Space Invaders

Race, Gender and Bodies Out of Place

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Dissonant Bodies

The post-colonial presence, where the abstract metaphor of the 'Other' is now metamorphosed into concrete, historical bodies, challenges the screen of universal thought – reason, theory, the West – that has historically masked the presence of a particular voice, sex, sexuality, ethnicity and history, and has only granted the 'Other' a presence in order to confirm its own premises (and prejudices).

Chambers, *Migrancy, Culture, Identity*

I think that there is a profound suggestion in this work that our own turning away from the dark side of our psyche has a lot to do with this relationship that we have physically with the third world or with what we consider to be the less developed world. In a time of global unity it is just not possible to have that kind of division any more and this is the unconscious and the third world brought right into our living room to occupy space and it feels uncomfortable and causes anxiety.

Gormley, *Field for the British Isles*

The multifaceted ways in which the arrival and residence of postcolonials, of first or subsequent generations, have transformed the urban landscapes of the West have, deservedly, attracted the attention of academics across a range of disciplines. The productive energies that have managed to proliferate cultural, social and political developments, in spite of insipid forms of racism, figure in these accounts. New sounds, spoken and musical, foods and smells have all been noted. The challenge posed by this presence to homogeneous notions of place, identity and knowledge has been granted sophisticated attention, most especially in relation to youth cultures and metropolitan city living (Gilroy 1993; Back 1994; Sharma, Hutnyk and Sharma 1996).

The presence of racialised minorities in positions of authority historically and conceptually 'reserved' for specific types of white masculinities has, however, not been granted in-depth attention. This has not been seen

to be an ideal locale for noting the postcolonial condition, for elucidating the power of whiteness or for a specific type of doubling of modernity through the presence of a menace that reveals the monstrosity of repressive versions of enlightenment (Du Bois 1989). The complex web of analysis has not travelled from the spontaneous vibrancy found in street life and youth cultures into the rather more restrained air of institutions.[1] As increasing numbers of Black and Asian bodies take up positions within the professions – within politics, academia and the visual arts – there is, in short, a socio-spatial impact to be witnessed. If we are to understand this particular postcolonial condition, the terms of their coexistence require further probing. And our analysis needs to go beyond number-crunching exercises which count (monitor) the quantities of different bodies in the stratified structures of institutions. These endeavours are usually based on banal but dominant versions of multiculturalism which assume that the existence of more bodies of colour in the higher ranks of organisations amounts to and is evidence of diversity and equality. The presence of women or 'black' bodies in the upper layers of institutions should not be taken as a straightforward sign that organisational cultures and structures are drastically changing. In fact, the existence of these hitherto different bodies highlights how certain types of masculinity and whiteness have marked what are often represented as empty, neutral positions that can be filled by any(body). By going beyond simply 'counting heads', we are able to advance a much more complex picture of how whiteness and masculinity are embedded in the character and life of organisations. If we want to grasp how racial and gender discrimination live as latent features of professional occupations, then it is absolutely vital to pay attention to the somatics of these processes.

Reserved Occupational Spaces

Thinking about how we exist in space, Lefebvre has famously noted that it is by means of the body that space is perceived, lived and produced. The proxemics of bodies and space means that 'each living body *is* space and *has* its space: it produces itself in space and it also produces that space' (Lefebvre 2002: 170). Bodies do not simply move through spaces but constitute and are constituted by them. Thus it is possible to see how both the space and the normative bodies of a specific space can become disturbed by the arrival of Black and Asian bodies in occupations which are not historically and conceptually marked out as their 'natural' domain.

The last chapter considered the formation of the public realm and the body politic. Today the exclusionary white male body politic 'has been fragmented and weakened by successive invasions from the excluded' (Gatens 1996: 25). The removal of formal barriers in the last two or three hundred years has meant that legally any(body), male or female, white or 'black', can occupy positions of leadership and authority in the body politic. However, despite the legal right for all bodies to enter these positions, subtle means of inclusion/exclusion continue to informally operate through the designation of the somatic norm. The male body continues to be defined as the ideal type. 'It is still "anthropus" who is taken to be capable of representing the universal type, the universal body. Man is the model and it is his body which is taken for the human body' (Gatens 1996: 24). And, although it is no longer constitutionally and juridically enshrined, nevertheless the white body continues to be the somatic norm (Mills 1997).

Today we have a scenario where the historically embedded relationship between 'reserved' positions and certain social types means that informally the universal 'individual' who is the ideal figure of modernity, found in the state, in bureaucracies and in the professions, still does not include everyone. This coupling is not so set in concrete that it can't be changed, but it is one that weighs heavily upon how those positions are imagined. The positions have a gendered (Gherardi 1995) and racialised symbolism to them. Thus different bodies belonging to 'other' places are in one sense out of place as they are 'space invaders'. Mills speaks of the way in which the 'Racial contract demarcates space, reserving privileged spaces for its first class citizens' (1997: 49). This is certainly the case for privileged spaces in the public realm. It is white men, with a changing classed habitus, who have for hundreds of years filled the higher echelons and over time it is they who have come to be seen as the 'natural' occupants of these positions.

In this chapter the socio-spatial impact of racialised and gendered bodies in occupational spaces for which they are not the normative figures will be gauged through an analytical frame whose reach is much wider than the principal domain of individual institutions. Two fundamental dynamics – disorientation and amplification – are identified as being intrinsic to the ways in which 'new' bodies are encountered. The chapter moves between scenes both in and outside of institutions in order to shed light on the ways in which the processes operate.

Notions of 'the look', 'terror' and the 'monstrous' help us to consider what is disturbed by the arrival or entry of 'new' kinds of bodies in professional occupations which are not historically and conceptually

'reserved' for them. In encounters where the hitherto outside, in a social/ political/psychical sense, is physically on the inside, disorientation and amplification come into play. The institutional sites will be Parliament, Whitehall, academia and the art world. But the spread of the sites that inform the analysis will be much wider. This chapter invites us to consider the resident narratives that disorientation and amplification throw up.

