This dissertation is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Murdoch University, 2003
I declare that this dissertation is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.
This thesis argues that performance can be seen to constitute both a critical discipline and a set of activities entailing an engagement with spatial, temporal, physical and material relations, rather than as a product of linguistic, textual and discursive relations. As such, performance is able to critique the functioning of language, text and discourse in assuming space, time, bodies and matter. Performance also suggests ways of working on and informing writing practices. The social relations of performance pertain to times and spaces which are temporary and processual, to activities which imagine other times, spaces and people, and seek to realise them for a specific time in a specific space for a specific group of people. The social relations realised in this process of contingent realities are able to inform writing, that is, to produce writing which connects theatre with other discourses, and which connects words with bodies in time and space.

It is argued that theatre and performance’s process of imagination and realisation and its engagement with spatial, temporal, physical and material relations provides a valuable site for critically examining the ways in which Australia privileges and remembers specific configurations of space, time, bodies and matter, while marginalising others, in producing official representations of the Australian nation. Such representations, reflected in
governmental programmes such as those concerning citizenship and national security, have a bearing on how Australians view their national past, present and future, and how they perceive their social connections with each other. Just as specific performances are made subject to the textual and discursive categories of literature and social theory, official enactments of the Australian nation are able to ‘contain’ Australians who spatially, temporally and physically transgress national boundaries. As a material practice, performance is able to engage with official enactments of the nation in order to ‘re-open’ the spaces, times and encounters concealed within these sites.
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>vii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 WRITING AND PERFORMANCE</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>A Glossary</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 THREE DAYS IN THE LIFE OF AUSTRALIA</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>A Journal</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The First Day</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Second Day</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Third Day</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 FOUR MONTHS FROM AUSTRALIA</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>A Correspondence</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 FIVE MOMENTS: IMAGINING AND REALISING THE AUSTRALIAN NATION</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I wish to thank Monika Szunejko, George and Honor de Vos, and David Moody, for their patience and support.
The notion of Australia as a nation interacts with concepts of Australia the geographic space, Australia the historical entity which marked its federation one hundred years ago, and Australia the continuing relationship between a land and its people. Each of these ideas is important in the sense that it has to do with belonging: belonging to a place, belonging to a time, belonging to a group of people. To consider the performing of Australia is not to imply a sense of falseness or deception; rather, it is to understand how the process and progress of the nation continues by way of what is imagined and realised by people in time and space. The practice of performance offers clues and suggestions, in the activities undertaken in making connections between people, matter, time and space, as to how procedures are performed in the name of the nation, and how the nation communicates with its citizens.

However, because performance has a critical dimension as well, tied to the specific purpose of each performance, it also offer directions for more actively performing the nation, critically negotiating the official version and boundaries of the nation, and resisting the passive consumption of its criteria. Performing, in
this sense, is an informed and productive activity, connecting times, spaces and people separated by official social formations and regimes. This dissertation, then, begs the initial question of its ability to represent the performing of Australia, or indeed to perform Australia, given its recourse to language and writing in place of bodies in time and space. What is required is a series of writing strategies which is informed by performance and which denies the tendency to become either prescriptive, referential or ‘abstract’, that is, removed from the spatial, temporal and physical conditions of the act of writing.

In Part 1, I attempt to describe a relationship between words and bodies, and between the activities of performing and writing, examining the effects they have on each other in negotiating meaning. I argue that ‘performing’ writing, that is, imagining the time, space and physical act of writing, facilitates the use of performance as a critical perspective. I employ the format of a glossary to address the tendency of words to become referential and to carry authority. Starting with the terms ‘language’, ‘text’, ‘context’ and ‘discourse’, I consider how the terms relate to and reinforce each other, challenging performance to resist dominant ways of meaning by re-imposing bodies and physical connections.

I then attempt to subject linguistic meaning to temporal conditions by repeating my ‘definitions’ of the four initial terms in relation to other concepts: Bakhtin’s notions of dialogism, carnival and heteroglossia; Derrida’s descriptions of
difference, deconstruction and dissemination; and post-colonial reading and writing strategies, such as ambivalence, mimicry and hybridity. I also examine the main tenets of performance as it is inflected in performance theory and performance studies, and the concepts of nation and nationalism as they are conceived of in modern political theory. In considering how definitions can ‘shift’ over time and in different contexts, I argue that performance can both displace writing, spatially and temporally containing it and making it simultaneous with physical activities, and inform writing, allowing it to display a greater degree of connection with the time and space of its production, and to achieve a greater awareness of its subjectivity and purpose.

In regards to the act of writing, what is produced in Part 1 is a critical discussion by way of a glossary; an attempt to juxtapose the definitive and the ephemeral, the twin possibilities of any performance. In the light of Part 1’s consideration of Bakhtin and Derrida’s work on language and writing, a less univocal and monologic way of writing is called for, writing which does not present itself as ‘absolute presence’.

In Part 2, therefore, I attempt to redress this problem by emphasising the temporal conditions of writing within a given duration. I employ the format of a journal, written over three days, to examine how the Australian nation is imagined and realised in *A Day in the Life of Australia*, a book chronicling a nation-wide photographic project undertaken over a 24-hour period in 1981. The
choice of this book rests on the logistical project undertaken by the authors and their staff in strategically imagining and realising selected spaces and selected people as capable of representing the Australian nation within the given temporal frame of twenty-four hours. The application of performance concepts and the parameters of space, time, bodies and matter represents an attempt to recuperate the physical, temporal and spatial project involved in ‘capturing a nation on film’. The object of my study, then, is not the photographs or the book per se, but rather the practices involved in imagining and realising the nation. It is not intended to be an exercise in photo-analysis or textual analysis.

The journal format represents an attempt to subject writing to both a time of writing and a discrete writing space, and to bring some resistance to the idea of writing as representing a time and space of ‘absolute presence’. Writing the journal over three days allows for time to be remembered and to be anticipated, displacing the complete ‘presence’ of the present. I also wish to bring tension to the idea of ‘overlaying’ the time of the nation with the apparently natural time of a day, a temporality which assumes closure and resolution, and which metaphorises the Australian nation. A Day in the Life of Australia’s ability to represent the nation is contingent upon the given time of ‘a day’. By subjecting it to a temporality which includes a ‘before’ and ‘after’, the project can be evaluated more critically.

Over the course of three days I consider spatial strategies and connections in A
**Introduction**

*Day in the Life of Australia* by way of reference to Foucault’s account of heterotopias and utopias and Lefebvre’s conception of social and abstract space; temporal strategies and connections by way of reference to Bakhtin’s notion of the chronotope and Bhabha’s conception of the ‘time-lag’; material strategies and connections drawing upon Husserl’s formulation of ideal and real objects and Derrida’s deconstruction of Husserl’s argument; and physical connections, referring to Butler’s account of sustained social performances and bodily practices, and Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of the body-without-organs. A consistent feature of these theoretical accounts is a struggle to express textually the workings of either spatial, temporal, material or physical strategies in a social context. In each account, theatrical metaphors are adopted as a way of suggesting possible connections. Each theorist makes the assumption that theatre can serve merely as a vessel of explication, rather than provide a distinctive discourse and critical perspective.

My examination of *A Day in the Life of Australia* attempts to perform its production by connecting the times, spaces, bodies and matter isolated by the book. Such an expansive and comprehensive examination is necessary in this instant, not only in order to emphasise the passage and division of time, but more importantly to establish a theoretical framework which affords theatre and performance both a sense of agency and a critical subjectivity. Having imagined and realised a writing format subject to a temporal duration, the question is begged as to whether the act of writing can be articulated spatially and
physically as well.

In Part 3, therefore, I present a series of letters composed by two imagined ‘voices’ responding to and anticipating each other, informed by the activities they undertake and by the geographic spaces they visit along the way. The context of such a correspondence moves closer to the realm of the audience as a set of social relations. The letters are imagined as materially discrete, expressing temporal, spatial and physical differences and connections.

I examine the workings of nation as a social process, considering how it establishes the identity of its subjects as it demarcates its spatial and temporal boundaries. I look specifically at how the procedures relating to national security and to citizenship perform the time and space of the nation by imagining and realising people, times and spaces within and without the national borders, strategically separating specific times and spaces from each other. This analysis is presented in parallel with the detailing of a theatre production addressing the Australian nation. I utilise the format of a series of correspondence between two people as a way of examining the kinds of physical, spatial and temporal separation national identity entails, as well as to subject writing to a context in which both time and space are in motion, dependent on each other. Such a format precludes a perspective from which to totalise or resolve conflicting notions of nation, emphasising the process of writing, of theatre, and of nation.
Finally, Part 4 presents a piece of writing subject to the spatial, temporal and physical requirements of performance. In doing so I attempt to feed my discussion of the Australian nation, and the way it is temporally, spatially and physically imagined and realised, back into the practices of performance. In providing a description of and commentary on five imagined performances, I attempt to interrogate the process of the nation in its unfolding and realise ‘moments’ in which the nation’s narration is arrested. What I wish to identify and reflect upon in each performance is a moment of tension shared by all participants, performers and audience, national leaders and national subjects: a liminal site imagined and realised in the process of a liminal practice.
PART 1

WRITING AND PERFORMANCE

The principal tension in a theatrical performance lies between words and bodies. Words are eternal, assuming no spatiality, temporality, physicality or tangibility, while bodies are eventual, begging the question of their relationship with space, time, matter and other bodies. Yet their relationship is one of inevitability, of inescapability. Words and bodies mediate each other and inform each other, investing each other with meaning through the use of specific discourses. Performance provides a site for a material examination of the strategies involved in the textualisation of bodies occupying space and time, and of the contextualisation of language and of linguistic texts. The activities of performance and writing would thus appear to be able to inform and transform each other. With this in mind, I wish to consider the terms ‘language’, ‘text’, ‘context’ and ‘discourse’ in relation to theatre, performance, and the act of writing.

Language: A theatrical performance involves both a linguistic encounter, that is an encounter based on spoken and written language, and a physical/spatial/temporal encounter. These encounters exist dialectically,
working to mediate each other. The physical/spatial/temporal encounter attempts to contextualise the linguistic encounter, while the linguistic encounter attempts to textualise the physical/spatial/temporal encounter. Language tends toward the formation of texts, which provide potential sites for language. Language always brings with it textualising forces, textualising strategies. Language assumes texts, and imagines textuality as a stable state. Language marginalises and attempts to conceal its own relationship(s) with space, time, bodies and other matter.

Text: Texts mediate/act upon social processes in an attempt to express them in terms of fixed, determinate meanings. In order to do this texts endeavour to fix the relationship between time, space, bodies and other matter - by fixing each of these categories and isolating them from each other. However, Jacques Derrida, considering a morphology of texts, argues that texts exceed all boundaries attributed to them, to the extent that they are

no longer a finished corpus of writing, some content enclosed in a book or its margins, but a differential network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly to something other than itself, to other differential traces.¹

Context: Theatre provides a material site for addressing how the physical/spatial/temporal dimensions of communication attempt to contextualise language by restoring and reopening relationships between space, time, bodies and other matter. When texts are performed, their spatiality, temporality and physicality are re-emphasised. Bodies inhabiting space and time engage with language. In this way context and text can be seen as social processes, as
Discourse: Discourse can be viewed as a social process working towards the construction of meaning in texts. Just as texts exist as tendencies, meanings also remain incomplete, open to negotiation within specific contexts. Central to the construction of meaning in texts is the use of narrative, a set of conventions ordering, isolating and separating relationships between space, time, bodies and other matter. However, bodies and other matter in space and time also carry meaning, but in different ways to linguistic texts.

Michel Foucault conceives of discourse as a material and heterogeneous process, constructing meaning across a diverse field of social practices and institutions. Meanings thus express a political relationship of competing discourses, and provide a basis for the production of ideology. Michel de Certeau counters Foucault’s conception by presenting discourse as a specific way of using language within specific interactions, and by refuting the notion of an omniscient position where a specific discourse can be observed in its totality. Discourse requires agents: it needs contact between people in order to be produced. In this sense, discourse can be seen as a social practice itself, a practice which is fragmented and retrievable only in specific contexts and toward specific purposes.

The account of discourse offered by de Certeau is particularly useful for
discussing theatre and performance because these two categories constitute discourses overtly grounded in specific social practices, problematising attempts to present a position of omniscient discursive ‘presence’. A specific performance may be perceived as encompassing a number of contexts and purposes. In order to examine how specific meanings are constructed, it is necessary to specify such contexts and purposes, taking into consideration the perspectives produced by spectators and performers. However, the ability to discursively connect such fragmented practices is vital to understanding theatre and performance as critical practices capable of producing knowledge and negotiating and transforming other discourses rather than merely reflecting or re-enacting current or past social theories.

While acknowledging that they mark different histories and different enterprises, I will, for the purpose of my argument, commence by considering the terms ‘theatre’ and ‘performance’ together. While I shall be discussing ways in which the terms have been used to make distinctions between types of cultural activity and between types of human behaviour, my main point of focus is that set of physical, spatial and temporal activities which is utilised in specific contexts for specific purposes in the production of both theatre and performance. I am arguing that it is these activities which are retrievable in the analysis, or performance, of larger social formations or official programmes.

Every time a theatre production with a referential linguistic text is staged more
than once, every time a play runs for more than one night, we are able to see how the theatrical enterprise guarantees that the product the audience is attending and paying for is an homogeneous one. A director, cast and crew ensure that dialogue, blocking/choreography and lighting/sound/mechanics are reproduced in each performance. The audience contribute to the process of textualisation by choosing which night they wish to attend. Yet each performance involves different relationships between people, matter, times and spaces, and different relationships between words and bodies. Interruptions, distractions and mistakes all contextualise and mediate linguistic meaning to varying extents. Such circumstances raise the possibility of performance being able to bring strategic disruptions and resistance, however momentary, to the linguistic text.

In order to discuss theatre and performance in a way which emphasises them as physical and critical praxes, it is important to find ways of writing which attempt to resist the textual tendency to fix and order meaning, and instead seek to foreground writing contexts, and to subject writing to conditions of temporality and spatiality. I am proposing that performance is able to inform writing by connecting it with other activities and other experiences, and by offering strategies by which writing can resist and negotiate narrative discourses and thus ‘open up’ the notion of meaning. The administration of theatre and performance studies research and teaching tends to be undertaken by English, liberal arts and humanities faculties. Academic work produced in such a context tends to be
obliged to address the prevailing critical discourses of the administering department. Literary and communication studies, and most schools of social theory, negotiate their critical positions, however resistive, in relation to a centralised notion of text. Such negotiation provides perils for theatre and performance studies inasmuch as the experiences/encounters of performance always run the danger of being occluded in textual/theoretical writing, even where that writing attempts to represent or interpret the experience of performance. Narrative discourse brings with it a sense of resolution and closure, translating performance into discrete textual events with fixed times-and-places, and a sense of isolation, separating the nominated time-and-place from other times and places (simultaneous times and spaces, multiple times, multiple spaces, times-and-spaces ‘before’, times-and-spaces ‘after’).

The challenge for students and practitioners of theatre and performance is to question the primacy of writing as a critical technology by contextualising it, by emphasising its physical, temporal, spatial dimensions, and by allowing it to be influenced by the experience of performance. Rather than avoiding or eschewing it, the relationship between writing and performance needs to be recognised with a greater critical awareness, and with a mind to ‘working on’ writing so as to make it a more valuable performance tool. With this challenge in mind, I wish to examine the work of Mikhail Bakhtin in regard to his notion of dialogic writing.

**Dialogism:** In *The Dialogic Imagination*, Bakhtin offers a dialectical
perspective on language, perceiving it as both split, dispersed and heterogeneous, and simultaneously systematic, highly coded and homogeneous.

Rejecting the dimension of abstract signification, Bakhtin sees language as significant only within a social context.

Every representation of language puts us in contact with its utterer; to make us conscious of what language is, is to have us identify who speaks within it.4

Bakhtin theorises language as a process of difference: languages evade homogenisation into a unified notion of ‘language’. The study of language in itself is questioned where it is seen to be separated from its purpose: that of communication. The material nature of specific languages is emphasised in Bakhtin’s conception of the utterance, the smallest significant speech act. All utterances are produced within the context of dialogue with other utterances.

[I]n order to become dialogical, logical relations and concrete semantic relations must be embodied, i.e. they must enter into a different sphere of existence: they must become a word, i.e. an utterance, and have an author, i.e. the creator of the given utterance, whose position is expressed. In this sense, every utterance has an author, who is heard in the utterance as its creator. A dialogical reaction personifies every utterance to which it reacts.5

For Bakhtin, meaning is located in the use of language in communication and in action rather than in linguistic forms. He uses the terms ‘discourse in life’ and ‘discourse in art’ to differentiate these two processes of constructing meaning. Meanings constructed through language in dialogue are generated and heard as social voices anticipating and answering one another. Discourses are meaningful as social actions, as strategies employed within the context of communication.
Writing and Performance

Discourse lives, as it were, beyond itself, in a living impulse toward the object; if we detach ourselves completely from this impulse all we have left is the naked corpse of the word, from which we can learn nothing at all about the social situation or the fate of a given word in life.6

Dialogism is oriented in two directions simultaneously: toward both the object (or theme) and the addressee. Theoretical positions and desires achieve material existence, that is become discourse, through their articulation by dialogical relations.

Dialogism might be defined as the process of dialogue which is installed within the very semantics of discourse, organising the word’s meaning and performing its “creative work on its referent”. Reference itself is a function of the word’s dialogical orientation towards the “alien word” - towards both the “already uttered” which it answers and the “answer word” which it anticipates.7

Bakhtin’s theory of language in action views the relationship between text and context as processual and dialectical, with each term continually mediating the other.

The barrier between text and context, between “inside” and “outside”, for Bakhtin, is an artificial one, for in fact there is an easy flow of permeability between the two. The context is already textualised, informed by what Bakhtin calls “prior speakings” and the “already said”, while the text ... is “redolent with contexts”, at every point inflected by history and shaped by events.8

The concepts of dialogue and of utterance resist the tendency of language to produce finite, homogeneous forms and unified meanings. The social context of an utterance differentiates it from all other utterances: in the act of performance: in the specific time and space of the act of communication, the utterance gains significance. This social context stresses the historical, cultural and political conditions of the utterance.
Carnival: In Rabelais and his World Bakhtin examines the historical conditions of official religious ideology and folk humour in medieval Europe. The mutual exclusivity of these discourses is seen as contributing to the separation of high and low culture and the maintenance of a distinct social order. However, it is argued that the Renaissance in Western Europe brought with it a new and distinctive form of writing, both secular and official, predicated on a new set of social, political and ideological relationships. Bakhtin identifies a process of ‘carnivalisation’ of literary genres during this time: a contextualising of literary writing within the perspective of folk carnival humour, a perspective previously bounded by the time and space of folk carnivals. Carnival is based on laughter and on the parodying of the official order and the temporal suspension of hierarchies. It is characterised by feasting, by excess, by physical exaggeration and abandon.

Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people. While carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it. During carnival time life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom. It has a universal spirit; it is a special condition of the entire world, of the world’s revival and renewal, in which all take part.9

Texts such as Francois Rabelais’ Gargantua and Pantagruel bring official ideology and folk humour into direct relation with each other. Bakhtin uses the term ‘grotesque realism’ to describe the concept of the carnival aesthetic which foregrounds images of the human body as excessive, exaggerated and intrinsically connected with bodily functions: eating, drinking, defecating,
copulating. Such images are presented as positive and universal, tied up with the festive spirit of carnival. As an organising principle, grotesque realism defines and limits medieval ideology as it is presented in Rabelais’ writing, recontextualising it within the human world rather than in terms of official religious writing, the devotional nature of which presents a movement from earth to heaven. The official, unified picture of the world is abandoned, replaced by a new understanding of social and cultural relationships. Rabelais uses folk humour devices to make the categories of the dominant ideology ‘strange’, recast within carnival.

“By St. Rigomer, Panurge, my dear friend,” said Friar John, “I’m not advising you to do anything that I wouldn’t do myself in your place. Only take care and precautions to carry on and continue your work. If ever you let up you’re lost, my poor fellow. You'll be in the same trouble as nurses get into. If they stop suckling they lose their milk. If you don’t give your john-thomas continuous exercise, it’ll lose its milk and only be good for a pisser. In the same way your balls will be of no use to you except to fill your bag. I give you warning of that, my friend. I have seen it happen in the cases of several who couldn’t when they would, because they hadn’t when they could. Thus by lack of usage, as the clerks say, all privileges are lost. Therefore, my son, keep all this low, mean troglodyte, codpiece-dwelling population in a state of perpetual labour; see to it that they don’t live like gentlemen, on their rents and in idleness.”

Carnival makes space for a new form of writing where the separation of cultures is replaced by a relationship of connectedness. Both high and low culture are parodied, and both are affirmed. Just as the time and space of carnival are bounded, and the official order is restored, so is this new form of writing ultimately subjected to the discursive forces of resolution and closure. Nonetheless, it is a form of writing informed by a particular relationship of people in time and space, and as such holds clues for connecting critical writing
and performance.

**Heteroglossia:**

Every apparently unified linguistic or social community is characterised by heteroglossia, whereby language becomes the space of confrontation of differently oriented social accents, as diverse “sociolinguistic consciousness” fight it out on the terrain of language.\(^{11}\)

Bakhtin’s notion of carnivalised writing provokes a reassessment of assumed relationships in literary discourse. Rather than as an hierarchy or regime of genres, Bakhtin presents literature as a space of contention, mediating a struggle between the genre of the novel and all other literary genres. Those linguistic tendencies, corresponding to the notion of “discourse in art”, which seek to isolate, standardise and solidify language, are seen as prevalent in non-novel or poetic genres, giving rise to monoglossia, that speech type which represents an already-resolved, singular, authoritative voice. In contrast, Bakhtin sees the novel as characterised by heteroglossia, by a diversity of voices or speech types or voices in dialogue with each other. These voices represent distinct social positionings which encounter each other in a continual process of negotiation.

[All languages of heteroglossia, whatever the principle underlying them and making each unique, are specific points of view on the world, forms for conceptualising the world in words, specific world views, each characterised by its own objects, meanings and values. As such they all may be juxtaposed to one another, mutually supplement one another, contradict one another, and be interrelated dialogically. As such they encounter one another and co-exist in the consciousness of real people - first and foremost, in the creative consciousness of people who write novels. As such, these languages live a real life, they struggle and evolve in an environment of social heteroglossia.\(^{12}\)]

Heteroglossia provides the continuing possibility of effective resistance to
dominant ways of making sense, of foregrounding marginal perspectives. Such resistance, however, is confined to specific contexts, to spaces, times and people connected by heteroglossia. Similarly, the novel offers the possibility for divergent social positions to come into contact with each other, and in specific contexts to mediate, inform and transform each other.

Medieval literature tended to produce works expressing the sum of human knowledge in an order and form of stable compactness, as in the *Commedia*, where a multiform richness of language converges with the application of a systematic and unitary mode of thought. In contrast, the modern books that we love most are the outcome of a confluence and a clash of a multiplicity of interpretative methods, modes of thought and styles of expression. Even if the overall design has been minutely planned, what matters is not the enclosure of the work within a harmonious figure, but the centrifugal force produced by it - a plurality of languages as a guarantee of a truth that is not merely partial.13

In examining the speaking positions offered by the novel, and those offered by other literary genres, a number of differences present themselves. Poetic (or epic) genres tend to invoke a unified speaking position, a voice whose ideological position is already resolved, without need of definition or justification. The poetic text enforces completion, finality. If it asks a question, it does so rhetorically. It embodies ‘discourse in art’.

> And am I proof against that lovesome pair,  
> Old age and childhood, twins in Time,  
> In sorrowful vengeance?

> And will I not pretend the accustomed thanks:  
> Humouring age with filial flowers,  
> Childhood with pebbles?14

Two acts of exclusion function simultaneously in the poetic genres: all
‘languages’ other than that of the written voice are excluded, and all other voices within the ‘language’ of the poetic text are also excluded (I am using ‘language’ here to denote dialects and other forms of marginal speech as well as more formally recognised languages). The physical act of writing itself is overcoded in the poetic or epic genres: texts present themselves as aspatial and atemporal, drawing attention neither to their author nor to the conditions of their production. The generic conventions of the epic, of poetry, of drama, reinforce the simplifying and unifying of social and ideological positions by reference to metaphor and mythology. A specific literary meaning is then fixed by an act of inverted reference back to the ‘naturalised’, simplified social relations.

Special attention needs to be paid to the genre of drama. Bakhtin focuses in his writing on the literary genre, rather than on drama-in-performance. The playwright is considered as the sole author of the text, whose meaning is potentially accessible in its entirety to the reader. The literary conventions which legitimate drama as genre also determine the tendency within the dramatic text to fix a (literary) meaning by isolating a particular configuration of time, space, people and matter. The discourse of drama is ordered and already-resolved. Sounds made by performers are comprehensible only in terms of a linguistic and hence literary meaning. The speaking positions presented are subordinated to the meaning of the dramatic text: speech is objectivised. We quote from drama the way we quote from poetry, isolating a line or section of dialogue as we would a line of verse so as to present it as an epithet or timeless sentiment.
It is always painful to part from people whom one has known for a very brief space of time. The absence of old friends one can endure with equanimity. But even a momentary separation from anyone to whom one has just been introduced is almost unbearable.\textsuperscript{15}

Good night, good night. Parting is such sweet sorrow
That I shall say good night till it be morrow.\textsuperscript{16}

How I have felt that thing that’s called “to part”,
and feel it still: a dark, invincible
cruel something by which what was joined so well
is once more shown, held out, and torn apart.\textsuperscript{17}

The strategically ordered ‘speaking parts’ of a dramatic text do, however, provide an ambiguous site, one which has the potential to take into account simultaneous moments and simultaneous speech, as well as anticipate, to some extent, the conditions of the text’s performance. In this respect, the possibility exists for foregrounding the tension between a dramatic text and a ‘rehearsal script’. Such ambiguity, however, is seldom exploited to the extent where it becomes subversive, possibly because of the difficulty of avoiding prescription, and possibly because of the scriptural difficulty of representing temporal and spatial simultaneity. Thus, while the dramatic text is conducive to translation/transformation by theatre and performance, it also claims a material existence as literature, an existence which tends towards closure and finality, and which resists, to some extent, ‘re-opening’.

In contrast, the novel exploits and foregrounds opposition between speaking positions, between social and ideological positions. When brought into direct relation with other voices, the context of each speaking position is restored. In its openness to heteroglossia, the genre of the novel carries with it the
possibilities of linguistic change, and thus social change. At the same time it establishes a conflictual relationship with other genres of literature, providing a space within which poetic texts can be engaged and contextualised. Within the genre of the novel, with its inflection toward the future, speaking positions need to be identified, justified and qualified, in anticipation of an answer.

Now the various species of whales need some sort of popular comprehensive classification, if only an easy outline one for the present, hereafter to be filled in all its departments by subsequent labourers. As no better man advances to take this matter in hand, I hereupon offer my own poor endeavours. I promise nothing complete; because any human thing supposed to be complete, must for that very reason infallibly be faulty. I shall not pretend to a minute anatomical description of the various species, or - in this space at least - to much of any systematisation of cetology. I am the architect, not the builder.18

The simplified, resolved social relations represented and reinforced by the poetic literary genres are challenged by the genre of the novel, which allows for divergent social and cultural positions to come into contact with each other, and, importantly, for dominant speaking positions to be ‘carnivalised’: contextualised within marginal positions, and bounded by specific relationships of time and space.

The novel is the self-consciousness and (at least partial) thematization of dialogism; it is the form of writing in which what is signified is discourse itself. The novel foregrounds not the technical materiality of language but the social materiality of discourse: the irreducibly plural material of social relations - of contradiction and historical becoming - is at once the irreducible material of the novel and its object of representation.19

It is accepted that not all novelistic writing necessarily constitutes resistive or carnivalised writing: like all literary writing, the novel can reinforce existing social relations and mask the repression of marginal voices. Bakhtin is
examining novelistic writing within the context of European literary history, and while the traditions of the novel can be traced to contemporary literary writing, Bakhtin identifies a tendency in novelistic writing to sublimate the most salient aspects of grotesque realism, reducing the impact of bodies in the act of being born, of eating, drinking, defecating, copulating and dying by subjecting such images to the matrices of romantic love, chivalry, religious devotion and medicine. Such sublimation diminishes the impact of novelistic writing in connecting divergent perspectives and in resisting imposed hierarchical values.

But what are the specific strategies which can make novelistic writing (and heteroglossia) resistive? The ‘self-conscious’ nature of the novel holds a clue: there is an awareness of the act of writing, of the time and space of the act of writing. The act of writing may be presented as a series of letters, as a collection of narratives by various characters, as a number of diary or journal entries, or as a combination of various written ‘documents’. In some cases the writing may adopt a number of literary forms, or present itself as a collage of writing ‘styles’, still bound by a specific relation of time and space.

Furthermore, the writing Bakhtin celebrates as novelistic writing anticipates the act of reading. There is a willingness to ‘show’ a space of thought or an argument partly because it acknowledges that the reader may or may not share this same space of thought. Novelistic writing displays a tendency to enter into a context of dialogue and to anticipate the reader. By doing so, such writing
allows itself to be mediated by the time, space and circumstances of the act of reading at least in part by emphasising and submitting to the time, space and circumstances of the act of writing.

Yet another clue lies in the spirit of carnival, in the nature of carnival laughter and carnival parody. Carnival laughter is liberating laughter: a response to the repressive nature of the dominant order, a physical response bound in time and space. Carnivalised writing involves an awareness of the conditions of a voice’s marginalisation and repression: the resulting act of contextualisation is also an act of liberation, albeit a temporary one. The response is simultaneously both physical, emphasising the presence of the human body occupying time and space, and cultural. The body is used as a context for social, political and moral conflicts, resisting the textual forces of writing, which attempt to fix time, space, bodies and matter.

**Language:** The homogeneous, highly coded characteristic of language in general is mediated by the disparate and highly specific nature of particular material languages. Languages proceed through a process of difference, continually resisting the concretising and unifying forces of language, in order to effect communication. While language marginalises and attempts to conceal its own relationship(s) with space, time, bodies and other matter, specific languages foreground specific spatial, temporal and physical relationships, utilising these connections in order to effect a continual process of change in the form of
dialogue.

**Text:** Texts work toward the fixing of relationships between times, spaces, bodies and other matter in order to express social processes in terms of fixed, determinate meanings. However, their existence as historical objects confines them to the same contingencies of space and time, and their imagined state of stability is mediated by their formation within the context of dialogue. Thus, texts also develop processually, drawing meaning from the space, time and people they come into contact with, while at the same time attempting to determine the meaning of such encounters.

**Context:** The consideration of language within the context of dialogue emphasises the historical conditions of language and of texts. Dialogue is processual, differentiating each utterance, each textual formation, by its particular spatial, temporal and physical relations. However, such mediation and differentiation does not assume an existence prior to that of the particular text or utterance: text and context interact processually, neither possessing temporal or spatial priority.

**Discourse:** Discourses can be viewed as impulses brought to bear upon language by specific relationships of people, space and time, and working toward the construction of meaning in texts. Theoretical positions and desires become discourse through their articulation by dialogue. Meanings constructed
through language in dialogue are generated and heard as social voices anticipating and answering each other. Discourses are meaningful as social actions, as strategies employed within the context of communication.

In positing a preliminary formulation of the relationship between writing and performance, I am suggesting that it is useful to consider the two terms both as processes and as material activities. I am not seeking to provide comprehensive definitions of writing and performance here, but rather to examine the terms in relation to each other. Bakhtin’s perception of literature as a field of contestation between the genre of the novel and non-novel genres is helpful in informing this relationship: just as the poetic genres perform a double act of exclusion (excluding all ‘languages’ other than that of the written voice, and excluding all other voices within the language), the process/activity of writing performs two acts of separation. Firstly, it attempts to separate words from bodies occupying time and space, and secondly, writing attempts to separate bodies, time and space from each other, isolating them as discrete categories. Conversely, performance can be conceived of as a process/activity of connecting: connecting words with bodies, contextualising words with bodies occupying space and time; and connecting times, spaces, bodies and other matter with each other.

Like text and context, writing and performance exist as tendencies rather than as
absolute states, bringing tension and resistance to each other. The activity of writing is a precarious one for the student and practitioner of performance because it continually resists performance, resists connections between time, space, bodies and matter, and demands discretion, precision and streamlining. The process of maintaining connections, of continually contextualising words in the very act of writing them, makes for writing which in a textual sense would appear to be clumsy, cumbersome, repetitious and ambiguous. However, such writing is necessary not only in order to affirm connections between times, spaces, bodies and matter, but also to foreground the temporal, spatial and physical nature of the act of writing.

Thus far I have addressed the concept of language as possessing both a written and a spoken dimension, two equitable and largely interchangeable sites. Bakhtin’s concept of the utterance and his emphasis on heteroglossic uses of language focuses on the notion of speech as a liberating force in opposition to the constraints of literary writing. In order to problematise the relationship between speech and writing, as well as to consider how writing negotiates time, space and meaning, I wish to examine some of the principal concepts in Jacques Derrida’s work. I am not attempting to provide a conclusive definition of these concepts, as they each strategically evade a closed sense of meaning, but rather to examine the terms in relation to a discussion of language, text, context, discourse and theatre, and in relation to some of Bakhtin’s concepts.
Differance: Derrida’s term resists the very notion of conclusive definition, calling for the simultaneous understanding of a word in a number of possible ways, an understanding which is never conclusive. The modified spelling of the term, that is, the French spelling, is utilised in order to refer to both the notion of difference as a spatial and physical distinction, as well as that of a temporal distinction or deferral: we are presented with a distinction which is graphic but not phonetic.

This differance belongs neither to the voice nor to writing in the ordinary sense, and it takes place ... between speech and writing and beyond the tranquil familiarity that binds us to one and to the other, reassuring us sometimes in the illusion that they are two separate things.20

Derrida contends that every philosophical distinction or dissociation constitutes both a spatial and a temporal difference, that is it is shaped by differance. Differance is realised in neither an active nor a passive way, but rather occupies, and occurs within, a space and time anterior to such an opposition: differance produces differences.

Differance is employed by Derrida in examining the history of Western metaphysics, and in particular the way in which it privileges the present as an ideal and resolved perspective. Derrida claims that such a perspective rests upon the determination of consciousness as a “self-perception of presence”, and echoes Martin Heidegger in identifying this notion of consciousness as one in which the ontological difference, that between Being and beings, is forgotten.21 Derrida’s own formulation of the present is that of an amalgam of traces and
retentions which can neither be reduced nor resolved to a fixed entity or origin. This play of traces and retentions, a ‘writing’ temporally and spatially anteceding writing, constitutes differance, and questions the determination of being in presence.

**Deconstruction:** Derrida’s critique of Western philosophy identifies a tendency to elevate the pursuit and explication of truth and reason above all other forms of communication. Philosophy is removed from contact with other critical discourses, creating a hierarchy within which it has exclusive access to reason. Furthermore, philosophy seeks to present itself as ‘pure thought’ or ‘meta-thought’, removed from the fictional limitations of language exhibited by other discourses. Derrida argues that philosophy, like all discourses, is dependent upon language and upon linguistic forms and strategies, and thus incomplete inasmuch as it is shaped by differance. He seeks to contextualise philosophy by subjecting it to the type of critical examination or ‘close reading’ conventionally used to analyse literature. For Derrida, deconstruction comprises the various strategies and tactics employed in connecting philosophical writing with literary writing, and in foregrounding the fictional structures philosophy assumes in the name of reason.

Deconstruction seeks to reveal the contradictory nature of philosophical texts: by using other texts as objects of analysis, by the use of examples or case studies, by imposing a conceptual order, or by the employment of any number of
techniques which invoke distinctions between the essential and the inessential, such texts display a dependence on rhetorical figures, on fictional structures in order to make claims for truth. A close reading of these figures and structures can unravel the logic behind philosophical claims. Such strategies lead not to the rejection of the philosophical text as socially invalid, but rather to a reconsideration of the place of philosophy in relation to other discourses, and an opening up of new possibilities for writing critically.

[D]econstruction is not a theory that defines meaning in order to tell you how to find it. As a critical undoing of the hierarchical oppositions on which theories depend, it demonstrates the difficulties of any theory that would define meaning in a univocal way: as what an author intends, what conventions determine, what a reader experiences.

Dissemination: Derrida utilises this term in examining the tendency of texts to elude a definitive “tracking down”, or an identifiable antecedent or precedent. Texts are always removed spatially and temporally from their object or purpose, resulting in an indeterminate surplus or lack. Dissemination makes tracing a single origin impossible, but the term itself, like differance, resists definition, being only applicable within specific contexts, and having no existence beyond such contexts. Indeed dissemination prefigures difference.

Dissemination … although producing a nonfinite number of semantic effects, can be led back neither to a present of simple origin … nor to an eschatological presence. It marks an irreducible and generative multiplicity. The supplement and the turbulence of a certain lack fracture the limit of the text, forbidding an exhaustive and closed formalisation of it, or at least a saturating taxonomy of its themes, its signified, its meaning.

Writing: Derrida questions the philosophical opposition of speech and writing, in particular the way in which the term ‘writing’ invokes a notion of absence and
ambiguity. In contrast ‘speech’ is understood as a guarantee of fullness, presence and truth. Such a conception restricts the function of writing to that of an exterior vessel of language, attempting to translate the speech which preceded it. Derrida’s own formulation of writing is expanded to include all practices underscored by differance, that is all practices seeking to produce an inscription temporally and spatially removed from its object: graphic art, music, photography, cinematography, choreography, architecture, modelling, genetic coding, computer programming, etc. Each of these practices constitutes a field of indeterminate traces and retentions, a site of differance. These “writings” are never equivalent to their objects: they may replace, add to or subtract from their object but they always constitute a spatial and temporal removal. In redefining writing, Derrida puts into question a simple opposition of speech and writing: both are sites of differance resisting a state of resolution. Neither constitutes complete presence nor complete absence. Neither constitutes an essential notion of truth.

**Language:** Specific languages proceed through a process of difference, continually resisting the concretising and unifying forces of language, in order to effect communication. While language marginalises and attempts to conceal its own relationship(s) with space, time, bodies and other matter, specific languages foreground specific spatial, temporal and physical relationships, utilising these connections in order to effect a continual process of change in the form of dialogue. In attempting to represent thought, philosophical and metaphysical
discourses seek to conceal the conditions of their own production, that is they seek to conceal their writing. Philosophical language, apparently divorced from writing, apparently separated from specific spatial, temporal and physical relationships, represents itself as ‘pure’ thought, as an abstract ‘presence’, removed from contact with other language.

**Text:** Texts work toward the fixing of relationships between times, spaces, bodies and other matter in order to express social processes in terms of fixed, determinate meanings. Texts develop processually, drawing meaning from the space, time and people they come into contact with, while at the same time attempting to determine the meaning of such encounters. Texts invoke a state of absolute presence in order to present these meanings as possessing a spatial and temporal priority over their object - the social processes they seek to mediate. However, such meanings express a spatial and temporal slippage from their object, and thus remain indeterminate, deferred. Meaning and difference can thus be equated.

**Context:** The consideration of language within the context of dialogue emphasises the historical conditions of languages and of texts. Dialogue is processual, differentiating each utterance, each textual formation, by its particular spatial, temporal and physical relations. However, because dialogue occurs spatially and temporally, it also produces a continual and cumulative ambiguity, an indeterminate surplus or lack, which cannot be traced to a prior
utterance, nor to any single origin. Dialogic writing or carnalised writing, and ‘writing’ in Derrida’s sense of the word, can be equated with speech inasmuch as they each constitute a differential network, a multiplicity of possible meanings, a spatial and temporal removal from their object, as well as constituting sites for juxtaposing divergent or contradictory perspectives.

**Discourse:** Discourses can be viewed as impulses brought to bear upon language by specific relationships of people, space and time, and working toward the construction of meaning in texts. Theoretical positions and desires become discourse through their articulation by dialogue. Because discourse is dependent upon language and upon linguistic forms, however, it is shaped by differance, by an indeterminate surplus or lack which renders it incomplete in itself. The impulse of discourse to maintain coherence and the appearance of completion is resisted by dissemination, by the tendency of texts to foreground their indeterminacies and to evade any notion of origin.

Derrida and Bakhtin can both be seen as attempting to address particular political relationships and particular hierarchies. Bakhtin considers the relationship between high or classical culture and folk or popular culture, as well as the relationship between the novel and other literary genres. Derrida addresses the relationship between philosophy and literature, and that between speech and writing. In each case, a similar strategy is employed: an intermediary concept (the novel/‘carnivalised’ writing, deconstruction), derived from a
relationship of writing practices, is utilised to connect or re-contextualise previously polarised terms in a larger cultural relationship. In each case, the newly understood concept is first expanded to encompass previously opposed practices, and the resulting relationship (heteroglossia, differance/dissemination) is then shown to prefigure each term of the larger cultural relationship. Language is placed into a new context where time and space are re-connected, be it differance or dialogue/carnival, a time and space which resists textualisation and definitive closure.

Both Bakhtin and Derrida can be seen to be questioning the notion of a univocal perspective, be it the monoglossic ‘voice’ of poetry or drama or the philosophical representation of ‘thought’. Literature constitutes a space of contention in each formulation: for Bakhtin it mediates the struggle between the novel and other literary genres, while for Derrida it contextualises philosophy’s claims to ‘truth’, identifying the use of literary devices and figures. In each case what is sought is the levelling of a perceived hierarchy and a reassessment of the potential of writing.

However the theoretical positions of Derrida and of Bakhtin also raise questions of each other. Derrida’s conception of ‘writing’ problematises Bakhtin’s conception of dialogue and of utterance, calling to question whether or not Bakhtin’s terms privilege an abstract notion of speech over writing. Bakhtin’s terminology, however, appears to have more to do with emphasising language as
simultaneously dispersed and systematic, with the ultimate purpose being the formulation of a writing which represents a multiplicity of divergent perspectives.

The question of presence is also begged in Bakhtin’s notion of dialogue. In claiming that every utterance has an author, and that dialogue personifies every utterance to which it reacts, Bakhtin can be seen as privileging language which is identifiably connected to its author at the expense of language which does not identify or display traces of its context, that is, language which expresses a degree of absence. Such a reading is reinforced by Bakhtin’s distinction between ‘discourse in life’ and ‘discourse in art’. Bakhtin appears to be equating absence, to any degree, with a notion of language as abstract and homogeneous, already resolved. For Derrida, no such concept can ever achieve unity or resolution. The central point of contention, then, is one of terminology.

While Bakhtin, like Derrida, conceptualises language as a process of difference, he argues that indeterminacies can be resolved by restoring a particular utterance’s context - the dialogue in which it is engaged. Derrida argues that such a resolution is impossible, because such a context does not exist, or at least no longer exists, and any attempt to trace it is confounded by dissemination. Questions of definition and terminology are again consequential here. In negotiating the relationship between philosophical writing and literary writing, Derrida assumes a monoglossic ‘boundary’ for each type of writing, an
apparently resolved perspective conducive to deconstruction, or to the identification of literary or rhetorical figures. Bakhtin’s concept of novelistic writing complicates this structure by introducing heteroglossia, a diversity of distinct social positionings continually negotiating each other. No single perspective remains conclusive or unchanged, no discourse maintains a referential position. Where Derrida contends a continual process of slippage and of ambiguity, Bakhtin counters with the spatially and temporally specific state of heteroglossia. It can be argued that while dialogue is confined temporally, it must still make allowance for meanings to slip or become ambiguous.

What Bakhtin’s notion of carnivalised writing is able to bring to deconstruction is an awareness of the spatiality and temporality of writing, as well as of speech, not in order to recuperate a sense of presence as reference, but rather to approach an awareness of the conditions of subjectivity, an awareness of the marginalisation and repression of a specific perspective and the possibilities for liberation. An awareness of the space and time of writing does not have to lead to an unequivocal perspective or complete presence, but is able to contribute in establishing a stronger sense of purpose, a reason for making connections between spaces, times and people. In this way a clearer sense of the future is presented, a crucial consideration in theorising the relationship between writing and performance.

It can be argued that every practice or activity constituent of theatre and
Writing and Performance

performance may be considered as a form of inscription, as a ‘writing’. Rehearsing, scripting, casting, blocking, designing, lighting, video and audio-recording, choreographing, as well as miming, dancing, singing, reciting, juggling, playing musical instruments, participating as an audience member, reviewing and choosing whether or not to attend can all be considered as sites of difference, as fields of indeterminate traces and retentions. While none of these practices can be equated exactly with theatre and performance, they each remain possible constituents, occupying times and spaces connected to but distinct from each other. Yet none in themselves are capable of standing in for theatre and performance in its absence, of definitively representing theatre and performance: each represents a distance, a deferral, an ambiguity.

Academic discourse conventionally calls for the documentation of performances being discussed, either by audio or videorecording, or by illustrations or photographs, or by the inclusion of programmes, publicity material or published reviews. An analysis of a performance is often seen to be incomplete without the accompaniment of material guaranteeing the performance as an historical fact. Such requirements appear to assume that a performance can be verified by ‘proof’ of its occurrence. The practice of documentation carries with it the impulse to bring ‘truth’ to the act of performance by definitively representing it. However, the convention of documentation, in any of its forms, cannot guarantee or even reliably provide any meaningful record of a performance. In each case, it represents at best a degree of spatial and temporal removal from the
performance and its significance. Potentially, however, such documentation, falsifiable in any of its manifestations, may express an absence which might contradict or erase the performance being inscribed. The convention of documentation as a supplement to writings on performance can be seen as an attempt to replace the context of the performance or to restore the performance’s ‘presence’. However, as a site of difference documentation constitutes neither complete presence nor a language of truth, and therefore its purpose must be questioned.

