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## **Living With Diversity: Everyday Encounter and the Politics of Tolerance**

**ABSTRACT:** This study is concerned with the uptake of tolerance as a response to the contemporary problems of managing diversity and developing cohesion in western societies. Drawing upon recent work that has attempted to critically theorise its contemporary uses and reveal its paradoxical operations, political agendas and civilising tendencies, this study moves to question how tolerance *takes place* on the ground. More specifically, it examines the relationship between tolerance and everyday encounter to consider how it is embodied, produced, and sometimes compromised by the intimacies of everyday practice. Whilst state mobilisations and discourses of tolerance clearly inflect its practice, the study argues that current debates offer only a partial account of the politics of tolerance and its affectual geographies, which are shaped by additional constituents of agency. As a way into its everyday politics, the study focuses on three in particular – geographies of place, ways of thinking (including habit, memory and familiarity) and materialities – across three different spaces of encounter in Birmingham, UK.

The first site focuses upon a public bus service, which presents a challenging arena for throwntogetherness and a space of intense materiality and unusual intimacy, where movement is constrained and differences are negotiated on the smallest of scales. The second focuses upon a multicultural primary school, which is positioned as a key site for the pedagogical promotion of tolerance, to question how parents negotiate difference and their parental responsibilities through an account of habit and familiarity. The final chapter turns to a conflict management workshop, where encounters with difference are carefully engineered in an attempt to develop more tolerant individuals through a series of exercises designed to cultivate techniques of thought. Taken together, these three sites develop an account of tolerance that is more plural, unpredictable and in many cases more optimistic than prevalent debates would suggest and demonstrate how, as a response to difference, tolerance might work as part of a wider telos of social change and ethical praxis.

# **Living with Diversity: Everyday Encounter and the Politics of Tolerance**

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2010

## Contents

	Abstract	i
	Title Page	ii
	Contents	iii
	Figures	iv
	Acknowledgments	vi
<b>1</b>	Introduction	1
<b>2</b>	On Living with Difference: The Politics of Tolerance	19
<b>3</b>	Tolerance and Encounter	47
<b>4</b>	Researching Tolerance	79
<b>5</b>	Tolerance on the Move: Passing Proximities	101
<b>6</b>	Values Education? Tolerance in the Playground	133
<b>7</b>	Building Coalition: Tolerance and Learning to Think Differently	169
<b>8</b>	Conclusion	207
	Appendix	225
	References	229

**Figures**

**Fig. 1.1** 'Respect. It's a two way street' 2

**Fig. 5.1** "See Something Say Something" 115

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## Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the support and participation of a number of individuals to whom I am eternally grateful.

I am indebted to those people who participated in the research, who shared their personal experiences and who gave their trust and time freely. Thanks in particular to Teepu Saltan and Royston John who made so many of these research encounters possible.

Throughout my research I have benefitted greatly from the support and advice of my supervisors, Professor Ash Amin, Dr Rachel Colls and Dr Ben Anderson who have provided unwavering encouragement and commented on countless drafts.

The Department of Geography at Durham University provided a stimulating environment in which to work and I am grateful to my colleagues and friends who made this possible. I would also like to thank the organisers and participants of the 'Urban Materialities' workshop at Durham University, 2010, the 'Geographies of the Passenger' session at the RGS-IBG Annual Conference, 2009 and the 'Geographies of Tolerance' session at the AAG Annual Conference, 2010 for facilitating the presentation of chapter drafts and providing insightful comments and feedback. Thanks also to the Economic and Social Research Council for funding the research.

I am indebted to my family and friends for their continued support over the last few years. In particular, I owe much of my sanity to Kathryn Wilkins, who has always been on the end of the phone and has shared both the highs and lows of completing a PhD. I am also grateful to my parents, Ann and Jim Wilson who have continued to support me throughout my studies.

Finally, this thesis would not have been possible without the advice, love and support of Jonathan Darling who offered encouragement when writing was difficult and whose discussions and insight are a constant source of inspiration.

For Winifred and Gordon



# 1. Introduction

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'The moment occurred as the group was presenting its research on the complexities of the Holocaust, the culmination of a month's work. At that particular moment, a White student used the word *tolerance* during a discussion about the people who rescued Jews during the Holocaust. The African American student expressed her dislike of the word while other students rolled their eyes as if to say, "Oh come on, don't make a big deal out of this. Do we really have to watch our every word?" The lone student explained that it was painful to hear a White person use that word. She said, "When I hear you talk about tolerance, I hear you telling me that I am something to be put up with. That doesn't make me feel very good". In the silence that followed this moment, I had the uncomfortable privilege of confronting myself as I struggled with the decision to address the differences in the room and with trusting my ability to facilitate a safe and honest dialogue' (Vacarr 2001, page 286).

In this particular account, Vacarr details a challenging moment of encounter that took place during a graduate course that she was teaching in Cambridge, Massachusetts. It pinpoints a moment when unspoken divisions in a classroom were brought to the surface and the subordinating and homonormative practices of tolerance were made apparent. It locates the embarrassment and uncomfortable silence that followed when a particular conception of the good was brought into question and the class was unable to discursively ground its moral claim.

When confronted by the cruel effects of tolerance during a classroom encounter in this way, the forms of oppression that are inbuilt within its concept are difficult to ignore. Nobody wants to be 'tolerated'. Yet today, tolerance is used ubiquitously. In the UK, The Home Office endeavours to 'build' it, schools are required to teach it and neighbours are asked to extend it. It features in citizenship ceremonies, diversity management programmes, religious sermons and media campaigns. It is linked to knowledge and understanding, presented as a counter to prejudice, hailed as an antidote to civil unrest and is pinpointed as a vital component of the creative city and a key characteristic of its 'creative class' (Florida 2005). It targets social behaviour (see Figure 1.1), sexuality (McGhee 2004), ethnicity, race, religion and nationality. We are repeatedly told what is not to be tolerated, whilst zero tolerance policies and zones designate its limits and map out its boundaries in public space (Fyfe 2004; MacLeod et. al 2003; Merrifield 2000).



Fig. 1.1. 'Respect. It's a two way street'. These campaign posters were issued by Northumbria Police to tackle anti-social behaviour, who claimed that 'a little more respect can make our communities better places to live'. The campaign was designed to target the issues that can make 'people feel harassed or victimised', portraying a series of scenarios that depict a 'whole host of crime and behaviour from inconsiderate parking to noisy neighbours'. Here, we are asked to tolerate the woman who has blocked somebody in with her car, the young girl who is 'hanging' around and the neighbour who has a house party on a work night. This campaign is just one example of the ubiquity of tolerance (Northumbria Police 2010).

In western societies, tolerance clearly operates and is further utilised across many different sites for a variety of different purposes. It is uncritically positioned within public policies as a national good and a key component of human dignity, and simultaneously circulates as both a political and moral discourse (Brown 2006). It is variously referred to as a virtue, a moral, a practice, a life-skill, tool, responsibility, relation and value and is considered to be both an

outcome *and* conditioning factor of social relations<sup>1</sup>. Yet despite its divergent and widespread use, tolerance evidently possesses negative undercurrents as Vacarr's (2001) account so clearly demonstrates. Indeed, as it has grown in political significance, it has attracted considerable academic scrutiny, which has attempted to critically theorise its contemporary uses to reveal its paradoxical operations and oppressive practices. Wendy Brown (2006) in particular, has detailed the ways in which its political mobilisation by the state has positioned subjects and constructed difference, to demarcate more or less tolerable bodies and to produce a civil order that is underwritten by normative renderings and particular conceptions of the good. The uncritical promotion of tolerance as an assumed good has therefore given rise to what is an ever-expanding scope for the coercion of behaviour and the policing of citizenship and belonging, which is played out across multiple sites in a variety of different ways (Burnett 2007). In light of such critiques, recent criticism has argued that the politics of tolerance actively works against the very projects of equality, respect and justice to which it is so often thought to be attached, which has considerable implications for the development of social cohesion in contemporary societies (Brown 2006; Gibson 2007; McGhee 2005).

Evidently, the literatures on tolerance are varied and wide-ranging. Philosophical debates have long scrutinised its moral worth and virtuous character as an interpersonal ethic (Galeotti 2002), whilst most recent debates have focused upon its liberal lineage, religious foundations (Johnson 2007; Weissberg 1998) or its political projects (Brown 2006). This study, whilst attending to the breadth of such debates, arises from a particular concern with the uptake of tolerance in the context of multicultural and multiethnic belongings – as both a government strategy for managing diversity in the UK and as a necessity for developing interactions across it. Given its central position this work is vital. Alongside respect for the law, tolerance has been positioned as one of the most important values of contemporary Britain (Lloyd 2009) – as a value where 'British people' come together (Tony Blair 2006). Indeed, it is not only something that is held in common, but is described as being *characteristically* British and was deemed integral to the restructuring of British institutions and the promotion of a 'coherent vision of its past and future' (Parekh 2008, page 69). Thus, as Gordon Brown suggested, the union flag is, by definition, a flag for tolerance (2006).

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<sup>1</sup> Each one of these descriptions arises at various points across the study as the context in which tolerance takes place changes. These multiple understandings are testimony to the difficulty of providing a coherent or universal definition of tolerance across different institutions, cultures, religions, nations, individuals, groups and spaces. In continuously moving between these various accounts, the study demonstrates how tolerance can operate as many of these things simultaneously and illuminates its always-fluid nature.

If tolerance is to continue to play a central role within British politics, much more needs to be done to connect its political accounts with its everyday practice, to examine how tolerance *takes place* in our classrooms, on our buses or in our workplaces. This study takes up precisely this task. Too much work has debated its concept and philosophy or attended to its political economy, which, whilst intrinsic to revealing the political agendas and civilising tendencies that lie at the heart of its promotion and condition, say little about how it is negotiated on the ground. The opening account of tolerance in the graduate classroom is far removed from its political presentation as a celebrated core value of contemporary society. As this study argues, current accounts are insufficiently attuned to such complexities of everyday life and encounter; the different contexts in which difference comes to matter; the personal and unpredictable challenges they present; the affects and emotions that are bound up with them and the materialities and habits of thought through which they take shape. Quite clearly, at a time of economic uncertainty and high unemployment, when fundamentalisms are growing and nationalisms are resurging, the capacity to live with difference within contemporary Britain is particularly pertinent and it is to these considerations – to the complexities of everyday encounter – that we should turn our focus.

If tolerance can act as a form of oppression and work to subordinate particular individuals as the opening encounter demonstrated, what does it really mean to fly a flag for tolerance or to come together in its name? According to Gilroy (2004) political gestures such as tolerance ‘abolish the ambition of plurality’ to build upon the premise that diversity brings ‘weakness, chaos and disorder’ (page 1). The urgent task is thus to question what implications the political resurgence of tolerance has for the development of plural societies and equally, as I will argue, what implications plural societies have for the politics of tolerance. First however, it is necessary to turn to the current framing of tolerance within British public policy to illuminate the political gesture that the contemporary politics of tolerance might make.

## 1. Tolerance and public policy in the UK

In the UK, the growing political significance of tolerance reflects a wider shift to a concern with shared belongings and common values as a way of managing diversity and further outlining the limits of multiculturalism (Kundnani 2007, page 122; see also CIC 2007; Fortier 2010). More widely, such a turn has sparked debates around the role of morals and values in politics, their universal quality and the place of the state in the legislation of them (see Bialasiewicz et.al 2005). Such a values-based approach to the management of diversity has been deployed to 'secure communities', develop allegiances amidst difference and in so doing 'secure Britishness' (Kelly and Bryne 2007), in what Gilroy (2004) has identified as a considerable shift from the celebration of diversity as a social asset, to the presentation of diversity as a possible threat and source of conflict. Indeed, such a turn has not only led to a greater concern with focusing upon what people might have in common (DCLG 2009b), but has required a complete transformation of the way in which the state approaches multiculturalism more widely (Fortier 2010).

In 2000, the publication of a report on the *Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain* (Runnymede Trust 2000) highlighted the role of emotions, pride politics and tolerance, in policing the terms of belonging and entitlement to British citizenship (Fortier 2005, page 561). In seeking to outline what it meant to be British, various 'glories' of its history were recovered and hailed as examples of the nations enduring values of tolerance, which were further 'mobilised as legitimate patriotisms' to be celebrated with (multicultural) pride (ibid). Such presentation sparked claims of a failure to acknowledge the 'terrors of the past' (page 564) in an effort to 'sanitize' Britishness under a 'veneer of tolerance' (page 559). Yet despite such claims, the assumption that Britain is naturally more tolerant 'than elsewhere' persists. This assumption was made quite clear within the recent *Profiles of Prejudice* report, which sought to investigate the extent and nature of prejudice against minority groups within the UK. Despite the absence of any clear definition of what tolerance might be and to whom or to what it might be directed, the report claimed that 'there is a rich seam of tolerance to be tapped among the population' (Citizenship 21 2003, page 5).

The community cohesion agenda within the UK is typical of the contemporary political gesture of tolerance and marks a renewed concern with 'moral politics', interpersonal obligations and a devolved responsibility from the state to the community and individual (McGhee 2005). It is 'held to inculcate regard towards others, civic pride and responsibility, social confidence and public participation' (Amin 2005, page 617) and has become part of a wider endeavour to cultivate responsible citizens. Born out of the apparent demise of multiculturalism<sup>2</sup> which was accused of emphasising differences and accommodating 'moral relativism' (Kundnani 2007) outside of any 'unifying model of political community' (Olssen 2004, page 186), it prioritises above all, unity and shared values.

Such a drive for unity, and the heavy scrutiny of the politics of multiculturalism as a way of living together with difference (Meer and Modood 2009), followed the 'urban disorders' in northern towns in 2001, which were evidenced as a reminder of the existing cultural intolerance within British cities (Amin 2002). Multicultural policies and the celebration of difference, were hailed as divisive and responsible for 'undermining our nation's sense of cohesiveness' (David Cameron in Burnett 2007, page 353) following reports that a lack of shared values had led to the violence that had erupted (Cantle 2001). Thus, as Burnett (2007) suggests, it was following such unrest that integrationism or cohesion was outlined as the 'new framework' and the question of how best to live together amidst difference took a new direction.

Importantly, this new direction in the form of the community cohesion agenda, reveals a 'reliance upon strategies of governance' (Fortier 2010, page 17), which seek to design human behaviour and encounter through managed contact. Whilst there is no agreed definition of community cohesion, key domains of focus were outlined to include a greater commitment to 'common values and civic culture' and 'social order and social control' of which tolerance was a key requirement (McGhee 2005, page 46; Cantle 2001). Thus, tolerance was not only described as essential to the development of positive social encounters but was also described as an outcome of them. It offers guidance on meaningful interaction and the conditions through which positive relations might be promoted, including an emphasis upon the role of schools and the development of conflict resolution strategies, which form the basis for Chapter 6 and 7 respectively. In short, the agenda outlines a series of contractual obligations of

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<sup>2</sup> Here I use the term multiculturalism to attend to those policies utilised to manage and to some extent celebrate diversity.

citizenship within what Back et.al (2002) have described as a new civilising project that has become a 'euphemism for assimilation' (Burnett 2007, page 355).

In drawing upon 'registers of emotion to define good citizenship', Fortier (2010, page 19) argues that the foundations of neoliberal forms of governance are revealed to locate a concern with individual agency and an affective citizenship that is 'cast within a political economy of interaction, where some forms of cohesive communities are given more value than others' (page 27)<sup>3</sup>. As Kundnani (2007, page 138) argues, such thinking has set up hierarchies of belonging in which different communities are 'ranked according to their inherent distance from British norms of civility'. Thus, despite 'sanitizing' Britishness 'under a veneer of tolerance' (Fortier 2005, page 559) we can uncover the formation of new economies of exclusion and inclusion that are produced by the imaginative mapping of affective relationships (Fortier 2010). The very idea of extending tolerance towards minority groups already positions them to be somehow outside of the nation and in need of its tolerance for it is a positioning that will always necessitate 'the creation of intolerant culprits' (Fortier 2005, page 559).

As the Equalities Review clearly suggests, 'even in the most tolerant of societies, some things should always remain intolerable' (2007) and indeed it is only through marking out the intolerable that we can have a conception of what is to be tolerated in the first place. Yet, it would appear that whilst tolerance is mobilised and set-up as an inter-subjective quality to secure solidarity and achieve a sense of common purpose, its universal application and mutuality is readily challenged. In Kelly and Byrne's *A Common Place* (2007), the conditional nature of tolerance is premised upon its necessary reconciliation with a common sense of national purpose. Whilst presenting Britishness to be 'an umbrella under which different identities can shelter' (page 25) and where the cultural identities of immigrants can be fostered, the nation is quite clearly presented 'as a domestic space that is not to be sacrificed' (Lewis 2005, page 544). Thus, citizenship ceremonies make tolerance a 'hallmark of contemporary citizenship' whilst providing a further reminder that the nation's diversity 'has always been underwritten by a subscription to a common set of values' (Kelly and Byrne 2007, page 3). Citizenship, and therefore the right to tolerate, is not a natural right, but is something that is earned through a contribution – a 'working together with common purpose' (ibid).

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<sup>3</sup> Fortier notes for example that a cohesive community of people from diverse backgrounds is actively encouraged, whilst one consisting of people from similar backgrounds is to be *discouraged* – particularly if this community should be an ethnic minority (2010, page 27).

Tolerance is therefore not only conditioned, but is entangled with particular hierarchies of power that are too often denied or overlooked and ill-fit its apparent claim for equality. In 2006, in a speech to a Muslim audience at Downing Street, Tony Blair stated that '[o]ur tolerance is part of what makes Britain, Britain... conform to it; or don't come here' (Burnett 2007, page 354). What conforming to tolerance might mean remains unclear, but he spoke to those considered to be deficient in – and alienated from – British values of tolerance, respect for diversity and free speech (Thomas 2010); a series of values that the 'decent' British majority are assumed to already hold (Burnett 2007). Whilst this speech located a desire to engineer 'value changes' amongst the 'tiny minority who oppose tolerance and diversity' (DCGL 2007), the tendency for government policy to focus upon the Muslim community as a whole works against the core aspirations of its community cohesion agenda (Thomas 2010).

The central position of tolerance within accounts of citizenship, community and belonging and as a valuable social 'tool' in the cultivation of more responsible citizens thus necessitates a closer scrutiny of its everyday workings, to examine what it does for the development of convivial culture on the ground. Quite clearly, it is not always an intersubjective relation, or a value that can somehow be shared and enjoyed by all, but rather a value that is often conditioned in particular ways. Of course, in focusing here upon public policy and state strategies of tolerance, there is a risk that the forms of governance described are granted too much coherency (Fortier 2010). As Clarke (2007) points out, governance 'implies at least, the permeability of states as institutions; the plurality of agencies involved in governing; and a shift from hierarchical, authoritative or bureaucratic forms of social coordination, typically towards the modes of markets and networks' (page 838). As Fortier (2010) argues, the social is thus always more than the effect of government and yet it is also impossible to consider it as being somehow distinct from it. Furthermore the policies outlined are often woefully insufficient at grasping the everyday complexities of *living with diversity* and as this study will demonstrate (McGhee 2005; Parker and Karner 2010), there are countless other constituents of action that are vital to its development and taking place in everyday life.

The pages of this study thus unpack the moral claims of tolerance and locate its variable and ever-changing conceptions, to question what its uptake within politics might mean for contemporary plural societies. More specifically, it argues that we need to better attend to how the accounts, policies, media calls and discourses of tolerance push into the everyday – in



order to consider to what extent they are both effective and effected. In short, this thesis is concerned with how tolerance *takes place*. Its central question is not simply concerned with its normative renderings and political account and conditions, but with what else conditions its practice, to consider the materialities, affects, positions, spatialities and emotions that shape its everyday occurrence and are yet insufficiently addressed by current policies. Whilst recent accounts have tended to move away from a concern with individual practice and the small challenges that permeate everyday life to focus more fully on the politics and policies of tolerance, I open up a dialogue between the two, to ask what of tolerance – its virtue, politics, policy and value – comes into everyday encounter and furthermore, what does such everyday encounter do to tolerance? In so doing, I do not intend to work to one side of recent accounts or propose a replacement of them, for everyday encounters are clearly altered by ethical and emotional injunctions that are put in place by the state and its discourses. Rather, the aim of this thesis is to open up the ways in which tolerance is theorised, to take current debates forward and develop an account that is more attentive to its unpredictable taking place, its embodied nature and the possibility that it creates for developing alternative relations. I turn now to Birmingham, UK where this study is set.

## **2. Birmingham, UK: A city of tolerance?**

In the context of multicultural and multiethnic belongings, there can be few better places for addressing the everyday politics of tolerance than in Birmingham, UK (see Parker and Karner 2010). As Sandercock (2003, page 6 ) claims, in such cities as Birmingham, the drives to tolerance, civil society, and pluralisation repeatedly encounter their ‘dialectical opposite’ – the impulse to fundamentalism and demands for the return of a unified race, nation, ethnicity or faith. Such duties or impulses mark sites of constant struggle where the question of how we might live together in difference is continuously rethought and challenged. In Birmingham, such struggle is intensified by the inescapability of its cultural diversity. It has long been the focus for debates concerned with the future (un)governability of plural cities and concerns about the challenges that majority-minority cities might pose for future planning and social cohesion (Finney and Simpson 2009)<sup>4</sup>. Indeed Birmingham might be considered characteristic

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<sup>4</sup> Whilst it has been suggested that within the next two decades Birmingham will achieve the first status as ‘majority-minority’ city in the UK (Slater 2001) these claims have been ardently contested as gross exaggerations and a convenient ‘hook’ upon which to hang discussion of ‘the challenges and opportunities of multicultural cities’ (Finney and Simpson 2009, page 142). While the population of Birmingham as a whole is expected to increase, the population is expected to become more diverse, with fewer White and Caribbean residents and more of each other group. Birmingham’s White population is expected to fall below one half of the total in 2024, but it will remain

of the 'new urban condition' in which difference, fragmentation and plurality prevail (Sandercock 2003, page 1), where conventional notions of identity, citizenship and belonging are challenged and where taken-for-granted uses of public space are contested. Situated at the heart of the UK, it has over one million residents and is at the centre of a conurbation of 2.5 million people (Masbouni et. al 2007, page 20). It is densely populated, has a long history of migration<sup>5</sup> and is currently considered to have one of the youngest populations in Europe. According to the last census, 70% of residents described themselves as white (20% below the national and regional averages and exceeded only in areas of inner city London), whilst the remaining 30% considered themselves to be non-white<sup>6</sup> (Birmingham City Council 2010), a statistic that is repeatedly presented as its defining characteristic.

Such a condition has been put forward as evidence of Birmingham's 'lively cosmopolitanism' and its credible position as a global city and 'postcolonial workshop of the world' (Henry et. al. 2002). Whilst the city still remains predominantly white it has further branded itself to be 'the major and most multiracial city in the country'; as a city that is inclusive, accessible and open (Birmingham City Council 2001). It has been positioned as an ideal model for the development of future European cities of diversity – as a place of plural belongings and varied geographies of cultural formation (Amin 2004, page 2). As Britain's equality chief, Trevor Phillips suggested, Birmingham's ethnic make-up means that it is ideally placed to be a model city through which new social imaginaries and new ways of thinking and living together might be developed (see Scotney 2008) and where the 'idea of Europe' in particular might be redefined (Whitby in Masbouni et. al 2007). This new imaginary of European belonging, takes as its starting point 'empathy/engagement with the stranger' (Amin 2004, page 3) and a culture of mutuality born out of a negotiation of difference, making it an ideal site for a study on tolerance. Indeed, Sandercock (2003, page 179) has identified Birmingham as one city that is actively 'reinventing itself as a cosmopolis', where alternative futures are imagined, fears of difference are negotiated and solidarity is sedimented through the promotion of a core set of values that work to organise hope and dampen anxieties.

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more than twice the size of any other single group, the largest of which will be the Pakistani population with 232 thousand residents in 2026. (Simpson 2007)

<sup>5</sup> Perhaps the most notable was the Commonwealth migrants that arrived from the 1960's onwards from the West Indies, Pakistan and India with their populations numbering over 40,000 in 2001 (Webster 2001).

<sup>6</sup> Of this 30%, 20% were from Asian and British Asian groups and 6% were made up of residents from Black and British Black groups (Birmingham City Council 2010).

This marks a considerable departure from its turbulent past. Once branded the 'bleeding heart of the country' following the Handsworth 'race riots' in 1985, Birmingham has repeatedly found itself at the centre of political storms on immigration and race relations (Rex and Moore 1967), where complex struggles for political influence and reputation have been played out on its streets and in the media (Solomos and Back 1995). However, while the city would seem to have done much to 'reinvent itself' as a city of tolerance, which has been described as a 'live and let live city' (Phillips 2008; Sandercock 2003) and a demonstration that 'a multi-ethnic community can be an asset and not a problem' (Whitby in Masbouni et. al 2007, page 6), conflicting accounts illuminate discontinuities between the city's claims of inclusion and welcome to reveal a more scrutinised and careful tolerance. Indeed, Chan (2007) argues that in Birmingham, we might see a factual, authentic multiculturalism that is based on the presence of particular cultural identities, which is testimony to a much greater concern with *imagining* the landscape of the city rather than fostering an interculturalism that would more fully address existing segregations between (cultural) groups. Racial inequality and discrimination are persistent despite the policies, initiatives and structures that have been implemented to tackle them (Abbas and Anwar 2005). Contests continue over the politics and presence of religious architecture (Gale 2004; Reeves 2009), while unemployment is higher amongst ethnic minorities and between 70% and 85% of the minority population is concentrated in the inner city – the areas of which suffer from multiple deprivations. Furthermore, whilst the ethnic and racial diversity of the city clearly distinguishes it from all other cities, save perhaps London and Leicester, it has been suggested that its subsequent definition of diversity fails to adequately accommodate its demographic diversity of gender, age, education, religion, sexuality and so on (Nasser 2007 in Masbouni et. al 2007), to reveal a very limited and superficial conception of tolerance and acceptance.

The grand narratives of tolerance and plurality have been further punctuated by events of intolerance and conflict that sit 'awkwardly' with the city's image and further illuminate the everyday complexities of living in a multicultural society. During this research in August 2009, The English Defence League staged a march through the city centre against 'British Islamic extremists', which ended in violence when it was met by anti-fascist campaigners and riot police near the busy Bull Ring shopping centre. In 2004, questions of religious tolerance were thrown into the public realm when violent confrontations took place outside a Birmingham theatre as members of the Sikh community took to the streets to protest against the performance of 'Behzti' ('Dishonour' in Punjabi). The play, which was deemed to be highly

offensive to their faith in its portrayal of rape, abuse and murder, was later cancelled sparking an outcry against 'the affront to artistic licence' and the right to free speech with both sides of the conflict calling for more tolerance (Grillo 2007a, page 5). One year later, whilst the transformation of Birmingham's image and its apparent embrace of diversity and promotion of racial harmony was congratulated in the aftermath of the civil unrest that occurred in the northern mill towns of Bradford, Burnley and Oldham in 2001, the city was shaken by its own riots. Violent clashes between ethnic minorities in Lozells in 2005, served to illustrate the enduring intolerances that existed in some of the city's most diverse wards. Whilst it was reported that the circulation of a rumour concerning an Asian shop owner and the rape of a 14 year old Black girl triggered the disturbances, critics claim that the tensions had further roots in the 'trivial' everyday rituals of capitalism, high unemployment, deprivation in housing and the circulation of negative stereotypes, emphasising the material, temporal and affective dimensions of the ongoing conflicts in the area. Yet despite the complex nature of the conflict, the event was hailed as yet another example of 'failed' multiculturalism, which 'exploded in a race riot' (Cowan, 2005; Vulliamy 2005) to evidence two communities divided along racial lines.

In 2008, the then Shadow Minister for Local Government and Community Cohesion – Paul Goodman MP warned that the city will face increased levels of social unrest as it continues to move towards becoming a fully 'plural city'. He identified the city as a place within which the viability of multiculturalism would be thrown into question and where 'cultural clashes' would grow between people of different ethnic groups, religion and value systems (Walker 2008). Of course, the tensions detailed here were large-scale events that attracted international attention. Yet they reveal the underlying sites of everyday resistance, anxiety and intolerance that are oft-overlooked by the prevailing accounts of affection, respect and acceptance and the more abstract debates concerning the physical manifestation of difference, its demographic statistics and promotion of cultural heritage. They attest to the turbulent nature of living with diversity and the need to unpack some of the narratives of tolerance and inclusion prioritised and circulated by planners and city investors. Whilst the city's founding narratives demonstrate a willingness to rethink what it means to be a 'Brummie' (Sandercock 2003, page 176) and the desire to promote Birmingham as a multicultural city that is built upon a culture of mutual respect and tolerance, these cases of resistance exist alongside accounts of decaying neighbourhoods, resentment, fear, 'white spaces' (Dudrah 2002), no-go

areas (Aspinall 2009, Parker and Karner 2010), gang cultures (Gillan 2008) and racism (Nayak 2010), which are played out in the national and local media.

Whilst these accounts might attest to a city caught between two opposing accounts – of the immense possibility of plural societies on the one hand and the ungovernability of them on the other (Sandercock 2003) – and certainly reflects the challenges of living with diversity, Yaqoob (Sivanandan et. al 2007) argues that the prevailing rhetoric of the city is made uncertain by the complex reality of daily lived experiences. She calls for greater emphasis to be placed upon its sites of habitual engagement to acknowledge their great resonance. Indeed as Parker and Karner have argued, reputational geographies – or the social imaginaries that define an area and its social status and ‘repositories of affect’ – are both created and disputed at the level of everyday practice and conviviality (2010, page 1452). Whilst these conflicting accounts might expose some of the limits, complexities and ambiguities of living with difference, they require close attention so as to avoid over-simplified accounts and normative assumptions as to which ways of inhabiting space should be privileged over others (Watson 2006). Whilst accounts of harmony can be disrupted by moments or instances of intolerance – a passing encounter with racism, an account of police brutality, a look of disgust or a series of irresponsible media reportings (Dudrah 2002) – sites of exchange and encounter can also work to dampen intolerances and trivialise differences in unpredictable ways. It is with this in mind that this thesis is written, to attend to those spaces of encounter that are oft-overlooked by urban planners and investors and yet make up some of the most important sites of everyday public life.

### **3. The Study**

Having outlined the main policy context within which this study is set and Birmingham’s unique position as ‘a city of tolerance’, in Chapter 2 I explore the political economy of tolerance more fully, as a way in to examining some of the implications of its politics for multicultural societies more widely. The chapter thus examines its position within discourses of national belonging and opens up some of the contemporary critiques and academic scrutiny of its recent promotion as a way of living with difference. Through interrogating the ubiquitous call for tolerance across various national and local contexts and across cultures, religions, policies and so on, I examine how tolerance functions as a state practice and mode of social

regulation. Drawing upon the work of Wendy Brown (2006) in particular, the chapter questions what kinds of social subjects the discourse of tolerance might produce and what habits of cohabitation and orientation towards others it might promote to examine its multifaceted conditions and uneven distributions of power. In so doing, I explore the ways in which the uptake of tolerance might function as both a tool of depoliticisation and governmentality, before examining claims that it works as a civilisational discourse that strengthens the superiority of western, liberal societies and individuals. Finally, to explore the implications of its liberal lineage and Protestant foundations for contemporary multicultural, multiethnic societies, I examine some alternative accounts of tolerance to highlight the difficulties of accommodating competing moralities and to further demonstrate the links between the state practice of tolerance and the regulation of aversion.

Whilst these various accounts of tolerance and recent critiques of its contemporary politics have done much to unpack its multiple readings and applications and the ways in which it might orientate bodies, regulate aversions and put particular hierarchies of belonging in place, I argue that they can only tell us so much about its everyday occurrence. In Chapter 3, I build upon these accounts of its politics and virtue, to focus more fully upon the relationship between tolerance and everyday encounter, to ask what else conditions the practice of tolerance. In so doing, I work towards a politics of bodily practice; one that positions tolerance to be both an affect and effect of encounter, and one that is shaped through various forms to sometimes strengthen and sometimes work against, the ethical injunctions and state mobilisations outlined in Chapter 2.

To theorise the ways in which tolerance is shaped by the myriad encounters between individual bodies and other finite things on a day to day basis (Thrift 2004a), I outline three points of focus that are crucial to the taking place of tolerance and form the basis for much of the ensuing discussions; materialities, ways of thinking (including habit, memory and familiarity) and the geographies of place. I argue that a closer examination of the relations in and through which material forms exist can provide a more careful account of why different spaces have quite different affective capacities. Calls for tolerance are regularly attached to particular bodies and objects that are invested with political attributes and read in various ways, whilst material *affects* are embodied and felt through the skin and intensities of feeling in such a way as to alter one's ability or capacity to act. Such readings and attributions or 'habits of visual discrimination' are what Brubaker et. al (2004, page 37) describe as

‘ubiquitous mental processes’ and so the chapter moves to demonstrate how tolerance might be (un)consciously shaped by patterns of thought – experiences, cognitions, perceptions and habits. In focusing upon thought, I argue that encounters have ‘a life and force beyond the deliberative and reflective consistencies of representational thinking’ (McCormack 2003, page 490) and in so doing, highlight the temporal nature of tolerance, which is too often neglected by current debates. Thirdly, I turn to the geographies of place, to argue that the specificities of place – or Birmingham in this instance – inflect encounters in particular ways. This includes a concern with the local infrastructure, demographics, relational connections, socio-economic conditions, histories, affective possibilities (Conradson and Latham 2007) and reputational geographies (Parker and Karner 2010). Finally, I examine the space of potential that tolerance might afford, paying particular attention to the suspension of condemnation that it demands and the alternative forms of relation that might develop under such conditions (Butler 2004). In better apprehending what affects the taking place of tolerance, I argue that we might begin to support or construct alternative connections across difference through both intervention and ethical cultivation (Connolly 2002; 2005).

Having outlined my concern with the relationship between tolerance and everyday encounter, in Chapter 4 I detail how I empirically examined tolerance and attended to the problems of researching its embodied and affectual conditions, and the relational, unpredictable and temporary registers through which it takes place. The chapter therefore locates my research within a body of geographical work that has responded to more-than-human and more-than-representational concerns to further meet appeals for ‘a greater trust in the encounter, as an experience to be taken on its own terms’ (Lorimer 2007, page 91). I then move on to outline the methods used and address some of the key ethical and practical issues of the research, including the implications of placing my body as the researcher, my movement between sites of study and my engagement with the sensitive issues of (in)tolerance, prejudice and racism, before finally detailing how tolerance is written in the chapters to come.

Chapter 5 is the first of three empirical chapters and details an account of tolerance ‘on the move’ through the case of everyday bus passengering in Birmingham. In this chapter, I consider how the close proximity of strangers in a cramped and constantly changing space is negotiated and how tolerance of others is variously conditioned. It details the public codes of conduct, conditions of carriage and the tacit rules of remaining ‘unproblematic’ in the presence of unacquainted others. It further argues that encounters on the bus rely heavily

upon visceral registers and appearance, to sediment judgement of others and orientate bodies in specific ways. In particular, it draws attention to the affective atmospheres of passengering that can work to diminish or increase ones capacity for tolerance, which are dependent upon a whole series of conditions – perhaps a delayed service, a long day at work or a particularly comfortable seat. Thus through attending to the intense materiality of the space – the bodies, bags, handrails and seats that constrain movement and impose upon the body – the chapter details a turbulent account of multicultural intimacy and the ways in which a tolerated multiplicity might be achieved through relations associated with tacit rules of behaviour. Whilst the wider discourses of differentiation and exclusion that are examined in Chapter 2 clearly inflect the movements and habits of passengers, Chapter 5 illuminates the much less predictable taking place of tolerance, which demands that passengers must continuously negotiate ‘the field of what might be possible’ (Bissell 2010a, page 286).

Chapter 6 turns to the spaces of a multicultural primary school where tolerance is pedagogically achieved and cohesive relations are actively promoted. Following the Cattle Report (2001), schools have been earmarked as key sites in which to develop and facilitate positive encounters with difference and further encourage greater tolerance of diversity not only amongst children but amongst parents and the community more widely. The chapter begins with the interplay between the expression of tolerance promoted by the school and the narratives of encounter provided by its parents, to locate a tolerance of others that is conditioned by personal biographies, accounts of race and religion and wider discourses of citizenship and belonging. However, whilst the chapter initially reveals the kind of scrutinised acceptance that is familiar to current critiques of the political use of tolerance, the chapter argues that Cattle’s topology of encounters and such wider discourses of belonging are insufficiently attuned to the complexities of encounter observed. The chapter thus details the ways in which the habitual practices and anxieties that work to limit and constrain tolerance of others are called into question by parents, arguing that tolerance is more closely regulated by the responsibilities that come with being a good parent than it is by the institutional framework of the school. I focus in particular upon the motivations of a Parents Group, which was set up to enable parents to ‘learn about each other from each other’ in order to facilitate a better, more tolerant learning environment for their children. Alongside other moments of encounter – in the playground, at play dates, birthday parties and the walk to school – I detail an alternative account of developed tolerance through attention to the ways in which such



activities and encounter gradually develop familiarity and so alter ways of thinking about others through an often pragmatic negotiation of difference (Noble 2009a).

Taking forward the ways in which patterns of thought were (un)consciously altered by the accumulation of encounters at the primary school, the final empirical chapter focuses upon a site where techniques of self-modification are drawn upon more explicitly and patterns of thinking are directly addressed. Chapter 7 therefore details the work of the National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) – a non-profit conflict management group charged with the task of reducing prejudice and developing more tolerant communities and individuals through a series of workshops and training programmes. More specifically, it attends to its workshop encounters and some of the theoretical foundations that the programme draws upon – ranging from the techniques utilised by diversity training initiatives to the more affective dimensions of interactive drama – to examine how the cultivation of more ‘ethical’ and responsible individuals is achieved through coercive means. I focus in particular on its lessons in the formation of stereotypes and habits of recognition, and the cathartic function of its ‘speak out’ exercises, which aim to confront participants with the cruel effects of intolerance and prejudice through the retelling of personal stories. Using the work of William Connolly in particular, I examine how such workshops might rethink the ways in which solidarities are formed, to develop what might be considered a ‘conscious conviviality’ or an agonism in practice, to return to the argument that a greater apprehension or conscious ‘bringing out’ of the conditions of tolerance might assist effective ethical cultivations. In so doing, I further highlight the use of tolerance in the creation of a ‘safe’ space within which issues of conflict can be addressed and interventions made. Lastly, the chapter considers the extent to which NCBI workshops might be effective in shaping behaviour beyond such spaces of minute regulation – the supportive gestures, deliberate seat arrangements and careful facilitation – to consider its wider political value as a way of promoting cohesion and facilitating a more permanent shift in values.

Finally, in a concluding chapter I detail what an account of tolerance through everyday encounters can offer current debates on living with difference. Whilst recent critiques of tolerance as a political discourse draw attention to the oft-hidden agendas and civilising tendencies of its contemporary promotion in western societies, I argue that these accounts can only tell us so much about the way in which tolerance takes place. Instead, I argue that a focus upon encounters is better able to attend to its many conceptualisations, uses, objects

and sites; its instability and unpredictable taking place, while keeping hold of the wider discourses of citizenship and belonging that inflect its practice. I then outline three key points. First, I outline the implications that the study has for understanding ordinary multiculturalism and the changing values of contemporary society, to suggest that accounts that argue for the easy and 'banal intermixture' of difference (Gilroy 2004), ignore the continuous struggles that expand existing conceptions of belonging. Secondly, taking this argument forward I argue that we might rethink the relationship between tolerance, citizenship and the state to illuminate the ways in which judgements of belonging reside in everyday practice, to challenge accounts of affective citizenship and regulated aversion (Brown 2006). Finally I return to the question that is persistent throughout the study, to detail what part tolerance might play – as an everyday practice, civic value and political tool – in wider projects of justice and equality.

## 2. On Responding to Difference: The Politics of Tolerance

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*'In ... tolerance lies the ultimate proof of his power...'* (de Botton 2009, page 12)

How we live together in the midst of difference is a question that has received renewed interest and has been accompanied by a recent growth in work around civilities and new understandings of ethics and being (see for example Popke 2009). Whilst living with difference and an ever increasing pluralism is now quintessentially what (urban) life is all about (Watson 2006), there is little consensus as to how such difference should be acknowledged, how we should respond to it, what ethos might mark interactions across it and whether we might find 'a basis for a common life' (Johnson 2007, page 1). How difference is negotiated and *lived* and what 'sense' of the human such negotiations create are important questions (ibid). As van Leeuwen (2008, page 148) contends, it would seem that living with difference, is 'characterised by a fundamental affective ambivalence' and the accounts of Birmingham presented in Chapter 1 are certainly testimony to such contention. Celebratory accounts of convivial multiculturalism and diverse ways of being (Gilroy 2004) co-exist in ambivalent tension with accounts of fear, division, antagonism and the attestation that different ways of living together are entirely incompatible (Grillo 2007b; Wood and Landry 2008).

Clearly, as I outlined in Chapter 1, there has been a notable turn to the promotion of core values, which in turn have outlined new 'economies of exclusion/inclusion' as a strategy for managing diversity effectively (Fortier 2005, page 559). The account that has perhaps held the most currency within liberal democracies is that of tolerance (Brown 2006; Johnson 2007). Whilst there is clearly much discussion over its definition, what shape it might take, and how it might relate to others, there is little doubt that tolerance has once again returned to the fore as a national value and civic good (Derrida in Borradori 2003). But exactly why it has

apparently emerged as the favoured response to difference is perhaps less certain. As the last chapter made clear, today, tolerance is ubiquitous in western societies. It is entangled with discourses and policies of national belonging and community cohesion, equality reviews and citizenship ceremonies. It is variously promoted as a civic good, a source of national pride and a tool for achieving unity amongst difference – as something that we should all hold in common. This chapter interrogates such promotion, to build on and contribute to recent academic critiques of tolerance as a political discourse and form of contemporary governmentality to further unpack its liberal lineage. In so doing, these accounts illuminate the ways in which tolerance is variously presented as a response to difference and begin to hint at some of the possible consequences for social encounter.

Having outlined its contemporary framing within British politics in Chapter 1, I begin by questioning the promotion of tolerance as a common good and way of living with difference, by outlining the negative conditions upon which it is necessarily based. In drawing on theories of its concept, I examine how tolerance relates to, and further positions ‘the different’ to unpack its negative principle and attend to claims that tolerance can be no more than a ‘suspended condemnation’ (Jenkins 2002). Taking forward these concerns, in section 2 I ask who has the right to tolerate, to tease out some of the power relations that are inbuilt within its concept, to further address its conditional nature and the processes of subjugation that are so often at the centre of its practice. Drawing upon arguments that tolerance is a conditional withholding of force by those in positions of power (Hage 2003; Jenkins 2002), I consider what kind of civil order tolerance promotes, to question whether tolerance might work to sustain otherness and further define the boundaries and limits of diversity. In so doing, I argue that there is an urgent need to consider how tolerance functions as a political discourse of state regulation and social organisation (Brown 2006), to question just exactly what kinds of social subjects it produces and what habits of civic cohabitation it might promote.

If tolerance produces liminal subjects, who these subjects are and how they are positioned as such is of political importance. This chapter draws upon the work of Wendy Brown in particular, to consider the extent to which the politics of tolerance might be considered to be a discourse of governmentality – a contractual obligation of citizenship that is regulated through pedagogical achievement and its appropriate codification by a range of civic institutions. In so doing the section highlights the means through which tolerance of difference is regulated by the state through the deployment of a variety of tactics. In highlighting its taken-for-granted

value of equality, section 3 demonstrates how the promotion of tolerance might disguise political agendas that distinguish tolerable from intolerable subjects through the case of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre Museum of Tolerance (Brown 2006). Through such an example it becomes possible to examine how the discourse of tolerance; orders subjects according to particular conceptions of the 'good'; defines opponents in moral terms; and depoliticises the social context of the conflicts and differences to which it is supposed to address.

Having acknowledged that the discourse of tolerance regulates aversions in multiple ways, section 4 questions whether it has brought a new politics of difference to the fore. In the aftermath of 9/11 it has been argued that racial phenotypes have become the new markers of difference, warranting a much closer scrutiny of the relationship between tolerance and race. In section 5 I suggest that the landscape of tolerance and its broad concern with matters of identity and difference has undergone significant transformation from its original roots and focus (Derrida in Borradori 2003). Yet in tracing its liberal lineage, I suggest that an uneasy relationship with Christianity – and Protestantism in particular – is revealed, which has significant implications for the application of tolerance as an apparently 'universal' principle. Following an account of this particular lineage I consider alternative accounts of tolerance and the ways in which it is differently inflected across a range of religions, groups and nations. In so doing I argue that tolerance, as it is currently understood and politically mobilised, requires huge transformations of the particular subjects and cultures to which it is attached, that not only raises questions about how tolerance might be distributed and put into practice within a plural society, but how competing moralities might be played out and accommodated (Fisher 1997). Such required transformations not only challenge those attestations that tolerance is a value that can be equally enjoyed by all, but also works to challenge the notion that it might encourage unity and cohesion amidst difference. Finally, whilst the accounts in this chapter are crucial to understanding the political mobilisation of tolerance and to drawing attention to the agendas and civilising tendencies that are bound up with its mobilisation as a response to difference, I argue that these accounts can only take us so far in understanding how tolerance *takes place*. Whilst its politics and discursive formations have quite clear ramifications for the *conditions* of tolerance, in the concluding section I outline my concern with theorising tolerance through everyday encounter as another way of approaching its study.

