Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 216–31; Sallie Sears, 'Theater of war: Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts*' in Jane Marcus (ed.), *Virginia Woolf: a Feminist Slant* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), pp. 212–35.

38 'At this very moment, half-past three on a June day in 1939' (p. 92); 'sitting here on a June day in 1939' (p. 208). Penrose op. cit., p. 276 points out that 'The thirtieth anniversary of Handley Page Ltd. was on 12th June (1939) – at that time the country was spending almost £2 million a week on aeroplanes.' Living as she did so close to what was then Gatwick aerodrome Woolf could not fail to be aware of the significance of the greatly increased air traffic in the later 1930s and its war menace. When she wrote the novel she was under the flight path of invasion – not now by sea, to be repelled from the island fortress, but by air, with the land below under threat from paratroops and bombs.

39 *Diary*, vol. 5, p. 297.

Nation and Narration Ed. Homi K. Bhabha (London: Routledge, 1990)

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# *DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation*[1]

*Homi K. Bhabha*

(In memory of Paul Moritz Strimpel (1914–87): Pforzheim – Paris – Zurich – Ahmedabad – Bombay – Milan – Lugano.)

## The time of the nation

The title of my essay – DissemiNation – owes something to the wit and wisdom of Jacques Derrida, but something more to my own experience of migration. I have lived that moment of the scattering of the people that in other times and other places, in the nations of others, becomes a time of gathering. Gatherings of exiles and emigrés and refugees, gathering on the edge of 'foreign' cultures; gathering at the frontiers; gatherings in the ghettos or cafés of city centres; gathering in the half-life, half-light of foreign tongues, or in the uncanny fluency of another's language; gathering the signs of approval and acceptance, degrees, discourses, disciplines; gathering the memories of underdevelopment, of other worlds lived retroactively; gathering the past in a ritual of revival; gathering the present. Also the gathering of the people in the diaspora: indentured, migrant, interned; the gathering of incriminatory statistics, educational performance, legal statutes, immigration status – the genealogy of that lonely figure that John Berger named the seventh man. The gathering of clouds from which the Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish asks 'where should the birds fly after the last sky?'

In the midst of these lonely gatherings of the scattered people, their myths and fantasies and experiences, there emerges a historical fact of singular importance. More deliberately than any other general historian, Eric Hobsbawm[2] writes the history of the modern western nation from the perspective of the nation's margin and the migrants' exile. The emergence of the later phase of the modern nation, from the mid-nineteenth century, is also one of the most sustained periods of mass migration within the west, and colonial expansion in the east. The nation fills the void left in the uprooting of communities and kin, and turns that loss into the language of metaphor. Metaphor, as the etymology of the word suggests, transfers the meaning of home and belonging, across the 'middle passage', or the central European steppes, across those distances, and cultural differences, that span the imagined community of the nation-people.

The discourse of nationalism is not my main concern. In some ways it

is the historical certainty and settled nature of that term against which I am attempting to write of the western nation as an obscure and ubiquitous form of living the *locality* of culture. This locality is more *around* temporality than *about* historicity: a form of living that is more complex than 'community'; more symbolic than 'society'; more connotative than 'country'; less patriotic than *patrie*; more rhetorical than the reason of state; more mythological than ideology; less homogeneous than hegemony; less centred than the citizen; more collective than 'the subject'; more psychic than civility; more hybrid in the articulation of cultural differences and identifications — gender, race or class — than can be represented in any hierarchical or binary structuring of social antagonism.

In proposing this cultural construction of nationness as a form of social and textual affiliation, I do not wish to deny these categories their specific historicities and particular meanings within different political languages. What I am attempting to formulate in this essay are the complex strategies of cultural identification and discursive address that function in the name of 'the people' or 'the nation' and make them the immanent subjects and objects of a range of social and literary narratives. My emphasis on the temporal dimension in the inscription of these political entities — that are also potent symbolic and affective sources of cultural identity — serves to displace the historicism that has dominated discussions of the nation as a cultural force. The focus on temporality resists the transparent linear equivalence of event and idea that historicism proposes; it provides a perspective on the disjunctive forms of representation that signify a people, a nation, or a national culture. It is neither the sociological solidity of these terms, nor their holistic history that gives them the narrative and psychological force that they have brought to bear on cultural production and projections. It is the mark of the ambivalence of the nation as a narrative strategy — and an apparatus of power — that it produces a continual slippage into analogous, even metonymic, categories, like the people, minorities, or 'cultural difference' that continually overlap in the act of writing the nation. What is displayed in this displacement and repetition of terms is the nation as the measure of the liminality of cultural modernity.

Edward Said aspires to such secular interpretation in his concept of 'wordliness' where 'sensuous particularity as well as historical contingency . . . exist *at the same level of surface particularity* as the textual object itself' (my emphasis).[3] Fredric Jameson invokes something similar in his notion of 'situational consciousness' or national allegory, 'where the telling of the individual story and the individual experience cannot but ultimately involve the whole laborious telling of the collectivity itself'.[4] And Julia Kristeva speaks perhaps too hastily of the pleasures of exile — 'How can one avoid sinking into the mire of common sense, if not by becoming a stranger to one's own country, language, sex and identity?'[5] — without realizing how fully the shadow of the nation falls on the condition of exile — which may partly explain her own later, labile identifications with the images of *other* nations: 'China', 'America'.



The nation as metaphor: *Amor Patria*; *Fatherland*; *Pig Earth*; *Mothertongue*; *Matigari*; *Middlemarch*; *Midnight's Children*; *One Hundred Years of Solitude*; *War and Peace*; *I Promessi Sposi*; *Kanthapura*; *Moby Dick*; *The Magic Mountain*; *Things Fall Apart*.

There must also be a tribe of interpreters of such metaphors — the translators of the dissemination of texts and discourses across cultures — who can perform what Said describes as the act of secular interpretation. 'To take account of this horizontal, secular space of the crowded spectacle of the modern nation . . . implies that no single explanation sending one back immediately to a single origin is adequate. And just as there are no simple dynastic answers, there are no simple discrete formations or social processes'.[6] If, in our travelling theory, we are alive to the *metaphoricity* of the peoples of imagined communities — migrant or metropolitan — then we shall find that the space of the modern nation-people is never simply horizontal. Their metaphoric movement requires a kind of 'doubleness' in writing; a temporality of representation that moves between cultural formations and social processes without a 'centred' causal logic. And such cultural movements disperse the homogeneous, visual time of the horizontal society because 'the present is no longer a mother-form [read mother-tongue or mother-land] around which are gathered and differentiated the future (present) and the past (present) . . . [as] a present of which the past and the future would be but modifications'.[7] The secular language of interpretation then needs to go beyond the presence of the 'look', that Said recommends, if we are to give 'the nonsequential energy of lived historical memory and subjectivity its appropriate narrative authority. We need another time of *writing* that will be able to inscribe the ambivalent and chiasmatic intersections of time and place that constitute the problematic 'modern' experience of the western nation.

How does one write the nation's modernity as the event of the everyday and the advent of the epochal? The language of national belonging comes laden with atavistic apologues, which has led Benedict Anderson to ask: 'But why do nations celebrate their hoariness, not their astonishing youth?'[8] The nation's claim to modernity, as an autonomous or sovereign form of political rationality, is particularly questionable if, with Partha Chatterjee, we adopt the post-colonial perspective:

> Nationalism . . . seeks to represent itself in the image of the Enlightenment and fails to do so. For Enlightenment itself, to assert its sovereignty as the universal ideal, needs its Other; if it could ever actualise itself in the real world as the truly universal, it would in fact destroy itself.[9]

Such ideological ambivalence nicely supports Gellner's paradoxical point that the historical necessity of the idea of the nation conflicts with the contingent and arbitrary signs and symbols that signify the affective life of the national culture. The nation may exemplify modern social cohesion but

> Nationalism is not what it seems, and above all not what it seems to itself . . . The cultural shreds and patches used by nationalism are often arbitrary historical inventions. Any old shred would have served as well. But in no way does it follow that the principle of nationalism . . . is itself in the least contingent and accidental.[10]

The problematic boundaries of modernity are enacted in these ambivalent temporalities of the nation-space. The language of culture and community is poised on the fissures of the present becoming the rhetorical figures of a national past. Historians transfixed on the event and origins of the nation never ask, and political theorists possessed of the 'modern' totalities of the nation — 'Homogeneity, literacy and anonymity are the key traits'[11] — never pose, the awkward question of the disjunctive representation of the social, in this double-time of the nation. It is indeed only in the disjunctive time of the nation's modernity — as a knowledge disjunct between political rationality and its impasse, between the shreds and patches of cultural signification and the certainties of a nationalist pedagogy — that questions of nation as narration come to be posed. How do we plot the narrative of the nation that must mediate between the teleology of progress tipping over into the 'timeless' discourse of irrationality? How do we understand that 'homogeneity' of modernity — the people — which, if pushed too far, may assume something resembling the archaic body of the despotic or totalitarian mass? In the midst of progress and modernity, the language of ambivalence reveals a politics 'without duration', as Althusser once provocatively wrote: 'Space without places, time without duration.'[12] To write the story of the nation demands that we articulate that archaic ambivalence that informs modernity. We may begin by questioning that progressive metaphor of modern social cohesion — *the many as one* — shared by organic theories of the holism of culture and community, and by theorists who treat gender, class, or race as radically 'expressive' social totalities.