To a certain extent, then, writing carried out for the purpose of performance documentation directly fulfills Derrida’s notion of the ‘dangerous supplement’ insofar as it serves as a ‘cure’ for memory while simultaneously replacing (and poisoning) the performance it seeks to document. What is missing from such ‘writing’ is its own spatial, temporal context – its relation as act of imagination and realisation to the act of imagination and realisation it is representing. It is precisely its removal from such a context which allows it to present itself as referential, as ‘document’.

As a preliminary formulation it could be argued that the practices of theatre and performance provide a spatial and temporal context for bringing a multiplicity of activities into contact with each other, a context which also marks a site of difference. However, theatre and performance’s own status as a ‘writing’ poses problems if Derrida’s formulation is to be considered critically. Theatre and
performance foreground their physical, spatial and temporal dimensions, and despite the danger of textualisation into plays, productions, seasons and companies, question a simple conception of their activities as inscriptions temporally and spatially removed from their object(s). In attempting to make specific connections between spaces, times, bodies and other matter, theatre and performance re-contextualise the notion of a differential trace structure by juxtaposing configurations of these parameters: a space, time, and physical and material configuration is produced which is able to connect other spaces, times, bodies and other matter. This configuration is contingent, constrained by time and space, but, through an awareness of these boundaries and their significance, is able to make spatial, temporal and physical connections. Theatre and performance, however, also continue processually, responding to particular circumstances and particular needs, prefigured not by an abstract difference but situated within an ongoing process of performance experiences, activities already started upon, relationships already explored, and continuing practices, constituent ‘writings’ re-opened. Theatre and performance only become ‘writings’ where one or more of the many simultaneous performance activities, such as scripting, choreography, design or photographic documentation, becomes a reference for the rest of the activities.

Derrida’s discussion of the relationship between ontological and ontic existence is consequential in considering theatre and performance, which claim existence both as a set of practices for the contextualising and connecting of spaces, times
and bodies, and simultaneously as a critical discourse informed by these practices. The slippage between the two terms calls for the discursive parameters of theatre and performance to be set out in relation to specific performances so that it is possible to see how they inform each other in bringing a critical perspective to bear upon larger social formations and specifically upon national programmes and procedures. What I wish to attempt is not a conclusive definition of theatre and performance, but rather a preliminary statement regarding the discursive and practical scope of theatre and performance.

**Social drama:** Victor Turner examines theatre and performance as stages of a process, one which demarcates social and cultural rites, rituals and ceremonies. Such performances are drawn from and shaped by what Turner calls the social drama, “an objectively isolable sequence of social interactions of a conflictive, competitive or agonistic type”. The social drama can be likened to Bakhtin’s notion of the utterance inasmuch as it is the smallest significant unit in a processual context: in Turner’s case it provides a morphology for negotiating social meaning through all cultural acts. Each social drama constitutes a sequence of phases: a breach, where a particular social code, value or meaning is transgressed; a crisis, where opposing social interests are defined in relation to each other; a redressive phase, where new relations and meanings are forged, however temporarily, on the basis of all interests involved in the drama; and finally by either a reintegration of those interested parties back into the society or by the recognition of a social schism.
**Liminal/liminoid:** Turner argues that social dramas are ‘liminal’ in that they mediate between the latent and manifest relations in a society by imagining a spatial and temporal threshold where opposing meanings can be considered: a suspension of everyday time and space. Such dramas are collective and obligatory in nature. However, in large-scale, complex societies, such rituals have been replaced by performances which are much less obligatory, and centred around smaller groups and individuals, performances which Turner describes as ‘liminoid’. Liminoid performances mark the production of the ‘aesthetic’ as a significant social category. Such performances, which include all genres of cultural performance, are still inscribed by an archetypal social drama and continue to be informed by it. Such a concept seems to correspond with Derrida’s formulation of differance as a ‘writing’ which spatially and temporally antecedes writing. All performances bear the mark of the social drama both in their structure and in the degree of reflection about society and its meaning(s), however small, they invoke. In this sense, all performances are reflexive and revealing, connected to the flow of everyday life.

Performances are never amorphous or open-ended, they have diachronic structure, a beginning, a sequence of overlapping but isolable phases, and an end. But their structure is not that of an abstract system; it is generated out of the dialectical oppositions of processes and of levels of process.26

**Theatre/performance:** Richard Schechner, like Turner, tends to favour biological categories in conceiving of performance as a type of ‘human behaviour’, ethologically informed, and transcending all cultural categories and
boundaries. What is important about all performance is the way human behaviour is given significance through re-presentation, that is, through its being ‘restored’.

Performance is an inclusive term. Theatre is only one node on a continuum that reaches from the ritualisation of animals (including humans) through performances in everyday life – greetings, displays of emotion, family scenes, professional roles, and so on – through to play, sports, theatre, dance, ceremonies, rites, and performances of great magnitude.27

All human behaviour inflected toward social interaction can be examined as performance, and Schechner provides extensive classifications and taxonomies for comparatively assessing a wide diversity of performance events. Like Turner, he utilises anthropological and ethnographic techniques and criteria in measuring and categorising these performances. The crossing of geographical and physical borders and the overcoming of the obstacles these borders present is recorded along with the data collected and recollected. Journeys to other countries and other environments tend to accompany an inscribed biographical-autobiographical journey from a theatre background to the newly annunciated epistemological field of performance studies. Along the way a break is made, discursive boundaries are re-drawn, and theatre is conceptualised as spatially removed from performance, rather than temporally removed.

The drama is the domain of the author, the composer, scenarist, shaman; the script is the domain of the teacher, guru, master; the theatre is the domain of the performers; the performance is the domain of the audience.28

The spatial distinctions asserted by Schechner suggest an hierarchical relationship between theatre and performance. While such a distinction raises
questions about the cultural encounters which produce the transcendent perspective from which performance articulates and enunciates theatre (and other cultural genres), it also provides a way of contextualising theatre spatially, temporally and physically.

The theatre is the visible/sonic set of events consisting either of well-known components, as in Bali, or of a score invented during rehearsal, as in the west. To some degree the theatre is the visible aspect of the script, the exterior topography of an interior map. Performance is the widest possible circle of events condensing around theatre. The audience is the dominant element of any performance.29

**Audience:** Audiences bring a processual dimension to theatre, not only in terms of the establishing of a process of dialogue between performers and audience, but also in emphasising the process by which each specific performance is spatially, temporally and physically connected to other performances. Audiences foreground the process of imagination and realisation involved both in producing socially relevant and meaningful performances and in producing a continual and cumulative ambiguity: the meaning of each theatrical ‘event’ is deferred to its specific context, that is, its process of interaction with a specific audience. Schechner’s formulation suggests the potential for a significant degree of agency on the part of the audience in determining a performance’s meaningfulness. It also foregrounds performance as a set of specific events, inscribed by a field of activities, rather than as a metaphysical abstraction.

While the usefulness of such a notion is apparent in considering performance as a physical as well as a critical praxis, I think it is still important to review how
the theatre/performance distinction has been produced. In particular, I wish to look at the process by which the realm of theatre is divested of its constituent audience and cast as an isolated practice. Schechner’s dichotomy is both persuasive and influential, and dovetails with Turner’s concepts of the social drama and liminality. The notion of a liminal space and time in which opposing meanings are played out and negotiated provides a model for considering the relationship between a social, abstract understanding of ‘performance’ and a cultural, aesthetic category of ‘theatre’. The temporal and spatial suspension provides the site of a semantic encounter between the social and the cultural. The practices of anthropology and ethnography constitute material cultural encounters marked by linguistic encounters. Theatrical events, expressing spatial, temporal and physical relations within specific cultural contexts, are ‘flattened out’, homogenised and recorded as an “exterior topography”. A culturally determined audience, specific to each context, is translated as ‘the audience’, the sign of the social category of performance. It is also, however, the sign of a spatial, temporal and physical removal from each encounter, that is, from the object of each ethnographic act. The closure of the cultural category ‘theatre’ allows for the opening up of the social category ‘performance’, a regime which in its imposed hierarchy (performance – theatre – script – drama) can be seen as privileging presence over absence.

Efficacy/efficiency:

Over the past five decades, the presentational forms associated with theatrical performance have been transformed into analytical tools,
generalised across disciplinary fields, and reinstalled in diverse locations. Anthropologists and folklorists have studied the rituals of both indigenous and diasporic groups as performance, sociologists and communication researchers have analysed the performance of social interactions and nonverbal communication, while cultural theorists have researched the everyday workings of race, gender, and sexual politics in terms of performance.30

In conceptualising performance as an emergent stratum of power and knowledge, Jon McKenzie places performance in a more explicitly post-structural context, drawing upon Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s notions of immanence, assemblage and subjectivity to argue that, as an ontologically and historically produced formation, performance produces a new epistemological subject, one with a fragmented, unstable identity. He identifies and addresses three types of performance: organisational performance, which is concerned with the efficiency of corporate practice; technological performance, which addresses the effectiveness of recent information and communication technology; and cultural performance, which encompasses discourses dealing with cultural expression and cultural tradition such as theatre, film and television, and which is concerned with efficacy.

McKenzie can be seen to be echoing Turner and Schechner’s assertions that cultural performance negotiates the dialectical relationship between entertainment and efficacy, a binary which favours social efficacy as the more desirable consequence of any performance. He contends that Performance Studies as an area of inquiry is limited in its scope because it is determined by the concerns of efficacy. He suggests that Turner’s notion of liminality has
become a norm in Performance Studies, arguing that Performance Management and what he terms ‘Techno-Performance’ provide alternative performance paradigms with alternative but related objectives. 

Postindustrial liminality is neither liminal nor liminoid: it is instead liminautic ... At the turn of the twenty-first century, the citationality of discourses and practices is passing across an electronic threshold, a digital limen. Words and gestures, statements and behaviours, symbolic systems and living bodies are being recorded, archived, and recombined through multimedia communication networks. Liminal and liminoid genres are becoming cyberspatial, flighty, liminautic. 

**Performance/theatre:** In attempting a “rehearsal of a general theory of performance”, McKenzie considers the paradigms of Performance Studies, Performance Management and Techno-Performance comparatively, noting that each emphasises performance as processual and contextual, a dynamic event in which norms are questioned and challenged. The concept of performance itself is contested in each paradigm, and new objects, methods and subjects of inquiry are continually being introduced and developed. In demonstrating how each paradigm is able to inform each other, McKenzie identifies Performance Studies programs within the academy as incorporating the practices and norms of Performance Management in the way staff and students are recruited, trained and evaluated, just as theatre models have been utilised by Performance Management researchers in the search for new approaches to achieving corporate efficiency. In presenting the outline of his ‘rehearsal’ as a “flight plan”, and in his use of a space shuttle launch as a metaphor for commencing speculative and highly experimental readings and writings on performance, McKenzie can be seen to be developing an approach to performance in as wide a
social and multiparadigmatic context as possible, one which favours the imagining and realisation of mutational forms of performance over the reifying of conventional forms and norms. In doing so, McKenzie’s performance assemblage is inflected toward the future rather than the past.

While we see the performance stratum as breaking with hundreds of years of disciplinary power, future researchers will follow its fissures from another perspective and scan its cracks and angles more acutely. They will read performance as breaking not only with centuries of panoptic surveillance but also with millennia ruled by an alphabetic lecture machine, one composed at various times of tablets and scrolls, manuscripts and books, and chairs and desks and lecterns … And if we have begun to sense that performance embodies such values as efficacy, efficiency and effectiveness, and to see performers as being animal, vegetable or mineral; distant researchers will experience performance as intensifications in a highly charged atmosphere, as contestations in a cloud of forces without form or substance…

McKenzie’s articulation of performance in an electronic, digital and virtual context, and in particular its break with the synchronous narration of history, leads me back to a consideration of how the dissemination of performance obscures the culturally specific functions of theatre. McKenzie provides a more transparent commentary on the ‘jettisoning’ of theatre from the performance machine. Within the academy, most performance studies researchers and practitioners emerge from or receive their early training in, a theatre and drama environment, and possess curricula vitae filled with theatrical productions of a largely canonical nature. As a result they still apply theatre criteria to the work they and others produce. Within the academy, teachers of theatre and of performance are aware that the schism between the two areas of inquiry is largely invisible or conceptually irrelevant to their colleagues in other areas of inquiry. McKenzie’s critique of cultural performance at least provides a
metaphor for reconciling this conceptual/pedagogical gap. Schechner’s re-casting of theatre as confined to the rectangle of the stage emphasises the importance of the audience as the completion of the performance context. Theatre as the sign of absence reinforces performance as presence. However, McKenzie connects the two concepts temporally as stages in the metaphor of the shuttle launch. Theatre provides a ‘fuel stage’ for the performance assemblage, a ‘stage’ which is disengaged when it is emptied.

Therefore, from this point in this paper, I shall refer to ‘performance’ rather than to ‘theatre and performance’, as the critical praxis and discourse informing my examination of the social formation of nation (and the Australian nation in particular) and constituting a parallel object of examination in itself, this notion of performance being inscribed by the absence of theatre and the presence of the (contextually specific) audience.

**Language:** Specific languages foreground specific spatial, temporal and physical relationships, utilising these connections in order to effect a continual process of change in the form of dialogue. The processual nature of specific languages, proceeding through difference, produces continual slippages in meanings, a process of ambiguity.

**Text:** The processual and ambiguous nature of specific languages gives rise to texts which allow for the slippage and interplay of meanings. The notion of the
social drama provides an example of an iterative text as a field of play, a text whose meaning is deferred to each specific performance context. However, the notion of an archetypal social drama determining all social rites and rituals can be seen as invoking a state of absolute presence in order to present this determining force as possessing a spatial and temporary priority over the performances it seeks to mediate. Similarly, an intercultural approach to performance also depends on performance texts, open to play and interplay within their specific cultural contexts, being made orthodox, authoritative and authentic, presented as possessing temporal and spatial priority over the performance practices they are connected to.

**Context:** The context of dialogue is a processual one, differentiating each utterance, each textual formation and each ‘writing’ in terms of its particular spatial, temporal and physical relations. Divergent or contradictory perspectives can be juxtaposed and brought into contact with each other. Similarly, liminal performances proceed from a suspension of everyday time and space in which social meanings are continually contested, reconciled or reconstituted. Liminal contexts, like those of carnival, are most able to effect social change where and when they share the space and time of any relevant performance text.

**Discourse:** Theoretical positions and desires become discursive through their articulation by dialogue. Because discourse is dependent upon language and upon linguistic forms, however, it is shaped by differance, by an indeterminate
surplus or lack which renders it incomplete in itself. The impulse of discourse to maintain coherence and the appearance of completion is resisted by dissemination, by the tendency of texts to foreground their indeterminacies and to evade any notion of origin. Performance simultaneously marks a processual critical practice and a discourse which takes as its object of study dynamic events (rather than static entities) which occur in a liminal context, which involve an audience as a constituent category, which negotiate social and cultural meanings through the re-presentation and juxtaposition of divergent perspectives, which have the potential to resist (or reinforce) the existing social order, and which express spatial, temporal, physical and material relationships.

Rather than by way of an essential or ontological definition, performance needs to be considered in terms of how, in specific contexts, it informs other cultural practices and sites, and, more importantly, how it informs writing. If performance is to be considered as an academic discipline (or research paradigm) in addition to a cultural practice, it needs to be understood as a site where writing practices co-exist with spatial, temporal and physical practices, and where no single practice occupies a referential position. Understanding how each specific performance activity, that is each potential performance inscription is transformed in the process of making performance, a transformation which is spatial, temporal and physical, provides ways for understanding how the discourse of performance can inform and transform other cultural practices,
formations and discourses.

Literature, communication studies and other liberal arts discourses, in responding to a centralised, strategic notion of text and textuality, privilege specific performance practices over others, treating specific writings and specific times and places as a reference for all performance practices. It is in the activities of literature and other liberal arts discourses that texts are revealed not as essential forms but as sets of material practices. This ‘administration’ works to isolate and stabilise performance as a discipline, diminishing its power to transform and to make spatial, temporal and physical connections. An awareness of the specific conditions in which performance may become marginalised is necessary in order to resist such stabilisation strategically. At the same time an awareness of how performance is carried out, realised, not just by an administrative apparatus but also by participants: practitioners, students, teachers, audiences, etc., is vital in order to understand the processual nature of such resistance.

These relationships and the strategies they suggest can prove equally applicable to the concept of nation and the process by which it is able to represent, regulate and question itself. Keeping this in mind, together with Derrida’s notions of ‘writing’ and differance, I wish to examine certain post-colonial reading and writing practices, and their ramifications for a writing praxis informed by performance. At the same time I want to consider how post-colonial theory can
provide a context for connecting the processes of performance and nation. A number of the resistive perspectives and strategies put forward by post-colonial theorists, notably Homi Bhabha, can be seen to be informed to some extent by the practices of deconstruction. As each of these strategies is realised only in specific contexts, I wish to discuss them in relation to resisting textual and discursive practices, rather than attempt to provide conclusive definitions of each term.

**Post-colonialism:** The critical perspective and enterprise which focuses on:

reading and writing practices grounded in some form of colonial experience occurring outside Europe but as a consequence of European expansion into and exploitation of “the other” worlds.  

Post-colonial discourse is concerned with resisting an imperial/colonial hierarchy through an awareness of colonial cultural strategies, and with the de-centring of colonial texts and language by privileging marginal perspectives, marginal writings. Such resistance takes the form of a number of specific strategies of reading and writing.

[Post-colonialism is the need, in nations or groups which have been victims of imperialism, to achieve an identity uncontaminated by universalist or Eurocentric concepts and images.](#)

**Ambivalence:**

[The colonial presence is always ambivalent, split between its appearance as original and authoritative and its articulation as repetition and difference.](#)

Homi Bhabha identifies ambivalence as occurring between colony and empire: colonial authority establishes its own difference from the authority of empire, a
strategic difference which generates its authority over its colonial subjects, but at the same time produces a point of tension: it repeats the imperial voice but no longer speaks it from a position of being ‘first’, of being singular and referential. This difference is both a spatial and temporal difference, and provides a site for resistive reading strategies. Colonial subjects also express this ambivalence in their relationship with the colonial authority: imagining a new time and space as objective while attempting to reconcile times and spaces transgressing the colonial boundaries. This process of compliance and resistance produces a cultural difference which expresses an indeterminate surplus or lack.

**Abrogation:** The foundation of most post-colonial strategies is the recognition of a repressive imperial hierarchy, and a refusal to consume its criteria and to accept its power over the means of communication. The centrality of colonial discourses is rejected: new contexts must be found in order to re-place colonial texts. Abrogation can involve refusing to accept standardised or centralised forms of language, or stabilising discourses, at the expense of marginalised languages and discourses, or refusing to consume or passively receive colonial texts.

> When a subject is constituted within a political stance whose oppositional mode and sense of oppression subverts and appropriates the discourse, the moment of abrogation may be perceived to exist not as a formal property of the text but as a reproduction of those properties within the context of that text’s consumption.36

** Appropriation:** The experience of colonial intrusion leaves the post-colonial subject with the language of the colonial authority, a language which in its
reception marginalises the subject. Appropriation involves the seizing and re-constructing of this language in order to produce new meanings. These new meanings reflect the cultural experiences of colonial subjects, presenting a divergence from the meanings and assumptions of colonial texts and discourses.

Strategies of appropriation … seize the language, re-place it in a specific cultural location, and yet maintain the integrity of that Otherness, which historically has been employed to keep the post-colonial at the margins of power, of ‘authenticity’, and even of reality itself.37

Abrogation and appropriation must accompany each other in order to effectively de-centre colonial discourse.

**History:** Central to the construction of meaning in texts is narrative, a strategy for ordering, isolating and separating relationships between time, space, bodies and matter. History is the discourse which transforms narrative into fact, containing and confining all social experience within a unified referential narrative. Within the discourse of history, times and spaces are presented as ‘events’, fixed spatial-temporal relations, expressed in a synchronous, linear progression. Dominant Western conceptions of history can be seen as legitimating colonialism and constructing the marginalised position of post-colonial subjects. All social occurrences are judged in relation to Western history and are either silenced or spoken as singular, centralised accounts of discrete events, that is as texts. In this way the discourse of history can be seen as contributing to the construction of a dominant Western subjectivity.

Resistance to a centralised notion of history involves understanding the
discourse as imposing cultural hierarchies and legitimating social categories which express a Eurocentric perspective, and in re-asserting historical contexts specific to certain people in specific places and times, which question the linearity and synchronicity of occurrences. Within these contexts a dominant notion of history can be de-centred, mediated or contained by other histories.

**Mimicry:** As a strategy of resistance to colonial authority, mimicry involves an awareness of how colonial power is reproduced through a process of repetition rather than representation. Homi Bhabha argues that in its attempts to reform its subjects in the image of empire, colonial power continually produces a difference, a slippage inasmuch as the doctrines which ensure civil liberties for those in the metropolitan centre must be reproduced by colonial authority in such a way that they function as a form of social control. This colonial mimicry serves to separate and differentiate colonial subjects from the metropolitan centre.

Mimicry is ... the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation, and discipline, which “appropriates” the Other as it visualises power. Mimicry is also the sign of the inappropriate, however, a difference or recalcitrance which coheres the dominant strategic function of colonial power, intensifies surveillance, and poses an immanent threat to both “normalized” knowledges and disciplinary powers.38

When social doctrines become colonial doctrines, they must necessarily become interdictory, enforcing a denial or disavowal of what is already known, a denial of pre-colonial knowledge at the same time and place as the colonial doctrine is administered. The site of the practices of colonial mimicry, that is the site of
prohibition and disavowal, can be seen as the site of potential resistance. The presence of the coloniser is only partly represented in the colonial subject: the indeterminate surplus or lack exposes the tension between empire and colony, and brings colonial authority into question.

What emerges between mimesis and mimicry is a writing, a mode of representation, that marginalises the monumentality of history, quite simply mocks its power to be a model, that power which supposedly makes it imitable.\(^{39}\)

**Hybridity:** While this particular term has been used in a number of ways in cultural studies, within the context of post-colonial resistance it is useful in considering how new cultural forms can be produced, and how cultural identities can transform temporally and spatially. Bakhtin uses the term in identifying language as both highly organised and homogeneous, and simultaneously split, heterogeneous and specific. The term is also utilised by him in describing the novel’s ability to provide a site where an official or dominant language comes into contact with unofficial, marginalised languages in such a way that the languages inform each other and are parodied or criticised, giving way to a new, hybridised discourse in which the dominant, previously monoglossic discourse has lost its univocality, that is, its authority.

In adapting this conception to the interaction of discourses within post-colonial contexts, Homi Bhabha provides it with a dimension of specificity and agency. Bhabha’s formulation of hybridity describes a strategic moment of resistance rather than an abstract possibility: by inscribing the discourses and practices of
the colonial subject, the colonial authority carries the trace of these potentially subversive practices, and can no longer make claims to univocality. Such a formulation can be likened to Derrida’s commentary on Western philosophy: it makes claims to an ontological or metaphysical realm of truth or reality through the use of specific examples, case studies or rhetorical devices taken from the physical world. By engaging directly with the discourses of the colonial subject, colonial discourse relinquishes its claim to absolute presence, and to temporal and spatial priority, the interaction leaving the hybridised colonial authority with an indeterminate surplus or lack, open to question and conducive to subversion by the colonial subject.

Colonial hybridity is not a problem of genealogy or identity between two different cultures which can then be resolved as an issue of cultural relativism. Hybridity is a problematic of colonial representation and individuation that reverses the effects of the colonialist disavowal, so that other “denied” knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority - its rules of recognition.

As a resistive strategy, hybridity needs to be considered as accompanying the abrogation of colonial criteria. In a similar way to ‘carnivalised’ writing or specific strategies of deconstruction, hybridity has the potential to reveal or unseat the discourse of colonial authority, questioning the right of any discourse to assume a position of absolute distinctness or of authority. Discourses of colonial authority seek to hide the conditions of their own production: direct contact with the discourses of colonial subjects reveals their inscription and subsequent administration.

The colonial hybrid is the articulation of the ambivalent space where the rite of power is enacted on the site of desire, making its objects at once disciplinary and disseminatory … If discriminatory effects enable the
authorities to keep an eye on them, their proliferating difference evades that eye, escapes that surveillance. Those discriminated against may be instantly recognised, but they also force a re-cognition of the immediacy and articulacy of authority - a disturbing effect that is familiar in the repeated hesitancy afflicting the colonial discourse when it contemplates its discriminated subjects … It is not that the authority is at a loss for words. It is, rather, that the colonial discourse has reached that point when, faced with the hybridity of its objects, the presence of power is revealed as something other than what its rules of recognition assert.41

An important consequence of colonial hybridity is an opening up of what constitutes post-colonial theory. Colonial doctrine and theories of authority lose their referentiality, and become open to interaction with marginal writings in the space of hybridity. In strategically questioning both the authority and the authenticity of a dominant colonial writing in specific contexts, post-colonial literature and art can be seen to function as resistive theory.

Language: Specific languages proceed through a process of difference, continually resisting the concretising and unifying forces of language, in order to effect communication. Language can be employed in the establishment and maintenance of authority, enforcing standardised criteria and a hierarchy of languages. While language marginalises and attempts to conceal its own relationship(s) with space, time, bodies and other matter, specific languages can foreground specific spatial, temporal and physical relationships. The connections realised by specific languages can be utilised in order to effect a continual process of change in the form of dialogue. Aspects of a dominant, standardising language can be appropriated by marginal languages in refusing the dominant language’s centrality and resisting such standardisation, at the sites
where the languages come into direct contact.

**Text:** Texts work toward the fixing of relationships between times, spaces, bodies and other matter in order to express social processes in terms of fixed, determinate meanings. Texts develop processually, drawing meaning from the space, time and people they come into contact with, while at the same time attempting to determine the meaning of such encounters. Texts may invoke a state of absolute and authoritative presence in order to present these meanings as possessing a spatial and temporal priority over the social processes they seek to mediate. Such a presence is reinforced by the discourse of history, that is a notion of history as unified, homogeneous and referential, which transforms textual narratives into social facts, attempting to put textual meanings beyond question. Such meanings, however, express a spatial and temporal slippage from their object, and thus remain indeterminate, deferred.

**Context:** The consideration of language within the context of dialogue emphasises the historical conditions of language and of texts. Dialogue is processual, differentiating each utterance, each textual formation, by its particular spatial, temporal and physical relations. However, because dialogue occurs spatially and temporally, it also produces a continual and cumulative ambiguity, an indeterminate surplus or lack, which cannot be traced to a prior utterance, nor to any single origin. If dialogue is seen as an active and strategic process, then the dissemination of dialogue provides opportunities for
questioning discourses of authority and for resisting the centrality of any single perspective. Contexts provide processes with purposes. Resistance occurs where contexts take issue with texts, a situation which occurs in liminal contexts, in which the temporal and spatial ‘flow’ of everyday life is suspended.

**Discourse:** Discourses can be viewed as impulses brought to bear upon language by specific relationships of people, space and time, and working toward the construction of meaning in texts. Theoretical positions and desires become discourse through their articulation by dialogue. Because discourse is dependent upon language and upon linguistic forms, however, it is shaped by differance, by an indeterminate surplus or lack which renders it incomplete in itself. The impulse of discourse to maintain coherence and the appearance of completion, to become doctrine, is resisted by dissemination, by the tendency of texts to foreground their indeterminacies and to evade any notion of origin. Within a context of resistance, discourses of authority can be brought into question by appropriating the language of such discourses in transforming meanings and definitions, by strategically repeating and mimicking discursive forms, or by containing such discourses within larger but culturally specific contexts.

Bakhtin’s assertion that the social relations of carnival, a time and space encompassing all people, gave rise to a form of writing which connected
divergent discourses and perspectives and brought them into contact with each other, is useful in considering the place of performance within the academy. The social relations of performance pertain to times and spaces which are temporary or processual, to activities which imagine other times, spaces and people, and seek to realise them for a specific time in a specific space for a specific group of people. The social relations realised in this process of contingent realities are able to inform writing, that is to produce writing which connects performance with other discourses, and which connects words with bodies in time and space. For writing to be informed by the conditions of performance, it must seek to emphasise its temporality, the space it occupies, the physical activity involved in its production, and its place in a process of interaction with other performance activities and with other writing. At the same time it must abrogate its own assumption of self-presence, of completion, of reference. Like Bakhtin’s formulation of carnival, performance provides a temporal and spatial suspension of everyday life which has the potential to either reinforce the social status quo and the existing social relations, or to produce moments and directions of resistance to the social order. It is this resistive potential, the possibility of performance effecting or contributing to the imagining and realising of social change, which justifies the conception of performance as a critical perspective as well as a social practice, and it is this potential which needs to be specified so as not to assume that all performance is ipso facto resistive

As an academic discipline, performance is potentially subject to a division in its
activities: writing can be separated from other performance activities and translated as a reference for performance. A hierarchy is established, one which simultaneously reinforces performance’s subjection by the administering discourses of literature and the arts. In its attempt to apprehend and return performance in its own image, literature imposes the dramatic text on performance, via the discrete entity ‘drama’ which denies performance’s temporary and dynamic nature, invoking its temporal and spatial priority over performance. The dramatic text isolates and orders the times, spaces, people and activities constituent of theatre, and imposes a particular way of using language, and thus of space, bodies and time. Without the contextualising force of the audience, the physical/spatial/temporal encounter is sublimated, transformed into a pedagogical encounter. The objectivity of words replaces the subjectivity of bodies. The referential nature of the dramatic text privileges particular configurations of time, space, people and other matter already shaped by the standardised text - auditions, line runs, moved readings, plays - and these in turn shape rehearsing and all other performance activities. Proximity to the text produces a hierarchy amongst these activities.

As a set of repressive strategies, literature attempts to inscribe both theatre and performance as sub-genres, marked by and represented by ‘drama’, a category distinct from, homogenous with, and comparable to other literary genres. The dramatic text constitutes a standardised, centralised form of language, upholding and at the same time reinforced by the tenets of the literary discourse. Drama
produces a canon of central texts in addition to a hierarchy privileging the linguistic text, ‘speech’ or ‘speaking parts’, and marginalising other performance activities, concretising them as stage directions. Like other literary genres, drama draws upon the discourse of history to legitimize its practice. In an academic environment, this is achieved by the teaching of drama within an historical context, by an official ‘ordering’ of the texts administered. This has the effect of compressing the spaces and times of writing, silencing marginal writing and organising a core of standardised texts according to particular historical themes or historically privileged authors.

It is this ‘worked upon’ version of the dramatic text which allows the spatial, temporal and physical activities of performance to be suspended, to be divested of a constituent audience, and to be contained within, or ‘translated’ to, the classroom or seminar room, making such an environment appear ‘natural’, beyond question. Rather than being produced as part of the process of performing, the dramatic text appears in the classroom as given, as a fact prior to other performance activities, restricting the possibilities of what can be learned to those controlled by drama and by literature. Time and space are subjected to texts, bodies are made to sit still, and all other matter is excluded, rendered inconsequential. The conditions of production of the dramatic text are concealed: the spatial, temporal and physical nature of writing is hidden so that the dramatic text presents itself as absolute, as authoritative, as doctrine.
Drama makes mimetic demands on students of performance, ensuring their acceptance of a text which denies other performance activities the fullness of space and time in order to claim a position of authority, of reference. Such a position is precarious inasmuch as the students who are the objects of dramatic teaching are also the practitioners of the ongoing process of performance. Within an academic environment, the teaching of drama, like the teaching of any subject, constitutes instruction in a discipline: what is carried out in the name of education and enlightenment also constitutes a form of social control. The tension involved in drama’s maintenance of an apparently full and absolute presence is revealed in the practical exploration of a dramatic text, as workshop, rehearsal or production. The fixed configuration of time, space, bodies and text constituting the classroom or seminar is brought into contact with the more open possibilities of time, space, bodies and other matter in the workshop, rehearsal space or theatre. Any attempt to impose the social relations of the classroom, that is the teaching of a dramatic text as literature, forces a denial, a disavowal of the spatial, temporal and physical activities explored in performing. The social relations of the performing space contextualise drama, forcing it into contact and into a process of dialogue with the spaces, times and bodies of performance, and thus constitute a site of resistance to the textualisation of performance.

While such resistance will be physical, spatial and temporal in nature, it also allows a new type of writing to emerge from this process of dialogue: writing which is simultaneous with other performance activities, writing which is
dependent on the bodies, times and spaces it is interacting with, writing which remembers and responds and anticipates responses, and which emphasises the physicality, spatiality and temporality of writing as an activity. Understanding the existence of writing within the performance space, within the context of that particular set of social relations, can lead to an understanding of how performance can inform writing in other academic environments. Writing informed by performance, that is writing which seeks to connect spaces, times, and bodies by emphasising its own spatiality, temporality and physicality, can engage with and bring into question writing couched in the discourses of literature, communication studies, philosophy and other disciplines which seek to theorise, textualise and define performance in an authoritative and administrative manner. Such engagement, such dialogue, such mimicry-in-the-performing-of-writing, reveals the temporal, spatial and physical nature of all writing.

While postcolonial theory provides discursive contexts and strategies for performance to resist and contain the administrative ambitions of literature, it is more directly concerned with the formation and transformation of the modern nation as a social category. I wish to firstly consider the nation within its historical context in Europe, to come to some understanding of the conditions which gave rise to it, and the conditions of nationhood.

**Nation/state:** Hugh Seton-Watson refers to a ‘state’ as “a legal and political
organisation, with the power to require obedience and loyalty from its subjects.”

He offers a preliminary definition of ‘nation’ as “a community of people, whose
members are bound together by a sense of solidarity, a common culture, a
national consciousness.” He states that not every state is a nation, exemplified
by Israel, and that not every nation is a state, as is the case with the Kurds. The
juxtaposition of ‘obedience’ and ‘national consciousness’ in Seton-Watson’s
definition suggests the paradox implied in the national project: the imposition of
a social camaraderie which the community maintains and enforces.

In his celebrated lecture at the Sorbonne in 1882, Ernest Renan discounted race,
language, material interest, religion, geography and military necessity as
sufficient grounds for a nation to come into being. Rather, he argued that history
or the convergence of specific historical events have resulted in a multitude of
national groups sharing a principle, generally expressed metaphysically,
regarding a common and glorious past and a common will in the present.

A nation is … a large-scale solidarity, constituted by the feeling of the
sacrifices that one has made in the past and of those that one is prepared to
make in the future. It presupposes a past; it is summarised, however, in the
present by a tangible fact, namely, consent, the clearly expressed desire to
continue a common life. A nation’s existence is … a daily plebiscite, just as
an individual’s existence is a perpetual affirmation of life.

Such a description is grounded on difference and allows for temporal change and
slippage. E. J. Hobsbawm concurs with the notion of nation as an historical
entity, citing the modern nation as connected to political and economic
liberalism in Europe in the nineteenth century. He puts forward three criteria for
a social group to be recognised as a nation. Firstly, the people must have an historical association with a current state. Secondly, an established cultural elite must exist, one possessing a written literary vernacular. Thirdly, the people must have a proven capacity for conquest. While England, France and Germany in the nineteenth century each fulfilled these criteria, the conditions of each state’s nationhood differed markedly because of political, technical, administrative and economic differences. While nationhood in each case sought to represent the perceived common good against privilege, Hobsbawm’s historical analysis sees the category of nation as facilitating free trade and promoting capitalist development, rather than popular solidarity, in producing an economy of an advantageous size.

**Nationalism:** Ernest Gellner argues that nations do not possess primacy over nationalism, but rather are engendered by it. Gellner’s account of nationalism starts from a conception of it as both a theory and a principle. The principle states that the political and the national should be congruent categories. As such nations constitute a contingency rather than a necessity. Gellner’s theory of nationalism conceives of it as a process of political legitimacy limiting ethnic boundaries in relation to political boundaries. Gellner argues that the historical transition from agrarian to industrial society amplified the need for states to be centralised and to possess one culture and one prevailing style of communication supported by a centralised education system run by a state monopolising legitimate culture. Such a state would be able to produce an anonymous,
homogeneous, literate labour force with a high degree of mobility.

When general social conditions make for standardised, homogeneous, centrally sustained high cultures, pervading entire populations and not just elite minorities, a situation arises in which well-defined educationally sanctioned and unified cultures constitute very nearly the only kind of unit with which men willingly and often ardently identify. The cultures now seem to be the natural repositories of political legitimacy.45

In connecting nationalism to an attachment with a homeland, a common language, ideals, values and traditions, Montserrat Guibernau builds on Gellner’s theory of nationalism, arguing that nationalism has the ability to create a sense of identity, particularly where society is perceived to be disintegrating.46 National identity facilitates choice about a people’s political destiny, as well as facilitating personal relationships and providing a source of strength and resilience. A sense of continuity over time is provided, along with differentiation from others. Guibernau argues that as cultural diversity increases and social structures such as class start to lose their significance, nationalism emerges as a way of providing a symbolic identity based on the perception of a common culture and history. Rituals provide a way for national identity to be regularly reaffirmed. In addition, certain symbols, values, beliefs and customs are seen by cultural members as a part of themselves. Nationalism can be seen to be produced by an emotional and not necessarily rational attachment to one’s land and culture.

Tom Nairn asserts that nationalism is by nature ambivalent inasmuch as it provokes societies to move forward by ‘regressing’, by looking inwards. An
accessible romantic culture invoking rural or peasant values is utilised as part of a populist appeal.

[N]ationalism can ... be pictured as like the old Roman god Janus, who stood above gateways with one face looking forward and one backwards. Thus does nationalism stand over the passage to modernity, for human society. As human kind is forced through its strait doorway, it must look desperately back into the past, to gather strength wherever it can be found for the ordeal of 'development'.

The general imposition of a high culture, that is, a written vernacular supported by a nationally administered education programme, upon low cultures allows for this imposed culture to embroider and modify elements of culture belonging to all its constituent subjects. According to Gellner, nationalism seeks to defend its own cultural inventions.

Generally speaking, nationalist ideology suffers from a pervasive false consciousness. Its myths invert reality: it claims to defend folk culture while in fact it is forging a high culture; it claims to protect an old folk society while in fact helping to build up an anonymous society ... [Nationalism] preaches and defends continuity, but owes everything to a decisive and unutterably profound break in human history. It preaches and defends cultural diversity, when in fact it imposes homogeneity both inside and, to a lesser degree, between political units. Its self-image and its true nature are inversely related, with an ironic neatness seldom equalled even by other successful ideologies.

Gellner argues that the conditions of life today make nationalism seem compelling. In particular the media is able to reproduce cultural units as homogeneous, and thus engender the idea of nationalism, in its pervasive, abstract and standardised way of communicating, regardless of content. What is significant is the medium and its function: those who can understand or gain access to understanding the media’s language and style, are included in the audience/community. Those who cannot are excluded.
Nation: Benedict Anderson picks up on this notion of a community produced by a standardised communication in arguing that the convergence of capitalism and communication technology shapes the way people perceive their connections with each other. Just as print technology produced a high culture by instituting and fixing a unifying vernacular language, laying the basis for national consciousnesses, the media standardises and fixes the way it transmits information. Anderson views the novel as invoking the device of ‘meanwhile’ to present a time-scheme of simultaneity in the presentation of events. He argues that prior to the appearance of the novel as a literary form in Europe events could only be narrated in a linear temporal order, a time-scheme which reinforced feudal notions of divine will and a rigid social hierarchy. However the concept of temporal simultaneity imagined a different world in which characters who might never have had a face-to-face exchange or be aware of each other are connected from the perspective of the omniscient reader. Anderson argues that this simultaneous unfolding of events produces “a precise analogue of the idea of nation”. Citizens imagine their connection to each other through the sharing of an official culture, an official history and a vision for the future. Anderson conceives of nations as specifically imagined political communities, each possessing finite boundaries and doctrines addressing the freedom of its members. Every contemporary society addresses such a notion while imagining the connections between its members in widely diverging ways.
**Language:** Specific languages proceed through a process of difference, continually resisting the concretising and unifying forces of language, in order to effect communication. Language can be employed in the establishment and maintenance of authority, enforcing standardised criteria and a hierarchy of languages. Nations utilise the facility of print-languages in fixing and standardising language in order to produce the illusion of a coherent and glorious past.

What the eye is to the lover – that particular, ordinary eye he or she is born with – language – whatever language history has made his or her mother-tongue – is to the patriot. Through that language, encountered at mother’s knee and parted with only at the grave, pasts are restored, fellowships are imagined, and futures are dreamed.52

However, aspects of a dominant, standardising language can be appropriated by marginal languages in refusing the dominant language’s centrality and resisting such standardisation, at the sites where the languages come into direct contact with each other.

**Text:** The processual and ambiguous nature of specific languages gives rise to texts which allow for the slippage and interplay of meanings. The notion of the social drama provides an example of an iterative text as a field of play, a text whose meaning is deferred to each specific performance context. However, the notion of an archetypal social drama determining all social rites and rituals can be seen as invoking a state of absolute presence in order to present this determining force as possessing a spatial and temporary priority over the
performances it seeks to mediate. The nation, in narrating itself as absolute presence, is reinforced by the discourse of history, that is, a notion of history as unified, homogeneous and referential, which transforms textual narratives into social facts, attempting to put textual meanings beyond question. Such meanings, however, express a spatial and temporal slippage from their object, and thus remain indeterminate, deferred.

**Context:** The consideration of language within the context of dialogue emphasises the historical conditions of language and of texts. Dialogue is processual, differentiating each utterance, each textual formation, by its particular spatial, temporal and physical relations. However, because dialogue occurs spatially and temporally, it also produces a continual and cumulative ambiguity, an indeterminate surplus or lack, which cannot be traced to a prior utterance, nor to any single origin. If dialogue is seen as an active and strategic process, then the dissemination of dialogue provides opportunities for questioning discourses of authority and for resisting the centrality of any single perspective. Contexts provide processes with purposes. Resistance occurs where contexts take issue with texts, a situation which occurs in liminal contexts, in which the temporal and spatial ‘flow’ of everyday life is suspended. However, unlike liminal spaces where direct contact is realised between performers and audience, and between divergent and conflicting perspectives and meanings, the process of the nation is imagined without the need for direct contact between its members. Official symbols and rituals imagine and realise nation in spaces and
times removed from direct contact with specific cultural groups and interests. Official rituals imagine and realise specific cultural practices and perspectives as homogeneous and anonymous, incomplete constituents of the larger social/national formation.

**Performance:** Performance simultaneously marks a processual practice and a critical discourse which takes as its object of study dynamic events (rather than static entities) which occur in a liminal context, which involve an audience as a constituent category, which negotiate social and cultural meanings through the re-presentation and juxtaposition of divergent perspectives, which have the potential to resist (or reinforce) the existing social order, and which express spatial, temporal, physical and material relationships. While specific performances are able to imagine and realise the social formation of the nation in an official context, reinforcing the significance of national values, other performances are able to imagine nation as a process underscored by difference and ambiguity, and suggest ways to resist the unquestioned consumption of national criteria by citizens.

To summarise my argument thus far, I have suggested that the impulses of language, text and discourse work to fix and order meaning in writing and in performing. Writing, in the form of script, summary, programme, review or performance documentation, has a tendency to assume a spatial and temporal
priority over other performance activities and components, and to act as a reference for the particular performance. The relations of carnival provide a way of conceiving how the relationship between performance and writing can be made more equitable, and indeed how performance can inform writing in a space and time which makes them ‘simultaneous’ and interacting with each other. Conceiving of language as dialogic and spatially and temporally removed from the object of its inscription reveals the tensions involved in maintaining a logocentric order, that is, an official and strategic way of making sense of the world. Writing which seeks to assume a perspective of absolute presence is continually confounded by its interaction with and recourse to specific contexts, specific practices and specific groups of people.

Performance provides the possibility of either reinforcing or interrogating the function of such writing by contextualising it within specific spatial, temporal and physical relations, that is, within a liminal context. It forces writing to reveal the physical, spatial and temporal conditions of its production, that is, to conceive of itself as a performance activity. The modern nation provides a salient conceptual site for examining the relationship between words and bodies and between writing and performing. The processual nature of performance, continually imagining and realising spatial, temporal and physical meanings and relationships, allows it to demonstrate and interrogate the process of nation, in its writing and narration and in its enactment of strategic spaces, times and bodies.
In order to discuss theatre and performance in a way which emphasises them as physical and critical praxes, it is important to find ways of writing which attempt to resist the textual tendency to fix and order meaning, and instead seek to foreground writing contexts, and to subject writing to conditions of temporality and spatiality. I am proposing that performance is able to inform writing by connecting it with other activities and other experiences, and by offering strategies by which writing can resist and negotiate narrative discourses and thus ‘open up’ the notion of meaning.

In Part 2 I wish to attempt to bring the conditions of performance to bear upon my writing by subjecting it to a more specific duration. In adopting the format of a journal written over three days and structuring the topics discussed in order to emphasis their inflection toward the past, present and future, I hope to connect the processes of writing, performance and the nation by considering them in a context of simultaneity.

But how can I hope to explain myself here; and yet, in some dim, random way, explain myself I must, else all these chapters might be naught.53
PART 2

THREE DAYS IN THE LIFE OF AUSTRALIA

Performance constitutes an academic discipline which is simultaneously an informed practice and a critical methodology able to inform other practices. In this section I wish to examine the social facility of the specific practices we recognise as ‘performance’: activities such as auditioning, rehearsing, workshopping, scripting, choreographing, etc., in relation to the social category of ‘nation’ and the ways in which it is performed. My aim is to consider nation both as a process of changing spatial, temporal, physical and material relationships, and as a material set of practices. The path I wish to follow is by way of a detailed examination of the four parameters of performance discussed in Part One, that of space, time, bodies and other matter.