With this in mind, the next section paves a way through some of the dominant ways of thinking about tolerance, to challenge its taken-for-granted mutuality and examine its position

as a 'negative principle' to trace some of the less desirable conditions of its concept. Whilst such readings undoubtedly question why tolerance has been so readily mobilised as a national good and pillar of community, they are not utilised so as to disregard its value. Rather, such theorisations offer a way of thinking through its inbuilt power relations and associations with particular conceptions of the good so as to open up our ways of thinking about its political mobilisation.

### **1. The negative principle of tolerance**

'Tolerance as a social ideal figures a citizenry necessarily leashed against the pull of its own instincts; it embodies a fear of citizen sentiments and energies, which it implicitly casts as inherently xenophobic, racist, or otherwise socially hostile and in need of restraint. In its bid to keep us from acting out our dislikes and diffidence, the ubiquitous call for tolerance today casts human society as a crowded late modern Hobbesian universe in which difference rather than sameness is the source and site of our enmity, in which bonds fashioned from mutual recognition are radically diminished, and in which both the heavy hand of the state and the constraining forces of necessity are frighteningly absent' *(Brown 2006, page 88)*.

The rapid uptake of tolerance within community cohesion projects and its ubiquitous promotion as a national characteristic and civic good should be carefully scrutinised to consider what kinds of orientation it promotes and to ask what form of civil order it might emplace (Brown 2006, page 5). Whilst tolerance would seem to promote relations of mutuality, where citizens have the equal capacity to tolerate, it is concurrently underwritten by a series of conditions that need to be addressed. As Brown suggests, tolerance is an internally 'inharmonious term' which combines 'goodness, capaciousness, and conciliation with discomfort, judgement and aversion' (page 25). It is positioned as a strategy for coping with something that one would rather not and marks a certain withholding of force or interference with its subject because one should not, for a variety of reasons, seek to intervene. The very condition of tolerance thus necessarily emerges from a set of circumstances that elicit disapproval, dislike or disdain and so hostility would seem to be inherent to it (Galeotti 2002; Mendus 1989). In theorising the neologism of tolerance in this

way, as always 'parasited by hostility' (Gibson 2007, page 159), we may begin to examine how tolerance relates to, and further positions 'the different', such that we might recognise an assumed 'antagonism towards alterity' (Brown 2006, page 26). These readings most certainly undermine its assumed capacity to foster cohesion and develop a sense of common purpose as was suggested by the current discourses of citizenship and belonging outlined in Chapter 1.

If then, as Scanlon (2003) suggests, tolerance is about the permissiveness and acceptance of practices despite disapproval of them, or a mask that works to control an otherwise natural and perhaps violent response to difference, then tolerance is necessarily removed from any qualities of indifference or neutrality<sup>7</sup>. It is rather a reactive virtue (Fisher 1997), or a 'second-order virtue' (Fletcher 1996), emerging as it does from an initial dislike or disdain. Yet, if tolerance is presupposed to counteract 'an impulse to intervene and regulate the lives of others' (Brown 2006, page 7), through no more than a withholding of force, it can also be said to maintain the initial (negative) relation to difference to which it is directed and thus becomes a gesture that distances and one that variously fixes its subjects at a threshold (Keith 2005). Through maintaining the negative relation with the subject or object in question, Fletcher (1996) in particular, suggests that tolerance as a relation is rendered inherently unstable. As she suggests;

'Those who suffer understandably prefer an easier way. Their natural inclination is to figure out an effective way of intervening to change the behaviour they disapprove of, or the tolerated behaviour will become a matter of indifference' (page 159).

It is the basic condition of suffering or putting up with what one would rather not that forms the basis of this critique. As Connolly suggests, 'suffering is to bear, endure, or undergo; to submit to something injurious; to become disorganised. [It] resides on the underside of agency, mastery, wholeness, joy, and comfort' (Connolly cited in Anderson 2006, page 740) and so it is perhaps understandable that there might be a natural inclination to intervene. The

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<sup>7</sup> Dussel for example, suggests that tolerance might be regarded to 'assume a certain indifference before the other', marking it to be a disposition, or relation of passivity in which 'one absolves oneself of the other's fate' (2004 page 329). I suggest that such description of tolerance as a passive relation of indifference, whilst useful for supporting arguments that call for a more productive relation with difference, overlooks the degree of labour that the practice of tolerance might require through the restraint or management of particular hostilities or dislikes.

implication however, is that tolerance can, at best, be no more than a 'suspended condemnation' (Jenkins 2002); there being no point at which the initial disapproval or dislike might be resolved or overcome, without addressing or challenging its origins more fully. The failure of tolerance would therefore appear to be already built into its very condition. For many, this simply affirms the suspicions that tolerance is a 'negative principle' (Herman 1996) and nominal in practice (see Jenkins 2002 for a discussion) – for the attitudes of dislike or disdain upon which it is premised are not only unaltered but can remain only temporarily out of view (see also Dussel 2004). These conceptualisations of tolerance clearly highlight the lack of transcendence that it offers. There is no room for an alternative account of how we might live differently with difference or how the negative relation to it might be transformed. It might thus be reasonable to conclude that living together under the conditions of tolerance does not encourage, or indeed allow, alternative relations of recognition, respect, equality, justice or acceptance and indeed, as Brown (2006) suggests, to promote tolerance as an ideal response to difference is in some cases, to actively move away from, or substitute such wider projects.

There are clearly reasonable grounds for concern here, and I give particular credence to the apparently unstable nature of tolerance. Yet at this point I do not wish to close down the possibility that tolerance might enable the development of alternative relations, but would rather take forward these concerns to trouble its unquestioned promotion as a common good. There is no doubt that such accounts of the negative principle of tolerance describe a 'troubling and unstable psychic landscape' (Brown 2006, page 29) for the 'cohesive' British society outlined in the introduction, and would certainly challenge any assumption that it may be a 'benign' politics (McClure 1990, page 364). They pose important questions around who has the right to tolerate, who decides what is tolerable and who has the power to withdraw it. At the very least there is certainly an urgent need to uncover the power struggles that are inbuilt within its practice and concept to examine what social asymmetries of power might be produced (see for example Johnson 2007) and it is with this in mind that I begin the next section.



## 2. A discourse of power

For Derrida (in Borradori 2003), tolerance in western societies is best described as a 'condescending concession' (page 127), used by those in a position of power as a supplementary mark of sovereignty<sup>8</sup>. In this instance it is thus 'first and foremost a form of charity' (page 127), for whilst permitting the subject/object to remain as it is, there is the persistent reminder that the subject/object is not necessarily deserving of it. Tolerance can therefore be withdrawn at any given point and as Hage (1998) suggests, tolerance and its advocacy leaves people 'empowered to be intolerant' should they so wish (page 86). It thus enables those that tolerate to position the other within particular boundaries or constraints, performing a 'symbolic violence in which a mode of domination is presented as a form of egalitarianism' (page 87). Indeed, when utilised within national discourses, Hage goes as far as to suggest that tolerance might be similar to the 'evil' nationalist practices that tolerance apparently opposes for it would appear to claim a dominant form of 'governmental belonging' (ibid ) for those citizens who possess the right or power to tolerate, whilst ensuring that those upon which 'the nation stakes its claim to be tolerant' remain forever outside of the nation (Lewis 2005, page 547).

Hage (1998) is not alone in claiming that tolerance is at best the (conditional) withholding of force by those in power, for Wemyss (2006) has called for tolerance and intolerance to be regarded as two different modalities of racism. In making clear the forms of domination that tolerance might put in place, the necessary project of unpacking the close relationship between tolerance and intolerance becomes more urgent so as to question the promotion of tolerance as a civic and national good and challenge those claims that suggest that the capacity to tolerate is equally distributed. Indeed we might begin, as Hage (1998) suggests, to understand why tolerance and intolerance coexist so readily and why the shift between the two can occur so easily.

The limited and conditioned nature of the so-called generosity that tolerance affords its objects, can be described as being 'tempered' by a concern for maintaining one's own well-being, which would predict the withdrawal of tolerance to be the point at which the benefits of non-intervention for the tolerator are compromised or the tolerator is required to 'adjust

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<sup>8</sup> Derrida (in Borradori 2003, page 127) was discussing the relationship between globalisation and tolerance, its resurgence in politics post 9/11 and its presentation as a necessary step towards 'peaceful cohabitation'.

their ways' (Jenkins 2002; Scanlon 2003). For this reason it would be difficult to examine tolerance as either a static or fixed concept, as its limits are prone to fluctuate according to various factors or perceptions of threat. Tolerance of immigration for example, may be dependent upon job availability, the wealth of the welfare system or the availability of 'societal hope' and one's sense of available possibilities (Hage 2003, page 20)<sup>9</sup>. In Australia, Hage (page 21) has argued that transcendental capitalism, neo-liberal policies and the state retreat from general welfare, has produced 'paranoid nationalists' and 'no-hopers' who have a reduced capacity for generosity and tolerance of others as a result. Tolerance of others is thus not only difficult to maintain, but can never be guaranteed.

To this point, whilst it is clear that tolerance as a positive national practice and value should be subject to scrutiny, I want to be clear that there is an equal need to keep sight of its merits and potential value. It would, for instance, be difficult to overlook the violence that it might prevent in instances where reconciliation or understanding is impossible. At the most rudimentary of levels, if preventing senseless acts of violence, is it not better to have tolerance rather than intolerance if it keeps disagreements in check (Horton 1996)? Further still, as Jenkins (2002) argues, it might be the case that the generosity afforded by tolerance – regardless of its limits – could leave the tolerator open to 'a risky connection' with others, in place of what might otherwise be a 'self-protecting separation' (page 120). Perhaps then, there may be something to be said about the form of social solidarity that it can potentially encourage, and I will return to this later on in the study. For now however, I wish to focus further upon the kind of civil order that tolerance would seem to put in place and further legitimise, to take forward claims that suggest that tolerance operates as a modality of racism or tool for the continued 'fantasy' of the 'white nation' (Hage 2003; 1998; Wemyss 2006). In so doing, I not only consider the extent to which tolerance might function as a form of governmentality, but how it legitimises particular state practices to function as a civilisational discourse that draws upon very specific conceptions of the 'good'.

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<sup>9</sup> Gibson (2007) for example, writes of the British 'gift' of tolerance in relation to asylum seekers as being inseparable from policies of deterrence, noting that tolerance is often diminished at the moment in which it is felt the extension of hospitality is abused or not returned (McGhee 2005).

## Tolerance as governmentality?

As I have thus far argued, the contemporary mobilisation of tolerance should first and foremost be recognised as a particular discourse of power. Whilst tolerance would seem to encourage the incorporation of the other and may even open up a risky connection as Jenkins (2002) suggests, it simultaneously sustains its otherness to ensure the continued dominance of the tolerator. As Brown argues:

‘Tolerance occupies the position of Derridean supplement; that which conceptually undermines the binary of identity/difference or inside/outside yet is crucial to the conceit of the integrity, autarky, self-sufficiency, and continuity of the dominant term’ (2006, page27).

Such ‘conceit’ of the continuity of the dominant term quite clearly undermines and perhaps even contradicts the projects of cohesion and unity amidst difference to which tolerance is so often considered key. Indeed, through the promulgation of tolerance alone, the achievement of equality or mutuality would seem to be an impossible project, for if the idea of mutual tolerance is a necessary falsehood (see also Hage 1998), then tolerance will always create liminal subjects (Jenkins 2002; Lewis 2005). As Brown continues:

‘Designated objects of tolerance are invariably marked as undesirable and marginal, as liminal civil subjects or even liminal humans; and those called upon to exercise tolerance are asked to repress or override their hostility or repugnance in the name of civility, peace or progress. Psychically, the former is the material of abjection and one variety of resentment’ (2006, page 28).

Who these subjects are and how they are created as such through discourses of tolerance is clearly of political importance. If tolerance is about power and is necessarily conditional, who outlines its conditions? Taking into account some of the negative undercurrents of tolerance that I have thus far examined and some of the subjugations that it would seem to promote, I wish to consider the extent to which tolerance might be configured as a form of ‘governmentality’ as Brown would suggest; to both produce and organise its subjects of focus.

To this point, and throughout Chapter 1, it is quite clear that tolerance is largely ‘nonlegal’ (Brown 2006, page 7), deployed across a range of different sites, in a variety of different ways, and it is this ubiquitous and varied promotion by agents other than – and in addition to – the state, that according to Brown, makes it possible for tolerance to function as a mode of governmentality<sup>10</sup>. When considering how tolerance might be governed or taught, clear distinctions have been made between individual tolerance and political tolerance (Jones 2010), although the differences between the two may be less clear than it might appear on the surface. Whilst individual tolerance is considered to be more closely related to virtue (on the assumption that it is less likely to be coerced) and requires the personal negotiation of those things that one finds disagreeable – in whatever form they may be – political tolerance requires a coherent set of reasons for the permissibility or prevention of the focus in question. The political mobilisation of tolerance requires a coherent understanding of what or who should or should not be tolerated. Certainly as Kundnani (2007) argues, any value that is put forward as part of a project of consensus or duty of citizenship, would be somewhat meaningless unless it was appropriately codified by institutions and further disseminated across a range of venues – schools, churches, community centres, gurdwaras, court rooms and so on – to provide ‘formal mechanisms for their elaboration in particular contexts and cases’ (page 137)<sup>11</sup>. Thus, whilst tolerance is not written in law, it functions as a political or social tool or practice which is often pedagogically achieved (Brown 2006, page 183), perhaps through ‘Values Education’ in primary schools or citizenship classes. Tolerance therefore functions through the employment of tactics by a variety of political and formerly non-political institutions and through a variety of knowledges (page 79) and thus would *appear* to operate from, and disseminate through, ever more invisible and non-accountable social powers (ibid). It is this operation that gives rise to Brown’s claim that tolerance might function as a discourse of governmentality. Importantly, whilst it would appear that the responsibility of tolerance and its projects of cohesion and citizenship would seem to have been devolved to the level of the community and the individual, commentators such as Burnett (2004) and Back et. al (2002) have argued that the moral values at the core of such projects are concurrently regulated by the state through the learning of ‘democratic mores’.

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<sup>10</sup> Brown cites Foucault’s account of government as ‘not a matter of imposing laws on men, but rather of disposing things, that is to say, to employ tactics rather than laws, and if need be to use the laws themselves as tactics’ (Foucault in Brown 2006, page 79).

<sup>11</sup> For example, when the Bradford Council of Mosques launched a new citizenship curriculum for Madrassahs and schools, the value of tolerance was prioritised within the educational material (Kelly and Byrne 2007)

Indeed, Brown (2006) suggests that whilst the Foucauldian notion of governmentality is valuable in apprehending the circulation of tolerance as a discourse of power, it fails to account for the ways in which tolerance not only organises subjects but further legitimates state practices at the same time. Whilst varied teaching might provide sufficient method through which the meaning of moral codes might be negotiated and learnt, without written law, such policies and calls for tolerance are often notably insufficient or narrow in their conceptions and working definitions of what tolerance is or should be, which is evident in its inconsistent dissemination and the variety of ways in which it is used (Chapter 1). Indeed, as McClure (1990) suggests, its political use in most instances relies upon an assumed taken-for-granted theoretical value of equality and 'cultural valence' and is further 'presumed to be sufficiently secure so as to provide the moral equivalent of a stable starting point for political reflection' (page 362). It is this taken-for-granted value of equality that has not only enabled the easy and ubiquitous uptake of tolerance across a spectrum of political projects and civic institutions but has further concealed some of its negative undercurrents and political agendas to which I will return in the next section. For now however, I want to examine an empirical example taken from Brown's (2006) thesis as a means to attend more fully to some of the regulative tendencies of contemporary projects of tolerance.

### **3. Learning to be tolerant**

Brown's (2006) account of the 'Simon Wiesenthal Centre Museum of Tolerance (MOT) in Los Angeles, is exemplary of the kind of desired pedagogical achievement that I have thus far outlined. It acts as a useful narrative board for working through some of the primary critiques of the contemporary discourses of tolerance and highlighting the multiple ways in which it works. Built in 1993 and positioned as a 'training site' for tolerance, it was named after the Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal, with the aim of confronting prejudice and furthering understanding of the Holocaust through the specific promotion of tolerance (page 116). Like other similar projects, there is no indication of the negative conditions upon which tolerance is necessarily based but instead it is promoted as an unquestionable good. The museum claims to encourage 'acceptance' of different practices and beliefs (page 116), yet these are presented against a backdrop of connected contemporary instances of sexism, racism and homophobia, which as Brown (2006) points out, has the effect of reducing every instance of social inquiry or inequality to be a problem of cultural difference (page 116). Such conflation of

identities and the reification of historically produced (and essentialised) antagonisms, purposefully positions particular groups to be the enemies of tolerance whilst positioning other groups to be forever victimised by *intolerance*. There are two key questions that I wish to pursue here, firstly how is such positioning and line drawing achieved, and secondly what divisions are made and why?

The clear paradox here is that whilst the responsibility of fighting 'intolerances' is placed firmly with the individual museum-goer, a common sense understanding of what characteristics should be monitored – what and indeed, whom should be tolerated and who should not – is carefully outlined by a series of 'simple, take-home messages' (page 120). It is a space that, in Brown's words, is 'wholly organised and controlled by others' (page 115), where guidance is orchestrated by installations, staged events and the presentation of strong moral-political positions that fail to embody 'respect for moral and deliberative autonomy' (page 119). It mimics deliberation and agency through its encouragement of participation and discussion, but such participation is only gestural and works to mask one-sided and 'pre-masticated' political messages (page 127). In this respect, Brown's example, illustrates the regulative tendencies that I have outlined in other projects of tolerance and returns to the problem of how 'political' tolerance might be taught or learnt without establishing a consensus or unified meaning and reason for its mobilisation. How can tolerance retain a commitment to fostering the diversity that it is apparently employed to promote?

Of course, realistically, teaching tolerance in such an environment can only ever be achieved when taught alongside or through a particular political narrative (see for example Jones 2010; Kundnani 2007) and it is this necessary narrative that forms the basis of contemporary critiques (although little has been done to assess the extent to which such narratives are effectuated in everyday life). Tolerance is not only promoted as a means of achieving harmony amidst difference, but it is driven by certain political agendas, which when concealed and presented as a common good are less likely to be held to account (Brown 2006). Brown accuses the MOT for example, of analytically disappearing the complex and political dimensions of conflicts and inequality, of presenting a one-sided perspective of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and positioning conflicts such as those in Northern Ireland as problems of extreme intolerance or terrorism rather than problems of dynamic complexity, historical processes, ideologies and politics. Such a removal of political context enables the easy demarcation of subjects, groups and identities as either good or bad – tolerable or intolerable,

tolerant or intolerant. Indeed, some of Brown's exegeses share Chantal Mouffe's (2005, page 75) concerns with the 'moralisation' of politics. Her account illuminates a political vocabulary that is constructive of a 'we/they' opposition according to moral categories of 'good' versus 'evil', 'tolerant' versus 'intolerant'. As Mouffe, suggests, whilst such a 'moralisation' of politics, does not necessarily mean the replacement of politics by morality as such, it has considerable consequences for the antagonistic potential of society, for 'when opponents are defined not in political but in moral terms, they cannot be envisaged as an 'adversary' but only as an 'enemy'' (ibid). This has important ramifications for projects of diversity.

Parallels can be drawn here with the British presentation of tolerance as being the value that is deficient in some 'young Muslims' (DCLG 2007), or as the value that was absent during the disturbances in northern mill towns in 2001. In positioning tolerance as the answer to prejudice and the tool that was needed to enable communities to live together despite their differences, the civil unrest and segregations were framed as matters of individual or group prejudice, which downplayed the social contexts of the tensions (Burnett 2004). Such a deployment of tolerance in these instances marks a 'de-emphasis of material deprivation and socio-economic marginalisation [...] in favour of concentrating on inter-community relationships' (McGhee 2003, page 376). In failing to acknowledge marginalisation and group differentiation more specifically it further overlooks uneven distributions of power (Olszen 2004) and the histories of struggle that are bound up with them.

Whilst moral codes are to some extent codified and learnt through democratic mores, such a framing of conflict, marks the devolution of *responsibility* to communities and the individual rather than the government in such a way as to quieten the demand – and possibility – for political solutions (Brubaker 2003; Mitchell 2004; Olszen 2004). As Burnett (2004) contends, 'rather than the state having an obligation to cater for all its citizens, that obligation is now contingent upon the reworking and realignment of individual identities and value systems' (page 15). Thus, the promotion of tolerance in these instances, whether it be by the MOT or by the British government, works as a discourse of depoliticisation, reducing political action to 'no more than sensitivity training' (Brown 2006, page 16). Ironically, the uptake of tolerance in (political) projects would seem to actually block projects that are more widely concerned with justice and equality whilst claiming to function as a central part of them, as I suggested earlier.

Yet there are wider implications, for whilst political projects of tolerance might regulate subjects, they would seem to further legitimise particular state practices and political agendas. For example, to return to the MOT, at one point, visitors are presented with a display on recent acts of terror committed by Islamic extremists before being asked whether the issue of racial profiling should once again be brought to the fore (Brown 2006, page 124) – a question that encourages, or rather necessitates, the easy conflation of religion and race. Not only does Brown's example of the 'casual racialisation' of Muslims (ibid), begin to open up thinking around how *bodies* might do tolerance, but more specifically, it invites questions as to how tolerance might be produced through *phenotypically* differentiated bodies (Amin 2010a), a question which is notably absent from current critiques or theoretical discussions of tolerance. What this illuminates is a common sense understanding of what is considered to be threatening and a process of judgement that has been normalised to further produce and position difference as Otherness – or produce the figure of the 'stranger' as Ahmed (2000) suggests (see also Diken 1998). The figure of the stranger is thus already identified in the very process of naming them other and is not simply a body that we fail to recognise. Instead it is constructed through mobilised political antagonisms that develop an *ontology* of strangers, to produce the figure of the Islamic terrorist (Rai 2004), the asylum seeker (Darling 2009) or the immigrant woman (Lewis 2005) to various political ends. Through programmes of citizenship and processes of welcome or expulsion, some individuals are already recognised as subjects for tolerance and are positioned as such, prior to any encounter with them. Such projects, rather than promoting connections across difference, appear instead to divide the public arena; to intensify differences and mark them as variously threatening (Thomas 2010).

#### **4. Tolerance, identity and social order**

The concern with the slippage between different categories of identification and their entanglement with contemporary discourses of tolerance, demands that we question whether discourses of tolerance have brought a new politics of difference or practice of judgement to the fore. Whilst tolerance is nearly always about difference (Jones 2010), in the aftermath of 9/11 and in the face of 'global terror' and rising nationalisms, it has been suggested that racial phenotypes in particular have become the new markers of difference (Rai 2004; see also Jamal and Naber 2008). Questions on the relationship between tolerance and race are certainly of import to this particular study – given its focus upon the city of Birmingham – and as such



provide the basis for much of its discussion (see Chapter 6). The small example from the MOT would seem to attest to the emergence of *cultural*, rather than biological arguments for racial and ethnic separations (Amin 2010; Hage 2003); an emergence which is manifest in accounts of signifiers that are attached to particular bodies as abject texts (Banerjea 2002, Wells and Watson 2005). Accounts of the 'Asian gang' take in stereotypes based upon skin colour, loud music, masculinities, chauvinism and fast cars (Alexander 2000; 2002) or they illuminate the pre-determinations of being Muslim that have too easily conflated race and religion with further judgements that encompass the wearing of veils, Urdu and prayer habits (Khan 2002; Swanton 2010a), or make distinctions between 'good' and 'bad' Muslims (Mamdani 2004; Thomas 2010). Such discourses not only fail to consider the politics of difference within such groups and categories of identity (Thomas 2010; Khan 2002), but they also contribute to a significant shift in postcolonial articulations of whiteness (Gunew 2007), which as Thobani (2007) notes, has been notably recast as vulnerable as a result of the 'War on Terror'<sup>12</sup>.

That tolerance is increasingly attached to matters of identity – broadly defined – strengthens the need to consider the relationship between tolerance and new forms of governance. Of particular note is the increased focus on identities that are apparently 'rooted in ideologically naturalised differences' (Brown 2006, page 78), such as ethnicity, race or sexuality (Puar 2006). A key concern is the way in which the circulation of contemporary liberal tolerance regulates and forms subjects in such a way as to trace behaviours and beliefs to an inner truth of being – to blood or phenotype (Brown 2006). The justifications for racial profiling for example, positions race as an 'index for radical Islamic nationalism or for terrorism' (Brown 2006, page 124) without the need for explanation (see also Mamdani 2004). In the aftermath of 9/11 Rai (2004) for instance, has focused upon conceptions of the civilised psyche that, when mobilised within political discourses, have grounded figures such as the Islamic terrorist in 'an older colonial discourse of the despotic and licentious Oriental male' (Rai 2004, page 538). In tracing genealogies of monstrosity, Rai suggests that this most recent 'monster' amounts to a series of signs that incorporate pre-constituted signals that tie 'cultural, religious and moral otherness to sexual deviancy' (page 538):

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<sup>12</sup> Thobani (2007) notes how, following the 9/11 attacks and the subsequent claims that 'Western societies' were 'gravely threatened' (page 169), whiteness has been positioned as 'the subject of the irrational hatred of the fanatic non-Western Other' (page 170) and thus vulnerable, neutral and innocent.

Today, the monster has re-emerged at the centre of an 'axis of evil', as a masculine-effeminate 'subject' that embodies Western civilisation's ultimate enemy: the Islamic terrorist. The figure produced through these practices- as both instrument and target of a diffuse power- has been taken as the ontological ground stabilising the borders of nations, races, sexes, genders, classes and humanity (page 539).

Such a 'matrix of subjectivity and culture' (page 540) extends Foucault's arguments concerning the production of subjects within 'societies of control', in which 'diffuse relations of power are rendered ever more immanent to the social field, distributed through the brains and bodies of citizens' through the regulation of life (Hardt and Negri 2001, cited in Rai 2004, page 541). The promotion of particular subject formations and the 'regulative individuation of the deviant, the abject, the other' implicates 'the normalising work of contemporary tolerance discourse' (Brown 2006, page 44). Those that are tolerated therefore appear as deviant from the norm and moreover, are further articulated as such through the very practice of tolerance. In these accounts, what emerges is a disciplinary practice that constructs a particular social order, which enables the designation of deviance and marks certain practices or beliefs as different enough to provoke hostility or even rejection through ever more directed and delimited lines of thought and sight (see for example Amoore 2009 on modes of visualisation in contemporary border security practices).

In thinking through the ways in which tolerance might be bound up with, and further productive of particular social orders, the regulation of hostility or even hate, Povinelli's (1998) provocative description of the limits of national tolerance through an account of the practice of clitoridectomy serves as a good case in point. She argues that anxieties about cultural diversity within Western Europe and North America have increasingly been expressed at the 'tip of the clitoris' to mark the 'clipped bundle of nerves' to be symbolic of a limit (page 575-576). Significantly, such construction of national limits has not been achieved by acknowledging the universal principles that the practice is thought to violate, but has instead been established through the evocation of supposedly more affective relations of aversion. These relations are cohered through repeated accounts of the practice as being one of 'savagery and barbarism, of ignorance and superstition' (page 577), whilst emphasising the national shame that would amount if such a practice were to be allowed to take place within the nation's border. The evocation of such aversion, rather than the acknowledgement of

violated principles, is perhaps testimony to the ‘difficulty of discursively grounding [such] moral claim within a multicultural discourse’ (page 578) and it is this difficulty that I want to take forward into the next section to ask what this might say about the legitimacy of the moral claims upon which such contemporary discourses are based.

In this section, I have suggested that the ubiquitous call for tolerance by the state, has endeavoured – and largely succeeded – to both produce and organise subjects through various points of operation, ‘from individuals to mass population, from particular parts of the body and psyche to appetites and ethics, work and citizenship practices’ (Brown 2006, page 81), but less has been said about what account of justice or morality such operations draw upon. In the next section, I consider the extent to which contemporary discourses of tolerance not only function as forms of governmentality, but further work to legitimise specific state practices whilst masquerading as equality. In so doing, we might better illuminate its uneasy relationship with liberal values and Christianity in particular, to address why, as Povinelli (1998) has suggested, the limits of tolerance are often difficult to ground discursively in multicultural discourses. This is an important question, for tolerance is, if nothing else, about accommodating and managing difference. If as I have implied, a political discourse of tolerance necessitates a coherent narrative and degree of codification, how can it *preserve* difference?

### **5. Tolerance and liberalism: a civilisational discourse?**

‘Liberal democratic societies are now haunted by the spectre of mistaken intolerance. They now know that in time their deepest moral impulses may be exposed to be historically contingent, mere prejudices masquerading as universal principles... [They] stumble, lose their breath, panic, even if ever so slightly, when asked to say why, on what grounds, according to whom, a practice is a moral, national limit of tolerance’ (Povinelli 1998, page 578).

Brown’s (2006) thesis has been crucial to advancing an account that more fully accounts for the political discourse of tolerance and its position as a tool of governmentality more specifically, which works to shape citizens in particular ways. I have outlined the numerous ways in which its mobilisation has ordered subjects and further justified practices of exclusion, so why it has emerged alongside discourses of justice and equality and why it is promoted as

both a civic and national good are key questions. The historical contingency and moral impulses that Povinelli (1998) alludes to, and upon which so much of contemporary discourses of tolerance are based, are thus crucial lines of enquiry for such questions.

I suggested earlier that tolerance – if it is to function as a political discourse and duty of citizenship – requires a degree of regulation if there is to be a unified conception of its practice and cultural value; a process of learning that might be likened to a process of ‘civilising’ (Brown 2006; Lewis 2005; Povinelli 1998). The liminal subjects that Brown (2006) and Povinelli (1998) describe are the product of a manufactured binary that associates tolerance and its practice with a particular idea of the ‘civilised’, which is specifically linked to the West, secularism and individualisation and which has as its opposite, barbarism, fundamentalism and group identity. Tolerance is thus not simply ‘asymmetrical across lines of power’ (Brown 2006, page 178), but rather works to mobilise particular accounts of what and whom is deemed to be civilised, carrying with it a certain degree of ‘cultural chauvinism’ (ibid) that further strengthens the superiority of the West. The processes that I have addressed are thus weighed down by a particular conception of the good – drawing upon specific values of human rationality, autonomy, self-reliance and self development (Galeotti 2002). Difference is therefore constructed in a way that not only positions it as alterity but recalls a specifically *liberal tradition* and conception of the good that is seldom explicitly disclosed or interrogated by policies or political projects.

Again, this still raises the question as to how tolerance has emerged at the centre of a civilisational discourse and yet still retained its outward appearance as a close associate of personal freedom. Perhaps one of the most urgent tasks lies in acknowledging the unprecedented transformation that the landscape of tolerance has undergone and how it has taken up a central position within liberal thought (Galeotti 2002). Whilst its association with matters of identity, broadly conceived, is ubiquitous and often largely unquestioned, it marks a pointed shift from its original conditions and concern with matters of faith, religion and belief. And while there has been a notable ‘return of the religious’ (Derrida in Boradori 2003, page 124), it is necessary to consider the suitability of its application and the new vocabulary within which it finds itself. In this last section I wish to consider the implications of such transformation before moving on to examine a number of contemporary examples through which these might be examined.

Whilst the landscape and objects of tolerance have clearly undergone considerable transformation, an examination of its historical roots is vital to account for why contemporary tolerance is often uncritically linked to concerns of equality and freedom of worship (Brown 2006; Weissberg 1998), despite the subjugations and exclusions that, in some instances, it quite clearly encourages. This goes some way to examine why it has been so readily taken up, and crucially, why in many cases it has had the effect of paradoxically creating antagonisms rather than reducing them (Brown 2006). The character of contemporary tolerance discourse can be traced back to the religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, when tolerance emerged as the appropriate antidote to religious conflict. This emergent character stems from the Lockean tradition of religious toleration and its concern with matters of belief and the founding logic that religious imposition was an impossible task that would require the inward persuasion of the mind (Locke 1963; Weissberg 1998). The advocacy of tolerance thus chiefly recognised that uncovering the fact of one true single religion was by all degree entirely impossible and therefore abolished any justification for conformity or attempted coercion<sup>13</sup>.

Theoretically then, tolerance minimised state duress to mark the liberty of individuals in matters of belief, values and ways of life, provided that they were compatible with the liberty of others (Galeotti 2002). It is perhaps this lingering assumption that makes the task of uncovering some of the coercive workings of tolerance so urgent. It also made an important demarcation between political order, public affairs and their regulated domain on the one hand, and those matters that were unrelated (and so protected) and defined as the private realm on the other (*ibid* page 25). Competing truth claims were thus positioned as ‘politically indifferent matters of private belief’ (McClure 1990, page 366) and it was this ‘protected area, where political interference was to be suspended [that] constituted the proper object-domain of toleration’ (Galeotti 2002, page 25), thus making it fundamental to the historical development of liberal politics. These roots or framings have clearly had, and will continue to have, significant ramifications for its contemporary use.

Tolerance is largely regarded to be one of the few commonalities that run through the multiple theories of contemporary liberal thinkers (Johnson 2007), the work of John Rawls being

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<sup>13</sup> It should be noted however, that Locke’s toleration of different religions was only on the condition that the religion in question did not subvert ‘civil society’. The lawful civil society as it was defined was thus given priority and should civil law be challenged, the government was permitted the power to suppress the religion. Thus for example, Locke’s toleration fell short of Atheists and other sects that failed to acknowledge the existence of God, for as Locke pointed out – how is an oath made on the Bible by an Atheist to hold any value? (Weissburg 1998, page 81).

perhaps the most common referent. Stemming from a concern with ‘reasonable pluralism’ – or the reality of ‘a plurality of reasonable yet incompatible doctrines’ – tolerance is offered as the only means through which a plural society, characterised as such, could be sustained (Rawls cited in Johnson page 41). Indeed it appears as one of the ‘settled convictions’ that underlines the liberal notion of ‘justice as fairness’ (McClure 1990, page 361). However, it is the conception of ‘reasonable’ that presents a problem, for it relies upon the transformation of comprehensive doctrines into forms more compatible with liberalism, and so begs the question as to what extent ‘reasonable pluralism’ might accommodate *actually existing* pluralism in contemporary societies (Galeotti 2002). It is upon this basis that the contemporary call for tolerance and its entanglement with liberal discourse has been accused of amounting to a civilisational project – accusing liberal societies of wrongly assuming themselves unique in their capacity to tolerate and yet remain culturally neutral at the same time. As Brown argues:

‘It reminds us that tolerance in its liberal mode is more than a means of achieving civil peace or freedom: it is an exercise of hegemony that requires extensive political transformations of the cultures and subjects it would govern’ (2006, page 202)

It is understandable then, that difficulties might be encountered when trying to discursively ground moral claims within a plural society – as they were in the graduate classroom at the beginning of this study – and I turn now to some cases through which such ‘extensive’ transformations might be observed, to question the extent to which tolerance as an indispensable value to the management of difference, adequately addresses the breadth of difference within contemporary societies. Rather than making judgements upon the limits and boundaries of tolerance as it is variously understood, my intention here is to illuminate some of the implications for its contemporary and practical use in multicultural societies such as the UK. In examining the liberal ideals that are commonly bound up with the idea of tolerance, I suggest that there are significant challenges to its universal, political application and everyday practice.

## Tolerance and Religion

Some of the implications might, for example, be examined by drawing comparisons between Christian and Hindu conceptions of tolerance, which begin to highlight some of the difficulties that may be faced by those societies where multiple religions are practiced<sup>14</sup>. In tracing the liberal lineage of tolerance and revealing its uneasy relationship with Christianity, Spinner-Halev (2005) argues that tolerance as it is currently mobilised is problematically based upon Protestantism that takes individual faith and conscience to be the centre of religion and consequently marks faith to be voluntary; 'there is a creed, a belief in God, and an organised church within which collective worship *can* take place, should an individual *wish* to take part' (page 32). The contention however, is the difficulty to which this particular conception of practice as *voluntary* can be readily applied to other religions. Some, if not most of these aspects are absent, for example, from Eastern religions such as Buddhism, Taoism and Shantoism, and all of them are missing from Hinduism (ibid). If contemporary discourses of tolerance are based upon Protestantism and its notions of autonomy, this has implications for its universal application and those societies in which a plurality of religions are practiced. Yet despite such tensions there would seem to be little room in current accounts to incorporate these different, sometimes conflicting conceptions of tolerance.

To make this point more clear, what Spinner-Halev depicts in this example is a distinction between two forms of tolerance; internal tolerance and external tolerance. Protestantism, she argues, marks an internal toleration, or a willingness to tolerate a religion as long as it is conceptualised in a similar way to itself; the key logic being that 'religion need not have a public space' (page 32). This is problematic for Hinduism that relies on conformity to social practice (though not relying on uniformity of belief), which is celebrated and displayed in public. Religions such as Hinduism would thus seem to mark less internal tolerance – as its central practices are difficult to exit – whilst demonstrating considerably more external tolerance<sup>15</sup>. In taking this one example, it can be seen why problems arise when orthodox

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<sup>14</sup> For example, in Birmingham, according to the 2001 census data, nearly 60% of residents identified as Christian, 14% as Muslim, 3% Sikh and 2% Hindu (BCC 2010).

<sup>15</sup> Zaid (2004), for example, has also noted that Islam, like Hinduism, would seem to encourage a greater degree of external tolerance than Protestantism, despite continuous arguments that place Islam in tension with other religions. To take just one example, Zaid notes how non-Muslims are granted more freedom within Islamic countries than Muslims, allowing them to have their own courts and permitting non-Muslims to drink alcohol, whilst strictly forbidding such practice from Muslims. Not only does this note variations between external and internal tolerance, but it is based upon the same conviction that formed the central logic of Locke's toleration, that 'compulsion is incompatible with religion'. In a similar

religions require conformity to social practice and why this meets a limited amount of tolerance within public places such as common schools<sup>16</sup>. Of course this has fuelled extensive debates around the 'boundaries of justifiable tolerance' (Harel 1996) and how these might be negotiated according to liberal perspectives. For example, conformity to practice has sparked growing concerns from liberals who question the freedom of choice that various religions grant their adherents. Orthodox Judaism for example has been subjected to scrutiny for its apparently 'antifeminist position' further raising questions as to whether practices that are so central to a distinctive way of life should be interfered with and if so at what point? Under what conditions Williams (1999) asks, might tolerance of subjugation be acceptable?

This invites room for discussing the understood virtue of tolerance, which to some extent has been lost within some of the more dominant critiques of tolerance as a working political practice (Brown 2006; Hage 2003; Jenkins 2002). This conceptual issue, like many other questions relating to the individual ethic and practice of tolerance provokes considerable contention. If for example, tolerance is required to prevent an individual from acting upon something that he deems *morally* disagreeable, then one might ask whether tolerance is appropriate in the first instance. Perhaps then, not every act of toleration should therefore be considered a virtue and if that is the case, one might ask what difference that would make to its promotion and practice. There is a marked need to consider whether the initial objection to a subject or object is acceptable in the first place. It has been argued for example, that if an individual refrains from carrying out an act of homophobic violence in the name of tolerance, the exercised restraint, whilst of course preferable to violence, should be stripped of any virtuous character (Horton 1996) for the subject should not be objected to in the first instance (although this is contested by various religious beliefs). This of course, is largely down to individual opinion and becomes particularly problematic when, as we have seen, tolerance becomes attached to a much wider array of objects and identities such that it conflates conflicts and characteristics of identity. Horton (1996), for example, briefly considers those

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vein, Fletcher (1996) suggests that the dominant circulation of tolerance is particularly problematic for Jews: 'the problem of tolerance is particularly acute, for the religion holds that all Jews are responsible for each other and that the Messiah will come ... only when all Jews observe all the mitzvoth, or commandments. When an observant Jew encounters one who refuses to perform the commandments, he or she can feel only pain and the yearning to find a way to induce a fellow Jew to comply with what he or she takes to be God's law.' (page 160). Tolerance is specifically conditioned. Here the Lockean conception of non-intervention does not work and so tolerance does not provide an adequate solution for the divergence in practiced faith.

<sup>16</sup> In 2008 for example, a British Sikh teenager was excluded from her school for wearing a kara – a bangle central to her faith – despite the school's 'no jewellery' policy. The matter was later concluded to be a case of unlawful discrimination by a high court judge (Lipsett 2008).



accounts that suggest that there might be a distinction to be made between weak tolerance and strong tolerance dependent upon the intensity of the felt dislike or moral objection, yet there could be no clear distinction or consensus as to where such a line might be drawn and it somewhat neglects the question of morality to which tolerance is attached.

In drawing upon these examples and the questions they raise, it is not my intention to examine the possible answers to such conflictual accounts or prioritise one particular conception. Rather, these examples emphasise the need for a much greater recognition of the multiple readings and applications of tolerance that exist across different religions, individuals, groups and nations. They illuminate the concepts heterogeneity and key points of contention, and challenge its ready presentation as a 'universal' principle. Whilst Islamic concepts of tolerance, have been contrasted with British concepts for example<sup>17</sup>, Asad (2003) notes that even within secular societies tolerance is differently inflected. There are different notions of access for minority communities; France would appear to foster a lesser degree of tolerance towards religious expression than nations such as Britain, passing a law in 2004 to ban the wearing of veils, kippahs, and crosses by school children (see Bowen 2007 for a discussion), whilst the national assembly recently passed a ban on the wearing of Islamic face coverings in public. This has led to what Lindekilde et al. (2009) have described as a European crisis of liberal values, highlighting the different understandings of tolerance that exist across the countries of the European Union alone. And finally, as Nussbaum's (2008) study of the clash within India demonstrates, a secular society does not necessarily guarantee tolerance as is commonly assumed, but can put into play different structures that mediate a publicly recognisable personality, which immediately places minorities within a defensive position of subjugation.

The heterogeneous nature of the concept clearly has significant consequences for contemporary societies. When attending to the multiple ways in which tolerance has been contextualised across different faiths, I return to the question of just how tolerance might be

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<sup>17</sup> In some cases Islamic concepts of tolerance have been contrasted with British debates where it has been suggested that 'the question of tolerance has been contextualised differently' (Modood and Ahmad 2007, page 198), with the British concept described as being fickle in its understanding, or rather, lack of understanding of difference. Asani (2003) argues that despite misuses of the Quran, it teaches pluralism and the principle of co-existence among human societies marks more tolerance than the history of many other religions. Indeed despite claims that tensions between liberal toleration and traditional Islam arise because Islamic community practices undermine autonomy and equality – which are regularly reduced to claims of abrasion between modern secular societies and their 'anti-modern conceptualisations of society and gender roles' (Salih 2004, page 998), a closer engagement with Islamic perspectives indicate an active nurturing of pluralism that not only tolerates difference, but further acknowledges its centrality for a strong democracy (Anwar 1996).

distributed and put into practice within a multicultural society such as Birmingham - how are competing moralities played out and accommodated (Fisher 2007)?<sup>18</sup> Whilst tolerance is apparently promoted as a transcultural principle or a minimal universal morality – there are clear tensions between its different understandings, the plural moralities that modern culture fosters, and the concurrent national demands of loyalty, which require, as this chapter suggests, a much more *cohesive* morality (ibid). The implications for this are made manifest when competing conceptions come to a head – events that ignite both debate and confrontation and variously call accounts of tolerance into question; the slaughter of Shambo – the Hindu Bull (Topping 2007); the Behtzi affair as outlined in Chapter 1 (Grillo 2007a); or the publication of the Danish cartoons that depicted the prophet Muhammad (Lægaard 2009; Lindekilde et. al 2009; Zizek 2008), are all examples of such events. The latter example in particular, confronts us with what Zizek (ibid) has described as ‘the antimony of tolerant reason’ (page 89), for whilst the violent response from Muslim protestors marked a considerable lack of understanding for western principles of press freedom, the publication of the cartoons similarly showed a lack of understanding of Islam<sup>19</sup>. Again, this says much about the limits of tolerance and the difficulty to which a universal account of its regulation can be narrated.

In this last section I have begun to highlight some of the potential problems of tolerance and the limitations of its universal application and discourse. A series of high-profile examples hint at some of the ways in which the limits of tolerance are challenged in everyday life – whether they manifest themselves as struggles in the school playground, demonstrations outside a theatre or campaigns in the media. Yet whilst they reveal the different conditions of tolerance, the accounts explored here are perhaps more spectacular encounters with difference, resulting in court cases, campaigns, human rights appeals and so on. But how are these negotiated on a more prosaic, everyday basis? In the concluding section of this chapter I want to move the current discussions of contemporary tolerance forward, to ask how the accounts outlined here inflect the taking place of tolerance as a response to difference in everyday life.

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<sup>18</sup> In 1996, Parekh for example argued that ‘the wider society cannot be expected indiscriminately to tolerate all kinds of minority practices, nor can it justifiably ban all practices that diverge from its own’. What was needed he claimed, was an evolved ‘reasonable consensus’ through intercommunal dialogue (page 251). However, what was regarded to be ‘reasonable’ was less readily defined.