The corporeal dimension of positions of authority is brought to the fore when those whose bodies are not the norm in these places take up these very positions. No doubt there are enormous differences in the cultures of organisations and the qualities required of those who occupy positions in such spaces. However, there are also interesting overlaps in the ways in which authority is granted to bodies across institutions. Professions are forged in particular types of places. Each field has its own peculiarities, histories and institutional identities. The internal life of an organisation is not uniform or homogeneous. Neither is it an isolated phenomenon. Institutions exist in relation to each other. A web of institutional networks which overlap and compete with each other affect the social life of organisations. Their long-distance reach and porous nature create a criss-crossing of global and international networks. Interestingly, though, the universal figure of leadership and representative of humanity continues to be conceptualised in the shadow of the nation. By this, I do not mean that the nation is the most significant player in the determination of political and economic outcomes. Rather, who is seen to have the right to represent is entangled with who is seen to really belong.

An Alien in White Consecrated Space

Standing on the steps outside Westminster, the space from where declarations and speeches are daily made for media reportage, Herman Ousely, the former head of the Commission of Racial Equality, announced on prime-time television news that the atmosphere of Parliament is one where black people feel unwelcome and that he himself, as a black individual, was made to feel as if he were an alien in this space.[2]

Specific scholarly questions had brought me to Westminster and Whitehall. Instead of looking at the dynamics of power by gazing 'down' at working-class and racialised groups, I had chosen to 'research up' (Puwar 1997a). The ethnographic enquiry has from the beginning laid the spotlight, however amicable it may be, on the home-grown working class, colonial populations across the world or the postcolonial in Western

cities. Elites[3] themselves have not, however, been the usual objects of anthropological scrutiny seeking to understand 'strangeness'. The power of 'élites' has enabled them to keep ethnographers at a distance. In an interesting twist in epistemic positionalities, now I, the home-grown postcolonial, sought to make what had passed as normal strange by observing the workings of 'race' and gender amongst the ranks of state élites. I wanted to see how certain kinds of whiteness and masculinity were sustained behind the masquerade of disembodied transcendental power, which claimed that all (black, white, male, female, however classed), could, in theory, join.

As I walked through the grand entrance to Parliament I felt a sense of unease with my own bodily arrival in this monument to democracy, nation and Imperial Englishness. A set of stories come with the building. Westminster is one of the 'consecrated relics, traditions and shrines' where 'the very spirit of "History" has laid its blessing on the nation' (Chambers 1990: 16). Since 'histories are made through the selective construction and representation of "tradition" in the public sphere' (Gabriel 1998: 39), mythical tales of distant lands and peoples yielded to imperial power have helped Britain to define itself by processes of dis-identification. Like all foundational myths wrapped up in the making of nations (Taussig 1997), these function as 'a story which locates the origin of the nation, the people and their national character so early that they are lost in the mists of, not "real", but "mythic" time – like basing the definition of the English as "free-born" on the Anglo-Saxon parliament' (Hall, S. 1992: 295).

The building of Westminster, with its Neo-Gothic architecture, high ceilings, arches and acoustics, invites reverence in a similar way to a cathedral, even while it is a heavily surveilled space, especially for non-members. Consensus is rendered 'practical' and 'concrete'. In a monumental space such as a cathedral:

> visitors are bound to become aware of their own footsteps, and listen to the noises, the singing; they must breathe the incense-laden air, and plunge into a particular world, that of sin and redemption; they will partake of an ideology; they will contemplate and decipher the symbols around them; and they will thus, on the basis of their own bodies, experience a total being in a total space. (Lefebvre 2002: 220–1)

Like other monumental spaces Parliament is 'determined by what may not take place there (prescribed/proscribed, scene/obscene)' (Lefebvre 2002: 224). As soon as one steps in, the power of sanctity is practised

in the surveilled operations that are a part of the rhythmic rituals of the place. The body starts moving in keeping with the nods and instructions of various gatekeepers, of which there are plenty throughout the building – both as people and as physical structures.

The artwork of Jane and Louise Wilson can help us to begin to think about how such a space is lived in. In a series of installations using video, still photographs and props, the Wilsons consider the mutual constitution of bodies and places within sites of political power. *Parliament* (1999), as a seat of government, is one of their sites (see Figures 3 and 4). Their life-size installations place the viewer in a 'physical encounter' (Wilson and Wilson 1999: 7). Their installation emphasises the disciplinary distinctions that operate in the architectural codes of Parliament. Distinctions between members and strangers are especially noted. The architectural aesthetics, of the minutest detail, as well as more large-scale dimensions, are magnified – the corridors, the doors, the telephone booths, the thick red carpet, as well as the sounds, such as the bell for voting, which coordinates bodies in particular directions at specific times.[4] By dwelling on the mundane domestic details of the least accessible spaces they generate a sense of unease. Their magnified trespassing invites us to consider the absence/presence in the psychic power of architecture.

The Rhythms of Organisations

Interestingly the Wilsons were not allowed to film any people in Parliament. In their own opinion they thought this ruling came out of the fear that as artists they would create some kind of untoward stunt.

While the Wilsons are acutely aware of the proxemics of bodies in space, they don't go as far as thinking about how it is particular types of bodies, with specific habituses, who have made this House their home. The rhythms of organisations affect the type of regimes that prevail in terms of gender and race. In the House, the timing, working procedures, rituals and bodily performances endorse specifically classed notions of masculine Englishness. The bourgeois and gentrified classes 'currently co-exist as inflections ... within hegemonic masculinity' (Connell 1995: 165).