In 1981 a book was published in Australia entitled *A Day in the Life of Australia*, documenting an expansive photographic project, the depiction of a typical day in Australia. The blurb on the inside of the dustcover reads as follows:

This book is the result of one of the most unusual projects in photographic history. On March 6, 1981, one hundred of the world’s greatest photo-
journalists were given the most unique and challenging assignment of their careers - to capture an entire nation on film in the course of a single day.

Never has a whole nation been caught up in a piece of photojournalism like this and never has there been a logistic project as ambitious as this one. Organised by two young photographers, American Rick Smolan and Australian Andy Park (with seemingly half the country working for them), the project caught the imagination of people the world over. On the pages of this unusual diary you’ll wake up with camel hunters in the Northern Territory, visit with prisoners inside an Adelaide jail, see Ayers Rock from outer space, travel through aboriginal missions in Arnhem Land, and explore an entire community living underground at Coober Pedy. The book features 367 stunning photographs chosen from the 96,000 shot on March 6, and includes six special photo-essays exploring a day in the life of unusual Australians.

*A Day in the Life of Australia* is a slice of history - a moment frozen in time.¹

The photographers participating in this project begin their work from the position of a geographically given fact: that they are in Australia, the country, the continent. Australia the geographic entity becomes a reference and a guarantee for Australia the nation: it subsumes everything within its designated space as Australian. In this respect, the photographs are not open to contention. They are irrefutable.

The book includes a photograph of the form letter sent by Rick Smolan to each of the prospective participants, indicating the project’s objectives.

I’ve been organising a project in which I hope to bring 70 of the world’s best photographers to Australia in early March 1981, and combine them with 30 top Australian photographers. The basic idea is to distribute the 100 photographers all over Australia and give everyone the same 24-hour period to capture a typical Australian day on film ... The aim of this project is not to make THE definitive statement about Australia. The goal is to capture a slice of life on a typical day.²

The photographic assignments appear to have been allocated principally by
geographic location, by the prior identification of spaces perceived as having the potential to typify Australia as a nation. In some way, then, each of these spaces has already been spoken for. Each location carries the marks of its discovery and its naming, that is of its social production. It is assumed that an expression of the relationships between these locations is able to represent Australia, in a meaningful if not definitive way.

A challenge for the student or practitioner of performance, in response to this particular undertaking, is to perceive of photography as an activity which works with space, time, bodies and other matter, and to work with these relationships outside the geographically given space of Australia. In this way, a space (representative of Australia) can be socially produced through a specific relationship with time, bodies, matter and other spaces. Rather than work within a space which has already been named and designated, the material skills of theatre can be utilised to present temporary spaces, spaces contingent upon specific physical relations, spaces which have been marginalised or annexed, and spaces in the process of transformation. In the absence of the geographic given, the question of what constitutes ‘Australia’ is opened up. The relations between the locations, between the acts of taking photographs, and between the photographs published in the book, must be considered as political rather than ‘natural’, and the space produced by such relations as the result of specific strategies. The activities of photography are politicised by being performed, that is by their material and physical imagination and realisation in space and time.
The “Australia” produced by *A Day in the Life of Australia* constitutes a nation as a set of relationships between people, between people and spaces, people and times; relationships contingent upon the geographic boundaries of the Australian continent and the historical boundaries of March 6, 1981. However, the logistics and the actual physical work that went into the photographing of that “Australia”, as well as its presentation in book form, utilise a more complex set of relationships of people, spaces, times and other matter. A critical engagement with these relationships, one which attempts to imagine and realise the construction of the project’s spaces, times, bodies and objects constitutes in itself a written performing of *A Day in the Life of Australia*, and is able to demonstrate how a particular conception of the Australian nation is staged or performed. I propose to use the spatial structure of a personal journal and the time-frame of three days in attempting such an examination.

I am not attempting a textual analysis of the photographs in the book as performances of the Australian nation, but rather a consideration of the physical, material, temporal and spatial contexts which allow *A Day in the Life of Australia* (the book and the logistical undertaking) to perform a particular version of the Australian nation. I have chosen not to reproduce specific photographs I discuss in the course of this section, in order to avoid their enforced textual boundaries and their tendency to take on a referential status in marking the project. Inasmuch as such reproductions express the same temporal
and spatial slippage from the project as any written consideration of the project’s logistics, the editing of the book and the juxtaposing of the pictures, the anchoring of such an examination by documented reproductions of selected photographs affords them too much weight and authority in relation to the other elements of A Day in the Life of Australia. By utilising the spatial and temporal format of this journal, I wish to foreground the play of potential meanings available in assessing the project, and in turn to comment on the discursive perspectives offered by the activities of performance.
The First Day

Space:

The space in which we live, which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, our time and our history occurs, the space that claws and gnaws at us, is also, in itself, a heterogeneous space. In other words, we do not live in a kind of void, inside of which we could place individuals and things. We do not live inside a void that could be coloured with diverse shades of light, we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another.3

Michel Foucault theorises the nature of contemporary space as distinct from the dominant conception of space in medieval Europe, where the separation and ordering of spaces was more explicit.

[In the Middle Ages there was a hierarchic ensemble of spaces: sacred places and profane places; protected places and open, exposed places; urban places and rural places (all these concern the real life of men). In cosmological theory, there were the supercelestial spaces, as opposed to the celestial, and the celestial place was in its turn opposed to the terrestrial place. There were places where things had been put because they had been violently displaced, and then on the contrary places where things found their natural ground and stability. It was this complete hierarchy, this opposition, this intersection of places that constituted what could very roughly be called medieval space: the space of emplacement.4

Foucault notes that vestiges of medieval spatial conceptions, of an observance of the sacred, are still retained by contemporary space, in the perpetuation of a separation of public and private space, and work and leisure space, among other spatial oppositions.5 He also makes a distinction between the concepts of internal space, that is, the universal and metaphysical qualities of space, explored at length by Gaston Bachelard in The Poetics of Space, and external
space, the space we experience socially, which is the object of Foucault’s own studies.

Foucault argues that the separation and ordering of spaces in the Middle Ages has been replaced by a new understanding of space: as socially produced sites. Furthermore, the sets of relations which produce these sites include among them relations with what Foucault terms utopias and heterotopias, particular sites which subvert, resist or contradict the sites they are related to. Utopias are imagined sites, inverting or perfecting the social order of the site to which they are related, while heterotopias are realised sites, spaces which simultaneously address and challenge all other socially produced sites, while remaining outside and distinct from these sites.6

Foucault cites theatres, cinemas, hospitals, prisons, libraries, museums, cemeteries, brothels and fairgrounds amongst other sites as examples of heterotopias, and lists six principles for defining and analysing them:
(a) All societies produce heterotopias, though they vary in form and function. Foucault distinguishes between crisis heterotopias, such as boarding schools and honeymoon hotels, which facilitate certain rites of passage, and heterotopias of deviation, such as prisons and psychiatric hospitals.
(b) Heterotopias have a precise function at any one time but can be made to function differently by a society. Foucault cites the European concept of the cemetery as a heterotopia which has changed in terms of function over time.
While cemeteries once occupied a central position within towns and villages, and were recognised as hallowed ground, a more secular perspective of the cemetery emerged in the early nineteenth century, where cemeteries started to be built in suburban areas, away from city centres. Foucault asserts that accompanying this shift was a change in the perception of the concept of death itself: rather than as a communal, universal eventuality, death began to be understood as a condition of the individual and as an illness.7

(c) Heterotopias are able to juxtapose a number of incompatible sites within one realised space.

Thus it is that the theatre brings onto the rectangle of the stage, one after the other, a whole series of places that are foreign to one another; thus it is that the cinema is a very odd rectangular room, at the end of which, on a two-dimensional screen, one sees the projection of a three-dimensional space.8

(d) Heterotopias are temporally specific and function in response to a suspension or interruption of conventional time. Foucault distinguishes between heterotopias associated with the accumulation of time, such as museums and libraries, and those heterotopias which are absolutely temporal, such as fairgrounds.

(e) Heterotopias generally involve some form of cultural action, gesture or social agreement in order to be accessed. For example, rituals of purification or gestures of respect must be carried out before entering places of worship. Foucault also points out that heterotopias may enforce varying levels of access or exclusion.

(f) Heterotopias address all other spaces, and have either an illusory or
compensatory relation with these spaces. Heterotopias of illusion expose real sites as illusory, such as brothels, which facilitate and at the same time conceal illicit behaviour, while heterotopias of compensation seek to rearrange and perfect a perceived imperfect site, instanced by the function of colonies in relation to a metropolitan centre.

Foucault describes the boat or ship as the most potent of all heterotopias, inasmuch as it constitutes a discrete site and at the same time travels between and connects all other heterotopias.

Foucault’s conception of utopias and heterotopias as sites which are connected to all other sites runs parallel with Bakhtin’s notion of carnival as a time which recontextualises the dominant relations of society by bringing high and low culture into a direct relationship. Utopias and heterotopias bring into contact sites which are hitherto and otherwise ordered and separated. They provide a spatial context for questioning and resisting hierarchical relations between sites. The theatre or auditorium, for example, provides a space which is able to juxtapose sites which would otherwise appear incompatible or unconnected, not only, as Foucault states, on the rectangle of the stage, but also in the audience, in other areas of the auditorium, and in any formal or informal space utilised for performance.
The relationship between utopias and heterotopias is also of significance. Foucault describes utopias as “fundamentally unreal spaces”, and refers to his notion of heterotopia as “a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites which can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted”. Foucault’s act of defining and distinguishing these external, referential spaces can also be seen as an act of separation, that is an act of equating difference with meaning and with separation. However, this begs the question of temporal relationships: can distinct spaces, separate spaces be connected temporally? It would appear that a definitive characteristic of utopias is that they are always imagined: on being realised they become heterotopias. I am arguing that utopias and heterotopias are temporally connected, and that the process by which utopias become heterotopias is particularly important in approaching a definition of performance. In order to be effectively enacted, in order to be realised as heterotopias, utopian sites must be allowed to occupy space and time and must themselves be occupied physically by people and objects. At the same time they must maintain their connection with all other spaces to remain functional. Conversely, in order for heterotopic sites to be realised, they must first be imagined in response to a social need, that is imagined as utopias.

Where heterotopias change in function over time, they must first be re-imagined as utopias before being re-realised or re-enacted as heterotopias. The activities of imagining and realising can be seen to have a processual, dialogic
relationship. In times of emergency, such as war, a large town hall may be imagined as a hospital to meet the increased demand for medical assistance; in the event of mechanical failure, an airline pilot may imagine a sporting field as a potential landing strip; economic need may lead the proprietors of a concert venue or night club to imagine their establishment as a pool hall or other perhaps more cost-effective enterprise. Site-specific performance involves the imagining of any relevant external space as a stage or site of performance.

Foucault’s notion of external, heterogeneous space relates to space which is distinct from but connected to other spaces. It is these connections which are of primary concern to performers and to students of performance, these connections which are at once temporal, physical and material. These connections constitute a practice, a way of ‘making space’: a process of imagining and realising. When we read a script we imagine space as well as time, bodies and other matter. When we participate in a theatrical production, either as a member of the performing company or of the audience we imagine space by making spatial delineations, as well as temporal and physical delineations: we ‘stage’. At the same time we perform space by being open to its implications, by becoming connected with it, by realising that the space is connected to us, is relevant to us, is occupied by us, and as such is real/realised. The space becomes contextual and containing. However, we cannot perform without staging; we cannot realise without imagining. What is realised, in turn, can only enter a process of change or transformation by being re-imagined.
Imagining and realising can be seen as concrete, material activities, as acts of social production with direct relevance to the stage as heterotopia.

*A Day in the Life of Australia* attempts to produce a space which is Australian, even if not definitively Australian, a space produced by the relations between selected sites. In their choice and allocation these relations are imagined rather than realised, expressed in terms of a pictorial text. But in the very act of our recognition of these photographs as either credible or incredible, and our acceptance of these photographs as being “of Australia”, we simultaneously imagine an Australia constructed by these images and realise our own connections with them, connections which subsume us as part of ‘Australia’.

Many photographs of spaces which are identifiable as common heterotopic sites are presented in *A Day in the Life of Australia*: a school, a brothel, a prison, an airport, a public toilet, a youth centre, a hospital, a fairground and a church. Each of these spaces is presented as conveying a particular way of relating to space. In addition, a number of spaces are presented which could perhaps be seen as more characteristically ‘Australian’ but which still function as heterotopias: a beach, a pub, a bowling club and a war memorial. Among typical heterotopic sites not depicted in *A Day in the Life of Australia* are libraries, museums, and cemeteries, heterotopias associated with the accumulation of time, as well as cinemas and theatres.
Each of the more common heterotopic sites depicted in *A Day in the Life of Australia* is presented as an official space functioning in an informal manner. A photograph of a classroom shows children having fun while milking a cow, which one of the students has brought with him to school. A female proprietor, dressed only in a sarong, leans against the corrugated iron fence fronting her brothel, a cigarette holder in her hand. Inmates of a male prison are photographed in a number of informal poses, meditating, having coffee, displaying their tattoos and their relationships with other inmates. Accompanying the idea of informality presented in these photographs is one of mobility and improvisation. Photographs are presented showing a funeral service in a remote settlement near Meekatharra, Western Australia, conducted by a ‘Patrol Padre’, one of a number of priests travelling over millions of hectares to serve small, isolated communities; a flying doctor pulling the tooth of a station hand on a cattle station in north-west Queensland; and a series of shots of a district nurse working in the Numurkah region of Victoria. The formally designated heterotopias of the church, the doctor’s or dentist’s surgery, and the hospital or nursing home, can be seen to have highly mobile boundaries, their space and function being determined by a specific relationship of people at a specific time.

The theme of making do under harsh or at least rugged conditions is borne out not only in these photographs but in pictures depicting workers in a bakery, in an abattoir, in factories, on a market garden, and in shots of roof tilers, railway
workers, steel welders, stockmen and farmers toiling in the sun. While *A Day in the Life of Australia* includes many photographs of Aboriginal people, none of them show Aboriginal people engaged in recognisable work. A photograph taken at 9.45 a.m. shows Aboriginal children playing cricket in the inner-city suburb of Redfern. Whether they are in school or on a public street is not clear. A shot taken at the same time shows a champion Aboriginal boxer training in a gym in nearby Chippendale; the photograph next to it shows the boxer’s manager and two trainers, all non-Aboriginal, sitting in the same gym next to an Aboriginal referee, who is seated in a steam cabinet. The four men are presumably watching the boxer training. On the following page is a shot taken in Townsville in Queensland showing two Aboriginal men carrying blankets, staring, bleary-eyed, into the camera lens, with a high-rise building in the background. In the caption accompanying the picture they are described as part of a group of people living under the Victoria Bridge. A shot taken in Sydney at 10.30 a.m. in what appears to be an alley, shows an older Aboriginal man, seemingly dazed, shielding his eyes from the sun. The shot is taken with a wide-angle lens, making the man appear as if he is reeling back from the flash of the camera. A photograph on page 93, of students taking a yoga class at Yirara, an Aboriginal College, in Alice Springs in the Northern Territory, appears with the following caption:

Unemployment is a situation many aboriginals are familiar with, as an estimated 65 percent of the aboriginal workforce is unemployed nationwide. While most schools teach students with the idea that they will eventually join the workforce, Yirara must cope with the fact that most of its students will never have full time jobs.
In each of the above situations, Aboriginal people are photographed in public spaces, or in recognisable heterotopic spaces, engaged in activities distinctly different to either those expected within that space, or to what the majority of non-Aboriginal people are doing in that space. Such a relationship is reinforced by the juxtaposition of these pictures with those of other Australians engaged in recognisable work. Heterotopic sites can be seen here as marking social inequalities through the level of access people have to public spaces, through the nature of their activities within these spaces, and through the times at which these spaces are used.

On pages 12 and 13 a double-page shot of Sydney Opera House is presented, shot in silhouette from overhead in the first light of day, surrounded by Sydney Harbour. The shape of the building and its location make it unmistakable, one of Sydney’s and Australia’s best known landmarks. It constitutes an achievement in design and in architecture and engineering, as well as a space of cultural importance, providing a venue for musical, dramatic and operatic performances. The photograph can be seen as an establishing shot for *A Day in the Life of Australia* inasmuch as Sydney was used as a ‘home base’ for the arrival and departure of photographers, and for the allocation, collection and collation of assignments. The photograph was also taken by the project’s chief instigator and organiser Rick Smolan.

One of the very last photographs in the book is a double-page shot of the one
hundred photographers who participated in the project, posing on the steps of Sydney Opera House, cameras in hand. The picture is shot in even light with each photographer clearly discernible, and with the Opera House looming overhead in the background. It is appropriate that the shot is taken outside rather than inside the building, for it is the exterior of Sydney Opera House which is significant, that is, which is seen to be significant, in denoting ‘Australia’ and spatially authenticating the photograph and the project. *A Day in the Life of Australia* produces Sydney Opera House, and specifically its exterior image, as a space which connects the other photographs in the book, the work of the photographers in the picture. In a collection which finds no place for libraries, museums, galleries, cinemas or theatres, the shots of Sydney Opera House function in justifying the cultural value of the project, guaranteeing the authenticity of the photographs and the credibility of the photographers. As a heterotopic site, *A Day in the Life of Australia* presents Sydney Opera House as having a compensatory function, providing a formal cultural site which despite its unusual design constitutes a receptacle of classical Western culture amidst a rugged frontier.

Another site produced strategically in *A Day in the Life of Australia* is that of Uluru. A double-page shot of Uluru is presented directly after the first double-page shot of Sydney Opera House. This photograph presents an aerial view of Uluru at dawn, from a distance, presumably shot “from outer space”. The wide-angle lens of the camera used makes the horizon appear to curve around the
Rock. Contrasting with the silhouetted Opera House, Uluru is shown in even light, standing alone in a vast desert. Further into the book, on pages 52 and 53, another double-page shot is presented, this time taken at 9.30 a.m. The photograph shows a group of about thirty tourists sitting or standing on the Rock, waving to the camera. The fact that the majority of them are holding cameras connects the picture with that of the project’s photographers in front of Sydney Opera House. A caption accompanies the photograph:

Ayers Rock and, in the background, the Olgas have recently become major tourist attractions in central Australia. In 1981, the Rock was climbed by more than 250,000 people. In the face of such booming tourism, local aboriginal tribes continue their age-old ceremonies involving ‘Uluru’ (meaning ‘sacred and permanent’) in a small reserve at the northern end of the monolith. To them, Uluru symbolises oneness with nature and is the gravitational centre of the continent.

The effect of the photograph combined with the caption is to foreground the question of presence and absence. The people in the photograph provide evidence of growing tourism, but the Aboriginal people spoken of are absent from the picture. The language used in the caption connotes a certain vulnerability in the Aboriginal practices, set against the strength of tourism. The presence of the tourists, indicating the changing function of Uluru as a site, and the implied spatial marginalisation of the local Aboriginal people, are cast within an opposition of old and new, of ‘natural’ and ‘commercial’. Uluru is produced here as a site which connects Aboriginal people and tourists (and which possibly groups all non-Aboriginal or non-local people as tourists). As a heterotopic site, Uluru can be seen in this instance as a space which connects people by suspending conventional notions of time. Contradictions and
oppositions experienced in ordinary life are resolved in this space and in this
suspension of time. Uluru is presented as juxtaposing the apparently
contradictory activities of Aboriginal ceremonies and tourism.

Uluru appears again in four photographs on pages 104 and 105, taken at 2 p.m.,
accompanied by the following caption:

Famous in part for its changes in colour during the day, Uluru is nearly as
internationally well-known as the Sydney Opera House. Climbing 348
metres above the surrounding plain, it has been a major element in
aboriginal Dreamtime legends for thousands of years. Explorer Ernest
Giles dubbed it Ayers Rock in 1872, to honour the incumbent governor of
South Australia, Sir Henry Ayers.

Three of the four photographs shown on these two pages depict sections of
Uluru without people present. One of the shots shows four tourists climbing the
Rock along a path which has been marked and posted to enable climbing. The
presence of the explorers of the past are echoed in this shot. Immediately
preceding these four photographs is a double-page shot, taken in Arnhem Land
in the Northern Territory, of an Aboriginal family sitting inside a corrugated iron
shed on a blanket, with a small tent or suspended sheet in the background. In the
foreground a man sits with his gaze fixed beyond the camera, his right hand
resting on a small cassette player. Two women and two children sit behind him,
to the left of the photograph, their serious gazes fixed on the camera. The only
other possession visible in the shed is an old suitcase to the right of the man. The
scene connotes poverty and entrapment, the shed’s corrugated walls resembling
prison bars. The photograph offers a stark contrast with the four shots that
follow, but a connection can be drawn. The proximity of the photographs within
the book evokes a proximity between the Aboriginal family in Arnhem Land and
Uluru. What seems to be borne out by this is the notion of Uluru as standing for
Aboriginal people and practices, as implicitly connected to Aboriginal culture.
The posts drilled into the rock now take on a new significance: they resemble a
scar down the middle of Uluru.

Another shot of Uluru, a double-page shot this time merely labeled ‘Ayers
Rock’ appears on pages 180 and 181. The photograph is taken at 4.30 p.m., and
shows an aerial lateral view of Uluru, with a light aircraft, dwarfed in size when
compared to the rock, in the foreground. The aircraft appears as a small, white
shape against a black chasm in the face of the Rock, the rest of which appears a
brilliant red. It is as if Uluru has a dark centre, about to swallow the aircraft.
The photograph immediately following this is another double-page shot, taken in
northern Queensland, showing a close-up of the bare chest of an older
Aboriginal man, whose splayed hands on each side of his chest indicate the
ceremonial scars across his sternum. The scars in the centre of the man’s chest
echo the black chasm in the centre of Uluru in the previous shot, as well as the
photograph of tourists climbing the Rock on page 104, reinforcing the
connection between Uluru and Aboriginal people.

Yet another shot appears on page 232, also labeled ‘Ayers Rock’. This picture is
taken at 6 p.m. and shows a close-up shot of a section of a eucalyptus tree with
sparse foliage, its white, skeletal branches contrasting with the now mostly black edifice of Uluru in the background, the Rock’s surface suggested only by a flash of red in the top left hand corner of the photograph. On the page facing this picture is a shot of three young Aboriginal women, taken in Meekatharra in Western Australia. The photograph is taken from below, looking up at the three women, an ominous evening sky in the background. The women are standing on different levels of a raised mound of red rock. The absence of Aboriginal people in the photographs of Uluru is here compensated for by a juxtaposition with the picture of the three women on the rock in Meekatharra.

One of the very last photographs in the book, chronologically the last taken on the day of the project, is another double-page shot of Uluru, this time taken from the ground looking up at the Rock, which is now totally black. The photograph has been taken with the camera shutter open for a five-hour period, at the end of the day of the project, from midnight until 5 a.m. on March 7. The position of the stars in the sky, changing in relation to the earth’s revolution, is recorded as streaks of light forming arcs surrounding Uluru. Like the previous shots of the Rock, and reinforced by the accompanying captions, Uluru is presented as a ‘natural’ and ‘spiritual’ centre, joined both to sky and land, exerting a power over the rest of the continent and connecting and anchoring the other photographs in the book, a heterotopic site accumulating time. The movement from light to shadow depicted in the photographs of Uluru provides a corollary to the movement from shadow to light depicted in the two photographs of
Sydney Opera House, a relationship which *A Day in the Life of Australia* connects with that between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal culture in Australia.

The progression of photographs of Uluru, corresponding to the unfolding of one day, tends toward a narrativisation of the space depicted. Uluru moves from daylight and the presence of tourists toward darkness and the presence of Aboriginal people. The presence of tourists has been realised by their appearance in the earlier photographs, by their cameras and by their engaging in tourist activities. The presence of Aboriginal people at Uluru has been imagined, however, by a variety of devices. The choice and ordering of the photographs presented, the use of captions, the positioning of people and objects within the frame in relation to the Rock, and the juxtaposition of photographs of Uluru with pictures of other places have all contributed in imagining the presence of Aboriginal people at Uluru. Such imagining constitutes a spatial, temporal, physical and material set of practices.

The photographs of Uluru utilise the colours of the Rock in establishing a relationship between black and white, a symbolic opposition made subject to narrative. While the earlier photographs show Uluru in daylight with only tourists present, the later pictures show the areas of the Rock in shadow becoming larger, figuratively engulfing the tiny white aircraft and dwarfing the dying white tree, black overcoming white. The heterotopic site of Uluru is thus imagined as a utopia, a site inverting the relative political positions of
Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people as depicted in other photographs in *A Day in the Life of Australia*. Conversely these photographs also carry through the theme of Australians surviving in rugged and adverse conditions, constantly under threat from the ominous forces of nature.

Both Sydney Opera House and Uluru are presented as spaces which are referential and heterotopic, connected to each photograph in the book. They are also presented as open to transformation, indicated by the differences in photographs of each of the two sites. Sydney Opera House is connected to the other spaces in *A Day in the Life of Australia* by the work of the photographers pictured on the steps. The relations between Uluru and the other spaces are imagined quite differently. Only one photographer working on the project visited Uluru and photographed it: Uluru was one of a hundred assignments. However, *A Day in the Life of Australia* affords Uluru a place of prominence, using it to punctuate the process of the project, drawing upon its geographically central position within the Australian continent, its recognisability, and its status as a marker of the passage of the day through the changes in colour it undergoes in relation to the sky. Its regular appearance in the book helps to guarantee the ‘Australian-ness’ of the other photographs, bringing to mind their connection with the land, the continent. More specifically, the juxtaposition of Uluru with photographs of Aboriginal people taken in other parts of Australia presents the site as a geographical centre bringing together all Aboriginal people, and recontextualising their relationship with non-Aboriginal people. The progression
of photographs of Uluru in *A Day in the Life of Australia*, and their relationship with the other photographs in the book, demonstrates the processual connection between heterotopia and utopia. Realised and imagined spaces are connected by time, bodies and other matter.

Today I have utilised Foucault’s concept of heterotopias to examine how *A Day in the Life of Australia* is able to socially produce a specific space and a specific set of spatial relations, and to consider how distinct spaces can be connected. I have chosen to focus on Uluru and Sydney Opera House in doing this. Tomorrow I wish to look more closely at how a concept of ‘Australia’ as space is produced by the book, with reference to Henri Lefebvre’s work on the social production of space.

**Time:**

The novel, from the very beginning, developed as a genre that had at its core a new way of conceptualising time. The absolute past, tradition, hierarchical distance played no role in the formation of the novel as a genre ... From the very beginning the novel was structured not in the distanced image of the absolute past but in the zone of direct contact with inconclusive present-day reality. At its core lay personal experience and free creative imagination.11

Mikhail Bakhtin introduces his concept of the ‘chronotope’ as a way of examining the relationship of time and space in the literary genre of the novel, a relationship he perceives as historically determined and historically traceable. Bakhtin asserts that temporal and spatial relationships remain inseparable in any
literary art form, and that it is the political nature of this fusion, that is, of the chronotope, which defines the genre of the literary text. It is through the chronotope that time and space take on a material rather than an abstract existence. The chronotope works on the novel’s narrative elements and form, organising the narrative and giving it meaning.

Time becomes, in effect, palpable and visible; the chronotope makes narrative events concrete, makes them take on flesh, causes blood to flow in their veins. An event can be communicated, it becomes information, one can give precise data on the place and time of its occurrence ... [T]he chronotope, functioning as the primary means for materialising time in space, emerges as a centre for concretising representation, as a force giving body to the entire novel.12

Bakhtin identifies and considers three principal types of chronotope corresponding to three ‘ancient’ forms of narrative writing: the Greek romance or adventure novel of ordeal, the adventure novel of everyday life, and the ancient biography or autobiography. According to Bakhtin, the Greek romance, exemplified by the Aethiopica of Heliodorus and Longus’ Daphnis and Chloe, operates within the bounds of ‘adventure-time’, in the gap between two biographical moments in the life of the central characters. Adventure-time changes neither these characters nor the world in which they live: it is a hiatus which leaves no trace, existing between the first meeting of the central characters, the lovers, and their subsequent marriage. The potential for change or for growth is absent: identities are affirmed as fixed and static. In the Greek romance chance orders and structures events: characters are subject to chance occurrences, and act accordingly. They meet, or fail to meet, by chance. Fortune and misfortune befall them by chance. The lack of any trace of change in the
lives of the characters removes them and their adventures from ‘real’ time, from biographical time. One implication of this removal is that any number of adventures can be joined together and added to the romance. Adventure-time allows for the infinite accumulation and permutation of events: they can be re-ordered temporally and also spatially. A place in itself becomes less significant than its distance from or proximity to another place.

The adventure chronotope is thus characterised by a technical, abstract connection between space and time, by the reversibility of moments in a temporal sequence, and by their interchangeability in space.¹³

In order for chance to function within this chronotope, it is necessary to limit the specificity and concreteness of time, space, and both living and inanimate entities in the romance. All spaces are equally unfamiliar, their inhabitants equally alien, resisting comparison to any element in the world of the reader. Bakhtin argues that such comparisons or acts of recognition would impose varying degrees of determination on the narrative, as well as an ordering and connecting of events. In order for events to remain interchangeable and reversible in time, their descriptions are characterised by isolation and disconnectedness. Such isolation removes the significance of any single space, time, entity or occurrence. Relationships of difference are occluded in favour of homogeneous relations between narrative components, between events.

In general, the homogenisation of all that is heterogeneous in a Greek romance (in the history of its origins as well as in its essence as genre), a homogenisation that results in a huge, almost encyclopaedic genre, is achieved only at the cost of the most extreme abstraction, schematisation and a denuding of all that is concrete and merely local. The chronotope of the Greek romance is the most abstract of all novelistic chronotopes.¹⁴
The adventure novel of everyday life, exemplified by the *Satyricon* of Petronius and by Apuleius’ *The Golden Ass*, is seen by Bakhtin as being concerned principally with transformation and identity: the metamorphosis of an individual is recounted through the presentation of a series of crises. Time transforms, leaves a mark on the individual, whose personality becomes a stronger determining force than chance in shaping the events of the novel. The adventure novel of everyday life also leaves a spatial trace, the central character’s ‘path of life’ corresponding to a traceable spatial journey. Space is understood as concrete and integral, as are social events, and this allows for the representation of ‘everyday life’, even though the principal character and events lie outside such life. In this chronotope, the temporal sequence remains separate from historical time, an isolated series of events in which the individual is transformed while the world remains unchanged. Novelistic time also remains distinct from the cyclical, pastoral, mythological nature of everyday time. In the adventure novel of everyday life, such life is characterised by violence, obscenity and infidelity.

In this everyday maelstrom of personal life, time is deprived of its unity and wholeness - it is chopped up into separate segments, each encompassing a single episode from everyday life.15

Bakhtin identifies a third category of ancient novelistic writing under the rubric of ancient biography and autobiography, making the distinction between Platonic and rhetorical biography/autobiography. The Platonic form, exemplified by Socrates’ *Apology* and Plato’s *Phaedo*, seeks to measure or map out an individual’s life as a path leading to ‘true knowledge’. Such a path
involves a central, referential time of metamorphosis, a time which contextualises biographical time in the work. The rhetorical form is based on the structure of the encomium, the funeral speech, in which a deceased person’s life is made public and praised verbally. The form involves the proposition of an ideal life-type, and then the fusing of that set of deeds and attributes with the figure of the deceased. The rhetorical form also assumes the conditions of the public square: the encomium is a verbal presentation in which all aspects of a person’s life are treated as public, and can be seen and heard.

Bakhtin argues that notions of a person’s wholeness and unity in ancient Greece were public in nature. The chronotope of the public square allows only for what appears to be so: the individual is all surface, possessing an externalised wholeness, but one which is only realised in relation to and in the presence of “one’s own people”. The notion of ‘self’ thus generated offers no distinction between biographical and autobiographical approaches to life. The model of the encomium, then, was valid for both the praising of a colleague and for the glorification of oneself, an acceptable practice inasmuch as the notion of a private and personal consciousness had no social existence. Bakhtin cites the Apologia of the orator Isocrates as the first recognisable example of an autobiographical form. Isocrates presents his life as an idealised ‘type’ for the education of his fellow citizens, disclosing all details of his life without the reservation of anything personal or private. Domestic, professional, philosophical and political details are all presented as connected and as
homogeneous elements, the sum of which constitutes the whole image of the individual.

While the ancient Greek forms of biography and autobiography were addressed to those present (in time and space) in the public square, ancient Roman autobiography was directed toward the connecting of a family group with both its ancestors and its future descendants, through the recording of family links and family traditions in an archive. However, such writing still presented all details, intimate or otherwise as public. The lives of ancestors were presented in an idealised, pedagogical form, running parallel with national ideals, fusing the history of the family with that of the nation. Roman autobiography also emphasised the determining role of the prodigia, the various omens, auguries and divinations besought at crucial times. The fortune or misfortune prophesied for the state is inexorably tied in with the fate of the state’s leaders, and such a notion of fortune involved resourcefulness, creativity, hard work, bravery and intuition: a constructive, public notion. However, both Roman and Greek biography/autobiography can be seen as presenting a distinctly public notion of self-consciousness.

Bakhtin argues that in all the ancient chronotopes he describes, a form of temporal inversion occurs, whereby the past and the present are enhanced by, and at the expense of, the future. What is strived for, what is hoped for, what is imagined, is written as having existed in an idealised past or as an ancient truth.
The force and persuasiveness of reality, of real life, belong to the present and the past alone - to the “is” and the “was” - and to the future belongs a reality of a different sort, one that is more ephemeral, a reality that when placed in the future is deprived of that materiality and density, that real-life weightiness that is essential to the “is” and “was”.17

Bakhtin identifies this type of inversion as a strategy of official recorded history. The past is portrayed as real and ‘fleshed out’, and at the same time eternal and outside of time, that is, outside a traceable temporal sequence connecting it with the present and the future. Temporal links between the past and the present are erased, forgotten, and separated from spatial connections, which are re-presented as natural, ideal, resolved connections: the past as presence, the future as absence.

There is a greater readiness to build a superstructure for reality (the present) along a vertical axis of upper and lower than to move forward along the horizontal axis of time. Should these vertical structurings turn out as well to be other-worldly, idealistic, eternal, outside time, then this extratemporal and eternal quality is perceived as something simultaneous with a given moment in the present; it is something contemporaneous, and that which already exists is perceived as better than the future (which does not yet exist and which never did exist).18

Bakhtin asserts that the later literary form of the chivalric romance displays a temporal scheme which bears some similarity to that of the Greek romance, consisting of a number of separate adventure sequences/fragments, in which time and space are organised in an abstract manner, and in which chance is a dominant element, but which in displaying certain differences is able to offer some resistance to the notion of temporal inversion. While the Greek romance describes an ‘adventure-time’ existing as an hiatus in the lives of the protagonists, one which leaves no trace, the chivalric romance offers no such
exterior, ‘ordinary’ life to come from or to return to. For the chivalric romance and its principal characters, the normal conditions of the world are those of miraculous chance.

The whole world becomes miraculous, so the miraculous becomes ordinary without ceasing at the same time to be miraculous. Even “unexpectedness” itself – since it is always with us – ceases to be something unexpected. The unexpected, and only the unexpected, is what is expected. The entire world is subject to “suddenly”, to the category of miraculous and unexpected chance.19

The heroic deed is another definitive feature of the chivalric romance. Such deeds are carried out either for the hero’s own glory or for that of the hero’s monarch, or feudal liege. Chivalric heroes are made individual, distinct from each other: they belong to tradition rather than to the work of an individual author, and thus appear as heroes of novel cycles. The world of the chivalric hero is an homogeneous one, in which all places are equally ‘other’: geographic borders are not encumbered by cultural borders, and all places are equally conducive to the performing of heroic deeds. Within the chivalric romance, the notion of time starts to take on a miraculous quality. Time becomes distorted, expanded or compressed in accordance with the emotional nature of the events narrated; a subjective playing with time in direct contrast to the technical, abstract functioning of time in the Greek romance.

Bakhtin sees the chivalric romance as providing the chronotopic structure for the type of encyclopaedic writing which emerged in Europe toward the end of the Middle Ages. He cites as examples Dante’s *The Divine Comedy*, Guillaume de
Lorris’ *Roman de la Rose*, and William Langland’s *The Vision of Piers Plowman*. These works attempt to expose a thorough and comprehensive vision of the medieval world in its ‘contradictory multiplicity’, assuming a simultaneity of spaces and of events perceived within a single time.

Only under conditions of pure simultaneity - or, what amounts to the same thing, in an environment outside time altogether - can there be revealed the true meaning of “that which was, and which is and which shall be”: and this is so because the force (time) that had divided these three is deprived of its authentic reality and its power to shape thinking.20

Bakhtin suggests that this type of encyclopaedic writing provides examples of a subjective playing with time, which in turn provides possibilities for representing the ‘fullness of time’, that is a sense of time which allows for things to occur and for change to take place in the future. Such forms produce tension in their relationship with official history, with the type of commentary which orders specific configurations of space and time, and which imposes a temporal inversion of events narrated so that an idealised, referential past is privileged. The time scheme produced by simultaneity is foregrounded in Benedict Anderson’s account of the emergence of the modern nation, which was discussed in Part 1. Anderson sees its significance lying in the fact that simultaneity provides a way of connecting and representing people who are not in face to face contact with each other. The omniscient perspectives of the reader and the writer connect the activities of such characters, and in a similar way are able to imagine themselves as connected to people they in fact have never met, in terms of a shared culture or a shared past or future.
Aligned with this notion of re-forming time and history is that of the exteriority, or public nature, of the individual figure in narrative. Bakhtin identifies the chronotope of the rogue, clown and fool as instrumental in emphasising this public nature by connecting individual characters with the temporal and spatial conditions of the public square, and by employing parodic laughter. The figures of the rogue, clown and fool exceed the boundaries of a purely ‘literal’ meaning within a text: they bring with them a figurative, allegorical level of meaning, inasmuch as they are masked figures, their reality bounded by their role, a parodic reflection of another’s mode of being. Because these figures, especially those of the clown and the fool, are traditional, folkloric figures, they bring to literature another mode of existence (these figures retain an existence ‘outside’ that of everyday life), but one which is neither idealised nor referential. The clown and the fool mock the lives of individuals publicly, they employ a bluntness in their public treatment of spheres of life considered private, and as narrators display a belligerent failure to understand (or at least a conviction to persistently misunderstand) the actions and intentions of those they observe, calling upon readers to reserve their own judgement. The clown and the fool bring with them a time which expands horizontally, in a similar way to the time of theatre, that is a time which stands apart from the perceived time of everyday life, but which nonetheless remains external and public.

Bakhtin sees the chronotopes of the chivalric romance (that is, of miraculous chance), the encyclopaedic work of fiction and the rogue, clown and fool as
making possible the development of the recognisable genre of the novel in the
Renaissance, exemplified by Rabelais’ *Gargantua and Pantagruel*.

Novels of this kind paved the way for a restoration of the spatial and
temporal material wholeness of the world on a new, more profound and
more complex level of development. They paved the way for the novel’s
appropriation of that world, a world in which simultaneously America was
being discovered, a sea route to India was being opened up, new fields in
natural science and mathematics were being established. And the way was
prepared for an utterly new way of seeing and of portraying time in the
novel.21

The Rabelaisian notion of carnival is seen by Bakhtin as providing a site which
directly associates gluttonous eating and drinking, death, copulation, birth and
laughter in an external, public manner. In doing so, Rabelais is able to parody
official, religious connections between objects and ideas, and official
hierarchies. The division between body and soul is rejected by Rabelais, along
with the transcendental world of the soul. In its place is posited a new image of a
‘whole’ person, defined in terms of temporal, spatial and physical dimensions.

But at a certain time when a great bear which his father kept escaped and
came to lick his face - for his nurses had not properly wiped his mouth - he
freed himself from those cables as easily as did Samson from the Philistines
and, seizing Master Bear, tore him to pieces like a chicken. He made a nice
tit-bit of him for that meal. Whereupon, for fear that he might hurt himself,
Gargantua had four great iron chains made to bind him, and buttresses
firmly fixed to his cradle. Of these chains you have one at La Rochelle,
which is drawn up at night between the two great towers of the harbour;
another is at Lyons; another at Angers, and the fourth was carried off by
the devils to bind Lucifer, who was breaking loose at the time because of a
colic that tormented him horribly, as a result of his eating the fricassee
doal of a sergeant for his breakfast.22

Rabelaisian time is exclusively collective time, a time of collective, productive
growth, in terms of both quantity and quality. Death is seen as collective: what
dies is considered in terms of sowing, as part of the process of renewal. It is a
time produced by collective labour and measured by the phases of agricultural work, phases perceived as synchronous with those of nature. Consumption and labour are not separated: all activity is seen in terms of sowing, harvesting and propagating. All times and all aspects of life are linked by communal labour. Rabelaisian time is concrete and unified, tending toward cyclical repetition, and resisting the divisions and order of a time scheme based on the categories of past, present and future.

“You would be very much surprised to learn,” said Pantagruel, “that the good Pope who instituted Holy Lent especially prescribed these [aphrodisiacal] foods to encourage the multiplication of the human race. For he knew that to be the season when the natural heat proceeds from the interior of the body, in which it has lain throughout the winter cold, and diffuses itself about the surface of the limbs, as the sap does in trees. What convinces me of this is that in the baptismal register of Thouars the number of children is greater in October and November than in the other ten months of the year; and so by retrospective computation we find that they must all have been made, conceived, and engendered in Lent.” 23

For Bakhtin, Rabelais represents the closest connection between European literature and European folklore. Gargantua and Pantagruel brings together discourses relating to the human body, clothing, food, drink, sexual behaviour, death and defecation; each discourse displaying its own specific logic. These referential aspects of social life are seen to be unfolding in parallel to each other, and at times intersecting. What is notable about each of these different aspects is their concrete connection with each other, connections which Bakhtin sees as disappearing in later forms of the novel. The separation of these aspects severs the novel from its historical connection with folkloric life, and effects a sublimation of each aspect. Communal life and unified time are undermined by notions of personal time and space.
From the Renaissance onward, time in Europe was steadily losing its repetitious and cyclical character and becoming more and more directional. The image of time as swinging pendulum or as circular orbit ceded to the image of time as arrow. Space and time have gained subjectivity by being oriented to [people]. Of course space and time have always been structured to conform with individual human feelings and needs; but in Europe this fact rose closer to the surface of consciousness at a certain period of its history and found expression in art. Photography in the last hundred years has strengthened and popularised the perspectival vision. Anyone with a simple box camera can now produce an image that melds time into space.24

*A Day in the Life of Australia* presents a very definite sense of a time scheme and of temporal boundaries. The book’s title and the marking of the time throughout emphasises the passage of the twenty-four hours constituting March 6, 1981. A day is seen as a ‘natural’ measure of time, reinforced by the first and last shots of Uluru presented in the book, which emphasise the cyclical character of the day. Time is used here in order to describe a given space, or a relationship between spaces. Australia is presented as a nation through the invocation of a unified sense of time. While *A Day in the Life of Australia* foregrounds photographs rather than writing in establishing a concrete, material relationship between time and space, the relationship can still be seen as a political one, and the concept of the chronotope can prove useful in examining how particular temporal strategies can be utilised in presenting a particular ‘picture’ of Australia. Such strategies are present in the conceiving and planning of the project, in the delegation of its constituent parts (or assignments), in the establishment of scenes to be photographed, in the employment of specific photographic techniques, and in the editing and layout of the published photographs.
The chronotope of the encyclopaedic work of fiction is discernible in the way that *A Day in the Life of Australia* attempts to present photographs in a relationship of simultaneity, juxtaposing pictures taken at the same time in different places. Photographs taken early in the morning show a family having breakfast, a baby being bathed by her mother, children waiting to catch a train to school, and a number of shops opening for business. Such simultaneity is emphasised in a series of shots taken at 10.30 a.m. showing various Australians taking their morning tea break. Photographs taken at midday contrast a Hare Krishna farm in Murwillumbah, New South Wales, a Benedictine Mission in New Norcia, Western Australia, a funeral for a stockman in Meekatharra, Western Australia, and a Tiwi man preparing to dance in a ceremony of remembrance on Bathurst Island. The juxtaposition of these photographs conveys a sense of exteriority to each of them. Domestic, cloistered, personal and culturally specific spaces and situations are made as public in nature as shops and public transport, brought together by the sharing of a common point in time. The gradual unfolding of the day presented in *A Day in the Life of Australia* brings with it an expectation of time continuing, an anticipation of what comes next.

Many aspects of the chronotope of the chivalric romance emerge through the course of *A Day in the Life of Australia*. While the relationship between time and space presented in the book would appear to be far from abstract, the day itself bears no significant relationship with the geographical space of Australia.
Many of the photographs presented emphasise their chance, candid qualities, asserting a sense of discovery and of serendipity. This is often established by the accompanying captions rather than by the actual photographs. A picture on page 23 shows two men fishing from a boat in a dam. The caption states that the photographer was surprised to discover these two men fishing before going to work. The caption accompanying a photograph of two women and a man dressed in minimal beachwear shopping in a department store on page 81 notes the reaction of the Chinese photographer responsible for the picture. A photograph of a surfboard in a telephone booth on page 80 is presented similarly. The very last photograph taken on the actual day of the project, a portrait of a young man, is presented on page 273 along with the following caption:

> A few minutes before midnight American photographer Greg Heisler decided to finish his day of shooting with a drink at a makeshift canteen in Yandicoogina. Since dawn he had shot nearly 40 rolls of film on his assignment in the Pilbara area of Western Australia. As he put his camera gear down he looked around the small room. In the corner was a noisy old refrigerator, a pool table, and a tattered movie screen hanging from the ceiling. Roger Gardiner, a young rover with a drilling team, headed towards the lights of the canteen. To get a beer and some conversation he’d just driven 200 km.

> “I’ve been on the road since I was 16, working my way around the country. I’ve been a storeman, factory hand, worked on a film crew, and played keyboards in a rock band. I like to move alone. It leaves me free to get into what I want. Right now I’m putting up with flies, heat, isolation and hard work to get some bread together.”