<sup>19</sup> It is also worth noting the restrictions that were placed upon writing with regards to the Holocaust, to note the lack of continuity in the kinds of tolerance outlined in relation to these two examples (Zizek 2008).

## 6. Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the many ways in which tolerance has been theorised in relation to difference in Western societies. Whilst current debates are clearly driven by a focus upon its contemporary politics and its mobilisation within projects of citizenship and belonging, I have incorporated those accounts which have until recently, remained largely within philosophical debates. Thus, within this chapter it is possible to locate two key ways of thinking about tolerance as a response to difference; as a personal virtue and ethic and as a political tool of governance. Quite clearly the two cannot be considered in isolation. As I have argued, its genealogy as a specific form of virtue has had considerable impact upon its mobilisation as an assumed common good, often working to conceal some of its negative undercurrents and political agendas – its exclusions, negative principles and its uneasy relationship with Christianity – which, as I have suggested have considerable implications for contemporary plural societies.

At various points, I have suggested that it is impossible to have one singular account of tolerance, despite continuous efforts to enforce its practice, prescribe its value or teach its meaning. The power to tolerate is differently inflected and it is attached to numerous bodies, practices, objects and subjects and operates as many different things simultaneously. It is understood differently across a variety of nations, cultures, religions, groups and individuals and fluctuates as perceptions of fear or threat grow and shrink. It is variously placed upon a scale that likens it to anything from indifference through to acceptance and whilst it is commonly promoted as a civic good and a positive response to difference it undoubtedly carries negative attachments and principles. These principles would appear to assume a certain antagonism towards difference, which works to further regulate aversions. It is thus considered to be a ‘suspended condemnation’ (Jenkins 2002) or a ‘condescending concession’ (Derrida in Borradori 2003) and as such is considered to be an unstable relation upon which to build cohesive societies.

Whilst it would appear that tolerance is increasingly deployed across a variety of sites by a variety of different agents and institutions to provide ‘formal mechanisms for [its] elaboration in particular contexts’ (Kundnani 2007, page 137), calls for tolerance are notably insufficient in their conceptions and working definitions of it. What is clear however is that tolerance produces and positions the different; mobilising political antagonisms that variously mark out

some bodies as more or less tolerable than others. I therefore take forward the question as to whether a new politics of difference and social order has come to the fore and this will be a question that remains throughout the study.

Quite clearly, this chapter has illuminated the many different ways in which tolerance works as a politics and state practice, how it is discursively formed and variously framed in policy statements. Yet these accounts can only tell us so much about the ways in which tolerance actually *takes place*. Current debates detail how tolerance is understood in relation to specific events (Derrida in Borradori 2003), how it is mobilised to achieve particular outcomes in various contexts, places and spaces (Brown 2006) and how it is taken up to tackle and further manage very specific problems (e.g. Altman 2006). Yet these are neglectful of its prosaic practice as a response to difference.

Hage (1998, page 85) has suggested that we might move away from an examination of tolerance as a principle, to 'examine its sociological dimensions from the perspective of those who practice it'. I take this particular call forward, for whilst the work covered in this chapter marks a timely and careful critique of political tolerance, it falls short of examining how tolerance occurs and takes shape on an everyday basis. If tolerance is implicated within new processes of bodily judgement, what occurs when the differentiated bodies described by these accounts encounter one another – in the street, in the workplace or on the bus? How does tolerance emerge and further shape these interactions and is there anything else at work? Whilst Brown (2006) in particular has suggested that there may be something important to say about the relationship between political accounts of tolerance and everyday life, the relationship is somewhat lost within the accounts that I have explored thus far and yet, if the take-up of tolerance is crucial to such policies as community cohesion, then how it is practised on a day-to-day basis is crucial.

Of course, there have been other calls to consider how state practices – such as the promulgation of core values – might be effectuated in everyday life. Painter (2006) for instance, has turned his attention to the 'prosaic' geographies of the state, to consider those constituents of action that make practices plural, porous, unpredictable and ever-changing. We might think for example of the many ways in which tolerance might be differently effectuated by different institutions. Whilst schools are crucial sites for the promulgation of values, where standards and curricula are closely monitored and regulated, the capabilities of

schools vary significantly for a whole manner of reasons (ibid). One only needs to address the plethora of cases that outline the differing approaches to the public expression of religion within the classroom to realise that guidelines are differently interpreted and involve not only guidelines outlined by the government, but decisions by teachers, parents associations, governors and so on. Such variations in the effectuation of core values are of course significant and will become more apparent as the thesis develops.

In Chapter 1, I detailed the current proliferation of tolerance as a core value within the policy landscape and its central position within British accounts of nationhood and citizenship. Throughout this chapter, I have explored the rise of tolerance as a political discourse more widely and the key criticisms that have emerged as a direct result, to challenge its central and unquestioned position. I have attempted to open up a dialogue between work concerned with the current political – specifically liberal – discourse of tolerance and those discussions that are more fully positioned within philosophical debates, concerned with its practice as a personal virtue or ethic. In moving between the two, I have suggested that the two strands are entangled with each other, and should not be considered separate. Whilst the works in this chapter help to unpack some of the implications of the uptake of tolerance, as Amin (2002, page 959) suggests, the ‘blanket policy prescriptions’ developed are regularly undermined by the ‘anthropology of everyday interaction’. Indeed, in the everyday realm, meetings and encounters, direct and intermediate can produce ‘non-interpretational physiognomic or gestural forms of understanding’ (Shotter 2004, page 443) that can make universal ideas and conceptualisations of tolerance uncertain and confused. Furthermore, I suggest that the account of public space that has been outlined by Brown (2006) looks very different on the ground. Whilst it is important to recognise that tolerance as it is politically mobilised would seem to regulate difference in specific ways – carrying broader traces of power and antagonisms that seem to diminish heterogeneity or reduce it to the private realm – such a reading offers little account of the heterogeneity and challenges of ‘throwntogetherness’ that continue to characterise urban multicultural and everyday sites of encounter (see for example Swanton 2007) where the question of how best to live with difference is more immediately felt.

Much of our academic talk about tolerance sees it sculpted by calculative reason or a deliberative democracy; constrained by discursive formations and normative conceptions of virtue and civility, which as I have suggested can only provide us with a partial account of its

taking place. There is a tendency within these debates to equate political agency with human agency, which disregards all those other constituents – the affects, materialities, habits, memories and so on that are so central to its social practice. Of course, across these accounts we have begun to see the emergence of an affective economy; how tolerance operates *through* bodies and vanquishes the powers that organises and further marks them as different – as deviant, marginal or intolerable. Such accounts of the minute manipulation of behaviour and the regulation of aversions locate what Fortier (2010, page 17, my emphasis) describes as a form of ‘*governing through affect*’ or the management of unease. Yet as Mussumi (in Zournazi 2003, page 19) argues even ‘the strictest of constraints’ can have the potential for something other to emerge in the event of a relation.

In the next chapter, I take these debates forward to focus upon the minutiae of everyday *encounters* and all those things that vie for our attention on a day-to-day basis. I therefore move to consider the relationship between tolerance and encounter, to consider how tolerance takes place and is emergent from the coming together of a myriad different things, thoughts and spatialities. In this account, tolerance and its limits are not pre-determined deliberately, but are rather *emergent*, embodied and felt. I therefore aim to develop a more open-ended account of tolerance, one that is less prescriptive than the accounts in this chapter would suggest but one that keeps hold of the regulatory practices that inflect it. In so doing, I am not suggesting that we might strip tolerance of its negative principles or civilising tendencies but rather that we consider how these push into the everyday. As Berlant asks, how do the formative encounters between ‘domestic intimacy, state policy, and mass mediated experiences’ affect and further relate to other ‘less institutionalised events, which might take place on the street, on the phone, in fantasy, at work, but rarely register as anything but residue?’ (1998, page 283). In asking such questions, I do not wish to turn away from the political structures and framings of tolerance – for they clearly have important societal ramifications – but to rather ‘relocate their conditions of possibility and relations and forces of production’ (Stoler 2006, page 13, cited in Oswin and Olund 2010 page 62).

## 3. Tolerance and Encounter

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*"I don't care what's in your head. Tell me what's in your gut..." (Royston, NCBI facilitator, workshop May 2009)*

### 1. An Encounter

I take hold of her hands and casually make a comment that I know will offend her. I am ill-prepared for the response; am thrown backwards as she pushes against me. Eyes wide, she thrusts her face inches from mine. With cheeks flushed, she swears at me; insults me; struggles to break free from my grip. I fight to maintain my composure; am deeply embarrassed by the volume of her voice. I become aware of my palms, try to stop the nervous giggle caught in my throat. She shakes me; drawing upon all kinds of descriptors - describes the figure that embodies all that she is fighting against. She stops as abruptly as she had begun. The muscle in her jaw flexes; she maintains eye contact. I am fixed to the spot. My shoulders are tense. She closes her eyes and exhales. I feel her grip loosen. She opens her eyes - looks sheepish, "sorry... I guess I've just heard that one too many times..."

In this encounter, a threshold of tolerance is crossed. Upon hearing an unwelcome comment the woman responds with unexpected force. Her tolerance is compromised by the encounter and is felt through the body - her flexed muscles, increased adrenaline and rapid breathing. Her emotions form a crucial part of the way in which this encounter is apprehended and understood (Thrift 2004a). Her state of agitation and rage is witnessed through her violent movements and wide eyes as she draws upon past experiences to describe the body that she believes herself to be struggling with. Particular histories of encounter are clearly reopened and memories of past prejudices are brought forth to affect her reactions in this particular moment. The outburst is surprising and takes hold of her within seconds and then, just as quickly as it had occurred, it leaves her to be replaced by mild embarrassment and an apologetic tone as she reflects upon her outburst and seeks to qualify her response.

This particular account of tolerance – or the point at which its limit is reached - was taken from my time spent with the National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) during an exercise designed to encourage people to talk about their experiences of prejudice. It is illustrative of the way in which tolerance *takes place*, is affected and perhaps compromised by situated encounters with others and is a far cry from the accounts of tolerance outlined in Chapter 2. It is an account that is shaped by non-rational sentiments and emotions, biological and physiological processes and affective energies. It speaks of particular visual ecologies and regimes, past experiences and a personal biography that are brought to the fore in a particular event of relation. The encounter is shaped by the materialities of the room – the semi-circle of plastic chairs and the white-washed walls of a community centre in central London<sup>20</sup>. It is underwritten by a series of support networks and workshop objectives; felt through the touch of a hand and a gesture of support. In short, this event of (in)tolerance was conditioned by the unpredictable coming together of multiple relations, objects, thoughts and bodies on a Thursday morning in the middle of May.

It is to such encounters – the coming together of myriad different bodies, things and spaces – to which this chapter now turns, to consider how they might coordinate thought and action and open up new directions for thinking about tolerance. In so doing, the chapter is concerned with the ways in which tolerance is regulated by alternative conditions to those put in place by the state and its public institutions and actors. In this chapter, I therefore move towards an account that is concerned ultimately with the relationship between tolerance and encounter. By examining this relationship, I argue that we might shed light upon some of the additional registers and regulatory constructs that are currently overlooked by the contemporary debates on tolerance and yet work to alter its taking place in important ways. Of course, as is clear from the opening account, encounters are unpredictable, partial and porous and often difficult to discursively construct. Theoretically, such an account is therefore a difficult one to write and is undoubtedly incomplete in its framing and is perhaps necessarily so. In considering what is important to the encounter, I thus focus in particular on just three concerns through which we might begin to theorise its relationship with tolerance and I will be returning to these in more detail in section 3.

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<sup>20</sup> This was the only workshop that I attended outside of Birmingham for a Leadership Training course.



In Chapter 2, I examined the political economy of tolerance and the multiple ways in which the state endeavours to regulate and condition relations – how it orders human beings, shapes particular classifications and constructs hierarchies of power. Whilst such atmospheres of governance are both enduring and pervasive, and undoubtedly work to regulate human relations in multifaceted ways, they are only part of what conditions tolerance on a day-to-day basis. Instead, such accounts leave room to question what else comes into play when differences come together, in short, what else conditions the practice of tolerance? As Spinks (cited in Thrift 2004a, page 64) suggests, ‘political attitudes and statements are partly conditioned by intense autonomic bodily reactions that do not simply reproduce the trace of a political intention and cannot be wholly recuperated within an ideological regime of truth’ – as many of the accounts addressed in the previous chapter might suggest. Yet the question remains; how might tolerance be conditioned by such ‘autonomic bodily reactions’, and how might these emerge from situated encounters? These are just two questions to which this chapter turns, to work towards a politics of bodily practice; one that positions tolerance as both an affect and effect of encounter that is regulated and shaped through various forms. These encounters I argue, sometimes strengthen and sometimes work against the ethical injunctions that have been mobilised by the state, or outlined by religions through which the limits of tolerance are so often understood and discursively formed.

My account of tolerance thus starts with, and further prioritises situated encounters as a point of analysis. Tolerance is emergent from encounters with others; it is embodied, felt and produced through the intimacies of everyday practice as an affect (Slocum 2008). In recognising this, it is not my intention to move away from those accounts of regulation outlined in the previous chapter, or to argue for a particular conceptual priority that positions practice over embodied knowing or reason<sup>21</sup>, but to suggest that current work on the political mobilisation of tolerance can only tell us so much about the many ways in which it takes place. Of course, encounters or intimacies are undoubtedly invested with particular ideals of relating with others – those accounts of community cohesion, citizenship requirements and ‘feelings for the nation’ (Fortier 2007, page 107) as outlined in Chapters 1 and 2. They are additionally shaped by competing conceptions of the good; ethical and moral sets that are informed by religion, education and media stories. They are also shaped by white anxieties (Hage 2003;

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<sup>21</sup> Barnett has argued that recent work on affect – particularly those that have made claims about the ways in which ‘the political’ might be rethought, have a tendency to give conceptual priority to affective registers over more deliberative registers, the result of which has been to elide the forms of embodied knowing that have the ‘capacity to take part in games of giving and asking for reasons’ (2008, page 187).

Jenkins 2002), resurgent nationalisms (Fortier 2005), immigration policies, cosmopolitanisms (Closs Stephens 2007) and the economic downturn. Tolerance therefore works through a very particular filter, but how these push into the everyday is currently unaddressed. As Fortier argues, such accounts and regulations of living together come with normative emotional and ethical injunctions that do not quite fit with the lived experiences of daily encounter (2007, page 107). Tolerance is about power, but a power that is 'corporeally implicated'; it produces, and is produced by, events of individuation that trouble the categories upon which it is currently mapped and understood. Tolerance is therefore not simply about legislative action, it is embodied, felt, produced or destroyed by events of relation between bodies.

'Tolerance talk' (Brown 2006) is littered with accounts of race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, gender and so on. It draws upon socially constructed identities and cultural stereotypes and further (re)produces them. In Chapter 2, I outlined some of the varied critiques of contemporary tolerance and the argument that its mobilisation has given primacy to phenotypical differentiations that regulate aversions in particular ways, whilst also acknowledging the way in which its value has achieved stability through discursive and institutional repetition. But how such differentiations – of tolerable/intolerable bodies – are embodied and further recognised in everyday life, and how (in)tolerance takes place when such bodies encounter each other is somewhat neglected. In this chapter I move away from what tolerance is – or should be, as a national good, political virtue or moral value - to consider how bodies *do* tolerance; how, in the 'frisson of contact' (Slocum 2008, page 851), they potentially collapse categories of identity and the so-called 'fantasies of binarism' (Gandhi 2006, page 3) that the practice of tolerance is accused of (re)producing. As Gilroy (2004 page xi) has argued, 'convivial culture' consistently demands that we recognise the 'unpredictable mechanisms of identification' and that human subjects always occupy multiple subject positions at any one given time.<sup>22</sup> Tolerance I argue, is thus a politics of improvisation<sup>23</sup>; it is always in the making and unpredictable. I therefore necessarily acknowledge its production or perhaps destruction through the coming together of multiple forms – their principles of

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<sup>22</sup> The Profiles of Prejudice report, for instance, notes how the ability of people to 'deal with difference' may be influenced by overlapping social positions – people are 'Sun' readers, Conservative voters, North East inhabitants, middle-class, educated to A level standard, parents or practicing Catholics – the various combinations of which are said to produce individuals that are more/less likely to be prejudiced (Citizenship 21, 2002).

<sup>23</sup> This phrase has been borrowed from Gandhi (2006), who in her study of 'Affective Communities' mapped out an 'improvisational politics' of anti-colonial struggle that she suggested complicated perspectives of colonial encounter through small gestures of transgression. These collapsed established affective formations (page 15) through 'unlikely collaborations between oppressors and oppressed' (page 6).

creativity, connection and extension (Amin and Thrift 2002a) and their generative capacity as they interact with each other, regulate ethical sets and are further apprehended and experienced in a multitude of ways through varying intensities of feeling.

The remainder of this chapter and study develops a vocabulary attentive to the multiple processes and modalities that make up the affectual geographies of tolerance, to examine how a capacity to tolerate is shaped by the myriad encounters that occur between individual bodies and other finite things on a day-to-day basis (Thrift 2004). I begin by outlining my concern with situated encounters and the intimate ethos through which my account of tolerance takes shape. As a movement of closeness that does not assume physical proximity, I am concerned with the 'intimate geographies through which affects make their way' (ibid page 74), to examine the many ways in which tolerance is conditioned by events of relation, and further still, to examine what the concept of tolerance might further bring to such events. As part of this discussion, I necessarily draw upon more-than-representational concerns and consider the workings of affect as a key concern that runs throughout the course of this study. In addition to these central foci, I then move to outline three further considerations that are crucial to the composition of encounters and the thoughts and actions that they coordinate – materialities, ways of thinking (including habit, memory and familiarity) and the geographies of place. These three concerns form the basis for much of the discussion within the empirical chapters that follow – as key constituents of action – and whilst, as I suggested earlier, these accounts are by no means complete, they offer a basis from which we might begin to unpack the relationship between tolerance and encounter more fully.

## **2. The affective encounter and an intimate ethos**

In the previous chapter we have seen what affects come into play when tolerance is governed. Affective relations that draw on 'injunctions of multicultural intimacies' (Fortier 2007, page 106) and encounter have been managed and engineered to describe particular ideals of living together – assimilationist, differentialist or cohesive; imagined as variously threatening, annihilating, productive or enriching (ibid). But what affects come into play during such encounters and how might we explain tolerance as *an affect of* encounter as we saw in the opening account? As I have suggested, my account of tolerance as an everyday practice is not simply about a greater focus upon the embodied, affective dispositions of subjects – for in

Chapter 2 we have already seen a concern for how certain, often ‘unconscious dispositions’ of response, encourage an orientation towards particular types of bodies through various strategies of governance (Ahmed 2004; Brown 2006; Povinelli 1998). Rather, it is about a foregrounding of proximity, one that is concerned with intimacies and a movement of closeness<sup>24</sup>. Whilst difference may have been relegated to the private realm by various political imaginings and the *politics and policies* of multiculturalism would appear to be in decline<sup>25</sup>, multiculturalism – as the mundane, everyday ‘phenomenon of inter-cultural co-existence’ is still very much alive (Bloch and Dreher 2009; Clayton 2009, page 483). Negotiation, as Massey suggests, is ‘forced upon us’ (Massey 2005 in Slocum 2008, page 851). Cities in particular, are often sites of intense ethnic mixing and banal encounter (Amin and Thrift 2002b, page 291), fostering a certain ‘throwntogetherness’ with others (Massey 2005, page 181) where people of different religions, ethnicities, sexualities, ages, race and class live and work alongside each other. The urban public sites of multiple connections and inter-connections oblige people to share space with others and make the chance of encounter ever present. As migrations and the processes of globalisation increase and conventional cartographies of distance and proximity are confounded (Fortier 2008), cities such as Birmingham inevitably become key sites of negotiation where conversations across difference are difficult to avoid (Appiah 2007; Sandercock 2003). Indeed, whilst living with difference has always been a feature of urban life, it is now as Watson (2006) suggests, quintessentially what urban life is all about.

Such everyday encounters act as crucial filters of social practice (Amin 2008, page 18). They mark a concern for a spatial process ‘of tense and tender ties’ (Fortier 2007), or a ‘set of qualitatively distinct relations between bodies’ (Anderson 2004, page 749) that are continuously ‘composed, dissolved and recomposed’ (Braun 2004, page 271), and through which tolerance emerges. Such a thinking in terms of co-constitutional connections (Castree and Nash, 2006; Whatmore 2002), acknowledges a conviviality that goes beyond a concern for the ‘ways in which people accommodate one another in everyday life’ (Hinchliffe and Whatmore 2006 page 125), to instead accommodate a more broadly conceived ‘difference’ – a

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<sup>24</sup> My account of intimacy, in line with Oswin and Olund (2010), is concerned with a movement of closeness that is not reliant upon *physical* proximity or a ‘fixing’ of scale, nor is it synonymous with the body, but might rather operate at any distance. As they suggest, whilst intimacy is not fixed by scale it ‘still has as its object, a sense of self in close connection to others – other selves or other things – that inhabits that elusive space somewhere between a purely solipsistic ‘me’ and a wholly subsuming ‘us’’. It is as they suggest, the ‘space in which the self emerges’ (page 60).

<sup>25</sup> See Back et. al (2002) and Mitchell (2004) for a discussion on the decline of multiculturalism and its celebration of difference and the return to a politics of assimilation.

difference that is inclusive of the more-than-human<sup>26</sup> and recognises that face-to-face contact as a social act does not exist in isolation (Castree and Nash, 2004; Panelli 2010; Whatmore 2004). Importantly, my concern with intimate encounters should not be equated with a concern for the local, but is rather a narrative of something shared (Berlant 1998), a *relational* propinquity, that ‘rules in everything that vies for attention’ (Amin 2004, page 39) as Amin suggests;

‘[i]ncreasingly, daily life is constituted through attachments and influences that are distanced, as revealed by the workings of diaspora communities, corporate networks, consumption patterns, travel networks, microworlds of communication and the many public spheres that stretch across space’ (page 39).

My focus upon the encounter is thus concerned with its emergent properties and relational qualities. More specifically, it is the composition of relations between bodies, things and spaces and an interest in what such diverse compositions can produce that is important (Anderson 2006). In asking how tolerance might emerge as a relation from an encounter, it is necessary to ask what role affect plays more specifically, for as Anderson (2006, page 735) argues it is ‘[t]he capacities to affect and be affected [that] enact the *life* of everyday life’. An attention to affect thus offers a more ‘complex view’ of causality (Hardt in Clough and Halley 2007, page ix) than some of the prevalent accounts of tolerance have afforded, for affects belong simultaneously to *both* sides of the relationship. Thus, a focus on affect<sup>27</sup> is indispensable to theorising the social and as such, I argue, necessary to theorising tolerance. Of course, encounters are all manner of affects. To be concerned with the taking place of tolerance is to be concerned with the various affects that it is entangled with – joy, sadness, anxiety, hope, fear and shame to name just a few. The diminishing affects of anxiety for example are clearly linked to a decreased capacity for tolerance (Hage 1998) and while I

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<sup>26</sup> I deliberately preference the term ‘more-than-human’ here, rather than ‘posthuman’ in line with Whatmore (2004) and Panelli (2010).

<sup>27</sup> The ‘affective turn’ (Clough and Halley 2007) in the social sciences, draws largely upon the work of Spinoza whose thought as Hardt argues, is the origin, either directly or indirectly, for the majority of contemporary work in the field (ibid 2007). This study however, draws largely upon the theoretical vocabulary of affect that has emerged in Non-Representational literatures within human geography (see for example Anderson 2006; Anderson and Holden 2008; McCormack 2008).

frequently refer to tolerance, I am at the same time outlining an account of *intolerance* for as Hage (1998) argues; the two necessarily coexist.

As I have suggested, in Chapter 2 there were certainly accounts that hinted at an affective economy (Ahmed 2004) – a politics of tolerance that marks some bodies as less tolerable and thus more exploitable than others through the regulation of aversions (Brown 2006), the mobilisation of shame (Povinelli 1998) or the generation of anxieties (Hage 2003). My account of tolerance is thus attentive to such affective economies and the ways in which they inflect encounters to perhaps enliven or diminish them. Yet as Massumi (2002) notes, we can never predict what affects human bodies or minds might be capable of in any given encounter ahead of its taking place. In the opening account we could never have predicted the woman's reaction to the unwelcome comment or what affect it might have had on the other individual, yet a focus upon affect does enable a greater concern with how tolerance *takes place* and operates – to consider how bodies become tolerant through encounters. Encounters with difference then, are not simply cultivated by rules of morality or theoretical understandings of tolerance, but by the actions brought forth from us by the event of encounter (Thrift 2003). Of course, there are multiple vocabularies of affect. I take my lead from Anderson (2006, page 735) in particular, who argues that to think through the affectual is to necessarily start with 'an alternative attunement to affect as a transpersonal *capacity* which a body has to be affected (through an affection) and to affect (as the result of a modification)'. These capacities are of continuous variation and are emergent from the transitions that take place during encounters (Anderson 2006; Massumi 2002). In the opening account, the woman's capacity for tolerance radically diminishes and is witnessed in the 'qualitative differences' (Anderson 2006, page 735) that energetically altered the encounter. The emergence of affect from the relations between these two bodies 'and from the encounters that those relations are entangled with' (page 736) is what I am interested in. The unpredictable composition of these relations marks the emergent affect to be 'outside expectation and adaption, as disconnected from meaningful sequencing, from narration, as it is from vital function' (Massumi 2002, page 25), yet the movement of affect is felt, corporeally expressed in bodily feelings – as the flushed cheeks, flexed muscles and rapid breathing of a body moved by anger. These visceral intensities are thus crucial to the body's apprehension of tolerance and the 'second-to-second resourcefulness of the body' (Thrift 2004a, page 67). We might reflect for instance, upon how forms of abjection – as directions against something beyond the scope of the tolerable

(Kristeva 1984, page 1) – are felt through gagging sensations, spasms in the stomach, perspiration and nausea (page 3, see also Kolnai 1998).

In attending to the movement of affect and its expression, a concurrent attention to the emotional as a process of qualification is vital to consider the naming of, or accounting for (in)tolerance. As Thrift notes:

‘body practices rely on the emotions as a crucial element of the body’s apprehension of the world; emotions are a vital part of the anticipation of the moment. Thus we can now understand emotions as a kind of corporeal thinking’ (2004a, page 67).

Emotions thus give narrative expression to feeling and give meaning to encounter, but crucially they also further ‘*multiply* the movement of affect, and the expression of feeling’ so as to enable or constrain subjectivities and identities in distinct ways (Anderson 2006, page 737 my emphasis). Experiences of fear for example, can be further implicated in feelings of safety, which further underpin experiences and ideas about others. Thus emotions of fear can further work to instinctively limit movement (Panelli et. al 2004) to orientate bodies and regulate aversions, as evident in the previous chapter. How individuals apprehend encounters with others is therefore vital. Furthermore, emotions can also align bodies with others (Fortier 2005). Ahmed, for instance notes how emotions such as love might become a way of ‘bonding with others in relation to an ideal’ (2004b, page 124). An identification of love for the nation, not only enables a cohesive community through a shared object of love, but also necessarily marks a distinction between those that love and those that hate.

However, whilst there has been much work around the affective aspects of politics and public life (Barnett 2008) and questions as to why some places or some encounters can and often do bring forth very different forms of response from us (Amin 2008; Allen 2006; Thrift 2004), it has been suggested that too much of such work has focused upon the careful manipulation or engineering of affect for political purpose and the pursuit of expanded commodification in particular (Barnett 2008, see also Pile 2010). That is to say, that too much concern has focused upon the small-scale manipulation of emotion and bodies through forms of mediation that are achieved without detection (Massumi 2002), which not only reduces embodied knowing to ‘the dimension of mute attunement and coping with the environment’ (Barnett, page 187), but

prioritises visceral registers of affect over and above deliberative arguments (Barnett 2008)<sup>28</sup>. Whilst my account intends to problematise some of the accounts of agency and careful governing outlined in Chapter 2, it is about *recognising* the creativity of everyday life and its enactment; its possibilities as opposed to its ‘consciously planned coding and symbols’ (Thrift and Dewsbury 2000, page 415), rather than necessarily *prioritising* it. Crucially, it does not call for a complete rejection of the representational system that has underlined understandings of the encounter as a specific ‘event’ or of tolerance as a specific form of relation, but to acknowledge its partiality.

My account of tolerance valorises those processes of encounter that are pre-cognitive and sensed through more personal registers, ‘whose power is not dependent upon crossing a threshold of contemplative cognition’ (McCormack 2003, page 488). In taking up some of the tenets of non-representational thinking (Anderson and Harrison 2010), I want to move away from some of those more static concepts of tolerance to recognise less familiar forms of ‘witnessing’ (Dewsbury 2003) and to acknowledge those aspects of tolerance that are at the same time pre-discursive, outside or beyond fixed categories of description or the subject-object relations that have so often framed its conception. Without doubt, the operation of tolerance carries traces of the more discursive, more corporeal, specifications and rigid categories of nation, religion, race and gender – expectations of how bodies should act and so on. The key point here is that these imaginings, their circulations and the increased governance of what Isin (2004) has termed the ‘neurotic citizen’, do not close down the possibility for something other to emerge, but are rather caught up with other modalities and relations, which connect and combine to modify, divert and interrupt them with unexpected transformations. This, I argue, multiplies the very politics of tolerance. Tolerance thus undoubtedly carries traces of broader relationships of power and antagonism (Ahmed 2004b), which impact upon the tenor of everyday encounters and whilst the modes of regulation considered in the previous chapter – and their affective engineering – might indeed

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<sup>28</sup> In this argument Barnett (2008) makes a clear distinction between work that is concerned with the ways in which ‘rationality emerges out of situated encounter’ – without prioritising a particular ontology and the work of Nigel Thrift and William E. Connolly, both of whom he claims develop arguments that ‘adopt a vocabulary of ontological layers, levels and priority’ (page 189). In making these arguments, he further asks how the difference between those apprehensions of the self that are reliant upon a background of affective dispositions, might be distinguished from those apprehensions that have been shaped by the manipulation of background conditions, in ‘the form of involuntary submission to the will of others (page 198).



‘instinctively’ limit movement and contact with others<sup>29</sup>, they do so to varying degrees (Massumi in Zournazi 2003).

To this point, I have outlined an account of tolerance that focuses upon everyday encounters as its points of analysis. I have argued that tolerance is embodied, felt and produced through the intimacies of everyday practice and whilst tolerance is no doubt shaped by competing conceptions of the good and the particular ideals of relation outlined by government bodies, religion or media stories, I argue that tolerance is always in the making. In particular, my concern with the relations between bodies, things and spaces has thus necessitated a close attunement to affect as a way of attending to the *taking place* of tolerance and its creative possibilities. In section 3, I move to outline the ways in which encounters have been theorised within geographical research to further highlight why tolerance needs to be studied and further thought of in this way. Finally, to theorise the relationship between tolerance and encounter more fully, I identify three points of focus for the study; materialities, ways of thinking and geographies of place.

### 3. Tolerance and Encounters

Studying the encounter enables a way of attending to the multiple conceptions of tolerance; the ways in which it simultaneously operates as a skill, a virtue, a relation or a tool. It offers a way of accommodating all of those different ideas about what it is or should be and how these take shape and change on an everyday basis across different sites. There has been a long tradition of work that has studied the relationship between encounter and tolerance – and tolerance of difference more specifically. Yet the majority of this tradition has positioned the encounter as a meeting, or coming together of people, that can function as a kind of ‘cross-cultural fertilisation’ (Wood and Landry 2008, page 107) and develop tolerance as a result. Whilst this framing clearly registers something of the affective capacities of encounter, there is little sense of how this takes place and a worrying assumption about what the encounter does *to us* rather than *for us* (Dewsbury 2003). City spaces are regularly regarded to cultivate dialogues and negotiations that erode cultural difference and initiate tolerance and respect

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<sup>29</sup> For example, in the aftermath of 9/11 Massumi suggests that ‘constant security threats continuously insinuate themselves into our lives at such a basic, habitual level that you’re barely aware how it’s changing the tenor of everyday living. You start ‘instinctively’ to limit your movements and contacts with people. It’s affectively limiting’ (Massumi in Zournazi 2003, page 19).

through the hybridisation of culture and an increased familiarity with diversity through no more than the *increased chance* of encounter (Young 2000). Habitual contact however, is not necessarily a 'guarantor of cultural exchange' (Amin 2002, page 969) and I suggest that it certainly does not provide evidence of a practiced or developed degree of tolerance. Indeed, encounters can be as much about diminishing the possibility for exchange as it can be about opening it up, often generating further resentments, animosity, intolerances, dread and misunderstandings (Bailey 2000). Accounts of harmony, empathy, tolerance and positive co-existence, are thus interrupted by moments of antagonism and disquiet, which demand a greater engagement with the conditions under which such eruptions may occur, as my account of Birmingham so clearly highlighted in Chapter 1 (Watson 2006).

Such calls for a greater engagement with the conditions and complexities of encounter are made pertinent by the increased importance placed upon everyday encounter within public policy discourses. The report *What Works in Enabling Cross-Community Interactions?* (DCLG 2009a), is a typical example and draws upon the theoretical approaches of the 'contact theory'<sup>30</sup> to outline key spaces of encounter for 'positive interaction' (page 20). It utilises Cantle's (2005) typology of cross cultural relationships or forms of engagement to better account for the possible enablers or barriers of positive encounters and to further develop strategies for managing diversity (SHM 2007)<sup>31</sup>. As Wood and Landry (2008, page 107) argue, the effects of encounter vary according to the quality and quantity of it, whether it is voluntary, where it occurs and whether it occurs between people of equal status. In the debates outlined in Chapter 2, it is quite clear that the encounters described by accounts and policies of tolerance are not encounters of equal status, but typically describe interaction between majority and minority individuals, groups or populations, where the former is in a position of power.

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<sup>30</sup> The 'contact theory' assumes the logic that the exposure of majority groups to minority groups challenges the negative stereotypes that both maintain and encourage segregation. Perhaps one of the most publicised accounts of the benefits of intercultural encounters occurred following the disturbances in the North of England in the spring and summer of 2001 when the Community Cohesion Review Team (CCRT) suggested that the underlying problem was a lack of 'contact' between communities and cultures. What followed was a concern with encouraging the physical mixing of individuals and groups within prioritised contact zones - housing estates, urban public spaces and more formal settings such as the school and workplace (Amin 2002; Cockburn 2007). a growing body of literature is critical of such contact theories (Dixon et al.2005, Clack et al. 2005, Maoz 2002).

<sup>31</sup> It names the encounters that occur as a result of planned activity for example, as enablers of 'social organisational interaction', whilst those occurring without organisation produce 'social incidental interaction' (SHM 2007)

As a result there has been an increased concern that such encounters might only be productive of positive relations if they occur in highly controlled environments; in an environment where particular values and cultural ideals are not prioritised over others, which has seen a growing concern with the facilitation of intervention strategies and conflict resolution programmes to prevent the repetition of subjugation and exclusion. Whilst I am less inclined to suggest that encounters can ever be sufficiently 'typologised' or regulated to such degree, and indeed, that it might always be necessary (and I will return to this at length in Chapter 7), the main call for concern here is that these framings of encounter are still notably confined to an understanding that privileges the individual, autonomous body.

There is however, a growing focus upon the *geographies* of encounter as way in which to study the everyday complexities of living with difference (Amin and Thrift 2002a; Valentine 2008; Watson 2006) and it is within this body of work that this study is positioned. It is about complicating these accounts of living with difference – that mark encounters and their effects to be somehow knowable or categorical – which forms my key concern. Whilst I do not follow their rigid definitions of contact which they take from Cattle (2005), I take leave from Wood and Landry (2008) who have noted how the examination of different spaces might produce very different accounts of encounter, and so very different accounts of tolerance. The empirical chapters to follow are therefore focused upon three particular spaces of encounter – a bus, a school and a conflict management workshop – each of which provides a different account of the ways in which tolerance takes place in the everyday spaces of Birmingham.

Chapter 5 focuses on the spaces of a public bus. As a space of mobility, buses have previously been described as 'non-places' (Augé 1995), valued as a link between communities and individuals at either end of a journey or as a means to physically connect places, but void of their own meaningful interactions. Yet buses are sites of tacit negotiations and passing propinquities, where the close proximity of often unacquainted people from different backgrounds is to be expected – an enclosed and often cramped moving space, where passengers are constantly coming and going. The bus can be a space of routine and habit, where unwritten rules of public conduct are communicated, challenged or negotiated. Chapter 6 focuses upon a primary school where I focus specifically on the encounters of parents. Here, rules of behaviour are much more explicit – kept in check by the school and permeated by its commitment to foster a cohesive environment. It is a space where tolerance should be pedagogically achieved and where there is considerable opportunity to develop acquaintances

with people from other backgrounds. Yet whilst cross-cultural contact is perhaps more structured, it is also shaped by personal investments and motivations which make competing claims on the school and its curricula. Whilst, like the bus, the school is a site of routine, habit and repetition, encounters are considerably more structured by the school timetable. The drop-off and collection of children occur at the same time, twice a day, five days a week and so can also be a space of familiarity. Finally, the last site of focus is that of a conflict management workshop, where the minute regulation of encounter is crucial to the programme's development. It is a space of role-play, where fictional encounters are staged, carefully managed, scrutinised and explicitly engineered to produce more tolerant individuals. The encounters here are necessarily unfamiliar and anything but ordinary. Here, encounters between individuals with different backgrounds and different, sometimes conflicting, interests are enforced and often emotionally charged.

Whilst these three sites of encounter might easily be categorised according to Cattle's typology of engagement or by the forms of interaction that each site *should* potentially enable (Cattle 2005), my framing of encounter goes beyond a concern with face-to-face interactions, to ask what else is important. Encounters are not just the coming together of human bodies, they are events of relation that bring together all manner of things and spatial arrangements, the combinations and compositions of which can produce very different affects and effects (Swanton 2010b). In these spaces, it is therefore impossible to predict actions according to typologies of interaction or to think purely in terms of encounters between majority and minority individuals or groups, for each is caught up with a whole series of competing claims, materialities, affects, expectations and so on.

To this point I have highlighted the centrality of affect to my concept of tolerance and in the following section I outline three additional points of focus that I argue are central to the taking place of tolerance and further help to theorise the relationship between tolerance and encounter. These are: materialities; ways of thinking (including habit, familiarity and memory); and the geographies of place. Each one of these concerns has been put forward as a key constituent of agency and yet all of them are insufficiently addressed or accounted for within discourses of tolerance. Bennett (2010) for example, has recently argued that political analysis has a tendency to reduce political agency to human agency, without accounting for the vitality of matter. Whilst political theory might acknowledge the significance of materiality, it is limited to 'human social structures or to the human meanings "embodied" in them and other objects'

(page xvi). Yet there is much to be said about the capacity of materials to act as agents, or forces with their own 'tendencies' (page viii). Similarly, work concerned with the ways in which thinking is organised aims to widen the current focus of political analysis by attending to the body/brain processes that form the perceptions, thinking and judgements that shape action (Connolly 2002). This includes a concern with the non-conscious thoughts, memory traces, habits and familiar senses that trouble the deliberative and reflective consistencies of thought. Finally, whilst the importance of place as a key constituent of social action has long been recognised, discourses of tolerance are insensitive to the affiliations, local demographics, textures, material conditions, practices of belonging and so on that differently shape tolerance (Parker and Karner 2010). These three points of focus are by no means exhaustive, but present just three of the many ways in which we might go about theorising the encounter and questioning what else is important to the taking place of tolerance. These three points of focus are neither presented in any particular order nor given any particular conceptual priority, but variously come to the fore at different moments throughout the three empirical chapters to follow.

#### **4. Tolerance and Materialities**

*'Politics [is] a more-than-human affair' (Hinchliffe and Whatmore 2006, page 124)*

Bennett (2010, page viii) recently asked how political responses to public problems would change if 'the vitality of (nonhuman) bodies' was taken seriously. By this, she refers to the 'capacity of *things* – edibles, commodities, storms, metals' and so on (ibid, my emphasis). If such things were to be taken seriously, our political analysis of events – or tolerance in this case – might recognise not only how matter might 'impede or block' the will of humans, but how matter might further act as 'quasi agents or forces with trajectories, propensities, or tendencies of their own' (viii). In a particular reference to Brown's (2006) account of tolerance, Bennett describes it as a project of 'demystification' (ibid), as one that succeeds in exposing the unjust politics of tolerance, the pursuit of domination and the 'deflection of responsibility' by some individuals, but as one that always reduces political agency to that of human agency. The 'vitality of matter' is, she argues, entirely absent from Brown's project.

In such absence, there is a danger that such critiques are founded upon an assumption that it is possible to already know what is out there, to predict how events will unfold, whilst preventing the detection of the 'range of nonhuman powers that are circulating around and within human bodies' (Bennet 2010, page ix). It is vital here to be clear about just exactly what matter or materialities are. As Bennett highlights, the *material* is too often taken to depict something that is physical, stable, unyielding and 'reducible to extension in space' (page 58; see also Kearns 2003). She locates *affect with* materiality, rather than outlining it as a separate force that can enter and animate a physical body. This relation *with* materiality has also enjoyed recent attention from geographers who have endeavoured to blur the distinction between material and immaterial concerns (see for example Kearnes 2003). Latham and McCormack (2004) for instance, argue that rather than defined in opposition, the immaterial is that which 'gives [the material] an expressive life and liveliness independent of the human subject' (ibid page 703).

It can be argued then, that tolerance emerges and takes form through materialities<sup>32</sup>. 'Corporeal sensibilities are activated' and precipitated through the interleaving of matter and sense (Anderson and Wylie 2008, page 327). On a very crude level, material forms mediate practice through the orientation of movement in particular ways; they guide visitors around a museum in a specific direction (Brown 2006), limit the movement of people on a bus or encourage the gathering of parents in a playground. Clearly, such sensibilities of movement shape the conditions of possibility within which to encounter others, but a closer examination of the *relations* in and through which material forms consist can provide a more careful account of why different spaces have quite different affective capacities (Latham and McCormack 2004; see also Bennett 2010). To understand how the productive intimacies outlined at the beginning of this chapter were shaped by the material spacings of the community centre, is to go beyond an account of the room's ground physicality – the windowless walls, harsh lighting, plastic chairs and carefully placed lilies – to acknowledge how they 'come into being from within the event of relation... [and how they] actuate or emerge from within the assembling of multiple, differential relations' (Anderson and Wylie 2008, page 320). Such objects have agential powers and can transform spatialities (Bennett 2004; Bissell

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<sup>32</sup> I use a very broad conception of 'materialities' here. Whilst distinctions are made quite clearly elsewhere (see for example Anderson and Wylie 2008) between historical materialisms – of class and capital exchange; bodily materialisms and thing-power materialisms (see for example Bennett 2010), I variously attend to all three throughout the thesis to greater and lesser degrees.

2009a). Their placement becomes part of an assemblage<sup>33</sup>, which as Bissell suggests ‘folds in the proximate environment’ (2009a page 100); a relationality which is intrinsic to understanding why the placing of a particular object, such as an unattended bag on a platform, or a cigarette end on a bus seat, might produce anxiety, affect bodies and alter their capacity to act.

Material affects are embodied, felt through the skin and intensities of feeling (Bissell 2009a), they encourage or diminish relations by altering one’s ability for action. The harsh lighting and windowless walls of the community centre in the opening account of this chapter might work to heighten sensitivities, whilst the hard plastic chairs might facilitate experiences of discomfort that further agitate and reduce one’s capacity to tolerate (see for example Bissell 2009b). In Brown’s (2006) account of the Museum of Tolerance, she hints at the strobe lighting, push buttons, bathroom graffiti and metal detectors that transform its spatiality, although she is less attentive to their affects on the relational capacities of its visitors. Such material is processually emergent, its ‘realities are always held together and animated by processes excessive of form and position’ (Latham and McCormack 2004, page 705), not always visible but felt or perhaps remembered. Such ‘corporeal perception and sensation is ... an incorporation of matter into the connective tissues and affective planes of a body subject’ (Anderson and Wylie 2008, page 324). To take this further, it is worth considering the materialities of psychoactive substances (see Latham and McCormack 2004), which can transform molecular processes and relations of assemblage – whether they be visions, sounds, aromas, affections or desires (page 715). For Bennett (2010) working through such concerns makes it possible to ask what might seem to be somewhat outlandish (political) questions so as to challenge current conceptions of human agency, for instance; could there be a link between the American diet and the widespread susceptibility to propaganda leading up to the invasions of Iraq (page 107)?

Thinking through the materialities of the body in particular, does not mean falling back into fixed categories of identification (Swanton 2007) of the kind examined in Chapter 2, but demands a renewed account of bodily perception, sense and sensibility to consider them as a productive site of social identities. This examines how material differences of bodies might

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<sup>33</sup> In describing an ‘assemblage’, I draw upon Bissell’s (2009a) reference to the ‘relationality between the material form of the object and its particular proximate spatiality’ (page 100). To take just one example, the significance of this particular relationality he argues is evident when an item of luggage is left at an airport; whilst a mundane object, it takes on a particularly ‘threatening form of agency’. In this instance, the object materiality has altered.

work to sort them and further affect their relations, intimacies and spatialities (Ahmed 2007; Brown 2008; Colls 2007; Veninga 2007). The body understood here is not a physical or complete entity, or an entity that is necessarily comprehensible through its practice, but is rather incomprehensible (Bissell 2009), understood in the first instance to be entirely relational – as a body-in-action (Harrison 2000). Writers such as Swanton (2010b) for instance, have examined how race *takes form* in moments of encounter between ‘material and immaterial elements’, through such assemblages as ‘skin, car and road’. This calls into question those contemporary discourses of tolerance that would seem to rely on, or promote essentialised notions of race, to open up questions as to how tolerable and intolerable bodies take form *through* encounter.