Westminster builds on and contributes to the flows of cathexis established in other places, such as specific public schools, Oxbridge, certain professions, men's clubs, trade unions and pubs and bars. There is an excessive amount of interchange between social and work activities, which helps sustain a system of patronage, gossip and fraternities.
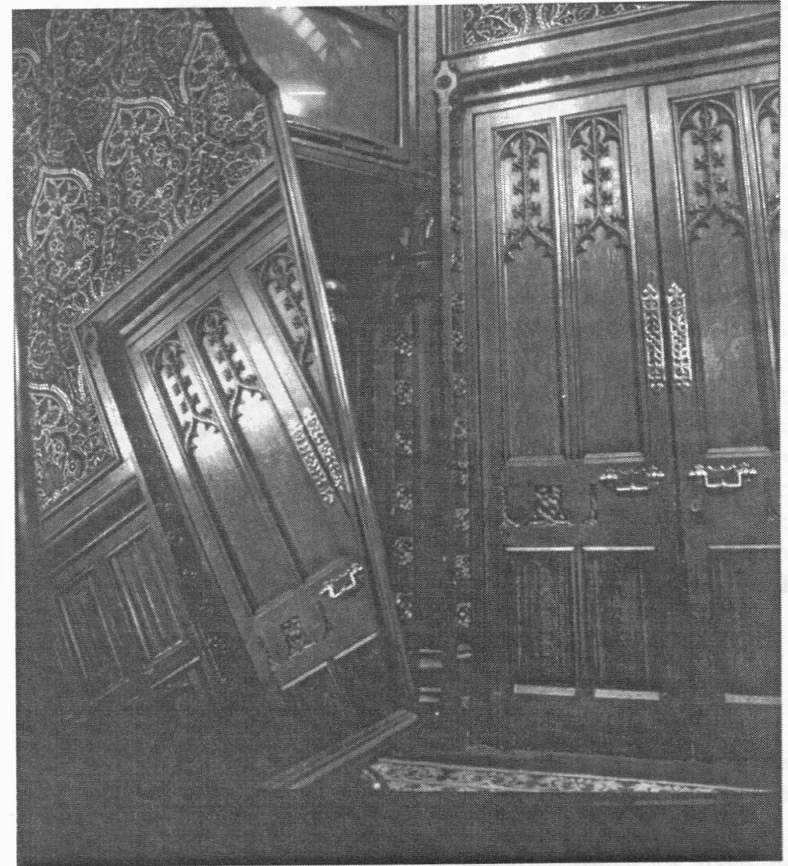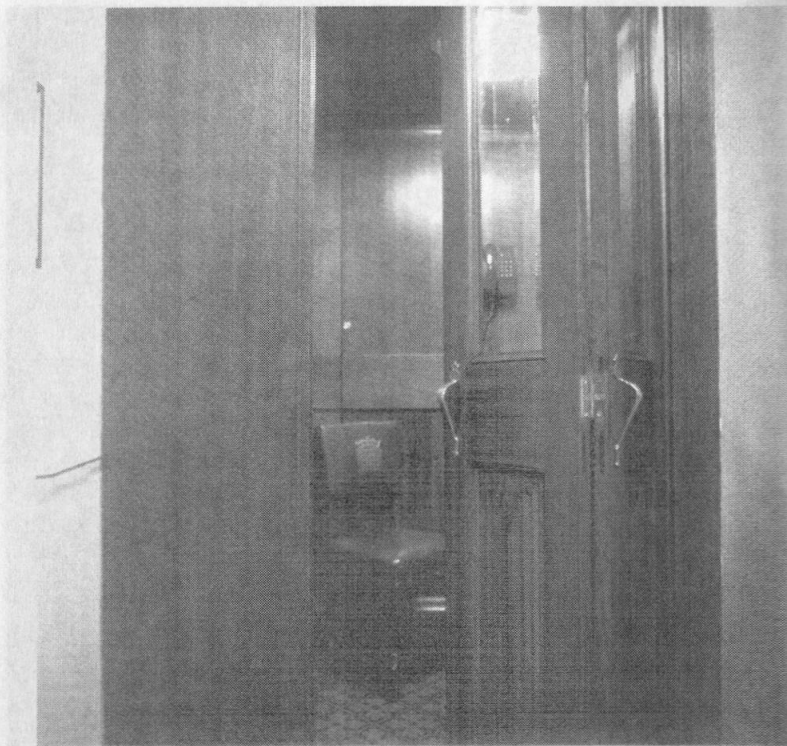
Figure 3 Jane and Louise Wilson, Moses committee room, robing mirror, House of Lords, Parliament, 1999. C-type print mounted on aluminium 180 cm × 180 cm. Courtesy of Lisson Gallery (London)

Hierarchical relations between the upper/middle classes and the working classes of another era are also repeated. Male members themselves no longer wear top hats and tailcoats, but some of the staff are still required to wear the clothing of a previous era. For instance, the porters are men who have to wear breeches and a tailcoat. They are expected to behave in a subservient way. The deference is expressed in the talk and body language of the staff. In the various drinking and eating areas, as one MP put it to me, 'The people that serve you are excessively polite.' Pomp, ceremony and decorated uniforms are also rife here.

Figure 4 Jane and Louise Wilson, Peer's telephone, House of Lords, Parliament, 1999. C-type print mounted on aluminium 180 cm × 180 cm. Courtesy of Lisson Gallery (London)

I always think that the House of Commons itself, in its corridors when you sort of look at the lobbies and things, it's a cross really between a cathedral and a public boys' school and that's still the ethos that pervades the place ... it's the whole history of Parliament. It was a place where gentlemen with a gentlemen's profession came after they had had a good lunch and really in lots of ways that kind of ethos has not changed. We still have people dressed up in eighteenth-century costumes and stockings and buckle shoes. I mean its a bizarre institution, it's one in which people, men, well almost entirely men, are completely addicted to this kind of ancient regime and it pervades everything. (Labour Party female MP)

It is into this atmosphere that women MPs and Black and Asian MPs arrive. And it is no wonder that Ousely declared that he felt like an alien.

Back in 1919 the first female MP, Nancy Astor, found the House so uncomfortable that it is reported that she never went into any part of the House except the Chamber and her own room (Vallance 1979). Grosz states that 'The more one disinvests one's own body from ... [a] ... space, the less able one is to effectively inhabit that space as one's own' (Grosz 2001: 9). Nancy Astor certainly disinvested herself. Today women MPs occupy the various spaces of Parliament in a much fuller way. They enter the bars and the tearooms, even if it is still sometimes with an air of trepidation. After all, the masculinity of Parliament is still reproduced through the sheer numbers of men, specific social/work activities – such as smoking cigars, drinking, the topic of conversations – all of which contributes to a masculine culture. Like other masculine cultures at work, this atmosphere 'can make women feel, without being told in so many words, "'you are out of place here'"' (Cockburn 1991: 65). At the same time, though, the arrival of women MPs is opening up the space, however slowly, for 'a different inhabitation' (Grosz 2001: 9). The presence of white women MPs has increased (Williams 1989; Eagle *et al.* 1998; Childs 2001; Mackay 2001), even though it is far from being the norm (see www.parliament.gov.uk for the latest statistics and portfolios).

The Look

The entry of a black female, or male, figure is, however, received quite differently. This presence is still capable of inducing a state of ontological anxiety. It disturbs a particular 'look'.

