriptions, for example, their production as gendered subjects). The future, once again, is a production and reflection of those relations that historically constitute the becoming-present of history. As Damasio points out,

Somatic markers are thus acquired by experience, under the control of an internal preference system and under the influence of an external set of circumstances which include not only entities and events with which the organism must interact, but also social conventions and ethical rules (Damasio 1995:179).

While these markers are affect-soaked – flashing up at the point of encounter such that the

encounter is backlit with affect, such as in instances of personal or collective trauma, they do not exist outside of the social and cultural. They *are* the cultural inscribed in the body, just as the social imaginary resides in the flesh. Somatic markers act alongside reason to enable the body to assess situations quickly: they refer to a virtual bank of affect that colours a moment and leads to a 'gut decision'. They rely on and are produced through the history of that body and its prior affective responses: they rely on the embodied imagination.

These nonrepresentational modes of thought carry the history of social and political relations, but also inscribe as they appear, altering the materiality of the body in their being brought forward, and working on those areas of the body that, for example, release hormones that affect wellbeing. However, a word of caution is needed here. There is a danger, when writing about affect and the embodied forms of knowledge that such theorising brings to the forefront, that those forms of knowledge are privileged as somehow superior to, more interesting, more authentic or more 'truthful' than representational knowledge. I cannot articulate too strongly that in drawing attention to these other forms of knowledge and their role in embodied life, I am not privileging what they contain as being somehow outside of relations of power. My point is the opposite: rather that *it is their very immediacy, their autonomy and their saturation with affect that makes these forms of thought so pertinent to cultural and political thought*. These forms of thought, that so easily elide representational thinking, can also elide critical and cultural theory. In cultural theory's focus on the text, it can miss how texts work *through* bodies in their affective capacities, drawing on latent memory, playing into imaginaries, flashing up markers, releasing hormones, changing body chemistry. Theory needs to address these aspects of thought as perhaps one of the most insidious means through which power is exercised. For example, Connolly discusses how "the weight of somatic markers also generates a need for tactics and techniques by which to work on them when their compressions of experience becomes too restrictive or destructive" (Connolly 2002:34-5). He is aware that the body's presubjective responses need critical analysis just as much as the linguistic content of a text. He gives the example of turning a friend away "because a racial stereotype kicks in at the possibility of intimacy" (Connolly 2002:34). Similarly, Gatens and Lloyd refer to those social imaginaries that carry with them the weight of oppressive or exclusionary politics, such as in Gatens' discussion of sexual and Aboriginal politics (Gatens 1996, 2008). It is for this reason that critical theory needs to pay attention to these deeply held forms of thinking, and recognise

their embeddedness in cultural/historical systems. Moreover, it needs to recognise the part that they play in ‘backforming’ those cultural/historical matrices. Massumi points to this in his discussion of cultural “grids,” those overlayings that organise, concretise, hypostatise and ultimately feed back into the becoming of the world (Massumi 2002:8). In the following chapter I will suggest some approaches to the interrogation of these modes of thought.

Deleuze and Guattari refer to this complex system of feeding back and forward, of becoming-social in terms of the relation between macropolitics and micropolitics. They state how

everything is political, but every politics is simultaneously a macropolitics and a micropolitics. Take aggregates of the perception or feeling type: their molar organisation, their rigid segmentarity, does not preclude the existence of an entire world of unconscious microperepts, unconscious affects, fine segmentations that grasp or experience different things, are distributed and operate differently. There is a micropolitics of perception, affection, conversation and so forth. If we consider the great binary aggregates, such as the sexes or classes, it is evident that they also cross over into molecular assemblages of a different nature, and that there is a double reciprocal dependency between them. For the two sexes imply a multiplicity of molecular combinations bringing into play not only the man in the woman and the woman in the man, but the relation of each to the animal, the plant etc.: a thousand tiny sexes (Deleuze and Guattari 1988:235).

In their distinction between mass and class (in terms of the molar and the molecular), they write how

classes are indeed fashioned from masses; they crystallise them. And masses are constantly flowing or leaking from classes. Their reciprocal presupposition, however, does not preclude a difference in viewpoint, nature, scale and function (Deleuze and Guattari 1988:235).

Micropolitics always lie beneath macropolitics; their flickers and vacillations are what allows macropolitics to exist as such... the workings beneath the surface that give rise to hypostatisations of gender, class and race relations. Micropolitics can be seen as the capillary endings that enable a macropolitics to be investigated and untangled. As an approach to thinking about the politics of affect, Bennett and Shapiro describe micropolitics thus:

To engage in micropolitics is to pay attention to the connections between affective registers and experiences and collective identities and practices. The aim is to encourage a more intentional project of reforming, refining, intensifying or disciplining the emotions, aesthetic impulses, urges and moods that enter into one’s political programs, part affiliations, ideological commitments, and policy preferences. Why work experimentally on such affections? Because to alter moods, emotions and gut feelings is ultimately, though indirectly and unpredictably, to alter one’s politics. Moods and affects energise public life: they provide the motivational resources to enact intellectual commitments or political priorities – to transform them into actualities. The claim is that politics in the broadest sense ...requires not only intellectual codes...but also an embodied sensibility that organises affects into a style that generates the impetus to enact the principles, programs and visions – or to reveal the singularities they exclude (Bennett and Shapiro 2002:5-6).

Understanding the relationship between micropolitics and macropolitics - the complex feeding forward and backwards, the affective movement and co-constitution of bodies that makes up the social - is central to this discussion of new materialist thought. My argument

is that the nonrepresentational should not be left out of critical enquiry, and moreover we need to understand the relationship between the affects and those concretions of affect and materialities that we call social and cultural forms.

Connolly's discussion of contemporary neurological research and cultural theory has the potential to illuminate the role of thought and affect in the relationship between the body and culture. In *Neuropolitics*, thought becomes the basis of politics and techniques of thought. Broadly categorised in Foucauldian terms as techniques of the self and in Deleuzian terms as micropolitics, these techniques can provide the basis for ethical praxis. A focus on thought has real potential for the rethinking of politics after the subject: his discussion of the various registers that affect and meaning resonate through and in doing so inscribe on the body, and of thought as both cultural and material has significant potential for new materialist thought.⁵⁵ Connolly argues for thought experiments as ethical processes. These experiments involve an active process of changing embodied ways of being in the world for ethical ends, often to engender different bodily states. The plasticity of mind that neuroscience encounters - the ability of neurons to remap, to move and accordingly make changes to the self as effect of bodily practices, coupled with a social view of the body as produced through its performative actions, allows - when considered alongside an expanded model of thought - for a consideration of the *role of thought* in political and ethical praxis. As such, it serves to celebrate those political theories that articulate an ethics of *technique*. Connolly lists various 'everyday' techniques through which bodies work on their thinking to change the speed, direction or intensity of thought, such as meditation, music, dance, drugs, exercise, surgery, punishment and watching films, which, when viewed as techniques in thought and therefore of self, can be considered to be concerned specifically with *attentiveness*, or what Connolly refers to as an "ethic of cultivation", involving "entanglements among thinking, virtual memory, technique, habit, mood, and sensibility"(Connolly 2002:102). The synthesis of social, phenomenological and affective models of the body are clear in the following quote:

Why press the connection between thinking and technique? Because it discloses something about thinking that might otherwise remain obscure. Thinking is not merely involved in knowing, explaining, representing, evaluating, and judging. Subsisting within these activities are the inventive and compositional dimensions of thinking. To think is to move something. And to modify a pattern of body/brain connections helps to draw a habit, a disposition to judgement, or a capacity of action into being. Thinking not only expresses our identities; it participates in composing, strengthening, and modifying them (Connolly 2002:103).

⁵⁵ Unfortunately, in Connolly's quasi-evangelical zeal for a new politics of "democratic pluralism" and "nontheistic gratitude", the latter part of this volume becomes focused on pursuing a specific political agenda and could be considered more as a treatise for a semi-theology.

Protevi's discussion of the Columbine shootings addresses the ways in which bodies that are prepared to kill – whose capacities to be affected by killing are weakened – can be produced through particular techniques and technologies, such as those adopted in military training. He describes corporeal techniques to “lower the intensity of the act of killing so that, in most cases, it falls below the threshold that would inhibit close-range killing with the hand by untrained agents”: practices of deintensification through repetition, teamwork, linguistic devices of dehumanisation, but also the charging of intensity at certain points in the production of rage (Protevi 2009:151). In focusing on techniques and technologies involved in the manipulation of intensity, this sort of analysis is useful for thinking outside of the subject:

In these cases the practical agent of the act of killing is not the individual person or subject but the emergent assemblage of military unit and nonsubjective reflex or equally nonsubjective affect program (Protevi 2009:153).

Techniques of “read and react” involve the bypassing of the subject through training – embedding reflexes to kill within the spinal cord of the soldier. While these examples are all documented ways in which military bodies are produced, a Spinozist lens leads to a consideration of the technologies of production of affective bodies that bypass the subject, or at least are able to *arrest* the subject for a necessary period.

New research into embodiment, particularly that coming from the ‘new materialists’ outlined above, attempts to provide crossing points between phenomenological approaches that universalise the embodied self, such that the different capacities for bodies to act are underplayed and ignored, and those approaches that situate cultural life outside of the body, severing textual life from the body and in doing so denying the materiality of culture. This is evident in recent conversations between cultural theory and neuroscience, in the resurgence of interest in Spinoza, James and Bergson, in Deleuzian approaches, in postphenomenology and through materialist feminists such as Gatens, Grosz, Berlant and Stewart (e.g. Grosz 1994; Gatens 1996; Berlant 2000; Stewart 2007). These approaches recognise the *layering* of culture, its ingress into the deepest recesses of what once were considered culture's outside, the plasticity of the body and above all the contingency of everything that once was considered natural. The specific confluence of postphenomenological and poststructuralist approaches enables this type of thinking to emerge. The next section considers how these materialist modes of enquiry can inform a discussion of materiality and spatiality in the social sciences, and elaborates on the way in

which critical cultural theory can attend to these materialist forms of thinking the social, and specifically to the relationship between the body, space and the text.

New materialities and spatialities

Through new materialist thought, materiality and spatiality can be reconsidered and discussed in terms of their relationship with the *affective body*, and through the human embodied capacities of dreaming and imagination. Affect, as we have seen, is central to a materialist politics of the subject, and through an exploration of recent philosophical engagements with materiality and post-humanist or post-phenomenological ontology it is possible to rethink materialism and spatiality through the lens of affect. I suggest that, in terms of an epistemological concern to find a social science that can deal with the deconstruction of the subject, the subject needs to resurface as a *decentred* site, a site *through* which to explore the affective webs of relation that give shape to lives, and through which sense is made of lives lived. In repositioning the subject at a decentred centre,⁵⁶ it becomes, through an expanded definition of thought, a catalyst for knowledge production, insofar as those materialities of affect flow through it and surface at its limits, allowing for a mode of attending to situations that takes into account the way in which the world is *imagined* and dreamed, and moreover, locates those dreams and imaginaries not in opposition to a real or a material world, but as *part of* that field – as “the condition of there being a real for us” (Lennon 2004:107).

Several recent geographical and archaeological debates have concerned themselves with the idea of materiality. In geography this has been linked to an attempt to turn back from a certain notion of the cultural, from a focus on the symbolic or the theoretical towards a concern with stuff, with economic relations, with politics. In archaeology, this has concerned itself more with a broadening of what counts as material culture, a materialising of the immaterial (Ingold 2007; Knappett 2007; Miller 2007; Nilsson 2007; Tilley 2007). What this means is that the debate on materiality has in both disciplines concerned itself with an assumption that the material is about the solid, the tangible, whether in terms of a moving away from that assumption (archaeology) or a desire to return to it (human geography). The association of materiality with solidity remains with the sign ‘materiality’, even as

⁵⁶ The term ‘decentred centre’ refers to the subject as focus of scholarly enquiry in this particular thesis, without suggesting that the subject *should* be at the centre of enquiry. The subject is the centre point that I have chosen since this is where my interests lie.

ontologies of the virtual, the spectral and the potential signal a move away from it. This association with solidity is the unsaid assumption behind much discussion of materiality.

In some of these archaeological and geographical considerations of materiality, a crucial element is missing – the body. In archaeology this may be an inevitability of dealing with and trying to attest for bodily absence through material culture, what Sørensen and Harris (2009) call the “archaeological condition”: the fact that “archaeology is forced to study societies through their material culture and to take the things of the world seriously in their own right” (Sørensen and Harris 2009). I would suggest that, as a result of this condition, the archaeological manoeuvre requires the absent body to be reinstated as a *spectral* body in order to move into a reconsideration of materialism which positions the body as point of encounter. If we attend to what things do to bodies and what bodies do to things, a relational perspective that uses the subject as a point of departure and arrival (because it has to begin and end somewhere) will elucidate other material and affective relations.

Against Ingold’s assertion that the ruminations of philosophers are abstract, and surrounded by a “language of gross impenetrability” (Ingold 2007:2), a consideration of certain key philosophers is vital in considering not only what is at stake in a discussion of materiality, but also in terms of the academic knowledge gained from an engagement with material culture and the material world. It is for this reason that I move towards a reconsideration of the material as an interrogation of the notion of the material world that goes beyond a debate between idealism and realism, and towards an understanding of the material that *incorporates* rather than separates bodies from the material: an approach to materiality in terms of bodily affect. The centre as locus of enquiry could, of course, be placed anywhere, but it is placed here as the body-space – the spatialities and temporalities produced through the subject’s encounter with the world: an encounter which constitutes the subject as such. This opens up the possibility of attending to subjectivity through a ‘sidelong glance’ – through an oblique displacement and decentering which enables thinking about what affects move through the subject and what outputs emerge from the embodied subject’s processing of affect in its role as transducer of affects (see above).

A focus on the material relations between things can be supplemented through a thinking of the capacities of bodies and things, and by an ontology of the virtual, which occupies a

spectral presence in every action, in the momentary becoming of the world (Massumi 2002). This requires an *expanded* materiality, and one that, rather than being deadened through an association with the inanimate and the solid, is based on animating and enlivening capacities of relations between bodies and worlds, a point made by Anderson and Wylie when they discuss how “The question of materiality...far exceeds any invocation of ground or physicality” (Anderson and Wylie 2009:319). There is a need, then, to think instead in terms of a “material imagination that enables us to be *thoroughly materialist*” (Anderson and Wylie 2009:319). A “thoroughly materialist” perspective resituates geographies of affect in closer alliance with social and political geographies. It draws attention to the production of bodies that feel and move and act in certain ways. Gender, class and power affect bodies, and they are felt as such and imagined as if they exist. The tortured body and the torturer feel and enact the relations which give rise to the institutionalisation of torture and the forces between bodies that led to the act. The gendered body feels masculine or feminine, or both, and relates in particular ways to gendered performance; this feeds back into the grids that “back-form reality” – that “emerge and feed back into the process from which they arose” (Massumi 2002:8) in retroduction – a production by feedback. Equally, the marking out and naming of a space is retroduction – cultural forms back-formed from a continual process of ontogenesis and becoming – the “becoming cultural of nature” (Massumi 2002:10).

These possibilities, the circuits that flow through bodies and spaces, allow a very specific engagement with the idea of materiality. The body in space can be a position of enquiry in order to consider how forces are made visible in their effects. The body, as a conduit for affect, is a medium through which forces flow, but also one which, through its capacity to dream, to imagine, to synthesise, is able to alter the trajectories of some forces. Massumi’s discussion of domestic violence and TV football in the USA considers the event of the incursion of the screened football match into the home in terms of the transmission and circulation of affect. Based on statistical evidence that incidences of domestic violence increase during and after ‘Superbowl Sunday’, Massumi analyses the flow of affect that would ‘actualise’ in these statistics. He suggests that the TV event-space enters the home, revisioning domestic space as porous. As a “regime of sign circulation – the delivery, absorption, and relay of sounds, words, and visions – the home is a node in a circulatory network of many dimensions” (Massumi 2002:85), or a node in an extended field of immanence. Technologies of transmission give this node materiality and substance through

their affective resonance, which may then transfer between bodies as aggression, fear, pain, guilt. John Protevi, too, writes of the space of the family kitchen as a “second order body politic”... as a “distribution node for affectively charged material flows” (Protevi 2009:38). In doing so, he suggests that the milieu, the space around the body is tied into the affective flows that produce specific macropolitical relations.

The concept of the event-space allows us to consider the event of discursive reading as an object of enquiry rather than the text itself. In effect, this enables a rematerialisation of the text through affect, through what it does to bodies at the point of encounter. Images, then, can be thought of as image-events – they can not be considered outside of the moment through which the subject inputs/outputs the text. In this way, a focus on affect demands a focus on the *encounter*. Just as the content of a sealed letter is not available for analysis other than as a site of indeterminacy, a sort of Schroedinger’s cat for cultural inquiry, neither is the image material for the purpose of this conceptualisation outside of the encounter of the image-event. The image becomes active in its reading, in its processing with other images, with other bodies – it is in the body as dream-machine that the image-event occurs – in its visuality, in its recalling in memory, in the imprint it leaves on the body in relation to other image-events that similarly imprint on the body, in the way in which that body impacts on other bodies through its processing of the image-event, through the embodied imagination and the capacities of the body to be imbricated in and produce imaginaries.

The event-space and the new cultural materialism that it implies can also lead to a way of interrogating subjectivity, through thinking about the forces that produce the surface effect of the subject. It can provide a new position from which to see what is going on, through thinking of inputs and outputs, the processing of these through dreams and imaginaries, the body as machinic entity converting from digital to analogue, storing affect and bringing them into presence through dreams, practices, imaginings and memory that are part of bodily becoming and inscription. Attention to the body and the way in which forces play through bodies, then, leads to a rethinking of spatiality, proximity and materiality. For example, Benjamin’s seminal paper on the work of art discusses how the aura, that which gave the original work its ‘weightiness,’ existed as a “strange tissue of space and time: the unique apparition of a distance, however near it may be” (Benjamin 2002:104-5). He writes of the aura as being accessible from a “mountain range on the horizon or a branch that casts

its shadow on the beholder”. The ‘distance’ achieved by the aura of the work of art cannot be overcome by physical proximity. An interweaving of time and space occurs, so that far and near become irrelevant. So for Benjamin, proximity in terms of the distance in space had little effect on the spacing of the aura, which, in its ability to affect the spectator enfolded notions of distance and proximity into an auratic distancing.

Similarly, the space of the screen as a transmitter of affect offers an example of how a focus on affect can resituate and redefine spatialised relations. New affective spaces can emerge between technologies of transmission and bodies – a level of materiality whereby space is created between bodies and screens in terms of the ways in which these technologies and bodies play off each other. James Ash points out that the space of the computer game screen affects and inscribes on the body’s materiality through the scoring of new neural pathways which encourage a different way of engaging with space and with the world (Ash 2009). The body-space of the game screen then has a potential to insert itself into other spaces – through how a body relates to another body or how a body imagines itself and moves in an urban environment. These transmissions, which we might consider in terms of conversions from digital to analogue, where the body is an analogue device, processing inputs in terms of difference rather than binary,⁵⁷ inscribe onto bodies and bodies inscribe onto other bodies. The idea of the body in process, of the body as a site of inscription and becoming through technologies and regimes of representation and power is not new to students of Foucault, Butler and Bourdieu, for whom the act of performing is performative of particular types of body and particular body habits. However, here is a means of dealing with the performative becoming of the body subject through a sidelong glimpse, through a focus on the event of the body-space, enabled by Spinozist and posthumanist thought, which decentres the subject, refocuses the lens to close up, and in doing so *enables the processes of the subject to be exposed*.

Denise Riley’s writing on language argues for the consideration of language *as* affect, calling for a directly embodied reading of the performative capacities of language. As such she formulates a theory of language that relies for its power on the critique of the subject and of internalisation, which she discusses through the work of Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe, along with Merleau-Ponty. In particular, her essay “The Right to Be Lonely”

⁵⁷ See “On the superiority of the analog” in Massumi (2002) for a detailed discussion of the analogue.

involves an extended critique of the internalised subject, giving an account of language that penetrates the flesh, that enfleshes the world and which in its actions produces specific types of embodied subjectivity. This argument for the embodied materiality of language, while clearly similar to that of Butler, goes further in describing the performativities of language through their inscription. For Riley, “language goes with us into the house”, and moreover, “language is already waiting in the house, too (Riley 2005:53). Language and its incorporation troubles the limits of the body, since it resides in and outside of the body. It is materialised by what it *does* to bodies, and what bodies do in its name: “there is a forcible affect of language which courses like blood through its speakers” (Riley 2005:1).

In Siri Hustvedt’s novel , *Sorrows of an American*, the relationship of language to embodiment is discussed thus:

That is the strangeness of language. It crosses the boundaries of the body, is at once inside and outside, and it sometimes happens that we don’t notice the threshold has been crossed (Hustvedt 2008:17).

Riley’s essay “Malediction”, provides a clear analysis of the power of words to bruise, to penetrate, to be felt in the body, writing how “in its violently emotional materiality, the word is indeed made flesh and dwells amongst us” (Riley 2005:9). Referring to trauma and to recent work in trauma studies, she suggests that violent words “resonate within their target for decades after the occasion on which they were weapons” (Riley 2005:10) – their anamnesiac ability to remain painful after so long, to be held in the memory and reawakened in the body as felt pain or unease is testament to the materiality of language and its embodied effects. For Riley, language can operate *as* affect, not just as a vehicle for affect, coursing through and between bodies, sometimes unregistered until later, and “is impersonal: its working through and across us is indifferent to us, yet in the same blow it constitutes the fiber of the personal” (Riley 2005:1). As she notes, “a form of speaking is a form of feeling” – it is impossible to void words of what they do – their ‘thingness’. For Riley, words are objects that act, that bring about changes – that affect. An utterance can jar the body, can make the gut contort in fear, or horror, or dread, or jealousy. The affect that language has on the body makes the distinction between signifier and signified unimportant: the signifier/signified is one in its materiality, in terms of a more direct force – the word made flesh, dissolves those distinctions and leads to a new materialist semiotics where language is “robust, and fat with history” (Riley 2005:7).

This approach to culture considers the affective materialities not just of other bodies but of texts, and signifying systems. Spinoza insists on the relational capacities of the imagination,

and of the idea as produced through body sensation. To grant what causes that sensation materiality is to recognize its material effect on bodies. Riley places language both inside and outside the subject, in a transsubjective space as an “outward unconscious which hovers between people, rather than swimming upward from the privacy of each heart” (Riley 2005:4). Language is not abstract; it *penetrates* being.

A return to the human

This focus on bodies and spaces necessitates a move away from the ‘post-human’ sensibilities of some recent social theory and towards a focus on the subject, albeit from a displaced ‘sidelong glance’ which is offered to the scholar through the decentring of the subject as a result of this move - a tentative return to the human which denies the possibility of a return to humanist philosophy or an unproblematic application of the term ‘human’.

As we have seen, the impact of the Foucauldian and Deleuzian critique of the subject and of poststructural literary theory which takes apart the possibility of originary subjectivity and the authoritative voice of the subject have fractured the self and exposed the subject as an effect of various technologies and discourses and performativities (for example, Foucault 1983; Deleuze 1988a; Deleuze and Guattari 1988; Foucault 1992, 2005). However, recent philosophical arguments have further attempted to move away from the human as centre of ethical, ontological and epistemological enquiry, for example through Actor-Network Theory (e.g. Law and Hassard 1999; Latour 2005), through poststructuralism, through the idea of the cyborg and the post-human and through engagements with non-humans (e.g. Calarco 2008; Haraway 2008) through a postphenomenological encounter with objects that demand (Lingis 1998; Wylie 2002, 2007a), as well as through recent tentative forays into what has come to be known as speculative realism, especially the object-oriented panpsychism of Graham Harman (Harman 2004, 2009) and the post-humanist, post vitalism of Meillassoux and Brassier (Brassier 2007; Meillassoux 2008). These disparate projects have all had the effect of exposing the human-centrism of social science: the ‘humanities’ have displaced the human subject in favour of distributed networks and a questioning of what it actually means to be human.

These recent movements towards a post-humanism and post-phenomenology have been effective in decentring the human subject, and enabled new perspectives on the relations

between materialities. However, I still consider a focus on the human subject to be a useful way of exploring the intricacies of a distributed network, and moreover, a rethinking of materialism through the body-subject's material relations with the world brings back to social science a certain ethics of the human which has perhaps been sidelined by a focus on the post-human. I do not think that a return to the human subject is incongruent with any of these perspectives. On the contrary, the destabilising of the human as the centre is perhaps a Copernican necessity. Equally, the crux of my argument *relies* on an understanding of the subject in terms of momentary effects and concretisations of relations of power, desire, affect and discourse – an understanding which can only proceed via a questioning, deconstructing and destabilising of the human subject. Rather, I propose that a social science needs to remain just that – *social*. Questions of ontology and epistemology are central to an understanding of how we imagine the social, and the type of lens we use in order to interrogate the social. However, the task of the social scientist is not necessarily to ask *what is...* this is the task of the physicist and the philosopher. Our task as social scientists is to identify points or fields within the totality of the social world from which to gain some kind of purchase, some kind of grasp or ingress into *what is at work*. Our task is to identify strategic points within the game from which to pay attention. The possibility of an outside from which to observe has been closed off by the deconstructive project, and rather than viewing this as an impasse to radical social science, this needs to be considered as an *opportunity* to alter how we conceive of the social but also how we conceive of social science, and moreover to explore new ways of attending to the idea of the social.

In turning towards a discussion of materiality, I propose an *expanded* materialism based on the relationship between the body and its affects. This involves a thinking of the subject through the human's capacity to affect and to be affected, but also to synthesise affects through thought, dreaming and the imagination. This understanding of subject as an effect of the body as dreaming machine allows for a materialised account of embodied experience that *necessarily* incorporates the imagination. I argue for a *re*-placing of the subject *after* the post-humanist displacements that help us to understand those centrist discourses that lead us to place her at the centre. In other words, to come back to the subject after recognising that in a distributed network, there is no centre, there are only locations, and sites from which to enquire. Although the social does indeed comprise of “the nervous system, hormones, hands, love letters, screens, crowds, money” (Anderson and Harrison 2006:334), it is only at the interface between situated subjects and those letters and screens that affects

surface, or through their recollection in other space-times. In other words, a focus on the object is not useful to social science outside of a focus on the worlds produced through subjectification and objectification that material affects and the body subject bring about. Spaces of affect can be considered in terms of encounters between spaces and the bodies of situated subjects. Through the embodied encounter, places and landscapes are tied to dreams, imaginaries and other affects. Dreams of escape, dreams of a simple life, or of a finished life are given substance in their incorporation in imaginaries of particular landscapes. Affects are considered here as trans-human, as relational, yet surfacing in and through the embodied encounter. This rethinking of space enables a rethinking of the spatialities of that which affects bodies, and in doing so, leads to new domains for a critical politics, a point made by Woodward and Lea:

thinking from the viewpoint of the forceful assemblage of interacting bodies challenges and even reframes many of the relations we are often inclined to take as given or normal, lending further political dimensions, for example, to the presence of armed police at protests, the nature of private property, the chemical manipulation of food products, and so on (Woodward and Lea 2009:26).

Conclusion: the materiality of the text

In the previous chapter I offered an account of Spinoza's philosophy of substance and his theory of knowledge. In doing so I set out the foundations for thinking about the embodied imagination, based on the associative capacities of bodies in relation to other bodies and to the history of their own affects. As such, social imaginaries, as ideas shared and communicated between bodies, saturated with affect and shaped by embodied encounters with other bodies, texts and other materialities, resonating in dream and imagination, become a way in which to conceptualise the affective power of texts and images. My assertion that social imaginaries, as the process through which ideas of places, spaces, bodies and things emerge in the body and travel between bodies, are involved in the act of perception, have here become laid deeper into the precognitive matrices of the body prior to language. Bodies make affective investments in social imaginaries. They draw on them in making sense, in intensifying experience, in judging, in every encounter. As such, the social imaginary is that which is inscribed on the body, but also that which can be worked on and through in the course of managing affects. I have argued that a Spinozist ontology is useful for cultural theory, and in this chapter I have demonstrated how recent work on Spinoza and work that is filtered through a Spinozist lens has much to offer cultural materialism in its 'thoroughly materialist' incarnation. I now turn to how this thoroughly materialist approach can shed light on the relationship between the body and the text such that the text is

‘rematerialised’ in its conceptualisation.

A focus on materiality and the body is increasingly important to cultural inquiry in considering the relationship between bodies and media and communications technologies, where presence may take the form of something not seen as material in its taken for granted understanding of that which has a tangibility, a solidity. For example, I argue that there is an increasing need to consider the materiality of the image-space. In arguing for the materiality of ideas and of the textual, I suggest that one way in which we can make sense of social science after the deconstructive project is by employing a broader understanding of the material world, which incorporates the text in materialities of bodies and worlds, rather than positioning them in a separate ‘symbolic’ or ‘discursive’ realm. Butler has attempted to do this in thinking of the body as a political site yet a site of *indeterminacy* (Butler 2006). This can take place through an understanding of ideas and language as being embodied through their affects, through the way in which the affective subject relates to, feels, responds to and acts through the imaginaries, ideas and symbolic structures which have for too long been consigned to a realm of immateriality and divorced from the bodily encounters through which they are materialised and enlivened.

Brian Massumi writes that “affect holds the key to postmodern power after ideology” (Massumi, 2002:42). A Spinozist account of affect allows us to consider the text in terms of a body modification – as that which inscribes onto the body, leaves trace in memory and is shot through with affect at the point of encounter. As such, it offers insight into the ways in which affects move through bodies. Ideas about people, places, events emerge through the modifications of the body produced not only by immersion in a world of other bodies, but by the body’s relation with its own historical encounters with screens, graffiti, images, books – these all modify bodies and as such need to be understood as productive of the flow of affect between and through bodies. These affective materialities that produce particular ideas and imaginaries derive their power precisely from the way in which they inscribe themselves into bodies, through the body’s capacity to imagine, linking in with other networks of ideas and bodily modifications to augment their capacities to affect.

If we are to argue that bodies are produced through regimes and technologies of practice, and that the text is central to the understanding of our constitution as subjects, then it

follows that what happens when a text is read is a particular encounter of subject and text, and cannot be approached through the text alone. Where ideological critique has tended to focus on textual analysis, I am arguing for a more expanded analysis of the text – an analysis of the point of encounter. The critique of ideology has been criticised for its assumption that the text can reveal a deeper truth that lies beneath the veil of ideology, and Foucauldian discourse analysis can move beyond that in returning to the productive relationship between power and the text insofar as the text is considered as central to the productions of particular and contingent subjectivities. However, the Spinozist materialism that I advocate, whereby the affections of materialities onto the materialities of the body, experienced through the attribute of thought, discount any reading of the text as divorced from its power to affect the body and of the effect that that encounter then has with other embodied encounters. The text is therefore situated as another materiality that affects the body, alongside the TV screen, the bullet, the pet dog, the rain. Texts affect the body through signifying systems, of course, but then so does everything else – we understand the world through these languages, these languages that are produced in our bodies through our experience of past encounters with those systems that we read as signifying.

In this chapter I have attempted to build on the discussion of Spinoza in chapter three and of the body in chapter two to consider how attention to the materiality of thought can enable new ways of thinking about the relationship between bodies and spaces. A focus on affect can displace a subject-centred gaze, but also provide new modes of attending to spaces and bodies, and to the text itself. I have discussed how in adopting a postsubjective stance it is possible to consider new formations of culture and experience, and moreover, to provide new insights into the sociality of the body and its interest to thinkers as a site for a postfoundational political theory. In particular, I have argued that those nonrepresentational aspects of thought are central to the ongoing production of the social body, and moreover that these aspects of thought need to be analysed as much as those more representational concerns. Through the concept of affect, I have argued that social scientists can trace affective flows and in doing so reveal what may be going on that may not necessarily be visible. This focus, I have argued, necessitates a consideration of the object of social science, and I suggest that, despite moves away from the concept of the human, the human is still a viable object of study and argue for its retention, albeit from a displaced perspective. Finally, I have argued for the materialism of the text, through a consideration of the way in which texts and bodies are imbricated in constantly reproducing relations that have material

effects on both human and non-human bodies. Texts need to be considered in terms of their relations with bodies, this in turn leads to a rethinking of spatialities, which, when considered in terms of affective relations, can be reconfigured.

In the next chapter, I attempt to set out how some of the concepts explored in this chapter can be developed into a model for critical inquiry. As such, I draw upon the arguments contained within this and the previous chapter in order to consider how they may be incorporated into a politics of affect, and explore how some of these ideas can be taken forward in adopting an approach that uses the ways of thinking set out in this chapter to open up new horizons for the interrogation of subjectivity, affect and the imagination.

Chapter 5: Interlude

This section marks the middle point in the thesis – and in doing so offers a chance to consider what has gone before and how this will influence what comes after.

The story so far

Past chapters have moved towards a particular way of thinking about embodiment and experience that relies on a refusal of an origin or foundation. In chapter two, through a substantial review of sociological and philosophical thinking about the body and embodiment, I set up some problematics through which to explore a materialist politics of experience and of the subject. These included the question of bodily difference and the production of subjectivity and the lived body as the site of the social. These questions then led to a consideration of how experience is shaped by and shapes the material relations through which forms of life are produced. By taking a ‘step back’ in the third chapter, via a consideration of Spinoza’s philosophy, I was then able to formulate the concept of the embodied imagination as a way of considering how some of these questions can be approached. Chapter four then elaborated on the concept of affect as central to this approach, and argued for a cultural theory based on the way in which flows of affect produce subjects and worlds and tie them into particular social relations. It further discussed how engagement with ‘new materialist’ thinkers, influenced by Spinoza, can enable a reconsideration of the relationship between practice and thought, and between bodies and texts. I argued that this can provide the basis for a political theory and praxis which is itself “thoroughly materialist”. This ‘interlude’ explores some approaches to how these materialist ideas may be mobilised in the second half of the thesis to further elucidate some of the relationships between embodiment and the social discussed previously.