Elsewhere, calls for tolerance are regularly attached to particular objects such as the hijab<sup>34</sup> which, whilst existing as a singularity, simultaneously exists as a multiplicity – as a ‘contested signifier’ (Meer et.al 2010) – invested by media and political attributes of agency, separation, defiance, religious expression, difference, modesty, community and threat (see for example Khiabany and Williamson 2008; Tarlo 2007). The ‘turbulence’ and inconsistency of such object matter, highlight its continual process of becoming *through* ‘events of relation’ (Anderson and Wylie 2009, page 320), whilst its power is dependent upon the composition, time, place and density of such relations (Bennett 2010). Its *visibility* however, as a ‘Muslim sartorial practice’ (Meer et. al 2010, page 86) is also important here. Some bodies and some materials are undoubtedly more noticeable than others, which says as much about what is already in place as it can about the subject of observation (Ahmed 2007, page 157). In instances where the formatting of perception is reliant upon visual markers, visual registers become a key condition of tolerance. It is therefore vital to consider how such matter – and how such bodily matter in particular – might be *read* (see for example Alcoff 2006; Amoore 2007, Poole 1997). For example, in the account at the beginning of this chapter, the woman describes the person(s) that she believes herself to be fighting against. She outlines a picture that draws upon particular visual regimes to produce a face (Swanton, 2010a; Back 2007), a face that is constructed from past encounters and experiences that inflect judgement and direct resentment towards the figure in front of her. Of course, I have already outlined how political mobilisations of tolerance have given currency to various bodily signifiers of identity. I do not wish to return to this discussion here, nor it is my intention here to reiterate the rigid bodily

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<sup>34</sup> The use of this term follows Emma Tarlo’s account of hijab as meaning a Muslim woman’s headscarf. As she notes ‘[i]n Arabic, the word refers , not to a type of cloth, but to general notions of separation, screening and keeping things apart’ (2007, page 154)



descriptors or lines of identity that were addressed in the previous chapter, but to instead examine how visual registers 'reorient the positionality of consciousness' (Connolly 2002, page 65) in different contexts and in often unpredictable ways.

It is difficult to ignore the long histories of reading 'racial and social worth' from bodily difference (Amin 2010 page 4; Alcoff 2006). As Alcoff suggests, '[t]here is a visual registry operating in social relations that is socially constructed, historically evolving, and culturally variegated but nonetheless powerfully determinant over individual experience' (page 194). Particular 'visual registrations' can put people in a mode of 'watchfulness' (page 193), whilst an awareness of one's own body visibility can put one ill-at ease (see for example Ahmed 2007; Fechter 2005), particularly when in the knowledge of the meanings that are likely to be attributed to it by others (Alcoff 1998). According to Brubaker et. al (2004), such habits of visual discrimination and categorisation are ubiquitous mental processes that are central to acting – a seeing that carries both expectations and knowledges that are embodied in a person's characteristics. Tolerance is thus conditioned by processes of thought. Even without conscious awareness of these expectations and knowledges, they can work to influence judgements that shape and colour encounter. In section 5, I want to consider 'ways of thinking' more fully, to examine those things that might be described as events of 'individuation' – the experiences, memories, cognitions, (collective) perceptions, hallucinations and habits (Saldanha 2007) that often (un)consciously condition tolerance.

## **5. Tolerance and ways of thinking**

Tolerance is shaped by patterns of thinking that are infused in body/brain processes. Memory traces of the amygdale, somatic markers that operate below the threshold of reflection, gut feelings and memory traces from childhood, are just some of the processes through which culture and nature mix to compose what Connolly describes as 'body-brain-culture relays' (2002, page 1), which form the perceptions, thinking and judgements that work to shape tolerance<sup>35</sup>. If consciousness is as Connolly suggests, preorganised and 'moved to some extent by modes of thinking below its reach' (page 65), then tolerance is always less self-regulated or consciously directed than is often acknowledged.

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<sup>35</sup> See Churchland (2006) for an overview of why the brain matters to philosophy.

Swanton's work on racism for example, notes how thinking with affect not only acknowledges that encounters have 'a life and force beyond and before the deliberative and reflective consistencies of representational thinking' (McCormack cited in Swanton 2010, page 2340) but that processes of differentiation operate partially at the level of non-conscious thought. This has important implications, for in examining how 'affectively imbued racial summaries sort bodies and pass judgement in the fractions of a second before conscious reflection kicks in' (ibid), we might question how perceptions are formatted and what they bring or do to an encounter (and what encounters do to them). Crucially, such work on the processes of thought widens our focus of analysis, to consider the multitude of ways in which thinking is organised in addition to the political techniques and regimes outlined in Chapter 2. These may include personal experience or micropolitical activity (Connolly 2002, Swanton 2010a). By way of an example, Connolly (2002, page 121) notes how 'a sudden sound or unexpected smell' can trigger a painful re-enactment of a past experience that might activate a memory trace that may not be available to conscious recollection' but nonetheless works to shape immediate (re)action. Such stirring of 'visceral intensities' (Swanton 2010, page 459b) and the modulation of thought can thus shape the ways in which tolerance takes place.

In noting how perceptions might format and produce instantaneous judgement, Swanton in particular has positioned the 'half-second delay' – that exists between the taking place of perception formation and conscious reflection – to be a point of exposure, where intolerance and racism might be momentarily revealed. Of course, the flicker of disgust that might emerge in what Swanton (2007) has described as the 'space of prejudice' in practices of sense-making, is not necessarily always acted upon, indeed it might be dismissed or recognised as unreasonable or unjustified. Furthermore, as Connolly (2002, page 259) suggests, in paying attention to neurological and physiological responses, or patterns of thinking, we might 'foster positive experimentation in ethics and politics that subject such perceptions to 'modest schemata of interpretation and explanation'. In attending to patterns of thinking and their role in our day-to-day encounters, it might be possible to '*learn to be open* through a combination of institutional transformation and body trainings which use the half-second delay to act into a situation' (Thrift 2004a, page 70). As Thrift (ibid) argues, this might develop a politics that is attempting to foster and further develop 'good judgement' and I will return to this in the concluding section of this chapter to ask whether a greater attention to ways of thinking, might enable a politics that is capable of developing more tolerant individuals.

## Habit, memory and duration

As I have suggested, processes of thought can be variously directed by memory traces of past experiences or encounters; can call up information and images in the fraction of a second to shape actions in the present. There is something valuable to be said here about the experience of time and the *temporality* of encounters. In the opening account of this chapter, I outlined a moment in which tolerance breaks down. Whilst the woman's response would seem to be directed towards the offensive comment, it becomes clear that her outburst is also a response to past comments that are in some way attached or called upon. Without necessarily becoming an object of the encounter, the woman's intolerance would appear to have been coloured by memories of past prejudices. In this instance, past and future coexist 'in protracted present' to shape its practice through an 'unexpected conjunction of events' (Connolly 2005, page 99), and whilst the account outlined lasted for no more than a couple of minutes, the memories and recollections that are clearly drawn upon may have spanned more than several years to disturb the temporal 'sequencing of past/present/future' (Anderson 2004b, page 10). A concern with the reading of time is thus paramount to my framing of tolerance. Rather than consider the past, present and future to be both separate and discrete, I suggest that a reading of time as 'the play between newness, repetition and immanence' (Amin 2010a page 5), opens up the possibility of examining different dynamics of tolerance to recognise that an event or moment of tolerance, always contains more than what is necessarily disclosed. As Connolly (2002, page 99) suggests, whilst 'images of space, cause, time, morality and politics work reasonably well in dealing with stable relations set in persisting contexts', each of these function poorly when a setting is pluralised by unexpected events, memories or recollections that somehow 'turn the flow of time in a novel direction' (ibid). As the opening account suggests, 'a memory drawn up in an encounter may twist or turn the thought, conversation, or act, in a new direction' (Connolly 2005, page 102) as traces of the past are 'directly encountered through a qualitative charge in a capacity to affect and be affected' (Anderson 2004, page 10). We relive and regain 'thin sheets of time' and 'affect-imbued recollections float by in nonchronological order' (Connolly 2002, page 31). It is these affects of past encounters, their persistence and tendency to resurface often without warning that invites questions about the 'play between endurance and change' (Amin 2010, page 2) in matters of tolerance. Thus, an account of tolerance is, I suggest, best conceived through the conception of 'durational time' – time which is lived (Game 1997) and dynamic (Cragg and Travlou 2001).

I have begun to outline the significance of memory to my framing of tolerance. According to Grosz (2004, page 170), 'memory proper', recollection or remembrance should be understood as 'always spontaneous, tied to a highly particular place, date and situation, unrepeatable, singular, unique, perfect in itself'<sup>36</sup>. Whilst it is always directed towards the past and directed towards an idea, memory is 'called up by an attention to the present and the future', an attention that Bergson described as an "attention to life" (Crang and Travlou 2001, page 168). Grosz's engagement with Bergson's concept of time as duration, invites consideration of those things of the past that act to delay, prolong or redirect the energies of the present as sparks of 'novelty, or invention', into what might otherwise be 'predictable' (Grosz 2004, in Amin 2010, page 4).

My framing of tolerance however, is concerned with more than the direction towards ideas. It is concerned with embodied practice and the building up of habits through the '*in*foldings of memories' (Harrison 2000, my emphasis, see also Deleuze and Guattari 2008). If memory proper is concerned with the past, 'habit-memory' as Grosz (2004) terms it, is 'future orientated'; the interposition of a 'body schema between sensation and action' (page 107). Habits are developed through 'repetition, synthesis, and schematization' (page 169), which bring together regulated activities into an 'initial impulse'. An impulse to act or tolerate, can therefore be conditioned by habit or the 'synthesis of a series of repetitions into a given form' that acts in the *present*. Bergson in particular argued that habit-memory is a past that, rather than represented, is 'lived and acted' (Bergson, page 81 in Grosz 2004; see also Crang and Trevlou 2001), preserving the pasts most useful effects for the purpose of the present moment (Anderson 2004b, page 8).

Throughout the chapter, I have already highlighted the ways in which bodily perceptions are central to the workings of tolerance and through a concern with the movements of habit we might see how 'the unconscious strata of culture are built into social routine as bodily dispositions' (Tausig 1993 cited in Harrison 2000, page 503). Racial self-awareness for example might have its own habit-body, which as Alcoff (2006) suggests, is created by personal reactions to experiences of racism and challenges from others. As Varela argues:

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<sup>36</sup> See Till, 2004; Hebbert, 2005 and Crang and Travlou, 2001 for discussions on the links between memory, space and place and Anderson (2004b; 2005) for the links between recorded music and the practice of remembering.

“Cognitive structures emerge from recurrent patterns of perceptually guided action... cognition consists not of representations but of *embodied action*. Correlatively, the world as we know it is not pregiven; it is, rather, *enacted* through our history of structural coupling” (Varela, 1992 page 336 original emphasis in Harrison 2000, page 507)

Habits are central to everyday encounter and routine, they give embodied feeling a degree of consistency and configure and further maintain our sense of ‘self’ (Harrison 2000). As Harrison suggests, in this sense, embodiment is ‘the unthought in thought’ (page 497). Reiterations of already existing spatial norms can work to unconsciously reproduce segregations (see for example Thomas 2005) or negotiate shared space. Social identities are reinforced through habit, repetition, and continuity, through bodily repetition and the ‘intensification of everyday acts that otherwise remain submerged in the mundane order of things’ (Hoelscher and Alderman 2004, page 350). How we orientate our bodies around the spaces of a bus or navigate our way across a crowded platform require virtuosities developed through habit (see for example Augé 2002; Bissell 2009c) and in such instances it is often only when habits are interrupted; when its recognisable points, determinations and paths are disrupted that they may become visible<sup>37</sup>.

In thinking through the importance of habit, it is vital to attend to the notion of familiarity – and the distinction between habitual practice and the *sense* of familiarity. As Spinoza et. al suggest:

“finding a situation familiar means simply having an appropriate set of dispositions and having them respond on cue... people do form habits and find situations familiar, but there is another feature of familiarity that is different from, indeed opposed to, this sort of habituation. One can find a situation familiar even when one has never experienced its like before” (Spinoza et. al 1997 page 19 in Harrison 2000, page 512).

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<sup>37</sup> As Game (1997) suggests, when habits are disrupted, doubt can creep in to demand explanation and we are perhaps made aware of time, for as she argues, the workings of habit often render it invisible. Ruptures or nicks (Grosz 2004), can bring us face-to-face with contingency; cracking up, ‘breaking down, hitting the wall, being unable to put the next foot forward’ (Game 1997, page 117), these are all described as extreme experiences in which the future disappears (ibid).

Whilst habit is a passive 'doing' of the expected, familiarity is more active (ibid), or rather 'a mode of improvisations which operate on (and in) immanent potentials' (page 51). A developed sense of familiarity is therefore capable of fostering or developing tolerance through the development of an appropriate set of dispositions for responding to others.

## 6. Placing Tolerance

Finally, to put forward a concern with the geographies of place is not to prioritise the geographically proximate, but to focus upon the relationships that work *through* place. I have already outlined my concern with a 'relational propinquity' that accommodates spatial connections and influences of varying spatial reach and here I take forward a geography of place, which as Amin (2004b) argues, is 'consistent with a spatial ontology of cities ... as sites of heterogeneity juxtaposed within close spatial proximity, and as sites of multiple geographies of affiliation, linkage and flow' (page 38). Thus, to focus on place in this way is to hold on to a concern for the 'specific and distinctive', while 'refusing the parochial' (Massey 2004, page 6). I therefore focus upon the effects associated with the different spatial configurations of place – of Birmingham, its wards and the areas within which my field sites were positioned. As Clayton (2009, page 489) suggests, the context of place should not be considered merely 'a setting against which inter-ethnic relations are played out'. Instead, place is actively taken up through 'articulations of belonging' which mark out differences and further make sense of everyday life (ibid). A study concerned with tolerance through accounts of living with difference must acknowledge the 'urban imaginary', its projections of diversity and planning strategies, whilst attending to the continuous movement and unexpected interactions that provide the resources for 'continuous invention' (Amin and Thrift 2004, page 233). After all, as Massey argues, 'propinquity needs to be negotiated' (2004, page 6).

Experiences between and within places differ. They differ in terms of how individuals are positioned and influence the terms upon which negotiations of difference take place. The *Profiles of Prejudice* report suggested that individuals living in places with a smaller minority population are more likely to be less tolerant of difference than those living in places with higher proportions (Citizenship 21, 2003), whilst Moore and Ovadia (2006) highlight the variation in attitudes of tolerance between rural and urban communities. Individual places possess 'distinctive institutional and public cultures' which as Amin suggests, send out various

signals of inclusion or exclusion that can, in many ways, work to shape relations between strangers (2010b, page 5). In Chapter 1, I outlined the various signals of inclusion that have positioned Birmingham to be a particularly 'tolerant city'. As Conradson and Latham argue, some places would certainly seem to be more 'conducive to the generation of specific affective-emotional states than others' (2007, page 238). Paris is, as they suggest, considered to be a city of romance, whilst London might be considered modestly cosmopolitan, both of which present the opportunity for 'new modes of feeling or being' (page 235; see also Anderson and Holden 2008). Such 'affective possibilities' of place may not be accessible to all those who inhabit the city, but these affective fields and expectations are, it is argued, still somehow real – embedded and emergent from particular local ecologies that have their own rhythms and dimensions (Amin 2008). Yet how such 'signals' inflect everyday encounters is a question that is perhaps less addressed.

When concerned with the microsocialities of practice and the relational geographies of place, this question is vital. If the same spaces of encounter were examined in any other place, how and in what ways might my accounts have changed? As I have suggested, Birmingham is positioned as a city of tolerance, a city rigorously promoted as a 'plural city' and a model for a new European social imaginary that facilitates positive and progressive intercultural relations. Such projection of cultural diversity or what Chan has termed a 'stylised fiction' (2006) can say much about the local habits of encounter – or perhaps more specifically – about the structures of *expectation* through which they might occur. However, in acknowledging the means through which Birmingham has been 'animated by a conceptual vocabulary' of tolerance (Anderson and Holden 2008, page 143), I am not ignoring what is often a considerable disjuncture between the expectations of place and the everyday experiences of encounter (Sandercock 2003). Instead, I am concerned with what such expectations might *do* to encounters rather than what they might say about them. For one participant who had moved to Birmingham specifically for what she had called 'the melting pot experience', every racist encounter was more painfully felt than those she had experienced elsewhere – intensified by disappointment that the area had not lived up to her expectations. The projected expectations of encounter thus altered how these encounters of racism were experienced, felt and further made sense of.

In a recent account of the reputational geographies of Alum Rock, Birmingham, Parker and Karner (2010) argued that the dominant framework for approaching questions of social

cohesion is insufficiently attuned to the 'interweaving textures of place' (page 1453). They overlook the local practices of belonging, material conditions, multidimensional affiliations and local politics to name just a few of the particularities of place (ibid; see also Amin and Thrift 2002b). Yet they also highlight the variations between places within Birmingham. They focus upon a district of long-established South-Asian settlement three miles east of the city centre – 'one of most deprived areas in Britain' (Parker and Karner, page 1452) and one considered to be emblematic of inner city areas held to lack social cohesion. It is thus not enough to consider how an account of tolerance in Birmingham might differ from one in Newcastle for instance, but to consider what juxtapositions and spatial configurations might make my account differ from one in Alum Rock or indeed anywhere else and it is this attention to the complex conditions that affect tolerance that are so often overlooked.

Clearly, the importance of place goes beyond the institutional projections of public culture. Moore and Ovadia (2006) suggested that it was more likely to be the demographic make-up of a place or its provision of education that amounts to spatial variations of tolerance. Local politics (Reeves et al. 2009), prevailing socio-economic conditions, informal histories of conflict and inequality (see for example Rex and Moore 1967), population density, collective resources, equality agendas and immigration patterns contribute to particular ecologies of place. Social differences are developed and inculcated through the urban environment (Veninga 2007). The material implications of segregated space and the specific histories that are entangled with it, the social differences that it sustains and the politics of belonging that it inscribes (ibid), quite clearly have implications for encounter and the development of tolerance.

It is perhaps here that we might see how place, materialities and ways of thinking overlap and interlink with each other – how they come together through a series of relations. Space does not produce relations but rather comes into being through events of relation that create a sense of spatiality and place. Recent work for example, has illuminated geographical understandings that are intimately linked to the built environment (Clayton 2008; see also Gale 2004) to incorporate assumptions about 'levels of poverty, roughness, the racial, ethnic and religious make-up of the area, as well as stories of danger and memories of past experience'<sup>38</sup>. Within Birmingham for example, the city's neighbourhoods are often 'racially

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<sup>38</sup> Whilst writing this thesis, it was revealed that a series of cameras that had been installed in predominantly Muslim areas of the city – Washwood Heath and Sparkbrook – as an apparent means to tackle dangerous driving, had in fact been funded by the government terrorism division in response to



coded' in the local popular imagination (see for example Dudrah 2002; Nayak and Bonnet 2003; Ram et.al 2002) which enfolds into present encounters.

Relations of tolerance are therefore placed and whilst the framings of tolerance and even the regulation of aversions are conceived through discourses of nationhood, citizenship rights and so on to affect the tenor of everyday encounters, they are both experienced and interpreted differently in different places (Clayton 2008). Throughout this study it was quite clear that an account of difference, or more specifically, an account of difference through tolerance, drew upon accounts of race and ethnicity. Given Birmingham's unique demographic and its prominent celebration as a 'city of difference' that draws heavily upon accounts of racial harmony, it is perhaps not surprising that racial tolerance was the issue first and foremost in peoples' minds when asked to talk about their experiences. As one participant pointed out, 'here difference means race'. Of course, had the research been carried out elsewhere my account of tolerance would have looked very different from the accounts that follow in this thesis.

## **6. Conclusion: A space of possibility?**

In this chapter, I have theorised the relationship between tolerance and everyday encounter, to consider how tolerance *takes place* through events of relation. Whilst my account of tolerance is inclusive of the representational constructs that have theorised it as a specific form of virtue or political value, I have endeavoured to consider the additional constituents of action – sometimes complimentary, sometimes competing – that variously come together to condition tolerance and its operation. Crucially, in prioritising a concern with encounters and the 'intimate geographies through which affects make their way', I have put forward a concept of tolerance that is attentive to its unpredictability, to position it, not as a static concept but as a relation of possibility.

Throughout my arguments is a concern with affect. In the previous chapter I began to outline the means through which affective relations were managed through accounts of multicultural intimacies, to regulate aversions (Brown 2006; Povinelli 1998) and orientate bodies in particular ways – to outline what Fortier (2010, page 17) has referred to as a 'governing

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an analysis of 'terrorist risks in the area', sparking outrage amongst the communities in question and highlighting assumptions made about the community (Lewis 2010).

through affect'. In this chapter however, I have opened up the account of tolerance and its constituents of action, to consider more fully how capacities to affect and be affected are emergent from everyday encounters and the relations those encounters are caught up with. In so doing, I have put forward an account of tolerance that is much less predictable, much less knowable and of course, one that is much more open to possibility. Importantly, in building upon the accounts outlined in the previous chapter and considering what else conditions the taking place of tolerance, I am not advocating a replacement of its contemporary critiques, but rather a way in which we might begin to think through how some of these governances or regulations might be effectuated in everyday life and perhaps more importantly, to what extent. To say that different encounters can and often do bring forth very different reactions from us, some of which may be tolerant and some of which may be less so, I have outlined a series of conditions that are less politically motivated than is often described.

In outlining three spaces of encounter, or what Wood and Landry (2008) have described as 'zones' of encounter - a public bus service, a primary school and a conflict management workshop - I have presented a basis from which the everyday occurrence of tolerance might be usefully examined. Whilst in policy discussions, these spaces might be distinguished by the forms of interaction they tend to facilitate, they bring together a whole series of spatial arrangements, thoughts and matter. The composition of these I suggest is capable of producing very different effects and affects that further work to expand or limit the possibilities of encounter. I have therefore outlined three particular points of focus - materialities, ways of thinking and geographies of place - each of which are addressed in the empirical chapters to come, to a lesser or greater degree. The bus for example, provides a particularly intense account of materiality, where bodies are thrown together in a space restricted by handrails, seats, luggage and bodies, whilst the school develops a much more fine-tuned account of the habit body and familiar space. Lastly, the conflict management workshop is more clearly orientated around a concern for the development of ethical interventions by attending to patterns of thought.

As I have hinted, this account is by no means complete and is necessarily hesitant. The three points of focus that I have outlined provide just three ways through which we might begin to think through the relationship between everyday encounters and the taking place of tolerance. These three concerns are not easily distinguished and are clearly bound up with other relations and encounters that are variously brought to the fore in different interactions. However, in

focusing upon them I argue that we might better appreciate how *compositions* of relation amongst 'diverse collectivities of humans and non-humans' (Anderson 2006, page 738) and their variations can produce divergent affects and effects that shape its taking place. In looking at tolerance in this way, we might take forward some of the concerns that were addressed in the previous chapter; its concern with deliberative reasoning and with the careful and often minute manipulation of emotion and bodies in particular, to ask what everyday encounters do to the formative encounters between state policies and mass-mediated experience. In foregrounding an account of tolerance through encounters, I argue that it is possible to look at tolerance in a very different way.

Finally, I wish to consider what tolerance might bring to the encounter, as a way of thinking through its role in developing alternative relations with difference. In exploring the different aspects and forms of constraint at work within encounters and how these shape the taking place and operation of tolerance, we might begin to consider how to support, construct or enhance more positive associations and connections across difference (see for example Watson 2006 for a similar argument). For the final part of this chapter, I want to attend to this notion, or sense of alternatives, to take forward some of Connolly's (2002) experimentations with thought and micropolitics, to consider what my account of tolerance might achieve. Throughout Chapter 2, it was quite clear that some of the dominant critiques of contemporary tolerance were inflected with a concern that its current mobilisation within political discourses closed down the possibility for alternative projects and ways of relating, through justice, equality, respect or acceptance. Of course, these concerns were, for the most part, based upon a static conception of tolerance and one which failed to appreciate its possibilities. In recognising the relational nature of tolerance and its unpredictable taking place to examine the space of tolerance as one of possibility, we might further question whether capacities to affect and be affected might be ethically cultivated through a series of interventions – or 'a practice of tending to belonging that creates new potentialities by enacting 'good encounters'' (Anderson 2006, page 738). A concern for such ethical cultivation and the possibility that tolerance might open up a space for alternative relations is therefore a concern that I return to throughout the thesis.

Bissell for example argues that 'being imbricated within affective atmospheres reveals an *interest* in the event' (2010, page 286), which contains within it an ethical potential to 'redraw and negotiate the field of what might be possible' (ibid). In Chapter 2, I noted that Jenkins

(2002) held onto the notion that tolerance might open up a risky connection with the other, and it is with this in mind that it might be possible to (re)position the space of tolerance – and the suspension that it affords – as one of negotiation and openness to something different, rather than one that necessarily maintains distance. Tolerance therefore contains within it, the capacity to redraw ethical orientation to increase affective capacities and change the nature of the original relationship. Of course, I am not suggesting that such potential is always realised, nor do I ignore the possibility that affective capacities might be diminished, for to do so would be to overlook its unpredictable occurrence. I also recognise that individual bodies have very different capacities to affect and be affected – or put simply, that they have different capacities to tolerate. Indeed, as Anderson (2006) indicates, the creation of something better, or indeed something new, whether it be through interventions or by other means is ‘a provisional, hesitant process’ (page 740, see also McCormack 2003). Instead, it is rather a recognition that tolerance, as a way of coping with or responding to difference can play a vital role in working towards such projects as justice or acceptance.

There are therefore two points that I wish to take forward. The first is that tolerance affords a suspension from action in the face of something or someone that one dislikes and whilst it has been argued that such suspension maintains distance and can only be maintained temporarily, I argue that we might instead consider how other relations might emerge from it. Through such suspension, new habits or familiarity might develop – or new ways of thinking – that work to challenge the initial negative relation upon which the need for tolerance was first founded. In holding onto this space as a space of potential, we might therefore rethink its value and creative possibility. My second point, focuses more fully on using such space to make purposeful interventions and it is here that the work of Connolly (2002; 2005) is most valuable. In paying greater attention to the conditions of tolerance and the patterns of thinking that are bound up with it, we might develop techniques through which thinking might be altered. Such tactics might be multifarious (see for example Connolly 2002, page 101), ranging from a greater focus upon the formation of stereotypes so as to bring them into question, the cultivation of more expansive ‘powers of reflection’, or more creative interventions such as utilising the embodied techniques of dance movement therapy as a way of fostering diverse capacities to affect and be affected (McCormack 2003). Such techniques as Connolly suggests can be subtle or much more spectacular, can be applied by the self or, on agreement, can be applied by others. Crucially, they are techniques that can be proliferated in everyday life.

Having outlined my account of tolerance and the concerns to which this thesis attends, the next chapter details how tolerance was both examined and researched.



## 4. Researching Tolerance

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How might the embodied and affectual conditions and intensities of tolerance be researched? How can tolerance, understood as both an affect and effect of encounter between diverse elements, objects, people and matter, be examined? These are particularly pertinent questions given that tolerance is not a practice with a shared understanding; it means different things to different people, is sensed and felt in a myriad of different ways and is commonly considered to be a private or personal practice which is perhaps only visible once its limits have been transgressed. In the last chapter I outlined a concern with the relational, unpredictable and temporary registers through which tolerance takes shape and is further conditioned. This chapter locates my research within a growing body of work that has attempted to address such concerns whilst further addressing the ‘methodological timidity’ (Latham, 2003 page 1993; see also Thrift 2000a) that social research has been accused of following the so-called ‘crisis of representation’ (Cragg 2005). Beginning with a brief account of the ontological politics of doing research and the political interest in ‘allowing something other to emerge’ (Thrift 2003, 2020), in section 1 I locate my research within a body of work that has responded to more-than-human and more-than-representational concerns and their subsequent appeals for ‘a greater trust in the encounter, as an experience to be taken on its own terms’ (Lorimer 2007, page 91). In so doing, my research draws inspiration from recent ethnographic work that has examined the intimacies of everyday practice and encounter, in an attempt to open up abstract models of identity and difference to better address their points of potential (Clayton 2009; Slocum 2008; Nayak 2010; Watson 2006; Swanton 2010a), whilst expanding how we think about the conduct of ethnographic research more widely (Katz 2010; Swanton 2010). In section 3 I then outline the methods used, before addressing some of the key ethical and practical issues of the research. In particular, in section 4 I outline the implications of placing

my body as the researcher, my movement between sites of study and my engagement with the sensitive issues of (in)tolerance, prejudice and racism that permeated the research encounters. In so doing, I suggest that these encounters better enabled me to trace the workings of inter-cultural relations, the (re)constructions of difference and the emergence and circulation of (in)tolerance through a series of collected accounts across three very different sites, while necessarily recognising the ambiguities and limitations of such accounts. Finally, in section 5 I address how tolerance is *written* in the chapters to come.

### **1. Ethnography and the crisis of representation**

Ethnography provided a set of research techniques that enabled me to attend to the key concerns set out in the previous chapter – to examine what Herbert (2000, page 551) has termed ‘the tissue of everyday life’. Before going into these practices in more detail, I wish to reflect upon recent demands that have been made of ethnography as a mode of research following the notable (re)evaluation of social science methods (Cragg 2002a; 2003; 2005). Theoretical debates concerned with how ‘everyday life’ might be apprehended and known (Davies and Dwyer 2007; 2008; 2010); how bodily feelings and haptic knowledges might be communicated (Paterson 2009); and how unruly experience might be ‘transformed into an authoritative written account’ (Clifford cit. Cragg 2005, page 226), pose a number of ethical, practical and theoretical challenges to the examination of tolerance. Feminist and poststructural challenges to social science have demanded the production of research more sensitive to power relations (England 1994, Pratt 2000) and in the wake of the crisis of representation (Cragg 2005), ethnography and its representational strategies, like other social science methods, has been substantially critiqued (Herbert 2000).

Research methods clearly interfere with the world to both produce and enact sociality in particular ways (Law and Urry 2004) and, as such, are intrinsically political. In acknowledging that they always ‘make a difference’ Law and Urry argue that methodological habits be unmade so as to steer away from the search for certainty and generality and fully appreciate the ‘mess, confusion and relative disorder’ (Law 2004 page 2) of the world’s multiple realities. My research certainly demanded a greater concern for the fleeting, the distributed, multiple, sensory, emotional and kinaesthetic that they demanded, to avoid reproducing the ‘structural stabilities’ of the kind I outlined in Chapter 2 (Law and Urry 2004, page 404). If tolerance is



both ephemeral and elusive, then as Law (2004) notes, the notion of a singular, or definite and limited set of processes waiting to be uncovered by a rigorous research study is clearly counterintuitive. Thus a reappraisal of what I was seeking to examine, necessarily demanded a reappraisal of the methods that I sought to use.

The demand for new ways of thinking about method and the ontological politics of doing research (see also Mol 1999) outlined a further commitment to appreciating that all research is itself performative (Davies and Dwyer 2007). Recent calls for a much more fine-tuned examination of how practices might come to be explained, disavow the logic of explanation, claiming it to 'cut away at the superfluous' surfaces of life and thought and to disregard exactly that which is important (Harrison, 2002 page 489). Clearly, a more 'sensitive' approach to the everyday creativities of practice and the open-ended, excessive nature of experience (Harrison 2000) was vital to understanding the taking place of tolerance (Dewsbury 2000; Thrift 2003). An ontological commitment to recognising the world as emergent and continuously coming to sense, where the actual is always haunted by possibility (Thrift 2003), opens up our ways of thinking about tolerance and further endeavours to acknowledge that 'power is not always dependent upon crossing a threshold of contemplative cognition' (McCormack 2003, page 488), as I have suggested in the previous chapters. Such attendance to margins of manoeuvrability (Massumi 2002) and a shift from the production of explanation to the presentation of description has of course raised questions for empirical research (Latham and Conradson 2003), to further challenge the assumption that description can only ever be a preliminary to something else (Dewsbury 2003; Dewsbury et al. 2002). Of course, as McCormack has suggested, this is not to throw out representational styles all together, but rather to 're-animate' them as 'active and affective interventions' (2005, page 122) in a commitment to develop 'fidelity to the event' (2003, page 487). Whilst in places such concerns have been positioned as a 'politics of modest supplement' (Lorimer 2007), such demands on empirical research have also been criticised as something more akin to a replacement of more established methods (ibid; see also Laurier and Philo 2006). Although I do not intend to go into a discussion here, I argue that it is perhaps more productive to consider current work (and I include my own here) as an experimental 'testing ground' – as one that imbues the traditional methods of ethnographic enquiry, with a sense of creative practice, to 'take practice and its complex embodied intersubjectivities seriously' (Latham 2003, page 2000).

This work, and its political interest in allowing something 'other' to emerge, is emblematic of a new form of responsibility or ethic and a desire to open up the encounter of which was vital to this research (Thrift 2003). Through a concern with the temporary and fragile construction of social aggregates such research practices were able to expand the 'existing pool of alternatives' (Latham 2003, page 2021) through which tolerance could be examined. This responsibility, has seen insights from beyond the bounds of human geography and an increased engagement with performance (and the arts in particular), to foster a greater sensitivity to practice and encounter (Bassett 2004; Pinder 2005; Phillips 2004), including work with bodies (McCormack 2003; Pinder 2005), social psychology (Bondi 2005a, 2005b), moving image methodologies (Lorimer 2010), narrative and diary approaches (Latham 2003), and more performative/creative styles of writing ethnographic research (Price 2010; Brace and Johns-Putra, 2010). My ethnographic work thus drew upon such examples of what might be considered a more methodologically plural and empirically engaged style of human geography (Latham 2003) and whilst there have been calls for the 'throwing out' of the more 'canonical' methods of interviews, focus groups and so on (Thrift 2000a), I followed Latham (2003) in his call to use such explorations and interdisciplinary collaborations as an 'opportunity to reinterpret and reappropriate established methodologies and ways of writing' (page 2012).

In drawing upon and further developing creative dialogues between already established methods of research (Latham 2003, page 2012) and more-than-representational concerns of enactment, performance and the liveliness of practice, my ethnography endeavoured to be attentive to the embodied, material, affective and visceral conditions of tolerance, whilst remaining attentive to the more rigid categories of identity and belonging that both cut across and interact with such concerns. Loughenbury (2009) in particular has argued that the combination of NRT (Non Representational Theory) and ethnomethodologies, locates an 'empirically useful common ground' that enables a 'workable-method of ethnographic apprehension' (page 1409) that is capable of attending to a sense of personal capacity, whilst further paying attention to the 'vaguely tangible phenomena' (ibid) that I have identified, to multiply the ways in which tolerance might be examined, thought, conditioned and practiced. Thus, Loughenbury like others (see for example Laurier and Philo 2006; Latham 2003) has noted the value of utilising tenets of NRT, despite claims elsewhere that it might encourage or

retain a 'preoccupation' with 'the representational aporia as that which cannot be by-passed' (Laurier and Philo 2006, cited in Loughenbury 2009 page 1409) <sup>39</sup>.

Such combination tallied with my concern for studying the encounter as a movement of closeness between matter, bodies, spaces, times and thoughts, but furthermore as Swanton (2010b) suggests, through the tension between NRT and ethnomethodological approaches, it was possible to better grasp 'encounters with history' to include past experience, nostalgia, repetition, discourses of community cohesion, structural inequality and so on. In so doing, my research goes some way to address Katz's recent call for a development in the temporal dimensions of ethnographic data and 'the need to follow people before, through and after the sites where fly-on-the-wall researchers have traditionally observed them' (2010, page 25). This includes questions concerning the biographical meanings of situated public interactions, how history imposes on the present and a much fuller account of the macro-social formations that permeate micro-socialities (ibid). Whilst Katz perhaps overstates his case and overlooks work already underway (e.g. Hall 2004), in bringing time more centrally into ethnographic research, the 'longer-term framework of a participant's biography' (Katz 2010, page 26) is given greater credence, to recognise that 'history impinges on the present in ways we cannot always grasp' (page 27). This was, of course, of paramount importance when examining the taking place of tolerance and my concern with habit, familiarity and memory.

To this point, I have endeavoured to outline some of the key concerns and theoretical underpinnings that informed my approach to researching tolerance. I now turn to outline the ways in which I sought to attend to the affective, creative and embodied taking place of tolerance in everyday encounters.

## **2. Researching the Encounter**

'Each part of a city is distinct from each other part, and is different at different times of the day and night as well as across the different months and years, depending on the wider socio-political context. It is also different depending on

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<sup>39</sup> There is, of course, considerable debate over the practical application of NRT. Critics have voiced concerns over its political relevance (see for example Pile 2010); have further claimed that it tends to overlook emotional subjectivities and the human subject (Thien 2005; see Anderson and Harrison 2006 for a response); and argued that it overlooks issues of power, subjugation and difference (Tolia-Kelly 2006). Whilst each critique differs somewhat in focus, I have endeavoured to outline my application of NRT as one that is fully compatible with a concern for the body, emotions and difference and one that compliments the ethnomethodological approach outlined.

who you are, both in a material sense and in the realm of the imaginary – every subjectivity in the city is walking through the city streets with a different set of images and imaginations, constituted in personal histories. Each city is different from another’ (Watson 2006 page 2).

My research is positioned within a growing body of work that is attentive to everyday encounters (see for example Wise and Velayutham 2008), which encompass concerns with affect and emotion (Nayak 2010), machinic geographies (Swanton 2010a, 2010b) and corporeal feminist theories (Slocum 2008) to name just a few. Such work not only attends to the creativities of practice, but has been utilised as a means to resist dominant narratives of identity (Alexander 2000), belonging (Veninga 2007; Wise 2005) and ‘living together’ (Swanton 2010a). Alexander’s (2002) work for example, highlights how ethnography can trouble the ‘wisdom’ of bounded ethnic groups, to tell stories that resist dominant racialised narratives that provide the very ‘cultural artefacture that reinscribes difference’ (Kalra 2006, page 459), which as Kalra argues, can further enable a commitment to a cultural politics of resistance. My work therefore seeks to do just this through troubling the bounded identities and subjectivities that dominate accounts of tolerant relations, its virtue and value, and the ethical and emotional injunctions through which proximities are both imagined and further designed, by state actors, discourses and policy documents.

Watson’s (2006) study of (dis)enchanted publics for example, provides a detailed ethnography that aims to destabilise dominant, often simplistic and universalised accounts of public space, to (re)consider it as ‘a site of potentiality, difference and delightful encounter’ (page 19). In this respect, I took much inspiration from her focus on multiple sites of encounter, her intention to move away from ‘spaces that more usually capture public attention’ (page 18) – those loved by city planners and investors – to focus instead on some of the more ordinary spaces of everyday life, too often considered unimportant or somehow ‘in-between’. In choosing multiple sites of encounter, I was able to consider how each site was distinct from the others, at different times and according to different people, and how these differences were productive of varying degrees and intensities of (in)tolerance so as to multiply its account. In offering an alternative exploration of what might be considered to be ‘mundane’ space (see for example Binnie et. al 2007), my intention was to not only open up understandings of practice, but to position each as a site of potential. As with Watson’s (2006) study, this required addressing the socio-cultural, historical and political specificity of each site,

accumulating ethnographic details and descriptions, as well as interrogating the wider discourses of belonging and identity that permeated them<sup>40</sup>.

### Embodied research

*‘Considering the unseen in the everyday involves more than just epistemological consideration, but an awareness of the performed manners of everyday life as ontological’ (Harrison 2000 page 498).*

When considering why it is that we can regularly observe or inhabit a street without ever really noticing anything, Harrison (2000) contends that it is because our embodiment is implicated in everything we see or say – as he suggests, ‘the unthought in thought revolves around [it]’ (page 497). An attunement to embodied practice or the ‘unseen’ in the everyday was thus crucial to disclosing the workings of tolerance and how it is variously entangled with geographies of affect and emotion (such as anxiety or worry, Hage 2003) and how bodies can *become* tolerant. This was achieved through various tactics. Nayak (2010) in particular suggests that the ‘emotionally charged’ nature of ethnographic fieldwork, better confronts us with the visceral productions of identity and difference, and indeed my ethnographic attention to embodiment – through which bodily practices can become – necessarily encompassed a concern with the sensate – touch, smell, taste, hearing and the visual (Morton 2005; Drobnick 2006, Smith 1994; 1997; 2000). My own observation work, might better be described as ‘observant participation’ (Thrift 2000a), as for the most part, I was an active participant – as passenger, workshop participant and so on<sup>41</sup>. I endeavoured to attune myself to the ‘goings on’ that constantly emerged during the research process (Morton 2005, page 668) and the ‘collective and nonpersonal nature of sense and feeling’ (Harrison 2000, page 498). Through witnessing, sensing, listening and performing, I was able to pay attention to what Morton (2005) described as ‘the expressive, embodied and affective contours and evocations of manifold and co-existent geographies of the now’ (page 662) to attend more fully to their role in the taking place of tolerance. Such attention, has a degree of overlap with Kusenbach’s earlier ‘go-along’ ethnographies (2003), which endeavoured to be more attentive to the

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<sup>40</sup> Loughenbury also utilised a combination of NRT and ethnomethodological techniques to explore the potential or the ‘affective capacities’ that ‘mark out the individuals behind the disaffected young white men’ identified in the Cattle Report (2009 page 1414)

<sup>41</sup> Brown in his work on the affective geographies of homoerotic cruising, has also noted the value of incorporating personal encounters into research that focuses on what are ‘deeply embodied and visceral experiences’ (2008 page 918)

'transcendent and reflective aspects of lived experience *in situ*' (2003, page 455 author's emphasis) through the combination of ethnographic observation and interviewing<sup>42</sup>. In my concern for capturing the sensed practices of tolerance and its emergent properties, my observations took leave in particular from Bull and Back (2003), who advocate an attention to such concerns by 'thinking through ears'. As they propose:

The kind of listening we envision is not straightforward, not self-evident – it is not easy listening. Rather, we have to work toward what might be called agile listening and this involves attuning our ears to listen again to the multiple layers of meaning potentially embedded in the same sound. More than this, deep listening involves practices of dialogue and procedures for investigations, transposition and interpretation' (page 3-4)

Such agile listening enabled a thinking through of relational practices – how I related to others and the places I inhabited – to attend to the ways in which places and atmospheres changed with different sounds (see also Tonkiss 2003) and how such changes altered bodily capacities to act and to tolerate<sup>43</sup>. Observant participation also enabled an attention to kinaesthetic affects, an attunement to the movements that are so often beyond representational awareness and absent from ethnographic research (see for example Jones 2005; McCormack 2003 for notable exceptions). This considered for example, the corporeal experiences of travelling – the 'reek and jiggle' of bus passengering (Hutchinson 2000), or the vibrations of travel that were generative of particular collectives and 'provisional connections between bodies' (Bissell forthcoming). My interrogation therefore required sympathy to the 'alterability of sensuous dispositions and somatic sensations' (Paterson 2009, page 779), which I achieved through a careful reflection on my own movements in combination with the accounts of movement and feeling provided by participants (see Spinney 2006). In combining such sensual autoethnography with additional participant-observation work, interviewing, focus groups, and diaries, I became what Crang has described as a 'copresent interlocutor' (2003, page 499). Rather than considering my body to be an inescapable positioning – through race, gender and

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<sup>42</sup> Kusenbach (2003) outlines the 'go-along' method as being a combination of ethnographic observation and participant interviews, the combination of which are particularly suited to a focus upon spatial practice, biography and environmental perception. Researchers accompany participants on their everyday outings and through asking questions, listening and watching 'actively explore their subjects' stream of experiences and practices as they move through, and interact with, their physical and social environment' (page 463).

<sup>43</sup> Whilst it was beyond observation, Connolly (2002) notes how 'infrasound' might come to colour moods, feelings and perceptions. He acknowledges recent experiments in neuroscience whereby organ music too low to be heard resulted in reactions of sorrow, coldness, anxiety and shivers' (page 179-180).

so on – my body became an instrument of the research (Crang 2003, see also for example Anderson, J. 2004)<sup>44</sup>.

Of course, exploring the ‘doing’ or happenings of tolerance through these means, did not lose sight of the ways in which bodies are expected to do things (Nash 2000, Nayak 2010), nor did I ignore the various semantics of tolerance, its national framings, religious inflections and so on. Nayak’s illuminating account of racism in the postcolonial English suburbs (2010) is particularly useful in demonstrating how non-representational concerns can help understand how difference might be ‘pushed into life’ through encounters with human and non-human actors’ (2010 page 2372), without forgoing a concern with the discursive, representational constructs and historically generated ideas that exist within complex relations (see also Anderson and Harrison 2006). As he argues:

‘ritual choreographies articulate what so often goes unspoken in day-to-day exchanges (...): the barely uttered gestures, fleeting glances, strained silences, and discreet performances of othering’ (page 2388).