*Out of many one*: nowhere has this founding dictum of the political society of the modern nation — its spatial expression of a unitary people — found a more intriguing *image* of itself than in those diverse languages of literary criticism that seek to portray the great power of the idea of the nation in the disclosures of its everyday life; in the telling details that emerge as metaphors for national life. I am reminded of Bakhtin's wonderful description of a 'national' *vision of emergence* in Goethe's *Italian Journey*, which represents the triumph of the realistic component over the Romantic. Goethe's realist narrative produces a national-historical time that makes visible a specifically Italian day in the detail of its passing time, 'The bells ring, the rosary is said, the maid enters the room with a lighted lamp and says: *Felicissima notte!* . . . If one were to force a German clockhand on them, they would be at a loss.'[13] For Bakhtin it is Goethe's vision of the microscopic, elementary, perhaps random tolling of everyday life in Italy that reveals the profound history of its locality (*Lokalität*), the spatialization of historical time, 'a creative humanization of this locality, which transforms a part of terrestrial space into a place of historical life for people'.[14]

The recurrent metaphor of landscape as the inscape of national identity emphasizes the quality of light, the question of social visibility, the power of the eye to naturalize the rhetoric of national affiliation and its forms of collective expression. There is, however, always the distracting presence of another temporality that disturbs the contemporaneity of the national present, as we saw in the national discourses with which I began. Despite Bakhtin's emphasis on the realist vision in the emergence of the nation in Goethe's work, he acknowledges that the origin of the nation's visual *presence* is the effect of a narrative struggle. From the beginning, Bakhtin writes, the realist and Romantic conceptions of time co-exist in Goethe's work, but the ghostly (*Gespenstermässiges*), the terrifying (*Unerfreuliches*), and the unaccountable (*Unzuberechnendes*) are consistently 'surmounted' by the structural aspects of the visualization of time: 'the necessity of the past and the necessity of its place in a line of continuous development . . . finally the aspect of the past being linked to a necessary future'.[15] National time becomes concrete and visible in the chronotope of the local, particular, graphic, from beginning to end. The narrative structure of this *historical* surmounting of the 'ghostly' or the 'double' is seen in the intensification of narrative synchrony as a graphically visible position in space: 'to grasp the most elusive course of pure historical time and fix it through unmediated contemplation'.[16] But what kind of 'present' is this if it is a consistent process of surmounting the ghostly time of repetition? Can this national time-space be as fixed or as immediately visible as Bakhtin claims?

If in Bakhtin's 'surmounting' we hear the echo of another use of that word by Freud in his essay on *The Uncanny*, then we begin to get a sense of the complex time of the national narrative. Freud associates *surmounting* with the repressions of a 'cultural' unconscious; a liminal, uncertain state of cultural belief when the archaic emerges in the midst or margins of modernity as a result of some psychic ambivalence or intellectual uncertainty. The 'double' is the figure most frequently associated with this uncanny process of 'the doubling, dividing and interchanging of the self'.[17] Such 'double-time' cannot be so simply represented as visible or flexible in 'unmediated contemplation'; nor can we accept Bakhtin's repeated attempt to read the national space as achieved only in the *fullness of time*. Such an apprehension of the 'double and split' time of national representation, as I am proposing, leads us to question the homogeneous and horizontal view familiarly associated with it. We are led to ask, provocatively, whether the *emergence* of a national perspective — of an élite or subaltern nature — within a culture of social contestation, can ever articulate its 'representative' authority in that fullness of narrative time, and that visual synchrony of the sign that Bakhtin proposes.

Two brilliant accounts of the emergence of national narratives seem to support my suggestion. They represent the diametrically opposed world views of master and slave which between them account for the major historical and philosophical dialectic of modern times. I am thinking of

John Barrell's[18] splendid analysis of the rhetorical and perspectival status of the 'English gentleman' within the social diversity of the eighteenth-century novel; and of Huston Baker's innovative reading of the 'new *national* modes of sounding, interpreting and speaking the Negro in the Harlem Renaissance'.[19] In his concluding essay Barrell surveys the positions open to 'an equal, wide survey' and demonstrates how the demand for a holistic, representative vision of society could only be represented in a discourse that was *at the same time* obsessively fixed upon, and uncertain of, the boundaries of society, and the margins of the text. For instance, the hypostatized 'common language' which was the language of the gentleman whether he be Observer, Spectator, Rambler, 'Common to all by virtue of the fact that it manifested the peculiarities of none'[20] — was primarily defined through a process of negation — of regionalism, occupation, faculty — so that this centred vision of 'the gentleman' is so to speak 'a condition of empty potential, one who is imagined as being able to comprehend everything, and yet who may give no evidence of having comprehended anything'.[21] A different note of liminality is struck in Baker's description of the 'radical maroonage' that structured the emergence of an insurgent Afro-American expressive culture in its expansive, 'national' phase. Baker's sense that the 'discursive project' of the Harlem Renaissance is modernist is based less on a strictly literary understanding of the term, and more appropriately on the agonistic enunciative conditions within which the Harlem Renaissance shaped its cultural practice. The transgressive, invasive structure of the black 'national' text, which thrives on rhetorical strategies of hybridity, deformation, masking, and inversion, is developed through an extended analogy with the guerilla warfare that became a way of life for the maroon communities of runaway slaves and fugitives who lived dangerously, and insubordinately, 'on the frontiers or margins of *all* American promise, profit and modes of production'. From this liminal, minority position where, as Foucault would say, the relations of discourse are of the nature of warfare, emerges the force of the people of an Afro-American nation, as Baker 'signifies upon' the extended metaphor of maroonage. For warriors read writers or even 'signs':

> these highly adaptable and mobile warriors took maximum advantage of local environments, striking and withdrawing with great rapidity, making extensive use of bushes to catch their adversaries in cross-fire, fighting only when and where they chose, depending on reliable intelligence networks among non-maroons (both slave and white settlers) and often communicating by horns.[22]

Both gentleman and slave, with different cultural means and to very different historical ends, demonstrate that forces of social authority and subalternality may emerge in displaced, even decentred, strategies of signification. This does not prevent them from being representative in a political sense, although it does suggest that positions of authority are themselves part of a process of ambivalent identification. Indeed the exercise of power may be both more politically effective and psychically



*affective* because their discursive liminality may provide greater scope for strategic manoeuvre and negotiation. It is precisely in reading between these borderlines of the nation-space that we can see how the 'people' come to be constructed within a range of discourses as a double narrative movement. The people are not simply historical events or parts of a patriotic body politic. They are also a complex rhetorical strategy of social reference where the claim to be representative provokes a crisis within the process of signification and discursive address. We then have a contested cultural territory where the people must be thought in a double-time; the people are the historical 'objects' of a nationalist pedagogy, giving the discourse an authority that is based on the pre-given or constituted historical origin or event; the people are also the 'subjects' of a process of signification that must erase any prior or originary presence of the nation-people to demonstrate the prodigious, living principle of the people as that continual process by which the national life is redeemed and signified as a repeating and reproductive process. The scraps, patches, and rags of daily life must be repeatedly turned into the signs of a national culture, while the very act of the narrative performance interpellates a growing circle of national subjects. In the production of the nation as narration there is a split between the continuist, accumulative temporality of the pedagogical, and the repetitious, recursive strategy of the performative. It is through this process of splitting that the conceptual ambivalence of modern society becomes the site of *writing the nation.*

## The space of the people

The tension between the pedagogical and the performative that I have identified in the narrative address of the nation, turns the reference to a 'people' — from whatever political or cultural position it is made — into a problem of knowledge that haunts the symbolic formation of social authority. The people are neither the beginning or the end of the national narrative; they represent the cutting edge between the totalizing powers of the social and the forces that signify the more specific address to contentious, unequal interests and identities within the population. The ambivalent signifying system of the nation-space participates in a more general genesis of ideology in modern societies that Claude Lefort has described so suggestively. For him too it is 'the enigma of language', at once internal and external to the speaking subject, that provides the most apt analogue for imagining the structure of ambivalence that constitutes modern social authority. I shall quote him at length, because his rich ability to represent the *movement of* political power *beyond* the blindness of Ideology or the insight of the Idea, brings him to that liminality of modern society from which I have attempted to derive the narrative of the nation and its people.

> In Ideology the representation of the rule is split off from the effective operation of it. . . . The rule is thus extracted from experience of

language; it is circumscribed, made fully visible and assumed to govern the conditions of possibility of this experience.... The enigma of language — namely that it is both internal and external to the speaking subject, that there is an articulation of the self with others which marks the emergence of the self and which the self does not control — is concealed by the representation of a place 'outside' — language from which it could be generated.... We encounter the ambiguity of the representation as soon as the rule is stated; for its very exhibition undermines the power that the rule claims to introduce into practice. *This exorbitant power must, in fact, be shown, and at the same time it must owe nothing to the movement which makes it appear .... To be true to its image, the rule must be abstracted from any question concerning its origin; thus it goes beyond the operations that it controls.... Only the authority of the master allows the contradiction to be concealed, but he is himself an object of representation; presented as possessor of the knowledge of the rule, he allows the contradiction to appear through himself.*

The ideological discourse that we are examining has no safety catch; it is rendered vulnerable by its attempt to make visible the place from which the social relation would be conceivable (both thinkable and creatable) by its inability to define this place without letting its contingency appear, without condemning itself to slide from one position to another, without hereby making apparent the instability of an order that it is intended to raise to the status of essence.... [The ideological] task of the implicit generalisation of knowledge and the implicit homogenization of experience could fall apart in the face of the unbearable ordeal of the collapse of certainty, of the vacillation of representations of discourse and as a result of the splitting of the subject.[23]

How do we conceive of the 'splitting' of the national subject? How do we articulate cultural differences within this vacillation of ideology in which the national discourse also participates, sliding ambivalently from one enunciatory position to another? What comes to be represented in that unruly 'time' of national culture, which Bakhtin surmounts in his reading of Goethe, Gellner associates with the rags and patches of everyday life, Said describes as 'the nonsequential energy of lived historical memory and subjectivity' and Lefort re-presents again as the inexorable *movement of signification* that both constitutes the exorbitant image of power and deprives it of the certainty and stability of centre or closure? What might be the cultural and political effects of the liminality of the nation, the margins of modernity, which cannot be signified without the narrative temporalities of splitting, ambivalence, and vacillation?