My approach is explicitly concerned with an exploration of what Stewart calls the “affective subject”, described as “a collection of trajectories and circuits” (Stewart 2007:59): the subject as an unstable, momentary concretion emerging out of an ontology of raw sociality shot through with vectors and planes of power in the form of capacities to affect. Just as the effect of a stable sexuality or of a stable self emerges from practice and from particular techniques and technologies, as Foucault has shown, so body-subjects need to be seen as concretions through which we come to know the world as a

fabulation that enfolds the intensities it finds itself in. It fashions itself out of movements and situations that are surprising, compelled by something new, or buried in layers of habit (Stewart 2007:58).

The self, in this context

exists, obliquely, in dreams of disappearing, of winning or being done with it all. Forms of attention and attachment keep it moving: the hypervigilance, the denial, the distraction, the sensory games of all sorts, the vaguely felt promise that something is happening, the constant half-searching for an escape route (Stewart 2007:58).

My discussion of imagination, affect and embodiment is made possible by those ways of thinking engendered by deconstruction, and the resulting dissolution of those fixities of subject and object, mind and body, nature and culture. In destabilising the subject, it is positioned by deconstruction as a fragile effect of those attempts at hypostatisation that are part of the making of sense, inflected through with various differentials of power and capacity that produce subjects and objects in their haecceity. Poststructuralism invites a divided, alienated subjectivity, a play of shadows, a surface effect that betrays its originary alienation and veers towards an ontology without borders. Butler's reconfiguration of subjectivity as produced through its own repetition, Derrida's unravelling of language and philosophy and of anything approaching a centre, and Foucault and Deleuze's postfoundational thinking have given rise to a mode of thought which, through its positioning of an aporetic centre, attempts to work *around* that centre, to focus its energies on techniques of hypostatisation, a mode of thought which refuses to position an axiomatic centre.

By thinking Spinoza alongside a Foucauldian hermeneutics of the subject (such as that explored in chapter two) we can form a political account of affect that recognises its centrality to the production of experience. In particular, I am interested in the way in which collective understandings arise through the affective materialities of bodies, but also in the way in which a focus on affect reinvigorates cultural theory. The idea of the embodied imagination can help us to think about what Deleuze calls the "interstice between seeing and speaking" and the production of subjectivities as surface effects or illusions (Deleuze 1988a:72). It is in the feeling body that the deepest levels of subjectivation make themselves known; where our bodies *reveal*. So I want to show how a focus on the non- or more than representational can help us to consider the way in which bodies, through their precognitive responses to situations, can *expose their sociality*.

In order to do this, I wish to produce an analytic of experience that refuses to retreat to the phenomenological. It is an attempt to situate experience in the production of experiential fields which lie outside of the subject, yet are accessed by bodies through the attribute of thought. The critique of humanism and of phenomenology offered through continental philosophy can open up opportunities to think about experience from a transindividual perspective: from a position whereby it can no longer be considered to be owned by or contained within a subject, but rather produced through relations between bodies, texts and spaces that structure experience in particular ways and in terms of particular political rationalities.

In chapter 4 I discussed the concept of the “sidelong glance”, as an oblique position from which to attend to various research problematics. This term focuses the attention of the researcher on the object of research as it is imbricated in and produced through relations that include other bodies, texts and spaces. In other words, it positions the object of enquiry at a displaced centre – a centre that does not suggest a point of origin or authority, yet recognises that this is what we are interested in right now. The sidelong glance is a way of thinking about social science after the critique of the subject and after posthumanism, an approach that recognises that objects of social scientific enquiry such as the subject, the human and the body are not originary, nor are they uncontested as categories, yet nevertheless they are important and interesting insofar as they are produced as effects of the material regimes through which they come into play with the world. In this way, the sideways glance becomes useful for a deconstructive “pulling apart” of that which seems natural, given its originary premise that the object of enquiry is neither foundational, determinate nor wholly present, and moreover that is the critique of presence and determinacy which informs the

mode of attending. Where this approach differs, I suggest, from other forms of relational thinking such as those descriptive accounts offered by Actor-Network-based analysis is the desire to go beyond description of relation alone – the incorporation of critique at the heart of analysis which is central to the deconstructive project. In the second half of the thesis, this displaced mode of attending to the world is adopted as a means of approaching inquiry from a position that acknowledges the imbrication of subject and object in relations of force and productive power, and recognises that the positions of the subject and object are also produced through those relations. While similar to a standard “positionality” approach, where the researcher’s position within grids of gender and class, for example, is made explicit, this approach is informed by a deconstructive project and as such aims to recognise the very contingency of the ways in which subjects and objects come to be known as such, and moreover, attempts to consider its objects as effects of productive processes. In shifting the view from the properties of an object itself towards a consideration of how it comes to be thought and known as such, this approach can perhaps avoid falling into too many foundationalist traps.

The first part of this thesis has also traced a personal intellectual journey – an extended thought project which has had a profound effect on my thinking and on my personal relationship with the world. It is for this reason that the next section of the thesis takes the form that it does. I agree with Deleuze and Massumi that concepts as developed should not be ‘applied’. It is, under this epistemology, the *application* of concepts that does violence to the representation of the object of enquiry. In the next part of the thesis, examples are used and discussed in order to explore the extent to which these approaches are effective

ways of thinking about bodies, materiality and experience and of relating to the world, such that a new politics of the body can be opened out, and new depths of the social can be trawled.

Exemplars and theory

The approach I take in the next few chapters adopts what I refer to as an exemplar method. Within this method, texts (in the wider sense of the word – to include interview transcripts and ethnographic fieldwork notes) are considered as *exemplars*. This approach is adapted from the work of Giorgio Agamben and Brian Massumi, and refers to the use of material in its *singularity* in order to work with concepts and ideas: the exemplar allows for theory to be worked through – a process of expanding, contracting and detailing – but not as an *application* of theory. Rather, it comprises *doing theory*. Massumi writes: “The first rule of thumb if you want to invent or reinvent concepts is simple: don't apply them” (Massumi 2002:17). The example works through ideas without recourse to thinking their generality or particularity, but rather their singularity. For Giorgio Agamben, the example allows for “pure singularities [that] communicate only in the empty space of the example, without being tied by any common property, by any identity” (Agamben 1993a:10-11). The example stands alongside of, rather than in the place of what it discusses. Massumi suggests using examples to work through concepts:

the activity of the example will transmit to the concept, more or less violently. The concept will start to deviate under the force. Let it. Then reconnect it to other concepts, drawn from other systems, until a whole new system of connection starts to form. Then... take another example. See what happens (Massumi 2002:19).

This thesis experiments with the exemplar method – taking examples, working with them, tying concepts together, thinking them through until they buckle or hold. It is the outcome of thinking that has involved more than just these examples, that has drawn on fieldwork practice, textual encounters, discussion and writing. The writing out of the examples in the next part of the thesis, however, do not illustrate this approach insofar as they show the working through of the example as a conceptual process. Instead, they are mobilised in terms of the way in which they can elucidate and illuminate the concepts set out in the first half of the thesis. However, the thought processes undertaken through the logic of the exemplar are what led to these examples being used, and are part of the ongoing production and development of thought through embodied activity through which this work has been produced. In other words, the

process of working with examples became part of working with concepts in the formation of ideas. The way in which the examples “fit” with the concepts discussed is as a result of the ongoing process of conceptual reworking through a reflexively materialist approach to fieldwork, whereby the conceptual terrain and arguments emerged from an embodied engagement with the world through which examples were worked through. (I use examples and exemplars interchangeably here, exemplar being the term used by Agamben, and example by Massumi to mean the same thing). In this way, the examples and illustrations discussed in the second half of the thesis should not be seen as a straightforward application of concepts, but more about the selection of moments, encounters and evidence that illustrates and communicates the theoretical arguments discussed in the thesis that have emerged through the process of working with examples in the course of the formulation of concepts.

In the process of working through these exemplars, my own embodied imagination was involved through their comparison and negotiation with personal memories, reflexive experiences, other textual encounters and in countless discussions and reflections. This approach to doing research refuses to separate out the theoretical from the empirical. During the course of writing and thinking, I have consistently come up against problems when trying to treat these as though they are separate: as though one can come up with ideas and concepts and then demonstrate how they work with recourse to an example, which can then be held up as the theory ‘as applied to the real world’. Theory as a mode of thought and writing is no more ‘abstract’ than any other. It is tied to embodied experience and perception as much as a descriptive account. Theory always involves engagement with the world, and the world, of course, includes theoretical texts. This approach is driven by a desire to promote the possibility of *research as thought and practice* – of research as the process of thinking and doing and doing without thinking – the body as the conduit and catalyst for these capacities of thought, yet also as that which attempts to uncoil them and write them through. The examples I use in the next few chapters make use of various types of ‘data’, and through writing them I attempt to show their complexity. The examples become expanded – they are thrown open in a revealing of the interplay of materialities, forces and capacities that participate in their ongoing production as experiential fields. At the end of this chapter I suggest some possibilities for thinking experience in this way,

through techniques of thought and modes of attending and writing which I pursue in the following chapters.

The problem of writing

When attempting to write that which appears outside of the representational, the barrier of reverting to the representational can never be overcome. Indeed, to attempt to come up with some sort of solution to this problem is futile. The question needs to be abandoned, in favour of a mode of writing that attempts to accept the impasse, accept that the excess of the world can never be accessed by experience, and any attempt to write experience will always reduce. It is possible, however, to ask questions, to write in such a way as to attempt to communicate experience to others, to hold strong to one's desire to move outside of the subjective frame and refuse to describe situations in these terms. Another problem particularly pertinent to this endeavour is the question of how to write experience without reverting to the personal, without describing situations in subjective or objective terms. In refusing the subject as origin of experience, a problematic is immediately encountered: how to write a deconstructive politics of experience and describe what is at work through the example, without reverting to the conventions of subjective description. Experiments in writing, such as those of Hélène Cixous, are one way of approaching this problem (e.g. Cixous 1998). Rather than adopt this mode of writing, I have adopted a mode of representation where examples are written alongside theory in the hope that the reader is able to think about how the situation described in the text can be interpreted through the theoretical lens that I am offering. In this way, the writing through of the example is not definitive. It asks questions of the reader, in the hope that the journey of thought undertaken by the reader in thinking through the example in the light of the rest of the discussion will reveal more than an explanatory text.

Writing is never an act of closure, of description and resolution – it asks more questions than it answers. Texts are vehicles of indeterminacy – they refuse and circle around meaning and presence (Derrida 1976, 1978, 1982). I take comfort and inspiration here from an interview with Michel Foucault, where he discusses his books as “experience books” (Foucault 2002): where the reading of a text is considered as a technique through which experience is produced. The book becomes a *technology of experience* rather than that which provides information – moving away from the author-text-reader model towards a model

through which experience flows, is stored in technology and surfaces through the experiential encounter (this notion of technologies of storage and of the production of experience will be returned to, and attended to in terms of the argument in chapter eight of this thesis). Foucault discusses those writers on experience who are interested in its function of “wrenching the subject from itself” (Foucault 2002:241) – through the idea of a *limit experience* – for example in the work of Blanchot, Bataille and Nietzsche. In thinking experience in these terms, he describes his books as “direct experiences aimed at pulling myself free of myself, and preventing me from being the same” (Foucault 2002:242), and later as

to construct myself, and to invite others to share and experience of what we are, not only our past but also our present, an experience of our modernity in such a way that we might come out of it transformed. Which means that at the end of a book we would establish new relationships with the subject at issue: the I who wrote the book and those who have read it would have a different relationship with madness, with its contemporary status, and its history in the modern world (Foucault 2002:242).

In other words, the text functions not in terms of its representational truth value, but as an *experience*. The text as technique of the self: reading and writing as body practices that produce as they transform. This is also of course true of all other texts to a greater or lesser extent: the work of Derrida, Deleuze and Nancy has in my own case altered experiential relations. If reading is considered as a productive body practice, which produces as it performs, then we can consider the way in which texts work on the body and produce subjectivities, move bodies towards different practices and in doing so work upon their very materiality. The text can serve as that which breaks apart existing knowledge, which transforms and constructs new relations in the act of reading as a mode of thought. The “experience book” is a technology of experience – it produces new experiential fields of relation.

In terms of the sort of deconstructive politics advocated in the analysis undertaken through this thesis, then, for an experience book to be effective, it needs to be able to produce in the reader new ways of engaging and subjecting to critique. Foucault is interested in the way in which an experience book can transform and as such equates having an experience as that which transforms the subject and therefore history (Foucault 1991). As a mode of judgment, the experience book is by definition subjective – it works on and through the subject and is judged as such by the subject. To argue for the merits of the experience book is not, however, to do away with other forms of judgment, such as through commonly held understandings of rigour,

peer review and so on. However, in referring to the concept of the experience book I aim to emphasise the affective capacities of the written word, and what happens when texts encounter bodies produced through specific material conditions, one of the main themes of this thesis. While Foucault makes a clear distinction between “experience books”, “truth books” and “demonstration-books” (Foucault 1991), I would argue that books can do all of these things, and moreover that the production of experience through bodies is a central way of thinking about how texts work.

In terms of thinking through the problem of writing, then, this approach can evoke a concern with how, despite the impossibility of writing experience, writing and reading can be considered as techniques through which experiential relations can emerge. Moreover, the impasse should never be seen as that. It can ask questions of writing and of the role of the speculative, of the aporia and of the sign, and produce new approaches. In repeatedly troubling ourselves with and lamenting over the problem of writing, we are preventing ourselves from really engaging with the concepts at hand – those concepts that can emerge from writing and through which we can think.

The theoretical and the empirical

The anthropologist Judith Okely demonstrates clearly how fieldwork can be considered as an embodied practice of thought which oscillates between the cognitive and the practical, between practice, habit, dream and imagination. In her contribution to a research methods book written in the early 1990s, she writes how

After fieldwork, the material found in notebooks, in transcripts and even in contemporary written sources is only a guide and a trigger. The anthropologist-writer draws on the totality of the experience, parts of which may not, cannot, be cerebrally written down at the time. It is recorded in memory, the body and all the senses. Ideas and themes have worked through the whole being throughout the experience of fieldwork. They have gestated in dreams and the subconscious in both sleep and waking hours, away from the field, at the anthropologist's desk, in libraries and in dialogue with people on return visits. Photographs point to details hitherto unnoticed by the fieldworker in the midst of the action. They may also revive hidden memories (Okely 1994:21).

This passage demonstrates the centrality of nonconscious thought to the process of forming new relations to concepts. Thought emerges from this combination of inputs, oscillations, vacillations, resonances and affects that surge through bodies and fire at many different levels. Philosophy, or theory, does not have to be done at a desk. Thought may run at a subconscious level, in the background, as a program might do on your computer. It may then surge up at particular moments when confronted by conflicting or similar thoughts

and ideas. The imaginative capacity of bodies is what enables this kind of thought – the association of ideas, their playing off against memories stored in the body, their clarification in writing and in dialogue. This account is an honest account of how academic research happens. It also forecloses the possibility of thinking that empirical work can be separate from theoretical work, which it does from the safe and methodologically rigorous position of the anthropological participant observer. *Thought is fieldwork; fieldwork is thought.* Moreover, this example illustrates how technologies and bodies are mutually co-constitutive of knowledge – those technologies of storage and of memory, which I will refer to in chapter seven, come forward in a production of experiential and knowledge-based fields. The inclusion of vast quantities of data does not necessarily suggest rigour. The process of thinking through is what matters. Instead of asking what one has found in one’s inquiries, we should perhaps ask – *how does the inquiry move thought?*⁵⁸

Stuart Hampshire’s discussion of “self-conscious materialism” – a mode of inquiry grounded in Spinozist metaphysics – has been very influential in my choice of research approach. In a little known article, he discusses this concept, and its application to an ethics of existence and to philosophy:

The self-conscious materialist thinks of his [sic] own reflections on the various causes of his thoughts, and of the associated physical states, as always modifying the original thoughts. He will at every moment think of his changing beliefs, desires and sentiments, and changes in the direction, or topic, of his thought, as associated with changes in just one physical object, his body. In reflecting on the order of physical changes associated with the intentional order of his thoughts, he is at the same time correcting the thoughts themselves; and this activity of correction also has its physical embodiment (Hampshire 1969:11–12).

Hampshire's reflexive materialism is directly concerned with attending to the expanded definition of thought discussed in chapter four. He writes, “it is precisely the point of materialism to assert a much closer relation between processes of thought and physical processes than is implied in most of the idioms of ordinary speech” (Hampshire 1969:18). Hampshire’s outline of reflexive materialist practice, then, is concerned with a reconsideration of the passions of bodies through a Spinozist lens – a self-reflexive bracketing of the passions as a way of considering them in their embodied materiality.

The practice of reflexive materialism and its application to what I referred to in the previous chapter as a ‘new materialist’ mode of inquiry is outlined below. I rely on the body as a point on which to gain some sort of *purchase* (see previous chapter): despite moves

⁵⁸ Inquiry is spelt here with an ‘I’ to denote a deeper investigative style than the more functional ‘enquiry’.

towards posthuman social science, there is no reason why an analysis of the production of particular experiential and affective fields cannot gain a point of purchase *through* the body, and in particular through its capacity for thought and for imagination. We can consider the conditions of emergence of experience without having to posit a foundational subject of experience. There is a case here for supplementing the reflexive materialism of Stuart Hampshire with what Brian Massumi refers to as thinking-feeling – that is, something that occurs within the act rather than outside of it (Massumi 2009). He refers to thinking-feeling as that which is contained within perception that allows the perceiver to feel the *lived relation* rather than the object, producing an order of spatiality and temporality out of perception. It is thought without abstraction, and without the removal caused by reflexive modes of analysis. This is, of course, hard to write through without the removal that comes from the reflexive. However, through the sorts of attentiveness embraced by thinking-feeling, the level of reflexive awareness can perhaps be augmented through this doubling-over of attentiveness.

The following chapters will mobilise these approaches through what we might consider to be a *loose ethnography* of the space of the South West Coast Path, in southern England: time spent researching its history as documented in books, poring over guide books, writing, planning routes, going to conferences, reading theory, walking alone and camping alone, writing more, walking with others and camping with others, discussing concepts, staying in bed and breakfasts, taking part in guided walks, and participating in writing retreats. These practices have all been subjected to a reflexive analysis based on the concept of self-conscious materialism. I cannot claim that this technique has led to a privileged knowledge *of a place*, for example through its history, its geology, or of the practice of those who use this place, as a traditional ethnographic or social scientific research project might. Merely the fact of my constant movement along the space of the path means that I could never become familiar with a place as anthropological field, in the traditional sense of a static, bounded space with the anthropologist residing with those who live there. My own approach to this, however, as a mobile ethnographer, as an ephemeral figure that does not reside within one particular place, has also allowed me to consider other themes that may go unnoticed by a more static approach. I adopted a technique that disavows a separation of theory and empirical inquiry and an attempt to apply thought to situations. Instead the approach aims to consider *how places, subjects and objects come to be known*. Where data have accumulated in textual form, they have been used as a *vehicle for thought*. Richard Carter-

White puts this well in his own PhD thesis:

while, in the final cut, the research undertaken in these situations is not included or analysed, they are nonetheless present *as a form of analysis*: that is, present in the effect of the methodological and theoretical choices made as an effluence of those situations (Carter-White 2009:38).

Informed by thinking about the relationship between micropolitics and macropolitics outlined in the previous chapter, I approached my fieldwork as a technique of thought and of the self, which fed into a specific production of spatialised and temporalised knowledge of self and of place. Connolly's suggestions for techniques of thought as an ethical practice of the self were influential here. This quote illustrates some of the techniques Connolly used in order to become an "immanent naturalist":

you might, say, behave experimentally like an immanent naturalist for a month, encouraging yourself to meditate about the abundance of being in an undesigned world as others pray to its designer, to tap into latent feelings of joy that may already accompany such a thought, and to forge 'brief habits' that express gratitude for that abundance. Perhaps you will then hold a dance party to music by the Buena Vista Social Club. As you proceed, you read studies about the looping interactions among the eight or nine brain regions of different speed, initiating function and capacity, allowing those studies to sharpen your powers of attentiveness to your own activities of perception, thinking and judgement (Connolly 2002:77).

This approach, involving the adopting of particular techniques of thought and therefore of the self in order to bring about a change in thought, is in part an attempt to *manage affect* through the courting of particular intensities, the playing-with those intensities, the feeding-back in thought on senses of anxiety and urgency and the consideration of these in the light of macropolitical modes. Doing micropolitics through a reflexive materialist process involves the registering of shifts in moods and the active working on of affect in the course of the thought experiment.

Another approach I adopt in the second section of the thesis involves an interrogation of the affective registers of the body at the moment when those registers are felt. This second approach involves what I call an *interruption* to interrogate the subject, drawing on an intertwining of Foucauldian critiques of the subject and Spinozist accounts of affect. The interruption is a form of reflexive interrogation that can expose the ways in which the body, as thoroughly social, operates through the affective register such that the apparent naturalness of its felt responses elides their sociality. Through an exploration of the body's response to affective triggers, the interruption can lay bare those affective flows that exist above, beneath and alongside the subject, (Protevi 2009) and give rise to, and connect to

retroductive structures of power and authority through their naming (e.g. as emotion).⁵⁹ An exploration and interrogation of personal events of bodily interruption - moments of affective intensity - allows the consideration of how bodies' capacities to act, dream and feel are produced in social and political ways, and how these invite certain cognitive responses in the recognition of the subject of those politics. In other words, the event of interruption is a point at which the body can *relate something of its production as a subject*. These sites of interruption can reveal much of the workings of power (as described in the Spinozist sense as capacity) and its imbrication in those registers that cannot be contained by the linguistic. These are the sites where the body speaks, where there may not yet be a name for the affective response of the body – the dark precursor that is revealed in the body.⁶⁰ These interruptions may point to those excessive levels below representation where micropolitics are always at play, yet may be missed in adopting a different conceptual and interrogatory lens.

Any consideration of the embodied materiality of affect and its relationship to politics means that analysis of the affective register needs to be tied into processes of subjectivation. Where affects surface in bodies at their capillary endings, an excess to the act is revealed. The Australian feminist scholar Elspeth Probyn writes of the importance of paying attention to affect in order to interrogate these processes: “It is in the physiological, the somatic, that the body is interesting because it is there that the body reveals its interest”(Probyn 2004:240). The body reveals the history enfolded through it, through those responses that erupt through its imagined and affective registers. And it is precisely in this revealing that a politics can be uncovered through the feeling body: “affect amplification makes us care about things” (Probyn 2005:23). Materialities come to act on the body and inscribe onto the body, which then inscribes itself elsewhere. In referring to the attention to the affects as praxis, Stewart discusses how you can

recognise it through fragments of past moments glimpsed unsteadily in the light of the present like the flickering light of a candle. Or project it onto some kind of track to follow. Or inhabit it as a pattern you find yourself already caught up in (again) and there's nothing you can do about it now (Stewart 2007:59).

The techniques and approaches discussed above focus on the body as the point at which one

⁵⁹ See the introduction to *Parables for the Virtual* for a discussion of the role of retroduction as that which emerges from a feeding back and produces as it does so (Massumi 2002).

⁶⁰ This term is taken from *Difference and Repetition* and refers to that within the virtual field which establishes a communication (Deleuze 2001:119).

can grasp onto what is at stake in a particular encounter. They involve either reflection on the self or a reflexive interaction with others in order to make sense of those embodied modes of thinking that occur prior to representation. I now return to a discussion of Spinoza and the embodied imagination in order to consider the usefulness of the concept of the social imaginary in thinking about embodied experience. Using the technique of the exemplar, the concept of the social imaginary is mobilised, thought through and sculpted in order to consider its efficacy in tying together those Foucauldian analytics of the subject with Spinozist materialism. While Gatens uses legal and other official texts in order to reveal the imaginaries contained within, I explore imaginaries through literary texts, interviews, and images in order to consider how macropolitical imaginaries of place, nation and identity can be produced through bodies' capacities to imagine, based on their experience of the body modifications caused by texts as well as by embodied practices (Gatens 1996; Gatens and Lloyd 1999; Gatens 2008). These can then be interrogated in terms of memory, affect and association as a practice of reflexive thinking to reveal those histories of bodily impression that work through the body to produce the effect of a social imaginary.

Lloyd and Gatens' writing is put to play with other recent thinkers in an attempt to think about how imaginaries flow through and produce bodies and subjectivities without holding them as owned by any particular body. This approach also explores embodied responses to texts through the idea of the social imaginary, drawing on Massumi's exploration of the analogue as metaphor for this relation: "an *analog* theory of image-based power: images as the conveyors of forces of emergence, as vehicles for existential potentialisation and transfer" (Massumi 2002:43). Exploration into the act of imagining, through the consideration of a body that imagines, attempts to reveal those somatic markers and prerepresentational memories and affective signals that shoot through the body's materiality in the making-sense of imaginary experience. While this approach is speculative and problematic in its endeavour to articulate that which cannot be represented, an attempt to adopt a transsubjective reflexive materialism is one way of achieving this aim. These problematics raise the question of whether it is possible to consider experience outside of the phenomenological subject, and also how to think about the way in which experiences work in the service of productive biopower and subjectivation.

The next four chapters work with these ideas through a focus on specific aspects of the relationship between embodiment, affect and the imagination, and mobilise my theoretical contribution to cultural geography. Chapters six and seven are designed to be read together. Chapter six looks at the production of place imaginaries and considers how the concept of the embodied imagination can reinvigorate cultural studies and cultural geography. Chapter seven considers what I call the 'interruption' as a way of interrogating the affective register of the body. As such, chapter six focuses on the ways in which political rationalities that constitute landscape and place imaginaries can be elided through their being felt as 'natural', while chapter seven focuses on how the body, through attention to the interruption, can reveal these elisions. This chapter attempts to demonstrate the way in which the history of bodies, the micropolitical and the macropolitical collide and intersect in the production of the affective subject. In chapter eight, I consider the production of the self through a discussion of Foucault and Spinoza, and suggest that bodies, practices and objects are involved in the co-constitution of experience such that the self is produced as an effect of that co-constitution. Chapter nine considers the theme of 'connection' whereby the idea of a 'connective imaginary' is considered as central to the way in which certain landscape practices and ways of knowing place are worked through in the embodied imagination. The idea of the connective imaginary is considered through an ontological lens that attempts to situate it as a symptom of a foundational disconnection or distancing, which considers culture as *desire* rather than ontology.

The chapters which follow, while leading to a conclusion about the importance of the concept of the embodied imagination to an understanding of subjectivation and experience, can be considered as stand-alone essays as well as contributing to a progressive argument. Together, though, the essays constellate to make a number of claims about the production of bodies, time, space and culture through a lens that privileges a Spinozist reading of Foucauldian accounts of the body, and attempt to point to ways in which this, and other concepts forged from a similar theoretical lineage, can be used to inform cultural theory. In particular, I work with key writers from within nonrepresentational theory in geography to demonstrate how these concepts can engage with some of the ideas informed by this theoretical move.

Chapter 6: Landscape, place and the embodied imagination

Introduction

This chapter works with some of the theoretical considerations explored in the first half of the thesis chapters and discussed in the interlude through examples drawn from texts and from fieldwork. I engage here with the idea of landscape in cultural geography through some examples taken from my fieldwork on the South West Coast Path, in South West England, as a way of considering how the concept of the embodied imagination can supplement current ways of thinking about landscape. This chapter is concerned with the consideration of cultural landscapes as formed through circulations of practices, bodies, materialities, political rationalities and discursive regimes, all of which give shape to experience. Accordingly, my concern in terms of approaching the fieldwork practice was to consider how these work together in the production of specific experiences of landscape and place. In doing so, I engage directly with the work of David Matless, whose Foucauldian genealogy *Landscape and Englishness* provides a starting block for my own work. In supplementing Foucault with Spinoza and the work of other Spinozist materialists, I posit a geography of landscape that can more thoroughly engage with the processes through which experience is produced, and consider in more depth how particular discursive regimes manifest themselves materially through bodies. In this chapter, imaginaries of landscape and place are analysed through the way in which bodies engage with them, using examples from both texts and fieldwork. In contributing to cultural geographies of landscape, I engage with the new materialisms discussed in the previous chapter in order to think through the ways in which macropolitical sedimentations of, for example race, nation and gender are considered as powerful organising principles around which affects can circulate, and towards which they can gravitate. In other words, I am attempting to engage with a politics of affect and the subject through the concept of the embodied imagination.

I suggest that in order to explore the relationship between power and subjectivity, as well as looking at representational forms, one needs also to consider the ways in which affective flows that constitute power relations work in and through the moving, feeling, body. For this reason, I advocate a focus on the body itself, not just as a product of forces but as an affective force which participates in ongoing processes of becoming – becoming gendered, becoming classed, and becoming a citizen. As a result I pay attention to the subject of

experience, but as a displaced subject: a subject considered as an effect of affective and material relations that produce its specific subjectivity. In doing this, I hope to point to the way in which certain tropes that can be considered through a genealogical lens contribute maintenance of this subjectivity.

This chapter is the first of a section of the thesis that can be read in two parts. In this first part, I consider the way in which power relations may be *concealed* through affective bodies. In the following chapter I consider how they can be *revealed*. Through considering how these relations play out in terms of the way in which people relate to place and landscape imaginaries, I focus on the how particular ways of being (belonging/exclusion, work/leisure) emerge through these practices. Deeply felt notions of belonging, of communion with nature, of happiness, of what ‘feels right’ can do much to conceal the material relations through which they are produced, and make them feel ‘natural’. This chapter discusses some such affective encounters between bodies and places, which, as I outline in the following chapter, may be revealed in their contingency at certain moments.

Cultural geographies of landscape

Recent work in cultural geography has positioned landscape in terms of specific relations between bodies and worlds – as intertwining, tension or haunting (Wylie 2002, 2005; Rose and Wylie 2006; Wylie 2006, 2007b), as dwelling (Ingold 2000; Cloke and Jones 2002), as dream of presence (Rose 2006) - that reside in the subjective experience of the looking, walking, moving, feeling body. Influenced by phenomenologists such as Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, landscape moves away from the ideological/discursive notion of a ‘text’ or ‘veil’ that obscures raw material relations beneath, towards its idea as practice or as intertwining (Wylie 2007a). This reflects what might be considered as the “performative turn” in the social sciences signalled by a concern with *practice* rather than representation (Thrift and Dewsbury 2000; Dewsbury, Harrison et al. 2002) and, in geographies of landscape, the move from the concept of “landscape” as a noun to the verb “landscaping” (Cresswell 2003; Wylie 2007a; Merriman, Revill et al. 2008). This turn is also associated with nonrepresentational theory, following an increasing concern with what Lorimer calls the “more-than-representational” (Lorimer 2005, 2008) – a turn which, through encounters with what Anderson and Harrison call “relational materialism” (Anderson and Harrison 2010) has variously focused on concepts such as affect, spatiality, materiality and the event

(e.g. Thrift and Dewsbury 2000; Dewsbury, Harrison et al. 2002; Thrift 2004; Thrift 2007; Anderson 2008b; Lorimer 2008). The analysis presented here, informed by “relational materialism” through my own theoretical engagement with thinkers such as Deleuze, Spinoza, Massumi and Connolly, for example, is a further contribution to this body of theory and engages with landscape through this theoretical lens. Geographies of embodied practice have turned to phenomenological methods in order to consider the immediacy of embodied experience (e.g. Spinney 2006; Lea 2008; Saville 2008). Other geographers have adopted a more postphenomenological approach as a means of exploring experience without assuming a foundational subject (Thrift and Dewsbury 2000; Wylie 2002; Popke 2003; Wylie 2005, 2006; Simpson 2009; Wylie 2009b). I intend to contribute to this body of work through a consideration of the relationship between subjectivation and experience, where experience is not considered as the sole property of a subject. In doing so, I wish to focus on the specificity of the production of experience, and argue for an explicitly political account of experience.

However, some of these approaches have come under some critique by geographers who are wary of the universalising power of phenomenological methods and a focus on the nonrepresentational and their potential occlusion of ethnic and gender specificity or power relations that produce such accounts (e.g. Saldanha 2005; Tolia-Kelly 2006; Tolia-Kelly 2007). This critique is necessary if we are to consider the way in which difference impacts on experience, and this thesis marks an attempt to theorise experience in a way that brings processes of subjectivation into the foreground - an attempt also to suggest that a focus on the nonrepresentational is always concerned with power relations.

Geographers have also attempted to think about the imaginative geographies of particular locations. In cultural geography, ‘imaginative geographies’ has often referred to how places, spaces and people are represented as Others through images and texts. The term ‘imaginative geographies’, originally conceived by Edward Said in *Orientalism* (Said 1978), has been used by geographers to point to the way in which representation is inextricably bound up with power, and to the processes of Othering and exclusionary power relations produced through these textual imaginary geographies (Gregory 1995b, 1995a; Schwartz 1996; Valverde 1998; Kitchin and Kneale 2001; Tavares and Brosseau 2006; Ridanpää 2007). These approaches commonly adopt a broadly Foucauldian approach to the

power/knowledge relation, where power to represent is considered in terms of the positive production of subjects of power, an approach that attempts to understand the relationship between power, knowledge and the production of subjectivities (Foucault 1979, 1982, 1984b).

I suggest that imaginative geographies have often remained at a distance from the materiality of experience, because of the way in which such geographies are theorised in discursive or symbolic terms. My approach moves instead towards an analysis of the *material* relations through which landscapes, bodies and texts combine and produce something which is in excess of those materialities, yet cannot be understood without reference to them. This is achieved through a mobilisation of the concept of the embodied imagination, which, I argue, allows a consideration of the materiality of the embodied encounter with landscape: the way in which the world *pushes back* in the co-constitutive production of experience. This approach also moves away from an ideological analysis borne out of the assumption that beneath the veil of representation there is a 'truth' that can be discovered, or from a focus on the text alone that constructs bodies as receptacles for the internalisation or performance of discursive forms, as for example in *Landscape and Englishness* (Matless 1998). In my supplementing Foucault with Spinoza the body is necessarily imbricated in the process of the production of experience, and the capacity of bodies to imagine is central to this.