Commenting on the epistemic position from which the Western, masculine, rational universal leader has historically developed an assured sense of himself, Irigaray observes that this has been a place from where, 'in his room or in his study, sometimes enjoying a fire fancied to be burning in baroque curls of smoke or else gazing out through the/his window' (1985a: 212–13), supported by woman, he has conducted the 'serene contemplation of Empire' (1985a: 136). These leaders have enjoyed their 'fancied fires' in the solitude of their study, or the company of like men, away from women and less civilised colonials or ex-colonials. Psychic and physical boundaries have been implicit to the sense of Europeanness, and more specifically the sense of who men of knowledge and leadership are as well as where they are placed. Well, now, albeit one by one and ever so slowly, those postcolonials have walked right into those rooms from which these men of 'wisdom' have looked out on to the world. The

previously colonised enter because they have the legal right to enter. The formal right and increased movement do not, however, mean that they don't remain unexpected and even uninvited guests.

Empire was contemplated in such a way that its gaze put into play a corporeal racial schema of alien other(s) which helped to glue collectivities of whiteness with a superior sense of their 'natural' right to occupy privileged spaces of institutional representation on both a national and an international scale. Commenting on the arrival of a black female body in one of the most intimate spaces of Westminster – the Smoking Room – Tony Banks (Labour MP) offers some telling observations. He notes:

> It is rather like one of those leather-enrobed London clubs in Pall Mall. I took Diane Abbott in there soon after she was elected and the response from the habitués was electrifying. They didn't need to say a word, both Diane and I knew the question. [In other words, what is she doing in here?] But she wasn't a cleaner. (*Sunday Telegraph*, 28 January 1996)

It is worth dwelling on the 'look' that darted across this white, cigar-filled, masculine space to receive this black female body. Here we have an encounter that bears remarkable resemblance to the now widely cited look once experienced by Frantz Fanon. Being 'supersaturated with meaning', there is 'a received stock of already-interpreted images of black bodies' (Gooding-Williams 1993: 158, 165) that kicks into place in a particular reading of the black/female body.[5] Allotted a place out there somewhere, in the hidden labour of public domestic work, outside of the 'seat of power', the arrival of a black female body triggers a racialised 'shameful livery put together by centuries of incomprehension' (Fanon 1986: 14). She is automatically classified, primitivised, domesticated and decivilised, categories that are all too familiar in processes of racialisation, be they theoretical acts or everyday interactions (Fanon 1986: 32).

Within the area of 'race' and racism Fanon's work has been a source of analytical inspiration to innumerable scholars (Gordon 1995; Read 1996; Macey 2000, 2002), especially the notion of the look.[6] It is, however, surprising how little use has been made of his work for helping us to understand the dynamics of institutional racism. Arriving in France as a psychiatrist in the 1950s from the French colony Martinique, Fanon, as a 'black' colonial figure, or, as he puts it in the language of the time, a 'negro', is confronted by the exclamation 'Look, a Negro!' (Fanon 1986: 109). The most vivid and subsequently most cited image is provided in an encounter he had with a little girl on the street. Of this he writes:

> 'Look, a Negro!' It was an external stimulus that flicked over me as I passed by. I made a tight smile. 'Look, a Negro!' It was true. It amused me. 'Look, a Negro!' The circle was drawing a bit tighter. I made no secret of my amusement. 'Mama, see the Negro! I'm frightened!' Frightened! Frightened! Now they were beginning to be afraid of me. I made up my mind to laugh myself to tears, but laughter had become impossible. I could no longer laugh, because I already knew that there were legends, stories, history and above all historicity ... Then, assailed at various points, the corporeal schema crumbled, its place taken by a racial epidermal schema. (1986: 112)

The somatic dimensions of racialisation are central to the incisive analysis Fanon offers of what this *look* does to the 'black' subject/body.[7] It is a look he observes as taking place, often without verbal communication, in everyday spaces in the city (bars, cafés and trains), as well as more enclosed institutional spaces (lecture halls, doctor's surgeries and psychiatric hospitals).

Reflecting on 'the look' in detail, Fanon notes: 'the movements, the attitudes, the glances of the other fixed me there, in the sense in which a chemical solution is fixed by a dye'. He says, 'Sealed into that crushing objecthood', the look 'imprisoned me'. The force of the racist episteme is imprinted on the body. Fanon asks: 'What else could it be for me but an amputation, an excision, a haemorrhage that spattered my whole body with black blood?' A 'historico-racial schema' below the corporeal schema had, he says 'woven me out of a thousand details, anecdotes, stories'. From the 'racial epidermal schema' he had been assigned ethnic characteristics, through which, he says: 'I was battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, racial defects, slave-ships, and above all else, above all: "Sho' good eatin"' (Fanon 1986: 109–12). He was 'classified', 'tucked away'.

The look operated as a 'weight', which, he says, 'burdened me' and 'challenged my claims' on the world: on where he could be and what he could be. Locating himself 'as a body in the middle of a spatial-temporal world' which placed him through a racialised schema, he notes, 'I was told to stay within bounds, to go back where I belonged.' He cries out: 'dissected under white eyes, the only real eyes. I am *fixed*' (Fanon 1986: 110–16).

Disorientation

The claims 'black' bodies make on institutions by occupying spaces they are not expected to be in are constantly challenged by a look which

abnormalises their presence and locates them, through the workings of racialised framings, as belonging elsewhere. It is important to note, though, that, at the same time as the black body is fixed by a white gaze, the white gaze itself is disorientated by the close proximity of these foreign bodies. Their very presence, as 'equal' members rather than as service staff (porters, cleaners, clerks and nannies), who take up a different rhythm in the occupation of space, challenges the ways in which racialised bodies have been categorised and fixed. Significantly, both the way in which the 'other' has been fixed and the construction of self in relation to this image are troubled; there is a disturbance of a certain order. A racialised episteme is interrupted. Thinking back to the scene in the Smoking Room in Parliament, the occupation of what has been dressed up as a 'universal' position of authority, even though we know it is crafted for particular bodies, or, rather, precisely because it is a black body, represents a dissonance; a jarring of framings that confuses and disorientates. It is a menacing presence that disturbs and interrupts a certain white, usually male, sense of public institutional place.