Similarly, it was upon the discreet performances that bring the silent and often immanent conditions of tolerance into emergence that I aimed to focus, to produce ‘ethnographic collisions of events, text and meaning,’ of compositions in process (Nayak 2010, page 2377), to consider how encounters were linked with wider narratives of nationhood, citizenship, belonging and identity formation. This enabled an apprehension of the fields of power in which tolerance might be implicated (McCormack 2005), how apparently rigid ideas and structures such as those of family, nation and gender might be modified, interrupted or unexpectedly transformed.

### 3. Methods

The research took place across three sites as outlined in the previous chapter – a bus, a school and a conflict management workshop across a nine month period (October 2008-June 2009). Research carried out on the bus continued throughout this period, as did the research at the conflict management group (although work was restricted to the timetable of its workshop

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<sup>44</sup> This also attended to what Crang has described as the problem of ‘practice lagging behind current theory’ where using the body as a tool of research is concerned (2003 page 499).

programme). Work at the school however, was confined to the summer term (April 2009-June 2009) to fit in with the school's busy schedule and to minimise disruption. Whilst each site was distinct, with different relations, temporalities, and people and each formed the basis of an empirical chapter these sites were not bounded or somehow separate. Different spatialities were enfolded within each one and the research always occupied spaces other than those explicitly outlined. Not only did I move between each of these sites, but my opinions of them were informed by other encounters that occurred in other spaces, where very different conditions were at play (Clayton 2008). Furthermore, my research encompassed 'shifts between scales of enquiry', moving between the institutional and the intimate, between Birmingham and Durham and between 'previously disparate practices ... the academic debate and the embodied experience' (Lorimer 2003 page 200; Swanton 2007). My ethnography and the research accounts to follow therefore form what might best be described as 'an interrelated mosaic of interpretative snapshots and vignettes of a particular social space and set of social practices *in the making*' (Latham 2003, page 2005), an ethnography generated through the 'imperfect processes of remembrance, transmission and interpretation' (Lorimer 2003 page 199). I moved between observant participation and participant observation, engaged in conversation, formal meetings, peripheral membership and sometimes more active membership. Part of my research took me to London, whilst several of my participants were based at various locations across the country, one of which was as far afield as Chicago, Illinois, and all of which brought different subjectivities to the research. I have observed bus shelters, routines, buses, workshops, coffee meetings, clothes, school assemblies, dance productions, Frisbee games, interactions and news headlines, which cover just some of the myriad ethnographic encounters that I documented. It was the accumulation of all of these encounters along with the interviews, conversations and diaries of participants that produced the three sites presented within this thesis and through which my understanding of the prosaic practices of tolerance took shape.

I have begun to address the means through which I endeavoured to pay attention to the embodied and sensed registers of tolerance through attending to the multiple encounters that produced each of the three sites. As I have suggested, my ethnographic observations were combined with additional material gathered from interviews, diaries, focus groups and discourse analysis and before I move on to consider some of the practical and ethical implications of the research I want to first address these in more detail.



## Discourse Analysis

Throughout the research, discourse analysis of UK government policy documents along with policies specific to Birmingham (e.g. DCLG 2009a; 2007; CIC 2007), and think tank/trust documents (e.g. Citizenship 21; Kelly and Byrne 2007) on issues of tolerance, multi/inter-culturalism and diversity was carried out in an attempt to locate the semantics of tolerance and track its dominant and subordinate framings. Media representations of such policies, including both national and local newspapers were examined to gain a sense of the national, local and social context within which the research took place. During my research for example, anti-war protests in Luton that had targeted returning British soldiers from Afghanistan, ignited various responses from numerous far-right groups, and culminated in National Front demonstrations, corresponding anti-fascism campaigns and the birth of the English Defence League, which renewed debates on extremism, free speech, Islam and Britishness. These events, perhaps unsurprisingly cropped up in research conversations, directed discussions, and redrew boundaries of tolerance. These analyses thus began to address the extent to which wider discourses of tolerance inflected day-to-day encounters and worked to intensify or dampen existing (in)tolerances and personal judgements.

## Focus Groups

A series of focus groups (each consisting of between three and eleven people) were carried out, both at the school and with participants from the NCBI workshops. The groups provided an opportunity to further tease out the extent to which civic pedagogy and media stories inflected their accounts, whilst addressing the multiple and varied ways in which tolerance was (collectively) made sense of on a day-to-day basis. For the most part, the groups were composed in part – if not entirely – by people who were already acquainted prior to the groups taking place<sup>45</sup>. The focus groups at the school were composed of parents who had responded to my call for participation, whilst the groups from the workshop were made up of people who had completed a workshop together. Whilst focus groups are oft-cited as being one of the main cultural methods in need of reappropriation (Latham 2003, Thrift 2000a) and

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<sup>45</sup> There has been discussion as to the extent to which this impacts upon the research, at one point during a focus group held with NCBI participants it was noted that some of the individuals were also work colleagues which was threatening the participants 'presentation of self' (Wellings et. al 2000)

are often critiqued for failing to reflect 'everyday interactions' on account of being artificially set up (Meth 2003), the groups developed a series of narratives that further helped to facilitate access to 'tacit, uncodified and experiential knowledge' (Hopkins 2007), through their use of collective activity and group interaction (Bryman 2004), which in some cases was followed up by individual interviews<sup>46</sup>. These began to address how personal biographies were bound up with accounts and delineations of tolerance, whilst attention to the embodied comprehensions and practices of the group discussions (see for example Davidson 2001), and a greater reflection on the numerous forms of everyday communication, anecdotes and jokes illuminated some of the ways in which it was accounted, challenged and negotiated to identify points at which differences were (re)constituted (Delph-Janiurek 2002). In these instances, a concern with the minutiae of practice, the changing moments of intensity, points of disruption or silences (Hyams 2004; Rose 2004; Davidson 2001) was vital and for the most part, my role in directing conversation within the groups was minimal (see Cameron 2005). Some interviews were however later conducted with focus group participants, whilst additional interviews and conversations were ongoing throughout the research, both at the school and NCBI (for a full list of the interviews completed see Appendix 1), some of which were pre-arranged, some of which were spontaneous. Those that were arranged were either carried out at pre-arranged locations or completed over the phone or by email correspondence.

### Diary

I took leave from Latham's (2003) diary-interview technique. Twelve diaries were handed out and five were returned, each of which were of varying length, style and quality. Following a common anxiety over just exactly what was expected from the diaries, participants were provided with a series of questions or guidelines to get their diaries started e.g. *are there particular moments or places in which you have felt tolerant/intolerant today?* – although these were not explicit and diarists were encouraged to develop their own format and narrative resources as a means of reflecting upon events. Some of the diarists chose to set themselves questions to which they later responded, whilst others made detailed recordings of their daily routines, thoughts and rhythms and further used the space to reflect upon past events. Due to the time constraints of those that took part, only one of these was followed up

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<sup>46</sup> There have been ongoing debates around the merits of focus groups and the distinctions between such group interaction and interviews (see Hopkins 2007 for an overview). Concerns expressed over the lack of disclosure that focus groups might encourage (Hollander 2004), have been met by others that highlight the potential for unique and spontaneous interaction that they enable (Skop 2006).

by an interview<sup>47</sup>, whilst the remainder were completed at a distance and returned by post as the preferred means of taking part in the research<sup>48</sup>. Whilst varying in approach, the often-discontinuous nature of the diary entries enabled a greater reflection upon the diversity of conscious thoughts and feelings (Meth 2003, Crang 2005) to offer insights into the many accumulations of encounter that make up accounts of tolerance. By bringing together a series of recordings that outlined their daily activities and performances, their relations with others, alongside reflections on past events, media stories and current affairs, the use of solicited diaries encouraged self reflection on their own behaviour, which allowed room for the identification of personal priorities (Milligan et. al 2005; Elliott 1997). They provided a vehicle for individuals to 'create a gap between their everyday self and their diary-writing self' (Latham 2003 page 2004), to produce 'constellations of sites, subjects, experience and sources dating from both past and present' as a means to 'embrace a creative biographical dimension in geographical research' (Lorimer 2003 page 200). Whilst the use of open-ended, solicited diaries as narrative spaces of reflection is relatively rare (Latham 2003), such spaces of reflection upon daily practice was valuable to the development of a greater awareness of the everyday, particularly considering that much of daily routines are 'non-conscious' (ibid). More specifically, the diaries proved particularly useful for garnering reflections on the techniques of engagement learned within NCBI workshops and the extent to which they encouraged acts of 'self-modification' or reflection after the workshop had taken place, whilst offering useful insights into the ways in which past encounters curtailed encounters and perceptions of others.

It is worth noting here that the methods used at each site varied. I conducted three focus groups at the school and three with NCBI and while diaries were issued to participants at both sites only five were returned, all of which were from NCBI participants. Multiple interviews were conducted across both of the sites, the details of which can be found in Appendix 1. No participants were involved in the research that was conducted on the bus as I was unable to recruit participants and so the account presented in Chapter 5 is garnered from my own observant participation as a passenger. Observant participation was also conducted in the NCBI workshops where I took part as a participant of the training. Within the school however,

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<sup>47</sup> The diary-interview method was coined by Zimmerman and Wieder (1977). On completion of the diary an interview was arranged to explore the 'less directly observable features of the events recorded, their meanings, their propriety, typicality, connection with other events, and so on' (page 484). The diary was examined and a series of questions were prepared in order to explore some of the points that had been raised within the diaries or highlight any points of clarification that may have been needed.

<sup>48</sup> In one particular case this form of participation was the preferred way to address and discuss sensitive and personal issues, offering them an alternative way in which to express their views (Crang 2005; Meth 2003).

my reflections on parent encounters were naturally more reliant upon interview and focus group material.

#### **4. Placing bodies; relations of power**

As I suggested at the beginning of the chapter, methods interfere with the world. Research processes generate knowledge in particular ways, but to this point, I have been less explicit about my *position* as the researcher. Whilst Crang (2003) recognised that research accounts have perhaps moved beyond an obsessive focus upon insider-outsider positions, too-often, he suggests, they still 'reproduce problematic notions of a stable, tightly defined, unchanging research project conducted by a singular researcher, with one stable essential identity, both between locations and over time, and suggest the latter is also true of the researched' (page 497). Meanwhile, there has been some backlash against endeavours of reflexivity, with claims of nihilism and a concern that 'textual reflexivity recreates the myth of the exceptional researcher set apart from their respondents not now by the clarity of their knowledge, but by their level of introspection, doubt and anxiety' (Crang 2005 on Bourdieu, page 226). Whilst I have outlined the importance of autobiographical trajectories within my research, the presentation of such accounts has been charged with being 'a moment of ethnographic hypocrisy, a systematic rewarding of style over substance by trading in the rites of the field and the voice of the Other for the art of the prose and the examination of the Self (Murphy 2002 page 252 cit Crang 2003). In the next section, however I highlight not only the need to recognise that research practice always takes place through a particular embodied perspective (see for example Saldanha 2007), but that the 'art of prose' has significant implications for the ongoing interpretations of the research encounters that I present in the chapters to come. First however, I consider three points of concern; the performance of research identities; processes of differentiation; and relations of power.

### **i. The performance of research identities**

For the most part anxieties arose as I moved between various positions; researcher, local resident, former pupil, passenger, participant, volunteer, colleague, friend and so on<sup>49</sup>. Trying to make sense of my position as a researcher as I negotiated these was difficult. Perhaps one of the most difficult sites for establishing and negotiating research relations with participants was the conflict management workshop. I was initially introduced to the group after locating them on the internet and making contact through email. Given that NCBI relies on the work of volunteers, I offered to volunteer with the group in order to negotiate access to its programme and participants, in a way that was hopefully of benefit to both parties. For the most part, my voluntary work there involved no more than administrative work; sending out emails, collating payment details, assisting with the practical organisation of workshops and on one occasion presenting a talk on 'Diversity Matters,' all of which I carried out alongside, and as a part of, my wider research. I was immediately welcomed to the branch, which was still in the early stages of establishing itself and was treated as a colleague from the offset.

Whilst my initial intention was to observe workshops as they took place alongside an examination of the workshop programme of methods, and to further recruit workshop participants to take part in my research, some of the NCBI facilitators, who had all participated in workshops as part of their training, strongly recommended that I participate in the workshops myself, so as to fully appreciate how the workshop techniques worked – something that I was told was better experienced than described (see McCormack 2003). Whilst my participation in workshops was welcomed by the other participants, who were made fully aware of my position as both a researcher and NCBI volunteer, the performance of these various identities was much more problematic and is reflected throughout my accounts in Chapter 7.

The workshops were challenging and covered some very sensitive and in most cases, very personal issues. At points when we were asked to reflect upon and further talk about our own prejudices, I was caught between a commitment to share and talk unreservedly about my prejudices, and an anxiety that I might potentially alienate some of my research participants – would they still talk to me if they felt that I was in some way judging them – if I revealed

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<sup>49</sup> Whilst I wish to draw attention here to the establishments, developments, translations and disruptions of my research relationships, they are by no means presented here as a claim to 'innocence' (Alexander 2000) or as an attempt to render the research coherent (Rose 1997; Pratt 2000), but rather to open up my multiple positions as a researcher.

something that they didn't like? Such decisions illuminate some of the practical and indeed ethical issues that arose during my varied research encounters and the necessary and messy movements between various roles and positions. This part of the study in particular was at times acutely personal, marked by relationships and my own learning through an exploration of my prejudices, self cultivation and so on. This had not been an intention of the research, but an unanticipated outcome that was rewarding on a variety of levels.

Bondi (2005) in particular has noted the very real need to reflect more fully upon the emotional impact of the project upon the researcher and the numerous occasions during which they might be moved by others (Bondi et. al 2005). Through such questioning my intention here is to go beyond a critical and reflexive examination of exactly what the research aimed to accomplish and who it was working for (Davidson 2001), to further illuminate a concern with how participants were presented within my ethnographic texts. Across the workshops, I learned a surprising amount about the other participants (and shared a surprising amount in return), people were seemingly very open and forthcoming with very sensitive, and often intimately personal detail about their lives and thoughts (the details of which do not feature in this thesis). I developed a strong affection for those that I completed my training with, which produced 'shifting sets of understandings, emotions, proximities and preferences' as the research developed (Alexander 2000 page 38). Being the youngest member of the group by a distance had a big impact upon the tenor of relationships developed – they were variously protective, supportive and encouraging; I was described in two instances as an 'adopted daughter', a surrogate sister, an ally and a friend. In thinking through these particular sets of complex relations, I took leave from Alexander (2000) who argues that an examination of such relationships is not simply about hierarchy and inequality and certainly not about objectivity, but rather provides an account of the complex power relations within which the research was situated, acknowledging that rather than 'detached and stable', as a researcher, I was myself continuously reconstituted through the research process (Delph-Janiurek 2002).

## **ii. Processes of differentiation, placing the body**

As Paterson has suggested, when 'thinking of and writing about the haptic experience of others, it is inescapably mediated through the haptic experiences of the researcher' (Paterson 2009, page 776, see also Bennett 2004). Of course, self narratives, or indeed any research

account, can never be impartial (Price 2010) and there are always going to be gaps. Indeed as one of my main concerns was to examine the conditions of tolerance, how personal biographies and histories of encounter, disposition and so on constellate to produce different affects, patterns of thinking and embodied understandings, it would be difficult to ignore my own embodiment of the research field and the inevitability that it would alter my accounts of, and relations with, participants and research sites.

I am reminded in particular of the observation work that I conducted within the school playground and the constant anxiety I felt about 'loitering' in a playground when I had no children of my own. Despite having permission to be there, the ongoing concern that my presence would ignite suspicion amongst parents always left me with a feeling of unease. As Brennan (2004) has suggested, a person's individual emotional experience is important, if one is feeling anxious, then the felt anxiety will work to influence one's impressions of their surroundings in often undetectable ways. Of course, it is difficult to know the extent of its influence but it is important to note nonetheless. However, whilst my presence in the playground was fairly (or so I felt) conspicuous – a body seemingly out of place – my experiences of bus passengering were entirely different, having travelled along that particular route from a very young age. Across my numerous journeys it was disconcertingly easy to forget the reason for the journey, to become just another passenger as I have always been along that particular route. A certain diligence was required to attend to my ethnographic work (see for example Watts 2008) to locate myself as a researcher and pay attention to those things that have for many years made up the rhythms of my everyday life, through 'deep listening' and all those other concerns mentioned previously. There was always a concern that my biography would allow me to focus on some things to the neglect of others and in those instances when I was relying upon observation work, there was a continuous concern that I might be seeing things that were not necessarily there.

Whilst Loughenbury (2009) suggests that we might pick up on 'cues' or practical gestures to give us an insight into an individual's experiences - the flush of a cheek<sup>50</sup>, as an expression of a body perhaps angered or embarrassed – I am wary to suggest that any such cues can ever be treated as anything more than partial. This important point was perhaps made most stark during an NCBI workshop. Following the completion of an exercise aimed at dealing with

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<sup>50</sup> Connolly for example notes how 'thought-imbued energies find symptomatic expression in the timbre of our voices, the calmness or intensity our gestures, our facial expressions, the flush of our faces, the rate of our heartbeats, the receptivity, tightness or sweatiness of our skin, and the relaxation or turmoil in our guts (2002 page 76).

controversial issues fairly, in which Charlene was asked to present two sides of an argument without giving away her own personal position, the audience were asked whether they were able to detect which side of the argument Charlene supported:

Alycia points out that she picked up on Charlene's defensive body language which unintentionally 'gave away' Charlene's position even if her words didn't. Charlene asks for clarification from Alycia who points out that at times during one of the accounts, Charlene placed her hand on the small of her back whilst she talked - clenching her fist tightly as she spoke to the room. Alycia sits back and looks pleased with herself, pointing out how amazing it is that you can say one thing, whilst your body says something quite different. Charlene cuts in "...but I suffer from chronic back pain. When I stand, I often put my hand there so that I can apply pressure and ease it a bit".

For me, this particular encounter most readily highlighted the pitfalls of such research and why participant observation is often fraught with anxieties. Of course, my research was full of countless acts of misrecognition of my own - acts to which I draw attention to throughout the thesis; but acts which are also undoubtedly common-place to everyday encounters (Back 2007, Noble 2009b). Of course, attention to the ways in which subjects are discursively constituted (Cameron and Gibson 2005) through a reliance on observation (Katz 1992), has acknowledged the undesirable construction and subsequent imposition of meaning often imposed upon the participant by the researcher (Brewer 2000) and I will return to this later in the final section of the chapter.

### **iii. Negotiating difference**

The subjects and participants of this thesis were not selected to represent difference and otherness in any predictable way. As I have argued, tolerance is attached to a whole manner of subjects, from appetites and fashion through to matters of ethnicity, and I was concerned with all of these things. However, in Chapter 6 for example, White Britishness in particular is interrogated as a difference that is particularly paramount to the space of the school, whilst gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity and class and the ways in which they are represented and performed in public space variously come to the fore in different moments across all three empirical chapters.



At other points in my research I was confronted with occasions where discussions of (in)tolerance became a space within which racist or bigoted comments were made. There has been much discussion amongst researchers as to how best to respond to such moments – and this was particularly important, as grasping the circulation of (in)tolerances and prejudices was such a central endeavour of the research. In some instances, expectations that there would be agreement between the participant and I spoke volumes, both about my assumed role as a researcher and the extent to which my identity was constructed – most often based upon assumptions made about my whiteness (see for example Back and Solomos 1993; Swanton 2007). Such responses were not something that could be prepared for, or decided prior to interviews but care was taken not to endorse such comments. Relational dimensions were however, brought forth from research moments (McCormack 2003) and in numerous cases amounted to the emergence of unanticipated feelings – perhaps empathy, perhaps anger (Bondi 2003), particularly within the confines of the workshop spaces and so, as McCormack makes clear, any figuration of the ethical was always ‘implicated in and emergent from the diverse sensibilities of embodiment’ (McCormack 2003 page 500). Indeed as Longhurst et. al (2008) have noted, the body of the researcher is itself a tool of research drawing attention to unwanted bodily responses and the messy unpredictability of the body (Paterson 2009) which was of course, central to the research.

## **5. Writing Tolerance**

‘Representations do not have a message; rather they are transformers, not causes or outcomes of action but actions themselves. Not examples but exemplary. In this sense representation is perhaps most usefully thought of as incessant presentation, continually assembling and disassembling, timing and spacing; worlding’ (Dewsbury et.al 2002 page 438).

‘[T]he creation of effects is precisely the business of writing’ ...

As Alexander (2006; see also Kalra 2006) has rightly asserted, ethnography is a dual process of fieldwork and writing and so a ‘concern for its poetic is paramount’ (Alexander 2006, page 398). How my accounts are pictured, narrated and written have implications not only for the ways in which subjects and encounters are constituted by the research, but also have

implications for their ongoing presentation and politics (Kalra 2006, Miller et. al 1998). In a recent collaboration between literary studies and geography, Brace and Johns-Putra argued the pressing need to (re)consider the *process* of writing (and reading) within geographic research, to address recent questions of representation and focus much more fully on texts as ongoing 'creations' (page 401), whilst attending to concerns about strategies of interpretation (Wiles et al. 2005). The visible traces of my ethnographic texts might be evidenced in my multiple fieldwork notebooks, chapter revisions, memos, transcripts and so on but the wider, perhaps less visible traces of their construction are somewhat obscured from the view of the reader. In this last section, I wish to reflect on the ethnographic accounts that accompany the argument of the thesis, to address the style of presentation that I have adopted, for as Price (2010) has argued, 'language – in its structure, utterances and inscriptions – constitutes the cornerstone of place-making' (page 203). When selecting the accounts presented over the remaining chapters, I maintained an awareness of the affect that they may have on the reader. The accounts presented are a combination of fieldwork diary reflections and participant observation notes coupled with media accounts, documentary transcripts, photos, diary entries and interview and focus group extracts.

Whilst accounts taken from the media or interview/focus group data were presented without alteration, save in some instances for the name, fieldwork diary reflections and participant observation accounts went through several drafts before completion. There are two points that I wish to address here; the first relates to the style in which the accounts are written and the second relates to the content of these accounts. When conducting participant observation, a method of 'thick description' was used to document my encounters, produced detailed lists of sights, objects, and people without, for the most part, any analysis. Given that the majority of my observation work was concerned with the everyday-ness of encounter, it was paramount that I attended to those things that were more-often-than-not, mundane, ordinary and overlooked, in short, to document 'what was happening when nothing was happening' (Becker 2001 page 73). As Becker notes, on a day-to-day basis it is most likely that we only become aware of those things that surround us when something is out of step or disrupted (ibid). For me, this was particularly important to bear in mind, given that the everyday workings of tolerance as a withholding or refrain from action, is perhaps only made clear when such withholding is suspended or disrupted. There is also an element of temporality to my empirical examples. Whilst Becker has noted the stylistic devices and use of multiple tenses in the work of Georges Perec, who adopts the perfect and imperfect tense to create a sense of

action both across time and as yet to occur, the varying tenses used in my own accounts were rather testimony to the duration of time across which they were written and were not consciously used. Participant observation tended to produce accounts of things as they were occurring, whilst other diary entries were reflections on such encounters and the final texts presented in this thesis are an accumulation of snapshots that are now over a year old, which to some extent captures both their complexity and ambiguity (Pred 2004).

Before moving on to the first empirical chapter, I want to reflect upon the *content* of my empirical accounts. These reflections upon the creation of the texts to follow and the rationale for such reflexivity, is to not only specify the partiality of the accounts, but is, as Pratt (2000) suggests, to take responsibility for them and open up new ways of knowing. After much deliberation, I removed all bodily descriptors of participants, omitting any attention to appearance, race, ethnicity, age and so on, unless it was explicitly referred to within the encounter or by a participant. I felt that in recounting bodily descriptors during accounts of (in)tolerance, I was automatically investing such characteristics with significance in relation to the unfolding of the encounter (Wiles et.al 2005), potentially reifying those processes by which bodies become fixed by their differences and controlling their 'visibility' (Pratt 2000, page 641). I also omitted any personal detail of the stories recounted within workshop sessions, as, whilst interesting and entirely moving accounts, such detail offered little extra to the account of tolerance. Thus despite having permission to reproduce them, I felt it unnecessary to use such accounts for the sake of interest only, particularly when the specificity of the accounts would risk exposing the identity of my participants (see for example Back and Solomos 1993). Of course, I am not suggesting that the empirical examples presented are free from problems, but rather, I hope I have gone some way to open them up to (re)interpretation and 'the possibility of alternative readings that transcend the taken for granted' (Pred 2004, page xiii). I turn now to my first empirical example; the bus.



## 5. Passing Propinquities: Tolerance on the Move

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*'People who live here know the city by its roads, bus routes, canals and railways, and we criss-cross these tracks, negotiating our way around the city...'* (Gay and Bell 1999 page.8).

The bus is packed with commuters. The school run. A couple at the front of the bus give up their seat for an elderly couple that have just got on. They join the growing number of people stood at the front of the bus. The doors open. A young mother and daughter get on. The woman pays and the girl runs ahead without her; plunging into the crowd of people. The mother shouts after her to hold on but loses sight of her. The girl stumbles and an elderly woman bends down to help her up. A young man on the first step of the stairs jumps down and takes her by the elbow - guides her to the bar. The remainder of the group part to make way for the mother, whose frown is quickly replaced with a thankful, somewhat apologetic look. Bodies and differences press up against each other. Arms reach out over others; hands hold onto overhead rails and other bodies to prevent falling as the bus rounds a corner. Foreign languages. Laughter as a girl loses her balance and falls into the man behind her. Embarrassment. Apologies. Shared smiles. A man at the front gets off. The bus pulls away and people reshuffle and redistribute the space. Somebody at the back wanted to get off. Anger. People get in the way; outrage! Somebody is shouting. Tuts and exasperation as people get shoved aside. They push back. Snarls. The doors open and the man leaves. Silence settles. *Monday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2008, 8:30 am*

Tolerance is integral to the everyday functioning of bus travel. For many, travelling by bus is often an intrinsic and necessary aspect of public life and everyday routine. From the daily commute to work, to the occasional ride across the city, the bus journey marks a space where interaction with unacquainted others is made possible – if not inevitable (Jensen 2009). Travelling by bus almost always demands a certain ‘throwntogetherness’ (Massey 2005) or ‘being with’ others (Bissell 2010). It is a site of tacit negotiations and intense intercultural encounter, where unacquainted bodies press up against each other, seats are shared and personal boundaries are constantly negotiated on the smallest of scales. The relentless mingling of foreign languages provides a constant reminder of differences that are not always

'visually accessible' (Back 2007, page 119) and so admit presences that are perhaps missed elsewhere. As Hutchinson suggests, bus-riding imposes a 'certain burden of consciousness on the individual rider, one that is manifest in an "unnatural" familiarity with one's fellow passengers' (2000, page 118) and gives rise to 'strange encounter(s) of flesh to flesh' (page 107). The extraordinary nature of such proximity with unacquainted others is perhaps best captured by Fujii (1999, page 106) who describes the odd sense of familiarity or 'intimate alienation' that is developed through repeated encounters with other passengers who remain strange nonetheless.

Whilst journeying by everyday modes of travel has been clearly distinguished from more 'life-changing' forms of travel such as those associated with migration (Burrell 2008; see also Conradson and McKay 2007), what happens on the bus *can* have enduring and meaningful effects. They can be sites of subjugation, contestation, politics and identity-making; of racial segregations, class conflicts or community sentiments (Jensen 2009). Subjectivities develop not only as a result of movement between settings, but are formed *during* movement and are central to our wider relations with others. Thus experiences of physical mobility can powerfully combine and further form experiences of *social* mobility and belonging (Burrell 2008) and as such, these everyday sites of banal encounter can be key sites through which wider processes of exclusion are lived, experienced and further made sense of (Davis et. al 1966). Indeed there is a long history of exclusion associated with such forms of public travel. The Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955/56 (Burns 1997) for example, provides perhaps one of the starkest and long-lasting reminders of the historical significance of bus travel and experiences of segregation of the most intolerant kind. An empty seat on a crowded bus can have powerful and lasting effects. Hutchinson's work in particular, examines the segregated nature of bus travel in Los Angeles, to suggest that while bus travel should encourage 'an onerous breach of class, race and ethnic boundaries' (2000, page 118), the highway era of Los Angeles significantly reduced such a threatening 'breach' of difference, to leave the bus overwhelmingly filled with the elderly and 'working class women of colour'. As Crang has suggested, this particular space is embedded 'in the racialised discrimination of selective investment in white commuter access' (2002a, page 570)<sup>51</sup>.

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<sup>51</sup> We might also consider the interracial seating on New Orleans public transport (Davis et.al 1966), whilst more recent studies have considered the formation of closed micro-communities of student commuting on suburban trains in Sydney (Symes 2007) and the transport exclusions of public transport in England (Hine and Mitchell 2001). Such accounts are to be taken into consideration, to understand how such spaces of encounter both create and reflect wider societal and political effects.

As the opening account suggests, intimacy and the negotiation of others, is often conducted with relative ease, to mark a space of tolerated multiplicity or unproblematic being with others and a crucial site of ordinary multiculturalism that is so often overlooked (Back 2006). It shows the tacit and unconscious negotiation of anonymous others (Amin 2008); how bodies come into contact and cooperate; and how both difference and sameness can be pressed up against each other and made trivial. Yet if the bus is a site of conviviality, it is also a site of frustration, direct or indirect aggression, heated exchange and small misanthropic dispositions that disrupt the 'tacit obligations to remain unproblematic' (Berlant 1998, page 287). In such instances, the intimacy of bodily encounter can take on a 'charge' and become an 'issue' (ibid). I therefore ask how such disruptions take place and why and how such tolerated multiplicity emerges in the first place, to examine the nature and contingencies of tolerance, and the circumstances through which it takes place. In so doing, I ask in what instances difference comes to matter and begin to address those questions that consider why particular kinds of public space can, and often do, strengthen a 'civic culture of tolerated multiplicity' (Amin 2008, page 9) where others have perhaps failed.

An examination of the contingencies of tolerance through an account of bus travel corresponds with recent calls for the political revalorisation of mobility spaces, to recognise their key role in the formation of new public domains and collectivities; as spaces of contestation and identity-making (Jensen 2009). A focus on bus travel and public transport more widely, not only enables an 'expansion of the realm of that which is often taken to constitute the social' (Bissell 2010, page 270), but offers a more nuanced account of the 'turbulent socialities of urban multiculturalism' on the ground (Swanton 2007, page 146). Importantly, this is a sociality that is concerned with much more than interpersonal relations. It involves a 'lively materialism' that considers how intensive difference is formed through vehicles of transport (Swanton 2010b)<sup>52</sup>, a concern with the economic, social, physical and cultural forces through which transport networks are segregated (Hutchinson 2000; Jensen and Richardson 2008), the socio-technical systems that regulate codes of conduct (Jensen 2008) and the affective atmospheres that are produced by, and are productive of, passenger mobilities (Bissell 2010). As Jensen (2008) argues, an examination of the sociality of public transport thus produces, and indeed necessitates, a complex assemblage of human and non-

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<sup>52</sup> See for example Swanton's work on the machinic geographies of race through 'taxi rides' which documents how automobility 'provides alternative windows on to race and the city' within cities where segregation has been enabled through automobility (2007, page 146)

human elements<sup>53</sup>. Importantly, whilst there has been a considerable body of mobilities work that is already underway to consider experiences of movement, or how people ‘dwell together’ in various ways (see for example Adey et. al 2010; Burrell 2008; Sheller and Urry 2006; Symes 2007), which points to the relational practices of travel, how such practices and registers of communication colour and are coloured by encounters with others beyond the spaces of the bus is less clearly addressed. Through this chapter I attend to all of these concerns alongside those outlined in Chapter 3, to consider the many regulative tendencies through which the spaces of bus travel are made – and the relations they enable – to offer an alternative window on to the taking place of tolerance, as I will now outline more specifically.

In this chapter, I consider how tolerance is produced, and sometimes destroyed within the spaces of public travel through encounters between manifold things. In short, the chapter is concerned with (in)tolerance *as an affect* and effect of encounter. First of all, I briefly consider the circumstances that set bus travel aside from other forms of (public) transport – its material spacings, demographics, temporalities and negative reputations – that shape the grounds and possibility for encounter. I then move on to consider the competing obligations and codes of conduct that permeate spaces of bus travel and the tolerated multiplicity that they would seem to demand. Through such account, I argue that tolerance emerges and is further maintained by a contractual consensus of passengering, which is made apparent in those moments when the consensus or conditions of travel are disrupted or ignored and the limits of tolerance are tested. Secondly, I consider how such disruptions and the moments of intolerance brought about by ‘failed’ passengering, point to, and are entangled with, other influences and concerns – affective attachments, judgements and personal biographies – that position some bodies as already more or less tolerable. In so doing, I consider the competing influences that work to affectively govern the taking place of tolerance within such space through examples of surveillance strategies, the circulation of media stories and wider discourses of belonging. Whilst such examples suggest that relations of tolerance might be governed through mediated affects, in the final section of the chapter I examine how affective *atmospheres* of travel can work to further shape relations between passengers, through an example of the workings of irritation. In so doing, I examine the material influences, bodily

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<sup>53</sup> By way of example, Both Katz (2002) and Thrift (2004b) have explored the embodied nature of car driving, in an attempt to describe the intimate entanglement of the car and the identity of the driver as producing a ‘distinctive ontology in the form of a person thing’ (Katz cited in Thrift 2004b, page 47) in which ‘the identity of the person and car kinaesthetically intertwine’ (ibid).



capacities and multiple itineraries that additionally work to alter one's ability to tolerate, to put forward an account of tolerance that is attentive to its continuous taking-shape.

Finally, I suggest that through examining the turbulent and often changeable nature of bus travel and its constantly shifting passenger groups, travel disruptions, conflicts and contestations, we can attend to the unpredictable coming together of multiple bodies, things and spacings – whether contradictory or complimentary (Amin 2010b) – to examine the demand placed upon passengers to respond to such turbulence accordingly. In so doing we might see moments of ethical potential or negotiation (Bissell 2010; Massumi in Zournazi 2003), where tolerance or new modes of living with difference might emerge from moments of engagement between different elements of position, identity and difference.

### **1. The bus**

As I have suggested the bus as a method of travel should be distinguished from other forms of transport. As Stradling et. al (2007) have noted, the bus is commonly associated with the young, the elderly and people on low incomes – a method of travel that is often regarded to be a last resort<sup>54</sup>. It may not be surprising that it carries no connotations of the 'ontological security' that comes with car travel – the prestige, competence, masculinity, skill or autonomy (Hiscock et. al 2002). It demands a certain 'giving up of the self' (Bissell 2010, page 283); there are no seat reservations, considerable restrictions on space, no real travel-time guarantees, no conductor, no adequate space for luggage or space within which to 'unpack into' (Watts 2008) and unlike the average train journey, there are stops every couple of minutes, which ensure that the passenger group is constantly shifting. Furthermore, bus travel carries a distinctly negative reputation as a focal point of danger. Fears and anxieties are bound up with stories of anti-social behaviour, violence, 'unruly youths', vandalism and drug taking (Chadwick 2010a, Hurst 2007)<sup>55</sup>. These circulate and remain at large within the public consciousness (Bissell

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<sup>54</sup> The association with this particular demographic is made visible by the adverts displayed around the bus – promising career opportunities, college courses, social services and debt advice.

<sup>55</sup> In a recent 'Inside Out Report', Phil Upton spent a day on a West Midlands bus service in Birmingham to explore the popular perceptions of bus travel in the West Midlands following a news story from two years previous that had indicated that two thirds of bus passengers had witnessed or experienced violent behaviour – a statistic consistently drawn upon to qualify anxieties associated with bus travel. Yet following the creation of a Safer Travel Partnership and a series of wide-spread campaigns involving CCTV and stop and search initiatives, Upton's experiences were entirely at odds with common public

2010), or become 'sticky' and attach themselves to particular bodies (Ahmed 2001; Johnstone and MacLeod 2007). Such an overwhelming association with a dynamic of unease, can have the effect of spoiling the 'ground for encounter' (Back 2006, page 7), heightening distrust of other passengers and imagining engagement with others to be not only undesirable but threatening, which as Chapter 2 highlighted can considerably limit tolerance of others (Hage 2003; 1998).

The chapter focuses specifically on one bus route across the city of Birmingham and is based upon autoethnographic observations of over one hundred hours of travel. Travelling from the centre of the neighbouring town of Solihull – which lies to the south-east of the city – through to Birmingham City Centre in the north-west, it travels through four of the city's most diverse wards<sup>56</sup>. Incidentally, these wards have been identified as some of the city's most segregated and indeed most troublesome – both economically and socially (BCC 2010); a reputation which, as I suggested in Chapter 3, can shape expectations of encounter and racially code an area in the local popular imagination (Dudrah 2002).

Having outlined some of the specific characteristics and details of bus travel in the West Midlands, in section 2 I move to consider the *mechanisms* of everyday bus travel, to draw out and discuss the many and varied relations of conduct, obligation and often unspoken expectations of travel that I argue are intrinsic to the regulation of intimacies through which tolerance takes shape.

## 2. Passenger obligations, intimate encounters and tolerance

'It is natural that the space of public transport is, as its name indicates, a contractual space in which is daily practiced the cohabitation of diverse opinions

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perceptions and media accounts, noting a distinct disjuncture between the reality of bus travel and city-wide narratives (BBC 2009).

<sup>56</sup> The route travels from Solihull town centre through the wards of Hall Green, Springfield, Sparkbrook and Ladywood. Solihull is a relatively affluent town to the south east of Birmingham, with low unemployment rates and an ethnic minority population of only 5.41%. The bordering Birmingham ward of Hall Green in the south east part of the city is a predominantly residential area, associated with a commuter population, a low unemployment rate, with an ethnic population of 23%, whilst Springfield and Sparkbrook are densely populated, inner city wards, which face some of the worst economic and social conditions in the city, with large ethnic minority populations (64% and 79.9% respectively) (BCC 2010). The bus therefore cuts through four very different areas – said to be some of the most segregated parts of the city and is reflected in the significant changes in passenger demographics as the bus advances along the main road that connects all four.

that, if they are not authorised to be shown off, are not obliged to be concealed [...] The theme of insecurity [...] would not be so widespread, nor the reactions to any provocation or aggressive behaviour so spirited, were not the idea of contractual consensus essential to the definition of this institution' (Augé 2002, page 44).

Clearly, when riding the bus, close proximity to others is to be expected – people stand shoulder to shoulder, place bags on laps, sit sideways-on and stand face to face with strangers. During any given journey there can be up to ninety people travelling – fifteen people standing and seventy-five seated. In such reduced space, a certain pressing corporeality is manifest – people stand back, crouch down, touch knees, squeeze past and breathe in, to let others by and get by in turn, affecting a 'heightened sensual attentiveness to the immediate spatiality' of the bus and an increased awareness of one's body in space (Bissell 2007, page 285). Yet close attention to the small gestures – the glances, helping hands, eye contact, civil inattentions and so on – suggest that not only are we witnessing the intensity of corporeal relations that Bissell describes, but we might see a 'wholly active and co-managed' series of interactions that tell of a group of strangers 'getting along' (ibid). So what is it about the nature of bus journeying that encourages such a 'getting along' with others when it perhaps fails elsewhere?

During any bus journey, passengers come and go with relative frequency. As the passenger demographic shifts with each stop, the choice of seat can become crucial. There are clearly a series of rules that lie behind the choice of one's seat (although the origins of these rules are multifaceted and perhaps less clear as I will endeavour to highlight). An acute awareness of where it is deemed appropriate to sit given the space available is necessary so as to avoid causing discomfort to others – if there are only three passengers on the bus, then it would be deemed highly inappropriate to take the seat directly next to one of them – having as it would, the effect of unnecessarily reducing their personal space. Passengers therefore space themselves accordingly, identifying not only where the vacant seats are but perhaps more importantly, whom they are by<sup>57</sup>. This is further complicated by a necessary understanding of who might have claims to which seats – for not all passengers are necessarily equally entitled across the journey. Of course there are guidelines in place – albeit somewhat limited – that serve to direct the passenger and make clear the claims that may be exerted. Stickers identify

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<sup>57</sup> Whilst for the most part, I spaced myself according to whom I would rather sit next to when selecting a seat, I was later reminded that this might be a slightly egocentric view and that for others, their choice of seat was dictated by a concern with whom would be less inconvenienced by their presence.

the priority seats that are to be given to the elderly, wheelchair users, people with buggies and those less able to get up the stairs or reach the back of the bus, such that as seat numbers diminish, a 'positional calculus of social segmentation and integration' (Symes 2007, page 452) may be observed. Whilst this largely ensures that the seats at the front of the bus are reserved for the elderly and those with buggies, leaving the upstairs and rear of the bus to a predominantly younger demographic, the extent to which such rules are observed and adhered to remains unmonitored in any official capacity. Instead, such claims are only informally exerted and recognised. What we witness here, is an orientation of bodies guided by materialities, habit and a series of informal instructions that mark a certain consciousness of what is appropriate conduct – both on the bus and in public space more widely. Such habit illuminates how the various regulated activities of public travel are brought together into an 'initial impulse' (Grosz 2004, page 169) and so, to borrow Amin's term, we might witness a 'territorialisation' that resonates from the 'situated multiplicity' of the bus (Amin 2008, page 13). This was evident in the following account.

A man with a small child looks up and sees people standing. To much protest, he hoists the child up onto his lap to allow another passenger to sit. A young mother at the front of the bus follows suit and stands, gesturing towards her priority seat when an elderly woman gets on. She places her hand on the elderly woman's shoulder and nods down at her with a brief smile. At the next stop a young man gets on with a pushchair. He navigates his way along the aisle with difficulty, pressing himself against the wall to try and make space for those trying to get around him and off the bus. The elderly woman that has only just sat down, begins to rise, pulling herself up with the use of a handrail. The man notices, realises with a start that she is making room for him. He leans forward, places his hand on her shoulder and tells her to sit back down. As he does so, a late arrival skirts around him to take the last available seat. He barely touches the seat before an elderly man gets on. With a hint of resignation, he jumps to his feet and heads for the stairs, gesturing towards the seat before he goes. *27<sup>th</sup> March 2009*

As this extract suggests, across any one journey we might see a series of ongoing negotiations or 'embodied tasks' as various requirements and claims to specific seats alter as the passenger group grows and shrinks with each stop. Viable claims to personal space alter. People get up to let others by, change seats to give priority to others or move to seats that have recently become vacated. Constant assessments of the passenger group are required throughout the journey; sidelong glances allow passengers to assess and monitor the available space and an attuned awareness to the passenger demographic becomes necessary in order to judge whether somebody is in greater need of a seat or perhaps more importantly, whether

somebody else should give up their seat first, a judgement which quite clearly relies on a 'visual registry' and categorisation (Alcoff 2006, page 194; see also Brubaker et. al 2004). Then there are the additional tactics to be read – tactics that are deployed by individuals who wish to deter others from sitting by them. Bags, coats and feet are placed on chairs, and aisle seats are occupied to restrict access to the available window seat. A quick glance may be met by a dead-eye; all of which might be read as variously hostile. Of course as space diminishes such strategies of deterrence become less acceptable and individuals are expected to recognise when such limits have been reached. Such movements may be considered to be 'expressions of particular ways of knowing' or a 'passenger knowledge' (Jensen 2006, page 161). Indeed, what we might see here is a general 'regard for the situation' (Amin 2008, page 16), or a tolerated multiplicity that is structured around an (un)conscious and obligatory negotiation of others. For Augé (2002), in his perceptive account of the Parisian Metro system, the obligatory negotiation that is required by public travel amounts to the unique formation of 'a collective morality':

'Transgressed or not the law of the metro inscribes the individual itinerary into the comfort of collective morality, and in that way is exemplary of what might be called the ritual paradox: it is always lived individually and subjectively; only individual itineraries give it a reality, and yet it is eminently social, the same for everyone, conferring on each person the minimum of collective identity through which a community is defined' (page 30).

There are certainly parallels to be made here with the tacit rules of bus travel and certainly something to be said about such a minimum of 'collective identity' and the negotiation of bodily intimacies with unacquainted others that it requires. The negotiation of intimacy and its association with tacit rules has been observed elsewhere by Berlant (1998, page 287) who noted how 'when people of apparently different races and classes find themselves in slow, crowded elevators.... intimacy reveals itself to be a relation associated with tacit fantasies, tacit rules, and tacit obligations to remain unproblematic'. Such a 'remaining unproblematic', might thus be regarded to be an 'ethical pulse' (Amin 2008) that is generated by the situation of bus travel (see also Bissell 2010 on trains) and produces a sensory knowing of space that enables the easy negotiation of unacquainted others. As Augé (2002) continues:

'the coded and ordered character of subway traffic imposes on each and every person codes of conduct that cannot be transgressed without running the risk of

sanction, either by authorities, or by the more or less effective disavowal of other users (Augé 2002, page 29 cited in Jensen 2008 p.6).