A more 'fleshy' approach to imaginative geographies, through a discussion of the materiality, corporeality and spatiality of cultural forms can provide a useful contribution to cultural geographies of bodies, landscape and place in its attempt to form a bridge between imaginative geographies and geographies of embodied practice. As such, I provide a means of thinking about the immediacies of embodied experience as *occurring through* rather than despite regimes of representation and power and technologies of subjectivation. It is an attempt to go *beyond* a Foucauldian analytic of power in its situating embodied experience, whether prior to that represented to the subject or after, in the realm of the social, precluding the possibility of anything before the social, and also in its suggestion that the embodied imagination needs to be considered as a central way in which particular representational experiences of the world achieve their potency.

This supplements Foucault in its positioning of a more *originary* sociality of the body, something that occasionally escapes Foucault as he slips into thinking the body as prior to the social (see Butler 1989), and also in the way that it provides a detailed analytic of the processes through which experience is structured through the technologies and practices of everyday life. The analysis in this chapter can inform a more fleshy approach to cultural enquiry; texts drawn from interviews and other sources are positioned as that which can communicate something of the fullness of landscape experience, and can relate something of how the body and world interact. Texts are analysed from a point of view that rethinks them as the production of those modes of relation and imagination that are part of the ongoing force of experience.

Approach

The chapter focuses on modes of analysis drawn from what we might consider to be a loose ethnography of the space of the South West Coast Path: time spent researching its history as documented in books, watching films, poring over guide books, planning routes, walking alone and camping alone, walking with others and camping with others, staying in bed and breakfasts, swimming in the sea, and taking part in guided walks and writing retreats.

These practices have all been subjected to a reflexive analysis, in the style advocated by Hampshire in his discussion of “reflexive materialism” (Hampshire 1969, see also interlude of this thesis). The analyses in this chapter focus on experience of landscape and place in order to provide examples of how subjects’ embodied histories produce particular narrative accounts of landscapes as they are felt bodily and therefore affectively. In doing so I engage directly with Spinoza’s philosophy of mind as outlined in the *Ethics*, and discussed in detail in chapter three. Examples are mobilised to show how these deeply felt attachments and displacements are produced from specific conjunctions of histories of affective encounters with places, bodies, texts and practices. In focusing on the way in which imaginaries of nation play out in the spaces of the path, I show how these spaces are produced through conjugations of bodies in conjunction with the histories of those bodies and with materialities, described in terms of the affect that those materialities have on bodies. I discuss how places are produced through these discursive and affective configurations, which are embroiled in meaning through the capacity to imagine and connect ideas. I demonstrate how deeply felt senses of belonging, of propriety and of disjuncture can resonate through bodies as a result of these configurations, which, like all of these configurations of bodies, imaginaries and spaces, *comprise and instantiate history*. In

particular, I relate these to the idea of nation, and the discursive articulation of land and identity which emerges as an effect of affective encounters and is correspondingly concealed by those encounters.⁶¹ I point to the ways in which particular ways of being in nature and of performing the countryside are produced through texts and practices and through these are tied to national tropes and sensibilities. As such, I argue, they produce not only a sense of connection with a place but one which is always inflected with the country/country conflation through which specific articulations of nation and territory occur.

Landscape and Englishness

David Matless' *Landscape and Englishness* offers a genealogy of the representation of the English countryside in the early twentieth century and is heavily indebted to Foucault's "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History". Matless used the archive of the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE), as well as other publications, to construct a historical geography of particular discursive formations that emerged in the first half of the twentieth century and, he argues, led to the production of specific types of bodies in the production of citizenship. In demonstrating the link between landscape and identity, the book is made up of two-chapter sections, where the first chapter in the section discusses "visions of landscape" (Matless 1998:14), and the second part discusses the production of particular types of subject or body through those landscape visions, considered in terms of 'citizenship'. In doing so, the book

acts as a study of the processes of subjectification effected through landscape; the ways in which different versions of what might be termed a 'geographical self' are central to competing visions of landscape and Englishness (Matless 1998:14).

Rather than presenting a unified account of the ideological production of the English landscape, then, Matless attempts to expose the competing heterogeneities that always constitute discourse. As such, he identifies particular ways of understanding landscape and its relationship with the production of subjects, such as through the concept of "the organic English body" (Matless 1998:136). In his focus on the discipline of bodies through various regimes, campaigns, landscape design, leisure cultures and practices, the way in which those aspects of subjectivation produce particular modes of *subjectivity* are exposed.

This chapter begins with a discussion of this book due to the way in which it positions the relationship between landscape and subjects within social and cultural relations. In my own

⁶¹ The term "conceal" here does not refer to the existence of a final truth that lies underneath as in ideological critique, more that these encounters 'feel natural'. The politics of the encounter is not necessarily foregrounded or felt.

work, through the critique of the subject and the self, I have attempted to expose the processes through which subjects are produced as effects of various relations of power, and to demonstrate the interplay between the macro and micropolitical. However, Matless's analysis, while fascinating, comprehensive and rigorous, lacks what I have earlier described, from Anderson and Wylie, as a "thorough materialism" (Anderson and Wylie 2009:319). Relying on social constructionist perspectives and tools of analysis, Matless pays less attention to the *materiality* of what is being produced in those discursive formations he attempts to unsettle through his analysis. What is missing is a sense of the materiality of these processes of subject production – the way the world 'pushes back' and the way in which bodies and matter are always involved in the production of relations of power and knowledge that produce landscape as practice. This mode of analysis, despite paying attention to the way in which productive power produces technologies of the self that enable self-governance, does not really take into account the affective registers of bodies and the role played in the production of bodies of experience as structured through various regimes and rationalities. The approach adopted in *Landscape and Englishness*, while clearly laying out the various ways in which landscape imaginaries or 'visions' are produced, with reference to texts produced by a range of organisations and authors, exposes an uncomfortable lacuna in the space between text and body. While the production of subjectivities is discussed in terms of the valorisation of particular practices and regimes, which of course are embodied, and through a discussion of the moral geographies of a place, this is not analysed *through the body*. A methodological approach that relies on critical discourse analysis, of course, renders this difficult, and this is not to say that Matless' discussion of technologies of subjectivation are not accurate and valid. However, I suggest that a useful supplement to this mode of analysis is to focus on the affective and material relations that are also produced through this, and to consider the way in which the technologies discussed in the book play out through the production of *experience*. This is not an attempt to set *Landscape and Englishness* up as a straw man – rather my own work responds to this through an exploration of similar relations of subject-production involving instead a focus on a material experiential field of bodies and landscapes rather than on discursive formations, in order to gain some sort of hold on the affective register. While this takes place through an analysis of textual as well as ethnographic encounters, my focus is on the way in which these relations play out through *bodies* rather than the content of the text itself.

In reconsidering the production of landscape imaginaries through a meshing of Foucauldian understandings of the hermeneutics of the subject with a Spinozist account of the imagination, I attempt to access the specific ways in which not just citizens, but affective, experiencing subjects are produced. In other words, my focus is on the way in which these texts, practices and regimens circulate and sediment in and through bodies, changing their very materiality as they are performed: the ways in which texts act upon bodies such that they contribute to existing imaginaries, produce new practices or solidify old ones. To consider this is to consider the body as *plastic*, in a constant process of becoming (see chapter two). Matless's book is positioned as the basis for critique or supplement, not because his approach is insubstantial or indeed irrelevant. Foucauldian analyses such as this genealogy of nation and subjectivity are central to the deconstructionist pursuit of exposing that which is considered as natural or transcendent as contingent. My approach is rather a *supplement* to those Foucauldian accounts of governmentality and subjectivation that enables a consideration of the production of experience as being central to the way in which regimes of power and authority take place. This, I argue, involves attention to the affective register of bodies, through which these relations are able to take hold – to “grip the subject” (Glynos 2001:195).

Turquoise

In chapter three, I argued that the philosophy of Spinoza, and particularly his understanding of mind as set out in the *Ethics* can serve as a useful supplement to Foucauldian analytics of power and subjectivation. In particular, Spinoza can inform a deeper concern with the processes through which embodied experience is produced and worked on by the imaginative capacities of bodies, through their encounters with the world, and through the materialities of landscape that affect them in the course of those encounters. As I have discussed, the concept of the embodied imagination can be considered as the capacity through which bodies understand their own modifications as things in the world. It is part of an ongoing production of experience, as Spinoza makes clear:

Imagination is an idea by which the mind considers a thing as present; which nevertheless indicates the present constitution of the human body more than the nature of the external thing (Spinoza 1996:176).

As we have seen, this means that all experience of other bodies, and of our own bodies in their preceding states – indeed all sensory experience - takes place through the imagination, and, moreover, all of our imaginative capacities, our dreams, daydreams, thoughts and memories, are embodied. To understand the imagination as the body's recognition of its

own modification firmly situates it not in some abstract immaterial realm of ideas, but within the thorough materiality that comprises the body, and indeed all substance. This approach to the *process* of imagining means that, to consider the way in which imaginative geographies are produced, it is necessary to consider how what I call ‘experiential fields’ bring into being particular relations between bodies and worlds. Thinking about texts in this way brings the body into the field of analysis, yet does not allow for experience to remain solely within, or to be the property of, a discrete subject.

Lloyd and Gatens (Lloyd 1996; Gatens and Lloyd 1999) discuss how the practice of imagining is central to the understanding of the world-as-experienced, and, in their discussion of the materiality of the imagination, allows a thinking of the imagination as both *affective* and *corporeal*. Imaginaries in this sense do not have to be coherent, all-encompassing forms. They may be quite specific, circulating images which tie in to a greater or lesser degree to other ideas. This more complex analysis of the play of associations and images in the production of imaginaries moves the focus from the content of imaginaries to the event of the imaginary being worked on and through by bodies. The capacity to imagine and to produce imaginaries works both on a lateral plane, across and between bodies, through the collective understandings of particular objects as imagined, and on a vertical plane through the singular history of a body and those modifications that have left their trace on it in the past. If one is to follow Foucault and Butler in thinking of bodies as being produced through those performative practices that inscribe themselves on and through them constantly,⁶² then the history of bodies can be read in terms of the material traces left by other bodies and by the body itself (Foucault 1979; Butler 1989, 2006).

The impact of other bodies manifests itself in affect as one aspect of bodily modification, and serves to intensify or deintensify experience. This takes place within the context of historical encounters with similar bodies through a focus on places as being produced through *sustained sensory engagements*. In order to consider how this might be useful for a consideration of the relationship between bodies and places, I now turn to an analysis of Ellen Meloy’s *The Anthropology of Turquoise*, a selection of essays which arguably contributes to the genre known as the “new nature writing”,⁶³ a genre that emphasises embodiment and connection to nature, in order to exemplify how these

⁶² As I argued in chapter two.

⁶³ This term refers to the Granta edited collection of the same name (Granta 2008)

embodied/historical/imaginary relations take place, and how images, associations and affects interact in the imagination. Meloy describes the affective significance of sensory perception through her description of colour and attachment to landscape in *The Anthropology of Turquoise*. Her landscape writing emphasises the somatic nature of the affective response, by discussing the felt and associative engagements with particular landscapes which is supplemented with a detailed biomedical description of the bodily processes involved in perception. This sensuous approach to nature writing foregrounds the affective relation to place which occurs through the body and its associational, imaginative capacities. Colours *already* affectively resonate in her descriptions, offering an almost synaesthetic account of vision:

On walks in my desert home a yellow cottonwood leaf stings my tongue like lemon, the indigo and copper margins of the river in shadow inflict the bruise of a frail wind on my skin. Somehow in the day's prismatic clarity, even in the untrustworthy moonlight, these orbs of blood and nerves understand that light is the language of the desert (Meloy 2002:9-10).

Reflecting further on her experience of landscape, Meloy considers the way in which bodies develop attachments, and are *moved* towards certain colours and combinations of colours in the making-affective of a particular set of landscape materialities. She asks,

How does vision, this tyrant of the senses, draw someone to a piece of earth? What do the eyes rest on – mind disengaged, heart not – that combines senses and affection into a homeland ... An aesthetic sense, an intuitive link between a chromatic band and emotion, can ... grow as strong as a fingerprint, defying logic and inviting the helpless surrender of a love affair. Intoxication with colour, sometimes subliminal, often fierce, may express itself as a profound attachment to landscape (Meloy 2002:9-16).

Meloy's attachment to the desert landscape is formulated in terms of an embodied response to colour. Colour here acts as an attractor to the feeling body, moving it towards its affective signal. The attachment to colour as central to the feeling of belongingness to a particular place exemplifies the enfolding of experience through the imaginative capacities of the body in order to gain a *sense of something*; a sense which is acquired through the impact of other bodies that intensifies and resonates in the body that imagines. Meloy historicises her response to landscape through a discussion of familiarity linked to positive affect, being careful not to suggest an innate or universal response to the stimuli she discusses. Her accounts of landscapes are those of embodied knowledge, and it is this that intensifies the experience as imagined and leads to her deeply felt sense of belonging and connection to the specific materialities of the American desert – in particular the colours of the rock, the flowers and the sagebrush. Genevieve Lloyd's discussion of Spinoza's *Ethics* refers to the way in which perception and understanding intensify each other, enabling more and more associations to be made and built up:

Images of things we understand clearly are more readily joined to other images. Images flourish in association with clear and distinct perception and so too does emotion (Lloyd 1996:111).

In other words, we build up ideas as we understand them more, and they then more easily relate to other ideas.

Imagining Cornwall

Landscapes of affect are here considered in terms of encounters between spaces, materialities and the bodies of situated subjects. Through the embodied encounter, landscapes are tied to dreams, imaginaries and other affects. Dreams of escape, dreams of a simple life, or of connection to place are given substance in their incorporation in imaginaries of particular landscapes. Affects, as trans-individual, as relational, surface in and through the embodied encounter. Using a narrative related during a walking interview in South West England, I now consider the way in which these dreams and affects emerge in landscape, and also begin to point to a materialist politics of affect that is revealed through this.

The promotional material produced by the South West Coast Path Management Team represents, as one might imagine, the path as a leisure space: the coastline as a space of leisure, tourism and heritage. Images produced feed into the production and valorisation of a particular type of body – what we might consider the ‘outdoor body’. The material on the website and in the brochure contributes to the way in which bodies engage with the space of the path, and this of course is accompanied by guidebooks, signposts, stiles, the worn footpath, conversations with others that feed into the production of a particular mode of engagement, a cultural practice that resonates with associations of escape, of communing with nature, of holidays and gazing out to sea (South West Coast Path National Trail Partnership 2008; 2010). The space of the path is produced through various overlapping materialities, imaginaries and institutional and discursive formations that encourage particular ways for bodies to engage with it and discourage others. This is perhaps clearest in the South West Coast Path Association’s illustrated history of the path, a book written by an enthusiast which valorises a ‘proper’ way of acting in and imagining the space (Carter 2005). The South West Coast Path Association lobby for the path to embrace clifftop and beachside views, and to lie as close to the edge of the land as is possible. Similarly, this *History* encourages proper modes of engagement involving correctly attired walking, and quiet contemplation of landscape. This text, and the ongoing production of particular

modes of engagement feed into expectations of other walkers and into their practices. Others on the path are recognised as similar or different, through the micropolitical markers of body type, skin, clothing, accent and behaviour. Politics of inclusion and exclusion bubble beneath the surface. It is impossible of course to pinpoint any particular text or practice as being central to the production of place imaginaries. However, as Wylie makes clear, “landscape norms and values are sustained by, and in an important sense simply *are*, a multitude of small, local, specific practices – ‘cultures of landscape’” (Wylie 2007a:112). With this in mind, then, attention can focus on the way in which local, specific practices partake in the ongoing production of cultures of landscape, and how those can then be retrospectively identified.

I conducted an interview, while walking, with a white British woman who had lived in London and South East England for most of her life. The walk took us through a seaside town in north Cornwall. We walked down towards the centre of the village, stopped by an estate agent’s shop and looked through the windows. It was the middle of the day, and the waves were crashing onto the beach nearby offering a continuous background soundtrack to our walk. We had been walking for some time, and were looking forward to sitting down and eating lunch. Together, we gazed at an image in the estate agent’s window of a little house, right on the edge of the beach - a bungalow, with peeling white and blue paint, at the end of a lane almost covered in sand. The bungalow laid almost amongst the dunes itself. “Look at that place...it’s right on the beach! And it’s not too expensive. Imagine living there... imagine what it would be like... surfing, swimming, walking on the beach every morning.” She writes down the estate agent’s telephone number. The encounter between the image in the window and my companion’s body set off a series of relaying memories, dreams, hopes, frustrations and attachments: past, present and futurity grappling for attention. Later, we tried to take apart what was going on at that moment, starting with some of the memories that surfaced through that relay:

She remembered visiting Cornwall with her first boyfriend, aged 17:

My boyfriend was a biologist and we came to Cornwall and I had my first grown-up holiday without my family. We bought a tent and went round Penwith mostly, discovering Cornwall. We walked around the Coast Path; although I’m not sure it was called that then, and saw the Nine Maidens stone circle.

She also mentioned the memories of coming to the same town a few years previously:

I had already stayed in this village before on holiday. It was about 3 or 4 years ago. I came here in February with another boyfriend. He had a friend who lives 4 or 5 doors away from this exact house. It was bleak and wintry and windy, and I walked along the beach and I thought to myself, I could live here. The memories came back straight away. I

remembered that there was a good bar here, and buying croissants for breakfast from the man from the village shop. I remembered bouncing around on rocks and getting splashed.

Other memories of Cornwall also combined with these recountings of place. Staying at a friend's house near there as a child. Reading comics and children's books about Cornish adventures, and fishing for crabs, and sea shanties, and TV series about smugglers.

Romantic fantasies of Celtic wildness, reperformed as a teenager at the stone circle, clash and collide with present experience in a rush of affect. We spoke too about her holiday here, this last week. About swimming in the sea, the stinging sticky cold of the water on her skin, the feeling that she could just swim for ever. When we were outside the estate agents, we were still shivering, chilled from the water. She told me too about walking along the clifftop, the light as the afternoon sun got lower, the pure, white light, the colours, the feel of the salty air on her face, the breeze that deepened her breath. The beers in the pub, the laughing, the banter, the taste of fish and chips. Above all, she remembered her vision saturated by purples, blues and orangey yellow - the sea, the thrift, the gorse. *I really feel at home here, she says. I feel a real connection to this place.*

In writing through this analysis in terms of the bodily and imaginative feelings that this engenders, I have attempted to demonstrate the way in which places emerge through embodied encounters and histories of other embodied encounters that are related through various connections made by the imaginative capacities of bodies. Practices that bring about pleasurable sensations, such as swimming, or looking at flowers, set off relays to other pleasurable memories of similar places and similar sensations. The 'idea of Cornwall' emerges from various bodily dispositions and reiterations of cultures of landscape forged through textual and interpersonal stimuli. Bodies respond according to how they understand themselves within the context of these imaginaries and in doing so contribute to their ongoing production. Memories of books and films grapple for attention with other memories and ideas become tied to other ideas through long association, become "sticky". This term is used in relation to Arun Saldanha's concept of viscosity, a way of understanding how 'race' emerges from connections between materialities and ideas that gather force through their "pulling together":

Race must similarly be conceived as a chain of contingency, in which the connections between its constituent components are not given, but are made viscous through local attractions. Whiteness, for example, is about the sticky connections between property, privilege, and a paler skin. There is no essence of whiteness, but there is a relative fixity that inheres in all the 'local pulls' of its many elements in flux. Emergence and viscosity are complementary concepts, the first pertaining to the genesis of distinctions, the second to the modality of that genesis (Saldanha 2006:18).

Thinking about the concept of viscosity in terms of how places and practices are imagined,

and how that viscosity is felt through the affective register can be useful in considering how identities and conventions sediment through and between bodies. It can help us to consider how, in a similar way to Meloy's description of colour and affect, affective responses to places are intimately tied to the histories of bodies, and not only to the bodies involved in the encounter, but also those bodies whose histories fed into the material relations through which that encounter took place. Through the production of stickiness, unconscious or vaguely conscious notions of how to behave, of belonging, or of feeling out of place become activated. Some associations between bodies and places become sticky, and act upon the material relations between bodies that engage with those places, leading to the production of affective encounter and experience.

Constellations

Imaginaries are nebulous, overlapping images, recalled memories, associations and traces which emerge during and colour embodied experience of the world. Agamben's understanding of constellations of ideas echoes this, where constellations are considered as repeated juxtapositions which serve to add weight to the associations comprising the imaginary (Agamben 1993c), recalling Benjamin's working of the dialectic in his discussion of the image in terms of "that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation" (Benjamin 1999:463). Imaginaries are social insofar as they are shared, and insofar as they are broadly communicable as universal notions. Because similar bodies imagine objects in similar ways (although the *way* in which the object is imagined is entirely specific to the individual body due to its singularity), similarities and patterned imaginaries are evident and reflect different institutional practices. Hence what we might consider the sociality of the imagination and the possibility of the social imaginary is a sort of composite, an overlapping of different imaginings.

Kathleen Stewart's discussion of Vermont can be used to explain how these imaginaries come to produce the idea of a place. Stewart discusses a poem by Wallace Stevens which contains the lines:

Thinkers without final thoughts
In an always incipient cosmos,
The way, when we climb a mountain,
Vermont throws itself together (quoted in Stewart 2007:29).

The poem, she suggests, illustrates how the body creates place through its history of

contact and exposure to texts and ideas that produce, in that moment of mountain climbing, that 'feel' of Vermont:

a potential mapping of disparate and incommensurate qualities that do not simply 'add up' but instead link complexly, in difference and through sheer repetition and not through the enclosures of identity, similarity, or meaning, or through the logic of code. It is fall colours, maple syrup, tourist brochures, calendars, snow, country stores, liberalism and yet the fight over gay marriage; racial homogeneity and yet everywhere white lesbian couples with babies of colour; the influx of New York wealth long ago rushing in to shore up that certain look of rolling hills and red barns and yet also the legacy of the dairy industry written onto the landscape and property laws; and the quirkiness, quaintness, dullness, and/or violence of village life in this time and place (Stewart 2007:30).

'Vermontness' operates as a moment – an event, a 'sensory relay' that erupts and "throws itself together into something ... Disparate things come together differently in each instance, and yet the repetition itself leaves a residue like a track or a habit – the making of a live cliché" (Stewart 2007:30). What Stewart does not comment on in her discussion of the poem is the way it is the embodied encounter with the idea of Vermont that gives rise to its emergence in the imagination. While an embodied encounter may happen with a text, or in the course of interaction with others, here in the poem, the eruption of the social imaginary that is Vermont is precisely an effect of the activity of climbing a mountain, or reading a poem, or watching a film - the romantic embodied vision of the tourist's gaze enacting the constellations of associations and semantic excess that embeds itself like a residue in the body.

The associative capacities of the imagination, as discussed above, are clearly at work in the constellatory production of imaginaries in the body. The idea that is 'Vermont', and the idea of Cornwall in the ethnographic example are conceived of by bodies in terms of repeated bodily encounters with texts, images, dreams, places and bodies that constellate in the imagination. Without the capacity of the body's modification through sensory triggers to set off the relay that erupts in the imagination, bodies and landscapes would not exist as such. A specific imaginary of Cornwall is produced in the body through the constellation of memories that inscribe, and these memories are shaped by those relations that produce Cornwall as object of a tourist imagination, and in this case a particular imagination of romance and Celtic otherness. The body that imagines refers and defers, seeks traces, oscillates around a singular idea through this capacity to recall previous and similar inscriptions and moments. To consider the way in which practice produces certain types of subjectivity, then, it is necessary to consider the histories of bodies and the way in which these histories of previous bodily modifications constellate in the encounter in the production of experience as constitutive of subjectivity.

Undercliff

An account of the embodied imagination can supplement a discursive genealogy of a situation through a focus on the way in which these relations – considered as discursive – actually play out through bodies and are material, enabling certain engagements, precluding others and forming connections and disjunctures between bodies, offering intensities that are variously felt by different subjects. Bodies perform, reiterate, respond to, and tap into imaginaries, and reconstitute them through these performances. In the second fieldwork example, the way in which practices contribute to the production of imaginative relations between body and place is discussed with reference to a walk along the Undercliff, in Dorset, where six of us: Leila, Jo, Yas, Juzer, Meg (a dog) and Lou walked between Branscombe and Beer, and foraged for wild food growing along the way. This local, specific practice, while unremarkable, was significant in terms of the way in which we engaged with the landscape, and how it was involved in the overlaying of identity through various textual associations that positioned this practice in terms of a specific articulation of Englishness.

Our walk was shaped by our desire to tap into folk knowledges of the English countryside, and to *embody* it through eating what we found along the way. The knowledges that contributed to our imaginaries of the self and of nature that fed into this desire were variously gleaned from growing up in the countryside, from foraging walks with friends, guide books, studying indigenous plants, childhood activities such as being involved in various clubs, watching TV programmes about wild food, our families and friends and countless other historical events that our bodies had participated in. Central to the way in which the landscape emerged through our practice and conversation that day was the production and communication of particular kinds of knowledge. Juzer knew all of the Latin names of the plants and we all tried to learn them, and we shared our knowledge of wildlife and wild flowers as we walked. Through the points of similarity in the histories of our bodies we were able to perform a shared interest in and dispositions towards walking, camping, and ‘being in nature’. I suggest that through these performances we all were involved in the ongoing production of particular landscape imaginaries about ‘natural bodies’, about being in and knowing the English countryside which is inseparable from specific articulations of nation, class, gender and bodies, and which feeds off and into a set of texts, technologies and practices that contribute to the imaginary. In particular, certain texts seemed important to us, such as Richard Mabey’s *Flora Britannica*, and his *Food for*

Free insofar as they introduced us to and renewed an interest in the histories of folk names and uses for particular plants (Mabey 1996, 2007). During the walk we discussed what people *used to do* with certain plants, and what we could do as a result. We also discussed the origins of folk names of plants. These discussions, I suggest, point to a particular desire to connect, both with an imagined ancestral past and with the land that testifies to that past through the presence of these plants. In naming, finding and eating these plants, and doing so in the name of past 'lost' practices, I suggest that we were articulating a particular desire for connection and for recovery of what is perceived as 'lost' through the discursive and melancholic production of modernity as that which destroys a more 'authentic' way of being in the world. Through our interactions, we were able to produce, on a mesopolitical level, the affective environment through which these imaginaries could take hold in our bodies. A particular articulation of Englishness was being drawn on, which celebrates the radical history of the land and the possibility of a 'new England'. The distinctly national way in which these folk cultures are articulated and written about (for example, *Flora Britannica*), ensures that these encounters are inflected with a sense of nation and the people rather than any other territorial formation, a sense of nation which is more tied to territory and soil identity than sovereignty, but nevertheless contributes to that sovereignty.

The transcript below shows how specific landscape imaginaries are contested in the course of our conversation – the way in which different bodies tap into imaginaries about various right ways of 'being in nature' and gaining some sort of sense of authenticity through that embodied practice – practices which all arise perhaps from a sense that 'being in nature' is something none of us do as a matter of economic necessity, but as a leisure/touristic/hobby activity. These different imaginaries overlap and rely on a shared sense of a place and how to 'be in' that place, which is based on distinction, engagement, and the tapping into positive affects gained from knowledge, participation, sensory stimuli and the summoning of particular subject positions in the performance of those imaginaries:

Transcript Dorset Yas (Y) Juzer (JU) Leila (L) Jo (JO)

JU I'm telling you about where we've walked, because I feel like I'll have a more...of a rich understanding of the walk and where I've been, by knowing exactly where I am in the country, why I'm on the coastal path,. But that shouldn't increase my enjoyment of it really: it should be enjoyable for the beauty and the scenery that is around me.

L but I think you were saying earlier that the knowledge actually enriches the enjoyment in some way

JO knowledge of plants and birds do but not necessarily knowledge of the route exactly – being able to ...knowing about things that made you notice them, and knowing about them in advance.

JU well I've had discussions with people about art for example where I've said that knowing about the history and what the painting means increases your appreciation of it, but that shouldn't be what art is about because that turns art into literature which isn't why I see art, and also with music, if someone said you can't appreciate the modern classical composers like Ysaÿe Eugène cos they're in such strange keys and have such strange melodies cos I don't understand the thing but I don't think I need to understand something in order to appreciate it. In relation to scenery?

Y I think before we came we had been recommended the Dorset part of the coast path by at least two people in Devon – the man at the tourist information centre and the man at the pub. and he talked about it as being the best part of the coastline, the ...the world heritage site, and so you come here with a certain expectation, and therefore, you know, if people have told you if it's a certain part that of the Dorset coastline you wanna know ...are you there? Have I see this thing there that everyone else is talking about? No not the east part the west part that's the part I want to see...The east part's rubbish (laughter) that's what the person down the pub says...

You know, you come here with those expectations, and when you see it, you're thinking oh yeah it is amazing cos you've been told it's gonna be amazing and... It is amazing... but you also know that it *should* be amazing so that's very weird so how does that work?

JU I think at some level I'd rather be blindfolded and dropped here and not know where is was

Y right

JO that's what that's how I use maps usually I use maps more to look at where I've been.

In this interview section, we are discussing the various merits of knowing the world through the immediacy of the embodied sensation or through the tabulated knowledges of the guidebook. We discuss the way in which our affective relation to the path is mediated through expectations that take place through past interactions with others, whom we presume share similar landscape aesthetics to ourselves. We are torn between the pleasures that come with knowing the names of things, and the imagined pleasure of 'pure experience' – of being somewhere without the violence of naming it as something – or somewhere. What we are ultimately getting at, however, is a pursuit of particular positive affects through engagement with certain landscapes, texts and imaginaries and letting them play out through our bodies. At the same time, there is a gendered subtext about ways of knowing, whereby male ways of knowing are considered more 'artificial' and 'geeky' as opposed to an embodied way of knowing which is seen as more 'feminine' (this gendered subtext would, I am sure, be denied by the participants if challenged, however).

During the walk, we picked wild mustard and jack-by-the-hedge, and added them to our cheese sandwiches. At one point, someone said "I'll never forget this sandwich", which everyone thought was hilarious. However, I think that what they were getting at was the positive affects of being on a clifftop on a June day with friends, after some physical exertion, and then finding something delicious, something which was 'of that place' and being able to firstly recognise it, and secondly put it in a sandwich. In a similar vein, my

brother walked the length of the South Downs Way recently, a long distance path near where we grew up. He walked mainly barefoot, and related to me how, when he walked, he imagined himself as a Sussex Downsman, one who knows the Downs intimately, exemplified by and augmented through the bodily engagement of skin with turf. These practices of connection are retold with an ironic inflection, a self-conscious awareness of the ways in which he attuned himself to the imaginary of belonging, but nevertheless were *felt* despite the self-conscious mode in which they were related.

These are practices that orient bodies towards the experience of some kind of connection with 'nature', and they rely on particular ways of relating to the English landscape that are drawn from a desire to be *part of something*. The actual embodiment of the landscape through eating it – a sacramental act of communion – engenders pleasure precisely because it feeds into and draws from countless romantic imaginaries about being part of a place and knowing a place. These practices affect because they are historically grounded in histories and representations and because they rely on an active production of self. These ways of relating are of course worked through macropolitical structures that give rise to particular affective ways of engaging – and of course those intertextual cultures of nature which I consider as the 'new pastoral' – a desire to participate in various nature practices that may be accompanied by interest in other English folk traditions. One member of the group made coracles, some liked folk music, and some were interested in either environmental or left-wing politics, which themselves resonate through particular ways of knowing land and place, and all regularly went camping as an escape of choice: these bodies were produced through and involved in the production of particular 'folk' imaginaries that enabled a shared interest and enjoyment in what they were doing. The positive affects that were produced from participating in these various practices cannot be separated from the material histories of those bodies and practices, and the way in which they are central to the production of experience and the idea of the counter-modern.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ The TV play *Nuts in May*, by Mike Leigh (1976) explores how landscape imaginaries and a sense of Englishness and escape are rooted in particular practices and circulate around class-based behavioural norms. The film focuses around a middle-class couple, Keith and Candice-Marie and their camping holiday in Dorset. Leigh refuses to allow the audience to sympathise with any one character in the film, and as a result the possibility is opened up to explore how affects intensify through the different imaginaries that are afforded through the experiential field of the campsite where they are staying. Keith and Candice-Marie begin the film with a song. Their ideas of escape are quite specifically based on freedom from the city, on communing with nature, and on obeying various regimes and disciplines in their pursuit of respect for their bodies and for the countryside. Keith, for example, is keen on following the country code, on the Canadian fitness manual, on raw milk and chewing food 73 times. His life is mediated through various regimens of how to live a respectable, natural, life, and how to produce himself in these terms. Candice-Marie's holiday is mediated through imaginaries of nature, ecology, and an absence of litter and pollution. The other characters are not so self-conscious in their practices. Ray, a trainee teacher, and Honkey and Finger, some bikers from the Midlands have 'illegal' campfires, listen to the radio and drink. As the film progresses, Keith becomes more and more irate at the way in which others do not conform to how he imagines one should behave in the countryside. In doing so the processes through which their experience is produced is made visible, emerging in the appearance of affective intensities in the characters that course between their bodies and produce a space of conflict.

If we pay attention to the ways in which bodies relate in places, both affectively and to how they make sense of particular sensations, we can provide a mode of ingress in to the various ways in which subjectivation occurs. In discussing the production of particular cultures of landscape, I argue that attention is paid to bodies in that landscape, not in a solipsistic account of experience, but in an oblique perspective that enables us to think about the processes through which experience is produced, through which affects move through bodies and the ways in which bodies draw on their own histories and the histories of others in a making-affective, and making-sense of their own practices and sensations.