Disorientation is one of the processes that bring to the fore the space-invader status of racialised bodies in privileged occupational positions. It is revealing of how specific bodies have been constructed out of the imagination of authority. Soon after being elected, Bernie Grant reflected on how his 'black' body was constantly questioned as a presence in the House of Commons, revealing a mismatch between the category MP and the category black. He remarked:

> One of the catering staff was shocked to see me in the catering establishment and demanded to know what I was doing there until they found out that I was a Member of Parliament.
>
> I was going into a lift and this guy said to me 'oh well, only Members can go in the lift' and I said I was a Member and then he recognised me. (Cited in Howe 1988: 9)

Once a black MP is known and becomes a familiar face, then their physical presence won't be openly quizzed. However, when a new unknown member joins, their presence will be interrogated in the same way, because they don't have an undisputed right to occupy the space. They are seen to be suspiciously out of place. To use Fanon's vocabulary, they are burdened by the claims black bodies can make on the world. In contrast, a white body is much more likely to be automatically accepted; their right to enter and exist is not an issue in quite the same way.[8]

Disorientation Across Space and Bodies

Westminster is a particularly peculiar institution and the encounters that take place here are quite specific to the archaic, crusty nature of this space. No doubt the architecture, the atmosphere and the talk that resounds across the Chamber, between the pillars of the corridors, the clinking of double whiskies, the tapping of heels on the heavy stone floors and the scent of cigars do make the encounter with 'black' bodies very distinctive. However, the disorientation caused by black bodies in positions of authority in the public realm is not unique to this institution. It is found across many other institutions. It even resides in what is characterised as the absolute pinnacle of rationality, the senior civil service, where in theory there is no room for the consideration of bodies because everything is mind. Here, too, black bodies in senior roles are noticed as matter out of place. This is not surprising, given that the more a position or occupation is imbued with the lofty air of universality, the less viable it is for these places to be the natural habitat of Black or Asian bodies.

The few senior 'black' civil servants who do exist in the higher ranks have found that their colleagues are often surprised to find a non-white person in a senior position. Reflecting on this experience, the civil servants mentioned that their presence in the more senior ranks 'throws people' and that their colleagues do a 'double take'. Commenting on what it is like to attend a work-related social function, one 'black' civil servant observed: 'you feel that they are noticing you and can't quite work out what you are doing there. It's like going into a pub in Cornwall. Every one turns around when you open the door ... that sort of feeling.' In a sense it is this 'What are you doing here?' look that abnormalises the presence of these 'black' bodies. It illustrates how positions of authority are embodied. At the same time, the coming together of bodies and spaces which have been juxtaposed induces a whole set of anxieties. In one sense, it represents a psychical somatic collision. The presence of these bodies in this place defies expectations. People are 'thrown' because a whole world-view is jolted. What they see before their eyes – postcolonial bodies in highly accomplished positions, right in the heart of whiteness – seizes their categorisations of space/body. They will no doubt try to clobber these rather unusual creatures into long-established images in the archive of imperial memory.

Disorientation does also occur along the lines of gender. But it is not as acute as it is with 'race'. Scenarios of the following kind, reported by

a woman who entered the fast stream of the civil service in the 1960s, are far less likely to occur today:[9]

> There were certain things that I felt odd about. I remember, on my second day, there was a knock on the door, and there were two people who'd joined the year ahead of me, as fast-streamers, and they'd basically come to have a look, you know, and they hadn't seen a woman trainee around, and they came to peer and went away again, rather frightened and then inviting me out to lunch sort of thing!

A significant levelling in the number of women entering the senior civil service has occurred over time. Nevertheless, the presence of women at the apex of the hierarchy can still occasion disorientation because women are still not the normative figure of authority at the higher levels of the bureaucracy. Notwithstanding departmental variations in numbers, cultures and structures, a head of department relayed an account to me which clearly illustrates how man is the unspecified somatic norm and the presence of a woman can be a disappointment:

> people are very surprised when they find me here. One lady came once to visit me, and she'd been reading the Department's Annual Report, and, of course, it kept referring to 'she', 'she' you know from time to time, not all the time. And when she came in, she looked at me, and she said 'Good Lord!' she said, 'You're a woman!' So I said, 'Well, what did you expect?' She said 'Well', she said, 'You won't believe this', she said. 'But I was convinced that the [Head of the Department] had to be a man, that when I read "she, she, she" in the text, I assumed that it was some peculiarity of this particular post, that the [Head of the Department] was always called "she", although he was a "he".'

In the next chapter I shall discuss how the 'double take' leads on to yet further 'takes' when gendered bodies speak, leading to the menace of their presence becoming even more exacerbated. For now I would like to stay with how the very taking up of a social space from where the universal subject speaks by a racialised subject is a cause of anxiety in institutions. It is worth pondering on why they engender a 'double take'. Why are they, in some small way, a shock to the system?

Disorientation in Academia

If we turn to the world of academia, it is possible to see how the placing of racialised 'other' bodies in the position of subject rather than that of

the usual objects of knowledge calls into question the territorial demarcations that mark the identity of the academic, especially the all-seeing globe-trotting academic. Regardless of how amicable academics are to other cultures and people, the sharing of the seat of power (knowledge) with those one studies can be an experience that very easily 'throws' institutional positionalities and runs the risk of causing ontological anxiety.

Claude Lévi-Strauss provides a remarkable case in point. While Lévi-Strauss was doing his fieldwork on American ethnology in New York, an assured sense of ontological importance was in a particular encounter destabilised. Sitting in the reading-room of New York Public Library, where he was doing research for his *Elementary Structures of Kinship*, he was thrown by the sight of a feathered Indian with a Parker pen, because the 'Indian' is located by Lévi-Strauss, despite his anti-racism, along with a whole bank of knowledge, in another time frame, a past that is outside a particular narrative of modernity. James Clifford observes that: 'In modern New York an Indian can appear only as a survival or a kind of incongruous parody' (cited in Chow 1993: 28). Thus what he sees before his eyes is 'odd' for Lévi-Strauss because, for him, the specialist, the image before him does not fit the 'authentic' image of an Indian. As Chow says, 'What confronts the Western scholar is the discomforting fact that the natives are no longer staying in their frames' (1993: 28).