> Greg had thought his day of shooting was over until Roger walked through the door. The clock read five to twelve. Heisler dragged down the old movie screen, set up his lights and photographed Roger at exactly midnight.

A sense of the photographer as hero or adventurer is conveyed through references to difficulties and hardships encountered, distances travelled both to
get to Australia and within Australia, and by the inclusion of a reference map on pages 276-277 showing the assignment locations of each of the participating photographers, a map which connects the photographers with the tradition of European explorers in Australia. *A Day in the Life of Australia* becomes the cause in whose name all endeavours are undertaken. The restrictions of time as well as the call for patience and endurance on the part of the photographers in their individual quests enhances the notion of heroic deeds. There is a dedication on page 1 to Olivier Rebbot, a French photographer killed whilst on assignment in El Salvador, who had been invited to participate in the project. An afterword in the book pays tribute to the immense undertaking of *A Day in the Life of Australia*, the enthusiasm and cooperation of the photographers, and the vision of the organisers Smolan and Park.

A sense of time being distorted is conveyed in a series of photographs taken in Adelaide Gaol, a men’s prison in South Australia, on pages 42-49. The photographs are black and white, a contrast from the colour photographs preceding the series, and emphasise the age of the institution. The first shot is a double-page spread of warders opening up cells in the morning and prisoners emerging with waste buckets. The lights and railings on the walls form lines of perspective which disappear beyond the viewer, giving a sense of the viewer being inside the prison.

Some of the comments of the photographer assigned to the gaol are included in a
I had a chance to speak with a number of the prisoners, many of whom asked me to photograph them. There were two basic complaints. The first was that the prison (built in 1839) was antiquated - they use buckets instead of toilets. To be locked inside a cell with that for 14 hours every night is inhuman - the cells are tiny little holes ... The prisoners’ other major complaint was the snail’s pace of the judicial system. The prisoners awaiting trial just never know when they are going to get to court. They sit there in those little holes waiting and waiting.

The last photograph in the series is a double-page shot of a prisoner standing in his cell, his back to the camera, staring up at a small window. The walls of the cell are bare, and only a bed is visible. The prisoner’s head is shaved; he is shirtless, and a large tattoo of a tiger’s head is visible on his back. The photograph immediately following this is one of a group of High Court judges taken in Canberra. The judges are dressed in their judicial robes and wigs, and appear to be deliberately posed in a tableau of jovial conversations. Books lie on a table in the foreground and a framed portrait hangs in the background. The photograph recalls Dutch seventeenth century paintings of institutional benefactors. Like the Adelaide gaol series, it is shot in grainy black and white. The film stock combined with the apparent age of the judges photographed and their apparel connotes a sense of antiquity, removed from the ‘reality’ of the present.

The effect of the placement of this photograph immediately after the shot of the prisoner in his cell is to connect the two: the High Court judges’ room appears to be on the other side of the window in the cell. The prisoner looks up at the window, waiting. The shot of the judges is taken from a low angle, as if the
judges are looking down at the viewer. The connotation is that, removed from
the present, the judges enjoy a position of power, and are in no hurry to
pronounce sentence: the prisoner is suspended in time and in space. The
photographs are connected spatially, while being severed temporally.

*A Day in the Life of Australia* brings a sense of the chivalric romance to bear
upon the geographic space, and upon the people, of Australia. By ‘opening up’ a
particular temporal conception of Australia, a contingent world is established in
which all available spaces and people are conducive to being ‘discovered’ by the
photographers and by *A Day in the Life of Australia*, conducive to being made
new or marvellous. The entire world is subject to “suddenly”, to the category of
miraculous and unexpected chance. The embarking of the photographers on the
project, each to designated destinations previously unknown (to varying extents)
to them, spatially and physically helps to reinforce a sense of time which allows
for ‘newness’, free from the determination of official or local history. This sense
of ‘discovery time’ is facilitated by the fact that the majority of the
photographers are not from Australia. As each designated destination constitutes
one of a hundred assignments, the spaces become homogeneous, free from
cultural borders.

An epilogue, entitled ‘DITLA Revisited’, questions the idea of *A Day in the Life
of Australia* as chivalric romance, however, inasmuch as it suggests an ‘outside’
time and space. In its discussion of the project it details what a number of the
participating photographers did after completing the project, heading off to assignments around the world. Evidence is thus presented for an ‘exterior world’ into which the photographers can return or ‘escape’. While the photographs place the photographer and the viewer ‘within Australia’, the epilogue tends to counteract this effect by moving beyond the temporal boundaries of the day of the project. It can be argued that in the epilogue *A Day in the Life of Australia* shifts into Bakhtin’s conception of adventure-time, thus separating its representation of Australia from a direct connection with the future and ‘freezing’ it in time, that is the time of the past or the time of official, recorded history. What is lost is the project’s resistance to temporal inversion, the past being portrayed as presence and the future as absence.

However, it is also suggested in the epilogue that traces of the project endure and that the lives of at least some of the photographers were changed by the experience. On page 282, an account is given of how the American photographer Greg Heisler met an Australian physiotherapist, Prue Taubert, in Perth directly after the project, and of their marriage in Sydney ten days later.

They posed for wedding portraits on the steps of the Opera House where three weeks earlier Heisler had taken a picture of the 100 photographers. The romance between Heisler and Taubert was one of many indications that DITLA was more than just a convention for world-weary photographers or two ambitious photographers’ scheme to promote Australia. Long before this book went to press - even before the film started coming back from the laboratory - everyone associated with DITLA knew that they had taken part in something strange and wonderful.

The notion of collective time characterising the carnival chronotope is evidenced in groups of photographs showing people working, eating, drinking, courting...
and playing. Photographs depicting each activity tend to be shown together, indicating their simultaneity. Two photographs of newborn babies on pages 202-203 are accompanied by a caption reading: “610 births were recorded on Friday March 6”. People are shown engaged in commercial fishing, vegetable and fruit picking, roof tiling, and working in bakeries, abattoirs, hospitals, factories, foundries, woollen mills, and on cattle and sheep stations. The photographs cumulatively build up a picture of Australians working collectively, connected by time and geographic space. This simultaneity of labour is emphasised in a specific exercise undertaken by all the photographers participating in the project. Each of them was asked to take a photograph of a small business proprietor outside their establishment at precisely 9 a.m. A selection of these photographs, on pages 32-37, include shots of a milk bar, Vietnamese grocer’s store, florist, butcher and brothel. The photographs work to imagine a nation starting work together, sharing time and labour.

The notions of agriculture as reference and a connection with the land are introduced in the first photograph in the book, on pages 2 and 3. It shows a married couple from Natimuk in Victoria standing in their fallow wheat fields at 5.45 a.m. in the morning. The first traces of light are just emerging. The photograph shows a wide expanse of land with nothing discernible except two people who work the land. The vast, empty fields wait to be planted, wait to become fruitful. Symbolic of the project itself, the field lies designated but not described, waiting to show signs of life. A photograph taken at 9.30 a.m., on
Three Days in the Life of Australia

page 38, shows fields along the Murray River near Mildura in Victoria being irrigated by giant sprinklers. On page 40 a dairy farmer is shown herding his cows into a new field in Korumburra in south-eastern Victoria. Shots taken at 2.30 p.m., on pages 118-123, depict sheep being rounded up in Cowra, New South Wales, cattle being mustered in Longreach, Queensland, a livestock auction in Ballarat, Victoria, and a country show in Tara, Queensland. A photograph taken at sunset shows a stockman mustering sheep on Carisbrooke Station in rural Queensland.

Rural life is strongly emphasised in *A Day in the Life of Australia*, perhaps at the expense of life in metropolitan areas. Such an emphasis brings with it a sense of time as determining what work has to be done. The day chosen for the project was a Friday, and it could be argued that had it been undertaken on a weekend, a different sense of time may have been conveyed, one less bound by the notion of collective labour. The sense of the day’s work coming to an end is conveyed by a series of photographs on pages 170-177, all taken at 4.30 p.m. depicting people in pubs. A double-page shot on pages 170-171 shows the front of the Australian Hotel in Cowra, New South Wales, with a number of its patrons posing outside for the photograph. The name of the pub, the Federation-style architecture, the identifiably Australian cars parked outside and the casual dress and demeanour of the patrons tends to allow this pub to take on a metaphoric quality: the Australian Hotel stands for all Australian pubs. The pictures on the next two pages, showing the interiors of pubs in Normanton and Miles in Queensland, are
consistent with the shot of the Australian Hotel: they could easily be taken as interiors of that pub.

However, photographs on the next two pages question assumptions of harmony and notions of collectivity. A large photograph of a group of white men, very casually dressed, sitting outside the front of a small pub in Berrimah, a suburb of Darwin in the Northern Territory, is juxta posed with a smaller picture of five Aboriginal men and a women, seated on or near a storage drum in roadside scrub. The white men are drinking cans and stubbies of beer; some of them are smoking. Bottles of port and sherry and a can of Coca Cola stand in front of the group of Aboriginal people. The accompanying caption indicates that the two groups are facing each other across a road. Part of the caption, on page 174, reads as follows:

Many pubs in northern Australia segregate black and white customers. The whites buy their liquor at the front of the pub, while the blacks are served through a window at the back called a ‘dog-box’.

Some of the white men in the larger photograph are facing the camera, staring either directly at it or past it. The viewer can now surmise who they are looking at. The relative size of this photograph, the number of men in the photograph, and their relative proximity to the camera, combines with the caption to convey a sense of intimidation. One of the men in the smaller photograph, taken from the side of the group, is pointing toward or across the road. Again, the viewer can guess who he is pointing at. Together the photos work to convey a sense of
trouble brewing. A time of supposed collective relaxation is questioned by evidence of exclusion and segregation. The photograph following, on pages 176-177, shows an Aboriginal stockman leading his horse away from the Birdsville Hotel in Queensland. An interior shot of the same pub, on page 179, shows a group of three men and two women drinking at the bar - they are all white.

A Day in the Life of Australia presents the pub as a space connected to a time - after work. However, it presents ‘pub time’ not as a time which brings together people and workplaces but as a time which perpetuates social and cultural divisions. The ‘rural’ feel of each of the photographs of pub scenes works to set the scenes back in time - a sense of preserving the past is conveyed rather than one of looking to the future.

The consideration of A Day in the Life of Australia as carnival is problematised by the relatively arbitrary choice of the day of the project. While a Friday was chosen to provide a link between the week and the weekend, March 6, 1981 was nonetheless a working day for the people of Australia, without any particular popular or national significance. Typicality is seen as more important than a sense of liberation: the time of the project is a representative time rather than a break with ordinary time. However, for the photographers the day in question is of considerable significance, representing a break in their normal routine, and, for most of them, a visit to a new place. While they are still engaged in photography, the project gives them an experience of working collectively. The
notions of liberation, laughter and physicality, though, are concealed in the project to the extent that the photographs ‘hide’ the photographer - only evidence of the photographer’s ‘deeds’ is on display.

While the chronotope of the chivalric romance, facilitated by the foregrounding of the photographers as chivalric heroes working in the name of a common cause, appears to be the most salient way in which time and space are connected in *A Day in the Life of Australia*, aspects of the encyclopaedic work of fiction, the chronotope of the carnival, and even ‘adventure-time’ are discernible in the way the photographs are juxtaposed, ordered and captioned. Bakhtin traces each of the chronotopes he identifies to a historical precedent, but presents them as discrete narrative structures. However, in *A Day in the Life of Australia* these chronotopes are connected temporally, working together to present the day of the project, the work of the photographers, the chosen pictures and the people and places thus represented, as Australian.

*A Day in the Life of Australia* utilises a particular time, one measured in hours and defined historically in the process of imagining and realising specific relationships between people and spaces. Connecting the people and spaces photographed to this specifically defined time, and containing them within these temporal boundaries, allows them to take on a ‘reality’ which then becomes representative of Australia. The emphasis on the photographers and their ‘adventures’ tends to afford them a subjectivity which in turn treats the spaces
and people of Australia as ‘strange’, as ‘foreign’. As a narrative practice ‘a day’ provides a temporal break in the lives of the photographers rather than in the lives of Australians. A metonymic notion of time thus produces a metaphoric notion of people and space. The photographs, representations of ‘Australia’, the country and the nation, become timeless, a guarantee to all future visitors, to all future ‘adventurers’.

Today I have considered Bakhtin’s concept of the chronotope, and specific examples of chronotopes, in order to examine how representations of time and space are notionally fused in order to provide a culturally ‘conventional’ and credible account of a social group, such as a nation, and in order to legitimate particular accounts of history. Tomorrow I wish to examine how official accounts of history can be challenged and interrogated by way of a consideration of Homi Bhabha’s concept of the ‘time-lag’.

Bodies:

It was important to demonstrate the whole remarkable complexity and depth of the human body and its life, to uncover a new meaning, a new place for human corporeality in the real spatial-temporal world. In the process of accommodating this concrete human corporeality, the entire remaining world also takes on new meaning and concrete reality, a new materiality, it enters into a contact with human beings that is no longer symbolic but material.25

Physical relations exist between our bodies and spaces, between our bodies and times, between our bodies and other matter, between our bodies and other
bodies. Our bodies are socially and culturally produced by words, languages and discourses, made object, made text, made ‘real’. Unlike the categories of space and time, the category of ‘bodies’ is always in danger of being assumed as a set of fixed entities, fixed by anatomy and physiology, fixed by sex and species, fixed by culture, race, and gender. The perceived boundaries of bodies, their delineations, limitations and surfaces encourage a conception of bodies as ‘natural’ forms, clothed in layers of cultural inscriptions and discursive categorisations. What is obscured is a notion of bodily subjectivity, of physical responses, of bodies occupying time and space, of bodies as contextualising forces for understanding ideas and objects.

The notion of bodies as sites imbued with meaning, as texts open to linguistic reading, is often coupled with an assumed metaphor of performance.

Deleuze and Foucault have rescued the notion of phantasm from its psychoanalytic usage in the understanding of illusion. Bodies...‘think’ not through concepts, nor categories, nor even language, but through phantasms. Philosophy becomes schizophrenia, it becomes theatre ... Inscribed on the human body by means of the social [these phantasms] govern not only our thought events, but our political practices, our sexuality.26

[A]cts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this on the surface of the body, through the play of signifying absences that suggest, but never reveal, the organising principle of identity as a cause. Such acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are performative in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are fabrications manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means. That the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality.27

The use of the theatre/performance metaphor to signify illusion or fabrication
invokes a notion of truth or reality which transgresses performance, a notion
which situates itself in the textualised body. The implication is that the practices
of performance deal with the ephemeral, concealing ‘real’ political relations
within an empty practice, performances as not being ‘real’ in themselves.

Performance continually runs the risk of being assumed and objectified in
philosophy, and in social science and humanities discourses. Its status as a
critical perspective is marginalised, just as bodies are in relation to linguistic
discourses. It is important, then, to consciously abrogate both notions of theatre
as an already-resolved metaphor and bodies as an homogenised category, as the
unified text ‘the body’.

The body stands still, like a statue, or lies in repose, like a corpse. As a
metaphysical abstraction or a bracketed phenomenon, its essence
transcends its action, its colour, its features, its history, its desire, its
transactions and its pain. A plenitude of bodies, by contrast, suggests
multiple possibilities of movement, interaction, combination, circulation,
and exchange. Just to begin to make the list of the diversity and the
reciprocity of bodies is to question the totality of the body.28

Bodies produce difference; they produce multiplicity; they produce other bodies.
The difficulty lies in writing how bodies produce and how they are themselves
produced, in resisting that tendency to textualise bodies even as we are trying to
avoid doing so. A writing praxis informed by performance needs to
contextualise writings about bodies within bodies, that is through a reflexive
understanding of the physicality of the activity of writing, and through a
specifically physical engagement with other writings. Furthermore, such a praxis
must draw upon the vast array of physical skills and techniques undertaken in
the practice of performance.

Bakhtin’s concept of the grotesque representation of bodies, as exemplified by Rabelais’ writing, emphasises the contextualising nature of such bodies: they bring together both the official and folk aspects of human life. Reading Rabelais within the context of literature, via the position of privilege afforded literature by Western culture, may highlight the crude and licentious elements of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, at the expense of the deference shown in negotiating education, religion and politics. What is criticised, what is parodied, is done so ‘in good faith’, that is as an act of engagement. Bodies comply and bodies resist simultaneously, growing out of each new circumstance. In doing so, they make way for further growth: they make room for the future.

The grotesque body ... is a body in the act of becoming. It is never finished, never completed; it is continually built, created, and builds and creates another body. Moreover, the body swallows the world and is itself swallowed by the world.29

Community and connection underpin the activities of bodies and the representation of bodies in Rabelais’ writing, connection to the time-and-space represented (the chronotope), and connection to all other bodies, so that bodies cannot be individualised or separated, and thus denied the space and time to change and grow.

[T]he grotesque image ... never presents an individual body; the image consists of orifices and convexities that present another, newly conceived body. It is a point of transition in a life eternally renewed, the inexhaustible vessel of death and conception ... The grotesque ignores the impenetrable surface that closes and limits the body as a separate and completed phenomenon.30
The grotesque imagery of Rabelais and its representation by Bakhtin do, however, beg questions of how effectively and to what extent such writing allows for difference and multiplicity, especially in regard to current conceptions of gender and ethnicity. What Bakhtin refers to as the material bodily principle tends to totalise and universalise the grotesque body as the “collective body of the people”. While allowing for growth and renewal, this principle appears to display a masculinist bias which, if read metaphorically, limits the usefulness of Rabelais’ novel in approaching a resistive praxis of writing or performing.\(^{31}\) However, the five prologues in Rabelais’ novel address a specific audience in a familiar tone, and such a specific and intricately ‘fleshed out’ perspective is required in order to attempt such a comprehensive picture of the medieval world. Read metonymically, *Gargantua and Pantagruel* offers possibilities for other specifically defined perspectives, inasmuch as it presents a way to intrinsically connect bodies (bodies which are polymorphous and continually changing), time (a time of renewal and creative growth) and space for a particular purpose.

Judith Butler questions assumed conceptions of ‘the body’ in examining gender, in particular the construction of gender reality. Butler argues that gender is generated through sustained social performances, contingent upon space and time. Such performances are publicly repeated so as to create the effect or ‘illusion’ of a gendered norm, a notion of gender as essential, coherent and heterosexual. Gestures, mannerisms and other stylisations of bodies function socially as a practice of affirming gendered identities: they imagine gender as
Bodies comply with these gestures and accept them as real: in performing such gestures bodies realise gender. While gender is manifested on the surface of bodies through these various stylisations, the discourse producing these stable categories is displaced, transferred to an attributable psyche, separated from the performing bodies.\textsuperscript{32}

Butler cites the cultural practices of drag as offering insights into the way in which discourses of heterosexuality function in organising and stabilising gender. Inasmuch as drag foregrounds the tension between the performer’s anatomy and the gender performed, the stability of sex as a cultural category is questioned. Sex, gender and performance become equally contingent, equally incongruous.

As much as drag creates a unified picture of “woman” (what its critics often oppose), it also reveals the distinctness of those aspects of gendered experience which are falsely naturalised as a unity through the regulatory fiction of heterosexual coherence. In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself - as well as its contingency.\textsuperscript{33}

What drag presents is an imitation of an imitation: it parodies the notion of an original or essential gender. Drag has a potential for liberation and for subversion where and when it is connected to an awareness of rigid or repressive gender constructions.

[L]aughter emerges in the realisation that all along the original was derived.\textsuperscript{34}

Inasmuch as compulsory heterosexuality actively assumes the naturalised categories of ‘man’ and ‘woman’, it is left open to the same kind of laughter
which the drag performance invites. Both ‘original’ and ‘imitation’ are equally
tenuous, equally laughable. Drag renders gender a bodily practice; it retrieves
gender from its psychological categorisation and opens it up to contention. In the
process it highlights new possibilities for bodies, and draws our attention toward
the future, toward the notion of bodies in the act of becoming. However, for drag
to achieve this resistive, emancipatory function, it must realise bodies as
connected, it must remind everyone participating that such connections actually
concern them, and that connected bodies produce something by the material
process of becoming.

Drag provides a practice for making connections, a practice contingent upon
bodies. While gender separates bodies and makes them discrete, bodies connect
gender categories, confuse distinctions and subvert the hierarchies produced by
gender. Bodily practices such as drag present ways to resist the closure of bodies
into atemporal and aspatial texts, homogeneous, resolved and open to metaphors
of ‘the body’.

*A Day in the Life of Australia* presents photographs of bodies connected
goingraphically and temporally, but separated socially by various categories.
Photographs taken early in the morning show a mother hugging her daughter
after bathing her; a man, boots and cowboy hat in the foreground, waking up in
the desert; a family saying grace before breakfast; and a newsagent delivering
newspapers. Each scenario presents something familiar, something physically
recognisable. The feel of water on skin, of being embraced, stretching and yawning upon waking, a meal with family; all bring with them a sense of connection: our bodies seek to understand the bodies in the photographs, to give them time and space.

The captions which accompany the photographs, however, tend to counteract such connections. The mother and daughter are identified as living in a commune in Nimbin, New South Wales, the waking man as a camel hunter supplying wild camels for export to the Middle East, the family as a grazier, his wife and their daughter on a large station property near Winton, Queensland, and the newsagent as starting his morning deliveries in Cowra, New South Wales, “thirteen hundred kilometres south-east of Winton”. Assumptions of class and of social status function alongside geographical difference in separating these scenarios, and in separating bodies.

The depiction of religious life in A Day in the Life of Australia provides an example of how social and physical separation function together in presenting discrete social categories. Two photographs of the Hare Krishna farm at Murwillumbah in New South Wales, taken at noon, are presented on pages 82-83. The first picture shows three women and a young girl, the daughter of the woman in the centre of the picture, eating in the communal dining area. Their faces are decorated and the women are dressed in saris. The caption points out that the meal consists entirely of farm produce and that the farm is virtually self-
sufficient. The second photograph shows the farm’s deity chamber, where offerings are made to Krishna. In the centre of the picture, a woman holds a baby. Three girls in the foreground, one of whom is holding a candle, attend the baby while another woman looks on in the background. The women are dressed in saris, the girls in long skirts and headscarves. Their faces are also decorated.

Pages 84-88 show photographs of the Benedictine Monks in New Norcia in Western Australia. The first picture, on pages 84-85, is a double-page shot of three monks, dressed in white robes, in an open field surrounded by olive trees. One monk walks in the background, his hands behind his back, looking away from the other two, who are conversing in the foreground. One of these two monks rests on his haunches, his hands held together. The monk he is talking with stands in the centre of the picture, side on to the camera. The sun is directly behind this monk, rendering him in silhouette, surrounded by bright light. The cape of his robe has blown up in the breeze, giving the impression of wings on the monk’s back. The effect of the light and the photograph’s composition is to suggest an angel appearing to the monk on his haunches, who with his legs concealed by his cloak and his hands clasped, appears to be praying to him.

The pictures of the Hare Krishna farm and those of the Benedictine Monks provide images which echo biblical pictures: the madonna with child, disciples in robes praying in olive groves, and even the apparition of an angel. However, the contrasts between the two sets of photographs are emphasised by the gender
of the subjects. The Hare Krishna farm is portrayed as a fruitful and colourful place, indicated by the decorated walls and stained glass windows, and by the women’s saris, their partaking of the farm’s produce, and by the children born on the farm. While the silhouettes of three men are discernible in the background of the photograph of the communal dining area, the picture is ostensibly a portrait of women. The men in the photographs of the Benedictine Monks are portrayed as living austerely, dressed in white robes, engaged in prayer, meditation or Bible reading. No women or children are present; no food or drink are visible. The following caption accompanies a photograph of a monk’s room, on page 88:

The monks’ vow of poverty is very much in evidence. They have very few possessions. Dom Francis has one set of work clothes, one winter habit, and two summer habits, and his room is a model of practical efficiency.

Male bodies are portrayed in these photographs as vessels of devotion through denial, through the marginalisation of physical aspects of life. In contrast, female bodies are shown as ‘fruitful’ and life-giving: as being born, as being capable of giving birth, of eating and working communally. A sense of devotion through embracing physical life is conveyed. The photographs of the two sites contrast a conception of religious life as connected to the body with one of religious life as separated from the body.

An often depicted physical relationship in A Day in the Life of Australia is the posing of two people for the benefit of the camera, the arm of one of the two placed around the shoulder or back of the other. The pose conveys a sense of the
intimate relationship between the two, and also tends to suggest a relationship of power. Where the two subjects each have their arms around the other, dominance is expressed by whoever has their arm placed higher. It is quite conventional in such poses for a male or older person to adopt a ‘dominant’ pose with someone who is female or who is younger. The photographs taken at 9 a.m. on pages 34-35 include a picture of a man and woman outside their petrol station and roadhouse on Kangaroo Island off the South Australian coast, the man’s arm around the woman, and a picture of a middle-aged woman and a younger man in their bakery/coffee shop, the man with his arm around the woman. While the same pose appears to express different familial relationships in these two pictures (husband and wife, mother and son), the man in each picture demonstrates his physical dominance and appears to emphasise his role as protector.

A double-page shot on pages 268-269 shows a bearded man dressed only in a sarong with his arm around a woman dressed in a kaftan, on the Cobourg Peninsula in the Northern Territory. The couple are posing for another bearded man with a polaroid camera, who is also dressed in a sarong. The inclusion of a photographer in the picture introduces a new set of relationships. The similarity between the man being photographed and the man with the camera leads the viewer to connect the two, and establishes a tension as to the relationship between the three. The reason for the couple posing is brought into question. It may be because of what the couple are wearing (a ‘back to nature’ photograph),
Three Days in the Life of Australia

or because the couple have just met, or because they are celebrating an occasion. The couple are being photographed at 11 p.m. at night, outside and with no discernible background, discounting the place as a reason for the picture. Whatever the reason, the pose adopted by the man and woman being photographed, a pose repeated often in A Day in the Life of Australia, imagines them as ‘a couple’.

The photograph of two women and a man dressed in minimal beachwear shopping in a department store on page 81 utilises the pose of ‘a couple’ in order to present a picture which foregrounds its ‘strangeness’. The man, dressed only in a pair of shorts, stands with an arm around each of the two women, their arms placed in a lower position around him. The physical intimacy between the three imagined by the photograph reinforces the sense of their being out of place in the department store. Assumptions of exclusivity which accompany notions of a ‘couple’ remain at odds with the image presented in the picture. The conventional sense of the ‘couple’ pose is also challenged by the photograph on page 44, depicting two men in Adelaide Gaol. The man on the right of the picture is dressed only in a pair of shorts, is bearded, and has a number of tattoos visible down his right arm and down his right thigh. He has his arm around the shoulder of the man on the left, who is clean-shaven, has longer hair, and is dressed in a white singlet and long trousers. The man on the left appears younger and less muscular than the man on the right: he has his arm placed around the waist of the other man. The pose they have adopted imagines the ‘dominance’ of
the man on the right, as well as their physical intimacy, and also emphasises the differences between the two of them.

These two photographs foreground their ‘remarkableness’ or ‘strangeness’ principally by relating the ‘couple pose’ to the space in which the picture is taken, in each case a heterotopic space. In the former picture the relationship between the people posing and the space of the photograph is significant; in the latter it is the marginal nature of the space itself which is significant in reinforcing the resistive characteristic of the picture, an image which challenges the perspective of a heterosexist norm when perceiving ‘couples’.

A photograph on page 117, taken in Meekatharra in Western Australia, shows two men posing for the camera. They are dressed almost identically in dusty working clothes consisting of khaki shirts, denim trousers, brown work boots and broad-brimmed hats, and the older man has his arm around the shoulder of the younger man. The shot is echoed by another, a double-page shot on pages 268-269, also taken in Meekatharra. In this picture, the two men are flanked by two cattle dogs, and the older man rests his arm on the younger man’s shoulder. They are dressed almost identically in cotton shirts, denim shorts, brown work boots and broad-brimmed hats. Both photographs appear to be of fathers and sons, and convey a sense of a tradition of work being carried on to the next generation. Tied in with this notion is a sense of bodies in the act of becoming: time is inflected toward the future. The first photograph, however, tends to
present a relationship of encouragement, a father proudly nurturing his son, while the second seems to express a more equal relationship, and even a sense of the father’s dependence on his son. The slight difference in the physical gesture of intimacy between father and son in these pictures imagines a more profound social difference.

Today I have referred to Mikhail Bakhtin’s writings on the carnivalised body and Judith Butler’s writings on the performance of gender in attempting to identify specific bodily practices in *A Day in the Life of Australia*, and the way they have been utilised in the imagining of social relationships and in the imagining of nation. Tomorrow I wish to consider how bodies might be capable of more resistant practices in imagining new possibilities for the nation and its representation.

**Matter:**

Even if we know almost nothing about the historical surrounding world of the first geometers, this much is certain as an invariant, essential structure: that it was a world of “things” (including the human beings themselves as subjects of this world); that all things necessarily had to have a bodily character - although not all things could be mere bodies, since the necessarily coexisting human beings are not thinkable as mere bodies and, like even the cultural objects which belong with them structurally, are not exhausted in corporeal being. What is also clear, and can be secured at least in its essential nucleus through careful *a priori* explication, is that these pure bodies had spatio-temporal shapes and “material” qualities (colour, warmth, weight, hardness, etc.) related to them. Further, it is clear that in the life of practical needs certain particularisations of shape stood out and that a technical praxis always aimed at the production of particular preferred shapes and the improvement of them according to certain directions of gradualness.
In proposing a theory of essential, spiritual forms and their production and renewal, through a consideration of geometry, Edmund Husserl makes a distinction between ‘real’ objects, which occupy concrete time and space, and ‘ideal’ objects, which are not embodied but which already exist.

[Geometry has] an existence which is peculiarly supertemporal and which - of this we are certain - is accessible to all, and this is true of all its particular forms. And all forms newly produced by someone on the basis of pregiven forms immediately take on the same objectivity. This is, we note, an “ideal” objectivity. It is proper to a whole class of spiritual products of the cultural world, to which not only all scientific constructions and the sciences themselves belong but also, for example the constructions of fine literature. Works of this class do not, like tools (hammers, pliers) or like architectural and other such products, have a repeatability in many like exemplars.

Husserl presents, as an example of an ideal object, the Pythagorean theorem, which he alleges as existing only once, that is, in an ideal form, and which transcends linguistic translation. While conceding that language embodies geometrical concepts and gives them expression, Husserl argues that this is insufficient for such concepts to take on an ideal objectivity, and that such an existence necessitates an origin as a priori knowledge or truth. He proposes an inquiry into how such a ‘pure’ origin can be traced and how the existence of ideal objects persists despite long periods of non-use or the lack of personal or recorded contact between practitioners. Discoveries made by previous practitioners (of geometry or of any technical praxis) are re-discovered, in exact replication, by subsequent practitioners in the act of successfully realising a similar or comparable intention. The time, space and participant(s) of the previous discovery are in this way connected with the time, space and
Husserl states that the re-discovery of ideal objects can only come about through philosophical thinking or eidetic reduction, that is through separating the empirical world from the realm of what he terms “pure” thinking. Such a realm has no use for conditional knowledge, knowledge which is bound by time and space, for the aim of such activity is absolute and eternal truth, prefiguring all possible (or conceivable) relationships of people, space, time and matter. Thus geometry exists as a praxis which is accessible for all present and future practitioners, transcending all spatial and temporal boundaries. This leads Husserl to conclude that the conventional study of history, with its emphasis on factuality, is a limited project, and to call for its revision based on “the foundations of the universal historical a priori”.

Husserl’s distinction between real and ideal objects, and that between the corresponding modes of thinking (physical and metaphysical thinking, or ontic and a priori thinking) constitutes what would appear to be a violent act of separation to the practitioner of performance, or of any praxis which emphasises process as part of its activity. The discrete and final nature of ideal objects appears to remove them from any structure of process, their existence as transcendental truths and theorems functioning as an irrefutable reference for strategic production in the material world. Thus theatrical projects are spoken of
in terms of seasons as coherent, unified entities, and dramatic texts as having an existence independent of specific performances. Coupled with this is the prefigured nature of ideal objects: the present and the future are subjected to a logic which has been resolved in the past, to a truth which is always already known.

Husserl is suggesting that a specific practice need not occupy time and space, and thus need not involve physical activity. The separation of eidetic reduction from other mental and physical activity, however, also removes the context and purpose of *a priori* thought. Such acts of separation call for re-thinking within a processual structure, so as to identify more specifically how real and ideal objects are connected, if Husserl’s notion of a praxis “aimed at the production of particular preferred shapes and the improvement of them according to certain directions of gradualness” is to prove useful in considering material relations in performance.

Husserl includes “all scientific constructions” and the “constructions of fine literature” amongst what he defines as ideal objects, citing them as products of philosophical thought. It is presumed, then, that science and literature, as technical practices, are able to invoke an objective set of principles, that is to take on a specific objectivity, in producing scientific and literary works with particular “material qualities”. However, what leads on from such an assumption is that the “quality” or objectivity of such a work does not rely upon the reader
or student of the work, but rather exists metaphysically, beyond question or refutation.

In order for the Pythagorean theorem to be invoked by a specific practitioner, a context in which to apply the theorem is necessary: the minimum requirement is a purpose or application. Husserl’s distinction from ‘real’ objects such as tools lies in the material state of the object. Ideal objects can be imagined but not realised. However, connecting the theorem with a purpose also connects the act of realising with the act of imagining; it connects reading with writing. Ideal objects only have a bearing on bodies, space and time because imagining, like realising, is a physical, spatial and temporal activity. Ideal objects can only be imagined in the context of a process of realising objects. Ideal and real objects are materially connected. The practices of performance, practices which are spatial, temporal and physical, contextualise both real and ideal objects within a process of production, connecting them in time and in space.

Performance works on and with all matter to produce spatial, temporal and physical connections through a process of imagination and realisation. Imagination and realisation do not constitute essential phenomena but rather are produced in relation to each other, within the context of the theatrical process. Likewise real and ideal objects are constituted in relation to each other, their material state of existence contingent upon space and time. Bodies, sets, furniture, domestic appliances, tools, musical instruments, graphic art,
photographs and other matter are imagined as theatrical or performance objects, realised within the context of a performance, rehearsal or improvisation, and later re-imagined as other objects within other sets of temporal, spatial and physical relations. Both real and ideal objects are constituted by and made subject to material conditions within such a context.

The camera, unlike the first and often confused European settlers, is just as much at home in a rational landscape as in a surreal one, in an ordered garden as in an intimidating wilderness. I would not like to imply that the photograph is not an art form, but its art derives from the photographer’s selection of time and frame. Within the frame itself, the camera brings an attitude of neutrality to a place, a time, a person. In the neutrality of these photographs is their truth. In their professional brilliance is their art, their charm, their delight.

*A Day in the Life of Australia* utilises three principal objects, the camera, the photograph and the book, in the process of producing something with a less definite time and space, Australia the nation. The material conditions of these three objects are utilised in the process of representing the material existence of the nation. The presence of the camera is assumed rather than emphasised in most of the book’s photographs, the apparent ‘invisibility’ of the camera enhancing the guarantee of the photographer’s ‘professionalism’. Where cameras are presented within the picture, they are shown as being used informally or naïvely by Australians, in contrast to the way they are used by professional photographers.

Photographs on page 137 show two young girls, dressed only in gumboots, taking a picture of each other in Crooked River, Victoria, and a young boy
Three Days in the Life of Australia

facing the camera, taking a picture of his photographer in Katherine in the Northern Territory. The two girls are standing in scrubland with eucalyptus trees and wooded hills in the background. The girl in the foreground has her back to the camera, the other girl’s face is concealed by her camera. The boy is photographed from the chest up, his only visible ‘clothing’ being a large stockman’s hat which covers the greater part of his head. His camera rests directly under the hat, concealing his face and resembling a large, single eye. All three children are using SLR cameras, which appear too large for them. The boy’s oversized hat reinforces the sense that the children are imitating adults, pointing cameras at cameras. The ‘bush’ background of the first photograph contributes to a notion of ‘innocence’ evidenced by a supposed naïve use of the camera. Innocence is imagined by establishing a particular relationship between specific objects and specific bodies.

The photograph on pages 268-269, of a bearded man dressed only in a sarong and a woman in a kaftan being photographed by another bearded man in a sarong, also presents a picture of a camera being used informally. The man photographing the couple is using a polaroid camera, in contrast to the SLR and medium-format cameras used by the photographers participating in the project, and is smoking a cigar while taking the photograph. In addition his head is several inches away from the camera, bringing into question the precision of the shot’s framing and focus. Because of his cigar, he is holding the camera with just one hand. The picture conveys a sense of ‘rugged primitivity’ rather than
innocence. The camera and the way it is being used, combined with the simple, minimal and colourful dress of the three people in the picture, and the men’s beards and tattoos, work together to imagine and realise ‘the primitive’ as in some way representative of the Australian nation, especially in relation to the photographers.

Photographs become a site of difference in a similar way to cameras, separating the photographic practices of the Australians depicted with those of the participating photographers. A double-page shot on pages 74-75 gives an overhead view of a group of female factory workers in Shepparton, Victoria perusing school photographs during their morning tea break. The format of the school photographs are readily recognisable: a class shot, a large individual portrait and four smaller portrait prints. The difficulty in identifying the respective mothers of the children in the photographs underlines the homogeneous, standardised nature of the pictures themselves. This homogeneity stands in contrast to the photographs taken by the participants in the project, each of which is presented as distinct and significant. Pages 138-139 show a group of twelve small photographs with the following caption:

Kodak (Australasia) distributed 200 instamatic cameras to school children throughout Australia on Friday, March 6th, and on this page are a selection of the 2,400 photographs they took.

The photographs are also presented in a way which emphasises their homogeneity, each picture presented in a uniform size against a black background, almost as if they were exposures from a roll of holiday photos. The
photographs also indicate the name and age of the child who took each of them. The inclusion of the children’s ages appears almost as an excuse for the photographs’ supposed lack of ‘professionalism’, in apparent contrast to the pictures taken by the participating photographers.

A contact or proof sheet from a roll of film taken by one of the photographers taking part in *A Day in the Life of Australia* is reproduced on page 184. It shows a grid of 36 black and white exposures, two of which have been circled in red, indicating choices made by the project’s picture editors. The chosen pictures appear on pages 182-183 and on page 185. Part of the caption accompanying the contact sheet reads as follows:

> When a photographer finds a subject which seems to have picture possibilities he experiments with a number of ways of taking the photograph; various angles, framings, lenses, exposures in order to achieve different effects. Photography is subjective. There is no ‘one correct way’ of photographing a situation. The picture editors have made their choice. Which ones would you choose?

The alternatives to the shots depicted reveals these photographs not only as products of the work of a photographer, but also of a developer, picture editor and printer. The ‘professionalism’ conveyed by these photographs is to some extent contingent upon work carried out by others: it expresses a material relationship rather than an essential quality. The ‘subjectivity’ of choice brings into question the notion of objectivity in the photographs shown in the book, a questioning displaced by the consideration of the alternative exposures as informed experimentation. The hierarchy of photographs produced in *A Day in*
the Life of Australia by the distinction between ‘professional’ and ‘amateur’ photographs, and emphasised by terms such as ‘angles’, ‘framings’, ‘lenses’ and ‘exposures’, imagines the book’s ‘official’ photographs as informed, precise and objective.

The contact sheet displayed on page 184 simultaneously presents photographs as multiple and ‘the camera’ as one. Though it is possible for a single roll of film to contain exposures taken in a number of cameras by a number of photographers, the camera as productive object or tool is concealed in order to produce a direct relationship between photographer and photograph. Its assumption in the process of photography removes it from a consideration as a variable element: in this sense it becomes objective, becomes ‘ideal’, becomes ‘the camera which never lies’. In the process of maintaining the many photographs presented in A Day in the Life of Australia as discrete but connected, the hundreds of cameras used in the project are homogenised and standardised as one object with one perspective. In this way ‘the camera’ is imagined as an ideal object expressing the vision of a particular photographer in the form of a photograph. This objectivity is reinforced by the way the photographs are arranged: the chronological order of presentation has the effect of ordering space as well as time, so that each space in turn appears to be brought into the presence of ‘the camera’, which always already exists. The camera and the reader are thus ‘fused’ as a self-present subject.
*A Day in the Life of Australia* can be seen to be producing an ‘objective’ perspective and ‘ideal’ objects through two separate, mutually-reinforcing acts of material production. Firstly, a hierarchical structure of professional/amateur, a structure which contributes to a particular notion of ‘Australian-ness’, is established in the presentation of specific photographs in strategic ways - a structured subjectivity. At the same time a process of material production occurs whereby objects assume an ‘ideal’ state, that is a singular state removed from space and time, in order to function as a reference for the production of other objects. This only occurs within the context of a specific purpose - an ‘objectivity’ bound in time and space.

Today, I have considered Husserl’s distinction between ‘real’ and ‘ideal’ objects in order to examine how *A Day in the Life of Australia* is able to produce a representation of national subjectivity and an apparently unified perspective of objectivity. Tomorrow, I wish to look at how these two processes of production interact in the material production of the book, and of Australia the nation, by way of a consideration of Jacques Derrida’s writings on Husserl.
The Second Day

Bodies:

Yesterday I considered how bodies were able to produce difference and multiplicity by applying Judith Butler’s conception of how bodies generated social identities through sustained performances, and Mikhail Bakhtin’s notions of the material bodily principle and grotesque realism, to photographs in *A Day in the Life of Australia*. While this was able to identify a few practices by which bodies are separated, imagined as discrete, and suggested how connections between bodies could be maintained or recovered, it begged the question of how bodies can shift or transgress the imagined boundaries of the book’s representations, the boundaries of ‘Australianness’. Today, in attempting to consider the possibility of a process of bodily transgression, a possibility constantly negotiated in the physical activities of performance, I wish to utilise Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s concept of the body without organs (BwO).

Rejecting outright the conceptions of the unconscious offered by psychoanalysis, Deleuze and Guattari seek to describe an alternative account of how it functions and what it encompasses. Without distinguishing between bodies and other matter, they suggest that all matter can be seen to exist as correlations upon an immanent field of energy, and to be discernible and definable by the way energy flows, and is diverted, blocked or transformed as it
attempts to pass through this field. Matter can only be measured, or defined, by the speeds and intensities of these flows. In this way all bodies and other matter can be viewed as machines, or assemblages, comprising lines of stratification, or territorialisation, and lines of flight, or deterritorialisation.40

Such a conception problematises the notion offered by psychoanalysis of the individual unconscious as a result/resolution of the conflict between drives/instincts and a process of socialisation. Deleuze and Guattari reject the familial models used by psychoanalysis to theorise drives, complexes and resultant behaviour, and with it the accompanying sense of ‘lack’, of the unconscious as attempting to recover a relationship lost in the past. In its place, they posit a conception of ‘desire’ as material energy in incessant flux, continually producing ‘realities’ through new connections.

Desire constantly couples continuous flows and partial objects that are by nature fragmentary and fragmented. Desire causes the current to flow, itself flows in turn, and breaks the flows.41

Deleuze and Guattari argue that society seeks to stratify or territorialise desire within closed structures, that is specific institutions or discourses. Such encounters lead to the production of an ‘organism’, a body which is organised by being articulated in a specific, discursive way, significant inasmuch as it conveys and interprets meaning in a specific way, and subjectified in its recognition of its discursive identity. The obverse of this social production is the production of a ‘body without organs’, that is, a body which is not socially organised according to specific discourses, and is consequently open to the
flows and intensities of material energy, of desire.

A BwO is made in such a way that it can be occupied, populated only by intensities ... The BwO causes intensities to pass; it produces and distributes them in a spatiyum that is itself intensive, lacking extension. It is not space, nor is it in space; it is matter that occupies space to a given degree - to the degree corresponding to the intensities produced ... The BwO is the field of immanence of desire, the plane of consistency specific to desire.42

The BwO is a concept equally applicable to all matter, whether it be the bodies of people, certain parts or aspects of those bodies, other organic matter or inanimate objects. It resists colonisation by discourses such as medicine, physiology and psychology by opening itself up to other ways of thinking, even to contradictory ways of thinking. However, because it is a conception which calls for resistance through material production rather than through a return to a previous ideal state, it is not bound by historical precedent, nor by a system or structure. It suggests that bodies need not yield to determination by discourses held to be authoritative or official, the discourses which reinforce the ‘organism’ on bodies, and that such resistance, such deterritorialisation, is productive rather than destructive.

Dismantling the organism has never meant killing yourself, but rather opening the body to connections that presuppose an entire assemblage, circuits, conjunctions, levels and thresholds, passages and distributions of intensity, and territories and deterritorialisations measured with the craft of a surveyor.43

The BwO has the potential to be a powerful tool in negotiating relations between words and bodies in performance. It provides a material way for bodies to become referential - not the body determined by human biology and medicine, but bodies seen from different perspectives, fragmented, conceived of by
fragments of physics, botany, geology, geometry, architecture, photography or any other way of making sense. It suggests new ways of making physical connections in the act of performing, and new ways of understanding words and speech within the context of performance. Such connections are pointed to by the activities of puppetry and ventriloquism, by the use of projections, and by experiments in choreography, lighting and sound. The BwO, however, provides a way of ‘making sense’ of the strategies underlying specific, resistive (or experimental) performance activities: embodying inanimate objects, blurring audience/‘performer’ distinctions, fragmenting character/actor distinctions, utilising multiple bodies as singular entities.