Swimming

Another example of the ‘new pastoral’ imaginary materialising through embodied practices comes from a new landscape culture of ‘wild swimming’ – swimming in rivers, lakes and the sea - which has emerged partly through a recent set of published books and guides, TV programmes and organisations. These aim to promote ‘wild swimming’ as a new practice which materially engages with the embodied imagination through the way in which specific bodily sensations are valorised. The affective intensities of engaging with the materiality of cold water are augmented through this valorisation and its association with other imaginaries, such as, once again, nationhood, ‘natural bodies’, access to the countryside, personal freedom and environmentalism.

This resurgence in a new English pastoral through body techniques is based on what Robert Macfarlane, in his introduction to Kate Rew’s *Wild Swim* considers a desire for reconnection – indeed he states that

over the past decade or so... a desire for what might be termed ‘reconnection’ has emerged, a yearning to recover a sense of how the natural world smells, tastes and sounds. More and more people are being drawn back to the woods, hills and waters of Britain and Ireland. More and more would agree with Gary Snyder (forester, poet, tool-maker, Buddhist) when he writes: ‘That’s the way to see the world, in our own bodies’ (Rew 2008:8).

While the constative ground on which this statement is made is perhaps questionable, its function as performative is evident by the increasing number of people articulating their swimming in similar terms to those described in the work of Macfarlane, Rew and Deakin. Wild swimming is positioned in these texts and through conversations with swimmers met during my fieldwork as an attempt to experience a specific timbre of bodily intensity – as an

all-absorbing sensory experience that is different and new:

When you are swimming outdoors your sensorium is transformed. You see the world in All-New Glorious Full-Body Technicolour (Rew 2008:8).

Wild swimming culture is couched in terms of an attempt to experience an intensive affective relationship with 'nature', where imagined landscapes are experienced through embodied practice, where the cold shock of water on naked skin stimulates and enervates, where ideas of freedom and escape emerging from subjective histories built on binary discourses of nature/culture, city/country, work/play are enlivened and performed. A new politics of access to open water emerges through the circulation and augmentation of practice: a resistance to health and safety culture and a desire for self-governance come alive in a moment of submersion, and that moment, when witnessed, may breed further moments of submersion of other bodies. These affective moments reveal the Romantic sensibility that lurks enfolded in certain bodies and which is actively worked on in their own manipulations of affect. These practices perform a particularly British sensibility, and may act to reclaim a new Romantic sense of nation: 'wild swimming culture' as a specific landscape culture celebrates British cold water and the bracing effect of a long-bemoaned climate which is now seen as vastly superior to those "decadent delights of tepid bathing" in the Mediterranean (Deakin 2000:16). The way in which the nation is produced through the culture of wild swimming is particularly apparent in Deakin's *Waterlog*, taglined "A Swimmer's journey through Britain" (Deakin 2000). The blurb on the back cover describes it as "a bold assertion of the *native* swimmer's right to roam" (my emphasis), and suggests it offers a "uniquely personal view of an *island race*" (my emphasis). *Waterlog*, a bestseller, specifically positions swimming as a bodily practice of nation, belonging, and identity. Swimming is reimagined as part of the 'natural relation' that native Britons have with the land, a performance of belonging and connection. Long-defunct outdoor swimming clubs are exhumed in order to argue for swimming as a central practice in defining Britain as a swimmer's land, an idyll of lakes and brooks and beaches and a distinct absence of chlorine.

Through these practices, dreams of a 'simple life' are acted out in the embodied imagination: the late modern urbanised (and often liberal and middle-class) subject embraces the new pastoral, and in doing so the new Albion. Lou and Jo, who accompanied me on some fieldwork, are keen swimmers, and regularly challenge themselves to new cold water experiences and the tactile landscapes that they afford. They swim in the sea in late November, in the river Avon in April, and swim naked where they can get away with it. The

shock of cold water on skin and the chill to the bone afterwards becomes deferred pleasure, but the pleasure comes not just from the materiality of the body in water alone, but the way in which they imagine themselves as participating in some sort of *social movement*. Bravado and taunting are used in order to manage others' affects and encourage their endeavours. The embodied imagination, through which histories, texts, hopes, future and past selves merge and interplay in the production of experience is what enables this experience firstly to happen, and secondly to be *felt* in particular ways.

Wild swimming culture as a landscape culture emerges and is actualised through certain texts, but it is the relational positioning of specific texts and bodies and the affects that move through them, where these cultures are felt and given substance. As such, an analysis of the sorts of imaginaries that emerge through the embodied performance of particular cultures can be considered. Lou and Jo discussed their swimming with me after we all went for a dip in the sea in early May.

The latest I've swum is probably November. Sometimes the shock of the cold water is too much. I'm struggling for breath and I worry that my heart is going to stop! But I love it, I love the sensation afterwards, when it almost burns you, and you feel so alive!

We're always looking for new places to swim.... we go to lakes and rivers, and in the sea of course, but I hate swimming pools, the chlorine, and other people's pee.... I just ignore the 'no swimming' signs. We should be able to take responsibility for ourselves.

The politics of access to open water are felt and enacted through the performing of these cultures. Texts circulate and encourage particular ways of understanding the lived relation of practice that is engendered through these activities. But it is the way in which these ideas circulate through bodies, partly as a result of those texts which is interesting here. Where Matless discusses the production of subjects through texts alone, the concept of the embodied imagination and a consideration of the way in which imaginaries circulate and move through the transsubjective passage of affects can shed interesting light on the way in which subjects are produced through the sorts of practices that Matless writes about. Balibar's discussion of Spinoza is useful to consider here (see chapter four), since he sets out a communicative model of practice, which relies on the circulation and collective production of knowledge through the concept of the transindividual. Here, the idea of wild swimming and the emergence of a new cultural practice can be considered as the object of inquiry, yet they emerge from a transindividual circulation of ideas, which is always processed through the embodied imagination. We can consider these cultures as affective fields through which practices and ways of thinking and feeling can emerge.

These practices also draw attention to the ordinariness of affective landscapes. The moments described here, as specific embodied/imaginary and affective configurations of body and landscape make a point about the importance of affect in the production of experience. I could, however, equally have discussed a bus journey from Hereford, as Raymond Williams did in his essay “Culture is Ordinary” (Williams 1989). There can be no generalisations from these events, no sweeping statements about nature and nation and class and rurality; however the logic of the embodied affective relationships in which we participate can be moved to elucidate other questions, spaces and events: the logic of history, materiality and the subject that accounts for and is an effect of the affective practices and imaginaries that bodies participate in. Structures of feeling⁶⁵ emerging from the text of wild swimming guide books, themselves products of intertwinings of subjectivity, text and experience, transmit through the embodied act of reading, planning and dreaming, between and through subjects and shape the experiential field.

Conclusion

I have argued in this chapter that the capacity of the body to imagine is central to how places are experienced. The attempt to unravel an imaginary understanding of a particular place or landscape, to strip away at it in the hope that something ‘raw’ lies beneath is, of course, a futile and unnecessary task. Instead, this analysis has attempted to show how the embodied imagination plays a significant part in the ongoing and material production of experiential fields. The imaginary cannot be an object of study in terms of its falsity and its relation to any “real conditions of existence” (Althusser 1971:109), but only in terms of its capacity to create, sustain and alter ways of life and identities through affective investment into particular shared imaginaries that are co-constitutive of an experiential field. Using Spinoza’s understanding of the imagination as a form of embodied knowledge disturbs and renders unproductive the boundary between the true and the imaginary by suggesting that *all* sensory knowledge is acquired through the realm of the imagination: the imagination is central to and productive of our experience of the world. Spinoza’s imagination is grounded in direct bodily awareness - the awareness of bodily modifications - and the body *imagines* external bodies as actually existing.

⁶⁵ This term is discussed in Raymond Williams’ *Marxism and Literature* (Williams 1977).

The bodies discussed in the fieldwork examples can be considered as points where it is possible to think about their own historicity, which, in conjunction with certain materialities, produces imaginaries that constitute something more than the moment of perception. They can point to the way in which landscape encounters, through the imaginative capacities of bodies, can not only give rise to associative images but also trigger specific affective responses which surface through those constellations of associative embodied history and meaning. The imagination encounters not only another body, experienced through the modification of the body itself, but also the history of similar body modifications, which, as affectively charged corporeal traces, make their mark in the materiality of the body, and emerge in recollection and in the production of imaginary associations. The productive power of imaginaries in embodied experience produces imagined places through matrices of affect, materiality and power. Imaginaries write themselves on and through bodies, producing subjects at the same time as those subjects dream their materialisation. Images circulate through this embodied imagination – images that are traces of former ideas of bodily modifications, recalled as memory, worked on with reason, and associated with other images in the production of experience.

The body processes, stores and transmits affects, makes associations, works on and through them, and produces something new with the results. Cultural landscapes then emerge from a presubjective ontogenesis in part through their being worked upon by becoming bodies. A focusing on the body as a nexus and interface for affect and imagination erodes any residual mind/body dualism, as imagination and affect are understood through the body's capacity to feel, to move and to affect. This elides the possibility of there being a presocial or precultural realm, since a raw sociality underpins the ontological basis for this formulation. We are at birth embedded into social relations which lead us to develop our sense of how to understand, act and practise.

This focus enables a thorough consideration of the ways in which practices, technologies and discursive structures produce subjects and places. The subject is considered here to be produced through material relations that affect the body, and this mode of analysis of the structures of experience that emerge through these relations is an important supplement to an analytic of discursive power. To think Spinoza with a Foucauldian critique of the subject incorporates experience into the analysis of subjectivation, yet positions that experience outside of the phenomenological subject through consideration of the material relations

through which experience surfaces in bodies at the moment of encounter.

At the beginning of the chapter I discussed the way in which Matless' *Landscape and Englishness* demonstrated how particular landscape cultures are produced and the way in which certain forms of citizenship emerge from these productions. I also suggested that Matless' reliance on a genealogical analysis of text exposed a space between the body and the text. Through the analyses of contemporary landscape cultures in this chapter, I have attempted to show how the concept of the embodied imagination can help to suture this, and also to materialise the text through its encounters with bodies. The concept of the embodied imagination allows for a consideration of the way in which experiential fields that lie outside of the subject are constitutive of subjective experience through the embodied encounter.

The landscapes discussed in these recountings and retellings emerge as imagined assemblages of body and world, shot through with affective, material and imaginary significance, which produce particular ways of being in the world that are based on shared social imaginaries. Institutionally and culturally sanctioned vocabularies and cultural landscapes rely on historical practices, institutions and texts, and as a result perform these. These texts and practices offer a vocabulary through which to speak, but prior to this speech comes the experience, the bodily intensities, the memories called to presence of texts, conversations, images, sensations, that are brought forward in the experiential moment, in the bodily sensations that bring about imaginaries. As I mentioned previously in the chapter, *without the capacity of the body's modification through sensory triggers to set off the relay that erupts in the imagination, bodies and landscapes would not exist as such*. The configurations of light and dark, sound and silence, movement and stillness, pressure and lightness, heat and cold around which these constellations of sensations aggregate may be articulated using familiar and practised vocabularies, or may indeed interrupt these, emerging through the interstices between body, landscape and text.

Chapter 7: Affective bodies and the interruption

Introduction

This chapter explores three incidents, or altercations that I have named ‘interruptions’ - events that cause bodies to move in unexpected ways, to react somatically to situations so that the subject is *surprised*. In the interlude I argued that the interruption can be adopted as a locus from which to interrogate the body – to ask questions of the productive regimes that have produced that body such that it will experience particular responses. This chapter attempts to exemplify how attention to the interruption can reveal something of the processes of subjectivation and the production and tapping into of experiential fields that contribute to the sort of body politics that I have been discussing in the previous chapters. The interruption is used here as a way of considering how the body’s affective response to particular situations contributes to, reinforces and at times disrupts the political and material rationalities of its own imaginative production.

It may seem a strange choice, when undertaking fieldwork, to focus on the altercations, the uneasy experiences, the moments when things go wrong. However, I posit that it is through these moments, and through a consideration of the body of the researcher as a tool through which to tap into various affective flows that produce regimes of practice, that one can reveal so much more than through a genealogical analysis alone. It is for this reason that this chapter can be considered as a supplement to the previous one – both chapters focus on landscape imaginaries and the production of place through practice, memory and iteration. However, in this chapter, those smooth edges that constitute imaginaries are disrupted through the event of the interruption. In the event, subjects emerge, embody and give materialisation to the different ways in which places are made. In the affective intensity of the altercation, embodied politics reveal themselves – they are made *manifest* through the response. The altercations discussed in this chapter reveal the contested qualities of space, and how these contestations work through bodies. However, this is not just a description of positionality: rather, the somatic intensities of the interruption are considered in terms of an ongoing process through which places and subjects constitute themselves and feed back – how the micropolitical works at the level of transcorporeal singularities in its production of the macropolitical arena of class and gender politics.

Drawing on the concepts introduced and discussed during the thesis, such as the embodied imagination, affect and the experiential field, this chapter serves to demonstrate how the theoretical approaches elaborated in the first part of the thesis, when brought to a specific example of a bodily interruption, can be useful in contributing to an ongoing politics of affect. The writing of this chapter owes something to two recent ‘writerly’ academics’ approaches to landscape: the work of Kathleen Stewart and Elspeth Probyn, both read during the early period of my PhD research, specifically in terms of the way in which they attempt to tease out the micropolitical flows of affect through the exploration of specific events. While ultimately I feel that Probyn’s account (described below) is more successful in both her writing style and her interrogation of the affective response, Stewart offers some interesting contributions to the debate in terms both of her approach to social inquiry and her focus on modes of attunement, or attendance.

In Stewart’s work on flows of affect through small town America, ordinary affects are described as:

things that happen. They happen in impulses, sensations, expectations, daydreams, encounters, and habits of relating, in strategies and their failures, in forms of persuasion, contagion, and compulsion, in modes of attention, attachment, and agency, and in publics and social worlds of all kinds that catch people up in something that feels like *something*... They work not through meanings per se, but rather in the way that they pick up density and texture as they move through bodies, dreams, dramas and social wordings of all kinds. Their significance lies in the intensities they build and in what thoughts and feelings they make possible...what potential modes of knowing, relating and attending to things are already somehow present in them in a state of potentiality and resonance (Stewart 2007:3).

This approach – to attempt to grasp the affective circuits that flow through bodies and spaces - allows a very specific engagement with the idea of materiality. In beginning with Stewart’s book I draw attention to the site of the body in space as a position of enquiry, and consider how forces are made visible in their effects. The body, as a conduit for affect, is a medium through which forces flow, but also one which, through its capacity to dream, to imagine, to synthesise, is able to alter the trajectories of some forces.

Stewart’s *Ordinary Affects* describes particular spaces, encounters and moments in the passage of lives lived out in neighbourhoods in the USA. Forces that give shape to lives are not deadened or further sedimented through their naming, but merely positioned in the text as “a scene of immanent force” (Stewart 2007:1). In doing this, Stewart adopts a particular mode of attending whereby the author’s voice in the third person, (the “she”) attempts to pull out the relations, the forces at play in the making of particular affective spaces, and

is not so much a subject position or an agent in hot pursuit of something definitive as a point of contact; instead she gazes, imagines, senses, takes on, performs, and asserts not a flat and finished truth but some possibilities (and threats) that have come into view (Stewart 2007:5).

In this way the methodological approach situates the researcher within an economy – a circulation - of affect, attuning herself to the affective resonances, connections and surfacings that make up the ordinary, and that may be overlooked by social scientists trained in empirical observation and acculturated into a subject/object division. While Stewart's intentions are valid, however, I do not accept that a third person approach is necessary in order to communicate the way in which flows of affect circulating through the event are always prior to subject production. While the third person displaces the subject from the 'I' position, it is simply reintroduced through the 'she' position. A more honest approach would perhaps to be to interrogate the subject rather than attempt to elide her. A focus on the body as site of subject-production, yet considered through an approach that displaces the subject, does just that, and it is for this reason that I choose to begin with the interruption, as a somatic event.

In this thesis, through the work of Spinoza and other recent Spinozist philosophers, I have considered the concept of affect as central to a materialist politics of the subject. I have outlined this through an exploration of recent philosophical engagements with materiality and post-humanist or post-phenomenological ontology in order to rethink materialism and spatiality. Accordingly, I suggest that, in terms of an epistemological concern to find a social science that can deal with the deconstruction of the subject, the subject needs to *resurface* as a decentred site, a site through which to explore the affective webs of relation that give shape to lives, and through which sense is made of lives lived. In repositioning the subject at a decentred centre, it becomes a catalyst for academic knowledge production, insofar as those materialities of affect flow through it and surface at its limits. This allows for a mode of attending to situations that takes into account the way in which the world is imagined, dreamed into being, and moreover, locates those dreamings and imaginaries not in opposition to a real or a material, but as part of that field – as “the condition of there being a real for us” (Lennon 2004:107).

A focus on the mundane, the 'ordinary' as the object of cultural enquiry (Williams 1989) moves away from studying affect in terms of a search for those epiphanic moments of exhilaration, of terror or of ecstasy, towards an understanding of the role of affective

relations between bodies and other bodies, and bodies and worlds in the making of lives. Affect comes to presence in details, in terms of changes that take place on the surfaces of bodies and in foldings within bodies – changes in responses to situations as imagined, lived and dreamed. The point at which they surface as a change in state or action of a body materialises them; their materiality consists in their taking part in the world of bodies and spaces and things. They can exert what Kathleen Stewart calls “palpable pressures” (Stewart 2007:6).

The interruption can be considered as a site of intensity through which feelings, textures and resonances emerge, and which is already tied into relations of force and productive power that constitute bodies as attuned to respond affectively in particular ways. The concept of the experiential field is also activated here as a means of thinking about the affective relations that emerge in the encounters between spaces and bodies. The researcher can, to a greater or lesser degree, respond and become attuned to these moments – make connections, argue for their significance, become self-consciously materialist through a reflexive and ongoing attention to the way in which philosophy and life can be thought and performed together (Hampshire 1969).

Elsbeth Probyn’s account, in her book *Blush*, of her tearful response to the sense of her body being out of place provides a useful exemplar for thinking about what the interruption reveals about the collective affective imaginaries that are shared and produced through texts and other sensory encounters. In this account she describes a journey to Uluru (Ayer’s Rock), and her unexpected outburst at the moment of encounter. She also describes here, and in her other work, how this response might relate to certain historical and biographical fields that could promote the possibility of such an affective response (Probyn 1999, 2004, 2005). This description of a specific body/landscape configuration draws attention to the somatic nature of imaginaries, their deeply felt, affective and embodied nature. In describing her visceral and precognitive affective reaction that she explains and rearticulates as a subject in terms of an out-of-placeness, a longing, she explores the encounter as historical, embodied and immediate: ‘the physiological experience of shame intersects with the physicality of place. The color, the place, the history of bodies all come alive’ (Probyn 2005:40).

Probyn's outburst of sobbing on the sight of Uluru (Ayers' Rock) in the Australian desert is discussed in terms of an embodied, historicised relation to place, through collectively imagined images of nation, landscape and belonging, to which her ambivalent sense of being *outside*, distanced from, led to her tears: "the image of the rock burned in my sense of Australia' (Probyn 2005:43). The embodied historicised subject's shame at seeing Uluru, Ayers Rock, while hearing 'the anthem of good white Australia' – *Beds Are Burning* by Midnight Oil – became a "white-hot intensity that burned through layers of memory and perception" – a feeling that "I have never felt so out of place in my life or so simultaneously desired to be a part of that place" (Probyn 2005:44).

The affective intensity of bodily sensation described here is a sudden eruption that takes place precisely because of the imaginative associations surrounding a particular place as experienced in the present by one body and in the past by many others: because of her distinct subjectivity as a foreigner who keenly feels her whiteness, her privilege, and her role in the perceived destruction of a symbol of a nation built on violence and racism. These imaginative associations are hinted at in her evocation of the song, the redness of the desert, the recognition of the image and its textual resonances that formed her *idea* of the place in terms of related notions of identity, belonging, history and politics. Here are the materialities of an 'other' landscape, a landscape whose image appears as an iconic form in ubiquitous representations of Australia, and also contains within its indeterminate meaning a history of a country where some bodies are marked as different, as less valid than others. White guilt and shame is played out in the encounter with the landscape, through this conjunction of materialities: a shame that is perhaps heightened through experience of political knowledge and activism, of witnessings of racism, of a discomfort with privilege. In this passage, the body out of place is recognised in its shamed response, where affect is a visceral sensation emerging from the investment of the body in particular imaginaries of home, territory, whiteness and estrangement, intensified and provoked by a hot, dry landscape that must always feel 'other' to a body that has spent its life in cold countries, and from the power of the monumental landscape in the imaginary of Australia as an adopted home – the desire to be part of it enacted through this 'pilgrimage'. In this account, the body *is* its response and is produced and reproduced through the repetitions and differences of response and poesis. In other words, it cannot be understood outside of its reactions to places, spaces, ideas and imaginaries. To speak of the body as independent of its affects is to misunderstand what the body, and its capacity to imagine, to affect and to be affected, is.

This example clearly informs a Spinozist understanding of the relationship between imagination and embodied experience. Probyn effectively *historicises* that imagined experience through her intimately relating the experience to context in an attempt to politicise and collectivise the affective response. The body, in its affective relation to landscape materialities as imagined through bodily modifications, responds with reference to its own past affections, and the pasts of other bodies. What is particularly clear in this description is the way in which the body is *interrupted* – the specific materialities of the world *pushing back* at the body – trigger something which in no way escapes the social. Indeed, it is the very sociality of the body that enables its response to those modifications of colour, heat and movement, as played out through the imaginative capacities of a particularly historicised body.

Taking the two texts discussed above as a starting point, I argue that a mode of attending to the interruption can be developed which enables a rigorous consideration of embodied politics. Considering the embodied materiality of affect ties the affective register into processes of subjectivation. Where affects surface at the capillary endings, in the response of bodies, more can be revealed through interrogation of these moments, which can reveal the way in which history is enfolded through the body's materiality – both imagined and affective. It is in this revealing that a politics can be uncovered – *a politics of the feeling body*.

What I am drawing attention to here is the way in which the body can reveal its sociality, its embeddedness within relations that afford different bodies different capacities, and which show how the presubjective never lies outside of the social. Indeed, in doing this, I intend to provide a response to those recent feminists of embodiment who place too much emphasis on the body as lying outside of sociality (for example Grosz and Braidotti) in favour of a more situated materialism through Foucault and Butler (Foucault 1972, 1978, 1979, 1982, 1988, 1992; Butler 1993; Braidotti 1994; Grosz 1994; Foucault 2005; Butler 2006). However, I cannot state strongly enough the dangers and problems of overcelebrating these aspects of embodied thought over rational or cognitive orders. A naïve faith in the body 'knowing what is best', or a privileging of those embodied, more-than-representational knowledges over more conscious modes of thought firstly sets up a false dichotomy between the rational and the emotional, and secondly introduces a naïve association of the body with nature. It is imperative to this argument that the interruption is *not* considered in this light, indeed my

argument states the direct opposite – that the body is always imbricated in the social, and that nothing escapes this. Instead, my argument is that these aspects of embodied knowledge and thought need to be attended to and interrogated as much as other modes of thought.

Through thinking about the embodied subject's responses (in terms of a thoroughly materialist response to memory, dream, sensation and association), it is possible to situate particular encounters in a relational politics of affect, that can point to moments of resistance, escape, frustration and hopelessness in terms of particular assemblages of materialities, capacities and imaginings. It can point to specific sites where bodies are enabled to imagine and perform things otherwise, and also to where affects converge around spaces of control or exploitation. It can focus on the way in which affects are manipulated, and how the affective relation can be transformed and new spaces opened up. Thinking in this way has considerable implications for a spatial politics of the body.

The interruption, then, is a scholarly interrogation of moments when the body responds, and the subject emerges through that response. These moments of interruption, moments when we experience a general unease, a jolt, when we retch with disgust, when we react unthinkingly, can tell us much about the way in which our bodies are thoroughly constituted through the social, how our muscular development, our digestive systems and our neural pathways are always imbricated in the social and, moreover, that they themselves instantiate and perform the social. The central question asked when interrogating the interruption, then, becomes: *what presubjective politics inhabit the subject and reveal the sociality of its bodily responses?*

This approach can attempt to uncover how relationships between bodies with more or less capacity to act inscribe themselves onto and through bodies, surfacing in particular, perhaps unsettling ways. Interruptions point to an excess of affect which can be interrogated, that we can step back from and consider the processes through which a body might react in such a way:

Attention to the uncanny moment ... puts you in a better position to work upon those fugitive registers of being that are pertinent to stability or innovation but unamenable to argument or representation. There is much more to thinking than argument (Connolly, 2002:73).

Three examples are used below in order to exemplify how the concept of the interruption can be activated in a deconstructive politics of the body. The first uses a narrative related during a walking interview in Cornwall, South West England. The second two are taken from ethnographic field notes, also conducted in South West England, during fieldwork visits with other people. All three examples are significant as they point to the playing out of particular – and regional – politics of class, territory, privilege and belonging as articulated through specific interactions that play through bodies and bring about the interruption. Through the embodied, imaginative encounter, landscapes may be tied to dreams, hopes, memories imaginaries and other affects. Dreams of escape, dreams of a simple life, or of a finished life (Stewart 2007) are given substance in their incorporation in imaginaries of particular landscapes and places. Affects are considered here as trans-corporeal, yet surfacing in and through the embodied encounter. In this way the dreams and affects that Stewart writes about emerge in embodied encounters with landscape, and also begin to point to a materialist politics of affect that is revealed through this.

Malevolent inscriptions

This example refers to a later incident in the walking interview in Cornwall that I discuss in detail in the previous chapter. The combination of childhood memories and particular sensory associations produced landscape imaginaries that were imbued with a deeply felt affective response retroduced as *belonging*. This sense provides the context of the interruption: I have described landscape imaginaries and their relation to embodied memory and history, and suggested how these can work with and through sensation to produce a sense of belonging which is both past and future orientated. I have also suggested that the repeated exposure to specific materialities, accompanied with positive affects, can lead to a sense of belonging, familiarity and fondness, which is of course a central tenet of Spinoza's *Ethics* (Spinoza 1996). Having 'set the scene' then, we can turn to the interruption. This happened later the same day and is offered as a way of thinking through some of the ideas discussed during the course of the thesis: namely, the affective subject displaced as the site of attention to the flows of affect that belie subjectivity's emergence, the possibility of a politics based on the somatic experience of the affective subject, and a rethinking of materiality in terms of the space produced through the encounter between subject and world. The dreams and imaginaries disrupted in the event are recognisable in their disruption and rely on the transsubjective flow of images and affects for their power.

As we climbed over a stile at the end of a field we noticed something written on the stile that made us stop, and silenced us for a second. The graffiti on the stile, in permanent black marker pen, said, *English out*.

The second of silence is the interruption: the pause in conversation, the charge resonating through the body as it recognises itself in those words. This is what Denise Riley means when she discusses the materiality of the speech act: “In its violently emotional materiality, the word is indeed made flesh and dwells amongst us” (Riley 2005:9).

All dreams have their others: imaginaries and experiential fields are produced and tapped into different bodies, and while fields may be shared, experience is not. When these dreams are performed and enacted, they impact on the lives and dreams of others who seek to get by, to get married, buy a house, to be able to afford to live in their own town or village, to get work in somewhere other than a hotel or bar. This is the flipside of some of these dreams of escape - those whose lives are affected by the dreams of others, whose positions within the enacted dreams of others lead to frustration, powerlessness, anger and politicisation. The coastal landscape as a space of escape, as a space for dreams of performing the self otherwise is an ambivalent space of home and struggle for others. The dreams of an imagined future homeland that presented themselves so powerfully in the previous chapter suffer an incursion by these words on the stile, written here by another body in order to affect, to provoke, to express. The power of the inscription lies partly in the incursion of graffiti (considered as an urban phenomenon) in an idealised rural leisure space of (contested) Englishness, the South West Coast path, one of the 15 ‘national trails’ that showcase the nation’s scenery (South West Coast Path National Trail Partnership 2008). The politics of the rural periphery are played out in the event and contribute to the formation of politicised identities. This inscription of the landscape also inscribes on the bodies of some of those who encounter it in, the affects and subsequent emotions of shock, guilt, anger, shame, sorrow, disapproval, approval: the inscription is noticed. Its out-of-placeness, the juxtaposition and foregrounding of economic and cultural marginalisation on this particular space affects the body. In this case, the English, outdoor, romantic body of my companion, whose sense of belonging to this part of the world is forged by childhood holidays and by affective investment in imaginaries of Cornish heritage as part of an English national heritage. The graffiti affected us both. We became aware of the politics upon which the fantasies and romantic place imaginaries are based through the reaction of our bodies to the reading of the graffiti. The visceral recognition of guilt and shock - however slight - through the affective register and named as such in our conversations

afterwards revealed the specific conjuncture of subjectivity and materiality that led to the irruption of affect at that moment of perception. To paraphrase Probyn, the body is *interested* - and the politics of the place are revealed and make themselves known through that body's interest (Probyn 2005). The English subject who sees this space as part of her land, as home, who infuses the materialities of the landscapes as experienced with dreams and hopes and imagined futures, perhaps based on ideas of a potential home, has been interrupted. There is a disconnect, a severance. Belonging, elation, freedom, dreams of being at home here are at once stalled. And with this interruption comes loss – the sense that this space is no longer hers to claim and the foundation, perhaps, of the melancholy of privilege. The realisation that claims of belonging and homeland are based on narratives of authenticity, of blood and soil that cannot be appropriated easily. This playground built on a history of economic exploitation of peripheral relations, built on a juxtaposition of economic dependency and stunning scenery is also imbued with authenticities that give it the sense of what it is, yet at the same time restrict appropriation. The "dreams of finished surfaces", of imagined future and complete selves often have undersides that can haunt (Stewart 2007:50). Reading the politics of these dreams and imaginaries through the body, through the affective resonances produced in its encounter with specific landscapes offers us a new reading of politics - a humanist politics for the posthuman age, which, while decentring the subject, acknowledges it and the processes through which the subject emerges as such. Here is a focus on the conjunction of subjectivity and materiality through an embodied reading of affect, as the basis for a decentred analysis of the subject, since the subject is not taken as origin but rather as a participant in a relay of forces, materialities and affects that can be used as a gauge for exploring the conditions for the emergence of the subject. These dreams and imaginaries and connections can flow through subjects, producing subjects in their wake, and can be 'read off' the body, meaning that it is possible to trace their occurrence and differentiated form through different bodies.

A campsite incident

The second example discussed here concerns an incident that occurred at a campsite in North Devon. The writing style differs in this example as it is an explicit attempt to write outside of the subject, in order to evoke more clearly the notion of the experiential field as that which moves through, around and between bodies. Bodies 'tap into' that experiential field through their differently inscribed histories, and in doing so, similar but different experiences are produced through the specific (non)-relation that is productive of and

produced by the field itself.

Exmoor National Park. A field by a stream in a valley. A little sign on the gate says *camping*, and that's it. It's late spring, and barbecues and camp fires are starting to burn. There is drinking and chatting and running and playing and paddling. A buzzard wheels above the field. The sky is blue and a yellowish light infuses the field with colour. Everything is burgeoning, green. The imaginary of Exmoor as outdoor leisure space is mobilised in the sign marking the space as a campsite, luring bodies and vehicles towards the field. Flags and tents are put up, firewood is collected. A guitar comes out. A blanket becomes the centre for a group of bodies, who talk and laugh.

The volleyball net is erected and some of the group move towards it and start to play. There is joking, laughing: a collective participation in the experiential field of the game. A new field of experience is activated when a dog defecates near the net, and returns to a tent away from the game. The players become aware of their bare feet. Different bodies react in different ways to the event. Anger and righteous indignation moves through some of the playing bodies, as well as confusion, ambivalence and bemusement in the face of the horror of others, working as intensities bouncing against each other in and through the playing bodies. For some, the indignation was accompanied by a sense of propriety – a history of understanding of matter out of place: a misfit in the imaginary production of an experiential field of organised fun in the countryside. For others, no such charge was activated. One member moves towards where the dog has gone, to tell the group what has happened. There is no response. The play continues, but the affects continue to resonate and circulate within the players' bodies: the hostile encounter coursing through bodies and building tension, anxiety, a slight change in direction.

Time passes and anticipation continues. For some members of the group, tension builds. Will the other group clear up the dog poo? The indeterminacy of the event is felt through the conditions that point to the possibilities of its differential unfolding. The indeterminacy resonates as looks are exchanged, between the volleyball players and towards the dog. One of the volleyballers assumes responsibility, gets a plastic bag, clears up the poo, and takes it over to the dog owners. Moral landscapes are forged through this act. They are doing the proper thing.

The response comes back: 'If you'd given me two minutes, I would have done that... Where do you think you are? This is Exmoor. There's animal shit everywhere. We live here. We come here all the time'.

The dog activates a movement in the experiential field. The affects that emerge in response to this activation arise from a tropistic reaction that is accompanied by imaginative associations with particular practices regarding the disposal of dog faeces that are *expected*, in conjunction with the collective perception of the aberrant act, communicated through the eyes, through the head, through changes in movement and in conversation.

This response moves through the group. The words carry affective charge, even when relayed. The act rejigs and shifts the experiential field. The game continues, but in a slightly less carefree style. Muscles tighten – care is taken not to let the ball stray too far near the other tents. Sides are taken: the potentials afforded by proximity to the other party – of a convivial beer round the camp fire later that evening – are foreclosed by this encounter as the meeting of differently historied bodies activated through the material production of “matter out of place” (Douglas 2002:36). The event changes the collective fields of affect and force, producing new relational dynamics acted out through bodies during the course of the evening and the next morning. Histories of living in towns, memories of dirty pavements, of litter, of treading in dog poo, a middle-class sense of social responsibility, associations of parks and bags and bins and fines if you don't clear it up, play out for some as memorial traces that lead to a sense of what is *right*. Histories of belonging, difference, open country, freedom, hostility and encroachment play out for others as memorial traces

that lead to a sense of what is *right*. Within the event, different bodies carry with them the traces of macropolitical structures of class, rurality and belonging that are played out in the micropolitical affective space of the experiential field. The event produces its subjects and its responses. Triggers set off reactions in bodies that respond according to their histories as they encounter the relational dynamics that the specificities of the space open up.