The arrival of a feathered Indian with a Parker pen (an instrument of technology that has written the world into being) into the reading-room (a place from where the world is contemplated) is discomforting not merely because the analytical categories of this scholar are not sophisticated enough to fit the image, but, more importantly, because the very identity of the intellectual as sovereign knower of the world is called into question. By moving out of the frames through which s/he is known, the 'native' is not just dislodging how s/he has been classified, but also how the Western scholar has framed himself. The self-image or ontological being of the masters of the universe, epistemically speaking, causes a double take. This is what is really shocking. This is a case where the identity of the scholar who goes 'tramping around the world' as a universal figure of academic knowledge is (Probyn 1993), to put it mildly, put out of sync.

What becomes evident in this encounter is that there is a psychic/ social/physical territorial boundary which marks the separation between the ever so interesting and even 'wise' cultures of 'other' worlds and the place of the Western intellectual who brings the voice of reason to each of his collections. The boundary that gives a place and position to the

Western intellect as the torch bearer of enlightenment is now threatened by the sight in front of Lévi-Strauss. Others too can clasp the instruments and become purveyors of knowledge.[10]

The crisis/puzzled thoughts that are induced in Lévi-Strauss are perhaps not surprising given the long historical epistemological/ontological bond which has constituted the sovereignty of the European subject (discussed in the last chapter via the plight of Churchill). While identifying themselves with reason, modernity and the ability to enact the universal and not just the particular, at the same time others were/are dis-identified from these capacities. The entry of 'the native' in the studies, offices and boardrooms troubles notions of self and other as they relate to who is the sovereign subject as well as the sovereign 'eye'. The latent categories and boundaries that tacitly inform who has the right to look, judge and represent start, ever so slightly, to falter.[11]

Uncomfortable Encounters

The ever-increasing proximity of people on the other side of the world to the geopolitical centre is able to generate an uncomfortable confrontation that forces an evacuation of epistemological/ontological assurance. The complexity of this process is captured most vividly through a sculptural work by the artist Paul Gormley titled *The Field*. The potential of the sheer physical presence, arrival and entry of particular bodies in a social space they are not expected to be in to engender unease is brought home to us through a very simple installation. This work unsettles taken-for-granted positionalities and provokes viewers to open up for questioning their own place in the world.

Gormley has created a series of fields (see Figure 5a and b).[12] These consist of hand-sized figures, with two holes for their eyes, made from baked clay. Thousands of these figures densely pack the floor of a whole room, which consists of nothing else but white walls and lighting. Importantly, all the figures vary very slightly in height but each is less than a foot high and faces the entrance to the room, the point from which the audience views them. The viewer is blocked from inspecting the whole gallery space by the presence of the figures, whose gaze, through the two holes in the head, looks up quizzically. The figures appeal to onlookers to reflect upon the boundaries which locate and construct a privileged position in the world. The point from which the viewer looks and asserts authority is a question that is raised by the presence of these figures.
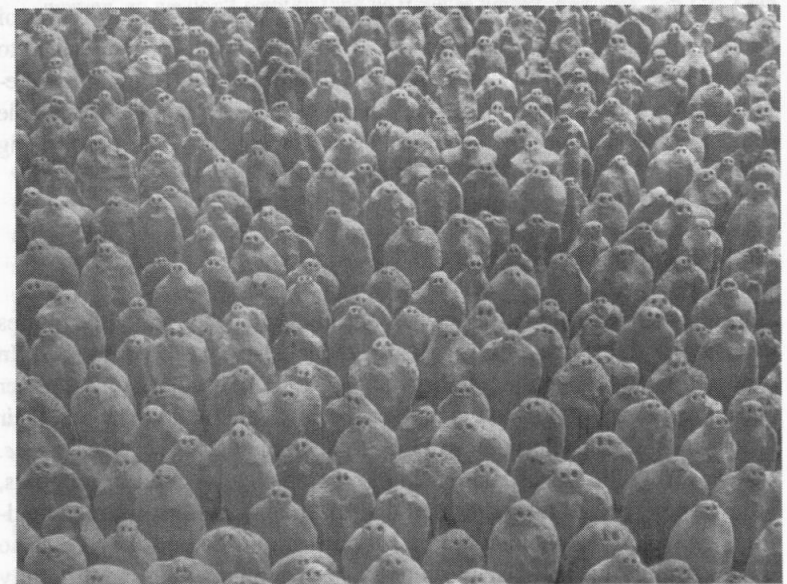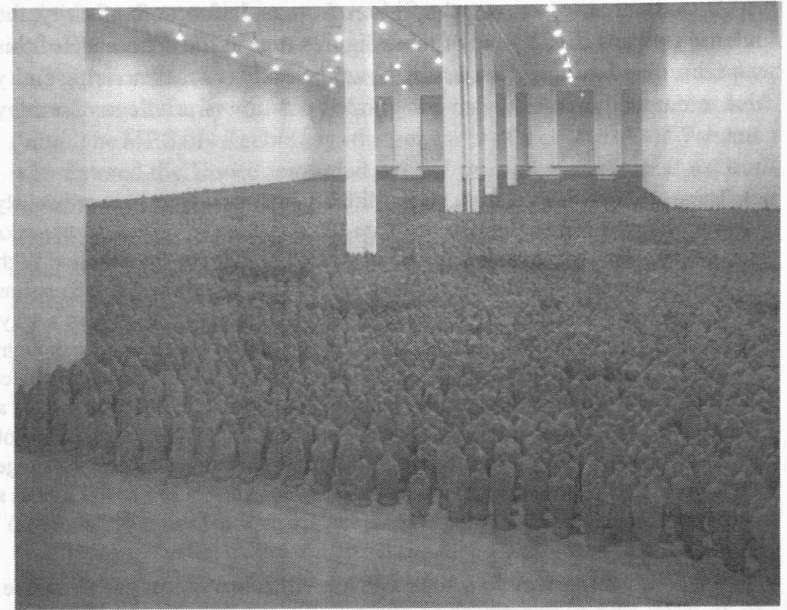
Figures 5(a) and (b) Antony Gormley, *The Field* (1991). Courtesy of Jay Jopling/White Cube (London).