Of course, to suggest that such imposition is solely responsible for the kind of negotiations that I have highlighted, would be to ignore the performance of particular forms of care and etiquette that have been developed elsewhere, but are brought to the fore from the particular situation of travel. Yet the idea that the ongoing, situational negotiations of personal space are both an obligatory and accepted (even if unspoken) part of bus passengering, was made most apparent in those moments where the 'unspoken rules' of passengering are ignored. Indeed, whilst the close proximity of unacquainted others is for the most part tolerable – perhaps, even unnoticeable – there are instances when such proximity or intimacy becomes an issue or “something that requires analytic eloquence” (Berlant 1998, page 287) and when difference comes to matter. The man that chooses to take the seat facing yours when the bus is entirely empty produces a degree of discomfort and further annoyance, which may simmer close to the surface for the remainder of the journey only to intensify and become intolerable at those points when his knee accidentally touched yours<sup>58</sup>. Other cases of overlooked codes of conduct might however, initiate a much more charged or disruptive response as it did within the following account:

The return journey from Birmingham. A woman gets on and makes her way to a spare seat at the front which is currently occupied by a woman's bags. The new arrival looks down at the seated woman. Glares. She stands; eyebrows raised. Waits for a response. The seated woman hasn't noticed and is gazing out of the window, seemingly oblivious to the new arrival.

The new arrival leans in. Brings her face within inches of the seated woman. Still no response. She takes hold of her shoulder and shakes her.

“Oi!”

The seated woman is startled. Looks up to meet the woman's glare. The standing woman juts her finger at the bag. No words needed. The woman hurriedly gathers her bags, piles them onto her lap and moves even closer to the window in an effort to make herself smaller. Presses against the glass. In slow, deliberate and patronising words, as though assuming the woman knows little English the challenging individual leans in once more, stabbing the seat with her index finger:

“It's for sitting on ent it?”

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<sup>58</sup> As Goffman notes, the skin is the most intimate of boundaries – the breach of which is considered intolerable (1966).

The woman, still pressed up against the window, doesn't move. Stares straight ahead. Frozen. The challenging individual looks her up and down - nose wrinkled. Seconds pass. The seated woman gets up abruptly; staggers to the front, where she stands - hand clutching rail and bag.

Ten minutes later another woman gets on and collapses into the vacant seat. The encounter is recounted, embellished and outlined as a victory for 'polite society'. The story is received with a grim expression. Head-shaking. As the bus stops the conversation can be heard clearly:

"You know what they're like...". Grim expression. Agreement. "I mean most of them are alright...." The two look thoughtful; "I suppose it's like our race... you always get a few who spoil it...".

Attention now turns to the young girl who is sat in front of them. "This one's lovely though...". The young girl appears confused - smiles nervously, near grimaces. "Wasn't I right?! Sitting there she was with all her bags". The story is told once more. Validation. The young girl is once again pointed at: "I like the way this one wears her headscarf. I mean sometimes you see them all... you know..." She scrunches up her face and covers it briefly with her hand, "but this one? This one's alright".  
*December 4<sup>th</sup> 2009*

This particular encounter reveals an expectation that passengers maintain a minimal awareness of the needs of their consociates. As numbers grow and shrink the claims upon the individual are likely to change (Goffman 1966). During this particular account, such necessary awareness is absent and as a result, a certain threshold of tolerance is crossed. In failing to move her bag from the seat, the woman's behaviour is not only regarded to be inconsiderate, but is further hailed as an example of ignorance – an ignorance not only of what is acceptable behaviour within the context of the bus journey, but of what is acceptable within 'polite society' more widely. Significantly, within this encounter, the woman with the bags comes to stand in for 'them' – or those not included within the second woman's definition of 'polite society' - a 'them' to which is attached a series of objects and bodily readings that are positioned as distinct from the challenging individual. The individual at the receiving end becomes a representative for a collective group and the encounter is read as lack of common values<sup>59</sup>, which as I have already suggested oft-define citizenship (Fortier 2010). It would seem that the first woman's failure to adhere to the unspoken rules of passengering has not only allowed another passenger to challenge her, but has further encouraged an alignment to be drawn that positions some bodies against others according to demarcations of race. Here, difference matters. In so doing we may see how, as Ahmed (2004b) suggests, particular

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<sup>59</sup> As Fortier (2010) has suggested, the recent turn to community cohesion, commonly holds that 'meaningful interaction' across difference can be achieved providing the right 'conditions' are met for its production, one of which is a shared set of common values.

histories are 'reopened with each encounter, such that some bodies are already read as more hateful than other(s)' (page 33; see also Swanton 2010a). The particular histories brought forward during this encounter are bound up with a series of attachments that also position the young girl in the encounter as 'other'. Thus the intolerance and expressions of disapproval and disgust that surface are not only directed towards the individual concerned but go further, to incorporate others and reorganise the social space of the bus and beyond. In addition, the second woman's slow talking, wrinkled nose and hostile tone similarly affects a reorganisation of bodily space within the bus, as the first tries to make herself smaller and then relocates to stand alone at the front. It would seem that despite having evidently shaken the seated woman, the challenging individual remains assured that her hostility and ensuing remarks were qualified by the first woman's failure to passenger correctly.

Elsewhere, Bissell (2010) has suggested that it is often an ignorance of the unspoken rules of travel that is precisely what serves to heighten and produce intolerance of others – an intolerance that is intensified by a concern that the offending individual might somehow be 'getting' away with behaviour that should otherwise be reprimanded<sup>60</sup>. Indeed, what makes this encounter stand out, is the severity with which the matter is dealt. The woman could quite easily have taken another seat and avoided the confrontation altogether. Yet instead, as this encounter unfolds, we might perhaps see what Katz (2002) calls the 'production of a moral drama' (page 39). Surrounding passengers become implicated as audiences, and the encounter is exaggerated and dramatised. For Katz, such dramatisations work to not only transform the negative feeling, but further justify the initial, perhaps unreasonable response, that may have had little 'rational bases' to begin with, particularly when the woman could have sat elsewhere. In this instance, the woman implies that this situation is not likely to be an isolated event, but is systematic of a wider problem claiming; 'you know what they're like'. The singular event is generalised. Whilst this particular encounter may not be typical it demonstrates how the surfacing of (in)tolerance can work to shape subjectivities during a journey, how relations between individuals may be formed, such that – as in this account – the effects may be socially exclusionary and further enduring.<sup>61</sup> Indeed, as this one example

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<sup>60</sup> In a particularly poignant example, Bissell (2010) notes the rapidity with which individuals may become intolerant of small noises within the quiet coach of a train where noise is prohibited, in the knowledge that an individual is not only failing to observe the conditions of carriage but is doing so without the likelihood of retribution – adding a certain intensity to the felt intolerance.

<sup>61</sup> Ahmed (2001) in her work on the organisation of hate, states that more should be done to examine the enduring affects on those individuals marked as hateful in such encounters, to 'listen to the affective life of injustice' and ask how such hateful encounters work to 'unmake the world of the other' (page 360).



suggests, such encounters can often be plagued by ‘systematic forms of violence’ (Ahmed 2004); past experiences and memories<sup>62</sup> that are brought to the fore by moments of encounter such that the encounter might be further imagined as a ‘movement of closeness’ between the ‘secure national self’ and the ‘arriving other’, through various ethical and emotional injunctions (Fortier 2007, page 108). In this instance, it is about the maintenance of both the physical relations of encounter and nonphysical relations in ‘terms of a social-spatial imaginary’ (page 107; see also Lewis 2005). There are certainly echoes of the civilising tendencies of tolerance that I outlined in Chapter 2, with quite clear distinctions made between the civilised and its other (Brown 2006), which is evident here in the use of the term ‘polite society’. The woman who initiates the encounter, clearly feels herself to be in a position of power when it comes to moral status, demeanour and belonging and reveals the conditional withholding of force and the ready coexistence of tolerance and intolerance (Hage 1998; Wemyss 2006).

For Thrift (2005, page 140) such encounters and active dislike are simply examples of the inevitable ‘small battles of everyday life’ that are central to the experience of cities. More often than not he suggests, such small events speak of a certain kind of *practical* morality, or an already assumed process of cognition that assumes that such encounters with, or of, (in)tolerance, are informed by reason and reason alone (see for example White 2006). However, while my account would seem to suggest that tolerance is both sustained and interwoven with obligations of passengering (even if these are observed with reluctance), which is further linked to an account of common values, there are clearly other things at work here that are central to the taking pace of tolerance and encounter. Whilst the disruption might certainly be written off as nothing more than one of those ‘small battles of everyday life’ that Thrift (2005) talks of, in this encounter, the intolerable body was already *read* as different (Amin 2010; Alcoff 2006; Poole 1997). Judgements had already formed to align the body with a group that were positioned as somehow outside of the nation, or ‘polite society’ as it was described, and the challenging individual had already assumed a moral superiority.

There is, I suggest, certainly something to be said about the patterns of thinking that have shaped this encounter. Social worth is read from the body. Affectively imbued racial summaries form judgements (see for example Swanton 2010) and reveal memory traces from past experiences and encounter. In the next section, I wish to consider how such habits of

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<sup>62</sup> Anderson for example notes that ‘what is at stake within practices of remembering is the ongoing formation of the ideal-real existence of the past in a non-synchronous present’ (2004b page 5)

visual discrimination and categorisation – a seeing that carries both expectations and knowledges – might be furthered by some of the socio-technical systems of bus travel which simultaneously work to create passenger subjectivities and encounter and regulate aversions in multiple ways, through an account of a recent zero tolerance campaign.

### 3. See Something Say Something or the regulation of aversion?

Phil: Are you aware of trouble on the bus?  
Youth: Yeah.  
Phil: Okay. Who creates trouble on the bus?  
Youth: Me.  
Phil: Guys like you?  
Youth: Yeah.  
Phil: Why's that?  
Youth: Why's that? Because I just do it.  
Phil: Why do you create trouble on the bus?  
Youth: I just do.  
Phil: Why?  
Youth: Because it's clever. I'm just bored.  
Phil: So if someone stopped you on the bus and said "guys tone it down a bit, there are people here minding their own business, what would your response be to that?"  
Youth: Fuck off!  
Phil: Right, because?  
Youth: Because I do what I want to innit?

This conversation was taken from a BBC 'Inside Out Report' (BBC 2009) on experiences of bus travel in the West Midlands following ongoing concerns over the safety of bus travel in the area. After a series of conversations with regular bus passengers, the reporter, Phil Upton, locates an individual that matches the description of the bus 'yobs' that are at the heart of so many accounts of anxious bus travel. The young man is put forward as a typical 'trouble maker' and upon admitting that he is, becomes a representative for a particular group. Troublemakers are 'guys like him' – male, around eighteen years of age, wearing a white tracksuit, black cap, gold chains and in the company of a group of individuals of similar characteristics. As the camera moves away, concerned viewers are reassured that 'guys like him' will have a tough time from now on. Under the new 'See Something Say Something' campaign, they will not be tolerated.

The 'See Something Say Something' campaign that was launched in 2008 claims to give passengers 'the chance to do something for their community', by encouraging them to anonymously email or text a hotline to alert the Safer Travel Police team to incidents of nuisance – smoking, loud music, vandalism or even unwelcome feet on seats (Travel West

Midlands 2008). Hundreds of posters that depict four pairs of eyes, apparently keeping an eye on other passengers, adorn bus shelters and the inside of National Express West Midlands buses as an ever-present reminder of surveillance and covert policing (see Figure 5.1)<sup>63</sup>.

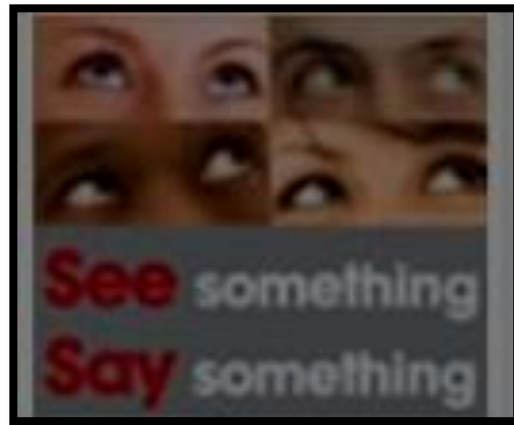


Figure 5.1 The 'See Something Say Something' campaign poster that was displayed on bus shelters and buses  
(Travel West Midlands 2008 <http://nxbus.co.uk/west-midlands>).

These posters carry a considerable degree of weight. Not only do they generate a climate of distrust and suspicion amongst passengers who are encouraged to act as 'foot soldiers' for the bus company and local police (Ahmed 2000), but they inspire an atmosphere of anticipation that spoils the grounds for encounter and further undermines the ability to live with difference of a particular kind (Back and Keith 2004). More specifically, when coupled with media reports that detail the 'bus yobs' targeted by new 'spy cameras' (Chadwick 2010b), stories of so-called 'bus-bashing' (BBC 2009) and accounts of fare-dodging veiled women who share bus passes (Wells 2003), media representation such as the Inside Out report have the effect of marking some bodies in particular, as already suspicious – already threatening; already intolerable<sup>64</sup>. Such authoritarian material attaches affects to particular ideas and people (Bissell 2010). It prefigures imaginations – so that particular attributes congeal to form the deviant and intolerable body. The arrival of a young man with a black hoody and cap, or the woman in a burkha with a bus pass, trigger judgements based upon 'loose summaries' that are 'distributed

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<sup>63</sup> As one officer from the local police force ominously suggested; '...just because you can't see us, it doesn't mean we can't see you. We have added a covert element to the way we police the network and we could be watching any bus at any time' (Chadwick 2010b)

<sup>64</sup> See Meer et.al (2010) for an example of the ways in which newspapers and other such media outlets become 'sources of authority' in the production of difference (although they highlight the necessary project of distinguishing between public intellectuals, commentators, columnists, editorials, leaders and so on).

across bodies' and given currency by the circulation of stories and media coverage (Swanton 2010b, page 2340). Subsequently, my bus journeys were filled with countless 'acts of misrecognition' (Back 2007, page 119), which were repeated journey after journey – the young man at the back who is wrongly blamed for the loud music, or the suspicious man with the black eye that ignites shame when he offers you his seat. Such circulations of suspicion became further attached to particular spatial practices that were often limited to the top deck of the bus (and the back in particular). How do you know that you shouldn't sit at the back of the bus? You just do. Even when the bus is running at full capacity, there will always be spare seats around those sat at the back. Repeated references to the back of the bus during safety campaigns format particular expectations of encounter, while cigarette ends and graffiti serve as evidence of past deviances and claims to territory (Cowan 2007; Oliphant 2008).

Whilst campaigns such as 'See Something Say Something' are designed to make bus travel safer and more enjoyable, they paradoxically sustain and further generate aversion, fuelling rumours and suspicions that are already at large within the public consciousness (see for example Hurst 2007a); a paradox that was noted by Brown (2006) in Chapter 2. They alter the boundaries of acceptable conduct and outline a series of people to be targeted and watched more closely (see Back and Keith 2004). Such formatting of perception is made most apparent as Swanton (2007) suggests, during those fractions of a second before conscious reflection occurs and during which instantaneous judgement flickers – the sinking feeling or the lurch of the stomach that accompanies the arrival of a particular figure or the rapid judgements that inform seat choices upon boarding the bus. This particular example illuminates the ways in which discursive framings of tolerance inflect encounter. As Thrift (2005) suggests, safety is increasingly promoted through its association with fear, developing 'misanthropic threads' that course through the city (page 140), and anxieties that are engendered through encounters with difference and the close juxtaposition of strangers (see for example Fyfe 2004, Amin 2006). They are, to a certain degree, affectively limiting - 'instinctively' restricting movement and contact which as I noted in Chapter 3 significantly diminishes the capacity for tolerance. In a rather more spectacular example, following 9/11 Mussumi has argued that the constant presentation of threats to security:

'[C]ontinuously insinuate themselves into our lives at such a basic, habitual level that you're barely aware how it's changing the tenor of everyday living. You start

'instinctively' to limit your movements and contacts with people. It is affectively limiting' (Massumi in Zournazi 2003, page 12).

Of course, the movement of such affects, and the development of particular patterns of thinking speak directly to those concerns addressed by Rai (2004) and Brown (2006) about the relationship between tolerance and the regulation of aversion, such that we may see the closing down of relations, and a heightened anxiety and distrust of others through the creation of intolerable subjects. Yet, whilst such campaigns clearly format perceptions and develop particular patterns of thought and processes of differentiation I argue that such manipulation works alongside (and sometimes against) other affective regimes that similarly close down or open up encounters to complicate accounts of governance and agency. In short, there are others conditions through which bodies become 'disposed for action'. In the next section I turn to a series of examples taken from journeys that took place during key commuter hours, to consider the 'affective atmospheres' (Anderson 2009) of bus travel and to ask what these do to the taking place of tolerance.

#### **4. Affective Atmospheres of travel... becoming (in)tolerant**

Frustration is growing. Bodies huddle against the wind and dance from foot to foot to keep warm. It is the middle of rush hour. Bus after bus crawls past the stop, caught up in rush hour traffic. Never the number six. Steel drums beat in the distance, a man stands in the doorway of the jewellers, eyes closed, finger clicking and swaying to his own music.

The bus can be seen on the horizon. People begin to inch forwards; watchful glances and pursed lips. People huddle, almost on top of each other. It gets closer, a surge of people, pushing, shoving; open contempt. Adrenalin. A man trips up. Hands pull others back, scowls follow frowns. People behind start to complain about those pushing in from the side, whilst others actively try to stop them from getting on, turning their shoulders as they pass and sticking their elbows out to the side. Too many people get on at the same time - pushing up against each other, tutting; cursing. A briefcase hits my shin. Muted apologies and begrudged acceptance.

A woman in a wheelchair has remained stationary, forced to wait at the door as people overtake from all sides. I purposefully wait behind, elbows out to stem the flow and allow the woman on. A man skirts around me, pushes past. I am enraged. "ER...!" I stand, mouth open. Another man comes to assist, extends his arm out to stop people from passing. He unclips the ramp, bends down to pick it up. As he does so, another man pushes past, stands on the ramp and traps the man's fingers. As the man yelps in pain,

the offender looks over his shoulder. Blank indifference.  
*February 17<sup>th</sup> 2009 4:10pm*

For the commuters, there is a high likelihood that they will not be able to get a seat, or worse, that they will have to wait for the following bus – which as experience would tell them, could be another thirty minutes or more. As the queue grows, people edge towards the front – pushing forwards and pressing up against others<sup>65</sup>. Traffic is slow moving, often grid-locked at this time of the day. People continue to gather and the queue loses shape as people join at random points, causing considerable agitation amongst those that are still in the queue. As the bus appears on the horizon, heated words are exchanged, heads are shaken, sleeves pulled and bodies pushed. Such ‘misanthropic dispositions’ are not only common at this time of day, but become a necessary part of getting home. As Bissell (2010, page 278) has noted elsewhere, journeys on public transport are riddled with such ‘small acts of violence’ – the pushing and shoving that become necessary to get a seat, make one’s stop, or get on the bus before others. As he suggests, ‘[o]ver time and engrained in habit, such a misanthropic disposition might constitute a strategy for dealing with the stresses and strains of travelling with others’ (page 278). Yet whilst such dispositions might be evidence of a particular strategy of coping, they might also be intensified by an overarching concern for ensuring that the ‘procedural justice’ that influence the practice or event of queuing is not violated<sup>66</sup> as they were in this account and at no time was this more apparent than during the key commuter hours – specifically when leaving Birmingham City Centre between 5pm and 6pm on a weekday evening.

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<sup>65</sup> Bissell (2007) offers considerable detail on the ‘event of waiting’ and its corporeal experiences, locating the spaces of waiting for mobilities as being woven through the ‘fabric of everyday life’. Whilst the bus queue is often thought to constitute a site of stasis, Bissell notes the intense corporeal relations, the subtle micro-bodily actions and the sometimes outright disruptive effects of frustration, anger or rage that illustrate ‘passionate fleeting periods of being held-in-suspense’ (page 290).

<sup>66</sup> In her observations of the ‘hidden rules’ of English behaviour, Fox (2004) details the event of queuing as being a particularly English phenomenon that is about a general sense of fairness, where queue jumping is regarded as immoral and subtle gestures and territorial postures seek to maintain order. She quotes the Hungarian humorist Georges Mikes; ‘On the continent, if people are waiting at a bus-stop they loiter around in a seemingly vague fashion. When the bus arrives they make a dash for it ... An Englishman, even if he is alone, forms an orderly queue of one’ (page 153). As she argues, a queue jumper can therefore prompt complete strangers to exchange raised eye-brows, eye-rolls, tutts and verbal comments that are fuelled by moral outrage. See also Helweg-Larsen and LoMonaco (2008) on the norms of procedural justice that influence queuing and the reactions to the violation of such norms.

## Negative Affects

The affects of such misanthropy linger. Passengers attest to feeling considerably 'wound up' by the time they take their seat, still angered from having been cut up in the queue or beaten to the seat that they felt they deserved. Encounters are made up of a whole multitude of affects and emotions – anxiety, irritation, anger, impatience, boredom and so on – which energetically alter encounters (Anderson 2006) and are expressed through gritted teeth, tensed muscles and reddened faces. The capacity to tolerate is radically diminished by irritation or anxiety (Hage 2003) while intolerance can give way to anger. On that one particular occasion I had the (mis)fortune of sitting behind the man who had so rudely pushed his way on to the bus. His very presence sustained my agitation and loathing across the duration of the forty minute journey – each sniff that he made frustrating me further and inspiring undesirable thoughts about the man's character. Quite clearly, negative feelings are carried over and continue to reveal themselves across the journey to have considerable impact upon one's capacity to tolerate others.

Of course, this raises the question as to what individuals might bring to an encounter? If the frustrations and anxieties of waiting for a bus have considerable affect on the atmosphere of a journey, what else of an individual's day might be brought to bear upon the space of the bus? As Thrift (2005, page 140) has suggested 'it is quite clear that all kinds of situations are freighted with affective inputs and consequences that are central to their moral outcomes', for affect 'acts both as a way of initiating action, a reading of the sense of aliveness of the situation and an intercorporeal transfer of that expectancy' (page 139). Of course, there can never be one typical bus journey or 'situation' through which this might be examined, although the journey depicted above is useful for considering how affects 'transcend the personal and are implicated in the experience of others' (Bissell 2007, page 291). One journey might be fraught with impatience, agitation or anxiety whilst the same journey taken at an alternative time or day might be experienced as something closer to contentment or enjoyment and so on. In short, through the workings of affect, bodies become disposed for action in particular ways (Thrift 2004, page 62). In the next example, I consider the workings of irritation and the subsequent diminishment in one's capacity to tolerate other intensities of feeling to examine how (in)tolerance might be produced as an effect of encounter.

## 5. The movement of irritation

I take a seat downstairs towards the front. I have a headache. Loud music travels down the stairs. A man is stood at the front, chatting to the driver as he navigates the traffic. They appear to know each other and are talking in a language I do not recognise.

The man to my right is watching them intently, fixated; mouth open. "This is a flaming bus you know...!". He seems highly agitated - looks around him as though looking for support from fellow passengers. Nobody pays him any attention. He continues to grumble under his breath, perched on the edge of his seat. Tense. The young woman in front of me is on the phone as is the woman behind.

The man looks at the two of them, pointedly, one after the other - eyebrows raised, eyes wide. He appears irritated. He starts shaking his left knee and returns his attention to the man talking to the driver. Glares. His right hand starts up; taps in sync with the movements of his knee.

I can't relax. The man seems to be poised for action. I anticipate - dread - confrontation. I am now acutely aware of the two ongoing conversations and they begin to aggravate me.

"Did you see the way he changed the topic? I was like... have respect!" The girl behind me sounds young. I look behind to see who she is. She chews gum mechanically as she listens to the individual on the phone.

The bus stops to allow more people on. The man talking to the driver tries to get out of their way, flattens himself against the wall. He fails. The man to my right is watching this and shaking his head. Unblinking. His face is flushed. He bites his lip.

"We could go bowling...?" I catch the tail-end of a phone conversation at the back of the bus.

"I ain't getting up now innit 'cos that's rude!" The girl cuts through the background noise and is uncomfortably loud. She is really starting to irritate me - talks none stop without room for breath. The man to my right now has his fists clenched; his arms tensed with his fists resting on his knees. He checks his watch and stares ahead, the muscles in his face flex as he grits his teeth.

"How much is a 21inch?" The man at the back seems to be planning his evening. The girl behind drowns him out:

"YOU'RE TALKING BULLSHIT...! Oh...whatever...!" Her conversation is inescapable. I look at the man, worried that this might push him over the edge. I too can feel myself tensing and my head really hurts. I start to resent her, which increases as I try to fathom what is being said on the other end of the phone - the conversation makes little sense.



"I don't wanna hear bullshit like that..." At this, the man glares at her momentarily. I want to do the same to communicate my annoyance, but don't have the courage.

The woman seated by the man sighs and puts her head on the window, putting one leg up on the seat in front as she does so. She seems exhausted. Turns her body away from the agitated man; closes her eyes and rubs her temples. The man is now positively fuming and is shifting in his seat, frequently glancing at the woman behind me. His irritation is wearing off on me; his fidgeting putting me on edge.

I start sighing and try to catch his eye - show that I understand. The woman on the phone gets up and makes her way to the front, still talking avidly, oblivious to the two of us watching her leave as she passes by. The bus quiets immediately. Heavy silence. The man rolls his head forward as though relieved of a pain.

A bottle bounces down the stairs. (9 February, 2009)

In this account the man's irritation emerges and is made apparent through corporeal display – his head-shaking, lip-biting, hand-wringing, exaggerated sighs, repetitive foot tapping and fidgeting – which gives the impression that he is fighting an impulse to (re)act more violently, whilst also making his irritation clear to the remaining passenger body<sup>67</sup>. As the young girl continues to talk on her mobile the man's irritation seems to intensify, whilst the girl remains seemingly oblivious to his attempts to make his irritation clear. As Ngai suggests, irritation, might be best described as a 'flatness or ongoingness' that has a remarkable capacity for duration (2005, page 7). Felt as 'vague sensation in search of an object' (ibid page 180), the girl on the phone serves as an anchor for the nervous energy of the man's irritation and is made *responsible* for it and his subsequent intolerance – they become her problem, rather than his own. Whilst the man clearly arrived in a state of agitation, the origin of his negative feelings appears to be aligned with the girl (Brennan 2004). Yet the irritation does more than simply colour the man's perceptions and activities (Löfgren 2008). His irritation and corporeal display affect those around him to 'catch' and register with other bodies<sup>68</sup>. In short, it is 'transmitted' (Brennan 2004). The individual next to him slumps against the window, covers hers eyes and

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<sup>67</sup> As Shouse has indicated, such corporeal displays attest to affect as a non-conscious experience of intensity; "affects are comprised of correlated sets of responses involving the facial muscles, the viscera, the respiratory system, the skeleton, autonomic blood flow changes, and vocalisations that act together to produce an analogue of the particular gradient of intensity impinging on the organism (Demos 19 cited in Shouse 2005)

<sup>68</sup> As McCormack (2008) suggests, such affective atmosphere 'becomes something distributed yet palpable, a quality of environmental immersion that registers in and through sensing bodies while also remaining diffuse, in the air, ethereal. (page 413).

massages her temples wearily in an apparent effort to block out the remainder of the bus,<sup>69</sup> whilst his irritation works to agitate me; to put me on edge, tense my muscles and heighten my already felt weariness. As Brennan suggests, the transmission of affect ‘if only for an instant, alters the biochemistry and neurology of the subject. The “atmosphere” or the environment literally gets into the individual’ (2004, page 1). Whilst the bodily changes may be brief or perhaps longer lasting, affect is literally *in the flesh*.

Such example offers an insight into the transmission of affect and the movement of tolerance, or the means through which the emotions or affects of one person and ‘the enhancing or depressing energies these entail’ (Brennan 2004, page 3), can enter into another individual. The distinction between the individual and the environment is blurred and we might begin to see how one particular journey might come to affect a particular ‘atmosphere’ (Anderson 2009; McCormack 2008, Brennan 2004) that is conducive to the formation of various forms of encounter<sup>70</sup>. As Anderson (2009, page 78) suggests, such atmospheres can animate or dampen the ‘background sense of life’ to become the ‘shared ground from which subjective states and their attendant feelings and emotions emerge’ (ibid). The so-called ‘hardening of affects’ is thus a social affair (Brennan 2004 page 139), and passengering becomes a social practice that potentially culminates in a sense of belonging to the situation.

Whilst such negative affects enter into others, the registration of the transmitted affect may be influenced by the individual in a variety of ways. As Brennan argues, ‘transmission does not mean that a person’s individual emotional experience is irrelevant’ (2004, page 6), indeed our registration of it may be influenced in various ways<sup>71</sup>. The affect might be shared; the ‘linguistic and visual content’ (page 7) picked up on, but the meanings attached remain entirely personal. Furthermore, affects are attached not only to other bodies, ideas and things, but can be attached to other affects (Sedgwick 1993 page 19; see also Brennan 2004). Whilst in the example of irritation that I outlined, the sense of irritation was shared by both the man and myself, made manifest in a heightened awareness of others, the objects of our irritation

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<sup>69</sup> Brennan (2004) has suggested that visual images, can have a direct physical impact upon a body, ‘there reception involves the activation of neurological networks, stimulated by spectrum vibrations at various frequencies’ (page 10) which constitute transmissions that breach the boundaries between individual and the environment.

<sup>70</sup> Watts (2008), in her study of train travel for example, notes how when travelling through a train it would not be unusual to find that each carriage is marked by a distinctive ‘atmosphere’. Whilst one carriage might be relatively lively or ‘chatty’ another might be distinctly ‘cold and still’ (page 722).

<sup>71</sup> By way of an example, Brennan (2004) notes how upon entering a room with a degree of anxiety, the anxiety will work to influence the impression that she receives of the room.

differed – mine being much more focused upon the man’s agitated manner. Furthermore, my already felt weariness from a long day of work, would have already worked to reduce my capacity to tolerate such dispositions and so, whilst the man’s public display of irritation affected me, it may have gone unnoticed by other passengers.

## 6. The temporality of tolerance

There is reason why a disproportionate amount of intolerance surfaces at particular times of the day. At the end of a long day at work, travellers are more likely to be tired – a fatigue or weariness that manifests itself and is further felt through the body – the throbbing headache, tired eyes, stiff neck or sore back<sup>72</sup>. The work from the day ‘folds through, and shapes the experience of the journey’ (Bissell 2009b, page 441), a felt fatigue that heightens sensitivities to others and reduces ones capacity to tolerate otherwise tolerable subjects or objects<sup>73</sup>. A crying baby, ring tones, music from head phones, a loud phone conversation, offensive language and a repetitive foot tap, overlap and compete with each other, can either fade into the background or disrupt private thoughts to intrude upon one’s personal soundscape<sup>74</sup>. The light mist that lands on the side of the face as the man next to you opens a bottle of coke, the people at the back of the bus who lie across three seats when others are standing, or the repetitive sneezing of the individual sat behind become intolerable and enable the surfacing of prejudices<sup>75</sup>. Consider for example, the need to ‘see’ the source of irritation, to see exactly ‘who’ the source is - an understanding that is garnered and constructed through the acquisition of characteristics that serve to anchor or qualify the irritation, enabling the irritated

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<sup>72</sup> This is significant given Bissell’s insightful account of affect and the ‘pained body’, Bissell (2009d), examines the relationship between the body and pain through attention to affective intensities, noting that through pain, we witness a ‘closing down’ of the body, a depletion of living space-times and ones capacity to tolerate other (often high) intensities. As he suggests, ‘there is no becoming left to do’ (page 919).

<sup>73</sup> In her study of the organisation of time and its affects on bodily habits and emotions, Widerberg (2006) suggests that the ‘sped up life’ and a ‘life of doing work’ has generated a restless body that registers most commonly as irritation.

<sup>74</sup> The intrusion of one’s personal soundscape, as with the intrusion of unwanted smells, can be particularly powerful given one’s inability to prevent such invasion of one’s personal boundaries. Whilst an unwanted sight can be kept out through various tactics, unwanted sounds and smells are considerably more difficult to omit, enforcing unwanted intimacies. As Brennan (2004) suggests, ‘auditory traces ... have a direct physical impact, ;their reception involves the activation of neurological networks, stimulated by spectrum vibrations at various frequencies. These... constitute transmissions breaching the bounds between individual and environment’ (page10)

<sup>75</sup> Both Swanton (2010) and Katz (2002) have noticed for example, how, in the flash of anger that emerges as a result of being cut up, racist slurs and prejudiced remarks are brought forth from the event, often without conscious reflection.

individual to locate just exactly who it is that their frustrations should be directed towards. Not only might this allow previous encounters or histories of intolerance to be confirmed, as they were during the earlier encounter when the woman failed to remove her bag from the seat, but when similar traits or characteristics are encountered in the future, it is more likely that they will inspire recollections that will work to structure perceptions of others.

As Widerberg (2006) suggests, through such encounters and concern for their future ramifications, we might see how the persistently tired body that is so common to today's times – and the irritation through which it is expressed – poses a considerable threat not only to the body, but to societal relations more widely. The sources of irritation may be trivial, but can encourage intense responses (Bissell 2009c), which, as some of my earlier examples have suggested, are likely to have consequences that endure far beyond the singular event of the journey. This perhaps has wider ramifications still, when considering that such bus journeys are likely to be part of a daily routine – repeated perhaps five times a week – where time-space paths such as those of commuters are repeatedly 'bundled together' (Axhausen 2007 page 26), potentially producing and hardening habits through rhythms of situated experience (Amin 2010b).

A concern with the body is particularly pertinent to the experiences of bus travel, particularly when considering the curious relation between movement and the kinaesthetic affects of travel. Kinaesthetic affects can irritate or cause anxiety, which as I have suggested, can work to significantly diminish one's tolerance of others. An individual desperate to get home after a long day at work, or late for a meeting grows increasingly more agitated with stasis or 'even an unexpected *slowing*' of the bus (Bissell 2009c, page 285) – of which the individual has no control over as the likelihood of them achieving their goal diminishes. Importantly, this is an agitation which endures long after the bus regains speed (ibid). The kinaesthetics of bus travel – the jolts, rumblings, bumps and leans – of 'submitting to the technology of transport' (ibid page 285) might equally fatigue or agitate as the seat becomes the primary interface through which the journey is experienced and from which the body is unable to remove itself<sup>76</sup>. The very materiality of the bus thus has a significant impact upon one's ability to tolerate,

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<sup>76</sup> Of course there has been much work on the embodied and sensuous experiences of car travel in particular, which 'requires and occasions a metaphysical merger, an intertwining of the identities of the driver and the car that generates a distinctive ontology in the form of a person thing' (Katz quoted by Thrift 2004, page 47) note how such intertwining become intrinsic to the eruption of anger – or the experience of being cut off.

demanding greater sensitivity to the wider dynamics of bodily encounter (Amin 2010b) and its influence on relations with others.

Such corporeal responses or susceptibility to the movements of travel, might become more apparent, or at least, more of an issue, at particular moments or within particular encounters as was made apparent within the following example:

I sit in the back left corner. There are seven of us, all crammed in. Somebody is wearing perfume. It overpowers. A frown flickers across the face of the woman opposite, nose wrinkled briefly as she glances at the woman next to her. She is reading the Metro and looks to be considerably more at ease than the remainder of us who are twisted in our seats so as not to touch knees/elbows with the people opposite/next to us. Next to her is a young woman, with huge blue eyes, long lashes and long blue headscarf. She seems to be looking out the back window over our heads. She gives the woman next to her a side-long glance. She has a florescent iced drink and sits with the straw in her mouth, taking the occasional drink whilst she looks out the window. She has a far off expression on her face and makes unappealing sucking noises through the straw. Heavy sigh.

The woman next to me stares straight ahead, she has several bags on her lap and holds them in place, as we sit almost on top of one another. I become aware that my foot is resting on something, squirm in my seat to try and move it -push against the object to see if it will move. I look down and realise that my foot is resting on the young woman's opposite. I quickly move it. Embarrassment. She doesn't seem to notice. Somebody on the other side starts shouting. The woman opposite widens her eyes and looks to the floor. In so doing I accidentally catch her eye. The shouting stops and she focuses back on the paper. All four of us on the back seat are sat in a line, clutching bags on our laps, trying to keep to our space. The woman with the iced drink leaves and is watched by the woman next to her as she does so. A brief frown flickers across her face.

The larger-than-usual passenger numbers restricts space, making it more difficult to find comfort or prevent oneself from invading the personal space of another<sup>77</sup>. The bus seat constrains the body, forces one to face the front of the bus and prevents one from twisting in the seat to observe the passengers behind. Legs are placed in uncomfortable positions and the body is fixed in position, unable to negotiate the materiality of the seat to find comfort. The spatial arrangement of the bus structures the objects/subjects of vision (Bissell 2009) and suspends the body in a state of unease and acute sensitivity to the movements of others. As the bus lurches to the right, the body responds; tenses itself to remain in its upright position

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<sup>77</sup> Of course as Bissell (2009) has noted, there are other regulatory regimes that work to structure and shape such materialities – the need to maximise passenger capacity, whilst minimising cost and so on.

and to refrain from falling onto the individual in the neighbouring seat. At times of such close proximity and bodily discomfort, the smallest of gestures and micro-bodily actions have large effects. A slightly wrinkled nose, a momentary eye roll or an ever-so-slight wince are enough to indicate judgement and put another ill-at-ease. Thus, attention to such micro-bodily gestures is vital to understanding the taking place of tolerance.

Of course there are times when bus travel enables a certain disengagement from others – as Bissell (2007) notes, there are instances in which it is possible to cut off, despite the peopled nature of the bus. This might include the use of various technologies; ipads, ipods and mobile phones, or newspapers, books and magazines, all of which might dampen intensities of encounter (Bull 2005). However, as I have argued, this is also likely to be reliant upon a variety of conditions – perhaps a smaller passenger group, a good day at work, a comfortable seat or time to spare. In such instances, those things or people that may have been intolerable during past journeys, whether it be the individual talking on the phone, or the woman that is taking up more than her fair share of space, are readily tolerated and perhaps fail to become an issue at all. There are also instances, as described by Harrison (2008, page 425), whereby ‘phenomena’ such as exhaustion or lassitude ‘trace a passage of withdrawal from engagement’ and where the possibility of intentional relation is reduced. Yet such reduction in intentionality, does not describe a body removed from the sociality of the bus, but rather one that is made vulnerable and susceptible and thus thoroughly social.

The turbulent and constantly shifting nature of bus space that I have outlined to this point, would give currency to those arguments that suggest that the ‘dynamics of mingling’ with strangers can never be predicted (Amin 2008), regardless of the well placed designs, codes of conduct and conditions of carriage. Instead, there are always disruptions, or additional affects that work to trouble conventional patterns of conduct and encounters with difference. Whilst the bus is certainly a site of routine and often enables a certain hardening of habits through the repetition of situated experience, the thrown togetherness of bodies, mass and matter demand a more rigorous appreciation of the tacit dimensions of tolerance. Tolerance is not just about a sense of ‘us’ – a relation between two individuals – but is much much more. In this final section, I examine the shifting nature of bus travel across a fifteen minute period, to examine the ebbs and flows of relations, as boundaries are drawn and redrawn according to various concerns. In particular I wish to highlight the rapidity with which ‘affective

atmospheres' (Anderson 2009) of travel and the assembling of bodies and relations can change across one journey.

The bus is slow moving. People sit slumped against the window. Silence, but for a conversation at the back. It grows in volume. Isolated sentences can be heard:

"Even if you move to say, Stetchford... You still say you're from Small Heath innit?" A conversation about loyalty starts up. The men talk over each other, inspiring thoughts of territory and gang membership.

I look out the window. We have been stationary for while - an unusually long time even for Sparkbrook. People at the front of the bus are now standing to look over the heads of those in front. Flashing blue lights can be seen ahead. The road appears to be blocked. '9PM 'Til I Come' is playing somewhere behind me. Someone picks out the beat and taps with their foot. People are starting to comment on the police up ahead. A ripple of excitement moves through the bus. The bus slowly fills with the buzz of chatter.

At the back they're exchanging stories about people they know who have been stabbed, talking over each other; competing for the best stories. "Nah, what do you reckon it is?" People are continuing to guess as stories are passed down and information on the events outside are relayed. Red and white tape. Police cars. The lethargy of the journey has vanished. People talk to the people next to them, strike up idle conversations. Outside, people talk to policemen in the street, watching as events unfold. Time passes. We remain stationary.

The initial excitement fades. People return to their seats; start to become restless. Fidgeting. Conversation has died. People stand again; peer down with cupped hands against the glass. Those on the right hand side stare in at the passengers of a bus passing in the opposite direction. They stare back, equally expressionless.

"What the fuck you looking at? What?! You dirty..." A man on the back mutters the last part of the sentence under his breath, as he looks in at the passing bus.

Slow. We are diverted away from the main road and down a much smaller residential one. The bus tries to turn a corner and for a while it seems it will not be able to make it.

"Not bothered man... the more time we spend on this, the less time we have to sit there..." Aside from one of the men at the back, the remaining passenger group seem strangely calm, expressionless; accepting of the inevitable delay. We turn another corner and the extent of the queue is made apparent. Traffic stretches out ahead. Frustration erupts at the back.

"What the fuck?!" What the... where the fuck is this driver going? Can he not drive?!" We watch out the window as another bus tries to turn a corner at the same time as us. The other bus seems to be having more trouble and has tried to take the corner a little more widely than there is room to do.

We emerge back out onto the main road, just to the other side of the sectioned off area. People now look to their left to see if they can see anything. There are no clues. Somebody then points to a man who is running a metre stick up and down the road. Perhaps a road traffic accident? We're still moving very slowly. A warmth hits my face as the sun appears between two buildings. I have a slight headache. I want the music to stop. I start to feel frustrated. The mood of the bus is certainly very different from the excitement of ten minutes ago. The man at the back is still ranting about the time. "Man we'll be five/ten minutes...wait where you are". The music now sounds like something off the Mario Brothers. This cheers me. The cheer doesn't last. The repetition is painful. January 12<sup>th</sup> 2009

Upon finally reaching the end of the traffic, a round of celebratory applause broke out – people stood up and looked down on the scene as the bus passed it by. As Carr et. al (cited in Amin 2008, page 6) claim; '[s]eeing people responding to the same setting in similar ways creates a temporary bond'. The temporary bonds witnessed here, were not engineered but rather emerged out of a shared concern with both reaching a particular destination and fulfilling a curiosity of the events occurring at street level. There may be no wider engagement beyond this particular encounter, but through this we might see how temporary bonds of passengering might form between strangers through 'contingent and situated activity' (Hinchliffe and Whatmore, 2006 page 124), and further, how such fleeting associations are not necessarily emergent from a 'realm of conscious judgement' (page 136), but are illustrative of a 'conviviality ... that operates through affective registers' (Bissell, 2010 page 286).

In the space of fifteen minutes, the atmosphere of the bus changes considerably, fluctuating between one of frustration, listlessness and boredom through to one of excitement and animation. The mood of the individual sat at the back alters rapidly, their lack of concern about the delay soon giving way to an evident frustration which erupts and imposes itself on the remaining passenger group. In chapter 2 I noted how tolerance is prone to fluctuation according to one's sense of available possibilities with regards to job availability, perceptions of threat and the wealth of the welfare system (Hage 2003; see also Jenkins 2002). Here we see a much more banal, micro-scale account of the ways in which affective capacities can fluctuate to alter one's sense of possibility. The account highlights the turbulent nature of bus travel, how atmospheres of irritation, mirth, boredom or conviviality might be made and unmade and how temporary and very fragile kinds of community or collective might emerge or dissolve. Of course, there are examples where wider goals of civic engagement and conviviality are perhaps more consciously directed and engineered – for example a journey during which passengers were called upon to join forces and petition against changes to current bus



services. Yet, whether it be through conversation or felt through affective atmospheres, such collective engagement and momentary associations are suggestive of a politics and prosaic encounter that are too often overlooked and undervalued and are yet central to such relations as tolerance.

### **7. Conclusion: Passing propinquities**

Through close attention to the 'contractual' nature of bus travel and the often unspoken codes of conduct that come with the obligation to share space with others, I have suggested that we might see the formation of a tolerated multiplicity through which the intimacies of encounter 'reveal' themselves to be relations associated with tacit rules to 'remain unproblematic' (Berlant 1998, page 287) in the presence of unacquainted others. Such tolerated multiplicity is clearly revealed in those moments where such obligations of travel are broken, during which intolerances are brought to the surface in various forms and intensities. However, whilst the obligatory nature of passengering and the often unspoken codes of public conduct are clearly crucial to the workings of tolerance, I have suggested that it is further sustained or disrupted by other concerns. As I have suggested, bodies are not only orientated by particular codes of conduct and conditions of carriage, but by affects, judgements and biographies that additionally work to open up or close down encounter with others, so that some bodies are already read or sensed as more or less tolerable than others. This is particularly pertinent in such an enclosed and often cramped space of movement, where passengers are constantly coming and going and where the close proximity to people from different backgrounds is enforced. Here, a certain pressing corporeality and a heavy reliance upon the senses and the visual play of appearance sediments judgement of others.