A camper van incident

We travelled to Dorset in the camper van. Jo wanted to stay at Kimmeridge Bay – it had been on Springwatch, and looked amazing, and there were all sorts of birds and plants there. We had the idea that we would park overnight in the car park overlooking the bay, and wake up in the morning and see the sun rise over the bay, and stroll down to the sea with our cups of tea, and possibly have a swim. There were three of us – Jo, me and Meg the dog. We'd just come from the Tolpuddle Martyrs' festival, where we'd watched a re-enactment of the effects of the enclosures movement at the end of the 18th century, and had an animated discussion of this historical event. It was dark by the time we'd had a pub dinner and got to Kimmeridge. We drove up and down winding lanes, past high hedgerows and beautiful views of the sea, past Corfe Castle and down down down to the car park. Further up the lane we saw some other campers in a little car park, but we wanted to be nearer the sea.

As we drove past a gate, I saw a sign that marked the road as a private road, and a notice saying that to park cost £5.00. We had met two sisters on a hill earlier, and they had suggested we come and camp down at Kimmeridge. They said that the parking man didn't come by until 9 or 10 in the morning. A feeling of worry started to grip me, a visceral sense that we were doing something that was against the rules. The sign said no camping. Surely we could just stay in the van until morning, then go on our way? Our bodies were exhausted from late nights and laughter and singing and lots and lots of ale. We went straight into the back and got under the covers. Meg stayed in the cab of the van, on a blanket. There was a light on in the cottage in the distance. The car park had portable toilets and was flat, perfect for camping in the van. It was also very empty. We knew that when we woke up the view would be incredible. We fell asleep almost straight away.

At 12:30 am, the dog started barking maniacally. I woke up straight away, terrified of what she might be barking at. A powerful torch was being shone onto the windscreen. We lay quivering in the back. A man's voice shouted 'You in there. You've got 10 minutes to get your backsides out of here or I'm calling the police'. We opened the back door. 'Hello', we called. 'We're round here'. We were hoping to have a chat and find out what the problem was. He didn't come to the back of the van. He has left with his torch, refusing to engage in any conversation or dialogue. He left behind him a barking frightened border collie, and two terrified and angry women. Our hearts were beating double time, and we were shaking with anger, fear and injustice. Our already politicised sense of private and public property, of land rights and access to the coast and countryside intensified through the day's events and discussions, worked through our bodies, jangling our nerves, unsettling every muscle and coursing through our veins in anger.

Histories of bodies clashing and histories of power relations led to our embodied response: the ownership of land by private estates, the influx of tourists leaving litter behind them, the play about the enclosures movement, the legal status of land near the coast, the persecution of travellers, the sudden noise and shock perhaps of the barking dog, the body roused from sleep, the cover of darkness. All of these and more led to the affective state our bodies found themselves in, the coming together of histories of countless bodies that had come before our own to this place, and to others. Histories of bodies in and out of place – histories of material relations sedimented in law that operate through specific rationalities and moral landscapes of the proper. Histories, hopes and fears. My sense that something

like this would probably happen, and that it would be horrible; our hopes for tea on the beach in the morning; our imaginings of what Kimmeridge would be like.

Kimmeridge, now, for us both, has a very different status in our imaginations. We probably won't go there again. Our conversation after the incident, when we got back in the front and drove in the dark across the Isle of Purbeck to another camping spot, where we knew we'd be safe, made sure of that. The body registered its history, but also the histories of others, through our actions in choosing to camp there and our responses when it predictably went wrong. It registered a sense of injustice that was profoundly and somatically felt, an injustice based on the notion that we didn't feel that we'd done anything bad. The lack of interaction on a human level from the faceless voice with the torch angered us more, worked up our rage and indignation with great intensity. We felt we were right. Perhaps the torch man felt he was right too. I wondered what histories, what fears and hopes and previous encounters were jangling around his body – whether he felt as angry, or vindicated, or whether the dog barking scared him.

What is interesting in this incident is what it reveals – and this is not simply a psychoanalysis of an emotional response – it is a consideration of the history of material relations that produce affective response. These materialities affect the body through its imagination, and in doing so bring in other histories, other imaginaries, other institutional contexts, such that the moment of intensity – the moment when the body responds in fear and anger, can be read as the conjunction of relations that stretch far beyond the bodies here and now – the traces of other bodily intensities, perhaps felt far in the past or in another place, but nevertheless productive of the bodies of the here and now. History is figured as embodied, as stitched through the present relations between bodies and places – ghosts of previous encounters of our own and other bodies that produce rationalities that become sedimented in law, text and the materiality of the landscape itself.

In this altercation, our responses cannot be separated from particular *dispositions*. The techniques and technologies that augmented those dispositions, in this place, our attitudes towards landowners and private property and access to the countryside, were clearly apparent in what had gone before. During the performance about the enclosures movement we both had tears in our eyes – our bodies had been moved and bore the traces of that

moving by the affective atmosphere of the space, by the music, and by our own augmentation of the affective response through our own interactions. In the car after the festival we discussed enclosures, and land, and property, the difficulty of finding places to camp in the camper van, and the lack of public land in the United Kingdom. All of these can be considered as embodied techniques and technologies through which our dispositions had been augmented, through which the potential for the incident to affect us had increased. Moreover, the incident acted upon those dispositions and augmented them. The memory of it gained purchase onto any other memory of a situation of injustice about parking, or camping, or access to the countryside, or private estates owning beaches, fuelling the politics of these issues as it sediments in the body as disposition and as intensity and perhaps as a call to action.

Conclusion

In these examples I have drawn attention to three ‘altercations’, positioned as moments of interruption that occurred through encounters of specific materialities and bodies. Through thinking about the embodied subject's responses (in terms of a wholly materialist response to memory, dream, sensation, association, that is enabled through the body's capacity to dream, remember and imagine), these encounters are situated in a relational politics of affect. The interruption takes place as a surprise – a moment when the body reacts and then checks itself, and can point to the production of imaginaries and affects that are central to the experiential field through which relations of force and power move.

The examples discussed here can inform cultural geographies through providing a lens that enables a distancing from the universalised or solipsistic subjective perspective, while at the same time considering the centrality of the embodied response, and its subjective recognition of that response in the production of subjectivity. These descriptions can be considered as meeting points, or nodes, where it is possible to think about the historicity of bodies in conjunction with certain materialities that produce something more than the experiential moment. They can point to the way in which landscape encounters, through the imaginative capacities of bodies, can not only give rise to associative images but also trigger specific affective responses which surface through those constellations of associative embodied history and meaning. The imagination encounters not only another body, experienced through the modification of the body itself, but also the history of similar body

modifications, which, as affectively charged corporeal traces, make their mark in the materiality of the body, and emerge in recollection and in the production of imaginary associations. The productive power of imaginaries in embodied experience produces imagined places through matrices of affect, materiality and power. Imaginaries write themselves on and through bodies, producing subjects at the same time as those subjects dream their materialisation. Images circulate through this embodied imagination – images that are traces of former ideas of bodily modifications, recalled as memory, worked on with reason, and associated with other images in the production of experience.

The body processes, stores and transmits affects, makes associations, works on and through them, and produces something new with the results. Landscapes, as subjective spaces of experience and of culture, then emerge from a presubjective ontogenesis in part through their being worked upon by becoming bodies. A focusing on the body as a nexus and interface for affect and imagination erodes any residual mind/body dualism, as imagination and affect are understood through the body's capacity to feel, to move and to affect. This elides the possibility of there being a presocial or precultural realm, since a raw sociality underpins the ontological basis for this formulation. We are from birth embedded into social relations which lead us to develop our sense of how to understand, act and practise.

A focus on the interruption enables a more thorough means of thinking about the practices, technologies and discursive structures that produce subjects and places. The subject is considered here to be produced through material relations that affect the body, and this mode of analysis of the structures of experience that emerge through these relations is an important supplement to an analytics of discursive power. To think Spinoza with a Foucauldian critique of the subject incorporates experience into the analysis of subjectivation, yet positions that experience outside of the phenomenological subject through consideration of the material relations through which experience surfaces in bodies at the moment of encounter. As such I have attempted to use specific textual and fieldwork examples in an attempt to rethink embodied experience using a Spinozist relational ontology, where bodies are considered as modes of Substance, and where the imagination is positioned as means by which bodies acquire knowledge of the world. Institutionally and culturally sanctioned vocabularies and cultural landscapes rely on historical practices, institutions and texts, and consequently perform these. These texts and practices give a vocabulary through which to speak, but prior to this speech comes the experience, the

bodily intensities, the memories called to presence of texts, conversations, images, sensations, that are brought forward in the experiential moment, in the bodily sensations through which the revelatory power of the interruption can be accessed.

The structure of these two chapters enables us to think about the way in which the body's affective register, and the embodied imagination are both able to expose and conceal power relations through their ability to make bodies *feel*. In the previous chapter, I discussed the way in which social imaginaries and landscape cultures are produced through bodies, which are considered as the point of encounter between the subject and the text. These imaginaries, as well as the relations of productive power that flow through these imaginaries are *concealed* through their very semblance of normality, of what *feels natural*. In this chapter, these relations are troubled through the concept of the interruption, which emerges to draw attention to the body's imbrication in historical relations. I have argued that the interruption as figured through the body can be used as a way of *revealing* the workings of power in the production of the subject, through the use of one's own and others' bodies as indicators, adopting a reflexive materialist practice of inquiry.

Chapter 8: Techniques of the self and the embodied imagination

Introduction

The concept of the embodied imagination can contribute to thinking about the way in which certain practices, techniques and technologies are incorporated through bodies in order to produce specific relations of the self to the self. This chapter works towards developing an account of techniques of the self based on the work of the later Foucault which, through the idea of the embodied imagination, attempts to engage more fully with the production of *experience* as central to the process of subjectivation. Central to this is the production of experiential *time* through memory, through specific technologies which assist the presencing of memories and future possibilities into the here and now, and through attempts to 'hold on' to experience as a mnemonic for future memory. As a result, this chapter positions the spectralities of memories and imagined futures as central tools for the production of temporal experience and of the self. I argue that bodies imagine future and past selves as a way of thinking about the self in time, in the making of a life.

The self, as the focus of conceptual inquiry, is considered as produced through practices which attempt to situate experience and practice in time, and to bring to presence futures and pasts in order to attain a sense of continuity, progression and narrative through which the idea of *a self* and *a life* is constituted. In particular, I discuss how bodies and technologies are co-constituting in the production of experience, drawing on examples from fieldwork as well as from texts in order to consider how the work of the embodied imagination can be augmented or supplemented through cultural and technological forms, which are then considered as 'prostheses'. Examples in this chapter come from fieldwork walking the South West Coast Path, and from the archives of the South West Coast Path Association. Again, the fieldwork serves primarily as a springboard for thinking about concepts rather than as 'empirical data' as such. Leisure walking in the UK as a landscape culture, as discussed in chapter six, is configured here as a technique of the self. I suggest that the embodied imagination is mobilised in the reflexive performance of the self, and that central to this technique is the imagination of future and past selves. An archive of diaries and photodiaries produced by coast path walkers is also drawn upon to discuss how technologies and bodies are co-constitutive of the production of temporality that involved in this project of the self. This is also illustrated with reference to Wim Wenders' film *Until the End of the World* (1991), where the *prosthetic* implications of recording technology is

discussed. I argue that experience is co-constituted between bodies, materialities and spaces, in part through these prosthetic devices, which are used to presence futures, to recall pasts and to mark the movement of a life. To this end, I compare the use of these technologies with Foucault's concept of self-writing (Foucault 1997). The last section moves on to discuss how recent moves in geography towards the idea of the spectral can helpfully trouble the metaphysics of presence, and thus can enable a consideration of how these technicities and techniques of imagination and technology are involved in the production of the self, and also in the production of temporality.

Techniques of the self

While Foucault was always concerned with a critique of the subject through his theorising of power, the late Foucault supplements the idea of subjectivity as an internalisation of power relations with the actively emerging and worked upon "technologies of the self" that is a result of productive power. In particular, the second and third volumes of *The History of Sexuality*, and accompanying lectures at the Collège de France and the University of California, Berkeley, posited the idea of the subject in these terms (Foucault 1982, 1983, 1987, 1988, 1992, 2005). Foucault provided a genealogical analysis of the way in which human beings in western societies constitute *themselves* as subjects, performing a critical analysis of the means and processes through which this sense of self occurs – a genealogy of our relation to our selves. New forms of subjectivity which reconfigure power relations, then, can emerge through the project of producing a critical ontology of the self. Approaches to the body that rely on an understanding of its own self-production through iterative performance are central to this understanding of the modern self-subject (see chapter two). As Mitchell Dean points out, Foucault

asked questions not about the true nature of our identity but about how we come to invest so much in all this talk about identity, self and subjectivity, how we come to locate the truth of being in what we take to be deepest structures of our self (not only our sexuality, but also our memories and our childhood) and how authority comes to constitute, inscribe and invest itself in the different ways we produce true and false statements about who we are and what we should become (Dean 1996:212).

A destabilisation of the subject and consideration of the self as active process of desire for fullness, constantly produced and reproduced through regimes of power and through specific relations of oneself to oneself, allows subjectivity to be thought of in terms of *process*. The subject is considered as central to its own self-production through its actively partaking in practices and techniques of the body, which are techniques of thought that constitute the effect of the self. The illusion of the subject as originary core is maintained

by conscious efforts to produce the idea of the stable, continuous self through the workings of these techniques and technologies of the self. However, this is not to equate the technologies of the self with false consciousness; the self is not a screen to mask an inner nub of truth. The self exists purely through its own techniques: its immanent production as part of regimes of power and relation.

This critical ontology of the self involves a ‘deconstruction’ of interiority through thinking the subject in terms of an infolding of surfaces. As I discussed in chapter two, Gilles Deleuze’s writing on Foucault discusses subjectivation (*assujétissement*) and the critique of interiority through the notion of the fold. For Deleuze, Foucault provides a philosophy of the surface: “in all his work Foucault seems haunted by this theme of an inside which is merely the fold of the outside” (Deleuze 1988a:81). The notion of the fold, an infolding of exteriority, allows a thinking of an inside as “an operation of an outside”, a “depth” caused by the fold as a “density withdrawn into itself” (Deleuze 1988a:81). Deleuze writes of how Foucault showed how the Greeks “folded force”, and effectively “invented the subject but only as a derivative or the product of subjectivation” (Deleuze 1988a:84). Subjectivation is seen to involve affect on the self by the self, through a folding of force. The subject is created and individuated through the fold, allowing a clearer consideration of the notion of interiority as an effect of surfaces, the inside as a function of the outside (Deleuze 1988a). Nikolas Rose, drawing on Foucault and Deleuze, discusses the historicity and contingency of the notion of the subject/self as interiority, arguing that the way in which we come to understand ourselves as an essential innerness, with an “individualised, interiorised, totalised and psychologised understanding of what it is to be human” is “the site of a historical problem” (Rose 1996:129). Interiority is revealed as the result of a process of mythologising the subject, an in-turning of an outside through folds that “incorporate without totalising, internalise without unifying, collect together discontinuously in the form of pleats making surfaces, spaces, flows and relations” (Rose 1996:143). The critique of interiority allows us to consider the way in which subjects work to *stabilise* the category of the human through how we imagine ourselves as subjects of a biography – through the processes of narrativisation and the drawing on particular regimes and vocabularies in order to stabilise the self.

In the third volume of *The History of Sexuality* Foucault discusses a particular relation of

oneself to oneself found in Ancient Greece – the *epimeleia heautou* – or the care of the self. This mode or relation involved an ethics of taking care of the body and the soul and of others through a concern with the self, manifest in particular technologies and practices. These regimes involved a specific type of focus and vigilance on the self, and practices to control and modify the self according to a personal ethics based on written and discursive moral codes. An analysis of various texts of the first centuries revealed an

insistence on the attention that should be brought to bear on oneself; it is the modality, scope, constancy, and exactitude of the required vigilance; it is the anxiety concerning all of the disturbances of the body and the mind, which must be prevented by means of an austere regimen (Foucault 1988:41).

The cultivation of the self involved a medicalisation or somaticisation of the relation to the self through particular attention to the body, which was seen to threaten the soul with its weaknesses. The ethics of care of the self involved a specific relation to the body, where excess was discouraged and particular measured activities were seen as favourable: this involved particular health “regimens, physical exercises without overexertion, the carefully measured satisfaction of needs” (Foucault 1988:51). The body was controlled through regimen as a structure of conduct, seen as both voluntary and rational, involving a concern with regulation and avoidance of excess, and also of passivity, seen as morally inferior to activity, in the sexual role and in other areas of life. Medicine provided

a corpus of knowledge and rules, a way of living, a reflective mode of relation to oneself, to one’s body, to food, to wakefulness and sleep, to the various activities, and to the environment (Foucault 1988:100).

Practices, spaces, relations thereby all became valorised in terms of their healthy or unhealthy properties.

The care of the self was seen as an inherently *social* rather than an isolated individual mode of being – as inscribed in discourse and practice, in relations with others as well as the self, and in the form of the monitoring of the self as another would:

the care of the self is therefore shot through with the presence of the Other: the other as guide of one’s life, the other as the correspondent to whom one writes and before whom one takes stock of oneself, the other as helpful friend, benevolent relative (Gros 2005:536–7).

The cultivation of the self, then, took the form of the intensification and valorisation of relations of oneself to oneself – the growth in the importance of these relations in the living out of an ethical life.

The ideas and technologies of the *epimeleia heautou* became institutionalised into a truly

social phenomenon. The regimes, maintenance of the self and practices through which the self is taken care of – the relationship of oneself to oneself – through their sociality and institutionalisation emerged as a culture of the self whereby responsibility to oneself according to specific standards was valorised socially (Foucault 1983). Foucault writes of the

concern with self as a universal precept and real practice – many individuals respond to its call, it has its institutions, its rules, its methods, its techniques, its exercise and it is also a mode of experience – individual and collective – with its means and forms of expression – this is why we can speak of a culture of self (Foucault 1983).

It is this enculturation of the care of the self, and the institutionalisation of the relation of the self to itself in the form of the valorisation of a moral way of being, that enabled it to act as an authoritative regime of practice. Its sociality existed in its relationality – the way in which the care of the self emerged through relations with others:

Around the care of the self, there developed an entire activity of speaking and writing in which the work of oneself on oneself and communication with others were linked together....it constituted, not an exercise in solitude, but a true social practice (Foucault 1988:51).

This interplay of care of the self and tending to others enabled new kinds of relationships, blending into pre-existing relationships:

The care of the self, or the attention one devotes to the care that others should take of themselves – appears then as an intensification of social relations (Foucault 1988:53).

Foucault's discussion of the care of the self in antiquity raises the question of contemporary relations to the self, and forces a consideration of the techniques, practices and regimes through which these relations are produced. By considering the self as effect of the techniques and practices of its production, a focus on the relation of self to self enables a close analysis of processes of subjectivation. Unlike the relation of the care of the self, a contemporary Western relation, according to Foucault, as developed through technologies such as the Christian confession and psychotherapeutics is concerned more with "knowing oneself" than taking care of the self as an ethical practice. As a result, these relations encourage the imagining of the self in terms of a kernel that is available for access if one practises the right introspective regimens, rather than seeing the self in a constant process of emergence through regimen and relation. What Foucault refers to as the "California cult of the self", whose practices are based on self-contemplation and introspection, are considered very different from the ethic of the care of the self of the ancient, which does not pursue a truth of the self, but endeavours not to lose control of pains and pleasures (Gros 2005). The modern relation with the self in terms of "knowing

oneself” is sedimented in the various technologies of institutions such as medicine and religion, whereby knowledge and introspection are rendered into a particular *vocabulary* derived from a source of authority which is intimately related to power. Foucault argues that the modern culture of self is now imposed by the other (as non-self), and in doing so has lost its independence from the other found in the immanent self-relation in the *epimeleia heautou*. While I think there are problems with this assertion, and with some of the ways in which Foucault’s ethics emerge from his analyses of these relations,⁶⁶ to consider the self and the subject as surface effects rather than origins opens up the processes, techniques and vocabularies leading to these effects for enquiry and analysis. The question of how subjective individualisations emerge from an originary social field is central to this pursuit: what are the processes through which this sociality is productive of the individual and the self?

Deleuze’s contribution to Foucault’s critique of the subject also comes in his discussion of the double:

The double is never a projection of the interior; on the contrary, it is an interiorisation of the outside. It is not a doubling of the one, but a redoubling of the Other. It is not a reproduction of the Same, but a repetition of the Different. It is not the emanation of the ‘I’, but something that places in immanence an always-other or a Non-self. It is never the other who is a double in the doubling process, it is a self that lives me as the double of the other: I do not encounter myself on the outside, I find the other in me (Deleuze 1988a:81).

For Deleuze, the doubling that is the effect of the fold can be either deconstructed to reveal its hollowness (death) or followed and reinforced in a way to vitalise the outside, and inhabit it as ‘absolute memory’. The figure of the double as produced through the fold enables an understanding of the multiplicity of presence in the becoming subject. The self as imagined, as hoped for, as remembered provides the multiples which are at once an effect of the folding of the outside and the affect of the self on the self. It is the idea of doubling, of multiplicity which is a function of the ontology of the virtual that provides a way of thinking through the relationship between temporality and techniques of the self.

Techniques of the self may involve the imagination of the self as a subject of a biography – a process which occurs through narrativisation, temporalisation and the employment of particular vocabularies and techniques in order to stabilise the self and move it to presence as that which is concrete and continuous, and no longer multiple. The process of subjectivation takes the form of particular patterned practices of narrative, performance

⁶⁶ See McNay’s feminist critique of the ethics of the self (McNay 1994).

and reflection:

I am interested ...in the way in which the subject constitutes himself [sic] in an active fashion, by the practices of the self, [but] these practices are nevertheless not something that the individual invents by himself. They are patterns that he finds in his culture and which are proposed, suggested and imposed on him by his culture, his society and his social group (Foucault 1987:11).

Future selves

Having discussed the self as an ongoing relation produced through techniques, technologies and practices that are constantly infolding, I now move onwards to consider the role of the imagination in this process of self-production. I argue that the embodied imagination is central to the understanding of self-production in terms of how the self is imagined or dreamed during techniques of the self. I also suggest that the idea of time, and in particular the concept of the self in time is central to this production of the self. Futures and memories gain ingress into the experience of the present as part of this self-production. The idea of the future ruin can be used in order to consider how futures are imagined during the course of techniques of the self. Futurity plays out in the mundane ways in which the politics of the self operates.⁶⁷ Imagined futures and pasts are folded into the production of present, 'lived' experience such that they are productive of contingent temporalities and subjectivities, and contribute to the structuring of experience of finite life. As Massumi points out, anticipation

extends the moment beyond itself, superposing one moment upon the next, in a way that is not just thought but also bodily felt in a yearning, tending or tropism (Massumi 2002:91).

One such way in which futurity plays out is through the production of future memory, through specific practices which aim to trigger particular memories in the future. The production of future memory is mobilised in literature and film in terms of what we might call the 'future ruin'. The future ruin offers a riposte to the idea of a golden age in its displacing melancholic yearning for the past in order to reinstate the *present* as the time for which the yearning takes place, or perhaps a yearning shaped by regret for what could have

⁶⁷ Geographers and other scholars have recently engaged with the politics of futurity, notably in Ben Anderson's recent work on the geographies of the future and preparedness, along with the work of Dillon and Massumi. These thinkers focus on the ways in which governments and other institutions operate practices and logics of preparedness, and in doing so suggest how the anticipatory contributes to a specific style of governance (Massumi 2007; Anderson 2008a; Anderson; Dillon 2010). These writers draw attention to how futures are predicted, managed, controlled and enacted in terms of macro-level politics of governance. My concern here, however, is with the micropolitical level – the ways in which futures are brought into play at the level of the body and through the governing of the self.

been, had malevolent presences within the present been done away with.⁶⁸ Effectively, the consideration of the way in which future memories are used in order to displace the present, can demonstrate how imagined futures contribute to the ongoing production of the self. Through the temporal displacement of the narrative, the melancholy of the ruin is transposed through the future setting to a celebration or critique of the now, offering distance and recognition, a displaced view from which to consider the familiar – enabling the familiar/strange lens of the anthropological gaze.

My argument here is that cultural representations of landscapes of future ruin can also be used as a way of thinking about time and the self. In the relation of the self to the self through thought, there is a folding into the present of a future past-as-remembered, a disruption of and irruption into experiential time which occurs as both an absencing and a presenting. In the making of a future ruin, the planned ideological construction of greatness summons future memory to presence now and in years to come, while the bringing to presence of a ruined future doubles back and reframes and unsettles the present. The idea of the future memory, as outlined in the example of a future ruin, enables a particular way of thinking about temporality and experience. These imagined landscapes can be considered as a *cipher for the self*, in which the idea of future memory, and the displacing of time contained therein, offers some intellectual purchase on the techniques through which the self is narrativised, and provide a way of thinking about particular practices of the self and its relationship to temporality. The imagined melancholic future of the possible self as ruin or, more hopefully, as a greater being, is played out through certain extended practices of the self, such as bodily regimes and projects. During these projects,

⁶⁸ In 1934, The Nazi architect Albert Speer wrote of the idea of “*Ruinenwert*”, or ruin value. Influenced by the existence of Classical ruins and by the Romantic aestheticisation of the ruin in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Speer presented his idea to Hitler alongside a Romantic drawing of the proposed Zeppelin field in Nurnberg as a ruin, “overgrown with ivy, its columns fallen, the walls crumbling here and there, but the outlines still clearly recognisable” (Speer 1970:56). The *ruinenwert* mobilises the future ruin in terms of its testament to the greatness of a civilisation. Similarly, at the laying of a cornerstone for the convention hall in Nürnberg, Hitler reportedly announced, “If the Movement should ever fall silent, even after thousands of years this witness here will speak. In the midst of a sacred grove of age-old oaks the people of that time will admire in reverent astonishment this first giant among the buildings of the Third Reich” (Fest 1977:784).

The power of the future ruin as testimony to a particular representation of the past is also a recurring trope in science-fiction writing and visual culture: for example in Hisaharu Motoda’s lithographs of a post-apocalyptic Tokyo, in JG Ballard’s landscapes of atrophy and ennui, in Will Self’s *The Book of Dave*, where the future village of Ham (Hampstead) is all that’s left of a submerged London, and from the surface of the waters there protrude various recognisable architectural features (Ballard 1994; Motoda 2004; Self 2006). David Mitchell’s *Cloud Atlas*, too, writes a future Hawaii with the crumbling observatory evidence of a superior civilisation and of the old, now forgotten “smarts” from before “the Fall” (Mitchell 2004). Other examples include Macaulay’s imagining of a New Zealander standing on the remains of London Bridge “to sketch the ruins of St Paul’s”, later illustrated by Gustav Dore (Macaulay 1840; Skilton 2004) and Charlton Heston’s discovery of the ruined Statue of Liberty in the final scene of *Planet of the Apes*: these are all recognisable architectural landmarks ruined, traces and memories of a present time.

particular modes of recording experience, both in the production of texts and of memories are complicit in the transformation of the self through embodied practices which produce future memory as enfolded into the experience of the present. An emphasis on the role of temporality allows us to think about the way in which techniques involved in the production of the self are tied to the ways in which past, present and future intertwine and fold into each other, rethinking the possible, the potential and the virtual.⁶⁹ As such, this enfolding of imagined temporality into techniques of the self can be useful in theorising the processes of subjectivation, and demonstrate how the production of temporality is central to the role of experience in the production of the subject.

Spinoza and Spinozist philosophies can contribute to this area through their conceptualisation of the body as an ongoing variation, modified and inscribed upon, and also through the concept of the virtual in Deleuze (Deleuze 1991, 2001; Massumi 2002). Present experience always involves history as it has modified the body, produced habits and dispositions, materialities and sensibilities, but also in terms of memories as the affective residue of past encounters. It also involves the spectral, indeterminate and possibly multiple future self, as brought into imaginary being or flashing up as an affective shock as in the case of Damasio's somatic marker theory (Damasio 1995; 2000, see chapter four). In a Deleuzian sense, the past and the future become imbricated in the making-present of the now as a spatialised and temporalised condition of individualisation through the spectral remembered and future selves which haunt experience, and which are incorporated as a doubling into the experience of the self, especially, and with more opacity, during reflexive projects of the self. These doubled selves presence in the moment of embodied perception and feed into that moment, colouring it with possibility. This argument draws on Deleuze's notion, introduced above, of "doubling" – the folding in of surfaces, the repetition of the different, the other as self, the multiplicity of the self in process (Deleuze 1988a:81). The subject of experience then emerges through this enfolding. To think the self as an effect of techniques and technologies, of infoldings and doublings, brings our attention back to those specific practices through which this effect is maintained.

In the next section, I argue for the importance of thinking through temporality and the experience of time as an important aspect of subjectivation. A focus on temporality

⁶⁹ See chapter 1 of *Parables for the Virtual* for a discussion of the difference between these two concepts (Massumi 2002:9-10).

considers the body-subject's performance of anticipatory practices in an active process of self-and subject formation. The anticipatory dimension, and the forging of imagined pasts with possible futures in/outside of a constantly emerging present, provide the possibility of thinking practice through the active, dreaming, affective subject-in-the-making, rather than the subject as a determined entity in the production of the self.

Secular pilgrimages

The South West Coast Path is one of the 15 'national trails' in the United Kingdom, that pass through "some of the most stunning and diverse landscapes in Britain" (www.nationaltrail.co.uk). It runs for 630 miles around the coastline of Somerset, Devon, Cornwall and Dorset, and as such affords the possibility for a continuous waymarked trek, as well as shorter walks and strolls. The long-distance footpath, whose histories are tied into imaginaries of ancient trackways, migratory and pilgrimage routes, can act as a lure towards challenge, towards a long walk over many days which I consider in this chapter in terms of an extended practice of the self. This section considers the long walk in terms of the production of self, particularly through the idea of *time*, through a discussion of some ethnographic examples gathered from fieldwork conducted with walkers in South West England and from archive research at the South West Coast Path Association, which has a collection of diaries and journals of various kinds, of people's walks. During the course of the research, many of the participants articulated their choice to walk and also their experience of walking in terms of giving themselves time to think, in terms of their bodily and mental health, or in terms of connecting with a past or with some idea of nature or the divine. As a result, the embodied practice of the long distance walk is often and commonly discussed in terms of a technique of the self.

Long distance walks can be considered as 'secular pilgrimages' where the goal of self-transformation may or may not be the sole focus for practice, but is drawn on when walkers describe, narrate and re-present their journeys. The concept of the secular pilgrimage comes from Ian Reader and Tony Walter's *Pilgrimage in Popular Culture*, and refers to the way in which the term has come to mean something outside of its historical roots in the pursuit of a specifically religious experience (Reader and Walter 1993). The volume covers studies of visits to Glastonbury, to war graves in northern France, to Graceland, in Memphis, to Anfield, and refers to these in terms of sites of remembrance, identity

construction and religious or quasi-religious experience.⁷⁰ Many discussions of pilgrimage and also many common sense mobilisations of the concept draw on an idea of the sacred discussed by Durkheim in *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, as that which is removed from the everyday (Durkheim 1964). Whatever the problems with the concept of everyday as axiom, it is still commonly understood to demarcate a space/time associated with repetition, with home, with stability and perhaps boredom. The accounts of journeys along the South West Coast Path in this chapter are considered as ‘secular pilgrimages’ since they rely to some extent on the trope of the transformational journey for their legitimation, and since through their performance as this type of practice, they contribute to a genealogically related set of ideas, concepts, technologies and practices of the body that feed into the cultural trope of the transformational journey or challenge.⁷¹ The state of the body when on the pilgrimage, then, is self-reflexive. Rebecca Solnit discusses pilgrimage in terms of labour or work, in a “spiritual economy in which effort and privation are rewarded”, arguing that pilgrimage is almost universally embedded in human cultures as a spiritual journey, and asceticism and physical exertion are almost universally understood as means of spiritual development (Solnit 2002:46).

The accounts of walkers (and runners) in the SWCPA’s archive point to their practices being undertaken as what I refer to as an *extraordinary practice of the self*: extraordinary because it happens over an extended period that marks a spatial and temporal remove from the ordinary, rather than a practice of the self which is absorbed as part of a day-to-day living out of life. While some participants engaged in specific thought techniques in order to bring about change in the self or in their relation to the world, this need not necessarily occur. Transformation of the self may happen as a by-product, indeed the body is by its very existence involved in ongoing transformation and modification, and this necessarily reflects on the self as an illusory surface effect of the various affective modifications that bodies undergo. It is the relationship between this ongoing variability of bodies that comes with their participation in a world of motion and rest, and the way in which these

⁷⁰ One of the problems of much literature on pilgrimage is that much is made of an attempt to define the essence of ‘pilgrimage’ and the extent to which these practices can be seen to correspond to that essence. Another concern is whether pilgrimage is an individual or collective experience, drawing on Turner’s concept of *communitas* (Turner 1974; Turner and Turner 1978). These are problematic firstly since they rely on an essentialist definition of pilgrimage, rather than the way in which the concept is mobilised in practice, and secondly as they posit a fundamental opposition between the individual and the social, rather than founding the concept of the individual, as I have suggested throughout the course of this thesis, through Spinoza, Foucault, Deleuze, Nancy, Simondon and others, on a primary sociality through which individualisations emerge.

⁷¹ See the following for further discussion of the association of pilgrimage with transformation (Adler 1989; Solnit 2002; Slavin 2003).

modifications emerge and feed back into the representational experience of the world - the resonations between texts and imaginaries and bodily states - through which the self appears. This is why the *recountings* of practices are interesting: they point to the self as surface effect, as reflected through the subject.