Physical experimentation can be understood as specifically liberating where bodies are seen to free themselves from the ‘organism’, from specific regimes of signification and subjectification imposed as a stratum upon the BwO. However, liberation calls for an awareness of the material conditions of bodies’ marginalisation and territorialisation. The question of strategic resistance and the realising of new identities is jeopardised by Deleuze and Guattari’s conception of desire as incessant flux, in a similar way to Derrida’s notion of dissemination. In both cases, an immanent and evasive ‘force’ is elevated to a metaphysical state, removed from the contextualising boundaries of time and space. The myriad of examples, case studies and applications explored by Deleuze and Guattari tend to conform to textual boundaries: literary works, films, myths, botanical and geological theory, mathematical and economics concepts,
paintings and musical compositions. While each object of study is re-articulated by Deleuze and Guattari in the course of their discussion, they maintain a recognisable textual form precisely in order to exemplify or reinforce their argument.

Performance is able to contextualise bodies, and to connect them within time and within space. It is the temporality and the spatiality of performance which allows the material production of the BwO to be witnessed, for its purpose to be made clear, for its potential to liberate to be realised. It is within the temporary and confined context of performance that bodies can be seen not merely to transform or change, but to be produced, and to produce other bodies and to exist alongside them, becoming multiple. Specific performances can be seen to produce strategic ‘moments’ when ‘the incessant flux of desire’ is grasped before being released. The BwO re-imposes process on bodies and other matter which present themselves as closed or resolved, opening them up to be imagined and realised.

Deleuze and Guattari assert that the BwO produces a ‘becoming’, a non-reducible, material activity. Becomings move, in degrees, in the direction of marginal identities, away from being white, being male, being human.

The becoming-animal of the human being is real, even if the animal the human being becomes is not; and the becoming-other of the animal is real, even if that something other is not. This is the point to clarify: that a becoming lacks a subject distinct from itself; but also that it has no term, since its term in turn exists only as taken up in another becoming of which it is the subject, and which coexists, forms a block, with the first. This is
the principle according to which there is a reality specific to becoming.44

Becomings make bodies multiple, but without any conception of an original body, or of an ancestor. Seeking to abrogate the Family, the State, Myth and any hierarchy of groups as traceable precedent, Deleuze and Guattari argue that multiplicities, or ‘packs’ are formed and transformed by ‘contagion’, by a propagation of becomings. They focus on the category of the ‘anomalous’ in hypothesising that multiplicities are defined by their farthest dimensions, their borders, rather than by a centre. Borderlines allow a view of what a specific multiplicity encompasses or constitutes.

That is what Captain Ahab says to his first mate: I have no personal history with Moby-Dick, no revenge to take, any more than I have a myth to play out; but I do have a becoming! Moby-Dick is neither an individual nor a genus; he is the borderline, and I have to strike him to get at the pack as a whole, to reach the pack as a whole and pass beyond it. The elements of the pack are only imaginary ‘dummies’, the characteristics of the pack are only symbolic entities; all that counts is the borderline - the anomalous. “To me the white whale is that wall, shoved near to me […] Sometimes I think there is naught beyond. But ’tis enough.”45

Having established the borderline as a concept representing the movement or becoming of an anomalous body on the periphery of a multiplicity, a ‘line’ which is constantly being broken and re-formed elsewhere as multiplicities encounter and transform each other, Deleuze and Guattari reposition the concept within a larger theoretical/geometric relationship. They argue that borderlines determine the number of dimensions a multiplicity occupies and compress these dimensions without reducing their number. These compressed multiplicities come into contact with others when the borderlines are intersected by the ‘plane of consistency’, Deleuze and Guattari’s geometric formulation of desire as
Deleuze and Guattari have thus dis-assembled the notion of bodies as anatomical, physiological, and subject to normative patterns of behaviour, and have re-constituted a notion of bodies as multiple assemblages drawing their identity and potential from the relations they are perceived to be part of.

On the plane of consistency, a body is defined only by a longitude and a latitude: in other words the sum total of the material elements belonging to it under given relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness (longitude); the sum total of the intensive affects it is capable of at a given power or degree of potential (latitude).

Relating this conception of bodies back to yesterday’s consideration of Bakhtin’s material bodily principle, the notion of grotesque bodies can be considered as describing an intersection between official life and folk life. The space and time of carnival produce a BwO, a grotesque, anomalous body in the act of becoming, growing out of each new circumstance, simultaneously a discernible body and a multiplicity of bodies. What the material bodily principle brings to Deleuze and Guattari’s conception, cast as it is amidst immanent desire, is a re-assertion of bodily needs, that is needs specific to a group of bodies within a specific space and time, and bodily subjectivity. At the same time, the BwO offers carnivalised bodies ‘lines of flight’ from the binary relationship of folk and official culture, pushing out the boundaries of the
category of ‘the physical’ and allowing bodies to inform and be informed by all matter. Freed from the organisation of controlling discourses, bodies are able to imagine and realise the relations of carnival outside designated, organised times and spaces in order to make new connections, and produce new relations with other spaces, other times.

In bony, ribby regions of the earth, where at the base of high broken cliffs masses of rock lie strewn in fantastic groupings upon the plain, you will often discover images as of the petrified forms of the Leviathan partly merged in grass, which of a windy day breaks against them in a surf of green surges. Then again, in mountainous countries where the traveller is continually girdled by amphitheatrical heights; here and there from some lucky point of view you will catch passing glimpses of the profiles of whales defined along the undulating ridges. But you must be a thorough whaleman, to see these sights; and not only that, if you wish to return to such a sight again, you must be sure and take the exact intersecting latitude and longitude of your first stand-point, else - so chance-like are such observations of the hills - your precise, previous stand-point would require a laborious re-discovery ...

It is possible to look at *A Day in the Life of Australia* as presenting bodies in the act of being produced as well as in the act of producing other bodies. The intersection of a designated time with a geographically defined space is able to produce bodies articulated, subjectified and made significant (the organism) and conversely deterritorialised and open to new connections and new relations (the BwO).

Pages 186-191 show a series of three double-page shots, all taken at 4.30 p.m., which appear to echo each other, even though they are taken by different photographers in different locations. The shots are in colour, contrasting with the smaller, black and white photographs on the preceding and following pages. The
first picture, on pages 186-187, is captioned ‘Mulgarram Outstation, Arnhem Land’ and shows a group of people standing in front of a ‘humpy’ made of branches, bark and tree fronds. The group comprises a young man holding a portable cassette recorder, a young woman holding a baby on her hip, and four young children. They are all dressed simply and minimally, and are staring seriously or neutrally at the camera, except for a young boy on the left of the picture, who is smiling. The second picture, on pages 188-189, is captioned ‘Cowra, New South Wales’ and shows a group of people standing in front of the wall of a house with a corrugated-iron facing. The group are standing behind a gated fence made of white wooden posts and chicken-wire with barbed wire on the top, and comprise two men, two women holding babies, an older woman and a young boy. They are all squinting in the sunlight as they face the camera. The third photograph, on pages 190-191, is captioned ‘Melbourne’ and shows a group of people, a young woman, three young men and nine children sitting on the roof of a building, with tall apartment blocks in the background. They appear to be seated at the same height as the tops of the apartment blocks.

Each shot presents a group of people imagined as ‘family’. The social institution of family stratifies, subjectifies and makes significant the bodies in each of the pictures, imposing a logic on them which organises the bodies into generations, into parents and children, and reads the bodies as coherent within these structures. The poses each group of people adopts is recognisable as a ‘family pose’, and subjectifies them as accepting their own territorialisation. The
significance of these ‘families’ within the confines of the project and of the book pertain to a version of ‘Australianness’, a meaning which has to do not only with the physical relations within each photograph, but also with the relations between each shot.

The first photograph in the series depicts a group of people recognisable as Aboriginal. While their clothing and one or two other objects might anchor the picture as relatively recent, the bark humpy set in a small clearing against a background of bushland echoes early photographs of Aboriginal people, and gives an impression of ‘timelessness’, of ‘the past in the present’. The second photograph depicts a group of people recognisable as ‘white’ or of European origin. Their casual dress, the hats worn by the men and by the older woman, combined with the presence of the chicken-wire fence and the corrugated iron behind them, gives the picture the impression of a rural setting. Although there are more markers of the time of the present visible in the picture, there is also a sense of a time set slightly back from the present: the group stare into the late afternoon sun, which gives the picture a ‘golden’ glow. The third photograph depicts a group of people recognisable as Vietnamese. The cityscape of central Melbourne in the far background and the tall apartment blocks closer in the background anchor the picture in the present day, and even suggest the near future. A city landscape spreads out behind the group: there is little to suggest an idyllic suburbia.
The bodies in these three photographs can be seen to be territorialised by the discourses of the family and of history, articulated as recognisable groups, organised into coherent entities and ordered so as to produce a particular meaning: a vision of Australia in the past, present and future. The series of photographs imagines bodies, times and spaces in a specific way in order establish this meaning, rendering the three groups as distinct, separated, homogeneous and ordered. A progression of perceived family homes, from bushland dwelling to rural homestead to urban apartment or ‘flat’, stratifies the bodies pictured as conforming to a similar progression. The social institution of the family is overcoded as the grounds for examining differences in physical appearance as a marker for broader social differences.

However, the photographs can also be considered as being open to other perspectives, to other fragments of perspectives. The simultaneity of the photographs works to counteract their narrativisation in *A Day in the Life of Australia*, and to meld the three groups of people into each other. Freed from the book’s spatial ordering, and from the family ‘template’, the bodies open themselves up to the possibilities of new relationships. Activities such as playing, talking, eating and drinking, working and relaxing suggest new ways of bodies making connections, of becoming multiple, of forming packs. The very fact that photographs suspend bodies, times and spaces in order to express them as a fixed relationship indicates that bodies in motion, engaged in specific activities, can evade territorialisation and respond to acts of incorporation.
Foregrounding the conventions of the ‘family pose’ adopted by the people in each picture, and drawing attention to what is taken for granted in assuming a perception of ‘family’, provides a reminder that these representations of family are produced by bodily practices rather than by an essential form or institution, and that the category of family is open to contention. This in turn highlights new possibilities for the bodies represented, and draws the attention of the viewer toward the future, toward bodies in the act of becoming.

The problem of re-placing bodies bespoken by ‘the family’ and by narrative in relation to the BwO produced at the same time requires being open to desire in strategic ways, that is through an awareness of the conditions of marginalisation and territorialisation. While *A Day in the Life of Australia* presents a vast array of different and divergent bodies which suggest a multiplicity representative of Australia, such multiplicities are made reducible by discourses which stratify them and standardise them. The discourse of the family, that is the discourse generating an official version of family recognised by government and other authorities, separates bodies into groups, highlights similarities in physical appearance and attendant social assumptions, produces hierarchies within families and between families, and utilises referential times and spaces in producing specific meanings. It also traces a coherent path through generations, attributing families to common ancestors and a common past. This in turn contributes to the discourse of history and to the production of a referential order of spaces and times. Confusing the categorisation of bodies in the series of
photographs by connecting bodies and spaces in alternative ways resists their functioning as official representations. To consider Aboriginal people as engaged in rural activities such as agriculture and the maintenance of livestock, to consider Vietnamese people as living in Australia in pre-colonial times, to consider white Australians as new immigrants, is to bring tension to an official version of Australian history.

The three photographs can be viewed as expressing ‘packs’ physically confined and marginalised by official categories and official discourses, but possessing potentials imagined by the BwO. Each ‘pack’ exceeds the boundaries of history and family: the first photograph imagines a time before European settlement, before Federation; the second photograph imagines a space removed spatially, and thus temporally, from a metropolitan centre; and the third photograph imagines a space outside Australia. This transgression of official temporal and spatial boundaries marks the bodies in each picture as anomalous.

Considered as simultaneous shots of Australia, the three photographs offer up the bodies represented to be connected as a multiplicity, shifting the borderlines of the group out so as to encompass them all, the potentialities of the pack now increased by these connections. Their becoming-multiple constitutes a material act of production, an unfolding of the BwO, existing alongside the officially established categories and bringing tension to them. ‘Family’ becomes something other than a nuclear, discursive, resolved state: it becomes a
Three Days in the Life of Australia

borderline subject to spatial, temporal and physical change. While the photographs focus on the bodies present in each, the BwO connects them with other bodies, bodies from the past and the future, bodies they have or will come into contact with, their own bodies in other times and other places, the bodies of the photographers. The BwO imagines them as a multiplicity, expressed as a borderline, open to connections with other multiplicities.

Considered as a multiplicity, this series of three photographs displays the potential to resist its stratification, its signification and its territorialisation by official discourses. As the boundaries of ‘family’ are thus brought into question in A Day in the Life of Australia, in turn so are the boundaries of Australia as nation. The connections imagined between bodies by the BwO expresses the Australian nation as a multiplicity, exceeding the geographic boundaries of Australia. Indigenous Australians, exceeding the temporal boundaries of the nation; white Australians, inhabiting spaces and times more closely connected to the official boundaries of the nation, but always crossing these boundaries in more specific ways, such as the transgression of metropolitan centres; and immigrant Australians, exceeding the spatial boundaries of the nation, transgress the official boundaries of Australia, rendering them a spatial, temporal, physical borderline, a multiplicity open to new connections.

Today I have considered Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of the body without organs in order to interrogate critically how the social formation of nation
organises the bodies of its subjects to conform with national boundaries and
categories, utilising strategic representations of time and space. Other social
formations such as the family can reinforce this physical organisation by
presenting themselves as homogeneous social and cultural units. However, the
tension involved in the imagining and realising of these performances can be
revealed by the potential of bodies to exceed these social categories and resist
their arbitrary boundaries. Tomorrow I wish to consider how *A Day in the Life
of Australia* attempts to ‘contain’ Australian bodies within given national
boundaries and within the performative boundaries of the project.

**Matter:**

Yesterday I examined Husserl’s distinction between ‘real’ and ‘ideal’ objects
and argued that the boundaries between the two were contingent upon specific
acts of production. For example, in its manufacture and in its use in
photography, the camera may be considered a ‘real’ object, having a
repeatability in many like examples. However, within the context of *A Day in
the Life of Australia*, where photographs are being displayed in a discrete,
ordered way, open to selection and comparison, the camera is removed from the
physical, spatial and temporal process of production, and thus becomes a
singular, referential entity, an ‘ideal’ object. Such a resolved formulation of
objectivity leaves room for doubt, particularly in the equating of ideality with
referentiality and singularity, conditions which possibly fall short of Husserl’s
criteria for *a priori* knowledge.

Today, I wish to look at Derrida’s writings on Husserl in order to consider how the book *A Day in the Life of Australia* is able to be materially produced in time and space and to simultaneously generate a referential representation of Australia. Derrida sees Husserl as attempting to straddle the gap between two mutually exclusive ways of theorising meaning.

There are layers of meaning which appear as systems, or complexes, or static configurations, within which … are possible a movement and a genesis which must obey both the legality proper to and the functional significance of the structure under consideration. Other layers, sometimes more profound, sometimes more superficial, are given in the essential mode of creation and movement, that is, in the modes of primordial origin, of becoming, or of tradition; and these require that in speaking of them one uses the language of genesis, supposing that there is one, or that there is only one.49

The object of Husserl’s methodology is to reconcile conceptions pertaining to ‘genesis’ and to ‘structure’, a distinction Derrida identifies as philosophically corresponding to that between phenomenology and structuralism. However, because a structuralist reading requires the articulation of a total system of meaning contingent upon relations between elements within the structure, while a phenomenological act seeks to attain a ‘pure’ origin of the structure in question, such a reconciliation is impossible. The attempt to establish in total any particular structural system of meaning is rejected in favour of intuitive reasoning leading to immanent knowledge. Derrida identifies an inconsistency, however, in the way that Husserl exemplifies his argument:

*Sometimes* Husserl considers geometry and science in general as certain forms among others of what he calls the cultural world. In effect they
borrow all their characteristics from it. This world exists entirely ‘through
tradition’. And the sciences are only some traditions among others …

But at other times, on the contrary, Husserl describes science as a unique
and archetypal form of traditional culture. Besides all the characteristics
that it has in common with other cultural formations, science claims an
essential privilege: it does not permit itself to be enclosed in any
historically determined culture as such, for it has the universal validity of
truth.50

For Derrida, Husserl’s reference to geometry and specifically the Pythagorean
theorem presents an example which is already known, or is at least assumed to
be known by Husserl’s readers (the square of the hypotenuse of a right-angled
triangle is equal to the sum of the squares of the other two sides). However, in
articulating such a priori knowledge in the general, Husserl switches from a
search by deduction for an absolute origin to a notion of the genesis of the state
of ideal objectivity, attainable through intuitive reasoning. What Derrida
identifies in this approach is a slippage between an already known and identified
ideal object and the metaphysical state of ideal objectivity - the ontological
difference between presence and absence. While refuting neither the notion of a
priori knowledge existing as truth, nor the idea of tracing meaning or sense back
to a first instance, Derrida argues that both methodologies assume language as a
‘vessel’ conveying a self-present, absolute meaning rather than as a constitutive
necessity.

Speech is no longer simply the expression of what, without it, would
already be an object: caught again in its primordial purity, speech
constitutes the object and is a concrete juridical condition of truth. The
paradox is that, without the apparent fall back into language and thereby
into history, a fall which would alienate the ideal purity of sense, sense
would remain an empirical formation imprisoned as fact in a psychological
subjectivity - in the inventor’s head. Historical incarnation sets free the
transcendental, instead of binding it …
To constitute an ideal object is to put it at the permanent disposition of a pure gaze. Now, before being the constituted and exceeded auxiliary of an act which proceeds toward the truth of sense, linguistic ideality is the milieu in which the ideal object settles as what is sedimented or deposited. But here the act of primordial depositing is not the recording of a private thing, but the production of a common object, i.e., of an object whose original owner is thus dispossessed. Thus language preserves truth, so that truth can be regarded in the henceforth nonephemeral illumination of its sojourn; but also so that it can lengthen that stay. For there would be no truth without that word-hoarding, which is not only what deposits and keeps hold of the truth, but also that without which a project of truth and the idea of an infinite task would be unimaginable. That is why language is the element of the only tradition in which sense-retention and sense-prospecting are possible.\(^{51}\)

This does not imply, however, that language is able to act as an agent of reconciliation between the genetic and structural methodologies. What it does provide, however, is the possibility of transgressing subjectivity and of communicating and sharing meaning. This is not sufficient, though, for ideas or meanings to become objective. Derrida argues that for this to occur, language must be able to inscribe such ideas and meanings in time and space without the requirement of the presence of all those participating in the specific act of communication.

By itself the speaking subject … is incapable of absolutely grounding the ideal Objectivity of sense … To be absolutely ideal, the object must still be freed of every tie with an actually present subjectivity in general. Therefore it must perdure “even when no-one has actualised it in evidence.” Speech has freed the object of individual subjectivity but leaves it bound to its beginning and to the synchrony of an exchange within the institutive community. The possibility of writing will assure the absolute traditionalisation of the object, its absolute ideal Objectivity - i.e., the purity of its relation to a universal transcendental subjectivity. Writing will do this by emancipating sense from its actually present evidence for a real subject and from its present circulation within a determined community.\(^{52}\)

Writing resists and brings into question the privilege of speech as constituting the union of voice and thought, that is, as constituting self-presence. Derrida
presents writing as providing the possibility of any subject’s absence from the object in question. However, as was discussed in Part 1, language ensures that meaning constituted by it will always be shaped by differance, by that slippage between an object and its inscription in a space and time removed from it. It is writing which, in providing a way of embodying language, guarantees its ambiguity. Derrida argues that while the metaphysical notion of truth exists because of language, its constitution in the form of particular examples within the process of language will always produce slippages in meaning. Husserl’s attempt to bring a priori truths and case studies into contact with each other, then, is subject to the peril of such a slippage.

The authentic act of writing is a transcendental reduction performed by and toward the we. But since, in order to escape worldliness, sense must first be able to be set down in the world and be deposited in sensible spatiotemporality, it must put its pure intentional ideality, i.e., its truth-sense, in danger. Thus a possibility, which even here accords only with empiricism and nonphilosophy, appears in a philosophy which is (at least because of certain motifs) the contrary of empiricism: the possibility of truth’s disappearance … What disappears is what is annihilated, but also what ceases, intermittently or definitely, to appear in fact yet without affecting its being or being-sense.53

In order for a priori truth to exist, in order for it to become accessible, it must be preceded by an a priori notion of writing, a ‘first’ notion of writing spatially and temporally removed from specific acts of writing. Reference to ‘real’ examples or recourse to a self-present subject immediately invalidates any case for objectivity. The structure of writing, because of its spatial and temporal removal from its object, always constitutes the subject as absent as well. Ideal objects, then, can only be intuitively reasoned, realised, in the absence of ‘real’ objects.
The relationship between Derrida’s Edmund Husserl’s ‘Origin of Geometry’: An Introduction and Husserl’s essay itself gives a clue to, while not definitively exemplifying, the relationship between real and ideal objects. Derrida’s essay, by the fact of its title, resists closure and resolution by anticipating the act of reading Husserl’s essay, and yet treats Husserl’s essay as incomplete, or at least his project as unfinished, attempting to present an extension of Husserl’s argument. Such spatial and temporal transgressions are only possible in the absence of Husserl’s essay - in a space and time removed from the essay. However, the material object of Derrida’s book, in its English translation, questions such a relation by appending Husserl’s essay to Derrida’s ‘Introduction’. A temporal order is established, one which inverts the historical order. The book embodies the absence of Derrida, of Husserl, and of any direct contact with a reader, but also constitutes a way of making what they have written material, of making it simultaneous with bodies, time and space. The problem is, though, that only the relationship between the writings can thus be imagined and realised, not writing itself. Absence cannot be produced through presence.

I cannot reproduce the Winter Garden Photograph. For you, it would be nothing but an indifferent picture, one of the thousand manifestations of the “ordinary”; it cannot in any way constitute the visible object of a science; it cannot establish an objectivity, in the positive sense of the word …

Yesterday, in examining the contact sheet displayed in A Day in the Life of Australia, I compared the existence of the photographs, or exposures, as multiple, with the existence of the camera as singular and referential. In the light
of Derrida’s writings on Husserl, I wish to consider whether a distinction can be drawn between the camera as a singular, referential object and the camera as objective, within the context of the book. The camera and the book are removed from each other by the presence of the photographs taken. The photographs are not only ordered temporally and spatially themselves, but also place the camera and the book into a temporal sequence of production: camera, then photograph, then book. The camera and the book are removed from each other both spatially and temporally. And yet yesterday I argued that the photographs ‘fused’ the camera and the reader as a self-present subject. Such an assertion now needs qualification: what is fused by the photographs is the idea of the camera and the idea of the reader, both singular, both absent. The presence of a real camera and a real book precludes this fusion.

The photograph expresses a spatial and temporal displacement from the camera which has produced it. The camera, a ‘real’ object, produces the photograph as another ‘real’ object in order to represent matter in another space and time. The photograph constitutes both a real object and a material act of inscription. The book *A Day in the Life of Australia* orders photographs temporally and arranges them spatially in order to represent something without a ‘real’ existence - Australia. The book, a ‘real’ object, attempts to establish a structure in which a ‘comprehensive’ or ‘total’ picture of Australia is presented. The photographs become the book through a structural process attempting to establish meaning as cumulative and self-evident. The camera becomes the book through a process of
genesis, however: the perspective of the ‘intuitive’, ‘professional’ camera is assumed as the book’s perspective, attempting to spatially and temporally connect two acts of production historically separated.

The book’s ‘genetic’ production, as opposed to its strategic structure, can be seen to rely on the possibility of communicating a sense of ‘Australia’ to more than just a constituent (and represented) community. Such a possibility is represented by photography; not the subjective, material practice of photography, but by the objective ‘language’ of photography. It is such a conception of photography which allows the material connection of the camera and the photograph, and of the camera and the book. It is such a conception of photography which can be seen to function as writing, as constituting differance.

_A Day in the Life of Australia_ expresses a temporal and spatial slippage in meaning in its relation with Australia the nation, but in attempting to inscribe ‘Australia’ as object, the book becomes referential, simultaneously an appendix and an introduction. It could be argued, then, that differance is a condition of referentiality, the consequence of any act of authority, or of representation. The book’s material existence precludes it from any claims to _a priori_ truth, but at the same time it leaves it open to be imagined and realised within other spatial, temporal and material relations.

Every ‘language’, every writing is also a material practice, a way of connecting
matter in time and space. Photography emphasises its existence as practice where and when it foregrounds its materiality: where it anticipates its place as a photograph in a book or in relation to other photographs, where it anticipates the conditions in which a photograph will be viewed, where it foregrounds the photographer’s physical subjectivity and the space and time of the camera. Such measures emphasise the subjectivity of photography, resisting its claims to objectivity, authority and referentiality, and opening it up to connections with other material practices, such as performance.

In Part 1, I argued that for performance to resist being colonised and administrated by other academic disciplines, and indeed to inform them, it must continually search for and explore ways of making writing simultaneous with other performance activities, and dependent on the bodies, space and times it interacts with. Yesterday I argued that objects are able to become referential and singular in relation to other objects, an assertion I qualified today by conceding that it is the idea of an object, i.e. in its ideal form, which becomes referential, and that this idea cannot be historically connected to an object which is material and present. While what I have written yesterday is recorded as such and thus constitutes an historical fact (without necessarily making a claim to truth), Part 1 assumes a referential existence (but not an ideal one), not established by historical precedence, but by its removal from the time and space of this journal.

In order to resist the referentiality of writing, and at the same time resist
assumption by other disciplines, then, performance must make writing material, must make it a ‘real’ object, by re-placing it in the temporally and spatially traceable production process. The negotiation of writing by bodies in concealed times and places of production, such as rehearsals and research activities, must be foregrounded. The very fact of the spatial confinement, temporariness and physical subjectivity of performance, and its implication of all participants, holds the key to making writing material, and revealing all discourses as equally displaced from ideality and ‘truth’.

[T]he great Leviathan is that one creature in the world which must remain unpainted to the last. True, one portrait may hit the mark much nearer than another, but none can hit it with any very considerable degree of exactness. So there is no earthly way of finding out precisely what the whale really looks like. And the only mode in which you can derive even a tolerable idea of his living contour, is by going a whaling yourself; but by so doing, you run no small risk of being eternally stove and sunk by him. Wherefore, it seems to me you had best not be too fastidious in your curiosity touching this Leviathan.\(^5\)

**Time:**

Yesterday I considered the representation of time in *A Day in the Life of Australia* by way of reference to Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept of the chronotope. In examining the way time was imagined and realised in producing meaning in the photographs and in the book, I looked at how particular temporal contexts were established through their connections with particular spaces, and argued that the book presented these chronotopes as temporally connected, as processual. However, within the given temporal boundaries of the project, that is between the first photograph early in the morning and the last photograph at
midnight, the chronotope of the chivalric romance appeared ‘most’ referential, evidenced by the way the participating photographers were portrayed as intrepid heroes, their subjectivity foregrounded.

Two questions occur today about the temporal connections I have examined. In providing a series of chronotopes as forms for making narrative time ‘concrete’, Bakhtin examines an exclusively European literary history and its connection with European folklore. The question of what bearing such categories may have on the study of cultural forms in contexts outside Europe is compounded by the question of differance, of the temporal and spatial displacement of meaning, to which literary categories such as the chronotope are subject. With these two questions in mind, I wish to consider Homi Bhabha’s notion of ‘time-lag’ today, in relation both to photography and to performance, and the possibility of imagining and realising Australia as nation.

In the performance of human doing … emerges a figure of cultural time where perfectibility is not ineluctably tied to the myth of progressivism … What is crucial to such a vision of the future is the belief that we must not merely change the narratives of our histories, but transform our sense of what it means to live, to be, in other times and different spaces, both human and historical.56

In theorising the material conditions of post-colonial resistance, Bhabha seeks to avoid a dialectical formulation of the relationship between coloniser and colonised, asserting that such a formulation would produce a simple relation of opposition between two cultural hierarchies, conducive to being re-cast within an equitable universality. He argues that resistive political action should account
for the translation of the terms and conditions constituent of the colonial encounter, as well as recognise the differential structure of such an encounter. This would, in turn, resist the presentation of such encounters as ‘closed’ or resolved, privileged by a dominant version of history. Attempting to theorise a context for such translation, Bhabha argues that linguistic encounters between colonial authority and colonial subject constitute real occurrences, ‘enunciations’, which produce an imagined space, a ‘Third Space’, a space of the unconscious, of translation, of difference. Such a context prevents colonial encounters from being historically incorporated, resolved in the past.

The intervention of the Third Space of enunciation, which makes the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process, destroys this mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is customarily revealed as an integrated, open, expanding code. Such an intervention quite properly challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenising, unifying force, authenticated by the originary Past, kept alive in the national tradition of the people. In other words, the disruptive temporality of enunciation displaces the narrative of the Western nation.57

Inasmuch as they are made possible by language, all political acts are also cultural acts, according to Bhabha. Consequently, political demands for compliance and civil obedience can be equated with cultural demands, each of them imposing complicit hierarchies. An example of such a demand for compliance was presented in Part 1, in the consideration of Richard Schechner’s formulation of theatre as a cultural component of the wider social category of performance. In this encounter, the audience produced by a specific cultural act is translated and enunciated as the component of a general social category. Culture, however, also transgresses the spatial and temporal boundaries of colony: it is generated by migration, displacement and relocation as well,
experiences which foreground it as a practice of survival rather than as an expanding repository of knowledge.

If culture as epistemology focuses on function and intention, then culture as enunciation focuses on signification and institutionalisation ... The epistemological is locked into the hermeneutic circle, in the description of cultural elements as they tend towards a totality. The enunciative is a more dialogic process that attempts to track displacements and realignments that are the effects of cultural antagonisms and articulations - subverting the rationale of the hegemonic moment and relocating alternative, hybrid sites of cultural negotiation.58

Migration and diaspora provide material sites of culture not directly subject to the ambivalent demands of colonial authority. They also produce subjectivities in which the coloniser/colonised opposition is absent, and with it the colonial categories utilised in the translation and homogenisation of these encounters. From such perspectives, colonial enunciations in the form of cultural demands can no longer appeal to a referential time and space in signifying authority: they become ‘non-sentences’, temporally and spatially outside the sentence, indeterminate and disjunctive. What can no longer be assumed is that the enunciating subject is the one and the same as the historical agent: agency becomes contingent within the spatially and temporally ‘outside’ moment where meaning is negotiated. This moment is what Bhabha terms the ‘time-lag’, the gap between an enunciated sign’s actual occurrence and its discursive appearance as a symbol of colonial authority.

The contingency of the subject as agent is articulated in a double dimension, a dramatic action. The signified is distanced; the resulting time-lag opens up the space between the lexical and the grammatical, between enunciation and enounced, in-between the anchoring of signifiers. Then, suddenly, this in-between spatial dimension, this distancing, converts itself into the temporality of the ‘throw’ that iteratively (re)turns the subject as a moment of conclusion and control: a historically or contextually specific
The exposition of colonial agency, that is of intention and purpose, as ‘retroactive’, within a time-lag, opens up a space of undecidability, a margin of hybridity bringing tension to the notion of ‘the present’ as absolute presence. The present is reconstituted as an amalgam of traces and retentions which can neither be reduced nor resolved to a fixed origin: it represents neither the immediacy of experience nor a break with the past. The space ‘in-between’ the present of the enunciation becomes a site for marginal perspectives to translate the enunciation and return the subject as reinscribed, as a newly constituted, hybridised subject. Bhabha argues that translation ‘stages’ cultural difference by emphasising its process in (or in-between) the present.

The ‘newness’ of migrant or minority discourse has to be discovered in medias res: a newness that is not part of the ‘progressivist’ division between past and present, or the archaic and the modern; nor is it a ‘newness’ that can be contained in the mimesis of original and copy … The newness of cultural translation is akin to … the ‘foreignness of languages’ - that problem of representation native to representation itself.60

The time-lag is presented as a structure for representing postcolonial agency. However, Bhabha questions theories advocating the splitting and constant reforming of the subject, which declare a ‘transcendent becoming’, arguing that such a notion constructs only a spatial difference while assuming a universal enunciative present. For the time-lag to constitute a moment of historical transformation, the specific historical conditions of the enunciation must be made clear. Postcolonial intention and purpose require specific temporal, spatial, discursive contexts in order to be realised. It is for this reason that Bhabha is
critical of the use of the categories of race, gender and class, which he identifies as signs of modernity, in order to universalise experiences of marginality. He argues that each of these categories, that is, ways of categorising the ‘other’, is the sign of a temporal as well as a spatial difference: they are ‘time-lagged’ signs.

The Western discourses of modernity appear discrete and resolved within a (retroactive, time-lagged) formulation of the present as full presence, as contemporary, as ‘now’. This in turn establishes them as an apparently immediate perspective or subjectivity from which to produce ‘newness’, a ‘non-place’ of enunciation.

For the emergence of modernity - as an ideology of beginning, modernity as the new - the template of this ‘non-place’ becomes the colonial space. It signifies this in a double way. The colonial space is the terra incognita or the terra nulla, the empty or wasted land whose history has to be begun, whose archives must be filled out; whose future progress must be secured in modernity. But the colonial space also stands for the despotic time of the Orient that becomes a great problem for the definition of modernity and its inscription of the history of the colonised from the perspective of the West.61

Bhabha argues that postcolonial texts emphasise and re-assert the enunciative moment of modernity in order to reinscribe the subject as hybridised. As a resistive practice hybridity reveals what Bhabha terms ‘the projective past’, a perspective which reads modernity as one historical narrative among others it will encounter in the future. From such a perspective modernity can be apprehended in the act of translating and reassuming agency, focusing on the process taking place within the time-lag, “the passage of a projective past in the
very time of its performance”.62 In this way postcolonial texts, in their engagement with modernity, can be seen as re-claiming the past as accessible and open to translation.

It is the function of the lag to slow down the linear, progressive time of modernity to reveal its ‘gesture’, ... ‘the pauses and stresses of the whole performance’. This can only be achieved - as Walter Benjamin remarked of Brecht’s epic theatre - by damming the stream of real life, by bringing the flow to a standstill in a reflux of astonishment. When the dialectic of modernity is brought to a standstill, then the temporal action of modernity - its progressive, future drive - is staged, revealing ‘everything that is involved in the act of staging per se’. This slowing down, or lagging, impels the ‘past’, projects it, gives its dead symbols the circulatory life of the ‘sign’ of the present, of passage, the quickening of the quotidian. Where these temporalities touch contingently, their spatial boundaries metonymically overlapping, at that moment their margins are lagged, sutured, by the indeterminate articulation of the ‘disjunctive’ present. Time-lag keeps alive the making of the past.63

Bhabha’s conception of the utterance enunciated within the context of a linguistic encounter links it to Bakhtin’s notion of language as processual and shaped by dialogue, oriented towards both the ‘already uttered’ and the anticipated answer. Each enunciation can be seen as textually ‘containing’ heteroglossia, voices representing distinct social positionings encountering each other in a continual process of negotiation. Furthermore, in his critique of modernity, Bhabha echoes Bakhtin in identifying, in the context of European literature, an unwillingness to move forward temporally as a condition of the construction of social hierarchies as spatial hierarchies. The present as presence, the immediate, the contemporary, is privileged over the absent future. The past, severed from any traceable temporal connection with the present and future, becomes referential, historically factual and authoritative, a spatial rather than temporal connection.
It is within this break from the past, which establishes historical authority, that Bhabha parts company with Bakhtin, however. The re-assertion of the real time of the literary utterance, its enunciation as an authoritative representation/translation of the strange, foreign, alien, miraculous ‘other’, presents it as a colonial act articulating political demands in the form of cultural criteria. The subjectivity reinscribed by the encounter assumes the perspective of colonial emissary, of the adventurer, the romantic or chivalric hero, ‘hero’ as carrying the literary value of masculine, active, dominant. Postcolonial subjectivity is denied or marginalised: knowledge, resilience, patience and cunning are mediated by subservience, passivity, fear and superstition. Chronotopes impose values which, in ‘materialising’ European literary time in space, objectify the colonised.

European literary criteria leave only the chronotope of the clown or fool accessible to the postcolonial subject, masked, marginal figures whose reality is bound by their role. The terms themselves carry a negative, degraded connotation. Such a perspective, however, represents a recognisable subjectivity, one which strategically misreads the actions and intentions of those observed, and thus can be exploited in interrupting the seamless flow of narrative, foregrounding the machinations of translation and negotiation. Bakhtin argues that this chronotope transgresses literal meaning via allegory, a strategy which can draw upon connections with folklore and traditions other than European, and
can thus bring tension to any notion of closure and resolution. The clown or fool imagines other time and spaces in the present, realising a ‘time-lag’.

However, the time-lag draws attention to the potential complicity of carnival in ‘returning’ the subjectivity of the coloniser. The ‘world upside down’ is capable of merely reversing political positions while maintaining the social relations and the political order they represent. Tied to and bounded by an officially recognised time, carnival can be seen to justify both a time of liberation and a time of surrender to the dominant social order. However, considered as an encounter of translation in real time, what amounts to parody in the relationship between official and folk culture becomes something more uncomfortable in a colonial context. The time-lag forces coloniser and colonised to ‘re-enact the crime’ in a context where ‘no offence is intended’: linguistic meaning becomes physical meaning, and the encounter is made subject to bodily references which bring tension to colonial categories, exposing the violence they assume and embody. As a context for hybridity, carnival imbues the reinscribed subject/agent with the trace of an ambivalent laughter both liberating and menacing, the promise of future encounters. As Bhabha stresses, however, the temporal and spatial conditions, and the political and discursive conditions, of these encounters must be specified in order for them to become moments of historical transformation.

In his references to the ‘dramatic action’ articulating the contingency of the
subject as agent, the ‘staging’ of cultural difference and of modernity, and the
‘performance’ of the projective past, Bhabha can be seen to be appropriating
theatrical metaphors in order to describe the colonial encounter in the process of
its translation. Although stating that the site of the colonial enunciation is
crossed by the difference of writing, Bhabha appears to be struggling with
Derrida’s conception of writing as a temporally and spatially displaced
inscription. The endless slippage of meaning and the indeterminacy of traces and
retentions do not in themselves adequately specify the spatial, temporal, physical
and material conditions of the colonial encounter, nor that of the colonial
subject’s marginalisation. In juxtaposing configurations of space, time, bodies
and matter, however, performance affords differently constituted ‘differential
trace structures’, that is, different cultural perspectives, an imagined and realised
context in which to encounter and translate each other.

Performances also continue processually, responding to particular circumstances
and particular needs, prefigured not by an abstract difference but situated within
an ongoing process of performance experiences, activities already started upon,
relationships already explored. Such a movement forward is able to ‘erase’ the
historically resolved past while enacting the projected past. Bhabha’s metaphors,
however, treat the practices of performance as also resolved, homogenising the
multiplicity of activities involved in the connecting of times, spaces, bodies and
other matter. His argument assumes performance as a ‘vessel’ able to convey a
self-present, ‘total’ meaning, able to reveal “everything that is involved in the
act of staging *per se*”. Performance is cast here as a supplement which restores subjectivity and presence to postcolonial texts, to writing, rather than as an ongoing temporal, spatial, physical and material practice with its own critical perspectives. Just as Husserl addresses his notion of ideal objects in the absence of geometry or a geometric purpose, Bhabha constructs his notion of the time-lag in the absence of performance.

While the time-lag strips performance of its potential for critical agency, it also poses problems for the consideration of nation as a unified social formation. Yesterday I looked at how *A Day in the Life of Australia* utilised the time-frame of a day as given or nominal in order to portray the people and spaces of Australia as open to discovery. The assumption that such a day was a typical one affirms the narrative of the Australian nation as a series of homogeneous days, each of them discrete and resolved, each of them constituted by a series of ordered events. The temporality of the time-lag, however, disrupts this narrative, emphasising the contingency of any officially enunciated national ‘beginning’, and making room for indigenous, migrant and more specifically marginalised perspectives, which transgress and translate the demands of this beginning.

The photograph, fine child of the age of mechanical reproduction, is only the most peremptory of a huge modern accumulation of documentary evidence (birth certificates, diaries, report cards, letters, medical records, and the like) which simultaneously records a certain apparent continuity and emphasises its loss from memory. Out of this estrangement comes a conception of personhood, of identity … which, because it can not be ‘remembered’, must be narrated … These narratives … are set in homogeneous, empty time … As with modern persons, so it is with nations. Awareness of being embedded in secular, serial time, with all its
implications of continuity, yet of ‘forgetting’ the experience of this continuity … engenders the need for a narrative of ‘identity’. 64

Yesterday I looked at how a ‘distorted’ sense of time was conveyed in *A Day in the Life of Australia* in the series of photographs taken in Adelaide Gaol. Through the choice of film stock, establishing and closing shots, and the actual number of photographs presented, I argued that a sense of ‘prison time’ moving slowly in relation to time ‘outside’ was imagined along with a sense of spatial confinement. Today these photographs can be further qualified: what is presented is a perceived unwillingness to move forward temporally, equated with a resistance to ‘progress’. Entering prison means going back in time, cut off from the present. However prison constitutes a practice as well as an institution, and it is in this respect that it can be seen to occur in real time, and to be connected to acts of translation.

The connection imagined between the last picture in the Adelaide Gaol series and the photograph immediately following, of the High Court judges’ chamber in Canberra, is a spatial one, the prisoner subject to a law situated in the past, from which he is temporally separated, and consequently suspended in space and time. However, the act of judgement, of sentencing, constitutes an enunciation, an encounter in which two or more parties attempt to translate the law and each other’s justification of it. Because the meaning of such an encounter can never be unified or resolved, its historical documentation will always constitute a site of ambivalence. Presence is ensured only by precedence. The sentence or verdict
as enunciation re-opens the referential, sealed past. Within the context of the time-lag the photographs of the prisoner and of the judges are connected to acts of sentencing historically prior to the nation: to transportation as a judicial enunciation, an act of spatial displacement to a ‘non-place’ (which becomes a colonial space); to the subjecting of indigenous people to the criteria of colonial law and to spaces of confinement separated from time.

The two photographs of groups of people drinking outside a pub in Berrimah, considered yesterday as examples of how exclusion and segregation are perpetuated in ‘pub-time’, supposedly a collective time, also bring tension to the narrative of the Australian nation if considered as an encounter in real time. Like the photographs of the prisoner and the judges, there is a sense of waiting, of time slowing down, and in this case, of trouble brewing. The Aboriginal group are presented in a smaller photograph as well as being smaller in number. Encounters between European settlers and Aboriginal people prior to the official national beginning can be connected with the encounter imagined in these photographs, the violence, concealed historically, imagined and realised within the time-lagged ‘present’.

In each of these examples, the notion of the time-lag is able to ‘re-open’ the past to new connections in sites constituted by more than one photograph. In A Day in the Life of Australia, where images representative of the nation are narrativised in order to produce meaning, the gaps between the pictures indicate
sites where spatial connections and hierarchies, indicative of ‘Australia’, are produced at the expense of temporal continuity. Presented as discrete, ordered and homogeneous, and ‘freed’ from a connection with an expository time, the photographs assume an immediacy, a presence, an authoritative perspective. The time-lag is able to emerge from ‘within’ the imagined spatial movement from picture to picture: it is the movement which signals a severance from temporal connections but at the same time constitutes a site which can be considered as an encounter. It is in this ‘third space’ that marginal perspectives, marginal discourses can negotiate and displace the privileged subject, in medias res.

Space:
In examining Michel Foucault’s conceptions of heterotopia and utopia yesterday, and their implications for considering how a hierarchy of spaces is used to imagine and realise nation in A Day in the Life of Australia, I briefly discussed the reading of dramatic texts, or scripts, in relation to participating in theatrical productions. I argued that each activity involved a process of imagining and realising, a process which was spatial, temporal and physical. Today I wish to address the possible doubt that this argument might provoke in relation to Foucault’s conception of utopia as “fundamentally unreal”. If I am to assert that utopias and heterotopias are connected temporally, then both imagination and realisation must occur in time and space. However, Foucault’s description of utopia does not necessarily claim such an existence: it appears to
assume ‘imagination’ as a ‘mental’ process, occupying a unified space and time displaced from the material world. Because such a space and time implies a temporal priority over material practices, this ‘separation’ has a bearing on the extent to which the space of nation is open to transformation.

In *The Production of Space*, Henri Lefebvre takes issue with Foucault, as well as with Jacques Derrida and other post-structural theorists, for failing to describe the space of epistemology, of knowledge (and imagination), and how it differs from the ‘real’ world in which people interact. He charges these theorists with ignoring the gap separating linguistic mental space from the social space in which language becomes practice.

They leap over an entire area, ignoring the need for any logical links, and justify this in the vaguest possible manner by invoking, as the need arises, some such notion as *coupure* or rupture or break. They thus interrupt the continuity of their argument in the name of a discontinuity which their own methodology ought logically to prohibit.65

Lefebvre argues that a society’s conceptions of space, both abstract and material, are socially produced, the result of an ongoing process which, although strategically concealed, is historically traceable. While this ‘social’ space is neither a template for material production nor an accumulation of knowledge, it constitutes a social product which encompasses both mental and physical space. In analysing social space, Lefebvre focuses on three interconnected ‘moments’, corresponding to perceived, conceived and ‘lived’ knowledge: spatial practice, which is concerned with the spatial relationships characterising specific social formations within the context of production and reproduction; representations of
space, concerned with the relations of production, the conceptualisation of space and ‘dominant’ spaces; and representational spaces, concerned with ‘lived’ and dominated spaces, and with art and symbolism.

Lefebvre states that each society produces its own social space, and that analysing this space and the process by which it is produced reveals the conditions required for a specific political order to be maintained. Focusing on Western neocapitalist society as characteristically ‘modern’ space, Lefebvre identifies a close association between urban life and people’s daily routines as a principal component of its spatial practice, even where many people live and work in rural areas. Such a practice is consistent rather than coherent. Representations of space tend towards a system of verbal signs, while representational spaces, overlaying physical space, tend towards systems of non-verbal signs, the logic of which, in each case, is tied to economic growth.

