

The Cultural Politics of Emotion

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Introduction: Feel Your Way

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

EMOTIONS AND OBJECTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INSIDE OUT AND OUTSIDE IN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

My argument about the circulation of objects draws on psychoanalysis and Marxism (see Chapter 2). I consider, for example, that the subject does not always know how she feels: the subject is not self-present and emotions are an effect of this splitting of experience (Terada 2001: 30). From Freud onwards, this lack of self-presence is articulated as 'the unconscious'. Working with Freudian psychoanalysis, I will show how objects get displaced, and consider the role of repression in what makes objects 'sticky'. But I also suggest that the lack of presence does not always return to the subject, or to the 'scene' of trauma (castration), upon which much psychoanalytic theory rests. Drawing on Marx, I argue that emotions accumulate over time, as a form of affective value (see Chapter 4). Objects only seem to have such value, by an erasure of these histories, as histories of production and labour. But whilst Marx suggests that emotions are erased by the value of things (the suffering of the worker's body is not visible in commodity form), I focus on how emotions are produced.¹⁸ It is not so much emotions that are erased, as if they were already there, but the processes of production or the 'making' of emotions. In other words, 'feelings' become 'fetishes', qualities that seem to reside in objects, only through an erasure of the history of their production and circulation.

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

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

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

THE EMOTIONALITY OF TEXTS

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