Cultural tropes such as that of the pilgrimage, the quest, the challenge and the idea of self-discovery have all been significant in participants' accounts of their walking practices both during and after their walks. I suggest that the ways in which people discuss the practice of walking, and recording and thinking about the walk, involve a *temporalisation* of the self, an infolding of practices, and a calling into presence of past and future selves. Future selves may materialise in the activation, for example, of deferral - a deferred feeling of achievement: "You need to have pain in order to feel pleasure", was a common view of walkers I met. The present of bodily fatigue becomes displaced through a summoning to presence of an imagined future self as 'having done that', as having achieved. The phrase "I want to have done it" defers the pleasure until afterwards, in the pub, at home, in comfort. Bodily discomfort was seen to enable the deferred pleasure of comfort, which, in its doubling over into the experience of discomfort, enabled a positive reading of discomfort in terms of its impact on the self. Equally, ideas of physical health and fitness involve a focus on bodily discomfort in the present moment being displaced through the spectral future fitter self. Similarly, explicit ideas of transformation carry with them spectral past and future selves. The following ethnographic example demonstrates how temporality plays out in walking as a technology of the self:

One man whom I met walking in south west England, had just been made redundant, and was walking along the coastal path from start to finish - a distance of over 600 miles, carrying camping equipment. He had an enormous green rucksack which looked incredibly heavy. He was in his early forties, and slightly dishevelled. He smiled and we started chatting. He had been walking for 7 weeks, and was nearly at the end of the path. He was in no rush to finish, however - time was not a constraint for him. He told me that he saw walking as a new way in which he defined himself, and a practice that enabled his reinvention of himself as someone who views time differently. This man discussed how, after a few weeks he started to not worry about getting to the next place, and to relax into the idea that there was no hurry, no time limit, and that the next place would not offer up anything more than what he was experiencing at that moment. This was described as a revelatory moment of relaxing into the new temporalities afforded by a long walk. Walking, as an extended body practice and technique of the self, also enabled him to reconsider his past as remembered in terms of someone who worked too hard, who did not spend enough time in his own company, and who neglected his physical and mental health. It then helped to actively produce a different self in contrast to this recalled and reconsidered past self, which was assisted through the production of a different, more indeterminate but more contented, future self.

These temporally aligned imaginaries of the self coloured his experience of walking whereby past and future are worked into a process of self-creation as transformative. They fed back and fed forward through his embodied perception of the world and shaped the way in which he narrated his self.

The embodied experience of the present: a lowering of levels of stress hormones, the sensation of fresh air in the lungs and his new-found sense of self-reliance fed forward into a rethinking of his future self in terms of someone content, calm and in control. The remembered past folded into the present as an undesirable future state, giving his walking a symbolic value as a boundary marker between the rejection of one imagined self and the beginning of another. The self appears in his account as interiority definitely, but it is a mutable interiority, and the act of transforming the self through practice suggests that the conditions of indeterminacy involved in the thinking of the self are mobilised as a way of acting the self otherwise. The invention of a future self through the reconstruction of the remembered past may occur – as in, "I've known for a long time that I haven't really been happy" or "I've always wanted to do something like this". These statements of memory may or may not be true insofar as they may or may not have been imagined in the past. However they are *in the past as imagined in the present*, and so feed forward into the experience of the present and the production of the self in transition.

Hupomnemata

Foucault discusses the Ancient Greek practice of rereading the *hupomnemata* notebook – a collection of readings taken from elsewhere and written down to be read as a practice of the self designed to detach the soul from concern for the future and redirect it towards contemplation of the past (Foucault 1997). In "Self-writing", Foucault discusses various practices of the aesthetics of existence and the governing of the self through writing. The notebook is both constraint on the self and central to "self-work" – for example practices where the written artefact is reflected over and meditated on (Foucault 1997). The contents of the notebook were seen to form part of the self – "the soul must make them not merely its own but itself ... into tissue and blood" (Foucault 1997:2-5) meaning that self-writing performed an infolding of the texts of others such that they appear as internal to the self of the reader. In the *hupomnemata*, and in subsequent practices of correspondence and diary writing, there is an awareness of recording for future review, or for assessment by others. The present of writing contains within it a protentive future and the possibility for future memory to be augmented through the act of reading and re-reading.

The archive of the South West Coast Path Association contains many diaries, poems,

photograph albums and notebooks sent in by those who have walked along the path and documented it in some way. Many of the people I walked with also chose to document their experiences through photography, diaries, notebooks and blogs. In a similar way, photography, for many of the participants I worked with, provided a record of a self in transformation, a focusing of attention onto the self and the production of future memory as a way of working on the self - the bringing into presence the possibility for the event of that memory, either individual or collective; the concretisation of the significance of the practice through an attempt to materialise experience in the text. I argue that we can consider the production of documentation of experience a type of *hupomnemata* for the present – a process of writing and recording that encourages a particular type of self-reflection.

Technologies of memory such as photographs and diaries can be considered as *prosthetic devices* for recording and storing experience for the production of future memory, or to ‘hold on’ to a particular moment as practised by walkers. They co-constitute the production and recall of future memory in their encounter with bodies. This extract from my fieldwork notes discusses one such device:

One research participant, who kept a wildflower notebook while walking, suggested that it was ‘like having a journal without having to write one’. Every day she noted down the flowers she saw along the way, sometimes sketching them, including the date and place where the flowers were spotted. She had done this for many years while walking along the coastal path.

For this person, the flowers spotted on the walk were a route to memory, the future self remembering the present self doubled over in the process of thinking about another time and place. The notebook accompanying her on the walks provided a means of accessing memories of past walks and past selves. By contributing to an ongoing documentation of her walks, she created a constant, something to refer back and forward to, to place her walks in terms of season and geographical space. The attentiveness towards the flowers she spotted along the way brought about a particular mode of being in the world where attunement to that which afforded specific relations to the body was allowed a deeper affect. The writing of the wildflower notebook was a production and reproduced a technology of memory, and in doing so allowed those memories and the selves that become tied to those memories to take specific forms.

Walking and photography were often tied together in a specific landscape practice which, I argue, foregrounds the temporalising of the self through the material production of future

memories. The production of images that archive and order experience temporalises the walk and in doing so provides a way of thinking about the self in transformation. The practice of photography, when used to document a particular practice of the self enables the camera to testify to one's presence and to produce a catalyst for the recalling of a future memory, which may be static and visual or may summon the senses into a displacement of bodily sensation into new times and spaces. The writing of a journal or the taking of photographs can be considered in terms of the construction of a testimony, a present or perfect tense account. We testify to ourselves and to others: *I was here*. It may be revisited in times of self-doubt, at times of sorrow, as melancholy reflection.

Pip is a young photographer with whom I spent five days walking and camping. Here, she describes how and why she takes photographs whilst walking. For Pip, walking involved a combination of physical challenge and the practice of paying attention to the world. As such, the self as photographer and nature lover was practised through specific embodied ways of focusing attention to light, weather, mood, and the technical practice of photography as a means and outcome of this attention.

I want to practise how to act quickly – how to know your tools, even when it might be horrendous weather.

Those who combined walking and photography referred often to post-production practices—the editing and construction of an archive after the moment which would testify to presence at the site of capture. For Pip, photography involves an attempt to

recreate the feeling as if you were here ... I think on it and act on it and edit them after – I try and create an essence of the trip or wherever you are, and with that half of you is engaged and half is keeping a foot on dry land.

The self as photographer, as future editor of photos, as individual life who pays attention to the sensory aspects of landscape were being performed as conscious ways of working on the self. The photographic practice embodied this idea of doubling through an attempting to absorb the moment – the feel of a place, the sense of being there, while also projecting a future of review, edit, print and display. The doubling of present and future selves formed the practice. Photography, in this example, was about both paying attention to the moment and the production of future memory. Photography disciplined perception:

it engages you in where you are at the time ... it's instantaneous – you react to how you're feeling at that moment even through that might change when you're looking back on it afterwards ... I find it more involved when you're walking and doing something as well – there's no pressure and you can go with it more, but it's keeping practice as well, like training – you have to keep doing it...

Landscape is good – there's something to remind you when you get home – to inspire you – you get stuck into a grind sometimes. It shifts your own brain around too – you look at things differently.

The future recalling of memory through the material artefact of the photograph enables time travel through the summoning of the experiential landscape practice of the past into the moment of engagement with the image, through the testimony provided by the image. The camera here is co-constitutive of both an attunement to an experiential field, as well as the production of the self. As such, it cannot be separated from the ongoing process of performativity through which bodies come to be known as subjects. The interesting thing about this encounter is the way in which these prosthetic processes of bodies and technologies cannot be seen to be mastered by body or world. The materialities of landscape, bodies, camera and attention produce specific affordances which are taken up in the practice, but nevertheless cannot be seen to originate at any one point.

The camera, the diary and the flower notebook can be considered as prosthetic devices in the production and recording of experience and in the production of time, through their mobilisation in techniques of the self – storing future memories outside of the body, techniques that demand attentiveness, or that demand thinking about the act of seeing, and also as that which focuses thought on a particular practice considered as a practice of the self. Taking photographs in particular marks a moment when a reflexive sensibility occurs – the act of photography as part of the archiving of an extended practice of the self, a reflecting on the here and now in order to attune thought to the production of a self that takes place in the present, but also in the future in the storing up of experience. The camera participates in this production through its role as a technology of memory – its producing of future memories which allows a feeding back and forward to occur – the production of experiential forms that resonate through memory and through their participation in imaginaries focused on the production of body/nature relations (such as affective investment in cultures of landscape). These techniques and technologies attempt to bring the excess of experience into the here and now, and in doing so produce the here and now as something which emerges from the politics of finitude, the construction of a life.

Storing experience outside of the body

In the film *Until the End of the World* (Wenders 1991), director Wim Wenders' central concerns of transport, movement and photography are explored in a transposition to the near future (1999/2000). The protagonist, Claire, records her drifts around the world on a mini video recorder, attempting to hold onto particular experiences, to revisit them, to

capture them. Her life involves a constant attempt to grasp, to hold onto experience while it slips away. Towards the end of the film, Claire and her new lover, Sam, arrive at Sam's parents' house in an Aboriginal cultural centre in the Australian desert, where his parents have been working on a machine to help his mother, who has been blind since birth, to see. The machine works through a recording of vision and brain waves, and then a transmission process whereby the viewer watches the recording again and the brain waves are matched up and in doing so, the 'experience of seeing' is recorded, rather than just light data. In this way, attempts are made to *grasp hold of vision itself*: the moment of visual experience, complete with affective resonance as tapped into through the brain waves of the viewer. The machine attempts to communicate visual experience from one subject (who can see) to another (who cannot). In this way, experience is co-constituted through technological apparatus in an attempt to move the idea of experience outside of that which can be possessed by a subject, or even by a body. It is through this example, then, that we can consider the prosthetic implications of recording technology – the way in which bodies and materialities intersect on a transindividual level, or 'feel through' each other (Dawney, Harris et al. 2010) in the production of experience. To consider the production of experience as that which can lie outside of the subject enables an understanding of this sense of the prosthetic, as the affective bases of experiential production move between and through materialities, including bodies, producing experience in the course of their affective capacities (see chapters three and four). The images revealed in the experimental transmissions, however, are grainy and unclear, and point to the impossibility of holding onto the fullness of becoming, which will always be in excess of that which can be pinned down.

Later on in the film, the vision machine is used as a means of recording dreams. Claire and Sam's desire to see their dreams, to explore their selves through this playing over, this dreaming and watching and redreaming leads them to addiction, an obsession with the experience of dreaming as transposed into their waking world and revelatory in terms of their self-knowledge. For weeks, they do not communicate with each other, and spend every waking moment staring at the hand-held TV screens that play back their dreams. Their lives feed back on themselves, spiralling into an experience whose intensity leads to their neglecting their bodies, each other, and disengaging from the world outside of the dream-machine. Here, the desire to grasp hold of experience is taken to a new level, where the possibility of its capture is forever out of reach, yet glimpses that trigger memory and

allow for a partial revisiting are caught, spurring them onwards towards endless reviewing.

In this film, the themes of temporality, experience and its relation to the self are clearly situated in the context of finitude, as played out through the indeterminate sense that this is the end of the world. The millenarian context of a possible nuclear blast places the characters in a situation where they grasp at life and experience, reaching out to capture every moment as it slips away from them, to the point where life itself *becomes* the recording and playing over of experience.

In the above discussion of the technicities used to store memory and capture experience, the playing out of life and of biography involves a desire for rewind and fast forward – a means of comparing past and future selves, a wish to revisit old selves and project future selves. To situate the self in time is to be aware of life as a linear trajectory, and those technologies that break up that trajectory through allowing other times to ingress onto the present actually *reinforce* that sense. The imagination positions spectral selves together in order to produce the effect of the self in time.

Spectral selves

In this chapter I have considered the way in which selves are imagined as part of their ongoing production as surface effects. I have also examined how other bodies and materialities participate in the ongoing production of the self, and how these imaginings are temporalised. The set of writings contributing to what has become known as ‘spectral geographies’, and more widely, the ‘spectral turn’ in the social sciences has engaged with the troubling presence of spectralities informed by Derrida’s *Specters of Marx* (Derrida 1994), and can be considered as a useful way of thinking about these imagined presences and the parts they play in the production of the subject and the production of space.

In geography, these ideas have often been brought to bear on the traces left in spaces by past material relations. In other words, geographers have begun to exercise their ‘archaeological imagination’ in attempting to give presence to *what has gone before*. This is particularly true of Tim Edensor’s work on industrial ruins, of the anthropologist Yael Navaro-Yashin’s work on affect and ruination, the work of Caitlin deSilvey, and of Derek McCormack’s

work on remote sensing (Edensor 2005; DeSilvey 2007; Navaro-Yashin 2009; McCormack 2010). Some more literal interpreters of spectrality have turned their attention to attempting to construct a geography of ghosts and the supernatural.

Derrida's *Specters of Marx*, however, does not locate spectrality specifically in the trace as articulated through the past, through a material trace lingering on, to be sensed (McCormack) or unearthed (Edensor). Instead, Derrida positions spectrality as a troubling of presence, of time, space and materiality, a trembling that exposes the excess to which presence is simply a phase, through which time, space and materiality emerge but yet can never be contained. This notion of full presence as impossible, or as partial, can be seen in various recent conceptual configurations, from Simondon's concept of individuation, to Deleuze and Guattari and subsequently Massumi's concept of the virtual, to Nancy's concept of spacing and Merleau-Ponty's concept of flesh (Merleau-Ponty 1968; Deleuze and Guattari 1988; Simondon 1995; Nancy 2000; Massumi 2002; Simondon 2007 and 1989; Massumi, Boever et al. 2009). All of these concepts suggest that presence is only ever partial, an incomplete actualisation of potentiality, and rely on the production of something that lies outside of time and space, outside of presence through which presence becomes apparent. These 'spectral' ontologies, including Derrida's, which of course has clear links to his ideas of the trace, difference, and of the supplement enable a thinking of imaginaries, traces, virtualities and potentialities as playing a part in the constitution of the real.

Thinking about materiality, presence and absence, and the spectral requires a consideration of the role of the imagination in producing these reconstructions, in engaging with the traces of what has come before and in thinking about how these imaginary reconstructions contribute to particular circulations of images and imaginaries that are constituted through and constitutive of institutions, technologies and practices. Yet little attention has been paid by these voyagers of the spectral into the spectral presencing of future potentialities, and the role of these in the production of what I call experiential fields.⁷² *It's not only the past that haunts us.* Future memories, perhaps expressed through hope and anxiety, are always folded into the phenomenological present, and are actively productive of time and space. Futures not as the to-come, which is a limit point which we can never go beyond, but as imagined, as

⁷² The experiential field is considered here in terms of the preindividual space of bodies and materialities, that, through the ongoing relations of motion and rest that constitute the force of affect, the possibility for experience is produced, as that which is recognised by a subject.

taking place within the body in the active production of experience and life and in this taking place contributing to processes of subjectivation. Spectral geographies can, I suggest, offer up a useful way of considering how, at the point of encounter between body and world, spectral bodies that emerge through the embodied imagination are central to the production of the subject, and moreover, that the concept of the spectral enables the troubling of presence that can work to *undo* some of the discursive formations that produce the stable, originary subject.

Spectral images of the future are a key part of the material/immaterial/corporeal/incorporeal assemblages through which materialisation and ontogenesis happens. They are part and parcel of historical becoming, not that which is to come, although, of course, like all of history, they feed into the ongoing process of becoming and as a result contribute to that which comes after. Imagined futures, and future memories presence themselves in text, in practice, in dream, in portent and image. Their testimonies may reveal themselves in their later presencing, in these conjunctions of imagination, body, world through which histories perform the ongoingness of the present.

The temporalisation of the self

Visions of possible futures can be considered in terms of the excess of the here and now; in terms of technologies of temporalising, those technicities that produce the excess that haunt, augment and shape experience. The experience of finitude is produced through the politics of time and memory, and, I argue, future memory. The non-here-and-now produced through technologies of retention and of futurity are central to the experience of time in the living, and to the production of the subject.

The geographer Ben Anderson's work on hope draws on empirical data on listening to music to exemplify the way in which specific conjunctions of association, memory and emotion work together, bringing the past and the future into the present-as-experienced. In particular, he discusses how aspects of the past-as-remembered can feed forward into the present, enabling the possibility of a different imagined future, itself feeding back into the emerging present in order to alter the subjective experience of that present, through the opening up of a space for hope. He writes how

a renewed *feeling* of other tendencies and latencies emerges from a disruption, or opening up of difference, in the pattern of broader affective flow that feed back to change the sense of space-time (Anderson 2006:745).

Hence the present as experienced is constituted through the temporal folding of past and future into the present, with the result that other futures become revealed as possibilities contained within the present state of being. This enables the imagined future, experienced for example in hope, to amplify, in that the meta-cognition of the experiencing of hope itself contributes to the hope as experienced. Anderson discusses this as a performative moment:

a calling forth of an outside, ... an intensive colouring of ongoing experience that induces an escalation of the disposition of hopefulness, from which the naming of hope emerges and into which such a naming of a hope feeds back (Anderson 2006:746).

In focusing on the temporalisation of the self through reflexive techniques of the self, I refer to the way in which the capacity of the subject to think, to imagine, to dream otherwise is a central part of the way in which the self is produced as an effect of techniques of subjectivation. The capacity to imagine the self otherwise, and to enfold doubled past and future selves into the experience of the moment as a temporalisation of the narrative of the self is what enables the self to exist as a continuing idea. Memory is a necessary part of the experience of the self, as is the projection of possible future selves and the production of future memory. As Deleuze writes,

thought thinks its own history (the past) but, in order to free itself from what it thinks (the present) and be able finally to 'think otherwise' (the future) (Deleuze 1988a:98).

Anderson's evoking of the language and intent of poststructural theory in his discussion of hope draws on ideas such as difference and the outside, and of the necessary existence of the opposite of hope – despair – as contained within the same conditions that make hope possible.

It is always in the context of specific diminishments that becoming hopeful occurs...The present is haunted by the fact that something good that exceeds it has yet to take place (Anderson 2006:743).

These statements point to the existence of a Derridan trace within the realm of the present and the known (Derrida 1982). While Anderson's argument relies on the indeterminacy contained within the structuring conditions that make hope or despair possible, it is the dreaming, feeling subject and the specific assemblage of affective resonances in the social and relational context which enable the indeterminacy to be at once identified and constructively analysed. Rather than simply leaving indeterminacy as an end in itself, then,

Anderson takes apart the conditions of indeterminacy, providing a means for us to discuss the inevitably indeterminate nature of the conjunction between temporality and affect.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on Foucault's writing on the care of the self, and suggested that it can be helpfully supplemented through a consideration of the way in which bodies imagine themselves. This imagining is not figured as a return to identity politics, but more an assertion that the process of imagining the self otherwise is central to its ongoing production, and moreover to the production of experience. I have also suggested that temporality is central to the imaginative production of the self. Central to this is the way in which certain techniques and technologies (walking, photography, diaries) assist in the temporalising of the self, where the self is narrated and so produced as an effect of that narration in terms of a singular and continuous presence through linear time. These techniques and technologies enable imagined past and future selves to occupy spectral presences in the reflexive imagining of practices of the self. Effectively, there is a doubling or a resonating of multiplicity in the phenomenological moment, through which an essence of self as effect of the multiples of possibility can be read. The possibility of a future self as other is dreamed and folded into the experience of particular practices, allowing them to be experienced as transformatory or part of a narrative of progression enacted through techniques of the self. This thinking of the self otherwise relies on this temporally aligned narrativisation of the self, which then emerges as an effect of these dreams and practices.

Through a consideration of the significance of temporality, and a mobilisation and interrogation of technologies of memory, imagined futures and spectrality we can consider how bodies, by dint of their capacities to imagine, and to imagine affectively, negotiate and work with past and futurity, through the logic of the double, in the active pursuit of becoming-other as becoming-self. Thinking through the idea of future memory enables us to think about the way in which bodies manipulate temporality in the production of the self. Attention to the way in which pasts and futures are imagined – the way in which specific futures are hoped and others feared, can also reveal something of the specific mechanisms through which subjectivation is played out. By summoning pasts into presence, imagining the future and placing traces of that into the present as enacted and experienced, subjects work upon particular (social) imaginaries, dream possibles, and impossibles, and create

scenarios for future memory. The idea of the future ruin discussed at the beginning of the chapter illustrates ways in which time folds into experience, and enables thinking about the way in which temporalisation of the self through the doubling of the self is central to a consideration of the role of thought in techniques of the self. In doing so, the notion of linear time is destabilised through its own infolding in the spacing and temporalisation of the world, where pasts and futures collide in the ongoing production of the present.

This chapter, like the previous two, attempts to situate the production of experience in an account of subjectivation through a discussion of the embodied imagination. In particular, it considers the experience of the self and of time to be central to politics of the self, and argues that the body's capacity to imagine the self through time is productive of the internalising relationship through which the self is produced. In addition, it draws attention to the way in which particular technologies are imbricated in the production of temporality through their anamnestic capacities. Through this, we can consider the way in which experience can be considered as produced through the co-constitutive relation of embodied imagination, technologies and other materialities such that the phenomenological ground of experience is displaced and troubled.

Chapter 9: Landscape, foundation, testimony - geographies of disconnection

But really, all of this is an *idea* to me,
meaning belonging, and loss and the strange wild sea.
Something more of *feeling* than of the daily draw of the
cold shale against my boots.

(Barron 2009)

“Displacement is the condition of there being a thing called place”

(Wylie 2009a)

Introduction

Drawing on the arguments of the previous chapters regarding the role of affect and the embodied imagination in the production of temporal and spatial imaginaries, I now move towards a reconsideration of these ideas from a different but related conceptual angle. In doing so, I argue that ontologies of non-relation, which are present in the work of the philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy, can help us to consider dislocation, movement and instability as an ontological state which leads to the various practices of connection, for example, to nature, or to territory. Nancy's concept of *espacement*, or spacing, can be used to think about the immanent production of these experiential fields of connection and the positioning of foundation of connection as a strategic placement of an outside through which nostalgia for community takes place. This is exemplified through a discussion of the cultural landscape of Tintagel in Cornwall as space through which various desires for connection are activated. In doing so, I explore the idea of the testimonial power of landscape, and suggest that, following Derrida, the absences, uncertainties and instability of testimony is what provides it with its power to testify to a foundational moment (Derrida 2000). I then discuss how this contributes to recent work in nonrepresentational theory that disrupts, unsettles and calls into question the orthodoxy of relation by moving towards a geography of foundational displacement and disconnection, a geography of rupture and caesura as well as relation and connection. This is discussed through a consideration of the drive for

connection as a symptom of that displacement. In other words, this chapter takes a *step back* from the ways in which spatial and temporal imaginaries work through the embodied imagination in order to produce particularly nuanced modes of experience that are intimately tied to processes of subjectivation (chapters six, seven and eight) and instead considers an ontological basis for the way in which bodies imaginatively produce affective cultural landscapes in terms of a *desire* for connection and community.

A conversation in a pub: a connective imaginary

During my fieldwork, I start talking to a man in a pub on the Devon/Cornwall border. I am tired after a day of walking and drinking a pint of Tribute at the bar, my rucksack and waterproofs on the floor next to me.

"So, you're walking", he observes.

"Yeah, I'm doing some research and walking at the same time, about landscape and the body and stuff".

At this point I feel slightly ashamed. Somehow I feel that what I'm doing is 'not real' - something to be embarrassed about in a pub full of fishermen and farmers, people who work hard, who labour in the freezing wind and rain, who *feel the daily draw of shale on their boots*. "I've been walking along the coast path, too," he says. "When I can get away, I like to walk along the same paths that people have been walking along throughout history. I like to look out at a view that hasn't changed for hundreds of years (unless you see the odd boat, of course)". The conversation turns to places nearby - and a mutual recognition of which brought these two bodies into the possibility of sharing a sense of a place. We run through the names of places we had been to and the walks we have done, a litany of staging posts and landmarks: him with an eye for history - of tin mining, of coastguards, of poets, and me with an eye for wild flowers, clifftops, and swimming spots, and both of us thinking of pubs along the way. This man was articulating a desire encountered time and time again in various guises - a recurring trope of connection with 'nature' and with the past. Our conversation can be read with reference to a sense of melancholic loss for some golden age, some sense of primordial oneness experienced prior to modernity, a disposition, of course, associated with romantic individualism and counter-modern, counter-urban ideologies. Cultural tropes of ecstatic communion with nature and connection with the past engage the body in particular affective relations with places that feed into and augment the embodied encounter. They emerge at fleeting and sometimes sustained moments while walking, where

the body taps into imaginaries held in the tension between body and world, between history and possibility. My middle-class anxiety at not having a proper job, of being considered a Romantic tourist in an area of poverty and struggle produced by and through those material relations that position different bodies in different places, emerges through my body as a sense of unease. My desire to be doing something ‘more real’ is similarly resonant of the melancholic harking to a premodern lost community and a wistful valorisation of particular economic relations over others.

Our shared knowledge of places was a way of connecting with each other – two bodies in a pub - through the ritual act of listing and naming: our separate encounters with place being brought together through the way the coast path connects places and produces them as linear. The positioning of walking as an anti-modern practice whereby it is possible to reconnect is visible in both of our accounts, despite the prosaic tenor of our conversation – a melancholic loss of some primeval sense of oneness with the land, informed by the Romantics, circulated through countless images, poetry, novels, representations of lone walkers, pilgrimages, books and TV programmes and conversations about the natural environment of the British Isles, as well as through institutions such as the Youth Hostel Association, the Scout movement, the Ramblers. These institutions, through and alongside various rationalities, techniques and technologies, produced the affective embodied practices that enabled this conversation and inflected it in specific historical ways, and led to the movement of affect during the conversation as our imaginations brought similar and different memories into the communicative production of sense.

Nancy’s *The Inoperative Community* argues that a nostalgia for community occurs throughout the history of western thought (Nancy 1991). Concepts of the sublime, of alienation in Hegel, of dread in Kierkegaard, too, “circle about this schism in the connection of self to space, and all are inflected with degrees of melancholy” (Bowring 2008:79). Bowring’s *Field Guide to Melancholy* suggests that these desires to connect, for lost communion and community are augmented through modernity alongside the emergence of selfhood and alterity that present themselves as a disconnection, a cleaving, a break from an originary connection with God and nature that is constructed as an outside, an object of desire and longing. I want to suggest that this ‘connective imaginary’, articulated through practices that respond to a particular desire for communion, produced and reproduced through

textual and material encounters, through practice and rationality, can be figured through a geography of disconnection and displacement, informed by the deconstructive critique of presence. In particular, I argue for a consideration of these imaginaries through what the geographer Mitch Rose, after Derrida, calls a “dream of presence”: community as a structuring outside through and against which practice is directed (Rose 2006; Rose 2009).

The idea of an imaginary connection with nature, a primal communion, as an anti-modern romantic and melancholic sensibility is symptomatic of those very binaries that produce the idea of nature, the self, and community. As such it can be considered in terms of a foundational outside – an immanent relation produced as an illusory transcendent – a point of focus towards which desire for presence, stability and identity is directed. With reference to the work of Nancy, I argue that the notion of an originary connection that has been cleaved through modernity – a modern fall of man – works to displace and occlude the ontological state of disconnection, distance and spacing from which subjects and objects emerge. To make this argument, I first discuss the concept of the foundation, or the outside, with reference to Hannah Arendt’s essay “What is Authority”. In doing so, I argue for a consideration of outsides as produced immanently, and focus on this production as process rather than the outside as an object in itself. Working from a position of radical contingency, then, I discuss how certain practices serve to augment the position of the foundation, particularly through technologies of testimony. The concept of testimony in Derrida is mobilised here in order to suggest that it relies on indeterminacy for its very power. A reconsideration of foundations as contingent and as indeterminate thus enables the possibility of thinking about the foundation in terms of *desire*, and in doing so opens up new avenues for postfoundational politics.

Ethnographic fieldwork at Tintagel Castle, Cornwall, is drawn upon to consider the way in which cultural landscapes can offer up testimonies to bodies, testimonies that may be themselves without foundation, yet which feed into the desire for foundation that the geographer Mitch Rose discusses in terms of a “dream of presence”, and Nancy considers in his work on community (Nancy 1991; Rose 2006). In conclusion, I suggest that despite recent turns to the ‘relational’, we also need to consider the ‘non-relational’ and call into question those connective imaginaries that lead to a desire for foundational politics and identities. Through Nancy, and through a consideration of recent moves in

nonrepresentational theory, I discuss this and argue that a politics of openness offers one alternative.

In order to elaborate further the ontological basis for a discussion of the connective imaginary as symptomatic of a primary disconnection, I now turn to Arendt's discussion of authority. Arendt positions the concepts of foundation and testimony as central to the ongoing production of authority. In this chapter I suggest that the myth of originary connection, as perpetuated through the connective imaginary and resonated through tropes of melancholy and loss of community, acts as a foundational outside and informs and augments the production of the caesura of loss that underwrites all articulations of belonging and connection. The foundation, and testimonies to that foundation are here considered through a nonfoundational perspective which leads to their deconstruction and the possibility of new politics and ethics being formed through the deconstructive move. This next section operates on two levels: firstly, I discuss the foundation and testimony as a way of exploring the way in which identities based on blood and soil are maintained through the testimonial power of particular spaces. The displacing of the foundation thus opens up the possibility for the troubling of foundational identities. Secondly, the displacing of the foundational outside leads to a consideration not only of the contingency of foundations but the necessity of an absence of foundation and connection. With this move, I turn to Jean-Luc Nancy in order to discuss how the ontological primacy of disconnection and spacing may be a way of thinking through presence, fullness and foundational identity in terms of desire.

The foundation in Arendt and the nonfoundational in Nancy

Hannah Arendt's essay "What is Authority?" traces a particular articulation of political authority through its Roman legacy and through Greek philosophy to contemporary political systems such as the in USA, and situates authority in the idea of a *foundation* – or of a foundational moment (Arendt 1977). For Arendt, the foundational moment is positioned in terms of a response to finitude – as a way of dealing with our mortality and existence as finite beings, and as a way of addressing the problem of memory - of holding on. The production of continuity through the idea of permanence and durability is what, in her account of authority, enables the continuity of life. Authority resides in the technologies of preserving the politics of time – such as the technologies of testimony, both written and

oral, which link past and present through providing partial access to the excess of the foundational moment, as well as through tradition as preserved in institutions such as education systems. Testimony enables and performs collective memory – a collective witness to the foundation and therefore a link to that foundation.

Arendt positions authority as a specific relation, dependent on the production of the foundation as an *outside*, as a transcendent that establishes that authority and upon which the authoritative relation ultimately depends:

The source of authority in authoritarian government is always a force external and superior to its own power; it is always this source, this external force which transcends the political realm, from which the authorities derive their ‘authority’, that is, their legitimacy, and against which their power can be checked (Arendt 1977:97).

This transcendent outside might take the form of a religious text, or the idea of “laws of nature”, or Platonic ideas. While authority is governed by and appeals to an outside, however, the authoritative relation does not *reside* in the outside but rather it relies on the outside for its legitimacy. Authoritative relations testify to the power of the outside, to the foundation through the positioning of certain subjects and institutions as having a privileged access to the foundation, and it is this practice of testifying to that foundation through which authority is bestowed and augmented. The authority of the foundation, then, is positioned as an outside, as an exteriority which wields no power itself, yet enables power through reference to this outside. This exteriority is in excess of itself: it can never be reached in entirety, and is accessed only through the testimony of those who in some way witnessed the foundational moment.

Tradition preserved the past by handing down from one generation to the next the testimony of the ancestors, who first had witnessed and created the sacred founding and then augmented it by their authority throughout the centuries. As long as this tradition was uninterrupted, authority was inviolate; and to act without authority and tradition, without accepted, time-honoured standards and models, without the help of the wisdom of the founding fathers, was inconceivable (Arendt 1977:124).

As Arendt makes clear in this quote, the idea of *testimony* is central to the production of this outside, since it provides us with a link or vicarious experience of that outside through which structures of authority gain and augment their power. I posit that the notion of testimony can be used here in order to explain the processes through which bodies claim access to a foundational outside. In this chapter, the landscape provides this testimony.⁷³

⁷³ While Derrida argues that “in the humanist logic of what we call testimony in our European culture, a horse does not testify. Nor does a body” (Derrida 2000:81), my argument here is that the logic of testimony as providing access to a possible foundation extends to the nonhuman, and to suggest that the landscape testifies is to suggest that embodied

Testimony links past and present and provides the technologies through which the outside is recognised as such. However, as I shall discuss, Derrida's deconstruction of testimony and of the foundational moment can work to push further some of the ideas contained within Arendt's discussion of the outside. In Derrida's discussion of the first draft of the US Declaration of Independence, and also in his discussion of Maurice Blanchot's literary-testimonial text "The Instant of my Death", the events to which testimony is directed are always fictions, are always indeterminate (Derrida 1986; Blanchot 2000; Derrida 2000). Derrida explores the relationship between testimony and fiction, arguing that the weightiness of testimony lies in the *possibility* of its being fictional. In doing so, he troubles the positioning of fiction and testimony as separate and opposing forms:

and yet, if the testimonial is by law irreducible to the fictional, there is no testimony that does not structurally imply in itself the possibility of fiction, simulacra, dissimulation, lie, and perjury (Derrida 2000:29).