There are certainly many instances where the influences of affective governance are at work. Media representations, safety campaigns, pre-formed judgements and circulating suspicions, all speak of regulative tendencies that are located within wider discourses and representations of diversity, community, belonging, and rights to the nation to identify some bodies as somehow different or perhaps intolerable (Lewis 2005; Brown 2006). Yet whilst these tendencies are woven through particular hierarchies of power and habits of encounter to work as 'a kind of precognitive instinct' (Amin 2010b) I have suggested that the workings of tolerance are much less predictable - and to some extent unmanageable to such degree. Through attending to the affective atmospheres of passengering, I have suggested that not only do other concerns influence tolerance of others, but in some instances work to override

such instincts. A long day at work or a delayed bus can work to diminish one's capacity to tolerate others and indeed, other affective intensities. Throughout this chapter, the objects/subjects of (in)tolerance continuously changed – variously focusing upon other passengers, intensities of feeling, traffic, noise, smells and so. An intolerable noise that invades one's own sense of personal space can easily become an intolerance of the individual responsible for the noise, which further diminishes the capacity to tolerate other subjects/objects. The affects of travel are felt through the body – the uncomfortable seat, the pounding headache or the 'reek and jiggle' of the journey (Hutchinson 2000), and whilst such agitations or experiences of diminishment are often personal, such negative affects can contribute to a wider atmosphere of passengering that can work to either open up or close down encounters with other passengers in multiple ways.

More widely, this chapter has been concerned with the unpredictable coming together of things in time and space. As my examples have demonstrated, the spaces of bus travel are particularly turbulent, not least because of the shifting passenger demographic that occurs with each stop or the myriad of individual itineraries that it accommodates, but a journey taken at rush hour is likely to be very different to one taken during the day or at the weekend. Travel-times are unpredictable and are likely to change, as are demands on seats. The bus is vulnerable to the effects of traffic, road works and so on and as my final example suggested, the atmospheres of travel not only change from journey to journey but can alter countless times across any one trip. Thus, whilst the bus is undoubtedly a site of daily routine and repeated encounters that, in some instances, may harden situated habits or work to trivialise difference, it is always potentially otherwise. It is this constant shifting and potential to be otherwise, which demands that passengers respond appropriately from moment to moment, to 'redraw and negotiate the field of what might be possible' (Bissell 2010, page 286) to mark a space that works as 'requisite for identity building' (Jensen 2009, page 147). The reordering and encounters described in this chapter, combine different elements of position, identity and difference into new constellations and moments of engagement, attraction and aversion. From such moments of encounter, tolerance and other modes of living with difference, might emerge, yet also be concurrently challenged undermined and called to account.

In the next chapter, I move to consider another site of everyday routine to build upon my account of tolerance and its alternative conditions of emergence, to consider not only how tolerance might develop as an affect of encounter, but what tolerance and the idea of it, might

bring *to* encounters. I therefore turn to a primary school as a space where tolerance is supposedly pedagogically achieved and cohesive relations are actively promoted.



## 6. Values Education? Tolerance in the Playground

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The reception waiting area is large, airy and yet packed full of colour. Posters compete for attention; large volumes of information about all kinds of events – the childrens aspirations, value of the month, language of the month, posters for this year's Olympics, the most recent school photo, staff pictures, weekly menus and environmental campaigns. I take a seat next to a low table which is stacked with 6 brightly coloured folders. Each folder details a particular event or week – a collection of photos logging the school's activities – Eid, Vershaki, Diwali, Christmas, Health Week and Easter. Happy children, photos of artwork, plays and fetes. Bollywood dancing, Easter parades, religious information and poetry. Sat in the school reception its values are inescapable; detailed in posters that stretch away from me down the corridors, while two displays 'celebrating diversity' mark out inspirational people to be admired. A huge 'welcome' poster hangs above my head – it must have at least 30 different languages on display with each language labelled underneath. Music filters in from the assembly currently underway (Research Diary Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2009 9:20)

In this chapter I move away from the spaces of public travel to examine how tolerance takes place within a multicultural primary school. Whilst the school, like the bus, is a site of routine encounter, habit and everyday rhythms of situated practice, its institutional framework, the personal investments in the site and the *temporalities* of encounter differ substantially. Unlike the spaces of bus travel in which individuals are likely to be unacquainted, despite a curious, perhaps unnatural intimacy, the potential for developed acquaintances at the school is much greater. It is a site that is above all, structured around a rigid routine and repetition of contact, which requires at the very least that parents and guardians<sup>78</sup> gather at the same time, twice daily, five days a week, for perhaps seven or more years. It is to these key spaces of mundane encounter – the playground, the walk to school, assemblies and so on that this chapter turns.

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<sup>78</sup> For the remainder of the chapter I shall refer only to parents, although this is intended to be inclusive of guardians and carers.

More specifically, the chapter focuses on *parent* accounts of tolerance, for whilst there has been much done on the relationship between multicultural schooling and the interactions and moral development of children, there is little work that examines the encounters of parents, despite claims that their increased mixity at such sites might lead to more positive interactions across difference.

The school is a site through which interaction is for the most part, closely managed. Here, relations are more clearly inflected by state influences and injunctions of intercultural dialogue of the kind outlined in Chapter 2. In recent years, both primary and secondary schools within the U.K. have been earmarked as playing a key role in the realisation of intercultural cities and cohesive communities<sup>79</sup> (Flint 2007, Burgess and Wilson 2003, Burgess et al 2005, Coles and Vincent 2006) and are now obliged to commit to the development of community cohesion as part of Ofsted inspections<sup>80</sup> (ICC 2009). Such injunctions of cohesive relations are effectuated across multiple sites and through a multiplicity of practices – outreach projects, school twinning schemes, citizenship studies, values education and community events such as fairs and sports days. Whilst these quite clearly work towards the general preparation of young people for life in a diverse society through developing a deeper understanding and tolerance of others<sup>81</sup>, parents are also earmarked as potential beneficiaries of their child’s schooling which is claimed to increase their understanding of people from different backgrounds (Wood and Landry 2008), although how this is actualised is less clearly addressed.

Yet as I have suggested, schools are particularly personal sites of encounter – being so intimately connected to the development of children and their wellbeing – and are therefore also sites where existing conflicts, intolerances and divisions are played out and reinforced (Flint 2007), as personal investments and motivations make competing claims upon the school and its curricula. Ongoing debates around faith schools and the relationship between education and religion (Burtonwood 2003), competing interpretations of morality, religious dress (Bowen 2007), segregation, racisms (Veninga 2007), language barriers (Blackledge 1999), and the political views of teachers are all subject to intense scrutiny within the school grounds,

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<sup>79</sup> See for example, ‘Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team’ (2001).

<sup>80</sup> Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills. Set up following the Education and Inspections Act, it regulates and inspects the care of children and young people, and education and skills for learners of all ages to provide annual reports for Parliament (Ofsted 2010).

<sup>81</sup> For Ted Cante in the Cante Report (2001), the key to such intercultural education and its ongoing success is to ‘provide all young people with a set of values, perspectives, skills and attitudes that encourage and empower them’ (see also DCLG 2008, page 8).

and serve as further testimony to the personal investments at stake. Tolerance is thus entangled with different ideas about parenting, citizenship, safety, belonging and religion, to name just a few of the complex and heterogeneous influences that shape and inform the encounters at the school and the ways in which tolerance is conceptualised.

To a large degree, debates have tended to be somewhat disembodied accounts of the political processes and institutional frameworks through which interactions are sustained, maintained or perhaps segregated to describe what tolerance – or a lack of tolerance – can do to the school environment and perhaps where its limits lie. They focus on the curriculum content, school demographic and academic achievement. Yet whilst these have a significant influence on interaction, they say very little about the practices and encounters that punctuate the everyday lives of those connected to the school and through which tolerance of other people is realised or perhaps challenged. As Wood and Landry (2008) have suggested, for the children, it is the day-to-day contact with others, that is most likely to work towards the breaking down of ‘community barriers’ rather than the planned curricula – although of course, this undoubtedly plays a significant role. If inadequate attention is granted to the more prosaic encounters through which children are more likely to negotiate difference, then there is even less said about the encounters through which parents might also learn to tolerate and further respect other backgrounds. Yet if nothing else, the school is a seminal part of a parent’s daily routine, where they are brought together with other parents and family members. Yet whilst parents might share common ground and life-stage experiences (Witten et. al 2001), they come from a wealth of different backgrounds (class, race, religion, culture, ethnicity, gender and so on). In what ways then do children play a role in facilitating their development of tolerance as Wood and Landry (2008) have suggested and through what practices and encounters does this occur?<sup>82</sup>

In 2007 the Institute of Community Cohesion (ICC) issued an information pack for schools to provide advice on the resources available to them to help discharge the duty to promote community cohesion (DCSF 2007). Drawing upon the principles of the Cattle Report (2001), which, as I outlined in Chapter 3, emphasised the importance of contact between people from different backgrounds, it stated:

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<sup>82</sup> Much work has been done to attend to the ways in which adults affect the predispositions of children and the expectations that parents should aid their moral development (see for example Okin and Reich 1999), but little work has been done to consider how the moral development of adults might be aided by their children.

“The Guidance states that schools can promote community cohesion through their work to provide reasonable means for children, young people, their friends and families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive relations” (ICC 2007, page 6)

Whilst it notes that different types of schools are likely to face different challenges, the key focus on increased interaction with difference as a means to promote more ‘positive’ and tolerant communities (Wood and Landry 2008) is insufficient in attending to the relationship between such interaction and tolerance. As I suggested in the last chapter, while encounters with difference can clearly build positive relations, they can also be full of small cruelties, unequal power relations, bad experiences or anxieties that can work to increase antagonism or further limit tolerance of others. It is thus necessary to ask under what conditions positive relations might develop and this is a question that runs throughout this chapter.

Following an examination of the school’s presentation of celebrated diversity and contributions to community cohesion, the chapter begins by identifying a series of points at which the school’s celebrated welcome and acceptance is conditioned and further limited by parents, to function instead as extensions of tolerance. In so doing, I locate competing accounts of tolerance, which are conditional, inherently unstable and at times, entirely at odds with the wider narratives of the school and the ethical and emotional injunctions upon which it draws. Through examining the *narratives* of encounter put forward by parents, I locate the ways in which they make sense of tolerance and give meaning to encounters and their apprehensions of others (Thrift 2004), to outline conditions of acceptance that are based upon hierarchical notions of belonging that are shaped by accounts of whiteness and claims to the nation. Whilst the school consistently promotes tolerance of diversity in all of its forms, both religion and race, whilst not mentioned exclusively, are identified as the predominant objects of tolerance and the points at which difference comes to matter. I therefore move to examine what this does to the relation of tolerance, and the extent to which it might be considered a ‘suspended condemnation’ of the other, one that is inbuilt with modalities of power and one that works to structure the social space of the school in particular ways.

In so doing, I suggest that Cattle’s argument around the development of more positive and tolerant relations through increased contact might be considered simplistic in its failure to



adequately grasp the complexities of encounter, particularly in such instances of minority-majority relations. Following on from these narratives of encounter the chapter turns to the habitual encounters of the school playground to examine the practices and 'tacit sorting' of bodies that occur during drop-off and collection times. In so doing, I outline a space through which differences are interwoven and negotiated on the smallest of scales – a site of diligent watchfulness, habit and repetition. While interactions in the playground are bound up with particular performances of parenting, which mark the space as a site of 'highly intense' encounter that in some instances works to solidify anxieties, I suggest that we might see a more pragmatic negotiation of difference that, on the surface, seems to sustain tolerance and keep disagreements in check.

Having outlined the habits and processes of differentiation that seem to segregate parents at drop off and collection times, the next section examines the points at which the observed segregation and habits of intermingling are disrupted, beginning with a Parents Group that was established with the intention of developing tolerance amongst parents. Through an account of the group's motivations and planned encounters, I locate a desire to develop more positive relations amongst parents, which is founded upon a shared commitment to developing a better future for their children, to illuminate the ways in which temporality and futurity are integrated into negotiations of difference. Whilst these encounters across difference are consciously undertaken and purposefully designed, I then examine alternative instances of 'enforced' encounter, which punctuate their everyday school routines and work to similarly disrupt established forces of habit. I thus locate a series of encounters that are considered to be 'ice-breakers' from which alternative relations between parents are developed.

Finally, in locating the increased familiarity with difference that these multiple encounters develop, I consider what tolerance might do to such encounters. I therefore move on to locate a series of points during which parents subject their limits to critical reflection. In so doing, I suggest that the dominant critiques of 'limited tolerance' fail to adequately acknowledge the degree of work and emotional labour that is required to continuously negotiate and readdress such limits and negotiate difference. Furthermore, I argue that the suspension of condemnation that tolerance affords, potentially enables a space within which a 'micropolitics of self-modification' (Connolly 2002, page 108) might occur and from which an alternative ethos of engagement might emerge, which, as I argued in Chapter 3, might challenge the assertion that tolerance works against alternative projects of respect or acceptance.

## 1. The institutional framework of tolerance: The school

The infant school is positioned within south-east Birmingham, serving an area where the cultural diversity and local demographic has a significant bearing upon the social interactions and possibility for (intercultural) encounter within the school. A growing number of pupils come from families where English is not their first language. It has been praised for promoting and celebrating the diversity of the school community and successfully fostering 'understanding and tolerance between families from a wide range of backgrounds' (interview 2009)<sup>83</sup>. According to Ofsted, it excels in its commitment to developing community cohesion and celebrating both the similarities and differences of the faiths and cultures present at the school. It rolls out its celebrated multiculturalism through 'festival days' (to mark key cultural and religious celebrations), the study of a different language each term, a school twinning scheme with a school in South East Asia, special meal days and assemblies, dance events, 'Values Education' and so on. Parents are specifically required to take an active part in their child's education and were a focus of Birmingham's multicultural agenda, which noted the need to engage parents (particular those of minority ethnic communities) in "school plus" activities to aid their learning and incorporate them into the wider school community (BCC 2001b, page 19)<sup>84</sup>. On the surface, the school would appear to be an exemplar of cultural tolerance, respect and acceptance and in short, is exactly the kind of civic site – as noted by Brown (2006) and Kundnani (2007) – through which core societal values are increasingly mobilised, pedagogically achieved and invested with particular affective values (Fortier 2010). After all, it is a site where tolerance is not only required, but through which it is also expected to develop (see for example Moller and Reich 1999).

Perhaps most striking is the school's emphasis on its 'Values Education' programme which sees the adoption of a 'universal' value each month as the focus for pupils, parents and staff. Described as a way to 'develop children's emotional intelligence through giving them

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<sup>83</sup> The catchment area for the school closely fits the local ward boundary. Whilst the ward in which it was originally situated had an ethnic minority population of 23%, the ward boundaries were recently changed to incorporate a neighbouring ward in which ethnic minorities made up 64% of the population (BCC 2010).

<sup>84</sup> One of the recommendations of the Community Cohesion report (Cantle 2001) was to focus on 'Programmes based around schools but aimed at parental involvement' on the basis that, 'it was emphasised on several occasions, that the good work of schools is often undermined by prejudiced home environments where parents do not have the same access to cultural diversity' (page 30).

opportunities to explore the values on which [...] society is based' – tolerance, respect, hope, honesty, courage and so on – it provides the focus for collective worship, personal, social and religious education. Worksheets are produced and sent home and parents are encouraged to promote the values outside of school hours, with a 'values award' presented to one child every month for demonstrating the value in question. As far as the school is concerned, this programme not only aids the moral, social and cultural development of the pupils, but 'makes a considerable contribution to the high degree of racial harmony' in the school and beyond, which hints at one of the school's key issues.

In addition, parents are invited to volunteer in classrooms, the library, the office or wildlife garden, and can also take an active part in the parents association. They are invited to assemblies when their child has a birthday and are further encouraged to take part in extra-curricular workshops. The school holds various celebrations to accommodate the faiths present in the school – Harvest, Diwali, Eid, Christmas, Easter and Vaisakhi – to which parents are invited and are further encouraged to participate as a means of sharing their culture with the remainder of the school. It is through these various means that the school aims to meet its objective of building strong links with the wider community and its groups. They describe just some of the many voluntary spaces upon which the school's success is so often measured and the varied activities, practices and spaces through which parents encounter the school and other parents. Yet there are other spaces, less-often mentioned and beyond the more 'structured' spaces of 'cross-cultural contact' (Wood and Landry 2008), that are central to the daily routine of parents and perhaps more importantly, to the negotiation and interweaving of difference. It is with particular attention to such sites - the walk or commute to school, the playground, birthday parties and play dates – that this chapter proceeds to examine how tolerance is effectuated and further negotiated through everyday encounters.

First of all however, it is necessary to offer a word on the demographic of the research participants. Whilst invitation to take part in the research was extended to all parents and guardians registered with the school, only 'white'<sup>85</sup> parents responded to the call to participate. This is particularly significant given that the 'white group' make up only one third of the school demographic. Furthermore, this response was predicted by one of the staff

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<sup>85</sup> Throughout the chapter I use the term 'white' on the basis that this was the term utilised by both parents and staff to describe the 'group'. In describing themselves as 'white' they set themselves apart from others within the school, who were referred to as 'Asian'. Throughout the chapter, these terms are used uncritically, without recognition of their complexities or histories, to reflect the ways in which parents understood and articulated their 'differences' within the confines of the school.

members prior to the dissemination of invitations, who had suggested that the white parents were often more vocal about the running of the school and were the most critical of its multicultural programme in particular. Indeed, it was predicted that this research would be used as a platform to vocalise concerns. Naturally, this had significant bearing upon the research and the accounts of tolerance examined and recounted. As a result this chapter develops an account of tolerance with a particular attention to race.

As I have suggested, at the time of this research, it was estimated that the British White group made up 30% of the school demographic, whilst the remaining 70% was majority British Asian of predominantly Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin. This provided unusual grounds for encounter. As I have made clear to this point, tolerance has, for the most part, been considered a core value for both managing and living with difference and is overwhelmingly couched in terms of majority groups tolerating minorities (Wemyss 2006), which is bound up with mechanisms of subordination (Brown 2006; Hage 1998). In this instance however, the white group, who would normally enjoy the position of majority are in the minority and so the chapter is therefore based upon the unusual circumstance of a minority group who are expected to negotiate their tolerance of the majority, which is further backed up with particular ideas about their rightful claim to citizenship, nationhood and belonging. In total, three focus groups were conducted and 10 interviews (see Appendix), alongside observation work of the school space and the playground in particular.

In the next section I begin with some of the narratives of encounter garnered from my conversations and interviews with parents, to place them alongside the official accounts of the school and its presentation of cohesion. In so doing, I explore some of the contested conceptualisations of tolerance and examine the ways in which its limits and subjects are described, constructed and further negotiated to locate the points at which they reproduce some of the civilising tendencies and meta-narratives of the political economy of tolerance (Brown 2006).

## 2. The instability of tolerance

In Chapter 2, one of the most salient critiques of tolerance was its perceived instability as a political value and relation. Whilst recognising that tolerance potentially prevents unnecessary violence and encourages refrain from acting upon negative feelings (Fletcher 1996), its perceived benefits were somewhat compromised by its unstable nature and its inevitable withdrawal. Indeed, in much the same way, the celebrated diversity and core values of the school were often felt to be somehow precarious and always in need of constant work and careful maintenance. Such fragility and vulnerability seemed to be somehow at odds with the school's reputation as a centre of excellence for promoting cohesion.

As is clear from the opening account of this chapter, the overwhelming impression on first visiting the school, is one of celebration. The breadth of different cultures, religions, languages, festivals and abilities on display speak of a school at ease with its diversity and inclusive of everyone. The vibrant displays and copious information available attest to its openness, whilst the paintings, poetry, photographs and singing from the ongoing assembly give the general sense of a happy pupil-body and school community. The school's success in celebrating its diversity and promoting intercultural learning was consistently confirmed by parents, whose accounts went some way to detail how the school activities, curricula and ethos not only enriched the lives of the children, but those of the parents as well, as Emma and Sandra suggested:

*Emma:* "...Diwali and the whole lights and the monkey King and all the rest of it, yeah, I know all of that story. Erm, Ellie's imagination is captured by that, and we have quite a theme back at home, and yeah, I certainly think, it's given me something that I would have missed out on if it hadn't been for this school...I love the fact that my child doesn't notice the difference between a child that has a brown face and a child that has ginger hair... And I love the fact that it makes me colour blind, I don't get so intimidated by large gangs of Asian lads anymore..." (Interview 2009)

*Sandra:* "I'd say that I was happy with the society that my children are growing up with and I've been happy with all the racial - and ethnic, and you know, all the different cultures and

representations. I think it's making my children much more tolerant - or is that the right word here?! Nothing is different. I think it really enriches the lives of my daughters, ... and I think we get a lot of that from the school" (focus group 2009)

Both accounts focus upon the school curricula and its mixed demographic, to outline the perceived impacts upon their children – most notably their personal development and their tolerance and acceptance of others – which is a key concern for the parents. There is quite clearly a notion that the learned ability to tolerate others added something to their child's life, not only within the school grounds but beyond the school gates, both through curricula activities and perhaps more indirectly through the ways in which it is shaping their child's behaviour towards others and further changing their own. In both accounts, the celebrated multiculturalism is valued and measured according to the degree to which it is having a positive effect upon themselves and their children more specifically.

Such value was constantly measured against what were felt to be more undesirable consequences of such celebrated diversity, which not only tarnished the benefits outlined, but further worked to outline the limit to which such celebration and welcome was tolerated. Thus, when discussing the school's future there seemed to be a very thin line between its continued success and its possible failure, with the so-called 'white' parents often deemed to embody the singular greatest threat to its developed cohesion. As one of the staff members suggested 'more often than not it is the white parents that express concerns about the emphasis placed upon celebrating diversity' and 'we have to acknowledge this as it could possibly threaten the cohesion of the school' (interview 2009). Accounts of 'white flight' to the surrounding suburbs or Christian schools and the anxieties of being a white minority within the school community, existed in tension with the school's wider accounts of achievement and were constantly positioned as challenges to overcome. Indeed, following my initial meetings, the school's diversity appeared to be mired by narratives of 'white anxiety' (Hage 1998), which spoke of the kinds of scrutinised hospitality or conditional acceptance that form the basis of so many of the contemporary critiques of tolerant relations that I have addressed (Gibson 2007). Accounts of celebrated diversity, were often qualified by an outline of its limits, or the point at which, as one parent put it, one might stop being 'the lovely liberal' (focus group 5/06/2009). Whilst in the previous chapter, the breakdown of tolerance was often abrupt and somewhat

unpredictable, within the school its withdrawal was already anticipated; its threat pervasive and enduring despite being hidden from view.

Such an atmosphere of anxiety and the general concern with anticipating the limits of tolerance and its threat to the school's cohesion, clearly laid the ground for distrust and suspicion. This was perhaps most obvious when it was assumed that participants would use my research as an opportunity to voice their grievances. Of course at times, this dampened the qualitative affect of the school's celebratory atmosphere and presentation of successful cohesion, to automatically place individuals in a defensive, often hostile position, which makes it difficult to develop the positive relations that Cattle (2005) speaks of.

### 3. Limiting Welcome

As so many writers have observed, tolerance and intolerance not only readily coexist, but the movement between them often occurs with relative – almost alarming – ease (Hage 1998). This might perhaps be expected given that a call for tolerance relies upon the simultaneous demarcation of what is not to be tolerated. As Hage (1998) suggests, outlining the limits of tolerance, not only sets the point at which intolerance becomes legitimate but actively encourages or urges a becoming intolerant of those objects that fall beyond the allocated limits – in effect, those practicing tolerance become 'committed to exclusion' (page 91). Thus, despite continuous proclamations of the benefits of diverse schooling and the tolerance and acceptance that it was breeding amongst children and parents alike, accounts repeatedly described their limits:

*Focus group 1:* I came to the nativity and I had another one of my little things of being irritated because I felt that had been watered down.... And that I've got to say really niggles me, that niggles me. Yeah I accept everything and I think it's fantastic and I love it, but I think this is a Christian community and all that kind of thing...

*Focus group 2:* The fact that Britain is so multicultural, so welcoming and so accepting and promoting of culture is brilliant , but why then should it mean that the actual culture of this

country actually gets sidelined and it is beginning to feel like that. (Focus group, 2009)

Such narrative accounts typically locate a 'domestic space that is not to be sacrificed' (Lewis 2005, page 544); a space that is composed of a series of Christian values, particular traditions and the English language – or a Britishness that Kundnani (2007) describes as bound to a white superiority. They certainly take forward claims that tolerance might work as a tool for the continued 'fantasy' of the 'white nation' (Hage 1998) as a way of welcoming diversity whilst simultaneously constructing an exclusionary conception of nationhood and belonging that is played out within the school grounds (see also Gibson 2007). Even those individuals that distanced themselves from any particular faith or belief, described a sense of loss when Christian traditions familiar to them were sacrificed in order to accommodate the school's diverse student body. In these instances such loss of familiarity worked to compromise what the parents regarded to be the intrinsic benefits of the school's diversity and we can identify an acceptance or welcome that is somehow limited – understood as an extension of tolerance. Such welcome or acceptance is, as Jenkins (2002) suggests:

'conceived as an attitude that can be sustained only in so far as it does not undermine the dominant position of the one who "gives", the one who has something in excess to give and only gives out of that excess, thus without risking damage to the reserves necessary to maintain ourselves *just as we are*; that is, in the position of the generous and not of those in need of generosity' (page 119)

The described limits articulate a distinction between those that are considered to be part of the 'actual' or 'true' British nation and those that continue to remain somehow outside to locate a hierarchical conception of citizenship. The parents activate 'diverse affects of territorial demarcation' (Bloch and Dreher 2009). Whilst speaking of a certain degree of 'welcome' or 'acceptance', they are, at the same time, enforcing a separation between themselves and others within the school, to locate the points at which difference comes to matter. Despite being the minority group within the school community, such accounts seek to reinstate a particular account of authority (Jenkins 2002), one which is bound up with a specific claim to the nation, and an anxiety that other groups or cultures had 'usurped a cultural-political space' within the school at their expense (Bloch and Dreher 2009, page 200). In observing the concern for maintaining one's own well-being, the withdrawal of tolerance can be predicted as the point at which the benefits for the tolerator are compromised or the



tolerator is required to adjust their own ways (Scanlon 2003) as became apparent in one focus group discussion on religion:

- A. It's a shame that we are losing traditions. I loved the singing at school, loved the inclination towards a religion...
- B. I was a bit "ooow" to see a big 'Happy Vaisakhi' up on the last day of the Easter holidays, but no 'Happy Easter' (focus group, 2009)

The movement of such felt injustice – of being somehow marginalised or engulfed – pinpoints what Forrest and Dunn describe as a 'remarkable twist of rhetoric, [where] the dominant group in society [is] now the oppressed, the disadvantaged and marginalised [the] oppressors' (in Bloch and Dreher 2009 page 199) and this is perhaps intensified by the unique demographic of the school. It highlights an anxiety about the security of Christianity as the dominant religion (Hage, 1998), but perhaps more importantly highlights a perceived loss of power within the school – a power which was felt to be unevenly distributed and granted to 'he who shouts the loudest' as one parent suggested (interview 2009)<sup>86</sup>. Such uncertainty about their position within the school was located in a rhetoric of victimhood (Bloch and Dreher 2009), which served to limit their tolerance. For Gibson (2007), such accounts of victimhood are commonly entangled with claims of an 'abused generosity', or rather, an abuse of the generosity that the act of tolerating is *felt* to embody, to the point where the tolerator needs protection as a result of their own generosity or compassion. In welcoming and accepting the diversity of the school, the parents felt they had made themselves vulnerable and now found their religious beliefs and culture in need of protection<sup>87</sup>. This clearly serves to intensify their anxieties.

Importantly, whilst the tolerance outlined here – as the parents would seem to suggest – is presupposed to counteract 'an impulse to intervene' in the school's celebration of other faiths and cultures through no more than a withholding of force or complaint, it is quite clear that it

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<sup>86</sup> This was a common theme across the interviews arising from a concern that the Asian community within the school got more than was fair on the basis that they consistently complained.

<sup>87</sup> As much work has suggested, such anxieties stem from not only a concern about the threat of intimacy, but with the threat of annihilation that such intimacy brings. Tarlo (2007) for example suggests that such anxieties are not simply about encounter, but are rather about the transformative potential of encounters – the extent to which encounters with the other may not only destroy or weaken one's own identity but encourage a taking up of another's.

also maintains the initial (negative) relation towards the group or religion to which the tolerance is here directed. The felt irritation that the nativity had been 'watered down' or that Vaisakhi was given priority over Easter was not addressed, challenged or indeed altered, but was instead, quite clearly maintained so as to arise at various points in the future. It is such maintenance of negative feeling, which for Fletcher (1996), renders the tolerance expressed inherently unstable and as I suggest, further accounts for the school's continuous concern for the ongoing sustainability of its social cohesion.

#### **4. The Space of tolerance: Embodying the Limit**

The examples covered to this point, suggest that the limits of tolerance are based upon the degree to which parents felt that they and their children were benefitting from the school's diversity. The point at which tolerance is limited coincides with those instances in which parents felt that their claims within the school were somehow in jeopardy. Whilst the discussion thus far has been focused upon parent accounts of the school's policies and curricula – whether it be the celebration of religious festivals, or the range of cultures that it chooses to accommodate – there is more to be said about how such line-drawing influences their daily encounters.

During my time at the school, it became clear that the anxieties outlined in the previous examples, intensified other points of concern, to lay the grounds for suspicion and encourage a closer scrutiny of others parents as a result. Particular bodies were identified as somehow taking advantage of the school's 'acceptance' or tolerance. Accounts of other parents trying to cheat the school system by refusing to pay for school trips, despite being able to afford them; of taking advantage of the generosity and the sense of duty felt by other parents or of refusing to volunteer or take an active role in the running of the school and its extra-curricular activities were frequent. As one mother suggested:

A: '...if it's a 'come along' and something is organised and you can just sit and have a coffee then you will get a lot of Asian people – it will be mixed. If we need somebody to *help* us organise then it will be the white people that show up, and it wears a little bit thin' (focus group, 2009)

As this account suggests, it is the Asian parents in particular that are identified – accused of taking but failing to give back to the school community. Rumours and suspicions of fraud and the use of false addresses to secure a child’s place within the school raised concerns about an imminent Asian ‘take-over’, whilst intimidating encounters in the playground and stories passed down from other schools, spoke of a threatening Asian masculinity (Alexander 2000)<sup>88</sup>. All of these accounts accumulated and served to test the limits of tolerance expressed by the parents, further multiplying the movement of anxieties (Anderson 2006) and to some extent confirming the suspicions that they already held. In reflecting upon the school’s policy of voluntary contribution for school trips Emma declared:

*Emma:*        ‘This is when I stop being this lovely liberal I-don’t-see racial-differences, because I stand there and I watch them going down the line and watch them give out the letters to the people that haven’t paid ... and to say that it’s never a certain person is unfair, but let’s say that I have never seen one of them handed out to a white person...’  
(interview, 2009)

Here there is a clear distinction made between those that are more likely to give to the school and those that are more likely to take, which is articulated through an account of race. Emma identifies her limit, or the point at which she feels she is no longer able to unconditionally welcome others – to outline the point at which she begins to judge people according to the colour of their skin. It is, in every sense, the point at which the ‘condemnation’ that Jenkins (2002) speaks of, is no longer suspended. Here, the school system is not only more likely to be – if not always – abused by non-white individuals, but the white body becomes the embodiment of a particular sense of duty or fairness and thus vulnerability (Thobani 2007). In this account we are perhaps reminded of the racial judgments and summaries that are at work and how readings of race condition and further limit tolerance of others within the school. As

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<sup>88</sup> As Zoe stated; ‘My big fear is that, for instance, going to the senior school, from listening to what people say, their impression is that there is... and I’m repeating what people say... their impression is that if I bumped into you walking up, I would turn to you and apologise and you would turn to me and apologise and this would be the end of it, but the Asian macho culture is to instantly be on the defensive... ‘did you do that deliberately’? And there are a lot of really big problems for boys at the secondary school’ (interview 2009)

Swanton suggests, 'racial summaries stick to and arrange bodies, things and spaces to produce the basis for rapid judgements that then form orientations' (Swanton 2010, page 2335).

Nowhere was this more clear than in the presence of one body in particular, which appeared to articulate the very space of tolerance – that of the 'Muslim woman' (Lewis 2005). The 'pockets of very traditional Muslim ladies... tied to the house' and prone to 'huddling together and speaking their own language'<sup>89</sup> were regarded as unwilling to participate in the school community – as secretive and as posing a significant barrier to its cohesion as Zoë suggested:

*Zoe* There's a lady that lives down my road - I've tried walking up to school with her and tried to engage, but the language barrier is so great. She's lived here since 1989 and I want to say to her "why can't you speak better English?" I don't want to sound racist, or stereotypical or whatever it is, but she's still living in a Pakistani village on Pennywick Road. You know?

*Angela* One of the children's jackets was left so I said I'd take it round to the house and have a chat and all... and she opened the door and it was like guarded, she was covered, and sort of quickly took the jacket in. And that's you know, they're still so very very traditional and I have to say that sometimes, that does really quite grate on me.

Such accounts would seem to stem from what Wise calls, 'the breakdown of everyday rituals of recognition' (2010, page 925) which have resulted in either misunderstandings or insult. They add to other narratives of encounter, to present the figure of the Muslim woman in particular as epitomising the loss or betrayal of British values – a loss that was felt to be unacceptable and beyond the tolerance that the parents were willing to extend. This particular group of women become typecast as an exception, as failing to take advantage of the 'liberal society' in which they live, as rejecting agency and as being submissive, mirroring those civilising tendencies accounted in Chapter 2 (Brown 2006). Aversions and suspicions are attached to their bodies as an abject text (Kahf 1999, Dwyer 1999) and they remain apparently self-segregated and somehow beyond integration.<sup>90</sup> Such encounters and the accumulation of them, enables a positioning of bodies which marks them as already more or less tolerable.

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<sup>89</sup> These descriptions were taken from one of the focus groups.

<sup>90</sup> Such logic is reminiscent of Kundnani's (2007) observations of various criticisms of multiculturalism put forward by liberal commentators such as Trevor Phillips and perhaps most notably, David Blunkett, who claimed that 'over tolerance of cultural diversity' (page 6) allowed Asian communities in particular,

To this point, I have outlined a series of competing accounts of tolerance through various narratives of encounter. Some of the latter accounts would seem to stand at odds with the school's record of achievement, whilst the accounts were often contradictory and moved between what was a whole-hearted embrace of the school, its programme and demographic through to an active dislike and rejection of it, giving further testimony to its unstable nature (Fletcher 1996) and the thin line between tolerance and intolerance. The objects of tolerance are also varied ranging from a focus on the school's curricula to religion to other parents and race – although these are clearly linked. Accounts of tolerance were also attached to particular bodies, such that some bodies in particular would seem to physically embody its very limits. Moreover, whilst some bodies are clearly positioned as intolerable according to wider discourses of citizenship, nationhood and belonging, they are additionally charged with negative affects that are multiplied by rumours and gossip, to mark them as variously threatening, untrustworthy, lazy or ignorant at different times and in different contexts.

Through examining some of the accounts that I have addressed, we see a white parent group that positions itself as 'the tolerant' – as those that somehow have greater claim to the school (and the nation more widely) and are therefore the group charged with the responsibility and thus power to extend welcome (and also withdraw it), despite their minority position (Wemyss 2006). These accounts suggest that some of Cattle's (2005) arguments around the development of positive relations draw upon oversimplified accounts of encounter. Within the school, it would seem that not only does increased contact between people from different backgrounds produce negative effects, but that the practice of tolerance reproduces the kind of meta-narratives that Brown (2006) and Hage (1998) described in Chapter 2. However, whilst 'white anxieties' about the maintenance of identity and position, and the reading of other bodies as a potential threat, would seem to 'secure collectives' (Ahmed 2004b, page 25), both within the school between white and Asian 'groups' and more broadly between individual subjects and the 'body of the nation' (ibid), it is important to ask how such narratives of encounter – perhaps of a brief exchange on a doorstep or on the way to school – inflect and orientate habitual encounters on an everyday basis. In the previous chapter, it was evident that past encounters were brought to the fore, or 'reopened', to shape new encounters and inflect 'visual regimes' and bodily readings with dislike, suspicion and anxiety (Alcoff 2006;

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to self-segregate, leaving them 'inherently at odds with modern values' (page 7) and crying out for a cultural difference that needed limits placed upon it. As Sara Ahmed has also noted, multiculturalism could only ever promise 'happiness' so long as '*they play the game*' (2008, page 133 my emphasis).

Swanton 2010a). To what extent then, does the accumulation of encounters in this space shape relations with others? In the next section, I focus upon the school playground to consider how such accounts of tolerance were made manifest in everyday routine and interaction.

### 5. 'The Visual Play of Skin': The Playground Part i

There seems to be a split along apparently racial lines at school drop off times when parents stop to chat. You see them in huddles, talking in their different languages – you know – in closed groups. Handshakes are exchanged. Quiet conversation. Cliques form – the parents don't mix. Children run in between the groups, demand attention and disrupt conversation. Some stand along the lines of the football pitch. That's where all the Asian people stand and that's where all the White people stand – they gather at the same spot every day. 'When I had to go over and see them, I have to say, I felt a bit intimidated as I approached – they're so very traditional'. Purposeful strides across the playground. Diligent watchfulness. Eye-contact. To walk between the groups is to walk 'across the divide'. Look around the playground and you'll see the same; they always do it, they divide by colour...<sup>91</sup>

As Noble (2009) has suggested, the school playground is a site of constant intermingling. As parents pick-up or drop-off their children, they gather, converse, pass-by, wave and meet (page 52). It becomes a site where common needs and life-stage experiences of parenting are likely to be shared (Witten et. al 2001, page 309); where subtle gestures of familiarity and welcome are exchanged and where a diligent watchfulness is often practiced. In short, differences are interwoven and negotiated on the smallest of scales (Noble 2009, page 52). Yet the playground depicted here seems to be positioned as a microcosm of the wider school community – as reflecting the segregation that was outlined by the parents that I spoke with. Indeed, despite the school's promoted multiculturalism, it would seem that at the more intimate scales of encounter, a persistent segregation is apparent. Bodies appear to be sorted according to demarcations of both race and religion. 'Particular bodily performances, signalling racial and affective location, tacitly sort' the parents (Amin on Saldanha 2010, page 7). They position themselves in particular spots, attracting other parents as the playground fills up. Groups form in small habitual clusters; they become part of the 'gazebo group', 'the Sikh dads', or the 'British contingent' by the climbing frame. The 'elders' stick together and 'alliances' are

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<sup>91</sup> This was constructed using material from a number of interviews and focus groups, coupled with notes from my own observations.

formed. Race and religion are amalgamated with other visual indicators of difference; turbans, the number of children, salwar kameez, age and so on, and through these indicators, materialities and the audible presence of foreign languages, 'race repeatedly takes form' (Swanton 2010, page 450).

During my earlier observations, it certainly seemed to be the case that the playground was divided by race and religion. I was acutely aware of the accounts already collected during my focus groups and interviews and was shocked to find such visible divisions. Yet whilst the playground was clearly divided and was noted as such by parents, such clusters or groupings were perhaps maintained by additional concerns, as Carolyn noted:

*Carolyn:* "I know where I stand because I can easily get back up to this end of the playground, to either grab my child and take him to the end of the line, or if he has a problem... I don't like standing over there. ... And so if I want to go and speak to one of my Asian friends, I have to walk over and then my view's blocked..." (interview, 2009).

There are clearly friendships that exist and have developed across these apparently segregated groups. Yet Carolyn pinpoints her reluctance to move from the group in which she normally stands on the basis that she wants her son to know exactly where she will be, whilst also being able to keep a view of the classroom door from which he will emerge. In reflecting on her choice of position, she locates a particular habit or routine that she has developed over her time at the school. It is not necessarily a conscious act of segregation – but a 'reiteration of already existing spatial norms' (Veninga 2007, page 118, see also Thomas 2005). Such everyday practice of waiting in the same place, with the same group of people, 'reproduces the space and continues segregation – embodying and repeating the *norm* of segregation' (Thomas 2005, page 1239 my emphasis). The playground then, is first and foremost a site of habit, repetition, and continuity, where habit is coupled with a concern for the safety of their children, which is here folded through an account of segregated space.

Of course, there is a need to ask why these groups developed as they did and why such spacings became habit in the first place. For many, these groups were formed during the early years of their child's education; a stage which was thought to be crucial for developing 'alliances', for as Gemma suggested, at this early stage;

“you’re in this little segregated bubble and everybody’s new and even though you’ve got kids in school previously there are a lot of new parents and sharing that, you know, “how are they doing, are they settling?” and then after that, that has gone, it drifts and then you come into the big playground and if you’ve lost your friends...(SHRUGS)”(interview, 2009).

Common to many of my conversations was an overwhelming feeling – and anxiety – that if you failed to make an effort to talk to other parents within this first year, then you would find yourself isolated upon leaving the reception class. What is perhaps most interesting is the way in which these friendships or acquaintances are emotively described as ‘*alliances*’ (interview 2009) that are taken through to the ‘big playground’, which says much about the way in which the playground space is viewed as a daunting space of exposure and potential isolation. Of course, this has considerable implications for the grounds of encounter.

The playground is a site where parents are judged on their parenting capabilities and are observed from a distance by both teachers and other parents. Blackford (2004), in her work on playgrounds and playground etiquette, suggests that they might be regarded as sites of panoptic force – a site of watchfulness that is not only concerned with keeping the children safe and well-behaved, but with judging the parenting capacities of others. It becomes a site for sharing experiential knowledge and the distribution of ‘both advice and admonitions’ (page 238); a space where one engages in ‘self-discipline through surveillance of one another’ (page 239). More importantly, it is a space where such judgements and close surveillances are coupled and further made sense of through accounts of difference; of race, religion and culture. The playground is therefore a space of heightened sensitivities, intense encounter and one that harbours a significant potential for the solidification of anxieties and prejudices, which was made apparent during one of the focus groups:

- A. And I heard this Asian lady telling her five year old that she wasn’t allowed to balance on the curb because it was too dangerous and she nearly had kittens when she saw Lee jumping off the dragon’s tail outside the library... And I don’t know about you, but I was brought up with the key thing that my parents had to teach me to be independent. That is not... it doesn’t seem to be a part of their upbringing, it seems to be ‘we will look after you, we will make sure that you are protected from the outside



world' and then I think you get married and you're still cosseted, live with the in-laws and then the whole process keeps going, nobody values independence and I think little things like that maybe, are...

B. You're being judged! Being judged on your parenting ability?!

A. Oh gosh! All the time, but I don't care about that anymore, it's taken me a long time to get there, you know, as my boys pelt off down the road, they're sometimes stopped.

B. (Does an impression of a goal keeper preparing to save a penalty)

A. Yeah! Well it should be... I'm happy with this and it doesn't bother me. I always say thank you for your care and concern, but they're fine. And I think it's these little things - and that's something I've spotted... but there are other things that I don't see and I don't necessarily spot that inadvertently... issues that we have.

(focus group 5/6/2009)

The parents here describe a certain *performance* of parenting which is contested, reified by others (Blackford 2004) and judged according to their child's behaviour. A judgement is made about the Asian woman, her upbringing and values, and her subsequent approach to parenting. This judgment inflected how this encounter and the woman's reaction were read – as interfering rather than caring. Yet whilst such 'interference' clearly irritates the mother, she suggests that she has learnt to tolerate such interventions and conceals her irritation with a polite but firm response. Needless to say, the parents suggest that it is 'these little things' that are repeated and further accumulate to become bigger issues and sustain – whether consciously or unconsciously – some of the tensions and (in)tolerances that exist within the school.

Of course, as I have already noted, there is quite a clear distinction between such narratives of encounter and the *taking place* of them. In practice, the polite 'thank you' might have taken a very different tone from the way in which it is remembered and recounted. Yet these narratives and recollections of encounter are crucial to formations of judgement. Small gestures and brief encounters can have lasting effects and be understood in a multitude of ways. These multiple accounts and observations of the playground allude to the heightened sensitivities and sense of personal exposure that the atmosphere of the playground would

seem to create. Watchful glances and huddled groups put parents on edge. Whilst the visible segregation in the playground became a key point of conversation and whilst many of the parents found it difficult to explain why such groups had developed – whether it was race first and foremost, or whether it was more readily explained by forces of habit – the spatial practices of parents at drop-off and collection points were commonly entangled with accounts of tolerance. For some, there was a sense of inevitability; the segregated space serving as proof of irreconcilable difference, whilst for other parents, such segregation demanded attention. Yet whilst the space of the playground was undoubtedly charged and tensions were clearly apparent in parent accounts, disagreements or confrontations were rarely visible.

In the previous chapter, it was often quite clear when a certain limit of tolerance had been reached – whether it was evident in a disruptive outburst, or made apparent through more subtle gestures. Yet whilst parents were quite happy to talk about what they disapproved of, what annoyed them and what they were not prepared to tolerate, surprisingly, these limits were less apparent or obvious in their everyday encounters. We might ask why for example, the mother in the last focus group responds so politely to the woman whom she feels so readily judges her parenting skills and why she apparently continued to do so on numerous occasions. What is it about the space of the primary school that encourages such a tolerant response? In short, what is it that sustains tolerance and keeps disagreements in check? In the next section I suggest that we might consider such encounters to be a ‘pragmatic negotiation of difference’ (Noble 2009, page 57) which is clearly linked to a series of parental responsibilities. To consider the relationship between tolerance and parenting more fully, I begin with a Parents Group that was set up with the intention of cultivating more positive relations between parents and a more generous tolerance of others.