As audiences tower over the figures from a platform of authority, the intense upward ironic gaze of these figures tugs at the coherence of this superior positioning.[13] Discussing how *The Field* is a mesmerising entity that attempts to move a taken-for-granted position of privilege, Gormley states:

> There is a trick that the work plays – life becomes its subject – we previously would have entered a gallery to share the space of the gallery with works and, in some way, aesthetically be possessed or possess those works. With Field, the space is entirely occupied by the work and the work then seems to make us its subject; seems to make life its subject so we are, in a way, invaded and it's not only that this space, the art gallery space, that we thought was ours has been invaded but we are also invaded: we are made the object of the art's scrutiny. These gazes look to us to find their place; they have a place but it's a place that we can't enter and they are looking to the space of consciousness inside us as their rightful promised land and that's a strange feeling ... This invasion of physical space, which you could also think of as a kind of infection, it is a physical metaphor for personal space. (1996: 61–2)

We can use the way in which Gormley has brought together space, body, territoriality and the gaze to look at race and gender in institutions. When racialised figures walk into historically white spaces as figures of authority, they generate unease. The boundaries that have contributed to a privileged sense of whiteness are jarred. This confrontation of the previously outside now on the inside contains the potential to move people out of entrenched positions.[14] But it can also be received as a terrorising threat.

Amplification of Numbers

Gormley stressed the sense in which the audience who look at the figures in *The Field* feel that their physical/personal space has been invaded. In institutional settings the numbers of 'black' bodies entering the higher echelons, or the routes to the higher echelons, are by no means in their thousands. Unlike Gormley's figures they do not fill the space *en masse*. However, while 'black' bodies are still statistically small in numbers, they are perceived as bodies that disturb the normal institutional landscape. Moreover, their numbers become amplified and they come to threateningly fill the space in much larger numbers than they literally do. This means that a sprinkling of two or three Black and Asian bodies rapidly become exaggerated to four or seven. And, interestingly, even

a single body can be seen to be taking up more physical space than it actually occupies.

The reception of women in classically male spaces can bring on similar dynamics to the arrival of the 'third world' that fills galleries in Gormley's *Field*. The MP Sally Keeble says the treatment of the class of 1997 women who entered the House reminded her 'of the way people treat asylum-seekers, seeing themselves as "flooded". It felt like an institution that was bracing himself for something alien' (cited in Campbell 2003). Thus an amplification of numbers is also evidenced along the lines of gender as well as race, although it is much more of an acute phenomenon with race. When, for instance, appointments are made, women in senior positions are more likely to be noticed and counted, in a way that men are not. A woman senior civil servant recalled one such scenario:

> they're counting, they're not doing it consciously, but you can sort of, you can sense it's a consideration ... and this comes up quite often: 'Well we've already got two women' or something. 'And it'll look a bit odd if we appoint a third woman.' You say, 'You mean like it was odd when you appointed the third man so and so?' And they laugh in a rather embarrassed way. 'Well, yes, of course, of course.' But that was a subconscious thought, there are two women, so we don't want to look as if we're biased. And they just don't see that the last five were men, and nobody thought that was bad.

Intrinsic to the dynamics involved in the amplification of numbers is the phenomenon of visibility, threat and terror. As bodies out of place or unexpected bodies, they are highly conspicuous. This is a visibility that comes from not being the norm. It is a process that is not all that different from the way in which racialised minorities are visible on the street, and especially in particular locations heavily demarcated as white places. Lest we think that what is involved here is simply a curiosity about newcomers, strangers or the unknown, coupled with the issue of numbers is the question of terror. The amplification occurs not only because they are unknown, but precisely because they are already 'known' in ways which are seen to threaten the spurious claims on space for a coherent superior identity. There is a terror of numbers, a fear of being swamped.[15] The dread of being displaced from an identity that has placed the white subject as being central to the world propels one to be constantly vigilant as to the activities of the figures that make it uncomfortable to hold on to this position. The vigilance borders on the paranoiac, an anxiety that unleashes its own so-called 'protective' symbolic and physical violence.

Amplification of Presence: Wired Up as Terror

The transposition of the existence of specific types of bodies into a threatening terror has a long lineage of racialised imaginings which have been in operation across continents and countries. Once again, it is useful to briefly turn to the insights drawn from the everyday wanderings of Frantz Fanon as a black man in the streets of France (which gives his flânerie a significantly different hue from that of Baudelaire). Fanon speaks of how on a 'white winter day' his cold shaking body becomes a body of terror through a 'look', whose retinal function is connected to a discursive network of stories of barbarism, horror and disgust:

> look, a nigger, it's cold, the nigger is shivering, the nigger is shivering because he is cold, the little boy is trembling because he is afraid of the nigger, the nigger is shivering with cold, that cold that goes through your bones, the handsome little boy is trembling because he thinks that the nigger is quivering with rage, the little white boy throws himself into his mother's arms. Mama, the nigger's going to eat me up. (Fanon 1986: 113–14)

The automatic mutation of a black body in movement – shaking, laughing, calling or touching – into something to be feared occurs through the infinitesimal everyday interactions and exchanges as bodies pass by each other and glances shoot across streets, trains and executive meetings. 'Black' bodies are known as belonging to other places, outside civil places. Once they enter these realms of the 'civilised', they represent the unknown and the potentially monstrous.

During the age of enlightenment and the age of reason (Warner 2000), human variations of the monster 'became a favourite metaphor to express new anxieties surrounding the self, and its conjoined twin, the other' (Kearney 2003: 118). This is particularly evident in impressions of other 'savage lands' living in a 'state of nature' (which were then, of course, colonised). For instance, Vespucci's discovery of the unknown territory of America by Jan Ver Straet (c. 1575), discussed in Chapter 2, represents an anxious vision of boundary loss and a fear of engulfment in the encounter with cannibals (McClintock 1995: 26–7). One thing that monsters do is defy conventional boundaries. Today 'black' bodies in senior positions also defy conventions. They have entered spaces where their bodies are neither historically or conceptually the 'norm'. For those for whom the whiteness of these spaces provides a comforting familiarity, the arrival of racialised members can represent the monstrous. Why? Because 'monsters scare the hell out of us and remind us that we don't

know who we are. They bring us to no man's land and fill us with fear and trembling' (Kearney 2003: 117). As the incongruous, they invade the normative location of bodies in space. They bring with them indefinite possibilities. They threaten the status quo. Whether they threaten it or not, that is what is feared. Their movements, postures and gestures are closely watched for any untoward behaviour. Racialised optics remain suspicious of these bodies out of place. They could represent an organisational terror, however muted it may be.