Testimony is always built on and relies on the conditional for its testimonial power:

If this possibility that is seems to prohibit were effectively excluded, if testimony thereby became proof, information, certainty, or archive, it would lose its function as testimony. In order to remain testimony, it must therefore allow itself to be haunted. It must allow itself to be parasitized by precisely what it excludes from its inner depths, the *possibility*, at least, of literature (Derrida 2000:30).

What Arendt points out, and Derrida elaborates on, is the way in which the outside is a) produced immanently and b) positioned in relation to the conditional through the indeterminacy which lies at the heart of testimony. In his essay on "Declarations of Independence" Derrida considers the moment of foundation as containing an aporia: God or the absolute outside as the inevitable aporia of founding (Derrida 1986). The task, for Derrida, is to resist the "constative anchor" – to let the aporia go unfilled, and let it work as an aporia, denouncing the foundation. Authority could, under these terms, be figured as *practice*, as the ongoing production of an aporetic space, produced through technique and testimony but without that testimony relating to an outside. This involves the recognition that there is no outside and we have to produce and reproduce the authoritative relation. The work of Nancy and of Derrida provides an ontological basis for a different way of thinking about authority – and as a result politics and ethics – one which does not rely on a foundation but instead seeks authoritative relations in techniques and technicities that play over a groundless ground.

landscape practice enables bodies to access foundational myths through the imaginary associations that colour their engagement with the world.

The idea of a foundation can be historicised as part of a project of finitude – as part of a way of confronting finite life. Narratives of foundational identities, for individuals and collectivities, are mythologised tellings of a desire for connection, a desire to belong and so to move beyond finitude. The production of an outside whose effect is to appear transcendent is a technique through which the desire for belonging, identity and closure is at least partially sated. Although the foundation as an effect of technologies of its own production and iteration means that it is exposed as immanent to the event, and therefore means that we can consider it as contingent, we are arguably yet to move beyond the mode of thinking that brings about the desire for foundation. To think about postfoundational resources for politics and ethics, then, we need to consider how to think about the possibility of a thought without ground, and it is this which has been opened up through the deconstructive project, and shows itself most clearly perhaps in Nancy's ontology and ethics of spacing.

Jean-Luc Nancy, as a post-Heideggerian philosopher of the continental tradition, engages with phenomenology and ontology specifically through a critique of Heidegger, and also with images and texts, following on from deconstructionist thinkers such as Derrida. As such, Nancy incorporates the aporias and indeterminacies of poststructuralism into a phenomenology that critiques the very ground of phenomenological thought. In the work of Nancy, the idea of the *spacing of the world* refers to a critique of Heidegger and of phenomenological understandings of space: a means of displacing the metaphysics of the subject and instead considering spacing as being “at the heart of things”(James 2006:91). Against the gathering, sheltering and oneness of Heideggerian humanism, being becomes an opening, a spacing of sense,

which is uncoverable and ungraspable, but nevertheless *is* the spacing of the world as meaningful, intelligible and experiencible as such (James 2006:102).

Spacing rejects immanence, which Nancy writes will always bring in the spectre of the transcendent, in a similar way to Derrida's understanding that the logic of the foundation will always contain the aporia of God. Rather, spacing enables a way of thinking immanently which refuses the duality of immanent/transcendent that introduces the transcendent inadvertently.

Nancy's work on community suggests that nostalgia is the central motif of Western understandings of community.

Until this day, history has been thought on the basis of a lost community – one to be regained or reconstituted (Nancy 1991:9).

As Robert Bernasconi points out, Nancy secures the history of the idea of community in the West firmly within a western metaphysics of presence (Bernasconi 1993:4), whereby foundational presence and connection occurs prior to the schism of modernity. However, when discussing the “phantasm of the lost community”, Nancy suggests that the concept of community, of the common, is actually produced through its own impossibility:

what this community has ‘lost’ – the immanence and the intimacy of a communion – is lost only in the sense that such a ‘loss’ is constitutive of ‘community’ itself (Nancy 1991:12).

Nancy’s discussion of being takes place through an ontological *separation*, where the spacing of the world occurs from an originary space/time and a shared experience of finitude, and where existence is figured as an opening out that never returns to itself. In Nancy’s work this leads to an ontology of singular–plural existence – an ontology that is based on being among others but implying no relation of gathering together. Being cannot be thought of without being-with, as the primary ontological condition: “Being cannot *be* anything but being-with-one-another, circulating in the *with* and as the *with* of this singular-plural existence” (Nancy 2000:3). But this spacing is not the radical alterity of Levinasian ethics:

Being is not the Other, but the origin is the punctual and discrete spacing *between us*, as *between us and the rest of the world*, as *between all beings* (Nancy 2000:19, emphasis in original).

Being-with, and the idea of being as singular-plural, raises the question of the body or the subject in isolation: being can only be thought through being-with. Being-with for Nancy implies no sense of similarity between bodies, or recourse to identity politics or ethics: rather it is an ontological state of *opening out* onto the world, of the production of time and space through this movement – what Nancy sees as the spacing of the world. Moreover it is only through being-with that we are capable of thinking about individuals and groups. The following quote illustrates this:

We can never simply be ‘the we’, understood as a unique subject, or understood as an indistinct ‘we’ that is like a diffuse generality. ‘We’ always expresses a plurality, expresses ‘our’ being divided and entangled: ‘one’ is not ‘with’ in some general sort of way, but each time according to determined modes that are themselves multiple and simultaneous (people, culture, language, lineage, network, group, couple, band, and so on). What is presented in this way, each time, is a stage [scène] on which several [people] can say ‘I’, each on his own account, each in turn. But the ‘we’ is not the adding together or the juxtaposition of these ‘I’s. A ‘we’, even one that is not articulated, is the condition for the possibility of each I (Nancy 2000:65).

Being-with occurs prior to the determination of space and time, prior to the individual. It operates as divisions and entanglements – intertwining and dispersions. It is what makes

space and time possible, and also the possibility of thinking about individuals and societies, which are understood as hypostatisations of the primary being-with. Being-with, the 'co-', the 'mit-', is a spacing, an opening out of the world. Being-with, however, can apply to one who is alone. Indeed, to be alone, for Nancy, is to be *alone-with* (Nancy 2005). Being-with is a condition for being-alone. The ontological separation implied by Nancy's concept of spacing as opening out can bring about a move away from foundational identity politics and towards a new politics of singularity, since the gathering implied by identity politics and the logic of the nation and the political group can be displaced through this move. With this displacement comes the displacement of the foundation, as politics can reform around an opening out rather than a closing in. The space of sense and the spacing of the world are thought in terms of a shared finitude and shared relationship to death, since time and space emerge from a primary being-with.

However, Nancy asserts that the structuring of experience that has relied on the grounding of the foundation and of the sovereign is still very much apparent, and perhaps reflects the desire for connection discussed in these last chapters (especially chapter six) that is one current response to finitude. In *Being Singular-Plural*, Nancy describes a world where the foundation has been replaced by *technē*, or ecotechnics, which can broadly be considered in terms of a political economy without a sovereign (Nancy 2000). The sovereign, as foundational authority, while it is displaced by *technē*, still reappears as a spectre filling the space where the sovereign had lain. So for Nancy the problem lies in thinking without foundation, allowing for a new ethics, an ethics based on the ontology of spacing and opening out of meaning. This ethics, then, as a utopian project, is perhaps more consonant with the world emerging through ecotechnics than the world working on the logic of the displaced sovereign. A move towards an ethics of spacing, a world where the empty space of the sovereign is allowed to remain empty, where the aporia has leave to remain, then, may lead to a less dissonant experience of the world and the possibility of a new ethics without foundation.

I want to make it quite clear here that the ontological notion of spacing and of singular-plurality discussed by Nancy is in no way *necessarily* related to an ethics of humanism, or togetherness. The spacing of sense that occurs prior to the subject, indeed prior to time and space, is ontological and as a result cannot be *tied* to ethics. Nevertheless, what Nancy's

work does invite is a consideration of foundationless ethics based on the refusal of the sovereign, or of identity politics in favour of a solidarity based ethics – a being-together that dissolves the I or the you and replaces it with the we. Nancy's project involves the possibility of a liberation of ecotechnics from capital, as a political and ethical project, through the spacing of the world as an alternative basis for identity – a being-together. Spacing involves a distancing, a placing, perhaps an elevation or diminishing. It involves thinking the world spatially, through bodies and technologies in process, a poesis, at once material, bodily and affective:

spacing, the intersection of singularities, and not the confrontation of faces or masks (Nancy 2000:140).

In considering these ontologies of space and distance, of opening over gathering, it is possible to move towards a deconstructive approach to the foundations of identity, connection, place and people: a consideration of the contingency of these moves to connection and identity and in doing so an opening of possibility for a new politics. This is not to suggest, however, that foundations are in any way dangerous, or problematic. Indeed, they may be desirable in terms of the affinities and associations that they sustain. What this approach can do, however, is enable a recognition that foundations are not transcendent or universal, that their contingency and indeterminacy is a central feature of their production through technologies of testimony, and that their status as productive fictions allows them to be analysed as such.

Tintagel and the testimony of landscape

I now return to my ethnographic fieldwork in order to consider how these discussions can inform the way in which we theorise affective and imaginary connections with place, as materialised through embodied practices of walking, visiting, looking and fantasising. I visited Tintagel castle, in Cornwall, a number of times during 2009–2010. The place I encountered, combined with some of the work I had been doing prior to my visit (reading Nancy and Simondon, and attending a reading retreat to discuss postfoundational approaches to political authority) resonated with many of the ideas I was working through, and as a result I made a number of return trips and interviewed various visitors and staff members. Tintagel Castle is the fourth most popular visitor attraction run by English Heritage, and is situated on a rocky outcrop in North Cornwall, connected to the mainland by a narrow rocky path. The castle was built by Richard, Earl of Cornwall in 1233, although its celebrity and popularity derive from its rather tenuous associations with King

Arthur, the mythical King of England during the Dark Ages.

My 'encounter' with Tintagel Castle was an encounter with a space of intertextuality, a landscape produced from constellations of imaginary association, and inhabited by myth through remembered Arthurian image-events such as watching *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, watching *Gawain and the Green Knight* at school, visiting the village of Tintagel aged 10 and buying a toy sword with my 3-year old brother which he - in a moment of extraordinary inspiration and originality - named Excalibur. My experience of this space also produced encountered memorial traces of visiting Glastonbury and walking up the Tor, Tennyson's *The Lady of Shalott*, the Isle of Avalon, the album by Roxy Music called *Avalon*. All of these image-event-memories emerged in the production of my imaginary of Tintagel, the place which wasn't Camelot or Lyonesse, but which maybe we want to be. The place which wasn't home, or birthplace to a fictional-fictionalised king, whose symbolic presence leaves so many traces in my own and in others' imaginations. These associations become activated through anticipation, through encounter and after leaving the site. These activations worked on and through dispositions, affects and images that contributed to the specific experience of place.

At the entrance to Tintagel Castle there is a darkened room where you go to watch a film on a loop. It's called *Searching for King Arthur*. The words in the film do something: they erode the foundational basis for any connection between King Arthur - as synecdoche for heroic solid connection with the past and (problematic of course) foundational identity- and the material space of Tintagel Castle. They do this by positioning Arthur as a *fictional* King, mentioning his invention as being conceived in Cornwall by Geoffrey of Monmouth and the augmentation and development of this romantic myth in Thomas Mallory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* and the building of Tintagel Castle by the Earl of Cornwall. But the iconography of the film - the swirling mists, the music, the literal spectral presence of characters in robes wafting around the landscape of Tintagel Castle do something else. They feed the desire for Arthurian romance. They elide the factual distancing of the site from the legend, by bringing the legend into the film in non-verbal ways. Sound effects such as neighing horses, galloping hooves, and a medieval/electronic soundtrack, which alludes not directly to Medieval England, but to a 1970s prog-rock sound that somehow evokes images of Avalon and a particular Romantic view of Albion, worked through album covers, graphic

design and popular countercultural forms. These elements of the film work on the level of *affect*. While the script effaces/denies the possibility of King Arthur having been born at this place, the affective resonances that work through the technology of the film cut through the body and stimulate powerful cultural/affective/imaginary associations that produce a sense of something – a romantic sensibility and fantasy. The film works through the affective register to prepare the body for the next image-event – the spectral encounter of the signified of Arthur through the displaced signifier of the embodied contact with a space. The body is primed through the cinematic devices of the film for a particular type of affective experience. The embodied encounter with the landscape, primed with expectation, imaginary and fantasy, enables the landscape to testify to a foundational moment – a fictional moment but nevertheless part of the origin myth of England. The body responds to this possibility, conjuring spectres as it moves through the landscape. Testimony here is used in what Derrida calls “a rather vague sense”, referring to the humanist European culture to suggest that nonhumans do not testify (Derrida 2000:81). I suggest, however, that the landscape here performs the logic of testimony through its *having been there*. Testimony states: “I was there”. The landscape, with its ruined medieval castle, testifies to longevity, to continuity and connection with the past, and the particular tenor of that testimony works through the body in the desires and imaginaries that are triggered in the cultural landscape.

There is no testimony in the film to the foundational moment through which authentic identity can be traced – no line back to the ancient Kingdom of England...but the film works on a desire to make a connection with a past that is being effaced/denied and fulfilled at the same time. The testimony to the (fictional) event of foundation is produced through the embodied landscape practice of walking around the site, enabling the emergence of said intertextual traces – all testimonies of their own with varying degrees of authority which point to a fictional foundation which is then foundationless. It is in this way, then, that I point to the testimony of landscape, the testimony of a particular relation to the materiality of a landscape that emerges through the embodied, intertextual encounter. The film’s soundtrack invites the audience to “visit the castle itself to discover how myths are made... and how they lead back into history”. This invitation performs and moves the body towards an experiential resonance whereby history and myth are intertwined in the production of present sensation and imaginary association. HV Morton’s *In Search of England*, first published in 1927 discusses this desire, the way in which imaginary associations work through bodies in their yearning for what is perceived to have been lost:

There are two Tintagels: one is in Cornwall, the other in Cloudland. One on the map; the other spun out of verse and music; and this is the real Tintagel, no dead rock in a grey sea, but a country of dream more real than reality, where there are still music, the breaking of lances, the pain of love (Morton 1960:107-8).

I would suggest that Morton is wrong to separate the two spaces – the material and the imaginary. Imaginary associations are produced through material embodied encounters, and the textual associations that emerge through that practice – the histories of bodies and spaces that allow this emergence can never be separated. Histories of bodies have inscribed themselves in other bodies and on the landscape. Later in the book, Morton discusses Tintagel as desire, and in doing so, brings the imaginary and material back together in a way that is more resonant with my own analysis:

Tintagel is haunted. It is haunted not by Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, but by that moment in our lives when imagination caught fire and blazed... The ghosts on this rock are the great army of Englishmen and Englishwomen who in their youth believed in Excalibur and wept in sorrow beside that mere as the three hooded queens came in their barge with a crying that 'shivered to the tingling stars' (Morton 1960:108).

I have drawn on this example to illustrate the complexities of the embodied and signified landscape and its testimonial power. Moreover, the desire for connection through time and space, which gives landscape testimonial power is articulated through the embodied encounter with landscape in this example. The *outside* of Arthur as past and future king of England and as a result a synecdoche for a specific mode of Englishness is produced through the immanent relations that enable it to be positioned as such – and through the desire for stable identity, continuity through time, and connection to a land and a people. Despite the unsettling of the foundation through its exposure as fiction, the testimony of the landscape experience, redolent with intertextual associations that, while specific to each singular body, nevertheless produces and reproduces shared social imaginaries among many bodies who visit this site. This testimony enables the production of collective memory as a witness to the foundation and therefore a link to that foundation.

Testimony, in this case the testimony of the landscape, serves as a technology of augmentation and of witness to the foundational moment. In turning to this example, I have tried to situate foundational identity as desire for community and connection: to recognise the lack of grounding for identity but demonstrate how foundational fantasies serve to meet a desire for connection with past and to move across time and space, confronting finitude through *an urge for connection*. The ontological spacing of the world as disconnection and ellipsis is arguably the source of this desire, coupled with a distinctly

modern understanding of finite life and the emergence of the self that articulates desire for connection towards specific affective nodes.

Geographies of disconnection

Recent theoretical shifts in cultural geography, such as an interest in performativity, in phenomenology and nonrepresentational theory has led to a shift in focus in cultural geography away from the idea of landscape as text or veil and towards landscape as process (Wylie 2007a): landscape as produced through its performing, imagining and enacting (e.g. Dewsbury, Harrison et al. 2002; Wylie 2002; Cresswell 2003; Rose and Wylie 2006; Wylie 2006; Merriman, Reville et al. 2008). However, implicit in this 'performative' turn, and focus on embodiment, there is a sense of *engagement*, an unproblematic subject of engagement who, by dint of the embodied practices through which landscape is seen to form, is considered as part of and connected to landscapes. For example, the Heideggerian concept of dwelling has been used by social scientists to consider embodied ways of being in the world, particularly those that are repeated and temporally durable, and used to position particular acts as expressing a primary ontological connection with land. The "dwelling perspective" as discussed by Tim Ingold has been influential in the social sciences (Ingold 2000; MacNaughton and Urry 2001; Lea 2008). In geography, Cloke and Jones discuss dwelling in terms of the "rich intimate ongoing togetherness of beings and things over time" (Cloke and Jones 2002), and it is clear that writers on dwelling foreground intimacy and familiarity in the embodied relation to place. Similarly, phenomenological accounts of landscape can unproblematically slip into an assumption of foundational subject and into a metaphysics of presence which goes unquestioned and unchallenged. Recent critiques of Heidegger from post-humanist, speculative realist perspectives have focused on the way in which dwelling brings with it associations of particular rural, peasant ways of living through Heidegger's use of examples (Brassier 2007; Harman 2009). The association of dwelling with those practices seen as less technologised or more 'rural' encourage a romantic sensibility inviting and conflating notions of connection and oneness with nature and rurality.

The critique of presence in poststructural theory (Derrida 1976, 1978, 1982) has called into question the ways in which subjects and objects are understood. Derrida, in particular, through concepts such as the trace, of difference, and of the spectre (Derrida 1976, 1982,

1994), critiques the “metaphysics of presence” upon which Western philosophy has historically relied, in favour of the possibility of thinking a new metaphysics through deconstruction and the logic of the trace. This chapter argues that to focus on the ontological primacy of disconnection, qua Nancy, can work to critique some recent approaches to cultural geography that rely perhaps too heavily on understandings of relation and of belonging. Geographies of displacement, estrangement and disconnection can be seen as useful tools in considering the pitfalls of unproblematically using concepts such as dwelling to privilege some modes of embodied engagement over others (e.g. Cloke and Jones 2002; Harrison 2007b, 2007a; Wylie 2007b; Romanillos 2008; Wylie 2009b). Recent accounts in cultural geography of absence, disconnection, of the impossibility of the phenomenological collapse of self and world, and its self-revealing as the object of an impossible desire critique those accounts of landscape that rely on tropes of belonging and connection. This is particularly true of those thinkers whose work displaces the phenomenological subject. For example, John Wylie’s recent account of absence and landscape can be read as an attempt to reposition nonrepresentational accounts of landscape against phenomenological and memory-focused accounts that presuppose both presence and connection:

Just so, in the ambition to write landscape via a language of connection and coincidence, ineradicable figures of absence, distance and non-coincidence were neither by-products nor merely intriguing facets of a more basic, underlying and *a priori* intertwining. Instead they were constitutive of landscape ...

It was haunted, like every landscape (displaced, like every place). It loomed with presences, ached with absences (Wylie 2009b:283-4)

Similarly, Paul Harrison has recently drawn our attention to the “non-relational” in his discussion of the hegemony of relation in social theory and the suturing of inevitable aporias that this perspective entails:

it seems to me that in the proliferation of biophilosophy, the unstoppable materialisation of actor networks and constructivist totalisations of the social or the cultural, few have been asking about breaks and gaps, interruptions and intervals, caesuras and tears (Harrison 2007a:592).

The cultural geographer Mitch Rose, whose understanding of the idea of landscape in terms of a Derridan “dream of presence”, starts to engage in these questions. “The landscape is not an object whose presence needs to be explained but a presence whose object-like appearance needs to be thought” (Rose 2006:538). In doing so he not only deconstructs landscape as presence, but also asks why it *appears* as present – in other words, asks what practices, imaginings and desires are mobilised when bodies see and understand landscape, or subjects, or objects, as present.

In a recent paper he attempts to move forward from a poststructuralist “crisis of theory” and crisis of representation through a questioning of the concept of culture and an analysis of culture as a *phenomenon* rather than an object (Rose 2009). He argues that the crisis of representation and the acknowledgement that one can never stand outside meaning and text has led to an unwillingness to address the *problem of culture*. Instead, the idea of *difference* has been substituted for culture to allow for complexity, for fluidity, for a sense of blurring of cultural boundaries while maintaining the idea of culture as an object of study. Rose suggests that culture-as-difference reifies both subjectivity and difference, fixing the self-present subject as the site of culture, and moreover as that which *possesses* culture. Culture then becomes the property of the subject – the site of the relocation of culture after structuralism. Culture exists, but rather than existing in structures, it exists in subjects. It is present, an object of study unquestioned.

Instead, he suggests that the idea of culture needs to be taken outside of the subject, in order to understand it not as an object in itself, but rather as a phenomenological effect. This approach to culture sees it as something that *appears* as interiority – something which we assume to have or own, which can be expressed or performed, but which is internalised within the subject. These concerns are also considered in my own critique of the subject as interiority which I deal with in chapters two and seven, particularly through Foucault. For Rose, then, cultures and the desire for culture can be considered, within and through deconstruction, in terms of a *dream of presence*. Taking Derrida’s critique of the metaphysics of presence, and the anxieties and horror implied in the deconstructive project when the foundations of presence and surety are taken away, the dream of presence becomes an active process of imagining and creating presence and fixity where they can never be (Derrida 1976). Rose describes these dreams of presence as “impossible possibilities”: always out of reach, at the ever-receding horizon (Rose 2006:542). They are what we strive for, what we seek to bring about – what we feel we must attain or even regain.

The imagination is central to this means of theorising culture. We actively imagine the world as closed, as contained, as fixed and ordered. We imagine cultural forms as objects of study. Cultivation, rather than culture, through practice, becomes an imagination of and a

movement towards presence, understood not in terms of “systems of presence” but “dreams of presence” (Rose 2006:539). In a Spinozist vein Rose sees these dreams (which are allied to imaginaries) as

intimate collections of material sensations where other dreams of presence (dreams of who we are, of where we belong, and of how we get on with life) are consigned (Rose 2006:539).

Stories and landscapes are dreams of presence which orient the event of becoming by making particular renderings of what constitutes everyday life materially and sensually experienced. The fact that those imaginations of everyday life never arrive in the form of a fully present culture is not the point. The central question, rather, is what attachments do they engender, how do they provide a sense of rhythm to everyday life and thus provide a bearing for becoming subjects? (Rose 2006:549)

Landscape “initiates... the operations of a becoming subject” (Rose 2006:538) rather than being the site of the operation of cultural ideologies. This refiguring of cultural theory demands that we consider the ontogenetic process of culture – culture as verb, as cultivating, as affective movement rather than as subject or text. Culture is something that movement operates towards, rather than something that exists. Culture is produced through the body that imagines, through the affective, moving, feeling body that becomes subject and object through its capacities of thought and action.

Contained within the concept of the dream of presence is a definite humanism – yet a humanism that sits comfortably alongside posthumanist theory. The human act of dreaming – the embodied imagination in my own work – reinstates the human body in the cultural landscape, not as originary subject but as a body which has certain capacities – produced materially and historically, which enables the dreaming of culture to happen. To ignore the very human act of culture, even if one is displacing the categories of the human and of culture, is to leave a space that needs to be addressed. To theorise culture in terms of expressions of desire is potentially very useful, and the cultural landscape can indeed be analysed in terms of the desire to territorialise, as the demand for order, presence and fixity. Seeing culture (post-)phenomenologically, as that which we *imagine*, rather than that which is present, can lead to a new framing, a new way of questioning our everyday lives. Instead of studying the minutiae, the how, which has happened as part of the crisis of representation, we may consider instead the why – the question of drive comes forward as being central to this – what drives people firstly, to move to cultivate, but secondly, to move to cultivate in specific ways. We can consider foundations, and other dreams of presence, in terms of *helpful fictions*, but act with the insight that these helpful fictions are not incontestable: we can rely on master signifiers such as ethics, equality, the common, in order to hold together those structures of legitimacy which enable cohesive social life. However,

the openness of the 'master signifier' holds it of course in danger of being seized, and as a result a deconstructive approach to authority-production by dint of particular master signifiers and material relations can make us aware of the ways in which they are being seized and claimed in the production of lived relations.

Geographies of disconnection can inform cultural geographies of landscape through the way in which they denaturalise connective imaginaries and those accounts of landscape and embodiment that overprivilege subjectivity and presence. As such, they offer an ontological destabilising and critique of presence which is central to the deconstructive project. While Rose has positioned the need or desire for culture in a primordial call of the Other, through Levinas' ontology of the subject as haunted by the presence of radical alterity, I suggest that the ontologies of nonrelation, of spacing that comes through in Nancy's and Simondon's work, that positions being-with as primary before the self-other, sits more comfortably with the notion of landscape as a dream of presence (Nancy 1991; Simondon 1995; Nancy 2000, 2005; Simondon 2007 and 1989; Brunner 2010; Nancy 2010). If presence is complicated from the start – i.e. the primary ontological (non)relation occurs before self and other, then this is a position from which presence too becomes complicated, and the desire for suture more easily explained. While both rely on a kind of vulnerability for their power, Nancy's vulnerability in the face of finitude is compared to Levinas' vulnerability in the face of the Other.

Conclusion

This chapter is slightly different in theoretical content and form from the rest of the thesis. Its purpose is to tie those thoroughly materialist accounts of the body and the imagination into a deconstructive ontology that not only recognises the absolute sociality of the body in its becoming a subject, but also recognises that doubled over into that sociality and into the imaginary production of particular forms of experience is an ontological ground that drives bodies towards particular modes of enculturation and presencing. The deconstructive critique of presence, and those various ontologies of spectrality, the trace, spacing and individuation that are allied with this critique, then, are in no way incommensurate with a more 'sociological' account of the social body, or an account of experience that focuses on its production through particular technologies and regimes. What the ontological step back does, rather, is consider the aporetic centre that always remains within an account of social

life, and what that aporetic centre does in terms of producing a drive to suture, to closure and to presence. The discussion of Tintagel as a space that testifies to a fictional foundation is thus pursued as an example of how the concept of dreams of presence, how the nostalgia for community that is its constituent works through bodies in the course of their engagements with place. The associations made by bodies in the encounter, that rely on intertextual memories for their potency, and operate through the affective register can be considered as a particular response to a desire for continuity across time and for connection with foundational tenets. Bodies latch onto the spectral encounters with possible/impossible pasts, and in doing so reveal the desire for connection and continuity activated in the testimony of the landscape encounter. The testimonial power of landscape is positioned as a way in which to further explore the way in which body-landscape encounters move to produce ways of being-in-the-world that tie them into regimes of temporality and spatiality, and in doing so, offer some form of fixity.

I have attempted to show how, through the associative capacities of bodies in their moves to make sense of their finite existence, specific ways of relating to the world emerge. In doing so, it is of course revealed that that there is no *necessary* relationship between blood and soil: no *authentic* relation between people and place, prior to the practices through which relations are brought into being. The outsides that produced these relations as necessary are, of course, produced as such through the immanent relation of the drive to identity and presence. As I discussed in chapters six and seven, identities forged through relation to place happen in historically specific situations and emerge in historically situated, embodied encounters. If we position an ontological displacement prior to a sense of place, then we can move towards the proposition that there is no absolute foundation to identity claim. This then opens up the possibility of thinking a new politics of territory, of belonging.

Perhaps, as Nancy argues in *Being Singular Plural*, we are still unable to move beyond the modes of experience that react against an aporetic ontology such as that of the spacing of the world: those modes of experience that reach out and grasp onto continuities between bodies, through spaces and over time. It is within these logics that the spectre of the sovereign and of the foundation still hangs over us. The desire for identities based on foundational principles is still manifest in the movements, effects and technicities of bodies striving to persist and to find points of connection and relation. To position these desires as

the object of inquiry effectively moves the mode of inquiry towards an understanding of the radical contingency of subject and object, of self and world, and works to deconstruct those foundational fictions as responses to a geography of dislocation. Perhaps, in the embracing of finitude and the Nancean possibility of being-with with rather than reacting-against the spacing of the world, a new ethics can emerge, augmented through non-foundational technologies – the ongoing production of new forms of testimony, for example.

This is not to say that foundations are not useful or productive: they are simply not *necessary* to politics. Indeed, the production and celebration of grounds can of course be useful ways of producing political commons. I argue, however, that a more open politics can emerge if they are recognised as being immanent to what produces them: if they are recognised as not transcendent or outside of the forms of life to which they give way. Rather, they could be considered as *fictions that help us along for a while*. In this recognition comes the possibility of a more open politics, a politics that can shift away from foundations if it is called to. It is in this way that the space opened up by deconstruction becomes an ethical project.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

Imagination, embodiment, affect and politics are inextricably linked. Forms of life that are tied to political rationalities emerge from affective flows through bodies that produce imaginative associations, and are experienced or *felt* in historically specific ways. I have argued that a thoroughly materialist approach to the investigation of these flows can lead to new modes of enquiry into the production of forms of life, and to the development of a postfoundationalist account of the production of experience. This thesis has discussed the relationship between bodies, the imagination, affect and practice in the context of new materialist and post-humanist thought. As such, it can be seen to contribute to the formulation of a *political analytic of feeling*: it rests on the premise that feeling has to be *taken apart* in order to consider how and why we collude in and even gain pleasure from forms of oppression. If we consider feeling to be outside of subjectivation, then we allow the most insidious forms of force to act on us and do not recognise its acting. I have argued that an understanding of power requires an understanding of affect and therefore feeling. In other words, I call for a questioning of the moment when things feel ‘right’ or ‘natural’ or ‘unacceptable’, and for an interrogation into what has led to the possibility for those feelings to take place, to be experienced.

I have suggested throughout that texts do things to bodies: they are affective. If this is the case, then this text too can be considered in terms of what it performs. In chapter five, I make reference to Foucault’s concept of the “experience book”, books as “direct experiences aimed at pulling myself free of myself, and preventing me from being the same” (Foucault 2002:242). To read a text is to involve the body in historically specific modifications that then impact on future modifications, to set up new associative connections in the embodied imagination and prepare the ground for other modes of practice. If this thesis engages the reader and, through the reader’s capacity for imagination and thought, contributes to thinking about experience, or politics, or affect, then it has served its purpose. In this concluding section I flag up a number of thematic directions that this thesis has taken, drawing out some areas that contribute to cultural theory and cultural geography, as well as pointing to areas that were beyond its scope but nevertheless would be productive and interesting avenues to pursue in the future. In doing so, I revisit the themes discussed in the introduction after their having been worked through in the body of the thesis.

Affect, Spinoza and materialism

I have engaged directly with Spinoza for three reasons. Firstly, because I consider that his radically monist view of substance can enable an account of immanent life that refuses the possibility of a transcendent, and as such, contributes to a politics of immanence and to the ongoing deconstruction of the outside that is part of a postfoundational project of thought.⁷⁴ In setting out a radical monism that sees both ideas and matter as different attributes of the same indivisible “Substance”, nature is both active creator (*natura naturans*) and passive created (*natura naturata*), since its cause and effect are immanent to itself (Spinoza 1996:20-1). Spinoza posits that all objects and bodies are *modes* of the totality of substance. What this effectively means is that Spinoza constructs a *radically immanent* metaphysics – where the possibility of an outside is foreclosed through his totalising of God. Considering individual bodies as modes of Substance can lead to a radical rethinking of the bounded nature of things and bodies: it enables a *relational* ontology, where individuals are perceived as part of a totality (Nature), and as such precludes any foundational outside or dualistic thinking of, for example, nature and culture, or individual and society, since all are simply modes of the same Substance.⁷⁵

Secondly, a consideration of Spinoza was sought as a means of engaging with recent use of the concept of affect in the social sciences (the ‘affective turn’). I was concerned that some scholarship that has emerged from this turn relies on a less than solid understanding of the history and genealogy of the concept, and may confuse affect with cognate ideas such as emotion and feeling (for example Pile 2009). A direct engagement with Spinoza’s texts has allowed the development here of a confident formulation of affect through movement, a formulation which has no need for a human or a subject, yet enables a particular way of thinking about the subject ‘after the subject’. Spinoza’s *Ethics* is concerned with affect without necessitating an anthropocentric framework implied by definitions of affect that are tied to the concept of emotion.

Thirdly, Spinoza’s discussions of thought and of the imagination have been highly

⁷⁴ This project is further pursued in chapter nine through the work of Jean-Luc Nancy.

⁷⁵ Here, relational refers to the way in which parts, or modes, of substance, interact in the ongoing movement of substance as a whole.

productive tools for thinking experience outside of the subject and for considering the material basis of thought and the imagination. Spinoza's account of the imagination, as worked through a Foucauldian understanding of subjectivation, gives rise in this thesis to a radically contingent, historicised account of experience, rationally and logically formulated. Spinoza can also be mobilised in thinking about the historicity of bodies through the concept of affect, and the body modifications that constitute affections upon which this concept is based: his philosophy invites a supplement to the concept of bodily inscription discussed in chapter two through its contribution to an analysis of experience-production as central to those processes of inscription.