These three interconnected spatial moments operate together in producing a consensus among members of society. Spaces impose tacit agreement about their uses, accessibility, ownership and status. Spaces invoke governmental, legal, religious, scientific and historical reference in ‘placing’ people. While ‘lived’ space historically precedes conceived space, representations of space invert this order, presenting space as ‘already worked out’, already designated.

Every space is already in place before the appearance in it of actors; these actors are collective as well as individual subjects inasmuch as the individuals are always members of groups or classes seeking to appropriate the space in question. This pre-existence of space conditions the subject’s
Lefebvre rejects the concepts of language, text and discourse as suitable for the analysis of space, proposing instead that the three spatial moments he identifies produce a ‘texture’ rather than a text, a field of networks or webs. While discourses can provide descriptions of the flow of energy and of bodies and matter via these webs, they are unable to explain the social practices thus enacted: “they are, precisely, acted - and not read.” 67 What discourses fail to take into account, according to Lefebvre, is that while spaces are able to mediate bodies and allow them to apprehend other bodies and matter, they are simultaneously subject to measurement and definition by bodies. This duality can only be perceived in a context which is physical, temporal and spatial.

In differentiating between spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces, Lefebvre refers to a conception of theatrical space which brings actors, ‘characters’, audience, author and text into contact with each other without uniting them.

By means of such theatrical interplay bodies are able to pass from a ‘real’, immediately experienced space (the pit, the stage) to a perceived space - a third space which is no longer either scenic or public. At once fictitious and
real, this third space is classical theatrical space … Theatrical space certainly implies a representation of space - scenic space - corresponding to a particular conception of space (that of the classical drama, say - or the Elizabethan, or the Italian). The representational space, mediated yet directly experienced, which infuses the work and the moment, is established as such through the dramatic action itself.68

Lefebvre suggests that an analysis of theatrical space confirms and clarifies the notion of spatial duality: an imagined space, expressing relationships between bodies and space, which is also concrete and practical, co-existing and expressing difference in relation to other ‘real’ spaces. In this sense, imagination can be seen as a physical, material and spatial practice.

In theorising the space of nation as social space, Lefebvre specifies two conditions: a market, established historically and subordinating local markets by controlling media and commercial relations; and violence, that is, the control and exploitation of market resources and production in order to maintain a dominant set of relations. The specific interaction of these two ‘moments’ produces the space of the nation, which embodies a national capital and a spatial hierarchy. The process by which this space is produced and the social product itself, while constituting a texture made up of networks and webs, appear as inseparable aspects of a present space, an immediate ‘whole’.

Lefebvre argues that monuments serve as nexuses within the webs of social spaces such as nations, while constituting social spaces themselves. Monumental spaces provide a reference for perceived, conceived and lived spaces in
imagining a sense of ‘belonging’. One of the principal functions of monumental space is to represent the space of death as a ‘living’ space which invokes the common authority of religion, government and knowledge. The violence involved in establishing the nation’s market and maintaining its dominant order are sublimated within monumental space, effecting a consensus. Traces and retentions of previous violent encounters in the establishment and maintenance of the nation are replaced by a serene and solemn power containing a multiplicity of meanings which adapt to each official occasion or circumstance: a ‘shifting hierarchy’.

For Lefebvre the space of knowledge, of epistemology, is the product of a political and institutional process - abstraction. This ‘abstract space’ is reinforced by a society’s representations of space and brought to bear, as a set of limitations, upon representational spaces. Spaces of work not only reinforce the notion of productive activity, they also situate such activity within a system and hierarchy of production. This dual function also has a bearing on the meaning of ‘space’ as an abstract concept. Abstract space works towards rendering all spaces homogeneous and discrete, able to be compared and contrasted. In the case of Western society, abstract space works to establish relations between
land, capital and labour as ‘natural’.

[T]he state framework, and the state as framework, cannot be conceived of without reference to the instrumental space that they make use of. Indeed each new form of state, each new form of political power, introduces its own particular way of partitioning space, its own particular administrative classification of discourses about space and about things and people in space. Each such form commands space, as it were, to serve its purposes; and the fact that space should thus become classificatory makes it possible for a certain type of non-critical thought simply to register the resultant ‘reality’ and accept it at face value.70

While identifying the notion of abstract space as a tacit agreement between land and capital ownership, expressing an historical relationship between the aristocracy and the middle class in Europe, Lefebvre argues that it continues to represent a site of resistance and mediation between labour and finance capital. Abstract space assumes forms which seemingly resolve contradictions between space conceived globally (along with conceptions of the space of the nation in relation to global space) and ‘fragmented’ space, the result of a multiplicity of procedures caused by the establishment of markets and the division of labour. However, Lefebvre asserts that these contradictions can be realised and exposed in ‘real’ space, that is within a context which transgresses representations of space and dominated representational spaces. Resistance is made possible by enacting abstract space ‘in space’. By re-connecting space with bodies, the historical regime of abstract space is displaced, brought into question by a way of making sense which temporally precedes it. Within the context of space, physical perceptions of space find connections with ‘real’ bodies, with labour.

The more carefully one examines space, considering it not only with the eyes, not only with the intellect, but also with the senses, with the total body, the more clearly one becomes aware of the conflicts at work within it, conflicts which foster the explosion of abstract space and the production
of a space that is other. Spatial practice is neither determined by an existing system, be it urban or ecological, nor adapted to a system, be it economic or political. On the contrary, thanks to the potential energies of a variety of groups capable of diverting homogenised space to their own purposes, a theatricalised or dramatised space is liable to arise. Space is liable to be eroticised and restored to ambiguity, to the common birthplace of needs and desires in spaces specialised either physiologically or socially.71

A double-page photograph on pages 228-229 of A Day in the Life of Australia depicts a group of people assembled next to the ANZAC memorial in Alice Springs. The photograph, taken at 6 p.m., places the group between the memorial’s white, stone obelisk and a flagpole with the Australian flag aloft. A few of the group are holding up Australian military ensigns, and most of the group appear to be wearing service medals. They are all, however, in civilian clothing. To the right of the group is a mounted Northern Territory police officer, visibly younger than the assembled group, wearing a slouch hat and also displaying service medals. The assembled group, all of them white and male, stare solemnly into the light of the setting sun behind the camera as long shadows fall across them.

The ANZAC memorial remembers Australians who fought in wars overseas as part of the British and the Australian armed forces, and particularly those who were killed in combat. Foremost in the military engagements remembered is the dawn landing at Gallipoli (Gelibolu) in Turkey on April 25th, 1915, during the First World War, where the British government disastrously deployed a military contingent of troops from Australia, New Zealand, France and Britain as the first stage in a planned invasion of Turkey. This military defeat, in which many
thousands of Australian soldiers were killed, serves as a reference for remembering the deaths of Australian soldiers and military personnel in all wars.

The space of the war memorial depicted connects it with war memorials in cities and towns throughout Australia, and especially to ANZAC House, the national war memorial in Canberra. It is a space of silence, a space of non-verbal ceremonies paying tribute specifically to those who lived in the local area and who died serving the national armed forces. It is also a space of prayer and of religious observance, of dawn and evening services. The historical deeds and mythology of the ANZAC campaign are taught in schools, and ANZAC Day, April 25th, is a day of national observance. However, war memorials also provide a space to remember anniversaries connected with other wars and battles, and for visiting representatives from other countries to officially pay their respects to Australian soldiers killed in military engagements connected with their countries.

The photograph of the Alice Springs memorial is able to connect the group of men assembled and their time of military service by way of the mounted policeman, who in his khaki uniform and slouch hat, imagines the soldiers who fought in the ANZAC and other campaigns, and now protects the men present, and their memories. The obelisk and flagpole stand in an area of cleared, brushed gravel, surrounded by scrubland and low hills. No buildings or roads are discernible: the photograph conveys a sense of ‘remoteness’, which also
contributes to the imagining of the distant lands where Australian soldiers fought. There is also a sense of Australia the nation being ‘cut off’ from the rest of the world, protected by its soldiers.

As a monumental space, the ANZAC memorial constitutes a representation of space recognisable to all Australians, a space which calls for solemn ‘respect’, a respect for the dead engendered in religious ceremonies. In ceremonies commemorating specific campaigns, the memorial becomes a representational space, this religious respect now transformed into national respect; wreaths, candles and the Australian flag uniting in affirming the joint authority of religious and political leaders, and a specific national identity. A space of death is imagined and realised as a living space, a space of consensus where the violence involved in establishing the nation is sublimated along with the violence involved in each military campaign.

The photograph also indicates how the space is able to establish a dominant order, an order which is white, and which is male. Female soldiers and military personnel, Aboriginal soldiers and other non-European volunteers, while historically recorded, are consigned to marginal or concealed spaces in the commemoration of Australian involvement in war. An order of precedence, reinforced by the practices of the Christian church, inverting historical time, is established. This dominant order, and the space it is established in, become referential in representing Australia as united, as a nation.
A Greek theatre presupposes tragedy and comedy, and by extension the presence of the city’s people and their allegiance to their heroes and gods. In theatrical space, music, choruses, masks, tiering - all such elements converge with language and actors. A spatial action overcomes conflicts, at least momentarily, even though it does not resolve them; it opens a way from everyday concerns to collective joy.72

In his references to “actors”, “dramatic action” and “theatrical space”, Lefebvre can be seen to be invoking performance in arguing for space’s re-connection with time, bodies and matter. He pre-supposes a time before the rise of the open market and the industrial revolution in Europe where conceptions of space realised this unity, an assumption which works some way towards counteracting efforts to imagine and realise new and resistive spatial practices by referring and relating them to achievements in the past. However, in identifying a process by which abstract space is produced in such a way that it assumes a position of priority in relation to ‘lived’ spaces, Lefebvre highlights the co-temporality of imagination and realisation: neither activity can claim priority.

Lefebvre’s suggestions for resistive practices also highlight the dangers of examining the categories of space, time, bodies and matter separately, most importantly the tendency to treat them as abstractions or essential entities rather than as material practices. Performance emphasise the activity and practicality of space, time, bodies and matter, blurring distinctions between them and connecting them within the context of specific purposes and specific encounters. This is something I wish to address tomorrow in considering the nation imagined and realised by A Day in the Life of Australia.
The Third Day

Time:

There are things which happen and leave no discernible trace, are not spoken or written of, though it would be very wrong to say that subsequent events go on indifferently, all the same, as though such things had never been.73

In the past two days I have looked at the connections time makes with space in the context of narration, and the way in which a ‘time-lagged’ version of the present is utilised in connecting photographs spatially: encounters between photographs at the expense of historical encounters. Today I want to extend this examination to include the ‘moment’ of the photograph constituted by the encounter between the photographer and the subject of the photograph, in order to emphasise time as temporal practice, as a set of activities imagined and realised by people, along with spatial, physical and material activities, within specific contexts and for specific purposes.

The photographs in *A Day in the Life of Australia* are imagined as being taken in ‘serial’ time, each picture occupying a point in time as discrete as the geographical spaces assigned to each photographer. Each photograph is imagined as the only picture of Australia at that particular time, exclusivity transforming it into metaphor/reference. Any suggestion of temporal simultaneity is qualified by distance, by spatial separation. Each photograph in *A
Day in the Life of Australia is representative of an encounter in which the requirements of the particular photographer are negotiated and met in relation to people or matter considered as photographic objects. These encounters involve varying degrees of complicity and collaboration, the meaning assumed by the photographic ‘object’ always expressing a difference in relation to the meaning assumed by the photographer. The time involved in establishing the displayed photograph, a time of negotiation and translation, is severed from the moment of time constituted by the opening of the camera shutter, the moment displayed as present and as presence. The photograph thus displays an ambivalent subjectivity, apparently the sign of the photographer’s immediacy and objectivity but produced by an act of forgetting, a break in continuity.

Each photograph is presented as a discovery, an unearthing of something new to the photographer: a new day, a new space to explore. The given temporal boundary of a day assumes the ‘regularity’ of time, and institutes its measurement in hours. Time is assumed as homogeneous, able to be divided into discrete intervals. The day provides a context for metaphorising ‘Australian’ life: a ‘typical’ day. It is only in a series of pictures of one space, set amidst singular, discrete photographs, that the homogeneity of time is questioned, only ‘between’ photographs of one space that a ‘time-lag’ can be discerned. It is in these gaps that what is presented as new and remarkable, as a discovery, can be seen to have an historical context. In ‘re-enacting the crime’, the agency and immediacy claimed by photographers also suggests their complicity.
The ‘Australia’ imagined by *A Day in the Life of Australia* appears as a relationship between people and a space ‘freed’ from any temporal context other than that of the given day - “a slice of history - a moment frozen in time”. The boundaries of the day help to authorise the photographers’ work by presenting it as urgent, ‘of the moment’, and with a strict deadline. It is within this boundary that time as an ongoing practice is forgotten; instead the photographs are ordered, narrativised, allowing categories of literary time to become referential.

A beginning for Australia is imagined by the beginning of the given day, which *A Day in the Life of Australia* is there to witness. A fictional structure is utilised in the separation of the day in question from serial time: it becomes ‘the present’ as self-presence, claiming the status of truth. However, in forgetting the time in which each photograph is established, the book denies the people portrayed the time in which to negotiate and determine the conditions of the nation, that is their own physical, material and spatial conditions in the future. This particular day is brought to a close, the photographers leave, and the nation is consigned to the book’s representation: the possibility of making the past has passed. The nation represented or realised by the photographic denial of time leaves a trail of ‘deaths’.

Awareness of being imbedded in secular, serial time, with all the implications of continuity, yet of forgetting the experience of this continuity … engenders the need for a narrative of identity … Nations, however, have no clearly identifiable births, and their deaths, if they ever happen, are never natural. Because there is no Originator, the nation’s biography can not be written evangelically, ‘down time’, through a long procreative chain of begettings. The only alternative is to fashion it ‘up time’ … wherever the lamp of archaeology casts its fitful gleam. This fashioning, however, is marked by deaths, which, in a curious inversion of
conventional genealogy, start from an originary present … [T]he nation’s biography snatches, against the going mortality rate, exemplary suicides, poignant martyrdoms, assassinations, executions, wars, and holocausts. But, to serve the narrative purpose, these violent deaths must be remembered/forgotten as ‘our own’.74

For the process of imagining and realising Australia as a nation to be re-opened, to be shown to continue, times before the book must be presented so as to displace the centrality and complete presence of the present, and in turn to make way for the future. Homi Bhabha argues that postcolonial texts re-place marginal perspectives within specific cultural encounters so as to question dominant cultural orders and dominant representations. The margin of this resistive tendency is constituted by the practices of performance, which make all texts, all inscriptions simultaneous with bodies in space and in time. This is the context in which not only can perspectives marginalised in the encounter with the photographer be remembered, but also in which the time and space of reading the book can be anticipated.

The process of imagining and realising the photographs taken as representative of Australia encapsulates a delay between the taking of the photographs, and their being read in the form of the book. Performance is able to play a critical function in apprehending the apparently resolved nature of this delay by ‘playing it out’, that is, by subjecting it to a time and space where the two acts, that of taking photographs and reading or viewing photographs, confront each other, foregrounding their physicality. In this sense, performing allows the strategic re-opening of the delay between writing and reading, highlighting absences and
questioning apparent resolutions. Rather than merely presenting an enactment or faithful retelling of such encounters, performance is able to present a critical inquiry of them, one in which time, space and bodies are re-asserted and reaffirmed, displacing the priority of any single text or account.

_A Day in the Life of Australia_ presents photography as writing, as an inscription of the Australian nation. However in its assumption of the ‘natural’ time of the day, and of the photographic moment, it attempts to claim an immediacy in denial of its temporal and spatial removal from its object. The indeterminate traces and retentions of photography are forgotten: ‘today’ is presented as a time of absolute presence. The time of the nation is overlayed with the time of the day, which assumes closure and resolution, and which metaphorises the Australian nation. Performance is able to contextualise and question the referential status of this temporality by imagining a ‘yesterday’ and a ‘tomorrow’, not merely as states of removal from the present, but as occupying time and space, as constituting connected times before and after from which to critically reconsider the authority of the day in question. The removal of photography as writing from the nation as object is able to be realised by subjecting it to a temporality exceeding the ‘moment’ of the picture and the duration of the day, and to a space where the past is able to be re-played and negotiated.

The temporal strategies of ‘yesterday’ and ‘tomorrow’, while contextualising the
writing of the nation, still beg the question of priority in terms of the time and space of writing. In Part 3, I wish to subject my writing to a less synchronous temporal scheme, one which more clearly attempts dialogic relations. In adopting the format of a correspondence between two ‘voices’, written over a period of four months, I hope to come closer to a writing which addresses and is informed by an audience.

Matter:

The camera was to the eye as bitumen is to the car: it smoothed out difference, it removed the necessity of choice associated with wet-weather tracks. You could forget where you were and become a reporter. You could save appearances and treat the whole thing as a commercial venture. Above all, you could assert a perfect fit between what you saw and the record of it. 

Over the past two days I have looked at how a particular representation of Australia as nation was produced through a process of material production. A relationship between photographers and particular people and places designated ‘Australian’, reflecting the subjectivity and agency of the photographer, is conveyed by way of a transference of objects, from camera to photograph to book. Such a process of transference removes the material context of each object as it is ‘processed’, by separating it from its connections with time, space, bodies and other objects. Photographs derive an immediacy from their separation from the camera which took the picture. The book derives its presence from a strategic ordering of the photographs, presenting them as discrete but
homogeneous, denying their existence as material objects distinct from the book. The photograph makes all cameras ‘one’, a singular perspective. The book makes all photographs one sequence, one narrative, one day.

While *A Day in the Life of Australia* presents itself in the form of a book, closed and resolved, its measurements of the hours of the represented day function in allowing the project, segmented into photographic moments, to ‘unfold’ in time and in space, each moment building up a cumulative picture of the Australian nation ‘in action’. Each photograph, initially constituting a material object, becomes a referential object in its separation from other photographs. Abstract concepts, such as naïvety, primitivity and informality, are ‘materialised’ in particular photographs in *A Day in the Life of Australia*, along with authoritative distinctions between ‘amateur’ and ‘professional’. In the production of such abstract concepts, that is in the production of meaning, each of the objects utilised in the process are disposed of, concealed. What is imagined is a ‘direct’ relationship between photographer and reader, a sharing of the same perspective, the same point-of-view.

*A Day in the Life of Australia* attempts to ‘materialise’ Australia as nation, to imagine and realise Australia, through the pictures presented. The presence it produces is imagined, however, in the nation’s absence. The camera and the photograph each constitute one object among many cameras and photographs during the time of the project in Australia. Their referentiality is produced in the
textualised time and space of the book. The book loses its referential, definitive status in the presence of the people, objects, and space and time of Australia. It becomes one object among many.

For you, it would be nothing but an indifferent picture, one of the thousand manifestations of the “ordinary”; it cannot in any way constitute the visible object of a science; it cannot establish an objectivity, in the positive sense of the word…76

*A Day in the Life of Australia* attempts to materialise ‘Australia’ through a comprehensive and strategic selection of places, people and activities, a structural approach to expressing the nation as a meaningful entity. The ‘Australia’ produced by *A Day in the Life of Australia*, however, is also the product of photographic ‘intuition’, the professionally conceived and carefully selected product of a technical praxis aimed at “the production of particular preferred shapes and the improvement of them according to certain directions of gradualness”. Photography, takes on the objectivity of a metaphysical practice. The photographs in the book are presented as having a singular existence, reinforced by their ‘professional conception’. Australia is presented, in its absence, as an ideal object.

The materiality of photographs, like the materiality of writing, is realised in a spatial, temporal and physical context. Performance connects matter with space, time and bodies: matter is realised in its production, in its spatial and temporal making, rather than in its textual meaning. The objectivity of pictures ‘of the nation’ must be reconsidered in relation to pictures ‘from the nation’, ‘by the
nation’, ‘for the nation’ and ‘during the nation’: a transformation from objective
to material relations.

[Photography corresponded to the explorer’s backward view and return
route – a discovery with profound implications for how we see the country
when viewed through photographs or, indeed, when it is seen in terms of
the picturesque viewpoints our paths construct for us. For the world of the
photograph, like the world of the picturesque, is the world of returning: it is
the world which lies invisibly behind on the outward route. To look into a
country which is composed photographically is to look into a mirror
revealing what lies behind the explorer’s shoulder. The strangest place in
this looking-glass world is where we stand looking into it but fail to see
ourselves mirrored there, glimpsing instead the strangeness of our
origins.77

While the adoption of a journal format was, amongst other things, an attempt to
imagine the materiality of writing, the single, referential document produced still
bears the marks of a monoglossic, univocal perspective, even in its subjection to
a three day duration. In Part 3 the exploration of a series of letters between two
‘voices’ attempts to address this in the production of a series of documents,
imagined as materially discrete, expressing physical, spatial and temporal
distance and difference.

Space:
Over the past two days I have considered how A Day in the Life of Australia
utilises a hierarchy of imagined spaces in presenting a particular representation
of Australia as nation. In examining Foucault’s concepts of heterotopia and
utopia, and Lefebvre’s version of social space as constituted by the interaction
between a spatial practice, dominant representations of space and dominated
representational spaces, I have discussed how spatial hierarchies are produced through a separation of space from the continuous flow of historical time, and its subjection by referential spaces and dominant orders of meaning. *A Day in the Life of Australia* works upon the given geographical space of Australia, a representation of Australia seen from ‘outside’ the space. Its spatial practice is established firstly by the allocation of assignments to the participating photographers. The logistics of the project calls for locations which are known and named. The map of the photographers’ assigned locations, on pages 276-277, indicates a concentration of assignments around the coast, focusing on the major cities, and, in particular, Sydney and Melbourne.

However, the photographs displayed tend to emphasise ‘the outdoors’ and ‘wide open spaces’, rural life and outback landscapes. The certainty of this observation is perhaps contingent upon a statistical analysis, but what can be identified more clearly is the establishment of a subjectivity which is urban and which is outside Australia, and which seeks out spaces which emphasise Australia’s difference to the rest of the world, at least to a Western urban readership. As the majority of Australia’s population also live in the capital cities, it can be presumed that the book is also able to assume an Australian readership which will presume an ‘urban’ or metropolitan perspective. Photographs of stockmen mustering sheep and roping steers, Aboriginal men hunting with spears in bushland, and truck drivers driving along vast, dusty highways all conform to dominant representations of space. Such representations, however, are global rather than
local ones, in which the ‘attraction’ of Australia lies in its image as a ‘frontier land’, rugged and untamed. Rural spaces, desert, scrubland and wilderness become dominated spaces, spaces of labour made homogeneous with other spaces of work depicted in the photographs.

The national capital, Canberra, is the subject of just three photographs in the book, one of which is a portrait taken at the airport, and another a roof tiler at work. The third picture is that of the High Court judges, taken in black and white. The picture’s implicit antiquity and removal from the affairs of everyday life marks it as a space of reference and judgement. Australia’s colonial past is represented as ‘fading’, disappearing. The violence of Australia’s past is resolved in the representation of Uluru and Sydney Opera House as referential and unifying spaces, and in the monumental space of war memorials and statues honouring explorers and politicians.

The space imagined by *A Day in the Life of Australia* is the product of abstraction, an homogenising of divergent, temporally fragmented spaces as places of work, or places of leisure, or landscapes. This abstraction is carried out from a distance, from a perspective ‘outside’ Australia. Within the context of the project the photographers’ position is central; their experience of the conditions of the space of Australia is not marginalised. Such a perspective is necessary to treat Australia as a ‘national space’, a perceivable, conceivable, representable whole. It is from this privileged perspective, which dominates lived spaces and
subjects them to dominant representations, that *A Day in the Life of Australia* perceives, conceives of and represents the Australian nation. The ‘labour’ of the photographers is emphasised, justifying these representations. The spaces of Australia are rendered as landscapes: urban, industrial, pastoral and wilderness; or as the background to portraits or ‘action shots’. Such dominated spaces provide a site for representing the nation discursively, in narrative; they constitute scenic spaces, offering themselves to the viewer. Australia the nation is produced as an abstraction, made to appear as if it was always like this (with nation as a ‘natural’ social formation), made up of distinctive but homogeneous spaces, each equally open to be admired, each equally open to enterprise and profit.

In resisting the production of social space through abstraction, Lefebvre, like Homi Bhabha, can be seen to be invoking a way of re-apprehending the past in the process of its ‘unfolding’, a projection of the encounters of the past seen in terms of time and bodies connected with space. He refers to the writing of Rabelais in invoking this notion of space inflected both toward the past and the future.

What is said is apprehended in the mode of something appearing or emerging. The ‘seen’ (as opposed to appearances) refers neither to the seer nor to the visible, but rather to a nocturnal invisibility about to be exposed to daylight.78

Lefebvre argues that for social space to become theatrical space, the dominant representations of space reflected in scenic space must be negotiated and
informed by “dramatic action”: by people contributing to the meaning of the space by the way they use it. What Lefebvre is describing is a space open to time, anticipating the future and the changes it may bring.

In Part 3, I present a series of letters written by two imagined ‘voices’ responding to and anticipating each other. The spaces they inhabit in the course of their respective travels are negotiated in terms of the

**Bodies:**

On the first day I considered Judith Butler’s argument that social identity, exemplified by gender, was generated through sustained performances, contingent upon time and space. Butler argues that social performances are publicly repeated so as to establish ‘norms’ and essentialise categories of identity. Marginal practices, such as drag, bring resistance to the notion of resolved, ‘original’ categories of identity by foregrounding their existence as bodily practices open to change in the future, rather than as stable, fixed and essential. The pose adopted by ‘couples’, which I identified as a recurring gesture in *A Day in the Life of Australia*, can be seen to reinforce dominant assumptions of gender by sustaining a notion of men as protective and women as passive, and relations between them as conforming to a heterosexist norm. The gender characteristics stabilised by these repeated performances contribute to producing identities definitive of Australia in the context of the book.
The poses of ‘couples’, ‘mates’, ‘family’ and other social groups repeated in *A Day in the Life of Australia* are represented not as bodily practices but as an essential manifestation of the ‘Australian psyche’, each photograph providing a window into an essential Australianness. At times this works against dominant conceptions of social identities, the search for the unusual or the remarkable producing pictures which bring tension to stable social categories. However, it also works to essentialise bodies as ‘the body’, and to reinforce particular discursive representations of ‘the body’ as metaphoric of all Australians. The bodies in *A Day in the Life of Australia* are viewed as Australian bodies, representing activities characteristic of a given space at a given time. These bodies offer themselves to be viewed, and in adopting recognisable poses for the camera, signal their acceptance of their subjectification by the practices of photography and nation.

This way of representing bodies renders them, in Deleuze and Guattari’s terminology, ‘organisms’, territorialised, signified and subjectified. They are spoken for by the *A Day in the Life of Australia*, organised by the discourses of photography and nation, separated from other bodies and denied the future in which to change, to produce ‘becomings’. The nation represented by this territorialisation of bodies assumes an identity fixed in time and space.
In conceiving of bodies as correlations within a field of immanent energy flowing in infinite relations, Deleuze and Guattari can be seen to share common ground with Lefebvre. Each asserts that the flow of energy through webs and networks provides a site which allows for both social control effected by dominant discourse and for the possibility of resistance through a ‘re-connection’ of space, time and bodies. The term ‘territorialisation’, however, implies an assumption of space as ‘passive’, a site of occupation rather than a practice. While Lefebvre argues that the ‘texture’ of space allows bodies and energy to flow through them, with referential spaces forming nexuses within the networks, Deleuze and Guattari’s conception of space as a vehicle of desire re-affirms bodies as bodily practices, producing becomings, multiplicities and borderlines. Viewed from the perspective of the BwO, the bodies presented in A Day in the Life of Australia as separate, significant and contained within the boundaries of the official Australian nation foreground their connections with each other, and resist narrative ordering by assuming a simultaneity in which a multiplicity is formed, growing out of each new picture, each new body. The Australia produced constitutes a borderline, populated and productive, physical and spatial, and yet open to change, open to the future. In Part 3 I attempt to explore the notion of a body’s becoming-multiple in imagining a series of letters between two ‘different but connected’ bodies.

In Homi Bhabha’s argument for the staging of modernity and the performing of
the projected past, in Judith Butler’s conception of social identity as constituted by repeated performances, in Henri Lefebvre’s call for space to be theatricalised, and in Deleuze and Guattari’s defence of ‘becoming’ as a discrete material state, the practices of performance are invoked in an attempt to describe a connection between time, space, bodies and matter in the process of their ‘progress’. In each case, the description of the specific parameter as practice assumes a purpose at the expense of performance. Performance is denied a purpose of its own: they become metaphoric, referential, an already resolved vehicle for conveying temporal, spatial or physical meaning. This ‘freezing’ of the time and space of performance can be seen as an attempt to transgress the contextualising potential of these activities, in order to render them as agents of textual production. The notion of time as material and concrete endangers the production of prescribed meanings, the complexity and uncertainty of theatrical encounters subjecting language, texts and discourses to duration and dispersal, to the possibility of becoming irretrievable.

Performance’s existence as a critical, academic perspective as well as a set of practices is endangered by its assumption in literary theory, communication theory, social theories of identity, and in any discourse which colonises it as an ‘empty practice’, homogeneous in its production, its meaning in no way contingent upon its purpose. And yet a consideration of performance’s agency as potentially strategic and resistive highlights the danger in assuming its servility, its repetition, its textuality. In Part 3, therefore, I wish to consider more
specifically how performance provides a critical perspective for examining the spatial, temporal and physical conditions of the Australian nation’s conception and representation, and how specific performances are able to negotiate the borderline constituting the nation.

I must own that I have engaged more among the Islands and Shoals upon this Coast than perhaps in prudence I ought to have done with a single Ship and every other thing considered. But if I had not I should not have been able to say whether it was Mainland or Islands; and as to its produce, that we should have been totally ignorant of as being inseparable with the other; and in this case it would have been far more satisfaction to me never to have discover’d it. But it is time I should have done with this Subject, which at best is but disagreeable, and which I was lead into on reflecting on our late Dangers.79
[F]rom the start the nation was conceived in language, not in blood, and … one could be ‘invited into’ the imagined community. Thus today, even the most insular nations accept the principle of naturalisation, no matter how difficult in practice they may make it.¹

I

Ffordd Bangor
Bethesda, Gwynedd
Wales
7/3/00

Dear Ricardo

I have at last made the decision to apply for Australian citizenship, and to make my way back to Australia. I shall renounce any claim to a nationality other than Australian. Although I have not been in Australia for some time, I have lived the majority of my life there, and feel a sense of belonging when in Australia, even alongside my feelings of being an outsider. Having lived in Wales during a time when a National Assembly has been established, and a process of devolution of
parliamentary powers from Westminster has been instituted, I am beginning to become aware of the fragility of ‘nation’ as a shared concept, of the ground upon which any specific nation stands, and of the ambiguity involved in invoking national ‘belonging’.

What is it that I want to be in becoming part of the Australian nation? What is it about my memories of Australia that provokes my sense of loyalty, of allegiance? How can the nation ‘hold’ me or transform me? What difference can I make to the nation? While living in Wales, the term ‘Australian’ has served as an identity ‘screen’, where people inquiring of my background, and tentative in broaching a subject which might indicate ignorance, would stop at ‘Australian’ as sufficient explanation of my ‘foreign-ness’. This would invariably save me attempting a complicated explanation of my ethnic background. My accent, that is, its difference in the context of dialogue, would reinforce this imagined identity.

Aspects of identity indicated by accent are important in considering Welsh national identity, both within the country and in relation to the rest of the world. When speaking Welsh, differences in accent tend to indicate regional and local identity. However, for the rest of the world the Welsh accent is realised, not in the speaking of Welsh, but in the speaking of English. The Welsh accent most often heard in theatrical productions or in film and television is an accent identifiably from the south of Wales, where Welsh is less commonly spoken. In
the north and in the west, where people are more likely to speak both Welsh and English (Welsh is commonly spoken in the villages, and English more commonly in the cities), the Welsh language itself produces a sign of ‘Welshness’. When speaking English, although there is an identifiable North Wales accent, younger Welsh people often have an accent recognisably connected to the north of England, the cities of Chester, Liverpool and Manchester being close to the border Wales shares with England.

Benedict Anderson identifies a trend in Europe in the nineteenth century, accompanying the growth in literacy, commerce and industry, toward the unifying of vernacular languages in print. Wales’ subjection to the British Empire facilitated the marginalising of the Welsh language and the adoption of English as the ‘national print language’, disseminated in books and newspapers. The imposition of a British education system, in which English was the sole medium of teaching and learning helped to diminish the influence of the Welsh language through the twentieth century until 1970, when Welsh was re-introduced as a medium of education in Welsh schools and universities. The establishment of a Welsh-language television station in 1982 both reflected and contributed to a resurgence of Welsh speakers in Wales. The activities of the National Assembly in Cardiff, opened in 1999, are conducted in both Welsh and English.
However, English still remains the first language of three-quarters of the population of Wales. It functions both as a popular and (jointly) official language. In forging a Welsh identity and presence within the European Union, Welsh political leaders mainly use English in communicating with other political representatives. Thus ‘Welshness’ is heard through the medium of English: English provides the context for encounters between Welsh people and others. English translates and arbitrates. English popularly unites the people of Wales, while the Welsh language realises a more formal unity, exemplified by national eisteddfods, and by the Welsh national anthem.

No matter how banal the words and mediocre the tunes [of national anthems], there is in this singing an experience of simultaneity. At precisely such moments, people wholly unknown to each other utter the same verses to the same melody. The image: unisonance. Singing the Marseillaise, Waltzing Matilda, and Indonesian Raya provide occasions for unisonality, for the echoed physical realisation of the imagined community. How selfless this unisonance feels! If we are aware that others are singing these songs precisely when and as we are, we have no idea who they may be, or even where, out of earshot, they are singing. Nothing connects us all but imagined sound.³

National ceremonies and expressions of unity also reveal the tension existing in Wales between country and nation, that is, between the United Kingdom and Wales. The way such a tension is resolved or addressed varies according to language or region within Wales. For many people, especially in the south and east of Wales, speaking Welsh connotes an elitist, educated perspective, alienating non-Welsh speakers. The effect of this viewpoint may diminish in the future with an increase in the provision of Welsh courses for adults as well as in its increased use as a medium of education in schools. However, in its representation as a popular rather than official language, English conceals the
history of its encounter with Welsh: the violence of the encounter, and of the imposition of empire, is forgotten in the all-encompassing present.

While there is a less apparent tension between nation and country in Australia, Australian linguistic identity is also established in dialogue, by a centralised accent, which works to group a majority of Australians together. The Australian accent expresses a difference in relation to a received or imagined English accent, and in relation to a received or imagined Australian accent disseminated by official media, by educational institutions and by film, radio and theatre. Australian identity in this instance is established by difference rather than by an essential form or property. However, in the process of this establishment, English as a language is removed from the specific conditions of time and space.

The violence involved in the imposition and enforcement of English, that is, the physical, spatial and temporal conditions of the process of its imposition, are forgotten in its dialogue with Empire. The languages existing before it, indigenous languages speaking a multitude of nations before the imposed nation, and the languages brought to Australia later by migrants, as well as all future languages representing culturally specific groups of people, are suppressed and denied by the ‘primacy’ of English and by its moderation of other languages. English becomes a measurement of linguistic identity: it is imagined as essential, as referential, as ideal. English enforces standardised criteria and a hierarchy of ‘other’ languages. Reconciliation and multiculturalism are social (and official)
Four Months from Australia

209

processes encountered through the medium of, that is, mediated by, English. Such mediation and administration affords English a temporal and spatial precedence over indigenous and migrant languages, privileging an official perspective. The terms ‘reconciliation’ and ‘multiculturalism’ invoke a non-indigenous and non-migrant ‘us’, while tending to totalise all marginal perspectives in relation to this centred, white Australian position, the historical conditions of which are erased by English.

My own cultural positioning as a non-white child of migrants to Australia, and my experiences of being treated as ‘different’ to white Australians while growing up in Perth, shape my aspirations in becoming officially ‘Australian’. My parents spoke English before they came to Australia, but it was an English whose centre was imagined in England. The Australian version of English was something they adapted to in time, but which nonetheless continued to marginalise them in dialogue with white Australians. My childhood accent, which displayed traces of ‘Sri Lankan English’, was a source of amusement to classmates. A sense of belonging to the Australian nation carries, for me, a sense of belonging to the periphery. It is perhaps nothing more than a sense of not belonging anywhere else, but it remains, nonetheless, something I cannot deny.

I have written to the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, asking for information regarding Australian citizenship. I expect to receive the forms when I arrive in Sri Lanka in two weeks’ time. I shall keep you informed.
of my progress.

Yours,

Rick.

II

Murdoch University
South Street
Perth, W.A.
Australia
21/3/00

Dear Rick

I have also been thinking about Australia and what it means to me to be an Australian citizen. We have just commenced rehearsing for our next production, an exploration of the Australian nation and of national belonging. The production continues my own interest in the way Australia is constituted as nation. What I hope to do is present a performance which enables both the audience and the performers to imagine the Australian nation as a set of connections, and at the same time realise that they are producing the Australian nation, or that they are constituent of it. This would involve a blurring of the distinction between audience and performer, the agency of both being necessary to ‘realise’ Australia not as an entity but as a practice.

I am particularly interested in the times and spaces privileged by the Australian nation, and the way in which these times and spaces have a bearing on the way
we lead our lives. My own recollections of learning about Australia in primary school seem to focus around European voyages of discovery, especially the voyage of Captain James Cook, which landed at Botany Bay in 1770. Prominence was also given to the expeditions of European explorers in Australia in the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. In this production I hope to explore how these voyages of discovery and expeditions continue to shape the way Australia the nation makes sense of the ‘new’, how they influence national knowledge and representation. I wish to consider how a nation was established in a space which was already discovered and inhabited by other people, by indigenous Australians. I also want to explore experiences of immigration to Australia, and their relationship with other voyages of discovery.

The most difficult thing in presenting my ideas regarding the production to the company was emphasising the extent to which it depended on each participant’s own sense of Australia and their own sense of belonging to a nation. I asked the company to start keeping a journal to use as a resource for the production, an aid to making sense of their knowledge of Australia, of being Australian or of being a student living in Australia, and of how the nation functions in time and space. I asked those who were not Australian by nationality or birth to consider the nation(s) they felt they belonged to. I want them to try and write something every day, to explore a process of writing in any form, to subject their examination of nation to the conditions of time, in order to look at nation as it unfolds in relation to their own lives. I have asked them to explore different
writing ‘personae’, ‘split’ writing positions, varied writing forms (poetry, drama, diaries, lists, letters, etc.), and real and fictional times and spaces of writing.

The function of directing in this production will be carried out through a process of collaboration between all involved in the production rather than by adhering to a hierarchical structure where theatrical activity is prescribed and dictated to by a chain of authority. As much as possible I was hoping to avoid many of the conventional structures of staging: no auditions, no casting, no referential script, no physical demarcation between performers and technical crew. I also wanted the company to explore possibilities for using space and time in a way which was relevant rather than assumed. Part of the difficulty in attempting this in an academic environment is the weight of student expectations based on precedent. What tends to occur in university productions is that the role of lecturer or tutor is replaced by the role of director, and all students enrolled are assigned a position and task within the production. Inasmuch as they are enrolled in an academic production course, I want the company to have an experience of taking responsibility for a theatre production of their own making, and performing it successfully. This will not be a season. No performance will be repeated. Instead I want to emphasise performance as a process, a process which each of the students has already started, and which will continue after this production is over.

Within the four months allocated for rehearsals, performances and assessments, we shall present three performances, each one responding to and anticipating the
others. Each performance will be performed just once, each temporal difference also constituting a physical and spatial difference. I am hoping that everyone participating in the production will make spatial, temporal and physical connections between the performances, and between the production and other aspects of their lives connected to nation. The scheduling of three performances is an attempt to emphasise the process of performance, resisting the tendency to refer to the final performance as the point of closure, and a commodifiable product. We will meet after the third performance to discuss possibilities for ‘the next performance’, a critical anticipation of the production process continuing. It is my hope that each performance will make use of what went before it, not as a referential precedent, but as shared memories open to transformation. The process of three performances will also allow the whole company a chance to be involved with performance activities they may not usually participate in. Everyone will work, in turn, on lighting, sound, mechanicals, stage management, properties, costume, set design and building, publicity, front of house duties as well as performing and directing, informing the production in different ways. Lighting and sound will be controlled by the performers as part of the performance: there will be no ‘backstage’ or technical area.

Alongside the process of journal writing, devising and rehearsing, I have asked the students to undertake some set critical reading in order to help them focus on the meaning of nation as practice, or as structure or social group. As the space assigned for the first and second performances is a fairly open space requiring
definition as to how and where performers and audience are placed in the space, I have asked the company to read Michel Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish*, not merely as a theoretical commentary regarding a specific social formation, but as a plan for the performance, a way of configuring space, giving it a texture, with a specific purpose in mind. In particular, I am interested in Bentham’s notion of the panopticon, and Foucault’s conception of it as a social model emphasising surveillance and subjection, and how it might provide insights into the influence of ‘transportation’ and the ‘penal colony’ in contemporary Australian society. I also want the company’s reading of *Discipline and Punish* to take into account how Foucault utilises and assumes space in presenting spaces of incarceration, spaces of authority and the space of the panopticon - writing as a spatial practice. Connections between the panopticon and the social relations of both theatre and nation, will hopefully become apparent.

All that is needed … is to place a supervisor in a central tower and to shut up in each cell a madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy. By the effect of backlighting, one can observe from the tower, standing out precisely against the light, the small captive shadows in the cells of the periphery. They are like so many cages, so many small theatres, in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualised and constantly visible. The panoptic mechanism arranges spatial unities that make it possible to see constantly and to recognise immediately.4

The rehearsals/preparations for the production have included a short series of workshops, some of which were presented by me, and some by other theatre or arts practitioners. These workshops were intended to serve both as a skills resource and as a common experience for the company. The process of devising has involved a considerable amount of conflict within the company, some of
which has had to do with strong opinions about representation as well as performance logistics. However, there are issues of trust and generosity within the group which have had to be addressed more directly. Time restrictions have prevented me from conducting more rehearsal activities which might have contributed to more understanding and cohesion in the company. I have been hesitant to arbitrate too strongly in any disputes, especially in rehearsing for Part One of the production, as I wanted to emphasise the idea of ‘the group as director’. As a result, I have relinquished, to some extent, my authority in putting forward performance ideas. While a considerable amount of what I had envisaged for the production will not come to fruition as a result, the production will hopefully express more of a collaboration and less of a prescription. One suggestion of mine which has been taken on board, however, is the production title: ‘A Cook’s Tour’, an allusion to both the production’s spatial/temporal limitations in presenting a comprehensive or definitive treatment of Australia as nation, and to the influence of Captain Cook’s voyage of discovery.

In what little spare time I have had recently, I chanced upon an advertisement placed in *The Australian* by ASIO (The Australian Security Intelligence Organisation) calling for applicants to the position of Generalist Intelligence Officer. The stated criteria expressed the desirability of a tertiary degree. My interest in the area of national security, and how it is imagined and realised in Australia, prompted me to send in an application for the position, in which I stated the relevance of my performance research to Australia and its security.
Three days ago I received a phone call from the Perth Office of ASIO asking me to attend a selection examination next week. The phone call was made at 7 a.m. on a Saturday morning. I was given the address of an office in the city, and was told not to mention “ASIO” but to ask for the examination for the Attorney-General’s Office. The examination takes place this Thursday at 8 a.m. I will keep you informed of the outcome.

Yours truly,

Ricardo

III

Arethusa Lane, Wellawatte
Colombo
Sri Lanka
14/4/00

Dear Ricardo

I have now arrived in Colombo, having left friends in Wales and family in London. However, any illusions I have about returning to the place where my parents were born, in order to at last feel a sense of belonging, have been dispelled. Everything I do here seems to mark me out as a foreigner. I had hoped that the physical and vocal traits identifying me as an outsider in Wales would allow me to be less conspicuous here, but this is not the case. Within Sri Lanka, I look neither Singhalese nor Tamil, the two largest ethnic and cultural groups,
although outside the country such an identity would rarely be questioned. The way I stand, sit down, eat, walk, and look around Colombo all ‘alienate’ me. My accent marks me as ‘Australian’: as soon as I speak, people seem more confident about my identity.

My family are Sri Lankan Burghers, or Dutch Burghers, a Eurasian, predominantly Christian, cultural minority, many of whom emigrated after World War Two, and Sri Lankan independence in 1948. The Burghers’ identity was forged through the succession of acts of colonisation by the Portuguese, Dutch and British in what was known, until 1972, as Ceylon. Many Burghers have never lived in ‘Sri Lanka’: their recollection of their birthplace is a country called ‘Ceylon’, a name which signifies both childhood memories and the less desirable criteria of European colonialism. Historically, ‘Ceylon’ represents an inversion, or at least a restructuring, of social relations in Sri Lanka today. Burghers often enjoyed positions of privilege under colonial authority, before independence precipitated the relative empowerment of the Sinhalese population and, to a lesser extent, the Tamil population. Ceylon is a place people can go back to in time, but not in geographical space.

The ongoing civil war in Sri Lanka, waged principally between the Sinhalese-dominated Sri Lankan government and army, and Tamil separatist groups claiming self-government in the northern and eastern provinces of the country, has caused a fragmentation in the conception of a Sri Lankan nation. Sinhalese
and Tamil families live side-by-side and Singhalese and Tamil people work together in Colombo and throughout most of the country while the war is being waged. The possibility of a separate Tamil state in the north-east of Sri Lanka seems a remote possibility at the moment, even though concessions have been made by the government as to political representation in this area. However, the uncertainties over existing national and cultural boundaries cast doubts over the position of Sri Lankan Tamils living outside the northern and eastern provinces, and that of Singhalese living within these provinces. In turn, Burghers, Moors, Malays and other cultural minorities also face uncertainty as to the future of their national status and their national allegiance.