The invisible move from a gesturing black body, to threat and then to 'protective terror', was played out in slow motion by the legal ruling on the beating of Rodney King by police in the United States. In court a video offered an eyewitness account of the police violently beating Rodney King. When charged with this, the defence attorneys for the police argued that they were only defending themselves from King, who was the real danger as he had an intention to injure the police officers. The jury in Simi Valley found this reading viable. Deconstructing how it was possible for the jury to interpret the visual evidence of the police enacting severe violence on King as proof of King being a moment away from exerting violence on the police, Judith Butler states that it was feasible to construe King as an agent of violence rather than a victim of it because the attorneys were able to wire in to a familiar white paranoia of blackness, which made them 'see' things in the video that were not there. Most notable is the scene where 'King's palm turned away from his body, held above his own head, is read *not* as self-protection but as the incipient moments of a physical threat'. She asks, 'How do we account for this *reversal* of gesture and intention in terms of a racial schematization of the visible field?' (1993b: 16).

> The video was used as 'evidence' to support the claim that the frozen black male body on the ground receiving the blows was himself producing those blows, about to produce them, was himself the imminent threat of a blow and, therefore, was himself responsible for the blows he received. That body thus received those blows which were that body in its essential gestures, even as the one gesture that body can be seen to make is to raise its palm outward to stave off the blows against it. According to this racist episteme, he is hit in exchange for the blows he never delivered, but which he is, by virtue of his blackness, always about to deliver. (Butler 1993b: 18–19)

Within a racialised circuit of paranoia, King's body emblematises the fear of the black male body and white vulnerability. The predominantly white jury assume 'the projection of their own aggression, and the subsequent regarding of that projection as an external threat'. We thus

have in evidence a 'white paranoia which projects the intention to injure that it itself enacts' (Butler 1993b: 19–22).

Amplification of presence is intrinsic to the way in which terror/ numbers/paranoia work together in this scenario. Even though King is just one body against several armed police officers, he is presented by the defence attorneys as being larger than life. His presence is expanded in size and proportion and hence the relentless blows he receives. The monstrous proportions he is apportioned accentuate the threat he poses, as well as justifying the vicious treatment that is meted out.

Amplification: Organisational Terror

How the existence of 'black' bodies in relatively élite positions within institutions can be perceived as a threat is clearly of quite a different order from how the body of Rodney King was perceived to justify further state violence. An appreciation of the differentiated degrees of terror is no doubt called for. Those black bodies who manage to get into positions of authority in institutions are in one sense deemed 'safe'. They have gone through the vetting and selection procedures that monitor entry to the professions. They have passed the surveillance tests (discussed in Chapters 6 and 7). Furthermore, by existing in particular institutions, they themselves have some degree of investment, however ambivalent it may be, in the professions they have chosen. They can be perceived as being 'terrifying', but they clearly don't represent the direct physical violent terror assigned to Rodney King's body. The terror they represent is expressed differently. It is much more benign. Their presence is ordinary even as it is peculiar, but it is also ever bordering on being suspiciously alarming. They risk being viewed as an 'organisational terror'.

Thinking about security, cultural and spatial, in an institutional context, there is a fear that 'black' bodies will alter the look of the institution, and they won't fully respect the norms or values as they will be eager for change, especially in terms of 'race'. Most importantly, there is a fear that they will displace the security from which the white figure of authority (usually he, but sometimes she) has spoken.

The process of amplification is further exacerbated if the 'black' bodies converse with each other in close proximity. In fact, they only have to be sitting together at a meeting or standing together in a lobby area before a series of leaps of imagination see a potential renegade movement in the making. Suspicions of whistle-blowing and untoward thought can transform a straightforward conversation about the trip into work into

collusion. Laughter and revelry may very easily become a disturbance. A cohort becomes a swarm that invites vigilance. What is feared is an organisational alliance. And, indeed, if 'black' staff do decide to form a self-autonomous group on issues of racism, then they will invite even further suspicion. In most professions there is a taboo attached to naming racism, let alone organising against it. Those who openly take it up as an internal issue, in one way or another, mark themselves out as potentially risky bodies.

The easy assumption that the coming together of these bodies is a potential act of aggression which intends to exclude others from its fraternal cathexis is a projection of an insecurity of losing the central and superior place of whiteness in the structuring of organisations and positions of authority. Thus its own hegemonic cathexis gets projected on to the social groupings of 'others', who are read as having already created exclusive collectivities even before they actually have. This is then used to justify the taboo that surrounds the naming of 'race' and racism in professional occupations. Fearing the loss of the glue that binds whiteness, any sign of a black collectivity is likely to be read as a tight-knit 'community' in the making that threatens the general collectivity of the profession. Naming race is seen to give race prominence in an organisation where it is considered to make no difference. The normativity of whiteness thus remains invisible. A 'black' gathering or support group can be assigned a potentially monstrous aura. These racialised bodies are assigned a territoriality, so that the territorial markings that come with whiteness are, like the blows to Rodney King's body, deflected and projected on to the other.

Similar dynamics come into play along the lines of gender. The presence of two or more women in male spaces can also be viewed as a potential organisational territorial block. Metaphors of war, battle, territories and invasions can be found amongst the male talk (humour) of the female presence amongst their ranks. The threat that these women may actually form some kind of organisational alliance (regiment) is what is feared, because it will displace the existing masculine organisational forms that manage to stay unmarked and invisible. A woman in the senior civil service remarked:

> I remember the day, just after I got the promotion. I mean there was me, and there was one other Grade 3 ... And I met one of my male colleagues ... he was actually a very nice man, comes up to me and he said that the 'monstrous regiment of women marches on'. And I said 'What?' [Laughs] 'There are two of us?'

In the 1997 general election when the numbers of women MPs doubled to 120, leaving men a mere 500, a Labour back-bencher declared to the press: 'I don't know what they do to the Tories but, by God, they frighten me ... Just don't know what to make of them.' A Conservative MP expressed that he feared that the women 'will start meddling in defence policy, increasing the aid budget and deploying peace-keeping troops everywhere' (cited in the *Spectator*, 24 May 1997).

The dissonance caused by the arrival of women and racialised minorities in privileged occupational spaces unleashes shock and surprise. Their entry causes disorientation and terror. The threat they are seen to pose amplifies their presence. As 'space invaders' they represent a potential organisational terror. They are thus highly visible bodies that by their mere presence invite suspicion and surveillance.