Deprived of the unmediated visibility of historicism — 'looking to the legitimacy of past generations as supplying cultural autonomy'[24] — the nation turns from being the symbol of modernity into becoming the symptom of an ethnography of the 'contemporary' within culture. Such a shift in perspective emerges from an acknowledgement of the nation's interrupted address, articulated in the tension signifying the people as an *a priori* historical presence, a pedagogical object; and the people constructed in the performance of narrative, its enunciatory 'present' marked in the repetition and pulsation of the national sign. The pedagogical founds its narrative authority in a tradition of the people, described by Poulantzas[25] as a moment of becoming designated by *itself*, encapsulated in a succession of historical moments that represents an eternity produced by self-generation. The performative intervenes in the sovereignty of the nation's *self-generation* by casting a shadow between the people as 'image' and its signification as a differentiating sign of Self, distinct from the Other or the Outside. In place of the polarity of a prefigurative self-generating nation itself and extrinsic Other nations, the performative introduces a temporality of the 'in-between' through the 'gap' or 'emptiness' of the signifier that punctuates linguistic difference. The boundary that marks the nation's selfhood interrupts the self-generating time of national production with a space of representation that threatens binary division with its difference. The barred Nation *It/Self*, alienated from its eternal self-generation, becomes a liminal form of social representation, a space that is *internally* marked by cultural difference and the heterogeneous histories of contending peoples, antagonistic authorities, and tense cultural locations.

This double-writing or dissemi-*nation*, is not simply a theoretical exercise in the internal contradictions of the modern liberal nation. The structure of cultural liminality — *within the nation* — that I have been trying to elaborate would be an essential precondition for a concept such as Raymond Williams' crucial distinction between residual and emergent practices in oppositional cultures which require, he insists, a 'non-metaphysical, non-subjectivist' mode of explanation. Such a space of cultural signification as I have attempted to open up through the intervention of the performative, would meet this important precondition. The liminal figure of the nation-space would ensure that no political ideologies could claim transcendent or metaphysical authority for themselves. This is because the subject of cultural discourse — the agency of a people — is split in the discursive ambivalence that emerges in the contestation of narrative authority between the pedagogical and the performative. This disjunctive temporality of the nation would provide the appropriate time-frame for representing those residual and emergent meanings and practices that Williams locates in the margins of the contemporary experience of society. Their designation depends upon a kind of social ellipsis; their transformational power depends upon their being historically displaced:

> But in certain areas, there will be in certain periods, practices and meanings which are not reached for. There will be areas of practice and meaning which, almost by definition from its own limited character, or in its profound deformation, the dominant culture is unable in any real terms to recognize.[26]

When Edward Said suggests that the question of the nation should be put on the contemporary critical agenda as a hermeneutic of 'worldliness', he

is fully aware that such a demand can only now be made from the liminal and ambivalent boundaries that articulate the signs of national culture, as 'zones of control *or* of abandonment, of recollection *and* of forgetting, of force *or* of dependence, of exclusiveness *or* of sharing' (my emphasis).[27]

Counter-narratives of the nation that continually evoke and erase its totalizing boundaries — both actual and conceptual — disturb those ideological manoeuvres through which 'imagined communities' are given essentialist identities. For the political unity of the nation consists in a continual displacement of its irredeemably plural modern space, bounded by different, even hostile nations, into a signifying space that is archaic and mythical, paradoxically representing the nation's modern territoriality, in the patriotic, atavistic temporality of Traditionalism. Quite simply, the difference of space returns as the Sameness of time, turning Territory into Tradition, turning the People into One. The liminal point of this ideological displacement is the turning of the differentiated spatial boundary, the 'outside', into the unified temporal territory of Tradition. Freud's concept of the 'narcissism of minor differences'[28] — reinterpreted for our purposes — provides a way of understanding how easily that boundary that secures the cohesive limits of the western nation may imperceptibly turn into a contentious *internal* liminality that provides a place from which to speak both of, and as, the minority, the exilic, the marginal, and the emergent.

Freud uses the analogy of feuds that prevail between communities with adjoining territories — the Spanish and the Portuguese, for instance — to illustrate the ambivalent identification of love and hate that binds a community together: 'it is always possible to bind together a considerable number of people in love, so long as there are other people left to receive the manifestation of their aggressiveness'.[29] The problem is, of course, that the ambivalent identifications of love and hate occupy the same psychic space; and paranoid projections 'outwards' return to haunt and split the place from which they are made. So long as a firm boundary is maintained between the territories, and the narcissistic wounded is contained, the aggressivity will be projected onto the Other or the Outside. But what if, as I have argued, the people are the articulation of a doubling of the national address, an ambivalent *movement* between the discourses of pedagogy and the performative? What if, as Lefort argues, the subject of modern ideology is split between the iconic image of authority and the movement of the signifier that produces the image, so that the 'sign' of the social is condemned to slide ceaselessly from one position to another? It is in this space of liminality, in the 'unbearable ordeal of the collapse of certainty' that we encounter once again the narcissistic neuroses of the national discourse with which I began. The nation is no longer the sign of modernity under which cultural differences are homogenized in the 'horizontal' view of society. The nation reveals, in its ambivalent and vacillating representation, the ethnography of its own historicity and opens up the possibility of other narratives of the people and their difference.

The people turn *pagan* in that disseminatory act of social narrative that



Lyotard defines, against the Platonic tradition, as the privileged pole of the *narrated*, 'where the one doing the speaking speaks from the place of the referent. As narrator she is narrated as well. And in a way she is already told, and what she herself is *telling* will not undo that somewhere else she is *told*'.[30] This narrative inversion or circulation — which is in the spirit of my splitting of the people — makes untenable any supremacist, or nationalist claims to cultural mastery, for the position of narrative control is neither monocular or monologic. The subject is graspable only in the passage between telling/told, between 'here' and 'somewhere else', and in this double scene the very condition of cultural knowledge is the alienation of the subject. The significance of this narrative splitting of the subject of identification is borne out in Lévi-Strauss' description of the ethnographic act.[31] The ethnographic demands that the observer himself is a part of his observation and this requires that the field of knowledge — the total social fact — must be appropriated from the outside like a thing, but like a thing which comprises within itself the subjective understanding of the indigenous. The transposition of this process into the language of the outsider's grasp — this entry into the area of the symbolic of representation/signification — then makes the social fact 'three dimensional'. For ethnography demands that the subject has to split itself into object and subject in the process of identifying its field of knowledge; the ethnographic object is constituted 'by dint of the subject's capacity for indefinite self-objectification (without ever quite abolishing itself as subject) for projecting outside itself ever-diminishing fragments of itself'.

Once the liminality of the nation-space is established, and its 'difference' is turned from the boundary 'outside' to its finitude 'within', the threat of cultural difference is no longer a problem of 'other' people. It becomes a question of the otherness of the people-as-one. The national subject splits in the ethnographic perspective of culture's contemporaneity and provides both a theoretical position and a narrative authority for marginal voices or minority discourse. They no longer need to address their strategies of opposition to a horizon of 'hegemony' that is envisaged as horizontal and homogeneous. The great contribution of Foucault's last published work is to suggest that people emerge in the modern state as a perpetual movement of 'the marginal integration of individuals'. 'What are we to-day?'[32] Foucault poses this most pertinent ethnographic question to the west itself to reveal the alterity of its political rationality. He suggests that the 'reason of state' in the modern nation must be derived from the heterogeneous and differentiated limits of its territory. The nation cannot be conceived in a state of *equilibrium* between several elements co-ordinated, and maintained by a 'good' law.

> Each state is in permanent competition with other countries, other nations ... so that each state has nothing before it other than an indefinite future of struggles. Politics has now to deal with an irreducible multiplicity of states struggling and competing in a limited history ... the State is its own finality.[33]

What is politically significant is the effect of this finality of the state on the liminality of the representation of the people. The people will no longer be contained in that national discourse of the teleology of progress; the anonymity of individuals; the spatial horizontality of community; the homogeneous time of social narratives; the historicist visibility of modernity, where 'the present of each level [of the social] coincides with the present of all the others, so that the present is an *essential* section which makes the essence *visible*'.[34] The finitude of the nation emphasizes the impossibility of such an expressive totality with its alliance between an immanent, plenitudinous present and the eternal visibility of a past. The liminality of the people — their double inscription as pedagogical objects and performative subjects — demands a 'time' of narrative that is disavowed in the discourse of historicism where narrative is only the agency of the event, or the medium of a naturalistic continuity of Community or Tradition. In describing the marginalistic integration of the individual in the social totality, Foucault provides a useful description of the rationality of the modern nation. Its main characteristic, he writes,

> is neither the constitution of the state, the coldest of cold monsters, nor the rise of bourgeois individualism. I won't even say it is the constant effort to integrate individuals into the political totality. I think that the main characteristic of our political rationality is the fact that this integration of the individuals in a community or in a totality results from a constant correlation between an increasing individualisation and the reinforcement of this totality. From this point of view we can understand why modern political rationality is permitted by the antinomy between law and order.[35]

From *Discipline and Punish* we have learned that the most individuated are those subjects who are placed on the margins of the social, so that the tension between law and order may produce the disciplinary or pastoral society. Having placed the people on the limits of the nation's narrative, I now want to explore forms of cultural identity and political solidarity that emerge from the disjunctive temporalities of the national culture. This is a lesson of history to be learnt from those peoples whose histories of marginality have been most profoundly enmeshed in the antinomies of law and order — the colonized and women.