This uncertainty about identity and the future is not merely something experienced as a mental or psychological phenomenon, but is manifested in the way people interact with each other, in the way they engage in similar or simultaneous activities, and the way in which they perceive, negotiate and mark time and space. These common practices and perceptions connect cultural groups materially. If these connections are to be considered as ‘imagined’, as Benedict Anderson claims, then the term ‘imagination’ must acquire a sense of agency and action.

Anderson argues that nations are limited and differentiated from each other by boundaries which are both finite and elastic, and that they invoke a state of
sovereignty as a sign of freedom from a previous order or regime. The sense of community or comradeship engendered in nations is able to be merged with any number or combination of political and ideological perspectives.

[The nation] is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.5

Anderson develops his concept of imagination by way of a consideration of newspapers as national artefacts. The temporal (‘calendrical’) coincidence of reported events combined with the relatively simultaneous consumption of the newspaper’s reporting of the events produces both an imagined connection between newspaper stories, and an imagined world where the nation provides a boundary between within and without. Anderson contends that newspapers as fictions connect events arbitrarily.

What is the essential literary convention of the newspaper? … Why are these events so juxtaposed? What connects them to each other? Not sheer caprice. Yet obviously most of them happen independently, without the actors being aware of each other or of what the others are up to. The arbitrariness of their inclusion and juxtaposition … shows that the linkage between them is imagined.6

Anderson’s conception of imagination is couched in terms of absence: an absence of direct contact, an absence of direct speech, an absence of critical faculty, an absence of truth, ‘actors’ as signs of the newspaper’s fictitiousness and lack of truth. National subjects are rendered passive, the concept of imagining confined to a misguided working of the mind. While such a conception facilitates an historical accounting of nation as a social category, it leaves little allowance for the agency of citizens in transforming nations, in
Four Months from Australia

bringing about social changes. Confining national subjects to the times and spaces of a passive mind-set ignores the social connections realised in the ongoing process of performing the nation, a process occupying the present and future as well as the past. The sovereignty of Sri Lanka as independent of the British Empire and the sense of community engendered by this freedom is severely strained, left indeterminate while the question of Tamil sovereignty remains unanswered. The future of the northern and eastern provinces of Sri Lanka is in the process of being determined, at stake the way Sri Lankans view themselves and how they wish the rest of the world to see them.

Historical writing is not well-equipped to describe theatrical events … [T]he facts of history are, it is assumed, not theatrical; they have their causes and their effects, but these lie in the past and in the future and are not fully known to those who precipitate them. The agents of history no doubt have psychological motives, but they cannot be fully conscious of what they do. Unlike actors, they are not performing – which is where the historian comes in, for it is the unselfconsciousness of the past that licenses the historian’s effort to endow it with meaning. Retrospectively, the historian may have the impression that the protagonists of the past were actors on a stage, propelled by a script not of their own writing; but the validity of this metaphor depends on the assumption that at the time the actors did not realise they were acting.7

The notion of imagining the nation (nation as imagined community) in the absence of direct contact is countered by the ongoing sharing of time and space by citizens in a multitude of social and cultural activities which, while perhaps not encompassing the nation in its entirety, realise smaller communities: regional, cultural, familial, specific. The connections produced by these smaller, more specific communities are material, imagined and realised in the presence of other citizens, other members of that community. Such connections are not
produced merely within the geographic borders of a country, the ‘official’
borders of nation, but are imagined and realised by subjects who have migrated,
by the practices of diaspora removed spatially and by generation. Yet even in
this temporal and spatial absence connections are remembered, are imagined and
realised concretely in space and time, in the presence of other community
members. These practices all work towards making incursions on the idea of
‘national absence’, of citizens not knowing each other, and redefine imagining
as an activity carried out by people in space and in time, producing social
connections alongside those prescribed officially.

I have received an Australian Citizenship application kit, produced by the
Australian Department for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, in the mail. In
its most official sense, citizenship denotes a legal status outlined in the
Australian Citizenship Act 1948. The status of Australian citizen confers the
right to vote, the right to apply for an Australian passport, the right to stand for
election, to serve on juries, to apply for employment in the Public Service or
Armed Forces, to register children born overseas as Australian Citizens, and
allows for higher priority to be given in immigration processing to those
applicants sponsored by citizens. In usage, however, the term ‘citizen’ often
connotes someone who has migrated to Australia and has taken part in a
citizenship ceremony.

In their latest Report to Parliament, the Australian Citizenship Council seeks to
emphasise a broader sense of the words ‘citizen’ and ‘citizenship’, focusing on
the idea of shared values and ideals of civic life, taking into account the many different beliefs and cultural practices held by Australians, as well as their varied emphases on regional identity. As a more inclusive term, ‘citizen’ is seen as having the potential to level perceived hierarchies and prejudices among migrants to Australia, indigenous Australians, and Australians of British descent, with all having equal status and equal access to becoming part of the Australian nation.

Australian Citizenship can be acquired by birth, by adoption by Australian Citizens, by descent (being born overseas to Australian Citizen parents), or by grant. People seeking a grant of Citizenship must have been a permanent resident in Australia for a total of two out of the last five years, and

- be at least 18 years of age;
- be capable of understanding the nature of their citizenship application;
- be of good character;
- possess a basic knowledge of the English language;
- have an adequate knowledge of the responsibilities and privileges of Australian Citizenship; and,
- be likely to reside permanently in Australia or maintain a close and continuous association with Australia.

These conditions are in the main designed to demonstrate a close and conscious connection with Australia. The Australian Citizenship programme has attempted to strengthen its ties with the Adult Migrant Education Program, in part through the development of a new curriculum kit on Australian Citizenship. It is anticipated that the new curriculum component will cover areas such as citizenship procedures and responsibilities, Australian history and institutions,
and social issues such as reconciliation and multiculturalism, and provide more of a formal basis for acquiring “an adequate knowledge of the responsibilities and privileges of Australian Citizenship”.

While such a curriculum may well expedite the acquisition of citizenship, the knowledge gained from it will be done *so in absentia*, the receiving of an official version of Australian history and its present social relations in place of knowledge realised through having lived in Australia. In this sense, official knowledge temporally precedes ‘first hand’ knowledge, and constitutes an imagined memory (imagined as first memory), one which is open to examination and assessment, and which can be recalled for that purpose. Knowledge is thus narrativised and made referential. Rather than a temporal, spatial, physical and material way of connecting times, space and bodies, remembering becomes an act of separation of these parameters and the memories held within them. I look forward to hearing more of your theatre production precisely because you and the company are attempting to connect these memories and experiences, bringing them into contact with each other in the act of producing times and spaces. I shall write to you again when I reach Thailand.

Yours

Rick.
Dear Rick

I am in Sydney for three days to attend a wedding of a friend, with whom I shared a house here for a year. Though it is now more than ten years since I have lived here, finding my way around is easy, and the feeling of being in a city rather than in a suburb is both comforting and energising. Ten years ago, coming to Sydney meant, to me, an act of coming to the ‘centre’ of the country, to a metropolis more representative of Australia than Perth. In particular, I wanted to find out what Australian theatre was, what made theatre ‘Australian’. Perth, separated by thousands of miles from the other capital cities in Australia, carried a connotation of provinciality and isolation. Sydney and Melbourne were ‘where the action was’. While living in Sydney, I was able to see a lot more theatre, in more venues, staged by more companies. However, in terms of variety, what I saw differed very little from the theatre I had seen in Perth. The larger professional companies still presented the same mix of plays from the canon of European playwrights combined with a work or two by Australian playwrights. Rather than expand or change my impressions of ‘Australian theatre’, it merely confirmed them.
Part One of A Cook’s Tour was performed in the Murdoch University Drama Workshop two weeks ago, and provided a great deal of encouragement for the company for the rest of the production. The audience seemed to respond both actively and favourably to the performance, and we hope to see most of them at Parts Two and Three. Exhaustion and pleasant surprise appeared to be the main feelings pervading the company after the performance, a realisation of what had been achieved despite the conflicts and misgivings of the rehearsals. I was pleased and relieved with the performance, which I felt presented a version of ‘Australia’ which was contradictory, dispersed, incomplete, both sad and funny, but which was ultimately recognisable to the audience.

Amongst the ideas explored in Part One were the strategic performing of time and of space. I asked the company to emphasise the time and space of the performance as meaningful, but also to encourage the audience to think about using time and space themselves, and in doing so to participate actively in the making of the performance. The squash courts adjoining the Drama Workshop were used as a foyer and amenities area before and after the performance, and during the two intervals. The company left it up to the audience to decide when to enter the Workshop, and they eventually formed a queue at the entrance, whereupon they were ‘processed’ by members of the company. This involved giving each audience member a ‘passport’ (a punchclock card) which had to be inserted into a punchclock and stamped, and then scanning them for weapons or contraband.
Upon entering the Workshop, a pathway formed by black curtains led the audience past company members engaged in various clerical and processing tasks and into the central performance space. The performance had apparently already commenced – a device to temporally disorient the audience and encourage them to make their own beginnings in watching the performance. The pathway was designed to spatially disorient the audience to some extent in order to allow two or three of the performers to ‘lead the way’ into the central space and to be ‘reluctantly co-opted’ into the ongoing performance, an enactment of prisoners being chained and forced to power a treadmill beneath a performer on a raised dais, dressed as Captain Cook, reading from a long, circular scroll of indeterminate, recurring writings. The scroll was an attempt to perform the ‘writ of the nation’, a narrative imagined as official and referential, in this case consisting of a contribution of an extract from the journal of each of the company members.

Throughout this scene the audience entered and seated themselves around the performance area on benches and filled sacks. The ensuing performance included stories, sketches, dances and tableaux written, devised and workshopped by the company. The performance attempted to ‘fill’ the gaps of conventional theatre: the filled sacks among the seats turned out to be disguised performers, who later turned up in the foyer and in the toilets during the intervals. All the audience’s movements, their entrances, exits and participation in activities during the performance were supervised in some way, but allowing
sufficient space and time for audience members to imagine their movements as being freely made, and for audience members to ‘supervise’ or exert social pressure on each other. The company did not announce a formal closure but instead provided the audience with the opportunity to leave by ‘resting’, heads down, on one side of the performance area, having planned to ‘perform’ until all the audience had decided to leave the space, thereby helping to produce their own ‘endings’.

I felt that the performance space and time created by the company addressed Foucault’s conceptualisation of the panopticon critically and actively, introducing the notion of punishment and incarceration, and connecting it to Britain’s imagining of Australia as a penal colony and place of transportation. While the imagined performance space and the actions of the performers invited movement and active participation from the audience, the audience themselves produced an inhibitory tension counteracting this freedom. The audience were ‘processed’ individually, ‘dressed’ as individuals rather than as a unified group, and invested with a role in the ensuing performance.

[The panopticon] induces in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power … [T]he inmates [are] caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers. … Power has its principle not so much in a person as in a certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gazes; in an arrangement whose internal mechanisms produce the relation in which individuals are caught up.10

While the spatial plan of the performance space did not conform precisely to that of the panopticon presented by Foucault, it did attempt to produce a space where
all participants, audience members and performers, were visible at all times. The space could be described as a version of theatre-in-the-round, without a discrete front or back. A friend took photographs of both the performers and the audience throughout the performance: I hope to distribute these pictures amongst the audience during Part Two, or use them as some form of reference, as a way of making connections between the performances.

In the process of devising and rehearsing Part Two, I have asked each of the company to consider their place in the group, and to consider the group as a whole, in the light of what they have embarked upon together, and in relation to the idea of belonging to a nation. As students enrolled in a theatre and drama course presenting *A Cook’s Tour*, each of them constitutes both a pedagogical object of the nation and a performative subject. Within the context of the course their ‘Australian-ness’ refers to their relationship with each other, in a specific time and space, drawing upon specific experiences in the process of a specific set of activities. While performing, this concept of ‘Australian-ness’ is extended to include relationships with the audience, and their actions and experiences. The audience assume the simultaneous roles of pedagogical object and performative subject. I am interested to see how the company makes connections between these ‘enactments’ of nation and the possibility of bringing resistance and change to official representations of the Australian nation.

The ASIO selection test took place the Thursday before last. I arrived at the
offices of the Attorney-General a minute or two late and found myself facing a room full of candidates seated at desks, just commencing the written examination. All of them were male, and dressed in suits and ties, making me even more conscious of both my tardiness and my slightly more casual dress. I had the impression that most of them were sitting the examination before going to their usual jobs. The rear and side walls of the examination room were bare. In the centre of the front wall, which the candidates faced, was a large, embossed representation of the Australian coat-of-arms. A portrait of the Queen hung above it. The coat-of-arms was flanked on one side by the Australian flag and on the other by the Union Jack.

The examination consisted of standard papers testing vocabulary, comprehension, numeracy and problem-solving. I found the questions and format familiar from sitting bank and public service examinations. In addition, there were set questions requiring the making of decisions and value judgements. Some of these required descriptive answers. Each candidate also had to fill out a detailed personal outline, covering family background and all movements within and outside Australia. This outline also called for the making of subjective judgements in the process of evaluation. We were informed that this information would be kept on file, but treated as confidential. We were also directed to The Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Act of 1979 and ASIO’s annual reports to Parliament for further reading. I found these publications useful in examining what is the official conception of national
security in Australia, and in attempting to ascertain how a process of imagining and realising national security could be undertaken.

[ASIO’s] main role is to collect and analyse intelligence so as to:
- forewarn ministers and appropriate agencies and authorities of activities likely to place at risk the security of Australian people, property or interests
- and provide ministers and appropriate agencies and authorities with sound advice on how risks might be managed and harm avoided, countered or reduced.11

The 1979 ASIO Act also provides definitions of ‘security’ and related concepts, which I found helpful in considering the nature of the boundaries, spatial, temporal and physical, which ASIO and the Commonwealth Government conceive of and seek to protect. ‘Security’ is defined as:

(a) the protection of, and of the people of, the Commonwealth and the several States and Territories from:
   (i) espionage;
   (ii) sabotage;
   (iii) politically motivated violence;
   (iv) promotion of communal violence;
   (v) attacks on Australia’s defence system; or
   (vi) acts of foreign interference.
   whether directed from, or committed within, Australia or not; and
(b) the carrying out of Australia’s responsibilities to any foreign country in relation to a matter mentioned in any of the sub-paragraphs of paragraph (a) …12

The intelligence collected and analysed by ASIO may only be communicated to the Attorney-General, Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition or other appropriate authority by the Director-General of ASIO. It is an offence for any other officer to disseminate intelligence on behalf of ASIO. The conditions and procedures pertaining to the granting and use of search warrants, the use of
listening devices and the inspection of postal articles are set out in the Act.

It would appear that ASIO’s ability to continue carrying out its assigned tasks depends to a large extent on its anonymity and on its ability to maintain its own status quo within the various communities it collects intelligence from. Threats to the national security largely constitute unknown or unseen dangers: what is sought is the possibility of foreseeing such dangers. Such dangers must be imagined in order to be anticipated, and in order to realise spatial, temporal, physical and material plans to counter them.

The White Whale swam before him as the monomaniac incarnation of all those malicious agencies which some deep men feel eating in them, till they are left living on with half a heart and half a lung ... All that most maddens and torments; all that stirs up the lees of things; all truth with malice in it; all that cracks the sinews and cakes the brain; all the subtle demonisms of life and thought; all evil, to crazy Ahab, were visibly personified, and made practically assailable in Moby-Dick.13

If I am successful in passing the examination stage of my ASIO application, I shall be contacted within the next week. If not, I would still consider the experience illuminating. Keep safe.

Yours truly

Ricardo.
Dear Ricardo

I am slowly making my way back to Australia. I flew from Colombo to Bangkok last week, and have now caught the train to Chiang Mai, where I am spending a few days with friends who live here. While in Bangkok, I had the opportunity to meet with members of the Maya Children’s Theatre group, who since 1981 have been presenting theatre programmes to children in slum areas in and around Bangkok, as well as regularly touring other areas of Thailand. Their workshops often involve the use of local materials and found objects to make puppets, masks and other theatre props, and the generative use of these in performing stories and tableaux. Children are encouraged to develop their own performance ideas and make their own decisions in response to material presented. Many of the programmes presented by Maya address social and environmental issues, encouraging grassroots and specific community responses rather than the dissemination of a particular ideology throughout the country. They also work directly with schools, preparing resource kits and providing consultancy for specific issues and themes.

Rather than administer centralised community programmes with an inherent set
of official values, Maya work ‘from the ground up’, allowing the situations of each community or group to inform their performances and workshops, and in turn the addressed issues themselves. Such work displays an explicit willingness to encourage and work with the Thai government in developing programmes aimed at increasing awareness of issues such as public health and the environment. In doing so Maya seek to foster a collective spirit amongst Thai communities, one which starts with theatre and the voicing of problems and common needs and goals, and which seeks to envision a way forward by addressing these specific goals both as community goals and as goals of the nation.

Homi Bhabha seeks to develop a more assertive concept of nation by resisting the kind of Western historicism which subjects nations to social and literary narrative. For Bhabha, ‘nationness’ constitutes a form of social and textual affiliation, in which citizens are subsumed within the spatial and temporal structures of the nation’s story, the nation represented by a multitude of literary metaphors.

If … 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 … 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.14

Bhabha contends that this process of metaphoric incorporation continually
produces slippages, displacements of meaning which appear as already resolved but which refer to a time and space of continuing translation and negotiation: a ‘present’ imagined as a ‘past’. Organic theories of culture, class, race, gender, community, etc., assume historicist categories and are thus able to resolve notions of the nation as a unifiable people, a ‘many as one’. The ‘people’ are both the historical objects of a nationalist pedagogy and the subjects of a process of signification and incorporation erasing times and spaces preceding the nation. The ‘people’ thus exist in a ‘double-time’, constituting both a referential presence and the construction of a continuing national narrative.

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 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.15

Bhabha is sceptical of Bakhtin’s assertion that the national space can only be achieved in writing which attempts to represent the “fullness of time”, a sense of time which allows for things to occur and for change to take place in the future. Bakhtin argues that the chronotope of the chivalric romance provides the structure for encyclopaedic writing which aims to represent space and events simultaneously, revealing a ‘contradictory multiplicity’ and providing tension to official historical writing. However, Bhabha rejects this notion of simultaneity as a condition for the representation of nation, arguing that the time of national representation is ‘double and split’, giving rise to a ‘supplementary’ (as in Derrida’s sense of the term) space, either addition or substitute, which holds the
performative and the pedagogical together.

Such a space is indicated in minority discourses which transgress the social, cultural, temporal and spatial boundaries of the nation. As the nation’s narrative strives to subsume indigenous and migrant stories and lore, and the specific minutiae and multiple perspectives of ‘daily life’, its time and space are continually challenged, revealed as open to contention. The equivocal recording and recounting of history is left open to question, rendered incomplete and unreliable.

Bhabha also takes issue with the temporal structure Benedict Anderson identifies as the time in which modern nations – imagined communities – are produced and reproduced. The “homogeneous, empty time” or the time of “meanwhile”, exemplified by the temporality of newspapers, is equated with Bakhtin’s chivalric romance chronotope, the time of “suddenly”, and criticised as providing the narrative(s) recounted with verisimilitude, an incorporation of events into national synchrony.

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 naturalises 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 time of the nation’s anomie.\(^\text{16}\)
Bhabha argues that the ‘simple present continuous’ in which the nation is narrated is separated by the discourse of official history from the split and fragmented past of the nation. This gap between the occurrence of events and their discursive appearance as national symbol, this moment of time-lag, involves a forgetting of the violence involved in the nation’s establishment. Without this ‘faithful’ act of forgetting the nation can have no beginning.

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 totalisation 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 … 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.17

All applicants for Australian citizenship under the age of 60 years must sit an interview in order to demonstrate their knowledge of the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship. This knowledge can also be demonstrated by satisfactorily completing the citizenship course element of the Adult Migrant Education Programme. In each case, knowledge of Australia’s past is being asked to be recalled as part of an act of faithfulness or allegiance to the Australian nation. Conversely, the knowledge and recollections of a previous nation are being disavowed and simultaneously ‘forgotten’. The Australian Citizenship Council recommends that all citizenship applicants participate in public ceremonies of conferral, wherever possible, in order to be introduced and welcomed to both the nation and the local community. These ceremonies
provide a public enactment of the act of bearing allegiance and remembering, while disavowing and forgetting, an enactment which is itself memorable, remembered physically in space and time.

Last year I attended a class reunion for my high school’s leaving year. It was twenty years since we had left school. The majority of my classmates and I had come to the school in Year 10 as part of a rationalisation of two schools. At the reunion we listened to stories of notable and humorous events in the school’s past, most of which had occurred before the majority of us had come to the school. However, we all laughed at and appeared to enjoy the recounting of past deeds and misdeeds, accepting them as part of our common history. The impression I had was that during the recollection of these events the minority of students who had attended the school for the whole ten to twelve years of their education suddenly seemed to out-number those of us who had arrived in Year 10, inverting what must have been their feelings of being outnumbered in Year 10. When the time came to take photographs, this ‘minority’ automatically gathered together, displaying a bond from which the rest of us felt somewhat excluded, though not necessarily offended.

The taking of photographs realised a separation of our class which had gradually been imagined through the course of the evening. Yet in the recounting of past stories, we remembered those stories as ‘our own’, forgetting that we were never there to remember them in the first place. The majority of us were split between
a past we were obliged to (but could not possibly) remember, and a past we
could remember, but were obliged to forget.

The citizenship ceremony prescribed under the 1948 Australian Citizenship Act
calls for all candidates to take either an oath or affirmation of allegiance to
Australia, replaced by a pledge of commitment by amendment to the Act in
1994, before an authorised community member, such as a Mayor, Town Clerk or
Shire President, and an official party usually consisting of Federal and State
Parliamentary representatives and Church representatives.

The official party occupies the dais, the candidates and their relatives and
friends being seated in the body of the hall. A portrait of the Queen and the
Australian Coat of Arms are usually placed on the wall behind the
presiding officer, flanked by an Australian flag.¹⁸

This spatial arrangement reminds me of the scene I imagine lay before you as
you took your ASIO written examination: a spatial reinforcement of the task at
hand as being carried out in the name of the sovereign.

What I also find interesting about citizenship ceremonies is their scripting in
terms of bodies and speech. The presiding officer introduces and facilitates the
ceremony, and short speeches are made by a representative of the Minister for
Immigration, and perhaps by one or two other members of the official party. The
candidates themselves are limited in their speaking to the recital of the oath or
affirmation of allegiance. After the presentation of certificates, the recipients are
welcomed as new citizens and congratulated by the presiding officer. An
informal social gathering often follows the official part of the ceremony. What
protocol prescribes for the citizenship ceremony is a fixed configuration of people, space and time which can be repeated, and which guarantees that all citizens thus invested are equal and homogeneous. The rehearsal or briefing before the ceremony attempts to ensure the successful imagining of the candidates’ incorporation into the nation. The official nature of the speeches privileges the members of the official party as pedagogical national representatives, and silences and subjects all other participants in the ceremony. Any informal talking or whispering is imagined as silence. The dais and microphone also physically privilege the speaker. The candidates and the rest of the audience sit and listen to the speaker while facing the Queen’s portrait, the Coat of Arms and the Australian flag, in front of which sit members of Parliament and members of the clergy. What they witness is an imagined uniting of Monarch, Church and State guaranteeing Australia’s sovereignty, and in witnessing this they realise their own position as national subjects, affirming or reaffirming their allegiance to the nation.

The nation presents itself as a text to be read, by narrating itself as an ordered chain of homogeneous and discrete events, each one presenting a fixed configuration of people, matter, time and space, each one narrated as ‘here and now’. Experiences, encounters and relationships which precede, foreground, connect, re-order or run parallel with the official chain of events are forgotten or silenced by the nation’s narration. This is what I experienced at the class reunion. Whether we were ‘there’ or not, we fell into line, accepting the official
version and the official order of events. Memories outside this narrative were ‘forgotten’: we were all from the same school and thus shared the same memories. Citizens recognise themselves only from the position of citizen, the consequence of being born within the nation, or of being ‘naturalised’ as such. The already-assumed citizen’s recognition of themselves and thus of the nation constitutes the complicit act which reproduces the relations of nation, that is, the homogenising and totalising of national endeavours.

Oh God! To sail with such a heathen crew that have small touch of human mothers in them! Whelped somewhere by the sharkish sea. The white whale is their demogorgon. Hark! the infernal orgies! that revelry is forward! mark the unfaltering silence aft! Methinks it pictures life.19

I shall write again from Malaysia. I look forward to hearing of the progress of ‘A Cook’s Tour’, and wish you luck in any further encounters with ASIO.

Yours

Rick.
Dear Rick

I am in Adelaide for the International Theatre Workshop Festival, specifically to attend a masterclass presented by the Mindanao Community Theatre Network. Over the past couple of days I have met, at general introductory sessions, many interesting and committed theatre and dance practitioners and students, involved in a multitude of theatre projects. At the same time, I have met many more community theatre workers struggling for ideas and approaches to performing, with talents and interests geared more towards administration and economic survival. The participants of Mindanao’s workshop tended to be mainly from the latter group, which has tended to detract from the scope and potential of the activities undertaken. In addition, there has been almost no critical attention given to the meaning of the term ‘community’ by the participants, something Mindanao members themselves have remarked upon.

The masterclass itself has been split into two, with ‘practitioners’ – community theatre workers – separated from theatre students. This is something I have found particularly disappointing and limiting. Having worked earlier with local students in the workshop, I found their performance ideas and abilities,
combined with their willingness to try new things, encouraging and informative. When I was forced by the workshop leaders to work exclusively with the community workers, I missed the students’ sense of humour and their attention to the physical, spatial and temporal aspects of performance. In contrast, the community workers tended to concentrate almost solely on scripts: dialogue-heavy statements of the blindingly obvious, devoid of an awareness of the limitless possibilities of performance. These scripts were equated with community issues, and with the probability of attracting government and private funding for their staging.

I am aware that I am generalising to some extent in treating the groups with such broad strokes, but I have made a genuine attempt to listen to and find out about the interests of each of the community workers participating in the workshop, hoping to pick up on new performance ideas and directions, and new approaches to addressing theatre and community. What I have found is that much of the activities of performance are taken for granted, assumed as an automatic enactment of a community theatre script. Workers are by and large funded to spend time with targeted communities, to undertake research and thus produce an informed script to be performed by or for the members of the community. Such a relationship seems to assume the space and time of theatre as being already resolved, an empty stage for the faithful enactment of scripts.
The activities presented by the Mindanao Community Theatre Network resembled those I had witnessed being presented by Australian Columban and Redemptorist priests and facilitators as part of Catholic parish and youth ministry work: activities informed by liberation theology and by the theatre of liberation. Some activities were instantly recognisable as part of Augusto Boal’s repertoire of Image Theatre and Forum Theatre exercises, aimed at finding connections between the participants, and common goals. However, after the separation of the students from the community workers, which led to the subsequent alienation and departure of the students, I found it harder to find connections with other participants. I felt isolated, perhaps because no-one else came from a tertiary education background, and because they all seemed to be aware of funding and administrative bodies, designated by various acronyms, which were not known to me. Other participants, and the workshop leaders themselves, found it strange that I had undertaken street theatre and other informal performances without seeking funding.

Part Two of A Cook’s Tour was performed in the Drama Workshop at Murdoch University about two weeks ago, and the company is now preparing for Part Three. The performance took place in a spatial structure similar to that used in Part One, with the audience again being processed before entering the performance space. An attempt was made to remind the audience, wherever possible, of the previous performance, and to anticipate the next one. Overall, I felt that Part Two benefited from the extra time the company had spent working
together and engaging in a writing process. Representations of the nation in Part Two were, in my opinion, more personal and less ‘dominant’ or typical, the interaction between physical rehearsal and journal exploration enabling, in a number of instances, more challenging ideas and images to be presented.

There is no performance without a goal. The prison is the enclosure in which the state organises the use of space and time in such a way as to achieve what Foucault calls docile bodies and hence, docile minds. As part of the preparation for the performance, we all visited Fremantle Gaol, which no longer operates as a prison but is preserved as a heritage site and developed as a multiple-function complex for community, government and commercial use. Our tour through the Gaol was conducted by a guide who had previously worked there as a warden. The Gaol was in operation from the 1850s, when it was built by convicts, until 1991, making it the longest serving prison in Australia. Its obvious antiquity, its lack of plumbing, insulation and recreation facilities, and its dim lighting, combined with the guide’s anecdotes to imagine a place of grim foreboding and harsh justice. It reminded me a little of school, both in its appearance, and in the implicit pressure I felt to behave myself within the bare cells, halls and exercise yard. From speaking with other members of the company I got the impression that the tour of the prison emphasised the seemingly endless repetitiveness of the daily routine for Fremantle Gaol’s inmates, the lack of either a temporal or spatial horizon. This awareness of daily routines, both institutional and otherwise, and the way their repetition shapes our social perspectives and interactions, was reflected in some of the performances.
Last Wednesday I received a visit from an ASIO field officer, who conducted an interview on behalf of the ASIO selection and recruitment panel. The officer rang me up the day before to arrange the interview for 7.30 p.m., after he had finished his regular work for the day. He gave me his name over the phone, which I then looked up and found in the phone directory. The entire interview was carried out in an informal manner at my dining room table. He informed me that I had been selected for the interview as a result of my aptitude test, and that the questions he was going to ask me had to do with vetting me for a security clearance. I noted the background information sheet he referred to during the interview contained information about my parents and my brother, and he joked about my ability to read upside down as being a requisite for ASIO employment. He was interested in any travel undertaken by me and by my family overseas, and most particularly in the trips taken by my parents to Sri Lanka. He asked on more than one occasion about my parents’ political affiliations and memberships, and whether they had had any contact with political or terrorist groups in Sri Lanka, particularly the LTTE.

After the required parts of the interview had been completed, the officer asked me if I had any questions about ASIO and about its working environment.

What is ASIO’s business? It is tempting … to look for tangible results – spies or terrorists caught, assassinations prevented, bombs defused in the
nick of time. But the true strength of a security service lies in its ability to
detect and pre-empt harmful activity long before it becomes a media event.
What a security service must do, before ever it can warn or advise or help
to prevent, is to know and understand. The real measure of ASIO’s
achievement in any year is how much it has increased its knowledge and
understanding of who and what threatens Australia’s security. And by
necessity, this is generally not something we can put into the public
domain.21

I asked the officer whether I was right in surmising that ASIO tended to
concentrate its efforts in the area of internal security on the affairs of newer
ethnic communities in Australia, and the possible changes they may bring to
Australian society in general. He told me that certain communities, not
necessarily newer ones, received greater surveillance because of the presence of
violent, politically motivated groups in the original country. Such surveillance
involved reviewing any public literature distributed by or within these
communities, and noting any visits made by community leaders to Australia.
The monitoring of visits, public speeches and press interviews, and public
protests pertaining to civil issues abroad, was part of the routine of recognising
and preventing the threat of community violence in Australia. Applications for
entry to or residence in Australia were also monitored by ASIO, and each year a
number of applications were rejected, upon ASIO advice, because of previous
espionage activity or links to terrorist groups.

He added that ASIO also played an important role in preventing foreign
intelligence organizations from covertly acquiring Australian scientific and
technological research, and other intellectual property, which was also perceived
as a potential threat to Australian security. Such prevention involved monitoring foreign agents’ activities in Australia, advising the rejection of entry or residence applications to people identified as being involved in the procurement of weapons of mass destruction or technologies used in their production, and advising scientific and research organizations on security procedures.

I was also interested in finding out where new trainees would be placed within the ASIO structure. I was told that new recruits would spend their first six to twelve months either in Canberra or Melbourne, because of the availability of staff and facilities for training, and that they would be involved in work pertaining to the Security Intelligence Program, where information relating to security was collected and analysed, and used to advise the Attorney-General. I was told that a lot of this work tended to be quite mundane: monitoring daily newspapers and other periodicals, airline passenger lists, updating databases and maintaining files on particular individuals and groups. Occasionally, interviews or informal conversations were undertaken with community groups, usually under the guise of an assumed name, identity and purpose, in order to collect intelligence or to monitor a group where a possible threat to security was perceived.

After the successful completion of a traineeship, opportunities existed for officers to work in the Protective Security, Foreign Intelligence or Counter Terrorism Support Programs as well as in the Security Intelligence Program. The
Protective Security Program was responsible for carrying out security assessments on particular people applying for entry to Australia or for access to official information carrying national security classifications. Denial of access might either take administrative or more physical forms. The Program was also responsible for security education within the Australian Public Service. The Foreign Intelligence Program was responsible for collecting foreign intelligence within Australia on behalf of other Australian security and intelligence groups. Such information was obtainable only under specific warrants issued by the Attorney-General. The Counter Terrorism Support Program managed the area of crisis response in the event of terrorist activity within Australia, involving contingency planning and the maintenance of communication, intelligence collection and technical support.

The interview lasted just over three hours, but seemed to pass more quickly. We appeared to get on quite well, joking at times, and the interview was carried out in a very informal manner. The officer told me a little about his own family, who had also migrated to Australia. When the interview was concluded, he told me that he would complete his report and submit it to the personnel section. He told me, off the record, that although the details of the report would remain strictly confidential, that he was recommending me for appointment as a trainee officer, subject to a psychological counselling session. While I felt gratified by his approval, there was also a great deal of tension about how badly I wanted to work for ASIO. This is something I must decide before I am contacted for the
next stage.

Wishing you happiness and safe travelling,

Yours truly,

Ricardo.

VII

Dear Ricardo

I have once again been enjoying the hospitality of friends, this time in Kuantan, having left Kuala Lumpur last week. Tomorrow morning I will take a bus over the Causeway to Singapore, and then embark on the final stage of my journey back to Australia. While in Kuala Lumpur, I was fortunate enough to meet with Krishen Jit, who in 1985 directed the Five Arts Theatre Company production of ‘1984: Here and Now’ in K.L. The production was ostensibly a dramatisation of George Orwell’s novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, but drew a direct parallel between the regime of Big Brother and the Party in Orwell’s novel and that of the Malaysian government led by Dr. Datuk Seri Mahathir, allegorically referring to the persecution of perceived political enemies, and corruption, nepotism and
repressive bureaucracy within Malaysia. Krishen showed me sections of the performance on videotape. The production was well-supported, particularly by Chinese and Indian Malaysians, but led to increased surveillance and suppression of those involved in staging the performance by the Malaysian Government.

The Five Arts production raised a number of questions for me, particularly in regard to the use of Orwell’s book, which while presenting a warning of the dangers of totalitarianism and the progress of the police state to post-war Britain, could be seen in Malaysia as an artefact of British colonialism. While the discourse of imperialism is disposed of in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by setting the novel in the future, such a future invokes the narrative of history, indicated by the very title of the novel, and Western history’s accompanying colonial demands. However, the production of ‘1984: Here and Now’ functions as an explication of the present rather than as a warning of a possible future: it attempts to translate rather than forewarn or hypothesise. The production performs cultural difference alongside everything else it presents. In translating Orwell’s novel, and producing a subjectivity in which the coloniser/colonised opposition is absent, the Five Arts production is able to reproduce the signs of the novel (Big Brother, Newspeak, Doublethink, the Thought Police) as symbols of the present, and thus to produce a spatial, temporal and physical site of resistance which translates the encounter between Malaysian authorities and Malaysian citizens.
Staying in Kuantan has given me time to complete and despatch my citizenship application forms, and I expect to have an interview arranged soon after arriving in Australia. My application-by-correspondence has also led me to think about the process by which my identity, established only by the sending of letters, that is, by the post, is anticipated and processed as national subject, as citizen.

Who is writing? To whom? And to send, to destine, to dispatch what? To what address? Without any desire to surprise, and thereby to grab attention by means of obscurity, I owe it to whatever remains of my honesty to say finally that I do not know.  

My correspondence with the Department of Immigration has highlighted for me both the spatial and temporal process entailed in citizenship. My arrival as citizen, or prospective citizen, in Australia marks a movement both in space and in time. It marks the end of one journey, and its erasure, and the beginning of another. Stories of ‘before’ are replaced with stories of the present, and of a new past.

All profound changes of consciousness, by their very nature, bring with them characteristic amnesias. Out of such oblivions, in specific historical circumstances, spring narratives.

I have begun to (once again) learn about the official history of Australia, of Cook’s landing at Botany Bay, of the establishment of the six British penal colonies, and of their coming together to form the Commonwealth of Australia. Tied in to this official narrative are official accounts of relations between Aboriginal people and British settlers, and of relations between British settlers and their descendants and migrants from the rest of the world. Such accounts are
presented as the ongoing narratives of reconciliation and multiculturalism, narrated in the ‘simple present continuous’.

The 1986 Australia Act completed Australia’s formal independence from the United Kingdom, greatly diminishing the role of the Royal Monarch in the running of government and abolishing appeals to the Privy Council. However, the Governor-General’s speech after the opening of Parliament on the occasion of each new Commonwealth government still carries weight inasmuch as it must be carried by Parliament in order for the Government to govern. The speech, prepared by the Prime Minister and senior ministers, sets out the Government’s proposed programs. A motion to adopt an Address-in-Reply is then voted on. The Prime Minister is obliged to resign if the vote is lost, as it indicates that supply will not be passed. The Sovereign’s speech realises a first act of legislation removed from the normal routine of parliamentary business, a reference for future acts of legislation, an act legitimating the sovereignty of Parliament.

The time of the sovereign is that of a succession of pure presents. The intermediary body of government attempts to deliver the post which would allow that time to exist, but in so doing takes time, breaks open the time of the sovereign, and gives rise to history and the possibility of the nation’s narrating to itself what it should have been.24

In considering the relationship between citizen and nation, Geoffrey Bennington examines the writings of the French social and political philosopher Montesquieu, who argued that the complications, circuitousness and secrecy of politics is based on its reliance on postal models of communication.
Montesquieu bemoaned the lack of directness in dealings characterising the affairs of French political institutions in the eighteenth century, claiming that each government letter, be it sealed military orders or legislative bills, constituted an ‘expedition’, all the while emphasising the two meanings of the word. Each expedition made the existence of such letters known, thus exposing the possibility of information being lost or falling into the wrong hands.

What Montesquieu reproaches politics with is apparently not so much the post as such, as the fact of wanting to achieve, by postal means, effects on a secondary addressee, the public, by means of ‘making a noise’: politics cannot want absolute secrecy, but the open, expiring secret constituted by a letter in the post.25

Bennington argues that what Montesquieu is searching for is a network which rather than exhibit its secret letters, would be secret itself, concerned with the end rather than the means, that is, political effects rather than the art and process of politics. This would do away with the possibility of the past being rediscovered and open to question. The presence of the letter would then be an absolute presence.

The post wants the letter to arrive at its destination, at what Montesquieu calls its ‘brilliant end’: this end is the death of the postman and the end of the past. As postal network, all politics wants politics to end. The arrival of the letter should erase its delivery. The end of politics is the end of politics.26

Equating the workings of the post with the philosophical doctrines of Nature and of Free Will, utilised by writers including Rousseau and Kant, Bennington identifies a split in the subjectivity of a letter latent in the possibility of sending a letter to oneself. The ‘citizen’ as member of the sovereign can send a letter to
the ‘same’ citizen as subject of the legislative letter. However, the citizen is in fact created by the sending of the letter: this ‘new’ subject does not pre-exist the sending of the letter. This split in subjectivity is identified by Bennington as providing the reason and the conditions of uncertainty necessary for politics, that is, the struggle for and exercising of power in public and governmental affairs.

The citizen sends himself the law, and in this sending names himself as citizen: this structure is that of autonomy in general, and implies a concomitant autonomination.27

However, the fact that the two moments of ‘citizen’ are separated by space and time means that autonomy can never be fully achieved. Thus, there is always room for politics and always the possibility of the letter not reaching its destination. The nation’s historical narrative is an attempt to fix this uncertainty, to fuse these potentially conflicting moments, and by doing so to establish national frontiers.

The idea of the nation is inseparable from its narration: that narration attempts, interminably, to constitute identity against difference, inside against outside, and in the assumed superiority of inside over outside, prepares against invasion and for ‘enlightened’ colonialism. In this structure, the legislator is never far away.28

The arrival of a letter marks the fusing of the body of the subject with the space of the destination, that is the fusing of the citizen with the nation. The myriad of possibilities of such an arrival not occurring through accidents, postal error, errors in names and addresses, duplication and duplicity, as well as the extra expeditions possibly undertaken to correct errors in some of these instances (re-directions, re-postings, searches for new identities and addresses, speculative
postings), are all erased in this act of fusion. My anticipated grant of citizenship depends on my arriving in Australia in order to be at my designated address to receive it. My journey from Wales to Sri Lanka to Thailand to Malaysia to Australia is concurrent with the expedition of the letter granting me Australian citizenship. However, in order for me to become a national subject, my journey must erase itself as it progresses, replaced by a history and by memories which are Australian.

My arrival as Australian citizen grants me a presence which is continuous and referential, with a history concurrent with that of the nation. It is my absence from Australia which will be erased: my ability to see the nation from a perspective outside that of the nation. However, because of the gap between my imagination as national subject, that is, my application for citizenship while overseas and its eventual granting, and my realisation as a symbol of the nation during the citizenship ceremony in Australia, there is a tension in terms of allegiance and memories. How can I forget what has happened to me whilst living outside Australia, or my parents’ lives before coming to Australia? My moment of ‘birth’, of investiture, is also a moment of encounter, of translation, for there were times and spaces ‘before’.

At the centre, the nation narrates itself as the nation: at the borders, it must recognise that there are other nations on which it cannot but depend. It follows that the ‘origin’ of the nation is never simple, but dependent on a differentiation of nations which has always already begun.29
This moment of transformation is, of course, something I cannot realise yet. My attempts to imagine it have ‘played’ with the possibility of my not making it to Australia, of the letter not arriving. Not knowing exactly what I am becoming part of quells my optimism. I am held in the tension between becoming and belonging, a state I have been in for some time now. My doubts lie in the possibility that neither crossing the geographical border of Australia nor attaining the temporal borders of residency and of the citizenship ceremony will alleviate me of this state. My comfort lies in the possibility that others (you, for example) might share this tension, this uncertain becoming. I hesitate here, before offering the suggestion that perhaps this is what evades being performed, what evades being revealed in official enactments of the nation, indeed in any attempt to performatively interrogate a nation such as Australia. Perhaps one day you might address this tension between becoming and belonging; perhaps one day I will. I suspect it is this very tension which embodies the possibility of ‘not nation’, of the nation’s narration being arrested and revealed in the act of producing itself.

Wishing you every success with Part Three of ‘A Cook’s Tour’, and hoping to meet up with you again in the near future.

Yours,

Rick.
Dear Rick,

‘A Cook’s Tour’ has finally been completed. Part Three took place on the Saturday before last, providing a draining but ultimately rewarding end to the production. Parts One and Two, amongst its many reference to times and spaces of the past, present and future, beckoned the audience to the voyage of James Cook to Botany Bay, and to other voyages of discovery. Part Three took place on the Swan River, rather than in the Drama Workshop, the audience being picked up in a hired boat, a ferry, from the East Street jetty in Fremantle, and taken on a voyage of discovery, in search of Australia the nation.

A few years ago, I met a woman in a clothing store who told me of her husband who had migrated to Australia from Italy some years earlier. He had recently been entertaining a friend who was visiting from Italy, and, along with some of his close friends who were also Italian migrants, had hired a boat to take the visitor for a cruise along the Swan River near Fremantle. After spending a pleasant afternoon on the river, they started back for home just before sunset. As they passed the vicinity of Gage Roads and faced the port of Fremantle, a palpable silence fell over all on the boat. Gradually the sound of someone crying became apparent. No-one spoke, but one by one, each person on the boat, except
the visitor, was brought to tears. What had been remembered in these moments was their first journey by boat to the port of Fremantle, when they had first come to Australia from Italy. They had arrived in Australia just before sunset. Not since that time had they looked at Fremantle from the water, nor had they been together on a boat at sunset. The moment held together the memories of what they had left behind, and the struggles that lay ahead in the new country.

This story provided inspiration for me in undertaking a performance about nation, and specifically about the Australian nation. What had been realised on that boat on the river was a connection between those aboard, a connection which was temporal, spatial, physical and material. The space and time of another moment had been imagined without the need for words or any other form of explanation. For me, such a moment provides a challenge for performance to imagine and realise such connections. However, it also connects ‘nation’ to an event occurring in space and time: all participants are taken outside the spatial and temporal boundaries of the nation in order to ‘re-enact the crime’. ‘Discovering’ Australia means discovering that there were (always) already people living there. Becoming Australian means entering a process of becoming aware of the temporal, spatial, physical and material conditions which separate and connect people; becoming aware of how ‘before’, ‘now’ and ‘after’ are connected. Being born in Australia, after a certain time and within certain social circumstances, affords citizens a certain advantage. Entering Australia together produces a spatial, temporal and physical ‘simultaneity’, a perspective
from which all participants are equally able to question received and assumed ideas about nation.

The ferry I had hired for Part Three was a single deck craft, surrounded on the outside by large perspex windows, giving those inside close to all-round vision. All the seating and fittings inside the boat had been removed in order to provide a large, open space conducive to a variety of performances. The ferry driver had agreed to take the boat as close as possible to Gage Roads. My challenge to the company was to take all the participants ‘out of Australia’ and then to bring them back as transformed citizens. Preparations for the performance included improvisations based on all possible nautical environments, on the re-enacting of acts of exploration around the coast of and within Australia, on transportation from Britain to the penal colony, and on encounters between Europeans and indigenous Australians. In each situation I asked the company to try to connect voyages of discovery in the past, imagined in terms of specific people, times and space, with the ways we discover things in the present day, keeping in mind the possibilities being ‘at sea’ might provide for performance.