Spinozist thought, especially on mind and the imagination, when considered alongside Foucault's account of bodies, technologies and practices, can lead to a *materialisation* of thought, and in doing so can call into question an idealist account of history in favour of a materialist account in which the idea is as much a part of substance as the referent. The Spinozist materialism that I advocate in this thesis relies on a concept of affect as what happens when bodies impress upon each other, when they *change the relation*. This enables us to think about the world in terms of how it *relates to itself*, and requires an understanding of the world as on the move, as durational and affective:

And I shall consider human actions and appetites just as if it were a question of lines, planes and bodies (Spinoza 1996:69).

The concept of affect, then, leads to a mode of analysis that figures bodies, spaces and subjects in terms of lines, planes and bodies – considering the subject as a “collection of trajectories and circuits” (Stewart 2007:58). In doing so, bodies and spaces are *undone* as individualised entities and shown to emerge as durational, relational processes through which intensities course.

It was beyond the scope of this thesis to consider in depth the extent to which the kind of materialist analysis I proposed here relates to a Marxian account of historical materialism. In the light of recent conference sessions organised at the Association of American Geographers 2011 (entitled ‘immanent materialisms’ and ‘sensational marxisms’) as well as a renewed interest in Marx's philosophy in the academy, a further avenue to explore might be to consider how the ‘new materialist’ ideas discussed in this thesis could be turned to a reading of Marx in the light of a politics of radical contingency, and consider the spaces for

thought and praxis that could be opened up therein. It is my suspicion that, since we know that Marx read Spinoza, and indeed hand-transcribed large amounts of the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* into his own notebooks, the connections between his own materialism and that of Spinoza and also Foucault are more close than some might suggest, particularly if we are to consider Marx's later work as opposed to his more Hegelian earlier work. Jane Bennett recently suggested that there are two schools of materialism: in situating Spinoza and Deleuze against Marx and Adorno, she loses sight of the potential for political agency offered by a Spinozist and Deleuzian account of the human body (Bennett 2010). Against Bennett, I would argue that Spinoza, Marx and Deleuze occupy a shared interest in the way in which material relations produce formations of power, and moreover that the complexity of the human body contains within it the distinct potential for thinking change. Spinoza is not an antihumanist, nevertheless his materialism has been seized by those who wish to propose a nonhuman vitality. The relationship between Marx and Spinoza is a fruitful avenue for further research, especially when engaging with the politics of affect.

Imaginarities and the embodied imagination

This thesis has argued for a materialist understanding of the imagination and of imaginaries. Here, the imagination is a material affection which takes place in bodies: *imaginaries are material, affective and embodied*. Through Spinoza's discussion of forms of knowledge and the mind/body relation in the *Ethics*, I discussed the concept of the embodied imagination. Central to the formulation of these ideas is the scholium from the *Ethics* describing hoofprints in the sand quoted in chapter three:

a soldier, having seen traces of a horse in the sand, will immediately pass from the thought of a horse to the thought of a horseman, and from that to the thought of war, etc. But a farmer will pass from the thought of a horse to the thought of a plow, and then to that of a field, etc. And so each one according as he has been accustomed to join and connect the images of things in this or that way, will pass from one thought to another (Spinoza 1996:47).

Here, Spinoza demonstrates how bodies produce imaginative knowledge through their embeddedness in institutional and technical regimes that give way to particular forms of experience, an argument which I consider as central to the way in which experience is produced through the material histories of bodies and their imbrication in relations with other bodies and materialities. Fundamental to this conceptualisation of experience is its recognition of the importance of practice and inscription in thinking about the ways in which experience emerges through bodies. Practice is expanded into a broad definition that includes, for example, thought and the reading of a text (see chapters four and five).

Drawing on Lloyd and Gatens, I showed how the concepts of the social imaginary and of the embodied imagination can be used to interrogate and rethink the analysis of social life. Imaginaries are produced through and produce affective assemblages of bodies in specific contexts and are central to the way in which forms of life emerge. In chapter six connective practices such as wild swimming and foraging are discussed as means through which identity, belonging and connection are felt, and how specific bodies feel this connection as natural. Chapter eight discussed how imaginaries of the self in time are actively worked on through embodied techniques of the self such as walking and landscape photography. Social imaginaries are defined as what takes place in the enactment of forms of life: an overlapping, a spiralling and a feeding back and forward of association that relies on the affective capacities of the imagination for their resonance through bodies in the ongoing production of the nebulous and ungraspable entity of the imaginary. In chapter six, I suggested that landscapes and bodies erupt through the embodied imagination in a process of constellation that refers and defers, that oscillates around an aporia. I argued that these imaginary bodies and landscapes become tied to regimes that produce feelings and stir intensities, producing, for example, the feeling of nation and territory.

To pay attention to the ways in which bodies imagine themselves, and others, and the extent to which these imaginaries augment and intensify affective resonances in bodies, I argue, is an important ingredient of a critical analysis of the production of forms of life. As such, a move towards a consideration of the role of imaginaries – the way we imagine and in doing so enact the world – is an important contribution to social, cultural and political analysis. Celebrated discussions of the imaginative production of knowledge, such as Said's account of the imaginary and material production of the Orient (Said 1978), Anderson's account of how nations come to be imagined as communities (Anderson 1984), and other 'imaginary geographies' can thus helpfully be supplemented by a consideration of the processes through which these imaginaries work in and through affective bodies, producing their materialities, producing ways of life, and enabling some responses and foreclosing others.

The subject is figured in this thesis as the surface effect of a 'body that imagines' (chapter three). This is a specific understanding of subjectivity and agency that relies on the centrality of *thought* to their production. In chapter four I argue for the materiality of

thought – for thought as that which works through bodies and as what bodies *do* – they process and transduce affections and modifications, and inscribe bodies through that process. Through Connolly, I make the case for an expanded definition of thought that (chapter four) encompasses both the representational/cognitive and nonrepresentational/noncognitive registers, and recognises the role of practice and of techniques of the body in the ongoing production and differentiation of bodies. Recently the concept of plasticity in bodies has received interest, and this is an area which could provide a fruitful course for further study with reference to the relationship between experience, subjectivity and the embodied imagination, for example through the work of Malabou and Ravaissou (Malabou 2008; Ravaissou, Carlisle et al. 2008).

The production of experience

In chapter two I discussed my desire to theorise a *visceral sociality* where subjective position in relation to others is felt bodily, implying a naturalness *which works to elide the contingency of the social order*, and to *expose as contingent* that which seems most natural. In this thesis, experience is figured in these terms – as life as felt which can work to position the subject as though it were universal and ahistorical. It is for this reason that embodied experience is subjected to a ‘sociological analysis’ through an attempt to draw on both sociological understandings of the body that rely on the concept of practice, enabling the possibility of thinking of social life as arrangements of things and bodies rather than something that *happens* to things and bodies and on phenomenological accounts of experience that foreground its embodied location yet take into account historically produced differences between bodies as enabled by the first argument. As such, I construct a postphenomenology that discusses how *experience* and *difference* are related: that takes into account the fact that bodies are involved in regimes that *produce experience*. The embodied imagination, as central to the production of experience, is shaped by the histories of bodies. In these discussions, I have tried to analyse experience without suggesting that it is the *property* of a subject, rather that it exists in flows and regimes, and courses through bodies, emerging as experience through its vacillation between the affective and the subjective registers, and that this can help to think about differential experiences of different bodies. In chapter two I argued that the lived body is the *site* of the social, and this is discussed in later chapters through the way in which the embodied imagination works to produce historically specific versions of experience in its capacities to make connections and to associate ideas (see my discussion of constellations in chapter three with reference to the social imaginary and also

of the experience of landscape and place imaginaries in chapter six).

Through this, I supplement an account of the production of the subject, based on the work of Foucault, with one that places *experience* as central to that process of subjectivation. In chapter two I discussed how phenomenological accounts of embodied experience may neglect to consider the ways in which experience emerges from material relations between bodies, spaces and things, and may overly privilege particular subjective perspectives, while sociological accounts of the body may underplay the role of experience in the production of the subject. In chapter eight, the experiential production of the self and of time is discussed through a consideration of how the embodied imagination produces foldings and multiplicities that work to both stabilise the idea of the self and disrupt the idea of pure presence, revealing a trembling that exposes the excess to presence of experience. This destabilisation of the self, through the consideration of the experiential folding of past and future into the present in the course of its own production, demands a conceptualisation of experience as that which is *historically constituted*. By drawing attention to the historical specificity of different types of bodies, and to the production of bodies through practices that are embedded in material/social relations, I demonstrate how experience cannot be thought of as outside of the historical conditions of its emergence, and moreover, that the taking-place of history inscribes and is inscribed through bodies, and as such is productive of specific modes of experience of the world. Chapter eight also draws attention to how experience is enabled and augmented through its co-constitution with technologies such as diaries, notebooks and photographs, and how through the embodied activity of working with these technologies, the self emerges in specific ways. As such, experience is depersonalised and considered as co-constituted between bodies, materialities and spaces.⁷⁶ This conceptualisation of experience *after the subject* is figured, too, in chapter three, through a discussion of Balibar's concept of the transindividual.

I argue, then, for a *fuller* account of subjectivation than that which Foucault offers: one that takes into consideration the affective and experiential registers. An account that considers the subject as “trajectories and circuits” yet recognises that those trajectories and circuits are *felt* and moreover that that feeling is central to the way in which life is performed. My

⁷⁶ This section refers obliquely to the work of Bernard Stiegler, whose account of technics has been highly influential to this section without its being directly engaged with. Further research in this area requires a more direct engagement with Stiegler and his arguments for the co-evolution of bodies and technologies (Stiegler 1998, 2009).

materialist account of the affective subject and the embodied imagination brings flesh to the concept of experience and works to supplement Foucault. My concern with the idea of interiority recognises that this is both felt, and augmented through embodied experience – for example through those practices of photography and walking discussed in chapters seven and eight. Affective responses are considered as collective and political in chapter seven, in a consideration of how we might perform and work towards a politics of the feeling body. Experience is produced historically and relationally, through the ongoing movement of affect through and between bodies.

As a result, this thesis is an attempt to consider experience as that which is always a surface effect of relations of subject-production that move through and between bodies, and which are always imbricated in wider regimes and rationalities that organise and produce bodies. In drawing attention to this, I hope that phenomenological accounts, particularly in cultural geography, will recognise the need to decentre experience and incorporate the concept of difference and the regimes that produce that difference more explicitly.

In engaging with the critique of the subject, it has been necessary to think about the question of the human, particularly in the light of recent posthumanist and antihumanist texts. Throughout the twentieth century, critiques of phenomenology, of authorship and of the subject have paved the way for a decentring of the category of the human. More recently, actor-network theory, science and technology studies, postphenomenology and the explicitly antihumanist speculative realism have successfully moved the focus of much enquiry towards the material, towards the nonhuman object. In an effort to destabilise the human the focus is changed to a point where the human is in danger of becoming a pawn in a galactic game, and consciousness merely a surface effect of various neurones and hormones, reacting to the demands of the nonhuman world like the determinism of Spinoza's stone.⁷⁷ For example, Bennett's *Vibrant Matter* posits a role for the nonhuman that appears to offer the human little agency (Bennett 2010).

⁷⁷ "Further conceive, I beg, that a stone, while continuing in motion, should be capable of thinking and knowing, that it is endeavoring, as far as it can, to continue to move. Such a stone, being conscious merely of its own endeavor and not at all indifferent, would believe itself to be completely free, and would think that it continued in motion solely because of its own wish. This is that human freedom, which all boast that they possess, and which consists solely in the fact, that men are conscious of their own desire, but are ignorant of the causes whereby that desire has been determined" (Spinoza 1674:396).

While I advocate a pulling-apart, or deconstruction of the body-subject, I make a case for sticking with the human. Humans are always at play with other forces, and non-human actants can have profound effects (Hurricane Katrina is perhaps a clear example of this). However, the human is produced in and through relationships where political agency is possible, where action and intention can take place, where we can position ourselves to respond in particular ways. The way in which we imagine the world is central both to the production of the subject and the extent to which we can work on this production. This is why I push in the thesis for a consideration and valorisation of *thought*, and why the idea of the interruption in chapter seven is important. I argue for a resurfacing of the subject as a decentred site: a site which we acknowledge is not a foundation or a centre, but nevertheless provides purchase for social and political analysis. The human body, as a specific field of potentials and capacities, is highly complex. I am keen to *rē*place the human after its displacement partly because of the position of the human as *zoon politikon*. However, the human is not considered in isolation here: throughout the thesis, and in positioning my theory within a Spinozist account of substance, I refer to the way in which bodies, subjects and indeed the category of the human take place in a milieu of ideas, signals, techniques and things. In my formulation of a postphenomenological account of experience–production, human subjects are figured through a consideration of affect, thought and materiality. In the final chapter I turned towards geographies of disconnection, and along with cultural geographers such as Wylie and Rose, suggest that these geographies can be used to critique landscape geographies that contain a residual romantic humanism as well as those that presuppose connection and presence, while still maintaining the human as a decentred site for analysis of the production of these ideas.

Power and feeling: the politics of affect

By thinking Spinoza alongside a Foucauldian hermeneutics of the subject we can form a political account of affect that recognises its centrality to the production of experience. In particular, I have shown how collective understandings arise through the affective materialities of bodies, and how a focus on affect reinvigorates cultural theory. The idea of the embodied imagination can help us to think about what Deleuze calls the “interstice between seeing and speaking”, where subjectivities are produced as surface effects or illusions (Deleuze 1988a:72). It is in the feeling body that the deepest levels of

subjectivation make themselves known: where our bodies *reveal*. A focus on the non- or more than representational can help us to consider the way in which bodies, through their precognitive responses to situations, can *expose their sociality*, and lead to a deconstruction and analysis of the various material forces that work on and produce bodies that respond in particular ways. As such, a politics of deconstruction, of analysis, of taking apart that which seems natural, can arise through this focus on the affective response.

Chapter seven interrogates embodied knowledges using Hampshire's approach of 'self-conscious materialism'. In this chapter I argued that research practices can be nuanced such that they point to the ways in which embodied, nonrepresentational knowledge emerges from the sociality and situatedness of the body. The concept of the 'interruption' is mobilised to this effect, and I consider this concept to be one of the central contributions of this thesis to cultural theory and analysis. To think of bodies as points through which affective relations move allows an interrogation of those relations *through the body*. The interruption, figured as a moment of affective intensity that reveals something of its own making when placed under interrogation, is a way of approaching this. In arguing for consideration of nonsubjective aspects of thought in an analysis of subject-production, I make the case that these forms of embodied knowledge do not stand outside of material regimes of subject production – they are not 'free' – and to figure them as such signals a resort to biologism and the body as "mute facticity" (Butler 2006:176). Chapter four points out that "it is their very immediacy, their autonomy and their saturation with affect that makes these forms of thought so pertinent to cultural and political thought" (page 90) and it is for this reason that the affective body should be subject to scholarly interrogation. In chapter seven the revelatory power of the interruption is discussed at length as a way of considering how reflexive materialism can provide a means of exposure of the body's own sociality. The interruption operates as a site where the body *speaks*: bodies' responses to situations contribute to, reinforce and sometimes disrupt the political and material rationalities of their own production. Attending to the body's responses lets it reveal and make manifest its own politics in its affective response. To attend in this way is to be aware of the relation between micro and macropolitics, to the way they fold in and through each other in the production of bodies and technologies, to historicise the moment of affective intensity, and to draw attention to those spaces where things aren't clear, where there are breaks, ruptures, inconsistencies of non-relation (Harrison 2007a, see also chapter nine of this thesis).

The interruption, then, can serve as a means of thinking deconstructively about the relationship between nature and culture, between body and society, between self and world, between inside and outside. However, in moving from a deconstructive to a performative politics, I have argued that, through Connolly and Hampshire, thought and practices of the self that involve thought can be central to the formation of an ethics of living. A careful consideration of thought enables the insertion of political agency into a postsubjective account of social life: bodies that process affections through thought can actively work on those affects. For example, chapter eight discussed how bodies actively work on themselves through the imaginative production of 'other' selves.

Focusing on the intimate space of affect leads to the recognition of the politics of the body, and can point to the specific sites where one can imagine oneself otherwise, and also to where those affects currently converge around spaces of control or exploitation. It can point to how affective relations can be transformed and new spaces can open up as a result of these transformed relations. This has considerable implications for cultural geography. It can reveal how affective spaces themselves translate into other spaces of affect: for example how the politics and affects in the space of the lapdancing club bleeds into the politics of other male/female relationships, how the frustration and anger felt at a misplaced parking ticket can irrupt into a space of family argument. These flows of affect can be traced, or attempts can be made to trace them, at their capillary endings where they reveal themselves at surfaces of bodies: in recallings, in inscriptions, and in actions.

Affect and ideology

Recent turns towards the concept of affect and towards a consideration of those embodied movements that run below the level of the subject – what we might consider the nonrepresentational – have attempted to replace the concept of ideology through a consideration of a different kind of politics based on embodied knowledge and micropolitics in the place of the driving forces of ideology such as capitalism or communism. In this thesis, however, I argue that the politics of affect is at the same time the politics of ideology, and moreover that a Marxian materialism that privileges the material relations between bodies and technologies as productive of forms of life “in the last instance” (Althusser 1971:159) is arguing for similar modes of analysis to those that I have addressed here – an

embodied, embedded materialisation of relations of power and force that work through bodies and their relations to things. My drawing attention to the embodied imagination is an attempt to show how ideas are *matter*: they inhere in formations of bodies and spaces that move people and things in specific ways; they operate on a topological plane that shapes materialities and moves people and things in specific ways and inscribes through practice, and they work through flows of bodies, texts and spaces. This thesis endeavours to show how these ideas matter, and in doing so moves towards a materialism that would be recognised by Marx, Foucault and Spinoza, a materialism that considers texts in terms of what they do, in terms of the affective force that they have in their encounters with bodies and with assemblages of bodies and things.

This thesis argues for an expanded analysis of the text – a consideration of the text at the point of *encounter*, and, in Spinozist terms, the text as a body modification. This is exemplified most fully in chapter six, where, through a critique of David Matless and through examples from my own fieldwork I provide an account of the role of body/text encounters in the production of feeling. In particular, the *stickiness* of particular imaginary associations through a history of embodied encounters with texts is explored in an analysis of the production of affective landscape imaginaries, which are shown to be tied into regimes of power. This chapter discussed how memories of books and films grapple for attention in the embodied imagination with other memories of embodied encounters with texts, things and spaces. In other words, I employ the language and thinking of affect not to erase ideology, but to *rematerialise* ideology – to offer up a materialism that can successfully account for the ways in which power (as capacity to affect) moves through practices, organs, ideas, signs and technologies. A materialism that can account for the ways in which these relations are co-constituted through non-human and human agents, which produce specific formations of force, and produce subjects in and through those formations. In this way, I argue against those “vitalist” materialists, who play too much into the power or agency of matter. My interest is in the human body and I make a case for the reinstatement of the figure of the human in the social sciences, albeit from the point of view informed by those posthumanist critiques that displace the human and allow for the way in which assemblages of human and non-human forms are co-constitutive of particular arrangements of life. This materialist approach to the text focuses on the point of encounter – the embodied engagement with the world as it acts on and is acted on, and the production of experience through that material, embodied encounter.

The concepts of the interruption and of the encounter, I suggest, are particularly useful tools for thinking about bodies and politics. I am interested in exploring how these concepts can be mobilised in order to inform social inquiry and wish to pursue this in the future. Recently, I have argued for a consideration of the body as a sort of “litmus paper” (Dawney 2010) pointing to the way in which interrogation of the body reveals its imbrication within political rationalities and regimes: the affective body as an indicator of the conditions of its own production. As a basis for a new forms of political analysis, this has much potential: we can consider trauma, for example, in terms of a material trace, a deferral that exists in the storage of the trace of history in the materiality of the body. Thinking in this way can also be used in order to consider the historical emergence of specific affective phenomena such as anxiety and hysteria, through a tying the flows of affect in with wider political structures such that attention to affective surfacings becomes a way of reading off the material forces that flow through and produce bodies.

Geographical concerns

In its focus on the affective makings of places and bodies, this thesis also contributes to discussions about the ‘emotional geographies’ of particular spaces. Recent debates in cultural geography about the relationship between affect and emotion have pointed to an often rather confused understanding of the relationship between them. I have attempted to interrogate the concept of affect here by returning directly to Spinoza, and, in doing so, reach a way of thinking about affect and emotion that neither conflate them nor suggest that they are entirely separate. In chapter four I discuss the difference between affect and emotion – where emotion is intensity owned and recognised (Massumi 2002:28). Affect is shown, through Spinoza and subsequently Deleuze and Massumi, to operate prior to the subject, and to be a property of all matter. Emotion, on the other hand, relies on the concept of the subject which I argue comes *after* the movement of affect, and operates in a different register. However I do not dismiss the concept of emotion, any more than I do the concept of the subject. Subjects, and emotions, are considered throughout the thesis in terms of *surface effects* – of surfacings that produce the effect of depth (see chapters two and eight). Affect prefigures individualisation; it resides in a world prior to how it is actualised and sedimented through, for example, language and culture. While affect blurs the boundary of thing and person, making it difficult to tell where one ends and the other begins, emotion is

central to the subjective understanding of self as individual. Emotions, the sociocultural feeding-back of affects registered in the subject as feeling, enter into affective relations, may augment their intensities, may compartmentalise them and enable their perpetuation, but nevertheless a focus on emotion alone will only tell part of the story. Emotion, I argue, is produced through the vacillation of registers that produces subjects, texts and cultures. Emotion cannot be considered as an *a priori*. My thesis operates in and elucidates the point of fluctuation between the affective and the subjective: the space of actualisation that occurs after the body recognises an affection, a space that is always a space of oscillation and vacillation between the registers. To consider the way in which emotional responses are produced through these oscillations and vacillations enables a less foundational and less phenomenological approach to the production of embodied response, and opens up the possibility to consider these responses in terms of the material relations that flow through bodies in their production.

This thesis also enters into the ongoing work in geography that falls under the title of nonrepresentational theory. As stated in the introduction, my intention was to work to performatively fill the space between nonrepresentational and political geographies, partly through the production of what we might consider a more 'sociological' account of the nonrepresentational. Like other work that is broadly aligned with nonrepresentational theory, attention to the emergent processes of ontogenesis, embodied knowledge, and the movement to sense, is central to the arguments made in this thesis. Nonrepresentational theory positions movement prior to subjects, and throughout I argue for a presubjective milieu prior to the formation of subject and object. The concept of the affective field is central to this (chapters five and six). My focus here has been on the relationship between the affective and the subjective, the material processes of becoming through which subjects and objects are individualised and historicised: and on what things *do* rather than what they are. In doing so, I am interested in how the representational and the nonrepresentational co-produce, how they feed back and collapse in on each other in a dance between the presubjective and the subjective registers. It is this relationship that can be elaborated as a contribution to cultural theory, for, as Dewsbury et al point out

Nonrepresentational theory takes representation seriously; representation not as a code to be broken or as an illusion to be dispelled rather representations are apprehended as performative in themselves; as doings. The point here is to redirect attention from the posited meaning towards the material compositions and conduct of representations (Dewsbury et al 2002, 438).

My work is explicitly concerned with this relationship, with thinking about what texts do to

bodies, with what is at work at the point of encounter. Representations are performative - as are bodies, particularly through the production of imaginaries through which shared understandings of the world are engaged with, as are other materialities – of the ongoing production of ways of life.

In my direct concern with Foucault and with other sociologists of the body, however, I provide a 'sociological' account of the nonrepresentational, a sociology based on a politics of radical immanence which refuses to consider an outside to the conditions of its own production. Through a consideration of the role of the nonrepresentational in the production of the subject, perhaps most significantly in chapter seven but also throughout the thesis, I have argued that nonrepresentational aspects of embodied practice and experience are as important as representational aspects in an attempt to give an account of subject-production. While affect works prior to the subject, it is the body's response to affections, the backlighting of the event through affect and the way in which this colours experience that informs the playing-out of social relations. In writing a sociological account of the nonrepresentational, then, I demonstrate the value of this approach as a way of considering the production of forms of life, but also perform a move towards thinking politics *after* identity politics through the permanently deconstructing concept of the social imaginary, which foregrounds *doing* over being; *bodies* over subjects. My approach to critical enquiry, however, has not been to engage directly with nonrepresentational theory but to produce a contribution to cultural theory that emphasises the relationship between the sociological and the nonrepresentational, and to consider a new way of understanding embodied practices.

The thesis also directly contributes to recent debates in cultural geography, particularly through its concern with landscape. The work of Wylie and Rose on landscape, in particular, are discussed as part of a concern with the ideas of space and place after the critique of the subject. Chapter six explicitly engages with cultural geographies of landscape through a critique of David Matless's *Landscape and Englishness*, suggesting an approach that considers the *material* relations that work to produce cultures of landscape and the imaginaries through which those cultures come to be experienced *as* affective. The chapter argues that certain affective modes of engagement with landscape - those moments where one might be struck by a sense of immediacy and a sense of naturalness to the body's

relationship with landscape that may inform wider processes of identity-production - occur *through* rather than *despite* regimes of representation and power and technologies of subjectivation. In other words, the affective resonances of landscape experience can appear as natural or presocial, if we refuse to interrogate the production of embodied intensities as a part of subjectivation processes. Chapter six and chapter nine demonstrate how particular landscape cultures have emerged through intertextual, embodied, material encounters. This felt naturalness works to conceal the contingency of relations through which it is produced: the politics that bubble beneath the surface of feeling. The nonrepresentational is considered in terms of the way it can inflect embodied experience with a sense of the 'natural', informed by biologicistic discourses of the body (see chapter two) and the move towards presence and suture (chapter nine), performed through embodied and imagined practices of connection such as walking and other performative cultures of landscape.

Spectres of deconstruction: undoing relational thinking

An underlying motif running through the thesis is 'undoing'. In chapter two I undo the idea of the body and the production of depth until we are only left with surfaces. Also in this chapter a biologicistic foundation for the body is undone. Later on, I undo the dichotomy between text and practice (chapters five and six), between theory and empirics (chapter five) between body and technology (chapter eight) and finally I undo the possibility of foundational relation connection (chapter nine). This chapter take the motif of undoing as far as possible – to consider the 'primary relation' between body and world as another foundational fiction. In particular, I emphasise how the philosophy of Nancy can supplement Spinoza's radical immanence through the idea of spacing. In chapter nine, the connective imaginary, which was so central to the practices and techniques described in earlier chapters, is discussed through a Nancean understanding of community as a structuring outside which is augmented and legitimated through various practices such as testimony. I make some quite big claims in this chapter, not least that the ontological state of unbelonging, caesura and loss underwrites articulations of belonging.

This chapter considers the techniques through which foundations are produced through bodies. In particular, it focuses on how experience of place, and the associations of that place become activated through anticipation, encounter and the triggering of memories. Where previously I have shown how a lived and felt relation to places produces imaginaries

which are tied to identity and politics, here I suggest that lived and felt relations are also based on an ontological displacement that repositions connection to place, land and identity in terms of *desire* rather than *belonging*. I suggested in my analysis of the space of Tintagel Castle, Cornwall, that a spatial encounter can activate dispositions, affects and representational images through which foundational identities are produced. If we figure this in terms of technique, in terms of specific productions of an aesthetics of existence, this opens up the possibility for transformation. Testimony, as a specific technique through which truths are produced, is considered in terms of landscape through the production of desires and imaginaries that emerge in the embodied encounter and testify to an imagined foundation. The imagination can be considered in terms of technique, in terms of the dreaming of and desire for presence that emerges through its working. Central to the argument in this chapter is the concept of imaginaries as ‘helpful fictions’ We can equally consider these to be techniques of truth, through Foucault, and consider the way in which these fictions, these outsides can be produced through specific techniques in order to live well. Foundations (God, nature, the State) are produced in and through the embodied imagination. As a way of thinking, as a mode of thought, the idea of ecotechnics and technique that Nancy brings to the table enables an aesthetics of existence that is not tied to the foundation, or which exposes the foundation and in that exposure frees it from the notion of the transcendent. For the concept of immanence itself troubles Nancy. It suggests a transcendent and calls it into play by its very denial.

While on the surface it might seem that the “non-relational” ontology proposed in chapter nine may seem at odds with the Spinozist relational ontology that the rest of the thesis sets out, a closer analysis suggests that the thinkers are working through similar ideas, especially in terms of a critique of the individual. Where Spinoza positions an *a priori* substance, Nancy positions a spacing. Both of these operate prior to individualisation, prior to the subject and object and as such are the miasma through which subjects and objects emerge. The semantics of spacing are helpful, however, in attempting to undo some of the connective assumptions made by a relational approach. In the thesis, I have shown how certain practices of connection are involved with the production of bodies, spaces and landscapes, and in doing so have led to particular modes of experience tied to regimes of nation, class, and belonging, for example. One of my intentions in turning to Nancy and to geographies of disconnection was to guard against setting up connection as some form of foundational or ontological state. In other words, to position a sense of connection, to land, blood or identity, for example, as contingent and related to a specific set of historical

emergences that Nancy discusses in *The Inoperative Community* (Nancy 1991). While Spinoza positions substance as an immanent totality, a felt sense of connection to all of creation does not logically or necessarily follow. Substance enables a radically immanent way of understanding material relations, but does not position itself in terms of attachments or connections. In moving to Nancy the possibility of a foundational connection is undone, but it is undone in such a way that is not incommensurate with Spinoza's ontology of substance. A presubjective modality, whether considered in terms of substance or in terms of spacing is apparent in the work of both philosophers. Nancy is useful as his attempt to deconstruct nostalgia for community and for connection enables us to consider the ways in which these connective imaginaries are instead symptoms of a desire for connection that is instead based on a recognition of a presubjective disconnection, a spacing that operates through the being-with, and that is a condition of the emergence of subject and object, rather than a presubjective collapse which is perhaps implied through an ontology of connection.

In Spinoza, affect operates below the level of the subject. As a material/physical theory of matter and movement, it does not rely on a subject, but rather takes place in the movement of matter itself. A presubjective spacing, that relies on the ontology of the "co" the being with of Nancy, holds true to the materialism of the work on affect the I have worked through in this thesis.

It is clear, however, that I have travelled some distance in this thesis, and a final word is needed on the intermeshing of deconstruction and new materialist thought which I have tried to achieve in this word. The question of whether deconstruction is compatible with new materialism is sometimes raised in terms of the extent to which a politics of critique can sit comfortably beside the more affirmative politics that have emerged, for example, through Deleuzian thinking. For example, Bennett's work on enchantment, and Connolly's on "immanent naturalism" and "nontheistic gratitude" suggest a focus on techniques of the self as the grounds for a new affirmative and celebratory politics. Counter to this, my argument instead lies in the value of critique – but critique in terms of clearing the ground for new ways of thinking, rather than in terms of an exposure of that which is false. Critique offers a mode of attending to the workings of the social through which their productive forces can be made apparent, and in doing so enables a recognition of the contingencies of that which is held as natural that offers an opening, a possibility for other contingencies to take place. To clarify this further, I turn to a lengthy quote from my colleague Claire Blencowe, whose work on positive critique clearly sets out this agenda as a

means of “doing critical politics”.

Positive critique is ‘positive’ because it interprets events in terms of the expansion of forces, capacities and experiences of empowerment. It is interested less in demonstrating the badness or fallacy of a given political discourse or institution (in the work of negative critique) than it is in illuminating the ‘hold’ that political discourses and institutions have upon people: what makes power acceptable; its appeal or allure. This appeal and allure is always understood in terms of productivity, the production of things, pleasures, affects, and capacities, especially knowledge.

Positive critique is ‘critique’ because it is a work upon the limits of the present, exposing economies of experience that give power its power. It describes knowledges, discourses and institutions in terms of their positivity and actual intelligibility rather than denouncing them on the grounds of their destructiveness, irrationality or fallacy. However it does so in order to *detach* us from these mechanisms, to open up and pluralise our perspectives, to generate space and demand for politics and critical judgement (Foucault, 2000c: 244–5). Positive critique is ‘denaturalising’, ‘defetishising’ and ‘detaching’ without being condemnatory, othering, dichotomising or dismissive (Blencowe 2010:6–7).

This chapter is the last stage in the taking-apart, in the undoing of the relation. We are left with technique and spacing, where once we had presence and truth. In this exposure of the aporia, of the space between, comes the possibility of transformation through a politics of radical contingency that works against the concept of the transcendent. While I do not engage specifically with Derrida to a great extent in the thesis, his presence lurks as a dark precursor to this project, never explicitly engaged with, yet haunting the sensibilities that led to this choice of approach. Deconstruction becomes a way of thinking, an orientation rather than a corpus to engage with. The aporia haunts the whole text of the thesis and as such it is characterised by a gradual *undoing*, a pulling apart, firstly of the text, then the self, then the subject, the object, the human, the cultural, the mind, the landscape, the emotions. This undoing reaches the point where there are only surfacings – surfacings of bodies that have the capacity to think and dream, upon which flicker and play the surface effects of subjects and objects, intentions and emotions. The world and the subject permanently deconstructs; the encounter is not only one of becoming and production, but also of disintegration and collapse, these terms only negative through our concern with the proper and the whole.

The concept of the embodied imagination developed during the course of this thesis calls for a politics of the body and a politics of thought – of through a deconstructive move to consider the politics of embodied thought in the production of the subject of power, and through a performative politics in the way in which this recognition affords us certain powers to think about our bodies differently, and in doing so question those very aspects of our own and others’ lives that we hold to be outside of historical specificity. Just as the critique of ideology armed us with tools to consider the promotion of certain ways of

being in textual forms, so this materialist critique can arm us with new strategies for alerting us to the ways in which the deepest aspects of our selves – even our autonomic, nonconscious thought - are imbricated in patterned ways of life, and in doing so allow us the possibilities to act for change. The embodied imagination is a way of considering how ways of life are produced, felt and enacted. Imaginaries endure through their production and reproduction in the relationship between bodies, texts and spaces.

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