## Of margins and minorities

The difficulty of writing the history of the people as the insurmountable agonism of the living, the incommensurable experiences of struggle and survival in the construction of a national culture, is nowhere better seen than in Frantz Fanon's essay *On National Culture*.[36] I start with it because it is a warning against the intellectual appropriation of the culture of the people (whatever they may be) within a representationalist discourse that may be fixed and reified in the annals of History. Fanon writes against that form of historicism that assumes that there is a



moment when the differential temporalities of cultural histories coalesce in an immediately readable present. For my purposes, he focuses on the time of cultural representation, instead of immediately historicizing the event. He explores the space of the nation without immediately identifying it with the historical institution of the state. As my concern here is not with the history of nationalist movements, but only with certain traditions of writing that have attempted to construct narratives of the imaginary of the nation-people, I am indebted to Fanon for liberating a certain, uncertain time of the people. The knowledge of the people depends on the discovery, Fanon says, 'of a much more fundamental substance which itself is continually being renewed', a structure of repetition that is not visible in the translucidity of the people's customs or the obvious objectivities which seem to characterize the people. 'Culture abhors simplification', Fanon writes, as he tries to locate the people in a performative time: 'the fluctuating movement that the people are *just* giving shape to'. The present of the people's history, then, is a practice that destroys the constant principles of the national culture that attempt to hark back to a 'true' national past, which is often represented in the reified forms of realism and stereotype. Such pedagogical knowledges and continuist national narratives miss the 'zone of occult instability where the people dwell' (Fanon's phrase). It is from this *instability* of cultural signification that the national culture comes to be articulated as a dialectic of various temporalities — modern, colonial, postcolonial, 'native' — that cannot be a knowledge that is stabilized in its enunciation: 'it is always contemporaneous with the act of recitation. It is the present act that on each of its occurrences marshalls in the ephemeral temporality inhabiting the space between the "I have heard" and "you will hear"'.[37]

I have heard this narrative movement of the post-colonial people, in their attempts to create a national culture. Its implicit critique of the fixed and stable forms of the nationalist narrative makes it imperative to question those western theories of the horizontal, homogeneous empty time of the nation's narrative. Does the language of culture's 'occult instability' have a relevance outside the situation of anti-colonial struggle? Does the incommensurable act of living — so often dismissed as ethical or empirical — have its own ambivalent narrative, its own history of theory? Can it change the way we identify the symbolic structure of the western nation?

A similar exploration of political time has a salutary feminist history in *Women's Time*.[38] It has rarely been acknowledged that Kristeva's celebrated essay of that title has its conjunctural, cultural history, not simply in psychoanalysis and semiotics, but in a powerful critique and redefinition of the nation as a space for the emergence of feminist political and psychic identifications. The nation as a symbolic denominator is, according to Kristeva, a powerful repository of cultural knowledge that erases the rationalist and progressivist logics of the 'canonical' nation. This symbolic history of the national culture is inscribed in the strange temporality of the future perfect, the effects of

which are not dissimilar to Fanon's occult instability. In such a historical time, the deeply repressed past initiates a strategy of repetition that disturbs the sociological totalities within which we recognize the modernity of the national culture — a little too forcibly for, or against, the reason of state, or the unreason of ideological misrecognition.

The borders of the nation are, Kristeva claims, constantly faced with a double temporality: the process of identity constituted by historical sedimentation (the pedagogical); and the loss of identity in the signifying process of cultural identification (the performative). The time and space of Kristeva's construction of the nation's finitude is analogous to my argument that it is from the liminality of the national culture that the figure of the people emerges in the narrative ambivalence of disjunctive times and meanings. The concurrent circulation of linear, cursive, and monumental time, in the same cultural space, constitutes a new historical temporality that Kristeva identifies with psychoanalytically informed, feminist strategies of political identification. What is remarkable is her insistence that the gendered sign can hold such exorbitant historical times together.

The political effects of Kristeva's multiple, and splitting, women's time leads to what she calls the 'demassification of difference'. The cultural moment of Fanon's 'occult instability' signifies the people in a fluctuating movement *which they are just giving shape to*, so that postcolonial time questions the teleological traditions of past and present, and the polarized historicist *sensibility* of the archaic and the modern. These are not simply attempts to invert the balance of power within an unchanged order of discourse. Fanon and Kristeva seek to redefine the symbolic process through which the social imaginary — nation, culture, or community — become subjects of discourse, and objects of psychic identification. In attempting to shift, through these differential temporalities, the alignment of subject and object in the culture of community, they force us to rethink the relation between the time of meaning and the sign of history *within* those languages, political or literary, which designate the people 'as one'. They challenge us to think the question of community and communication *without* the moment of transcendence; their excessive cultural temporalities are in contention but their difference cannot be negated or sublated. How do we understand such forms of social contradiction?

Cultural identification is then poised on the brink of what Kristeva calls the 'loss of identity' or Fanon describes as a profound cultural 'undecidability'. The people as a form of address emerge from the abyss of enunciation where the subject splits, the signifier 'fades', the pedagogical and the performative are agonistically articulated. The language of national collectivity and cohesiveness is now at stake. Neither can cultural homogeneity, or the nation's horizontal space be authoritatively represented within the familiar territory of the *public sphere*: social causality cannot be adequately understood as a deterministic or overdetermined effect of a 'statist' centre; nor can the rationality of political choice be divided between the polar realms of the private and the public. The narrative of national cohesion can no longer be signified,



in Anderson's words, as a 'sociological solidity'[39] fixed in a 'succession of *plurals*' — hospitals, prisons, remote villages — where the social space is clearly bounded by such repeated objects that represent a naturalistic, national horizon.

Such a pluralism of the national sign, where difference returns as the same, is contested by the signifier's 'loss of identity' that inscribes the narrative of the people in the ambivalent, 'double' writing of the performative and the pedagogical. The iterative temporality that marks the movement of meaning *between* the masterful image of the people and the movement of its sign interrupts the succession of plurals that produce the sociological solidity of the national narrative. The nation's totality is confronted with, and crossed by, a supplementary movement of writing. The heterogeneous structure of Derridean supplementarity in *writing* closely follows the agonistic, ambivalent movement between the pedagogical and performative that informs the nation's narrative address. A supplement, according to one meaning, 'cumulates and accumulates presence. It is thus that art, *techne*, image, representation, convention, etc. come as supplements to nature and are rich with this entire cumulating function' (pedagogical).[40] The *double entendre* of the supplement suggests, however, that 'It intervenes or insinuates itself *in-the-place-of* .... If it represents and makes an image it is by the *anterior* default of a presence ... the supplement is an adjunct, a subaltern instance.... As substitute, it is not simply added to the positivity of a presence, it produces no relief.... Somewhere, something can be filled up *of itself* ... only by allowing itself to be filled through sign and proxy' (performative).[41] It is in this supplementary space of doubling — *not plurality* — where the image is presence and proxy, where the sign supplements and empties nature, that the exorbitant, disjunctive times of Fanon and Kristeva can be turned into the discourses of emergent cultural identities, within a non-pluralistic politics of difference.

This supplementary space of cultural signification that opens up — and holds together — the performative and the pedagogical, provides a narrative structure characteristic of modern political rationality: the marginal integration of individuals in a repetitious movement between the antinomies of law and order. It is from the liminal movement of the culture of the nation — at once opened up and held together — that minority discourse emerges. Its strategy of intervention is similar to what parliamentary procedure recognizes as a supplementary question. It is a question that is supplementary to what is put down on the order paper, but by being 'after' the original, or in 'addition to' it, gives it the advantage of introducing a sense of 'secondariness' or belatedness into the structure of the original. The supplementary strategy suggests that adding 'to' need not 'add up' but may disturb the calculation. As Gasché has succinctly suggested, 'supplements ... are pluses that compensate for a minus in the origin'.[42] The supplementary strategy interrupts the successive seriality of the narrative of plurals and pluralism by radically changing their mode of articulation. In the metaphor of the national community as the 'many as one', the *one* is now both the tendency to

totalize the social in a homogenous empty time, and the repetition of that minus in the origin, the less-than-one that intervenes with a metonymic, iterative temporality. One cultural effect of such a metonymic interruption in the representation of the people, is apparent in Julia Kristeva's political writings. If we elide her concepts of women's time and female exile, then she seems to argue that the 'singularity' of woman — her representation as fragmentation and drive — produces a dissidence, and a distanciation, within the symbolic bond itself which demystifies 'the *community* of language as a universal and unifying tool, one which totalises and equalises'.[43] The minority does not simply confront the pedagogical, or powerful master-discourse with a contradictory or negating referent. It does not turn contradiction into a dialectical process. It interrogates its object by initially withholding its objective. Insinuating itself into the terms of reference of the dominant discourse, the supplementary antagonizes the implicit power to generalize, to produce the sociological solidity. The questioning of the supplement is not a repetitive rhetoric of the 'end' of society but a meditation on the disposition of space and time from which the narrative of the nation must *begin*. The power of supplementarity is not the negation of the preconstituted social contradictions of the past or present; its force lies — as we shall see in the discussion of *Handsworth Songs* that follows — in the renegotiation of those times, terms, and traditions through which we turn our uncertain, passing contemporaneity into the signs of history.

*Handsworth Songs*,[44] is a film made by the Black Audio Collective during the uprisings of 1985, in the Handsworth district of Birmingham, England. Shot in the midst of the uprising, it is haunted by two moments: the arrival of the migrant population in the 1950s, and the emergence of a black British peoples in the diaspora. And the film itself is part of the emergence of a black British cultural politics. Between the moments of arrival and emergence is the incommensurable movement of the present; the filmic time of a continual displacement of narrative; the time of oppression and resistance; the time of the performance of the riots, cut across by the pedagogical knowledges of state institutions, the racism of statistics and documents and newspapers, and then the perplexed living of Handsworth songs, and memories that flash up in a moment of danger.

Two memories repeat incessantly to translate the living perplexity of history, into the time of migration: the arrival of the ship laden with immigrants from the ex-colonies, just stepping off the boat, always just emerging — as in the phantasmatic scenario of Freud's family romance — into the land where the streets are paved with gold. Another image is of the perplexity and power of an emergent peoples, caught in the shot of a dreadlocked rastaman cutting a swathe through a posse of policemen. It is a memory that flashes incessantly through the film: a dangerous repetition in the present of the cinematic frame; the edge of human life that translates what will come next and what has gone before in the writing of History. Listen to the repetition of the time and space of the peoples that I have been trying to create:



> In time we will demand the impossible in order to wrestle, from it that which is possible, In time the streets will claim me without apology, In time I will be right to say that there are no stories . . . in the riots only the ghosts of other stories.