In civilisations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates.30

The company decided to wear a ‘crew’ uniform of striped long-sleeved t-shirts and jeans, except for two members, one female and one male, who functioned as a composite ‘captain’, and wore matching red dress-jackets and navy dress-caps. Their principal role was to facilitate the voyage for the ‘passengers’, and to
assimilate and re-appropriate the disparate, de-centred array of performances occurring around them.

The company set out in the ferry from the Barrack Street jetty in Perth and rehearsed on the way to Fremantle. The audience was picked up at the East Street jetty before sunset, where they were welcomed by the captain and crew and arranged so as to stand in parallel rows inside the ferry facing the front. Long lengths of thick rope were passed in front of each row to be held by the participants. The crew instructed each row to ‘row’, that is, to rotate the length of rope in front of them as if they were turning the oars of a boat, such as a slave galley. The ferry driver used the tide and the lowest gear of the ferry engine to simulate the motion of a boat rowing. As the boat took off, apparently as a result of the audience’s rowing, a crew member sang a folk song, an Irish air, imagining a farewell to familiar lands and transportation to the Australian colony.

The audience were then allowed to rest, as traditional band music was played through the ferry’s speakers. The audience was ‘paired off’, with each other or with crew members, and encouraged to dance, an imagining of the ‘first night out’ on an ocean cruise. Subsequent performances juxtaposed readings from explorer’s letters and journals with classroom projects and skits about explorers, and addressed Australians holidaying in and ‘discovering’ Bali, Singapore and Hong Kong. Through these smaller, disparate performances emerged a set of
contradictory but nonetheless familiar assumptions about how Australians, and more specifically white Australians, see themselves and their position in the world: an aversion to hierarchies and snobbery, an admiration for underdogs and ‘battlers’, a feeling of superiority toward south-east Asians and unease toward indigenous Australians. Such assumptions were discernible rather than defined, conjectured rather than concluded.

What I felt pleased about was that the company attempted to imagine Australia as ‘unknown’, in order to realise an uncertainty about what being a nation and being Australian means. This was what I hoped the audience would be left with as they were ‘brought back to Australia’. I was therefore a little disappointed when a formal close to the performance was announced before the ferry had returned to Fremantle: I wanted the audience to think about arriving in Australia and setting foot in a country somehow ‘made new’ by the performance. However, I also felt pleased by the work the company had put into the whole production, and relieved that it was over. Keeping the performance ‘open’ remains a possibility that can be imagined, a challenge for the future, and for the continuing process of performance.

Last week I went for my ASIO psychological counselling session. I had been contacted by mail a few days before this, and told to go the foyer of a hotel in West Perth at a given time and date, and to ask the concierge for a ‘Mrs. Austin’.
I duly did so, and was admitted to a room with garish wallpaper depicting tropical foliage. Resisting the temptation to lie on the plush, white couch, I sank into a similarly padded armchair. For the first time during the process of my ASIO application I felt as if I was in an environment close to that which I had imagined an espionage agent would work in. I wondered apprehensively whether or not to accept a drink if it was offered, but mercifully, none was. Unfortunately, I was again late, which led to a spiralling series of lies about work commitments and pressures. Mrs. Austin, after a cordial welcome, assumed a more confrontational attitude in questioning me. It appeared she had taken offence with my description of my thesis, in which I argued that imagining, realising, remembering and forgetting constituted spatial, temporal, physical and material activities rather than sociobiologically determined psychological activities. The discussion which ensued turned into an argument which highlighted for me the insurmountable gap between two different ways of thinking. My attempts to point this difference out failed to make an impression on the now openly hostile Mrs. Austin.

Changing the topic after a prolonged silence, Mrs. Austin drew my attention to inconsistencies between details I had given with my initial written examination and those I had given to the ASIO field officer during my home visit and interview. I explained that I had been unwilling to divulge my personal details during the examination as I was unsure of their being treated confidentially, but felt reassured after speaking to the field officer personally. My explanation did
not appear to satisfy Mrs. Austin.

I was then questioned about my motives for joining ASIO, and about my knowledge of what work as a generalist intelligence officer entailed. I explained that I saw working with ASIO as offering the possibility for contributing to government policy on national security and for enhancing Australia’s understanding of what constituted national borders and national frontiers, and ultimately what constituted security. I spoke of my own concerns about national security addressing spatial boundaries and temporal boundaries separately and discretely, and of the dangers such a program entailed in privileging certain groups of people, certain times and spaces, and thus producing ‘blind spots’ – unseen margins and peripheries – as well as missed opportunities for the nation to find new connections. Seizing my chance, I reiterated my opinion that performance’s process of imagination and realisation, engaging as it does with spatial, temporal, physical and material connections, provided a valuable critical tool for examining how Australia’s official program of national security reflects a limited range of representations of the nation, and ‘forgets’ many more connections between people, spaces and times.

Again, my explanations were treated with visible scorn. Mrs. Austin told me that the work of individual officers could never directly have a bearing on government policy, and emphasised the mundane and routine nature of most intelligence work. There was a genuine attempt made to make the work sound as
unappealing as possible. This may well have been a directive of such a counselling session. Mrs. Austin also asked me of any problems I could foresee in working with ASIO. I told her that I imagined that it may be hard to negotiate certain social situations with friends, given the confidential nature of intelligence work. I envisaged problems fielding questions about my work, and the general curiosity of friends. Mrs. Austin appeared to become quite defensive about this point, informing me that confidentiality should never cause major problems, and that her ‘real’ friends knew not to ask difficult or compromising questions. Suppressing the fleeting desire to counsel her about something apparently still unresolved, I brought up the question of assumed identities and the dangers posed in such practices. I was informed that risk factors were assessed in these situations, and that officers were never left on their own in any situation where danger was anticipated.

Throughout the session, I felt that I was failing to provide consistent or convincing answers to questions posed. My living, working and social habits were all queried, and particular attention was paid to my consumption of alcohol and drugs. My answers failed to impress Mrs. Austin. I was taken aback by the nature and atmosphere of the session, especially after the informal and friendly nature of the home visit. After what seemed like the better part of a day but was in fact just under three hours, I was informed that the session was over, and led to the door. Mrs. Austin inquired whether I was returning to work and I replied that I was. She smiled, for the first time since I was led into the room, as she bid
me farewell.

As I walked out of the hotel, I felt a tremendous sense of relief. I knew that my application had failed, and that I had failed to present a psychologically consistent profile to Mrs. Austin. I had become intimidated by the way I had been interrogated, but such intimidation had at least allowed me to question my own sincerity in applying for work with ASIO. I suspected that any ambitions I harboured to inform and to contribute to transforming the way the nation and its security were imagined and realised would have been consistently thwarted whilst employed by ASIO. To protect people I have never met from dangers I have never experienced and people I have only read about seemed like an unlikely ambition, but one which would have at least provided a link in the process of performing the nation as secure. The experience had confirmed for me, however that the national boundaries which Australia seeks to protect officially are spatial, temporal and, as you are discovering through your process of application, social boundaries as well. Two days after the session, I received a letter confirming that my application had indeed been terminated.

The drama’s done. Why then here does any one step forth? – Because one did survive the wreck.31

My attempts to perform Australia and to imagine its boundaries, while proving informative, have fallen short of my objectives. While contained within these social, temporal and spatial borders I cannot gain a glimpse of the nation in its totality: I cannot attain sufficient height or distance from Australia to view it in
its entirety. To perform the nation is to perform it without the guarantee of national space and time, without the guarantee of geography and history, without the guarantee of national subjects. The possibility of becoming something else must be present for the significance of becoming nation to be realised.

And yet I felt that there were ‘moments’, embedded within the three performance events constituting A Cook’s Tour, and within the ASIO written examination, home visit and psychological counselling session, which emphasised the significance of the nation, its demands and the way it called upon national subjects to make a commitment. These ‘moments’ constituted almost undetectable spaces and times of uncertainty, of the possibility of detection, or of rejection. The testing of my sincerity and commitment, in a sense my loyalty, throughout the ASIO selection process produced a process of split-second decisions and undecidable moments where I could have either maintained the semblance of good faith or given in to the urge to confess all. I was both an impostor and a willing subject. I was ready to go forward, yet unable to avoid looking back. During the initial ‘rowing’ exercise in Part 3 of ‘A Cook’s Tour’, there was an unspoken moment of uncertainty shared by the five members of my ‘line’. Either we would all ‘row’ or we would all desist. In that split second before we decided to row, however, I felt the possibility of not complying, of the boat not embarking, and of the gaps the apparently seamless narration of nation sometimes reveals. It was the fact that the moment was imagined and shared by all five of us that made it significant, a realisation that
the nation was contingent on our shared labour, our joint effort.

I have made the decision to apply for a position overseas. I am expecting a reply from the University of Wales in the near future. Though time now appears to be running out, I still look forward to the possibility of a reunion before my expected departure.

Yours truly,

Ricardo.

That the signer and the addressees are not always visibly and necessarily identical from one *envoi* to another, that the signers are not inevitably to be confused with the senders, nor the addressees with the receivers, that is with the readers (you for example), etc. – you will have the experience of all of this, and sometimes will feel it quite vividly, although confusedly. [This feeling] places you in relation, without discretion, to tragedy. It forbids that you regulate distances, keeping them or losing them. This was somewhat my own situation, and it is my only excuse.\(^{32}\)
FIVE MOMENTS: IMAGINING AND REALISING THE AUSTRALIAN NATION

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.¹

The following performance descriptions and commentaries attempt to invoke a way of re-apprehending the narration of Australia, both in its past and in the present, in the process of its ‘unfolding’, a projection of the past seen in terms of time and bodies connected with space. Each of the performances described imagines and realises an event constituting an annual, cyclical or regular affirmation of ‘Australian-ness’. In terms of ‘calendrical’ occurrence, each event is quite distinct from each other, and cannot be grouped together in terms of a season or sequence. What I am attempting to realise in each performance is a moment of tension shared by all participants, performers and audience, national leaders and national subjects. For national leaders and for performers, it is the gap(s) involved in any process of imagination and realisation, the gap in the apparently seamless narration of the nation. For the audience and for citizens it
is the ‘moment’ embodying the tension between becoming and belonging. The process of nation provides a context where it is the audience that is being performed. As national subjects we are the object and the subject of the narration. We need these ‘moments’ to catch up with ourselves.

**Christmas on the Beach: A Photograph**

*Darkness.*

A slow sunrise gradually reveals a vast expanse of ocean in the distance. The stage is covered in beach sand. The sound of seagulls squawking and squabbling is heard in the distance. The rising sun reveals three bodies lying upstage centre. They are dressed in bathing costumes. A lone figure, also dressed in a bathing costume, enters from stage left and walks past the bodies, stopping suddenly to look back at them. One of the lying figures slowly starts to move, to get up and to follow the walking figure off stage, stage right. Immediately, the sound of a number of people, both adults and children, talking and laughing, is heard in the distance, the sound becoming louder as a large group enters from stage left, and then another from stage right. They fill the stage area, children running and darting between adults, families searching for a bare patch of sand to spread blankets or place folding chairs down. The movement is random and disorganised. Snatches of conversation and shouts of
“Merry Christmas” are discernible within and between the various family groups spread out on stage, as food, bottles and glasses are produced and dispersed. As the scene progresses, various family members produce cameras, and random snapshots, some posed, some candid, are seen to be taken.

The people on stage very gradually begin to fall silent as a lone figure, a Photographer, dressed formally and carrying a large camera and tripod, enters from stage right and walks toward downstage centre. The photographer, whose back is now toward the audience, places the camera down and sets up the tripod before fixing the camera on it. The people move hesitantly into position as the photographer beckons and organises them into rows of standing, sitting and kneeling beachgoers. From time to time children continue to race around as adults chase them or gesticulate for them to stay within their family groups and not to get in the way of other families. The people take great pains to keep their family groups together within the larger formation. These efforts delay the taking of the photograph for several minutes.

When all seems in readiness for the photograph to be taken, the photographer appears hesitant. While the people watch passively, the photographer moves them toward stage right, arranging them in a similar way to the previous pose. The camera and tripod are moved and set up stage left. From time to time children continue to race around as adults chase them or gesticulate for them to stay within their family groups and not to get in the way of other families. The
people take great pains to keep their family groups together within the larger formation. These efforts delay the taking of the photograph for several minutes.

Again the photographer appears hesitant before taking the picture, and moves the group downstage so that their backs are toward the audience. The camera and tripod are set up centre stage.

House lights come up as upstage lights fade.

The photographer gestures to the people to move back further. They move toward the audience, and then in amongst them, filling empty spaces in and around the audience. The photographer addresses everyone in preparing the photograph. As the audience are being addressed the people in bathing suits gradually begin to exit, a few at a time, so that the photographer is left with the original audience. The picture is taken, the house lights fade, and the photographer exits stage right. Immediately the upstage lights come up very slowly, illuminating the two bodies upstage, which still lie motionless.

Lights fade

Darkness.

While most mass-produced representations of the time of Christmas as a holiday depict the season of winter, with snowmen, sleigh bells and reindeer, Christmas in Australia falls in the summer. As a point of differentiation from other nations, Australians are often depicted spending Christmas on the beach, in contrast to
more formal festivities and observances elsewhere in the world. The attendant
discourse of the family, however, is still one which Australians address in the
way they choose to spend Christmas. On the beach there are no walls between
families: everyone is visible. Family relations and domestic relations are
exposed to public view. Bodies are exposed in the act of swimming and
sunbaking. Bodies find connection with each other through a sharing of the
sensations of water, sun and sand. Celebrating Christmas, even in a secular
sense, involves the sharing of a meal. Families feasting see other families
feasting and realise a connection with them.

Social hierarchies and divisions experienced in the course of everyday life are
suspended on the beach. Families become less distinct from each other; bodies
become less distinct from each other. Viewed from a distance, or from an
unfamiliar vantage point, the families and bodies merge into one larger body:
they produce a becoming. The borderlines of this larger body shift outwards,
encompassing everyone present, the potentialities of the body increasing with
each new connection. As a social category, ‘family’ becomes subject to spatial,
temporal and physical change. In a similar way, the category of nation is also
revealed as contingent upon connections between space, time and bodies. The
bodies on the beach, in the act of becoming multiple, exceed the historical and
geographical boundaries of the official Australian nation. The beach as social
site expresses a temporal and spatial removal, or deferral, of the routine of the
metropolitan centre; that is, the time and space of urban life.
The crowds which congregated on the sand turned their backs on the continent, city and bush alike. The beach could be likened to a grandstand from which the occupants viewed in the foreground the narrow margin of human pleasure, and beyond, the oblivion of endless sea and sky. The hedonism which was latent in the colonial temperament now had its most dramatic flowering, for while the sun was embraced with a passionate passivity, the beach also created a sociability of a new, sensually self-conscious kind.2

The taking of a family photograph at Christmas on the beach attempts to recuperate the identity of a particular family. In bringing together and uniting one group of people, it marks a boundary with and differentiation from other groups: a distinct set of connections and common memories and ambitions. Thus, the taking of a family photograph is simultaneously an act of inclusion and exclusion. Those visible in the photograph should all belong to the particular family. It is desirable, then, to remove, as much as possible, those not in the family from the photograph. People engage in tacit agreement not to appear or get in the way of each other’s photographs, but often find themselves unwittingly in the background, foreground or periphery of other families’ photographs. In attempting to include all members of a particular family in a photograph, there is always the possibility of photographing those who do not belong to the particular family.

The goal of most Christmas family photographs on the beach would thus appear to be to present the family as if they were the only family on the beach that Christmas. Photographs attempt to imagine the beach as terra nullius, inhabited in the past, present and future only by the family in question, as an official
moment in the biography of the family. Courtesy and complicity combine in the production of a multitude of like photographs expressing this relationship between people and space. Tourists attempt to imagine the same relationship in photographing family and friends in foreign settings, especially public spaces, where a separation of the desired objects of the photograph from all other occupants of the space must be negotiated. People in such places display varying degrees of awareness of the tension involved in ‘getting in other people’s photographs’. The taking of a photograph in this context can be seen as an attempt to transform a heterotopic space, be it the beach or any other public place, into a utopian space, an attempt to imagine the photograph thus produced as an ideal object. However, such photographs display traces of their connections with times, spaces and bodies surrounding the moment of the picture, and of the tension involved in its imagining.

Bodies on the beach, expressing a connection with the cyclical time of Christmas, form a borderline sometimes contained by and sometimes transgressing the beach as space, as coastline. Freed from its photographic suspension as utopian moment, the beach becomes subject to changes in function over time. What is now a space of recreation and public access was once a space of encounter, confrontation and invasion. Landings on the beach constitute beginnings to military action. Bodies on the beach are connected with bodies which previously lay there. The establishment of the Australian nation is marked by a landing on the beach on the east coast of Australia. The moment of
the landing, however, carries with it traces of the times, spaces and bodies surrounding it. For the Australian nation to be established by this moment, for this moment to become official, the beach had to be imagined as *terra nullius*, inhabited in the past, present and future only by the nation defined and bounded by the British colonists. Such an imagining involves the separating of this moment from the violence involved in realising it, the forgetting of those bodies and those families whose lives surround and question the referentiality of this moment.

**ANZAC Day Ceremony: A Minute’s Silence**

*Darkness.*

*A slow sunrise gradually reveals a vast expanse of ocean in the distance. The stage is covered in beach sand. The sound of seagulls squawking and squabbling is heard in the distance. In the dim light it is possible to discern three bodies half in silhouette, lying upstage centre. They are dressed in bathing costumes. After a while a lone figure, also in silhouette and dressed in a naval uniform, enters from upstage left and walks past the bodies, stopping suddenly to look back at them. The figure kicks at the bodies which lie motionless. Lights fade.*

*Darkness.*
The sound of cannons firing four shots. Silence.

The sound of marching music starts softly, growing louder.

Lights come up as a parade of army soldiers followed by a group of civilians of all ages marches from stage left. They march across stage and exit stage right.


 Darkness.

A torch song plays as downstage lights fade up on a scene in a lounge room. People dressed in suits and cocktail dresses talk and laugh with each other, drinking and smoking.

The people on stage very gradually begin to fall silent as a lone figure, a Soldier, dressed in a military uniform and holding a cigarette and a canteen, enters from stage right and walks toward downstage centre. The soldier, whose back is now toward the audience, places the canteen down and drops the cigarette, stubbing it out with a boot.

Silence.

One person on stage coughs. Immediately everybody looks in that person’s direction, who, after putting a glass down, exits stage right.

Silence.

After a minute, ‘Long G’ is heard, played on a bugle. The people on stage disperse. Half exit stage left, the other half stage right.

The soldier turns and faces the audience as ‘The Last Post’ is played. After a few seconds the soldier turns and exits stage left.

The music continues as downstage lights fade.
Upstage lights come up to reveal the two bodies upstage, which still lie motionless. ‘The Last Post’ finishes.

Silence.

Lights fade.

Darkness

Dawn services are conducted at war memorials throughout Australia on ANZAC Day, in remembrance of Australian soldiers killed in military service. The great majority of these soldiers were killed overseas, in military campaigns in which Australia was not a major protagonist, but rather was supporting Britain, Europe and the United States in their endeavours. Foremost in the military engagements remembered is the dawn landing at Gallipoli (Gelibolu) in Turkey on April 25th, 1915, during the First World War, where the British government disastrously deployed a military contingent of troops from Australia, New Zealand, France and Britain as the first stage in a planned invasion of Turkey. This military defeat, in which many thousands of Australian and New Zealand soldiers, and far more British and French soldiers, were killed, serves as a reference for remembering the deaths of Australian soldiers and military personnel in all wars. The area of coastline leading to the Gallipoli battlefield, the site of the landing on the beach, was named Anzac Cove at the end of the First World War, and legends of the soldiers’ bravery have been utilised by Australian political and military leaders as a means of unifying Australians in particular national
endeavours. Ambiguities in the use of Gallipoli as a point of national reference continue to be forgotten or resolved in the cause of unifying the nation.

Gallipoli offered one giant problem – it was not only a defeat, but, in the end, an irrelevant sideshow. This, however, allowed for a subtle anti-Britishness to intrude itself into the saga. The defeat could not be laid at the feet of the heroic Anzacs: the failure of Gallipoli was a failure of British strategy. Hidden in the Anzac myth is the feeling that the Anzacs had been sent on a fool’s errand. But the sense in which Gallipoli was a sideshow also had the effect of giving the Anzacs a slightly proprietorial attitude to the campaign, ignoring the fact that British soldiers were in the majority.3

The importance of ANZAC Day to the Australian nation is established in part by ‘separating’ Australian soldiers from New Zealand soldiers, and from the British and French soldiers also participating in the campaign. For ANZAC Day to become a defining moment of the Australian nation, the memory of the day must be made ‘Australian’. The dawn service, ANZAC Day marches, and other ceremonies conducted on the day, must be reproduced as remembering a ‘national’ encounter.

The time of the traditional dawn service, 4.28 a.m., commemorates the time of the original ANZAC landing. While there is no standard format for the service, it usually begins with a single bugler blowing ‘Long G’ followed by ‘The Last Post’. The reciting of the Ode for the Returned and Services League, taken from Laurence Binyon’s poem ‘For the Fallen’, often precedes the playing of ‘The Last Post’. This is usually followed by a minute’s silence. Speeches, hymns, prayers and the laying of wreaths follow the observance of silence, and the service usually concludes with the playing of the National Anthem.4
The yearly commemoration of the landing at Gallipoli imagines a space of death as a living space, invoking the common authority of religion, government and history. Each source of authority is validated by the others, each act of violence undertaken in the maintenance of authority forgotten in the commemoration of violence experienced on foreign soil. Participation in ANZAC Day ceremonies realises a consensus in the remembering of the dead, reinforcing the national order. Whatever ambiguities the experience of Gallipoli presents as a definitively Australian experience and one representing Australian sovereignty, the annual ceremonies marking ANZAC Day validate the ANZAC campaign as an event of national importance. The cyclical repetition of the ceremonies imagines the soldiers’ dying as part of the process of renewal of the nation’s collective life. The soldiers’ dying for their country, for their fellow Australians, becomes the nation’s heritage. In such a metamorphosis, the notion of the Australian nation is overcoded, made natural or normal. ANZAC Day ceremonies constitute sustained social performances, connected to a specific time, and repeated annually. These ceremonies imagine a coherent, essential Australian nation in whose name military action is undertaken, and in whose name lives are lost.

Dawn services and ANZAC Day marches assume the physical compliance of all participants. For the main part, the majority of those present are expected to stand still, watch and listen. By doing so, they realise an act of remembrance,
regardless of their presence or absence at Gallipoli or at any other military engagement. The events of the first ANZAC Day are presented according to an official account. Experiences, encounters and relationships which precede, foreground, connect, re-order or run parallel with the official chain of events are forgotten or silenced by the nation’s narration. Whether those participating in the ceremonies were ‘there’ or not, they still fall into line, accepting the official version and the official order of events. Memories outside the official narrative are ‘forgotten’: the participants are all part of the same nation and thus share the same memories.

The observance of a minute’s silence combines an act of remembrance of those who have died with an act of compliance with the authority in whose name the dead have lost their lives. The silence realises a power which is solemn and serene, resolving the contradictions between a dominant order imagined as divinely sanctioned and the violence carried out in the establishment and maintenance of that order. A failed invasion is spatially, temporally and physically enunciated as a national symbol, simultaneously silencing the knowledge and memories of a successful invasion. The silence enforces a tension on all present: breaking this silence is seen as disrespectful and ‘un-Australian’. If remembering is an active process, connecting times spatially and physically, then to remain still and silent can be seen as an official arresting of that process in the name of a national text, imagined as a shared memory.
The Race that stops a Nation

Stage lights up.

House lights up.

A large group of people enter, half from stage left and half from stage right dressed in suits, cocktail dresses and hats. Some are carrying trays of hors d’oeuvres or drinks; others are carrying upturned hats. They approach the audience and move amongst them distributing the food and drinks. The people with upturned hats invite audience members to pick a ticket out of the hat. Eventually every member of the audience has a ticket. On it is written the name of one of the horses entered in the 2001 Melbourne Cup.

‘Long G’ is heard on a bugle. The performers in suits and cocktail dresses gather glasses and move back to the stage area. They turn to face the audience.

House lights down.

The group disperses and exits left and right.

Stage lights down.

A large video projection screen upstage plays a recording of the running of the 2001 Melbourne Cup. After three minutes the tape is stopped. A set of race results are displayed on the screen. Thirty seconds later, an alternative set of results are displayed. A further three sets of results are displayed at thirty
second intervals. Finally the last two minutes of the race are shown. The tape is stopped.

Stage lights up.

House lights up.

A large group of people enter, half from stage left and half from stage right dressed in suits, cocktail dresses and hats. Some are carrying trays of hors d’oeuvres or drinks; others are carrying upturned hats. They approach the audience and move amongst them distributing the food and drinks. The people with upturned hats invite audience members to pick a ticket out of the hat. Eventually every member of the audience has a ticket. On it is written the name of one of the horses entered in the 2001 Melbourne Cup.

House lights down.

Stage lights down.

The first Tuesday of November sees the annual running of the Melbourne Cup, a horse race run over two miles, at the Flemington racecourse in Melbourne. The race was first run in 1861, and since that time has held the title of Australia’s most prestigious and richest horse race. The Melbourne Cup has been popularly represented as ‘the race that stops a nation’. Live radio and television broadcasts bring the race to homes, workplaces and schools throughout Australia. Hotels and restaurants hold Melbourne Cup luncheons with special menus, organised around the live broadcast of the race. More informal
luncheons are organised in workplaces. One of the most enduring traditions of the race is the multitude of informal ‘sweeps’ held before the race, by groups of friends, social and sporting clubs, workplaces, hotels, restaurants and even by school classrooms. Participants contribute a certain amount of money, usually a small amount, to the sweepstake, entitling them to draw the name of one of the horses entered in the Cup. After the race, those who have ‘drawn’ the winning horse or the place-getters receive a nominated amount of the sweepstake. Traditionally, the person who draws the horse who finishes last also receives part of the stake.

The Melbourne Cup is the sporting event upon which the greatest number of Australians gamble. The Totalisator Agency Board (TAB), Australia’s official, government-administered gambling authority, with agencies (‘TABs’) in most towns and suburbs in Australia, experiences more than half its yearly volume of trade on the outcome of this one race. This is in addition to the vast amount of betting taken on the Melbourne Cup by bookmakers at Flemington, and on every other major racecourse in Australia holding a race meeting on Melbourne Cup day. No other race is run simultaneously with the Melbourne Cup. All other meetings stop for its running. Racegoers throughout Australia listen to public radio broadcasts or to on-course television telecasts of the race at Flemington. The race is also televised internationally. Radios and television sets are brought into or switched on in workplaces, homes, hotels and restaurants. All work and
routine activity stops for the time it takes to run the race (about three and a half minutes).

While Melbourne Cup Day is a public holiday in Melbourne, it is a working day for the rest of Australia. Most important metropolitan race meetings are held on the weekend. The fact that the Cup is held on a working day emphasises the race and the activities surrounding it as a special occasion, a suspension of everyday time and everyday life. The Saturday before the Melbourne Cup sees the running of the VRC (Victorian Racing Club) Derby. Derby Day is a comparatively formal occasion, drawing back on the socially hierarchical history of horse-racing in England and in nineteenth century Australia. VRC members and guests observe a very formal standard of dress and behaviour, and fashion designers take the opportunity to display their newest ranges on guests and models. Melbourne Cup Day has become what is seen to be a release from the formality of Derby Day: while members still observe dress codes, formality is eschewed by most and fashions extend to the frivolous and comical.

The festivities and frivolity leading up to the running of the Melbourne Cup imagine a nation as united in celebration and anticipation. Participation in forecasting, betting and ‘sweeps’ gives everyone a form of vested interest in the race. The race is realised as significant. For three and a half minutes, the fortunes of all Australians are divided among twenty or so horses. The time of the race’s running takes on a special quality, weighted down by Australians’
expectations. The future seems to contract to the finish of the race and its outcome. This time of running ‘holds’ everyone within its duration: watching or listening to the race unfold produces a national audience who watches history in the act of its writing.

Each year, the text narrates itself further, imagining a new start and a new finish. Winners and significant performances are consigned to history, remembered officially. Phar Lap, the winner of the 1930 Melbourne Cup, is revered as a national sporting icon. The accumulation of past winners adds weight to the force of the past as historically represented. The future is less certain, harder to predict. People’s personal recollections of Melbourne Cup Days are tied to what is officially remembered: the historically recorded results.

As an official, annual point of reference, the Melbourne Cup negotiates a formal, hierarchical, colonial, social activity, translating it into one which is less formal and more egalitarian. The Melbourne Cup also marks out a time and space connected to all other spaces in Australia, one in which time takes on a more subjective quality, bringing everyone ‘present’ toward an as yet indeterminate future. The event draws on the weight of the past and the uncertainty of the future to ‘stop a nation’. However, in this moment of ‘stopping’, the Melbourne Cup presents a site which arrests the certain and continual flow of the nation’s narration. In imagining a number of possible ‘futures’, the Cup performs the
nation it ‘stops’ as having alternative outcomes, realising the possibility of change.

**Sydney 2000: ‘The Safest Games in Modern Olympic History’**

*Stage lights up.*

*Upstage is covered in beach sand.*

*A group of men and women dressed in suits and sunglasses enters, half from stage right, half from stage left. They move downstage and face the audience.*

*House lights up.*

*They remove their sunglasses and survey the audience, before approaching them and moving amongst them, occupying any empty spaces in and around the audience.*

*House lights down.*

*An athlete enters from stage left and claps his hands repeatedly over his head, exhorting the audience to clap with him and encourage him. As soon as the audience has taken up the rhythm the athlete exits stage left. Thirty seconds later he appears upstage running and jumping into the sand. The audience sees mainly the jump. The athlete dusts himself off and bows to the audience in appreciation.*

*A Voice is heard.*
VOICE (omnes.): Number 342, West Block.

One of the performers seated in the audience stands up, replaces sunglasses, and escorts a selected audience member on to the stage, exiting stage right. The action is carried out with a noticeable degree of urgency and purpose.

A group of athletes, each absorbed in their own warm-up routine, enter from stage left and line up at an unseen line centre stage.

The sound of a starter pistol is heard. The athletes run and exit stage right. A second athlete repeats the ‘long jump sequence’. A Voice is heard.

VOICE (omnes.): Number 178, South Block.

One of the performers seated in the audience stands up, replaces sunglasses, and escorts a selected audience member on to the stage, exiting stage right. Upstage another long jumper jumps into the sand. A Voice is heard.

VOICE (omnes.): Number 226, East Block.

One of the performers seated in the audience stands up, replaces sunglasses, and escorts a selected audience member on to the stage, exiting stage right. The sound of cheering can be heard offstage, in the distance. The cheering gets louder.

A group of runners, in exaggerated states of exhaustion, enter staggering from stage left, finishing centre stage. As they finish a long jumper can be seen jumping upstage into the sand.
The first runner to finish falls to the ground and is helped up and congratulated by everyone else on stage.

House lights up.

A three-tiered dais is wheeled in from stage right, as the opening strains of ‘Advance Australia Fair’ are heard. The first three athletes take their places on the dais. While this is happening, the performers in the audience stand and silently exhort the rest of the audience to stand for the national anthem.

Halfway through the playing of the national anthem the music stops.

A Voice is heard.

VOICE (omnes.): Number 459, North Block.

One of the performers escorts a selected audience member on to the stage, exiting stage right.

Silence.

The national anthem continues, with members of the audience who sat down being exorted into standing again. The anthem finishes.

As it finishes a long jumper can be seen jumping upstage into the sand.

House lights down.

Stage lights down.

During the course of the year 2000, the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), in conjunction with the Australian Defence Force, the Australian Federal Police, the Australian Customs Service and the Department
of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, participated in the provision of security for the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the largest security operation ever undertaken in Australia. The operation was coordinated by the New South Wales Police Service through its Olympic Security Command Centre. Before and during the Games, ASIO provided more than 150,000 security clearances pertaining specifically to the Olympics, and 25,000 security clearances for entry into Australia by Olympic family members and other visitors.5

The Sydney Olympics, with its vast international media coverage and large concentrations of people in a small number of discrete spaces, was seen by ASIO as an event conducive to terrorist activity. In particular, United States and Israeli interests in Australia were kept under review due to political unrest in the Middle East, and the threat of terrorist activity by associates of Usama bin Laden. ASIO conducted counter-terrorism exercises with the New South Wales Police Service and the Australian Defence Force in order to test its updated counter-terrorism technical capabilities. In addition, ASIO made direct contact with 98 ethnic communities in order to establish channels of communication for the voicing of concerns regarding Olympics security and to explain ASIO’s role in providing security. Over 500 threat assessments specifically related to Olympic security were also issued.6
Within an Australian context, ASIO carries out security checks and threat assessments, and collects intelligence pertaining to possible acts of terrorism, politically motivated violence, sabotage and espionage. In representing the nation’s security, ASIO works from a premise of the time of the present as secure, and simultaneously from the premise of ‘security’ as presence. What is absent is violence, in any of its possible forms and from whatever foreseeable source it may possibly occur. The notion of security is tied to the bodies, spaces and time of the present; that is, the bodies, spaces and time of the official Australian nation. However, as a representation of absolute presence, security does not permit itself to become enclosed in an historically determined culture: it remains a guarantee of the ‘truth’ of the nation.

An effective way of protecting national assets is to control access to them. National security access controls include a system of identifying sensitive material and premises with classifications such as CONFIDENTIAL, SECRET and TOP SECRET. Only people with appropriate security clearances are allowed access to such premises or material.7

Security, as represented by ASIO, is legitimated by its importance to the nation. In protecting important and sensitive information, ASIO is seen to be securing the ‘truth’ of the nation. By its identification of important and sensitive information, and the consequences of such material falling into the wrong hands, ASIO can also be seen to be legitimating the official version of the nation. By classifying information, spaces and people, ASIO is able to ‘tie’ them to the present, that is, the referential time of the nation.

Another way of protecting sensitive material and areas, and of protecting Australia’s way of life, is to prevent certain people from entering or staying in Australia. Part of ASIO’s protective security work is to assess whether
people applying for entry or permanent residence visas have the potential for spying, have links with a terrorist organisation, or may in other ways be a threat to national security. 8

The borders of the nation which ASIO seeks to secure are spatial, physical and temporal: not just borders in the sense of demarcating a space, a time and a group of people, but in protecting a specific, dominant order of spaces, of times and of bodies. The control of access to information and spaces ‘protects’ people from other possible truths, from other versions of nation. Threats to the nation belong to the future and to non-official versions of the past; security is tied to the present. In envisioning possible threats to the nation, ASIO imagines harmful connections between people, times and spaces outside the geographical and historical borders of the nation. Violence, in its many possible forms, is deferred to ‘other’ times and spaces. Classification of information helps to separate these times and spaces from the official time and space of the nation, presented as a series of ‘pure presents’ a continual performing of ‘here’ and ‘now’. By imagining acts of violence and threats to Australia in their absence, ASIO is able to realise national security in the present: violence as multiple and absent; security as one and present. The control of bodies, spaces and access to information protects and secures the unheeded narration of the nation.

However, in the wider international context of the Olympic Games, ASIO must present itself as a representative of security to an audience who are not necessarily national subjects, who do not recognise the Australian flag or stand for the Australian national anthem. In the act of establishing and maintaining
security, and ensuring protection from acts of violence, ASIO must renegotiate the borders of the nation without recourse to the invocation of secrecy in the interests of the nation. The Olympic Games produces connections between bodies, spaces and times which contextualise the bodies, spaces and times of the Australian nation, bringing it into direct contact with other nations, whose temporal, spatial and cultural borders overlap with those of Australia. Athletes, entertainers and spectators are able to imagine people, times and spaces ‘outside’, ‘before’ and ‘after’ the official nation, and connect the ‘security’ of the present with the violence of the past. ASIO’s dissemination of the past as ‘intelligence’, like the nation’s official recording of history, runs the risk of being revealed as an attempt to forget other nations.

The practice of successive governments is not to discuss matters of national security. However, Commonwealth departments and agencies gave such a gold medal performance in supporting the New South Wales Police Service with security arrangements for the Sydney 2000 Games that we believe the Australian public should know how much work went on behind the scenes…

The success of the Commonwealth’s security support to the New South Wales Police Service has been demonstrated by the absence of incidents and the fact that this was the safest Games in modern Olympic history.9

Citizenship Day, 2001: The Pledge of Commitment

Stage lights up

Sunset. A vast expanse of ocean in the distance. The stage is covered in beach sand. The sound of seagulls squawking and squabbling is heard in the distance. The fading light reveals three bodies lying upstage centre. They are dressed in
bathing costumes. A lone figure, also dressed in a bathing costume, enters from stage left and walks past the bodies, stopping suddenly to look back at them. The three figures slowly start to move, to get up and to follow the walking figure off stage, stage right. Immediately, the sound of a number of people, both adults and children, talking and laughing, is heard in the distance, the sound becoming louder as a large group enters from stage left. The people are quite well-dressed.

A dais is wheeled in from stage right. A Facilitator enters from stage right and mounts the dais.

House lights up. Each member of the audience is handed a sheet of paper, on which is written the Australian Pledge of Commitment.

FACILITATOR: Thank you for being present on this special day. This is a chance for all of us to mark our loyalty to Australia by taking the Pledge.

The facilitator addresses the audience.

FACILITATOR: Please repeat after me: From this time forward …

The facilitator waits for the audience to respond. The performers encourage them.

FACILITATOR: I pledge my loyalty to …

The audience responds.

Silence.

A Voice is heard.

VOICE (omnes.): Number 178, West Block.
One of the performers dons a pair of sunglasses and approaches the audience. The performer escorts a selected audience member on to the stage, exiting stage right. The facilitator continues after a moment’s hesitation.

FACILITATOR: … Australia and its people …

Audience responds.

FACILITATOR: whose democratic beliefs I share …

Audience responds.

FACILITATOR: whose rights and liberties I respect …

Audience responds.

FACILITATOR: and whose laws I will uphold and obey.

Audience responds.

FACILITATOR: Congratulations to you all, and welcome to the nation.

House lights and stage lights down rapidly.

Darkness.

On the 17th of September, 2001, the Commonwealth of Australia, through the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, marked the inaugural Australian Citizenship Day with over 2,000 candidates being conferred as citizens in many ceremonies around Australia.10 Citizenship Day came into being in part due to recommendations made by the Australian Citizenship Council in their report of February, 2000, which stressed the desirability of
eligible permanent residents in Australia becoming citizens, and saw the
Centenary of Federation as an ideal time to launch a promotional campaign.

The Council believes that regular ongoing promotion of acquisition of
Australian citizenship should be undertaken, with heightened promotional
activity implemented to coincide with significant national milestones. Promotional activity would give a clear message that the Government and
the community value Australian Citizenship highly, and believe it is
desirable that eligible members of the Australian community become
Australian Citizens. A key objective would be to focus increased attention
on Australian Citizenship, as well as on the broader notions of citizenship,
to raise public awareness and enthusiasm, and to promote emotional
attachment.11

Citizenship Day ceremonies included early morning ceremonies on Sydney
Harbour Bridge and on the roof of Parliament House in Canberra, and sunset
ceremonies at East Point tourist reserve in Darwin and at City Beach in Perth.
What united each of these ceremonies, and the candidates participating in them,
was the Pledge of Commitment, by which candidates express their loyalty or
allegiance to the Australian nation. In an amendment to the 1948 Australian
Citizenship Act in 1994, the Pledge replaced the Oath or Affirmation of
Allegiance in citizenship ceremonies, the wording of which denoted specific
loyalty to Queen Elizabeth II as Queen of Australia. The wording of the Pledge
denotes loyalty to the constituent nation and to democracy:

* From this time forward, under God,*
  I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people,
  whose democratic beliefs I share,
  whose rights and liberties I respect, and
  whose laws I will uphold and obey.

* A person may choose to make the Pledge as an oath under God, or as an
affirmation without reference to God.12
In changing the wording so as to redirect the loyalty of citizenship candidates, the Commonwealth of Australia can be seen to be attempting to erase its historical ties with Great Britain, and with its colonial past. The words “From this time forward…” imagine a new beginning both for the candidate and for the nation thus renewed. This is of particular significance to the issue of encouraging permanent residents to become citizens, the majority of whom are of British origin. For Australia, such residents represent a physical and temporal connection with Great Britain. The question of loyalty, either shared or divided, becomes a point of concern both in the assertion of Australia’s sovereignty and in the voicing of Australia’s violent, colonial history. Citizenship becomes a way of making a choice. The feeling that permanent residents of British origin did not wish to be administered with migrants from other countries, or did not see a distinction between British subject and Australian citizen, has been identified as a stumbling block in previous attempts to encourage the acquiring of citizenship. The removal of the Queen also dispels any doubt as to what Australian citizenship signifies to permanent residents.

However, the reciting of the Pledge, that is, that performance of loyalty which unites all candidates with the nation and the future they aspire to, produces in each instance, for a brief, incommensurable moment, a ‘becoming’, a physical embodiment of the times and spaces of the past, present and future, connected, simultaneously visible. This becoming, apprehendable only in medias res, confronts the official nation and reveals its contingency. The possibilities of the
Pledge not being completed, not being honoured, or of being misinterpreted, are realised in this becoming. Like a theatre performance, all participants agree to face the future together, though always with the tension produced in not knowing what they have committed themselves to, what was here before them, or of what lies ahead.

I, Ishmael, was one of that crew; my shouts had gone up with the rest; my oath had been welded with theirs; and stronger I shouted, and more did I hammer and clinch my oath, because of the dread in my soul. A wild, mystical, sympathetic feeling was in me; Ahab’s quenchless feud seemed mine.13
NOTES

Part 1 Writing and Performance

19. Pechey, op. cit., p. 68.
25. Ibid., pp. 90-93.
26. Ibid., p. 80.
28. Ibid., p. 71.
29. Ibid., p. 91.
31. Ibid., pp. 93-94.
32. Ibid., pp. 267-268.
39. Ibid., p. 128.
40. Bhabha, ‘Signs Taken for Wonders’, p. 156.
41. Ibid., p. 154.
50. Ibid., p.26
51. Ibid., pp. 6-7.
52. Ibid., p. 154.
53. Melville, op. cit., p. 204.
Part 2 Three Days in the Life of Australia

2. Ibid., p. 12.
4. Ibid., p. 22.
5. Ibid., p. 23.
7. Ibid., p. 25.
8. Loc. cit.
9. Ibid., p. 27.
10. Ibid., p. 24.
13. Ibid., p. 100.
15. Ibid., p. 128.
16. Ibid., pp. 131-135.
17. Ibid., p. 147.
18. Ibid., p. 148.
19. Ibid., p. 152.
21. Ibid., p. 166.
23. Ibid., p. 673.
30. Ibid., p. 318.
31. Ibid., pp. 18-19.
33. Ibid., p. 137.
34. Ibid., p. 139.
36. Ibid., p. 46.
37. Ibid., p. 68.
38. Ibid., p. 70.
43. Ibid., p. 160.
44. Ibid., p. 238.
45. Ibid., p. 245.
46. Ibid., p. 254.
47. Ibid., p. 260.
51. Ibid., pp. 77-78.
52. Ibid., p. 87.
53. Ibid., pp. 92-93.
57. Ibid., p. 37.
58. Ibid., p. 178.
59. Ibid., p. 186.
60. Ibid., p. 227.
61. Ibid., p. 246.
63. Ibid., pp. 253-254.
66. Ibid., p. 57.
67. Ibid., p. 222.
68. Ibid., p. 188.
69. Ibid., p. 223.
70. Ibid., p. 281.
71. Ibid., p. 391.
72. Ibid., p. 222.
76. See above, n. 54.
78. Lefebvre, op. cit., p. 282.
Part 3 Four Months from Australia

2. Ibid., pp. 76-78.
3. Ibid., p. 145.
6. Ibid., p. 33.
9. Ibid., p. 44.
15. Ibid., p. 297.
17. Ibid., p. 311.
25. Ibid., p. 127.
26. Ibid., p. 128.
27. Ibid., p. 129.
28. Ibid., p. 132.
29. Ibid., pp. 121-122.
32. Derrida, op. cit., p.5.
Part 4  Five Moments: Imagining and Realising the Australian Nation

3. Ibid., p. 118.
8. Loc. cit.
12. Loc. cit.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


—— ‘Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree Outside Delhi, May 1817’, Critical Inquiry, vol. 12, no. 1, Autumn 1985, pp. 144-165.


Birringer, Johannes, Theatre, Theory, Postmodernism, Bloomington: Indiana University


Carter, Paul, ‘Dark with Excesses of Bright: Mapping the Coastlines of Knowledge’, in


— ‘He Stuttered’, trans. Constantin V. Boundas, in Boundas, Constantin V., and Olkowski, Dorothea, eds., Gilles Deleuze and the Theatre of Philosophy, New


— ‘Proverbs for Paranoids: Writing Geography on Hollowed Ground’, Transactions


Harootunian, H. D., ‘Foucault, Genealogy, History - The Pursuit of Otherness’, in Arac,
Bibliography 311


Maclean, Marie, *Narrative as Performance: The Baudelairean Experiment*, London:
Bibliography


Ngugi wa Thiong’o, ‘Enactments of Power: The Politics of Performance Space’, The
Drama Review, vol. 41, no. 3 (Fall 1997), pp. 11-30.


Rilke, Rainer Maria, *Selected Poems*, trans. J. B. Leishman, Harmondsworth: Penguin,
Bibliography

1964.


Bibliography


Stam, Robert, and Spence, Louise, ‘Colonialism, Racism and Representation’, *Screen,*


Bibliography