The symbolic demand of cultural difference constitutes a history in the midst of the uprising. From the desire of the possible in the impossible, in the historic present of the riots, emerge the ghostly repetition of other stories, other uprisings: Broadwater Farm, Southall, St. Paul's, Bristol. In the ghostly repetition of the black woman of Lozells Rd, Handsworth, who sees the future in the past: There are no stories in the riots, only the ghosts of other stories, she told a local journalist: 'You can see Enoch Powell in 1969, Michael X in 1965'. And from that gathering repetition she builds a history.

From across the film listen to another woman who speaks another historical language. From the archaic world of metaphor, caught in the movement of the people she translates the time of change into the ebb and flow of language's unmastering rhythm: the successive time of instaneity, battening against the straight horizons and the flow of water and words:

> I walk with my back to the sea, horizons straight ahead
> Wave the sea away and back it comes,
> Step and I slip on it.
> Crawling in my journey's footsteps
> When I stand it fills my bones.

The perplexity of the living must not be understood as some existential, ethical anguish of the empiricism of everyday life in 'the eternal living present', that gives liberal discourse a rich social reference in moral and cultural relativism. Nor must it be too hastily associated with the spontaneous and primordial *presence* of the people in the liberatory discourses of populist ressentiment. In the construction of this discourse of 'living perplexity' that I am attempting to produce we must remember that the space of human life is pushed to its incommensurable extreme; the judgement of living is perplexed; the topos of the narrative is neither the transcendental, pedagogical Idea of history nor the institution of the state, but a strange temporality of the repetition of the one in the other — an oscillating movement in the governing *present* of cultural authority.

Minority discourse sets the act of emergence in the antagonistic *in-between* of image and sign, the accumulative and the adjunct, presence and proxy. It contests genealogies of 'origin' that lead to claims for cultural supremacy and historical priority. Minority discourse acknowledges the status of national culture — and the people — as a contentious, performative space of the perplexity of the living in the midst of the pedagogical representations of the fullness of life. Now there is no reason to believe that such marks of difference — the incommensurable time of the subject of culture — cannot inscribe a 'history' of the people or become the gathering points of political solidarity. They will not,

however, celebrate the monumentality of historicist memory, the sociological solidity or totality of society, or the homogeneity of cultural experience. The discourse of the minority reveals the insurmountable ambivalence that structures the *equivocal* movement of historical time. How does one encounter the past as an anteriority that continually introduces an otherness or alterity within the present? How does one then narrate the present as a form of contemporaneity that is always belated? In what historical time do such configurations of cultural difference assume forms of cultural and political authority?

## Social anonymity and cultural anomie

The narrative of the modern nation can only begin, Benedict Anderson suggests in *Imagined Communities*, once the notion of the 'arbitrariness of the sign' fissures the sacral ontology of the medieval world and its overwhelming visual and aural imaginary. By 'separating language from reality' (Anderson's formulation), the arbitrary signifier enables a national temporality of the 'meanwhile', a form of 'homogenous empty time'; the time of cultural modernity that supersedes the prophetic notion of simultaneity-along-time. The narrative of the 'meanwhile' permits 'transverse, cross-time, marked not by prefiguring and fulfilment, but by temporal coincidence, and measured by clock and calendar'.[45] Such a form of temporality produces a symbolic structure of the nation as 'imagined community' which, in keeping with the scale and diversity of the modern nation, works like the plot of a realist novel. The steady onward clocking of calendrical time, in Anderson's words, gives the imagined world of the nation a sociological solidity; it links together diverse acts and actors on the national stage who are entirely unaware of each other, except as a function of this synchronicity of time which is not prefigurative but a form of civil contemporaneity realized in the *fullness* of time.

Anderson historicizes the emergence of the arbitrary sign of language — and here he is talking of the process of signification rather than the progress of narrative — as that which had to come before the narrative of the modern nation could begin. In decentring the prophetic visibility and simultaneity of medieval systems of dynastic representation, the homogeneous and horizontal community of modern society can emerge. The people-nation, however divided and split, can still assume, in the function of the social imaginary, a form of democratic 'anonymity'. However there is a profound ascesis in the sign of the anonymity of the modern community and the time — *meanwhile* — of its narrative consciousness, as Anderson explains it. It must be stressed that the narrative of the imagined community is constructed from two incommensurable temporalities of meaning that threaten its coherence. The space of the arbitrary sign, its separation of language and reality, enables Anderson to stress the imaginary or mythical nature of the society of the nation. However, the differential time of the arbitrary sign is neither synchronous nor serial. In the separation of language and reality — in the *process* of signification — there is no epistemological equivalence of subject and object, no possibility of the mimesis of meaning. The sign temporalizes the iterative difference that circulates within language, of which meaning is made, but cannot be represented thematically within narrative as a homogeneous empty time. Such a temporality is antithetical to the alterity of the sign which, in keeping with my account of the supplementary nature of cultural signification, singularizes and alienates the holism of the imagined community. From that place of the 'meanwhile', where cultural homogeneity and democratic anonymity make their claims on the national community, there emerges a more instantaneous and subaltern voice of the people, a minority discourse that speaks betwixt and between times and places.

Having initially located the imagined community of the nation in the homogeneous time of realist narrative, towards the end of his essay Anderson abandons the 'meanwhile' — his pedagogical temporality of the people. In order to represent the collective voice of the people as a performative discourse of public identification, a process he calls unisonance, Anderson resorts to another time of narrative. Unisonance is 'that special kind of contemporaneous community which language alone suggests',[46] and this patriotic speech-act is not written in the synchronic, novelistic 'meanwhile', but inscribed in a sudden primordiality of meaning that 'looms up *imperceptibly* out of a horizonless past' (my emphasis).[47] This movement of the sign cannot simply be historicized in the emergence of the realist narrative of the novel. It is at this point in the narrative of national time that the unisonant discourse produces its collective identification of the people, not as some transcendent national identity, but in a language of incommensurable doubleness that arises from the ambivalent splitting of the pedagogical and the performative. The people emerge in an uncanny simulacral moment of their 'present' history as 'a ghostly intimation of simultaneity across homogeneous empty time'. The weight of the words of the national discourse comes from an '*as it were* — Ancestral Englishness'.[48] It is precisely this repetitive *time* of the alienating anterior — rather than origin — that Lévi-Strauss writes of, when, in explaining the 'unconscious unity' of signification, he suggests that 'language can only have arisen all at once. Things cannot have begun to *signify* gradually'.[49] In that sudden timelessness of 'all at once', there is not synchrony but a break, not simultaneity but a spatial disjunction.

The 'meanwhile' is the barred sign of the processual and performative, not a simple present continuous, but the present as succession without synchrony — the iteration of the arbitrary sign of the modern nation-space. In embedding the *meanwhile* of the national narrative, where the people live their plural and autonomous lives within homogeneous empty time, Anderson misses the alienating and iterative time of the sign. He naturalizes the momentary 'suddenness' of the arbitrary sign, its pulsation, by making it part of the historical emergence of the novel, a narrative of synchrony. But the suddenness of the signifier is incessant, instantaneous rather than simultaneous. It introduces a signifying space of

repetition rather than a progressive or linear seriality. The 'meanwhile' turns into quite another time, or ambivalent sign, of the national people. If it is the time of the people's anonymity it is also the space of the nation's anomie.

How are we to understand this anteriority of signification as a position of social and cultural knowledge, this time of the 'before' of signification, which will not issue harmoniously into the present like the continuity of tradition — invented or otherwise? It has its own national history in Renan's 'Qu'est ce qu'une nation?' which has been the starting point for a number of the most influential accounts of the modern emergence of the nation — Kamenka, Gellner, Benedict Anderson, Tzvetan Todorov. It is the way in which the pedagogical presence of modernity — the Will to be a nation — introduces into the enunciative present of the nation a differential and iterative time of reinscription that interests me. Renan argues that the non-naturalist principle of the modern nation is represented in the *will* to nationhood — not in the identities of race, language, or territory. It is the will that unifies historical memory and secures present-day consent. The will is, indeed, the articulation of the nation-people:

> A nation's existence is, if you will pardon the metaphor, a daily plebiscite, just as an individual's existence is a perpetual affirmation of life. . . . The wish of nations, is all in all, the sole legitimate criteria, the one to which one must always return.[50]

Does the will to nationhood circulate in the same temporality as the desire of the daily plebiscite? Could it be that the iterative plebiscite decentres the totalizing pedagogy of the will? Renan's will is itself the site of a strange forgetting of the history of the nation's past: the violence involved in establishing the nation's writ. It is this forgetting — a minus in the origin — that constitutes the *beginning* of the nation's narrative. It is the syntactical and rhetorical arrangement of this argument that is more illuminating than any frankly historical or ideological reading. Listen to the complexity of this form of forgetting which is the moment in which the national will is articulated: 'yet every French citizen has to have forgotten [*is obliged to have forgotten*] Saint Bartholomew's Night's Massacre, or the massacres that took place in the Midi in the thirteenth century.'[51]

It is through this syntax of forgetting — or being obliged to forget — that the problematic identification of a national people becomes visible. The national subject is produced in that place where the daily plebiscite — the unitary number — circulates in the grand narrative of the will. However, the equivalence of will and plebiscite, the identity of part and whole, past and present, is cut across by the 'obligation to forget', or forgetting to remember. This is again the moment of anteriority of the nation's sign that entirely changes our understanding of the pastness of the past, and the unified present of the will to nationhood. We are in a discursive space similar to that moment of unisonance in Anderson's argument when the homogenous empty time of the nation's 'meanwhile' is cut across by the ghostly simultaneity of a temporality of doubling and repetition. To be obliged to forget — in the construction of the national present — is not a question of historical memory; it is the construction of a discourse on society that *performs* the problematic totalization of the national will. That strange time — forgetting to remember — is a place of 'partial identification' inscribed in the daily plebiscite which represents the performative discourse of the people. Renan's pedagogical return to the will to nationhood is both constituted and confronted by the circulation of numbers in the plebiscite which break down the identity of the will — it is an instance of the supplementary that 'adds to' without 'adding up'. May I remind you of Lefort's suggestive description of the ideological impact of suffrage in the nineteenth century, where the danger of numbers was considered almost more threatening than the mob: 'the idea of number as such is opposed to the idea of the substance of society. Number breaks down unity, destroys identity.'[52] It is the repetition of the national sign as numerical succession rather than synchrony that reveals that strange temporality of disavowal implicit in the national memory. Being obliged to forget becomes the basis for remembering the nation, peopling it anew, imagining the possibility of other contending and liberating forms of cultural identification.

Anderson fails to locate the alienating time of the arbitrary sign in his naturalized, nationalized space of the imagined community. Although he borrows his notion of the homogeneous empty time of the nation's modern narrative from Walter Benjamin, he fails to read that profound ambivalence that Benjamin places deep within the utterance of the narrative of modernity. Here, as the pedagogies of life and will contest the perplexed histories of the living people, their cultures of survival and resistance, Benjamin introduces a non-synchronous, incommensurable gap in the midst of storytelling. From this split in the utterance, from the unbeguiled, belated novelist there emerges an ambivalence in the narration of modern society that repeats, uncounselled and unconsolable, in the midst of plenitude:

> The novelist has isolated himself. The birthplace of the novel is the solitary individual, who is no longer able to express himself by giving examples of his most important concerns, is himself uncounselled and cannot counsel others. To write a novel means to carry the incommensurable to extremes in the representation of human life. In the midst of life's fullness, and through the representation of this fullness, the novel gives evidence of the profound perplexity of the living.[53]

It is from this incommensurability in the midst of the everyday that the nation speaks its disjunctive narrative. It begins, if that's the word, from that anterior space within the arbitrary sign which disturbs the homogenizing myth of cultural anonymity. From the margins of modernity, at the insurmountable extremes of storytelling, we encounter the question of cultural difference as the perplexity of living, and writing, the nation.

## Cultural difference

Despite my use of the term 'cultural difference', I am not attempting to unify a body of theory, nor to suggest the mastery of a sovereign form of 'difference'. I am attempting some speculative fieldnotes on that intermittent time, and intersticial space, that emerges as a structure of undecidability at the frontiers of cultural hybridity. My interest lies only in that movement of meaning that occurs in the writing of cultures articulated in difference. I am attempting to discover the uncanny moment of cultural difference that emerges in the process of enunciation:

> Perhaps it is like the over-familiar that constantly eludes one; those familiar transparencies, which, although they conceal nothing in their density, are nevertheless not entirely clear. The enunciative level emerges in its very proximity.[54]

Cultural difference must not be understood as the free play of polarities and pluralities in the homogeneous empty time of the national community. It addresses the jarring of meanings and values generated in-between the variety and diversity associated with cultural plenitude; it represents the process of cultural interpretation formed in the perplexity of living, in the disjunctive, liminal space of national society that I have tried to trace. Cultural difference, as a form of intervention, participates in a supplementary logic of secondariness similar to the strategies of minority discourse. The question of cultural difference faces us with a disposition of knowledges or a distribution of practices that exist beside each other, *Abseits*, in a form of juxtaposition or contradiction that resists the teleology of dialectical sublation. In erasing the harmonious totalities of Culture, cultural difference articulates the difference between representations of social life without surmounting the space of incommensurable meanings and judgements that are produced within the process of transcultural negotiation.

The effect of such secondariness is not merely to change the 'object' of analysis — to focus, for instance, on race rather than gender or native knowledges rather than metropolitan myths; nor to invert the axis of political discrimination by installing the excluded term at the centre. The analytic of cultural difference intervenes to transform the scenario of articulation — not simply to disturb the rationale of discrimination. It changes the position of enunciation and the relations of address within it; not only what is said but from where it is said; not simply the logic of articulation but the *topos* of enunciation. The aim of cultural difference is to re-articulate the sum of knowledge from the perspective of the signifying *singularity* of the 'other' that resists totalization — the repetition that will not return as the same, the minus-in-origin that results in political and discursive strategies where adding-*to* does not add-up but serves to disturb the calculation of power and knowledge, producing other spaces of subaltern signification. The identity of cultural difference cannot, therefore, exist autonomously in relation to an object or a practice 'in-itself', for the identification of the subject of cultural discourse is dialogical or transferential in the style of psychoanalysis. It is constituted through the *locus* of the Other which suggests both that the object of identification is ambivalent, and, more significantly, that the agency of identification is never pure or holistic but always constituted in a process of substitution, displacement or projection.



Cultural difference does not simply represent the contention between oppositional contents or antagonistic traditions of cultural value. Cultural difference introduces into the process of cultural judgement and interpretation that sudden shock of the successive, nonsynchronic time of signification, or the interruption of the supplementary question that I elaborated above. The very possibility of cultural contestation, the ability to shift the ground of knowledges, or to engage in the 'war of position', depends not only on the refutation or substitution of concepts. The analytic of cultural difference attempts to engage with the 'anterior' space of the sign that structures the symbolic language of alternative, antagonistic cultural practices. To the extent to which all forms of cultural discourse are subject to the rule of signification, there can be no question of a simple negation or sublation of the contradictory or oppositional instance. Cultural difference marks the establishment of new forms of meaning, and strategies of identification, through processes of negotiation where no discursive authority can be established without revealing the difference of itself. The signs of cultural difference cannot then be unitary or individual forms of identity because their continual implication in other symbolic systems always leaves them 'incomplete' or open to cultural translation. What I am suggesting as the *uncanny* structure of cultural difference is close to Lévi-Strauss' understanding of 'the unconscious as providing the common and specific character of social facts ... not because it harbours our most secret selves but because ... it enables us to coincide with forms of activity which are both *at once ours and other*'.[55]

Cultural difference is to be found where the 'loss' of meaning enters, as a cutting edge, into the representation of the fullness of the demands of culture. It is not adequate simply to become aware of the semiotic systems that produce the signs of culture and their dissemination. Much more significantly we are faced with the challenge of reading, into the present of a specific cultural performance, the traces of all those diverse disciplinary discourses and institutions of knowledge that constitute the condition and contexts of culture. I use the word 'traces' to suggest a particular kind of discursive transformation that the analytic of cultural difference demands. To enter into the interdisciplinarity of cultural texts — through the anteriority of the arbitrary sign — means that we cannot contextualize the emergent cultural form by explaining it in terms of some pre-given discursive causality or origin. We must always keep open a supplementary space for the articulation of cultural knowledges that are adjacent and adjunct but not necessarily accumulative, teleological, or dialectical. The 'difference' of cultural knowledge that 'adds to' but does not 'add up' is the enemy of the *implicit* generalization of knowledge or the implicit homogenization of experience, to borrow Lefort's phrase.

Interdisciplinarity, as the discursive practice of cultural difference, elaborates a logic of intervention and interpretation that is similar to the supplementary question that I posed above. In keeping with its subaltern, substitutive — rather than synchronic — temporality, the subject of cultural difference is neither pluralistic nor relativistic. The frontiers of cultural difference are always belated or secondary in the sense that their hybridity is never simply a question of the admixture of pre-given identities or essences. Hybridity is the perplexity of the living as it interrupts the representation of the fullness of life; it is an instance of iteration, in the minority discourse, of the time of the arbitrary sign — 'the minus in the origin' — through which all forms of cultural meaning are open to translation because their enunciation resists totalization. Interdisciplinarity is the acknowledgement of the emergent moment of culture produced in the ambivalent movement between the pedagogical and performative address, so that it is never simply the harmonious addition of contents or contexts that augment the positivity of a pre-given disciplinary or symbolic *presence*. In the restless drive for cultural translation, hybrid sites of meaning open up a cleavage in the language of culture which suggests that the similitude of the *symbol* as it plays across cultural sites must not obscure the fact that repetition of the *sign* is, in each specific social practice, both different and differential. It is in this sense that the enunciation of cultural difference emerges *in its proximity*; to traduce Foucault, we must not seek it in the 'visibility' of difference for it will elude us in that enigmatic transparency of writing that conceals nothing in its density but is nevertheless not clear.

Cultural difference emerges from the borderline moment of translation that Benjamin describes as the 'foreignness of languages.[56] Translation represents only an extreme instance of the figurative fate of writing that repeatedly generates a movement of equivalence between representation and reference, but never gets beyond the equivocation of the sign. The 'foreignness' of language is the nucleus of the untranslatable that goes beyond the transparency of subject matter. The transfer of meaning can never be total between differential systems of meaning, or within them, for 'the language of translation envelops its content like a royal robe with ample folds. . . . [it] signifies a more exalted language than its own and thus remains unsuited to its content, overpowering and alien'.[57] It is too often the slippage of signification that is celebrated, at the expense of this disturbing alienation, or overpowering of content. The erasure of content in the invisible but insistent structure of linguistic difference does not lead us to some general, formal acknowledgement of the function of the sign. The ill fitting robe of language alienates content in the sense that it deprives it of an immediate access to a stable or holistic reference 'outside' itself — in society. It suggests that social conditions are themselves being reinscribed or reconstituted in the very act of enunciation, revealing the instability of any division of meaning into an inside and outside. Content becomes the alien *mise en scène* that reveals the signifying structure of linguistic difference which is never seen for itself, but only glimpsed in the gap or the gaping of the garment. Benjamin's argument can be elaborated for a theory of cultural difference. It is only by engaging with what he calls the 'purer linguistic air' — the anteriority of the sign — that the reality-effect of content can be overpowered which then makes all cultural languages 'foreign' to themselves. And it is from this foreign perspective that it becomes possible to inscribe the specific locality of cultural systems — their incommensurable differences — and through that apprehension of difference, to perform the act of cultural translation. In the act of translation the 'given' content becomes alien and estranged; and that, in its turn, leaves the language of translation *Aufgabe*, always confronted by its double, the untranslatable — alien and foreign.

## The foreignness of languages

At this point I must give way to the *vox populi*: to a relatively unspoken tradition of the people of the pagus — colonials, postcolonials, migrants, minorities — wandering peoples who will not be contained within the *Heim* of the national culture and its unisonant discourse, but are themselves the marks of a shifting boundary that alienates the frontiers of the modern nation. They are Marx's reserve army of migrant labour who by speaking the foreignness of language split the patriotic voice of unisonance and become Nietzsche's mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms. They articulate the death-in-life of the idea of the 'imagined community' of the nation; the worn-out metaphors of the resplendent national life now circulate in another narrative of entry permits and passports and work permits that at once preserve and proliferate, bind and breach the human rights of the nation. Across the accumulation of the history of the west there are those people who speak the encrypted discourse of the melancholic and the migrant. Theirs is a voice that opens up a void in some ways similar to what Abraham and Torok describe as a radical *antimetaphoric*: 'the destruction in fantasy, of the very act that makes metaphor possible — the act of putting the original oral void into words, the act of introjection'.[58] The lost object — the national *Heim* — is repeated in the void that at once prefigures and pre-empts the 'unisonant', which makes it *unheimlich*; analogous to the incorporation that becomes the daemonic double of introjection and identification. The object of loss is written across the bodies of the people, as it repeats in the silence that speaks the foreignness of language. A Turkish worker in Germany: in the words of John Berger:

> His migration is like an event in a dream dreamt by another. The migrant's intentionality is permeated by historical necessities of which neither he nor anybody he meets is aware. That is why it is as if his life were dreamt by another. . . . Abandon the metaphor. . . . They watch the gestures made and learn to imitate them . . . the repetition by which gesture is laid upon gesture, precisely but inexorably, the pile of gestures being stacked minute by minute, hour by hour is exhausting. The rate of work allows no time to prepare for the gesture. The body loses its mind in the gesture. How opaque the disguise of

> words. . . . He treated the sounds of the unknown language as if they were silence. To break through his silence. He learnt twenty words of the new language. But to his amazement at first, their meaning changed as he spoke them. He asked for coffee. What the words signified to the barman was that he was asking for coffee in a bar where he should not be asking for coffee. He learnt girl. What the word meant when he used it, was that he was a randy dog. Is it possible to see through the opaqueness of the words?[59]

Through the opaqueness of words we confront the historical memory of the western nation which is 'obliged to forget'. Having begun this essay with the nation's need for metaphor, I want to turn now to the desolate silences of the wandering people; to that 'oral void' that emerges when the Turk abandons the metaphor of a *heimlich* national culture: for the Turkish immigrant the final return is mythic, we are told, 'It is the stuff of longing and prayers . . . as imagined it never happens. There is no final return'.[60]

In the repetition of gesture after gesture, the dream dreamt by another, the mythical return, it is not simply the figure of repetition that is *unheimlich*, but the Turk's desire to survive, to name, to fix — which is unnamed by the gesture itself. The gesture continually overlaps and accumulates, without adding up to a knowledge of work or labour. Without the language that bridges knowledge and act, without the objectification of the social process, the Turk leads the life of the double, the automaton. It is not the struggle of master and slave, but in the mechanical reproduction of gestures a mere imitation of life and labour. The opacity of language fails to translate or break through his silence and 'the body loses its mind in the gesture'. The gesture repeats and the body returns now, shrouded not in silence but eerily untranslated in the racist site of its enunciation: to say the word 'girl' is to be a randy dog, to ask for coffee is to encounter the colour bar.

The image of the body returns where there should only be its trace, as sign or letter. The Turk as dog is neither simply hallucination or phobia; it is a more complex form of social fantasy. Its ambivalence cannot be read as some simple racist/sexist projection where the white man's guilt is projected on the black man; his anxiety contained in the body of the white woman whose body screens (in both senses of the word) the racist fantasy. What such a reading leaves out is precisely the axis of identification — the desire of a man (white) for a man (black) — that underwrites that utterance and produces the paranoid 'delusion of reference', the man-dog that confronts the racist language with its own alterity, its foreignness.

The silent Other of gesture and failed speech becomes what Freud calls that 'haphazard member of the herd',[61] the Stranger, whose languageless presence evokes an archaic anxiety and aggressivity by impeding the search for narcissistic love-objects in which the subject can rediscover himself, and upon which the group's *amour propre* is based. If the immigrants' desire to 'imitate' language produces one void in the articulation of the social space — making present the opacity of language, its untranslatable residue — then the racist fantasy, which disavows the ambivalence of its desire, opens up another void in the present. The migrant's silence elicits those racist fantasies of purity and persecution that must always return from the Outside, to estrange the present of the life of the metropolis; to make it strangely familiar. In the process by which the paranoid position finally voids the place from where it speaks, we begin to see another history of the German language.

If the experience of the Turkish *Gastarbeiter* represents the radical incommensurability of translation, Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* attempts to redefine the boundaries of the western nation, so that the 'foreignness of languages' becomes the inescapable cultural condition for the enunciation of the mother-tongue. In the 'Rosa Diamond' section of *The Satanic Verses* Rushdie seems to suggest that it is only through the process of dissemi*Nation* — of meaning, time, peoples, cultural boundaries and historical traditions — that the radical alterity of the national culture will create new forms of living and writing: 'The trouble with the English is that their history happened overseas, so they don't know what it means'.[62]

S. S. Sisodia the soak — known also as Whisky Sisodia — stutters these words as part of his litany of 'what's wrong with the English'. The spirit of his words fleshes out the argument of this essay. I have suggested that the atavistic national past and its language of archaic belonging marginalizes the present of the 'modernity' of the national culture, rather like suggesting that history happens 'outside' the centre and core. More specifically I have argued that appeals to the national past must also be seen as the anterior space of signification that 'singularizes' the nation's cultural totality. It introduces a form of alterity of address that Rushdie embodies in the double narrative figures of Gibreel Farishta/Saladin Chamcha, or Gibreel Farishta/Sir Henry Diamond, which suggests that the national narrative is the site of an ambivalent identification; a margin of the uncertainty of cultural meaning that may become the space for an agonistic minority position. In the midst of life's fullness, and through the representation of this fullness, the novel gives evidence of the profound perplexity of the living. Gifted with phantom sight, Rosa Diamond, for whom repetition had become a comfort in her antiquity, represents the English *Heim* or homeland. The pageant of a 900 year-old history passes through her frail translucent body and inscribes itself, in a strange splitting of her language, 'the well-worn phrases, *unfinished business, grandstand view*, made her feel solid, unchanging, sempiternal, instead of the creature of cracks and absences she knew herself to be'.[63] Constructed from the well-worn pedagogies and pedigrees of national unity — her vision of the Battle of Hastings is the anchor of her being — and, at the same time, patched and fractured in the incommensurable perplexity of the nation's living, Rosa Diamond's green and pleasant garden is the spot where Gibreel Farishta lands when he falls out from the belly of the Boeing over sodden, southern England.

Gibreel masquerades in the clothes of Rosa's dead husband, Sir Henry

Diamond, ex-colonial landowner, and through this post-colonial mimicry, exacerbates the discursive split between the image of a continuist national history and the 'cracks and absences' that she knew herself to be. What emerges, at one level, is a popular tale of secret, adulterous Argentinian amours, passion in the pampas with Martín de la Cruz. What is more significant and in tension with the exoticism, is the emergence of a hybrid national narrative that turns the nostalgic past into the disruptive 'anterior' and displaces the historical present — opens it up to other histories and incommensurable narrative subjects. The cut or split in enunciation — underlining all acts of utterance — emerges with its iterative temporality to reinscribe the figure of Rosa Diamond in a new and terrifying avatar. Gibreel, the migrant hybrid in masquerade, as Sir Henry Diamond, mimics the collaborative colonial ideologies of patriotism and patriarchy, depriving those narratives of their imperial authority. Gibreel's returning gaze crosses out the synchronous history of England, the essentialist memories of William the Conqueror and the Battle of Hastings. In the middle of an account of her punctual domestic routine with Sir Henry — sherry always at six — Rosa Diamond is overtaken by another time and memory of narration and through the 'grandstand view' of imperial history you can hear its cracks and absences speak with another voice:

> Then she began without bothering with once upon atime and whether it was all true or false he could see the fierce energy that was going into the telling ... this memory jumbled rag-bag of material was in fact the very heart of her, her self-portrait.... So that it was not possible to distinguish memories from wishes, guilty reconstructions from confessional truths, because even on her deathbed Rosa Diamond did not know how to look her history in the eye.[64]

And what of Gibreel Farishta? Well he is the mote in the eye of history, its blind spot that will not let the nationalist gaze settle centrally. His mimicry of colonial masculinity and mimesis allows the absences of national history to speak in the ambivalent, ragbag narrative. But it is precisely this 'narrative sorcery' that established Gibreel's own re-entry into contemporary England. As the belated post-colonial he marginalizes and singularizes the totality of national culture. He is the history that happened elsewhere, overseas; his postcolonial, migrant presence does not evoke a harmonious patchwork of cultures, but articulates the narrative of cultural difference which can never let the national history look at itself narcissistically in the eye. For the liminality of the western nation is the shadow of its own finitude: the colonial space played out in the imaginative geography of the metropolitan space; the repetition or return of the margin of the postcolonial migrant to alienate the holism of history. The postcolonial space is now 'supplementary' to the metropolitan centre; it stands in a subaltern, adjunct relation that doesn't aggrandise the *presence* of the west but redraws its frontiers in the menacing, agonistic boundary of cultural difference that never quite adds up, always less than one nation and double.



From this splitting of time and narrative emerges a strange, empowering knowledge for the migrant that is at once schizoid and subversive. In his guise as the Archangel Gibreel he sees the bleak history of the metropolis: 'the angry present of masks and parodies, stifled and twisted by the insupportable, unrejected burden of its past, staring into the bleakness of its impoverished future'.[65] From Rosa Diamond's decentred narrative 'without bothering with once upon atime' Gibreel becomes — however insanely — the principle of avenging repetition: 'These powerless English! — Did they not think that their history would return to haunt them? — "The native is an oppressed person whose permanent dream is to become the persecutor" (Fanon).... He would make this land anew. He was the Archangel, Gibreel — *And I'm back*'.[66]

If the lesson of Rosa's narrative is that the national memory is always the site of the hybridity of histories and the displacement of narratives, then through Gibreel, the avenging migrant, we learn the ambivalence of cultural difference: it is the articulation *through* incommensurability that structures all narratives of identification, and all acts of cultural translation.

> He was joined to the adversary, their arms locked around one another's bodies, mouth to mouth, head to tail.... No more of these England induced ambiguities: those Biblical-satanic confusions ... Quran 18:50 there it was as plain as the day.... How much more practical, down to earth comprehensible.... Iblis/Shaitan standing for darkness; Gibreel for the light.... O most devilish and slippery of cities.... Well then the trouble with the English was their, Their — In a word Gibreel solemnly pronounces, that most naturalised sign of cultural difference.... The trouble with the English was their ... in a word ... their weather.[67]

## The English weather

To end with the English weather is to invoke, at once, the most changeable and immanent signs of national difference. It encourages memories of the 'deep' nation crafted in chalk and limestone; the quilted downs; the moors menaced by the wind; the quiet cathedral towns; that corner of a foreign field that is forever England. The English weather also revives memories of its daemonic double: the heat and dust of India; the dark emptiness of Africa; the tropical chaos that was deemed despotic and ungovernable and therefore worthy of the civilizing mission. These imaginative geographies that spanned countries and empires are changing; those imagined communities that played on the unisonant boundaries of the nation are singing with different voices. If I began with the scattering of the people across countries, I want to end with their gathering in the city. The return of the diasporic; the postcolonial.

*Handsworth Songs*; Fanon's manichean colonial Algiers; Rushdie's tropicalized London, grotesquely renamed *Ellowen Deeowen* in the migrant's mimicry: it is to the city that the migrants, the minorities, the

diasporic come to change the history of the nation. If I have suggested that the people emerge in the finitude of the nation, marking the liminality of cultural identity, producing the double-edged discourse of social territories and temporalities, then in the west, and increasingly elsewhere, it is the city which provides the space in which emergent identifications and new social movements of the people are played out. It is there that, in our time, the perplexity of the living is most acutely experienced.

In the narrative graftings of my essay I have attempted no general theory, only a certain productive tension of the perplexity of language in various locations of living. I have taken the measure of Fanon's occult instability and Kristeva's parallel times into the 'incommensurable narrative' of Benjamin's modern storyteller to suggest no salvation, but a strange cultural survival of the people. For it is by living on the borderline of history and language, on the limits of race and gender, that we are in a position to translate the differences between them into a kind of solidarity. I want to end with a much translated fragment from Walter Benjamin's essay, *The Task of the Translator*. I hope it will now be read from the nation's edge, through the sense of the city, from the periphery of the people, in culture's transnational dissemination:

> Fragments of a vessel in order to be articulated together must follow one another in the smallest details although they need not be *like* one another. In the same way a translation, instead of making itself similar to the meaning of the original, it must lovingly and in detail, form itself according to the manner of meaning of the original, to make them *both* recognisable as the broken fragments of the greater language, just as fragments are the broken parts of a vessel.[68]

## Notes

1 In memory of Paul Moritz Strimpel (1914–87): Pforzheim – Paris – Zurich – Ahmedabad – Bombay – Milan – Lugano.
2 I am thinking of Eric Hosbawm's great history of the 'long nineteenth century', especially *The Age of Capital 1848–1875* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1975) and *The Age of Empire 1875–1914* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987). See especially some of the suggestive ideas on the nation and migration in the latter volume, ch. 6.
3 E. Said, *The World, The Text and The Critic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 39.
4 F. Jameson, 'Third World literature in the era of multinational capitalism', *Social Text*, (Fall 1986).
5 J. Kristeva, 'A new type of intellectual: the dissident', in Toril Moi (ed.), *The Kristeva Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), p. 298.
6 E. Said, 'Opponents, audiences, constituencies and community', in Hal Foster (ed.), *Postmodern Culture* (London: Pluto, 1983), p. 145.
7 J. Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1981), p. 210.
8 B. Anderson, 'Narrating the nation', *The Times Literary Supplement*.
9 P. Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (London: Zed, 1986).
10 E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), p. 56.
11 ibid., p. 38.
12 L. Althusser, *Montesquieu, Rousseau, Marx* (London: Verso, 1972), p. 78.
13 M. Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, ed. C. Emerson and M. Holquist, trans. V. W. McGee (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1986) p. 31.
14 ibid., p. 34.
15 ibid., p. 36 and *passim*.
16 ibid., pp. 47–9.
17 S. Freud, 'The Uncanny', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. J. Strachey (London: Hogarth, 1955), p. 234. See also pp. 236, 247.
18 John Barrell, *English Literature in History, 1730–80* (London: Hutchinson 1983).
19 Houston A. Baker Jr, *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1987), esp. chs. 8–9.
20 Barrell, op. cit., p. 78.
21 ibid., p. 203.
22 Richard Price, *Maroon Societies* quoted in Baker op. cit., p. 77.
23 Claude Lefort, *The Political Forms of Modern Society* (Cambridge: Polity, 1986), pp. 212–14, my emphasis.
24 A. Giddens, *The Nation State and Violence* (Cambridge: Polity, 1985), p. 216.
25 N. Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism* (London: Verso, 1980), p. 113.
26 R. Williams, *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (London: Verso, 1980), p. 43. I must thank Prof. David Lloyd of the University of California, Berkeley, for reminding me of Williams' important concept.
27 E. Said, 'Representing the colonized', *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 15, no. 2 (Winter 1989).
28 S. Freud, *Civilisation and Its Discontents*, Standard Edition (London: Hogarth, 1961), p. 114.
29 Freud, op. cit., p. 114.
30 J.-F. Lyotard and J.-L. Thebaud, *Just Gaming*, trans. Wlad Godzich (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), p. 41.
31 C. Lévi-Strauss, *Introduction to the Work of Marcel Mauss*, trans. Felicity Baker (London: Routledge, 1987). Mark Cousins pointed me in the direction of this remarkable text. See his review in *New Formations*, no. 7 (Spring 1989). What follows is an account of Lévi-Strauss' argument to be found in Section 11 of the essay, pp. 21–44.
32 M. Foucault, *Technologies of the Self*, ed. H. Gutman *et al.* (London: Tavistock, 1988).
33 ibid., pp. 151–4. I have abbreviated the argument for my convenience.
34 L. Althusser, *Reading Capital* (London: New Left Books, 1972), pp. 122–32. I have, for convenience, produced a composite quotation from Althusser's various descriptions of the ideological effects of historicism.
35 Foucault, op.cit., pp. 162–3.
36 F. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969) My quotations and references come from pp. 174–90.
37 J.-F. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), p. 22.
38 Moi, op.cit., pp. 187–213. This passage was written in response to the insistent questioning of Nandini and Praminda in Prof. Tshome Gabriel's seminar on 'syncretic cultures' at the University of California, Los Angeles.

39 Anderson, op.cit., p. 35.
40 J. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. G. C. Spivak (Baltimore, Md: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), pp. 144–5. Quoted in R. Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 208.
41 ibid., p. 145.
42 Gasché, op.cit., p. 211.
43 Moi, op.cit., p. 210. I have also referred here to an argument to be found on p. 296.
44 All quotations are from the shooting script of *Handsworth Songs*, generously provided by the Black Audio and Film Collective.
45 Anderson, op. cit., p. 30.
46 ibid., 132.
47 ibid.
48 ibid.
49 Levi-Strauss, op.cit., p. 58.
50 This collection, ch. 2, pp. 19–20.
51 ibid., p. 11.
52 Lefort, op.cit., p. 303.
53 W. Benjamin, 'The storyteller', in *Illuminations*. trans. Harry Zohn (London: Cape, 1970), p. 87.
54 M. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (London: Tavistock, 1972), p. 111.
55 C. Lévi-Strauss, op.cit., p. 35.
56 Benjamin, op.cit. p. 75.
57 W. Benjamin 'The Task of the Translator', *Illuminations* (London: Cape, 1970), p. 75.
58 N. Abraham and M.Torok, 'Introjection – Incorporation', in S. Lebovici and D. Widlocher (eds), *Psychoanalysis in France* (London: International Universities Press, 1980), p. 10.
59 J. Berger, *A Seventh Man* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975). I have composed this passage from quotations that are scattered through the text.
60 Berger, op.cit., p. 216.
61 S. Freud, *Group Psychology and the Ego*, Standard Edition vol. XVIII (London: Hogarth, 1961), p. 119.
62 S. Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses* (New York: Viking, 1988), p. 337.
63 ibid., p. 130.
64 ibid., p. 145.
65 ibid., p. 320.
66 ibid., p. 353.
67 ibid., p. 354. I have slightly altered the presentation of this passage to fit in with the sequence of my argument.
68 Timothy Bahti and Andrew Benjamin have translated this much-discussed passage for me. What I want to emphasize is a form of the articulation of cultural difference that Paul de Man clarifies in his reading of Walter Benjamin's complex image of amphora.

> [Benjamin] is not saying that the fragments constitute a totality, he says that fragments are fragments, and that they remain essentially fragmentary. They follow each other metonymically, and they never constitute a totality.
>
> Paul de Man, *The Resistance to Theory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), p. 91

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