## **6. New Connections/planned encounter? The Parents Group**

*“We all want our children to succeed in the big wide world...” (Christine Interview)*

The Parents Group<sup>92</sup>, which was set up at the beginning of 2008 by two ‘white Christian’ mothers, who had children in attendance at the school<sup>93</sup> aims to strengthen community

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<sup>92</sup> During the interview, Christine explained that the group was held primarily for mums and families on the basis that a large proportion of the school community is Muslim and so it was felt that the group needed to provide women-only spaces as ‘mixing with men from outside of the family unit is not seen as

cohesion and develop 'good links between the diverse cultural, religious and racial groups that make up the local [...] community', by providing a space in which people could 'learn about each other, from each other'<sup>94</sup> through activities such as coffee mornings, picnics, Bollywood dancing, cookery evenings and daytrips.

As Christine told me, the origins of The Parents Group stemmed from a conversation that she had with her co-founder, who like her, had noted that whilst the children were apparently mixing well within the school, the opposite was true of the parents:

*Christine:* "The parents weren't mixing, the mothers were sitting or standing, or chatting in their groups which were apparently along racial lines, but were not really mixing or talking to each other. And we thought that was a bit odd. I want my child to grow up getting on with people of other races and backgrounds and not to have a shock and not know how to deal with people from other races or religions. [I]t was quite disappointing (...) that there was a lack of communication (.) The second thing that got us started erm... lots of white parents saying that 'we don't want to keep our children in the school because there are too many Asians and we want to take them off'... and if you asked for the racial profile of children who are not staying on, it is almost exclusively white" (interview 2009)

Christine's disappointment says much about her previous expectations of encounter and what she had hoped to get out of the school and the kind of multicultural learning it could instigate. Again, race is the key dividing line and it is the white parents who are considered to have the capacity and thus power (Hage 1998; Wemyss 2006), to destroy the school's cohesion and diversity by withdrawing their children from the school. In identifying such 'disturbing trends' they sought to find a point of commonality upon which parents might be able to build new lines of connection.

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a particularly good idea'. These events however, were not always exclusively for women, with a family event at least once a term so that the whole family could get involved, including dads, other children and extended members of the family.

<sup>93</sup> Whilst the group had initially intended to link in with the school and had asked for its support, they had difficulty gaining permission from the attached junior school and so set up independently in the hope of applying for funding elsewhere. Thus, whilst it was set up by parents within the school, it aims to reach out to other schools in the area, to establish itself as a wider community group.

<sup>94</sup> This is the group's key catchphrase.

*Christine:* "...we thought was that erm, that if you try to identify ... something that we all have in common, regardless of race, religion, and then if we try to build on that and see if we can do anything and what we chose is that we all want our children to succeed when our child goes out into the big world. Everyone wants that and because of the fact that we live in a very multicultural city and it is becoming an increasingly multicultural city, it's very important for children to have the life-skill of being able to get on with children of different background from theirs." (interview)

What is depicted here is a desire to foster a more cohesive community through a learning about others that is founded upon a shared commitment. For Noble (2009, page 57), parents such as Christine might be considered pragmatists, 'who want [their] children to survive in a culturally complex world', describing such negotiations of 'pervasive difference' to be strategic for the purpose of co-habitation alone. This does not necessarily mean that the sense of loss or anxiety that I described at the beginning of the chapter is automatically overcome, but that, as Noble argues, there is the sense that 'the trade-off for the more worldly and tolerant experience [their] children [get, is] more than worth it' (ibid). The group is motivated first and foremost by their parental responsibilities and firmly rests upon supporting their children to their best of their abilities for as Christine suggested, '... [children] are still very much influenced by their parents and if they only ever see their mums talking to mums of the same background as them, then they'll think that that is normal.'

Interestingly, in making specific reference to the future demographic of Birmingham and its growing plurality, this desire is bound up with their concern for the future and its social stability, echoing the fears examined in Chapter 1 – of the potential 'ungovernability' of plural cities (Finney and Simpson 2009, page 142). The ability to get on with children from different backgrounds is thus described as a 'life-skill' that the children need in order to better negotiate future encounters with difference. This recognition, of a need to act now so as to prevent problems arising in the future hints at the ways in which temporality and futurity are integrated into accounts of living with difference (Adam and Groves 2007) to position encounters in the extended present as potential agents of change. As I argued in Chapter 3, these accounts clearly disrupt the temporal sequencing of encounter as such a positioning not only makes the future tangible, but illuminates a projection of fear that in many instances requires a consideration of past experience (Anderson 2004; Connolly 2002).

This was evident when examining the notion of shock – of being confronted with difference – that Christine mentioned in her first account and was common to some of the other conversations that I had with parents. As Deb suggested:

Deb: "When I went to school it was white all the way through education before I came [to Birmingham] for university and for me, I had never had that kind of experience, it was absolutely a shock. My children won't ever have that and that is absolutely fantastic and they won't have... I mean...I mean, I wasn't racist, for me it was just a case of never having seen it before. And now we have chosen to live in this area, and I want to stay in this area, but it is something that I have had to learn and hopefully they won't have to learn that. So I kind of see our role as encouraging and stuff, but I don't think, do we have to go any further? Hopefully as the children grow up and they become parents, I hope that it is going to become a natural thing rather than having to force the issue every time, and never feeling comfortable and you know, it just seems normal and I imagine, you know, that it might be a gradual process." (Focus group)

The feelings of discomfort, of 'having to force the issue', are explained by her lack of encounters with difference at an early age. She locates the impact of her own upbringing and the importance of place on her present interactions to describe the discomfort she experienced when placed in a situation that was both unfamiliar and uncomfortable. Significantly, the ill-ease that she spoke of was identified as a personal problem or failing and not a reflection on others; a sentiment that was reiterated by Ryan:

Ryan "If I could have turned the clock back thirty years or whatever, thirty-odd years, you know, I would have turned around and said you know, I would have loved to have known more, so maybe it would have made me a better person who knows" (interview)

Both parents articulate an awareness of their limitations, which is bound up with past experiences and an acknowledgment that their acceptance of others could be improved. Continuous reference to their own failures and the difficulties they had engaging with people they felt were somehow different from themselves was enough reason for them to settle in

the area, noting a desire for something better for their children and identifying an intergenerational pattern of encounter that they hoped would see difference normalised. These accounts highlight the durational nature of encounters – the traces of the past and the ambitions for the future, which shape their taking place (Grosz 2004; Game 1997) – but also offers an alternative window onto the patterns of segregation in the playground; to highlight the anxieties, biographies and desires that permeate encounters and contribute to what appears to be the effects of racial segregation. These accounts return to the question as to whether ‘forced’ encounter might be the only means through which some of the awkwardness and lack of knowledge described might be confronted and perhaps diminished.

## 7. Creating Cultural Encounters

As I have suggested in earlier chapters, there has been much concern with ‘what works in enabling cross-community interaction’ (DCLG 2009a) with a renewed focus upon the spaces, activities and networks that might enable interaction that could potentially lead to greater tolerance of others (Cantle 2005). The Parents Group meetings are specifically designed with the intent of engineering encounters that would develop knowledge of others as a basis for more positive relations. As Christine suggested:

“We’re trying to specifically offer activities where people are forced into speaking to each other or to specifically learn something that they didn’t know before... it goes back to me being direct and... erm, saying I know that we’re actually going to have to do something to force people to interact because I know they won’t”.

The idea that encounters with difference needed to be ‘forced’ or managed in some way, says much about the perceived conditions of tolerance. Indeed it invites question as to whether, in such spaces – where segregations are visible and perhaps hardened by habit and suspicions – tolerance can only ever develop through such coerced means. As I suggested in Chapter 3, such encounters have been categorised by various policies according to the forms of relation they might facilitate and the quality of the encounters that took place through The Parents Group were certainly measured according to the kinds of individuals that participated:

"It is usually a good mix of faces that have attended. I haven't managed to, er, I don't think we've managed to get a woman who is in full veil, but we get many many women who are, or have a very loose scarf or the very tight headscarf, but yeah, unfortunately we haven't managed to get any of them" (Christine, interview 2009).

Again, the figure of the Muslim woman, or 'the woman in a full veil', resurfaces to outline the limits of The Parents Group's success and the differences that it can encompass, drawing upon particular visual regimes to produce a mix of 'faces' (Swanton 2010) which position the 'veiled women' as the ultimate embodiment of difference (Lewis 2005). They become signifiers of difference and separation (Meer et. al 2010) and in so doing, are made distinct from other bodies which are here positioned as neutral, or without difference. This idea – that the group's success was dependent upon the mixity of different bodies was furthered by Deb:

Deb: "The coffee morning that I came to (...) was lovely and they put a board up around taking different languages and I actually got there a bit late you know, but when I got there they'd got about twenty languages of hello and goodbye on the board and that worked really really well erm, but I don't know, I mean I went to a cricket match and I think that was about 50/50 [White/Asian], so I think they've managed it..." (focus group)

For Deb, the fifty/fifty balance between white and Asian parents serves as evidence of The Parents Group's success and develops a picture of the ways in which race and religion function as key markers of difference<sup>95</sup>. It would seem that on the surface, the group has been successful in encouraging different people to get involved and further offering them an opportunity to address some of their anxieties and fears of encounter. The lasting benefits of such intervention however are perhaps less easily addressed and I want to consider the extent to which the encounters enabled through these events might be considered to be 'transformative' (Tarlo 2007) or somehow productive of new forms of relation – to what extent

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<sup>95</sup> That there were preconceived ideas of what encounters with difference would look like, were perhaps most apparent in the surprise expressed when their expectations of encounter were not met as Zara suggested: 'Well they're doing this day out erm... to an English manor house type-thing and the lady that's organising it, I actually said to her... where are you going next and she actually said somewhere quaint, typically English – you know, China teacups and everything and I said you know "Oh God, I would have thought you would have been going to something perhaps more traditionally Muslim, Sikh, whatever" and she said "Oh!" and I said well that was what I wanted to go and see for myself and she was quite taken aback because she was a Muslim lady that was organising it and she was quite taken aback by that' (interview, 2009)

such 'forced' contact between parents developed the tolerance and understanding that the group were seeking.

Following a coach trip to an English manor house, Gemma reflected upon her movements within the playground, pointing out the increased effort that she made to move between different groups:

Gemma: I am one of those people that will drift around and say hello... I don't know whether you've noticed, but there is the group under the gazebo. Yeah? Yeah, now I know them, because they are the people that came on the coach trip and I will happily go up and say hello and how are your children? And that's fine, erm, so, but so, there are now crossovers and people are now starting to talk to people. So I think we're doing okay (...) I feel that overall it has been beneficial and you know the one thing that it has done is start an awful lot of dialogue.

This particular effort to disrupt the easy settlement of people and engage with those groups that were perhaps less likely to interact with others is directly linked with The Parents Group. She identifies a new *familiarity* – 'now I know them' – that makes it more acceptable and indeed easier to approach others. Whilst there is no indication here as to the lasting benefits or wider implications of such efforts beyond the playground, she makes a specific reference to the dialogue that such movements have opened up<sup>96</sup> and the 'set of dispositions' that she has developed in order to respond and interact with others (Spinosa et. al cited in Harrison 2000, page 512). The Parents Group is thus positioned as a point of departure – as the beginning of something else.

Across this section, I have outlined various movements towards others that have been driven by a desire to break down the segregation that was perceived to be either sustained by prejudice or a lack of understanding, or through the situated practices that worked to harden habits. However, in the next section, I return once again to the playground to offer an additional reading of encounter, to position the playground as a site of possibility and locate other influences that work to encourage encounter with difference and disrupt the easy settlement of racial or cultural groups.

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<sup>96</sup> Studies elsewhere have certainly suggested that the disruption of particular habits of labelling others to be irreconcilably different, enables the formation of new attachments through which new patterns of social interaction may be learnt (Amin 2002).



## 8. The Playground: Part ii

Two mothers take up their positions in their usual spot, just to the left of the centre playground, at the point at which two white lines meet on the floor. One leans on a pushchair while the other stands with arms folded. Their discussion is animated. Their two daughters run in circles around their legs. Momentary glances at the two girls ensure that their play is not getting out of hand. The women laugh. A young girl runs over to join the two girls, dragging her mother who holds her by the hand. There is an explosion of excitement among the girls, who run off to play with children who have assembled at the other end of the playground. The mother who has been dragged across the playground is left. She stands in between the two mothers; looks at her feet before looking in the direction of the girls. The easy conversation has stopped. She gives them an apologetic smile and the group descends into silence. The new arrival continues to look awkward. They focus on the girls who are now on the other side of the playground. Slow time. Minutes seem to pass before one of the women asks the new arrival a question about her book-bag. They visibly relax.

This is a very different form of enforced contact; an encounter between parents that is instigated by a child. While the unplanned meeting is clearly awkward, it highlights the value of a common ground or life-stage experience in diffusing some of the discomfort. Much like the encounters on the bus, this encounter is prolonged by a requirement to stay in position until the children are taken into the classroom, which ensures that the conversation is maintained for at least ten minutes. On close inspection, the playground is full of such small encounters; brief exchanges as parents pass each other by, are brought together by their children or are approached with a party invitation - interactions that are easily missed or overlooked as insignificant. Children run between groups, demand attention and provide a point of conversation and when a problem arises or a child falls down, the nearest parent will assist. My interviews were full of such accounts, and as one mother suggested, such moments might be considered to be 'ice breakers':

Deb: "And that's an ice breaker isn't it? The children - our children - are bringing us together and I think that that's what's happening"

Louise: "Oh I wouldn't be so friendly with Hayley if it wasn't linking us in with Stacey, but that's how I've met all the other mums here, otherwise we wouldn't have anything in common. Or at least... you find out things in common through the children and then it carries on..."

Deb But that's wherever you go to school. I think as a parent as soon as you go to school, you have to [make an effort]. Well you could hide yourself away, but it is generally much wiser if you make those efforts because then you have some friends.

Both examples of encounter – whether it be through events such as those organised by The Parents Group or through the activities of children – offer a different account of developed familiarity. Whilst those organised by The Parents Group were more obviously directed, both examples speak of a kind of 'labour' of intercultural community (Noble 2009a). There is more here than a 'coming into contact' as policies of cohesion too often suggest (Cantle 2005). As one parent suggested, "I could stay in my bubble and I could walk to and from school and not speak to anybody other than white people and I could remain in that bubble if I didn't want to know" (interview, 2009).

Such accounts of ice-breakers and enforced encounter went beyond the confines of the playground to incorporate play dates, birthday parties and school events. The pressures and anxieties of holding a birthday party for example – of sending out invites, providing food suitable for all religions and faiths and ensuring that they were aware of any additional requirements (such as the presence/absence of men, a space for girls to change in and so on) – were riddled with frustrations that were negotiated for the sake of ensuring that the party could take place. These were events that were positioned as constant 'learning curves'; that one parent described herself as 'stumbling blindly through', within which mistakes were made, dialogues were opened and parents were reliant upon their children to outline what was required of them in order to accommodate their friends. Whilst outlining some of the frustrations that they had experienced, they tolerated and for the most part happily accommodated the demands and requirements of other children and their parents. Furthermore, the parents commonly delighted in the responsibility and knowledge that their children displayed:

Zara: 'Erm I had some... my girl's friends came round and erm... they wanted to get changed and my daughter was quick to get tights out for her Muslim friend because she is very aware that she has to be covered and stuff like that. And these girls, at the age of five or seven have an awareness that I would never, never have had and I think that is breeding tolerance and acceptance and becomes the norm for me I suppose..."

Such a 'breeding of tolerance' is again contrasted with the parent's own biography and notes how such negotiations have become part of Zara's daily life, detailing the ways in which her understanding of other people has developed in unpredictable ways. However such tolerance was not always easy and was intimately linked to their child's wellbeing as I noted at the very beginning of this chapter. Perhaps one of the most common points of contention was the organisation of play dates. Angela (interview, 2009) for instance claimed it was 'impossible' to invite her daughter's friend over after school because of the presence of her husband. Despite offering assurances that he would not be there, the invitations were declined. Similarly other parents suggested that food requirements (such as Halal meat) were used as excuses to prevent their child's friend from visiting – despite suggesting that they would be more than happy to accommodate their needs. Whilst Angela claimed it to be 'no skin off her nose', it became an issue when her daughter blamed her, a feeling which Angela described as being 'very very painful' (interview, 2009).

These multiple negotiations and daily encounters at times demonstrate an increased awareness and tolerance of others that develops alongside and through a sense of familiarity. Frustrations are clearly tempered by the desire to be a good parent and these small negotiations reveal, at times, much more laboured and thought-through investments and negotiations of difference than is perhaps acknowledged by the school or policies of cohesion (DCLG 2009a; DCSF 2007). Here, tolerance of others, whilst clearly affected by the school's multicultural curricula and positive learning environment, is shaped first and foremost by parent responsibilities and commitments. Before moving to offer some reflections, I want to consider what tolerance *does* to encounters with difference. While to this point, I have suggested that tolerance might be considered 'pragmatic', in the final section I wish to examine how the development of tolerance might lead to something more than simply the desire to co-exist.

## **9. Moving Beyond Tolerance?**

'I wonder... I wonder whether to a certain extent, our attitudes are a little bit skewed? So I went to a Church of England school and there was no shying away from Christianity because all of you

there were [Christian]. It was what your parents felt was important I suppose'... (Claire, interview, 2009)

This particular question marks a turning point. It is a confession of one's own doubts and is something more than simple pragmatism. Such reflection – or scrutiny of one's way of thinking – is, I suggest, the beginnings of what Connolly has called a 'micropolitics of self-modification' (2002), which 'renders the visceral sense that their way of being is the natural mode, amenable to second-order correction' (page 80) . Whilst many of the accounts explored within this chapter have highlighted the negative principle of tolerance (Galeotti 2002), its instability (Fletcher 1996) and tendency to construct hierarchies of belonging this question suggests that something other might emerge from the space of suspension created by its practice. Whilst it may be the case that there are more challenges made of others than there is appreciation for the 'comparative contestability' of their own position, the parents certainly indicate a working towards something other than, or beyond, the suspended condemnation or limited hospitality through which the relations at the school might all too easily be read.

At the beginning of the chapter many accounts pinpointed the school's celebration of different religions as a key issue of tolerance, with the common concern that some religions were given priority over others. Yet here, whilst Claire felt that a certain degree of Christianity was unfairly overlooked and neglected to make way for the celebration and teaching of other religions, she questions the extent to which such condemnations and concerns are justified to suggest that perhaps her own personal biography and experiences of faith-schooling had unfairly coloured her judgement to create a false account of loss. Similarly, whilst claiming that the school unfairly prioritised the needs of its 'Asian community' Emma reflects on the school's decision to run regular 'curry days':

Emma: See it's interesting for example, why are we always invited to curry day? Now don't get me wrong, more than happy to come to curry day and more than happy to come to any day you know - Roast Lamb Day - so you know I just wonder if, I wonder if we have curry day because if it wasn't something that Asian people generally felt comfortable with they wouldn't come? So why not pizza and chips day, why not you know do... salmon and something or other? Or is it because on the other hand it is dead popular with the parents? So many parents will go out and pay for a curry...I know I would. (interview 2009)

Whilst Emma feels that the school has somehow ‘pandered’ to the needs of the Asian community over and above the needs of her own, she begins to rethink the logic behind the school’s decision, to note that such days were perhaps more inclusive than she had originally thought. This marks her account of inequality to be ill-founded. This more generous sensibility of thought was not only focused upon the running of the school, but upon their opinions of other parents. For Zara, this meant moving away from the assumption that ‘Asian’ families at the school were ‘tightly controlled’ and ‘claustrophobic’ to an alternative account that saw them as ‘incredibly supportive family units that contributed to the caring ethos of the school community (interview, 2009). According to Connolly (2000) such reflection and further self-modification might be viewed as a process that occurs in three stages; first one learns about experiences or viewpoints that have previously seemed alien (whether it be through The Parents Group or repeated encounter), second, in learning about such experiences, one comes to terms with why one’s own might appear strange to others, and finally, to accept such inevitable diversity, one works tactfully upon oneself to overcome the dislike or resentment that such diversity had previously caused (ibid).

Whilst these examples serve as only small accounts of critical reflection within much wider narratives of conditional acceptance, they serve as reminders that the narratives of tolerance explored in Chapter 2 speak too readily of a political *end*. Indeed they remind us that tolerance is always a movement towards something else – although of course, this is not always to something more positive. I thus suggest that it would be more productive to view the narratives collected here, as akin to Heyd’s (1996) account of tolerance, which positions it more readily as part of an ongoing *process*. As Heyd suggests, it may be useful to view tolerance as something more akin to a ‘perceptual virtue’ for in taking the moral decision to refrain from action in the face of something that is disapproved of or disliked, it is, at the same time, recognising that the subject or object in question has a fundamental right to remain without interference.

Whilst the moral decision to refrain from action appears to be informed by the more intimate responsibilities of parenting, this degree of recognition or acknowledgement of the moral reasons for restraint – as small as they might be, may just provide a space in which the initial prejudice might be troubled and so rethought, to mark a point of critical reflection for the parent. If such a space is created, and ‘the focus on the tolerated object (moves) to the human or moral standing of the subject’ in question, then we might, with time, witness the

abandonment of the initial relation of dislike or disapproval for an alternative, perhaps more positive one (see also Richards 1996).

## **10. Conclusion: Values Education?**

*‘There is an enormous amount to celebrate in the opportunity that we have as parents to get to know about other cultures’ (interview 2009).*

On first appearance the primary school could easily be read through some of the prevalent critiques of tolerance discussed in Chapter 2. It is a space of celebrated diversity, of welcome and tolerance, where cohesive relations are encouraged and supported, but where narratives of encounter attest to undercurrents of hostility that are oft-kept from view. However, it provides example of an unusual circumstance of encounter – where a minority group is expected to negotiate their tolerance of a majority and whilst there are clear tensions between the official narratives of the school and the narratives provided by the parents, the habitual encounters that I observed produced often surprising effects.

In focusing upon the development and sometimes the diminishment of tolerance across this particular site of schooling, the chapter was primarily concerned with the interplay between the specific institutional framework and school policies of tolerance – which aim to both structure and develop particular forms of relation – and the everyday encounters of parents as they negotiate its space. However, whilst there is little doubt that the framework in place has significant impact upon day-to-day negotiations and the structures and routine of parent encounters, I have suggested that their tolerance and relations of and with, others, are informed more fully by additional commitments, concerns and patterns of encounter that are closely shaped by their duties as responsible parents.

Unlike on the bus, (in)tolerance within the school is perhaps less spectacular. There are no outbursts or points of intense disruption and no moments in which (in)tolerance is rapidly brought to the fore and exposed for others to see. Yet while (in)tolerance may not be visible on the surface in everyday encounter, it is clearly articulated in quiet conversation, or amongst those who share common concerns. Through close attention it might be seen in the smallest of gestures in the playground or on the walk home from school, but rarely does it become an

issue. The segregated groups within the playground, whilst regularly disrupted, may speak of deep-seated differences – of race, ethnicity and religion – but are clearly produced and further entrenched through the slow hardening of situated practice and routines, the effects of which continue to reproduce the same patterns of segregation. More often than not however, tolerance is much more controlled – at times even laboured – kept in check and much less visible in terms of a bodily practice. This can largely be attributed to the nature of the space. It is a site of learning, but one where above all, the well-being of children is given full priority and as such is a space where parents are required to set a good example. Such requirement I suggest, is much less about school requests and much more about self regulation and the duty as a parent to provide a supportive learning environment. Thus, whilst intolerances are easily voiced and clearly have implications for encounters across difference, they are rarely acted upon and commonly tempered.

On the surface, the narratives of encounter might support concerns that whilst ‘publicly, Britain is a country in which few people now express negative feelings towards someone else, privately we are a different country’ (The Equalities Review 2007, page 91). Yet whilst the school is clearly a site of routine and hardened practices and is undeniably shaped by competing claims to belonging and private intolerances, such habits and claims are regularly disrupted – whether it be intentionally through engineered contact or by chance and routine. More importantly, these disruptions are repeated, whether it be through activities such as those set up by The Parents Group, encounters with others in the playground, or interactions that are instigated by children on a day-to-day basis. Whilst such encounters and movements of proximity are, of course, not necessarily enough to change attitudes or produce meaning (and in some cases clearly didn’t), there is certainly indication that something other might emerge as a result. This is not to fall into the trap that has been described by Fortier (2007, page 111) as the ‘illusion of tolerance with multicultural intimacy’, which assumes that ‘power relations and conflicts will be somehow suspended through dialogue and intimacy, and that the distance and hierarchy between those that tolerate and those who are tolerated will dissolve’ (p. 111), but to highlight the connection with others that tolerance might afford. Whilst such movement might be most obvious in the work of The Parents Group, I wish to place much more emphasis on those subtle examples of self-modification upon which I concluded.

As a final point, the encounters detailed in this chapter, do much to challenge the suggestion that the modern conception of tolerance 'now rests on the *easy acceptance* of the heterogeneity of values and ways of life' (Heyd 1996, page 4 my emphasis). Quite clearly, such understanding significantly undermines the work or the 'intercultural labour' (Noble 2009), that is needed to sustain and extend tolerance towards others. Not only does such a 'modern conception' undermine the value and indeed virtue of the kind of tolerance that is articulated here, but it simplifies the multifaceted, turbulent and often contradictory nature of living with difference and its day-to-day challenges. These sites of struggle, not only produce positive effects and a more generous tolerance of others, but can also work to harden lines of difference and reinforce exclusionary accounts of citizenship and belonging. Thus I suggest that the current focus upon 'encounters' and their role in developing cohesion within schools (Cantle 2005) are far too simplistic and can, in some instances, risk producing the kind of anxious and antagonistic relations that Brown (2006) speaks of.

In the next chapter, I wish to take forward some of the examples of self-modification outlined towards the end of this chapter, to consider what happens to tolerance when such patterns of thinking are purposefully addressed and regulated with the intention of producing tolerant individuals. If an awareness of one's own biography and its role in the development of perception can encourage an individual to rethink their boundaries of tolerance and orientation towards others, what happens to tolerance when this kind of reflection is engineered? I turn then, to the National Coalition Building Institute for my final account.



## 7. Building Coalition: Tolerance and Learning to Think Differently

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*“NCBI gives people concrete tools for altering environments that might be characterised by intolerance or fragmentation, isolation, and marginalizing behaviours. This is not just a volunteer group of independent do-gooders trying to change the world, but an entire community context within which people can alter their shared space” (NCBI 2009)*

Tolerance withholds violence; it suspends condemnation and prevents one from acting upon – or interfering with – something or someone that one dislikes. Yet as the previous two chapters have demonstrated, such withholding is dependent upon a series of situated conditions. Tolerance can be compromised and the initial dislike can resurface, perhaps gradually over time, or more unpredictably during a heated moment of exchange. Thus, as a relation, tolerance has been accused of doing little to challenge or alter the negative attachment to its object or subject of focus (Fletcher 1996). It is perhaps unsurprising then that it is said to work against wider projects of understanding, respect and acceptance (Brown 2006). Yet in the last chapter, I suggested that we might see a degree of self cultivation at work – a scrutiny of one’s way of thinking, which emerged out of relations of tolerance to further stretch it and in some instances move beyond it to something more akin to acceptance. Whilst in many instances such cultivation of thought was hesitant and perhaps only subtle, it leaves open the question as to what would happen if such cultivation was more closely regulated. What would happen if techniques of self-modification or critical thought were drawn upon more explicitly and patterns of thinking were acknowledged? In this final empirical chapter, I turn to the National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) to address these very questions, to consider how a conflict management group charged with the task of eliminating prejudice and group conflicts aims to encourage and further develop tolerance through a series of exercises designed to attend to habits of thought. This chapter thus accounts a more ‘generous’ tolerance than the kind outlined in Chapter 2 by the likes of Hage (1998) or Brown (2006), to position it as part of a

much wider telos of social change and ethical praxis – as a necessary step to more positive relations.

There are an abundance of programmes that utilise intervention strategies for the purpose of reducing conflict, producing tolerance and fostering diversity. A wealth of books evidence the growing interest in diversity training and managed encounter (Hostager and De Meuse 2008), which provide advice, techniques and learning programmes on how to understand and manage difference, outlining ‘the essential steps’ (Weeks 1994), ‘breakthrough strategies’ (Lieberman 2003), ‘mediation tools’ (Dana 2000) and ‘essential dynamics’ (Mayer 2000) that produce the best results. Such engineered contact and techniques of mediation were given prominence by the government in its concern for promoting interaction between people from different backgrounds (DCLG 2009, SHM 2007), which underlined the importance of understanding such necessary ‘dynamics’ and strategies of ‘intervention’ so as to enable schools, workplaces and communities to manage the consequences of increased dialogue (DCLG 2008, page 50).

There are several domains that draw upon techniques of engineered contact and this chapter touches upon a number of their legacies and philosophies. These include conflict management and peace building programmes, diversity/multicultural training initiatives, legislative theatre (Boal 1998), interactive drama and truth and reconciliation programmes. Whilst differing considerably in approach, measures and design, these domains share a common concern with facilitating transformations in behaviour, to produce more tolerant and accepting individuals (Hostager and De Meuse 2008; see also Jones and Clements 2008); in short, all of them are concerned with producing something other out of antagonism. Diversity training courses often attend to the requirements needed to effectively manage and attend to the needs of a diverse workforce (Hostager and DeMeuse 2008), focusing upon teaching the economic and social benefits of diversity, building emotional intelligence in negotiations (Ogilvie and Carsky 2002), drawing attention to the cultural differences that might impact upon business encounters, or training employees in appropriate employment legislations and acts. However, too often, negotiations and everyday encounters are often framed and valued in terms of their economic or legal outcome rather than in more affective terms (see for example Hunt et. al 2005). Understandably, this has led to criticism about the perceived gap between conceptual understandings of diversity – its requirements and responsibilities – and the ability to put such

understanding into practice and respond to challenging moments of encounter in everyday life – which, as I have outlined to this point, requires a very different set of skills (see Vacarr 2001). In contrast, conflict management programmes aim to reduce hostility and increase understanding between groups or individuals in conflict through a variety of planned interventions (Maoz 2002), yet whilst a growing body of work has started to focus more explicitly on the emotional and affective aspects of negotiation, the majority of these strategies have a tendency to focus largely upon rational elements of negotiation (Ogilvie and Carsky 2002; see Sarkissian et.al 2009 for an alternative) which undermines their practical value. Legislative theatre (Boal 1998) and interactive drama (Kumagai et. al 2007) while perhaps less commonly utilised than diversity training models, form part of a growing concern with ‘affective or experiential learning’ (Tromski and Doston 2003, page 52). Given the therapeutic benefits of the techniques of interactive drama and the focus on more affective learning, there has been much written about such encounters in the fields of psychology and counselling, whilst there is perhaps less said about the affective dimensions of their *politics*. This invites the question as to what the work of political theorists such as William Connolly (2002; 2005) and his attention to critical responsiveness and self cultivation might bring to these varied accounts of diversity management and training and what it might do for an account of tolerance; a question that forms the basis for this final empirical chapter.

The accounts and arguments that follow are based upon a series of one-day NCBI ‘Welcoming Diversity and Reducing Prejudice’ workshops and a three-day leadership training event that trains people to facilitate them. The Birmingham NCBI chapter is a relatively new branch, established in 2008 by the current director, who noted that whilst Birmingham as a city is known for its tolerance of diversity, ‘there was still a long way to go in terms of celebrating it’ (interview 2009). These workshops, consisting of between 10 and 20 people, comprise a series of activities that aim to develop a deeper understanding of prejudice – and its causes and effects – to provide participants with the tools and skills necessary to deal constructively with it and effect change at both an individual and community level. Whilst the aim of the NCBI programme is to ultimately develop understanding across difference, the wider project is punctuated with accounts of tolerance as both a conditioning factor of the workshop encounters and an outcome of them. Thus, when studying these exercises, we might see how the development of tolerance is intrinsic to a wider telos of social change and ethical praxis. For this part of the research, three one day workshops and one leadership training event were

attended, along with two focus group sessions and the completion of a series of interviews and diaries (see Appendix 1).

The chapter begins with an account of managed encounter and the strategies utilised by conflict management groups before moving to outline how tolerance of others becomes a necessary part of the workshop progression. In section 3, the chapter then turns to NCBI's focus upon habits of (mis)recognition and its attempts to illuminate the ways in which processes of judgement shape everyday encounters with others. Beginning with an 'Ups and Downs exercise, I attend to the techniques utilised by NCBI to dismantle perceptions and first impressions of others. In so doing I examine the ways in which the programme redraws lines of solidarity to illuminate the shifting and contingent nature of identity that is so often overlooked by the contemporary mobilisation of tolerance and everyday encounters with others. In section 4 I then turn to a 'First Thoughts' exercise which aims to unpack the formation of prejudice and intolerance by dissecting the elements that make up and further organise stereotypes. I consider how attention is drawn to the instincts that guide the movements of participants in often surprising ways. Following a concern with the ways in which participants are made aware of the instincts and patterns of thought that are so central to their everyday encounters, the chapter details how participants are confronted with the 'cruel effects' of their habits and it becomes 'ethically incumbent' to devise strategies to work upon their thinking (Connolly 2002, page 29). By outlining the ways in which a commitment to tolerance enables an apprehension of the other and encourages participants to listen and give equal attention to all views and perspectives, I suggest that we may see an ethical pedagogy that demands reflection before action and further seeks to recognise the humanity of the other so as to develop a heightened awareness of the group's interdependence.

Section 6 details a series of 'speak out' exercises to examine the facilitation of personal accounts of prejudice. In detailing the highly emotional nature of the exercise, I offer two accounts that highlight the visceral cues and affective energies that give rise to the taking place of tolerance, the breach of its limits and its symptomatic expression. The chapter then considers what such personal and emotional accounts do to the wider aims of such managed encounter. Having first noted the value of tolerance for apprehending and developing a relationship with others, and then acknowledging the point at which such value perhaps reaches its limit, the chapter draws upon the work of William Connolly and Judith Butler to examine the relationship between tolerance, vulnerability and suffering in section 7. Finally,

the chapter considers NCBI's 'effective interventions' to detail those points in which conflicting views and accounts of tolerance are carefully negotiated in the hope of transforming antagonistic relations. To conclude, I reflect upon the exercises covered in this chapter and consider their implications for everyday encounters beyond the confines of the workshop. In so doing I question whether the development of tolerance and the creation of such an agonistic space within which patterns of thought can be explored, can only ever be fully achieved in such spaces of regulated encounter and indeed, whether this can ever be enough.

### 1. Managed Encounter

I make my way into the main room. The room is small and the seats are arranged in 4 rows of 6 all of which are turned to the front. I am surprised, having expected a semi-circle - or a seating arrangement that would ensure face-to-face interaction at all times. I am relieved. I scan the room and recognise Kate, having met her outside and choose to push myself and sit by somebody new. I have been seated for only a matter of seconds when the facilitator jogs to the front. "I'm Royston and I get up every day to make a difference". There is laughter - slightly nervous - it ripples through the group. He is animated and beams at us all. He explains that NCBI is personal - beyond 'management speak'. He wants us to feel comfortable - to enjoy it and not endure it. BUT, he adds - and it is a big but - it is also about taking risks, about addressing really tough issues. He moves rapidly, laughs, bounces - keeps attention. He suggests that there will be many instances across the next three days when the purpose of some of the activities may seem unclear. He tells us - promises us even - that the 'Aha!' moment will come later. This, he reminds us, is not only about getting the chance to learn about others, but more importantly, it is a chance to turn the spotlight upon ourselves.

The above account is a typical introduction to an NCBI workshop and in this case marked the beginning of a three day 'Pro-diversity and Inclusion Leadership Training Workshop', in London, May 2009<sup>97</sup>. That morning there were fourteen participants (including myself) along with five NCBI volunteers, two of which were facilitating the programme. As with many NCBI workshops, the participants were there for a variety of reasons. Some were responsible for diversity issues and had either volunteered themselves or were sent by their place of work, others were there to train as volunteers for NCBI, whilst others were simply there because they had an interest in diversity work and wanted to improve their skills.

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<sup>97</sup> This was the only workshop that I attended outside of Birmingham to which I was invited to attend as part of my voluntary work with the organisation.

NCBI was formed in 1984 in Washington D.C. and was primarily intended to tackle the specific problem of escalating tensions between African Americans and Jews on college campuses across the city. It developed a series of workshop models that sought to provide community leaders with the required practical tools and training needed to address the problem. Following its success, the leadership training models that were produced were replicated across the US and beyond, to form an international leadership network of community-based chapters across Canada, Switzerland, the UK, Germany, Serbia and Austria. Described as a non-profit leadership-training organisation, it deals with all forms of racism and discrimination, working with a range of individuals, groups, teams and communities to eliminate prejudice and intergroup conflict and encourage more tolerant workplaces, communities and societies. Since 1998, NCBI (UK) has continuously won British Diversity Awards for Best Diversity Practice, has been funded by the Commission for Racial Equality, the Home Office and YMCA and has also received the Mandela International Award (NCBI 2009) for its diversity work.

Leaders learn effective bridge-building skills through a range of workshops, mentoring and specific issue-based projects<sup>98</sup> and NCBI claims to ensure that no group or individual involved in its conflict management projects is judged, shamed or blamed for any intolerance, prejudice or negative attitudes that they may hold. Instead, they are encouraged to be open about the sources of their prejudices to recognise the patterns of thought through which they develop and the norms that condition the possibility of recognition (Butler 2005), as a necessary step towards changing intolerant attitudes. In so doing, NCBI workshops aim to provide an alternative to more 'confrontational methods' of dealing with intolerance and prejudice, which it believes reduces the likelihood of fostering further resentment and defensiveness and provides a space in which individuals may reflect upon their attitudes more productively. Thus, NCBI workshops are above all else, designed to 'nurture self-awareness' (NCBI 2009).

The 'Prejudice Reduction Workshop model' utilised by NCBI is copyrighted and designed by the founder and executive director in Washington D.C.. Each trainer and facilitator is provided with a handbook and notes to assist with the effective running of the workshop model and it is continuously stipulated that the programme should always be used in its entirety and never, under any circumstances, mixed with other programmes. Whilst NCBI conducts a range of

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<sup>98</sup> NCBI is also involved with projects that target more specific issues of inter-group conflict or prejudice. Examples include bridge-building work in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham in the aftermath of the civil disturbances in 2001, anti-bullying in schools campaigns, work on racism in Leicestershire, refugee events in Nottinghamshire, Islamophobia workshops in London, violence prevention training and debating panels to name just a few, all of which utilise the core philosophies and 'techniques' of NCBI.

different projects and targets a variety of different issues, it utilises the same development model for all of its diversity work. In 2005, NCBI released a 'How-to Guide' for leading diverse communities (Brown and Mazza 2005), with the intent of providing the practical guidance and the conceptual tools needed to embrace diversity, resolve conflict and develop intergroup leadership. Such guidance goes beyond an account of what exercises should be delivered and in what order, to encompass detailed accounts of the ways in which the workshop should be set up and delivered, from the 'crucial' and 'proper' arrangement of chairs and flowers, to the points at which information should be delivered 'gently' or said 'lightly'. These are outlined alongside a series of tips or contingency plans for those instances when things fail to go according to plan – when participants respond in an unanticipated manner. The programme is thus minutely engineered to produce specific outcomes and create an affective 'atmosphere' (Anderson 2009) within which particular kinds of encounter can be facilitated – providing the right conditions are met.

Such conflict management programmes generally utilise a series of strategies, which as Ohbuchi and Suzuki (2003) suggest, largely fall into three categories: collaboration, confrontation, and avoidance or yielding (page 61). Collaborative strategies include rational negotiation between conflicting parties or strategies of persuasion to reach agreement, whilst confrontational strategies can involve 'tough assertion, criticism, coercion, or threats against the other party' (page 62). Avoidance strategies train individuals to keep disagreements from the public domain by avoiding, or refraining from pursuing issues or topics upon which they disagree. These three strategies vary in their perceived outcomes and benefits and tend to vary according to the nature of the conflict but attest to the highly engineered environments that are required.

Thus, running through such accounts of conflict management are a series of conditions or a checklist that is believed to enable effective interventions: equal status between participants, ongoing personal interaction between them, 'cooperation in a situation of mutual dependence' and institutional support (Maoz 2002, page 186). They illuminate the vital preparatory work that is needed to provide the right conditions of contact and a safe environment for conflict management (Sandercock 2003). There are however, disagreements about what conditions of encounter are most effective – if indeed they are at all – and whether such structured encounters can ever really lead to an improvement in relations between conflicting parties. Nevertheless, conflict management programmes continue to

develop and utilise a set of conceptual tools and approaches that can be adapted to suit a variety of conflicts and contexts to produce more tolerant relations and societies (Mollov and Lavie 2001).

Whilst legislative theatre (Boal 1998) and interactive drama (Kumagai et. al 2007) are perhaps less commonly utilised in conflict management, they form part of a growing concern with 'affective or experiential learning' (Tromski and Doston 2003, page 52) and have crossovers with the work of NCBI. They are somewhat dissimilar from the practices and programmes of diversity education or management, which have been commonly situated within the 'cognitive realm' (ibid) and have been accused of offering a shallow understanding of the kind of everyday interactions that I have focused upon in this study. This is a distinction that Royston pinpointed in the opening account; NCBI is not 'management speak' but personal, it is not just about shifting minds, but about 'shifting hearts' (Brown and Mazza 2005, page 96). Interactive methods thus place actors and audiences in situations where they are able to 'participate in 'true-to-life' interactions' (Tromski and Doston 2003, page 53) that overtly and covertly display prejudice of some description, to garner questions, reactions and affective responses. Whilst the goal of legislative theatre is to create a political space, where actors and audiences can articulate community ideas and contribute to political decision making processes (Pratt and Johnston 2007), the key features of these interactive encounters is the dialogue that they encourage, the spontaneity of behaviour and in some cases their therapeutic goals (ibid). Yet while such projects accommodate and encourage spontaneity of behaviour there are still set conditions of encounter and rules of engagement within which these encounters can take place and it is here that I locate my first account of tolerance.

## **2. Making mistakes**

NCBI is very clear in stipulating that the rules of the workshop must be adhered to and that the instructions set out by its facilitators must be followed. If at any point, it is felt that undue harm is purposefully caused to a participant by another, the exercise will be halted, the rules made clear and the participant responsible for wilfully hurting another or disrupting the workshop, is asked to leave with a facilitator who will negotiate the conditions of their return. As the handbook reminds facilitators, participants need to feel 'safe enough to share': As it states:



[H]ave [the participant] open their arms wide and turn to their neighbour and say in an upbeat tone – “I love taking risks; I love making mistakes”. Remind them that it is only when we are willing to take risks that our records about each other begin to lose power over us. Have them repeat the process one more time, this time using the phrase: “I welcome you to take risks and make mistakes about me and my group(s).” Remind the group that for some of us the real risk is in letting folks get close enough to make mistakes about us.

This particular call depicts the ‘risky connection’ that Jenkins (2002) speaks of when she examines the practice of tolerance. To permit and even welcome other participants to voice their prejudiced remarks or ‘mistakes’ without intervening, is to let them ‘get close’ enough to potentially cause personal injury. It is, as Vacarr (2001) suggests, about giving up the illusion of safety and the need to feel in control. This idea of connection; of bringing another closer, is far-removed from some of the earlier accounts of tolerance that I examined, which position it as a relation that keeps others at a distance (Keith 2005). Furthermore, the NCBI commitment is a *mutual* one, for whilst a participant agrees to welcome the mistakes of others, it is in the knowledge that their own mistakes will be granted the same reception. As such this commitment goes some way to strip the practice of tolerance of some of the power relations that so often trouble its use. However, this particular agreement was always conditional, as was made particularly clear in the following account:

Margot<sup>99</sup> stands at the front of the room. “You know what is most important? I LOVE MAKING MISTAKES!” She throws her arms wide as she says this, looking to each individual within the room and beams. “Embrace them... Learn from them”. There are nods around the room. “I LOVE MAKING MISTAKES!” This time she adds more volume. “Go on... try it...!” A few people tentatively repeat her, but fail to match her animation. I feel slightly awkward as Margot puts her hand to her ear; “I can’t hear you!” We do it again to slightly better effect. “Now we need to believe it!” I’m not sure that I do. The next statement is harder still: “I welcome you to make mistakes about me and my identities”. Given that we are now over our initial embarrassment of shouting out and throwing up our arms, this one is easier to repeat. Whether we all genuinely mean what we are saying remains uncertain. Somebody from the back asks if she can throw in an “add-on” to that comment. Margot nods, “What is it?”

“As long as you learn...”

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<sup>99</sup> Margot is an NCBI leader.

As Boler (1999) acknowledges, an ethical pedagogy demands that we listen and give equal attention to all views and perspectives and not dismiss those that we would rather not hear (see also Sandercock 2003). A commitment to do so is thus vital for the progression of NCBI workshops. According to NCBI, a mistake is described as ‘anything that may cause offense as the result of misinformation or ignorance’, the sources of which are described as ‘television programmes, movies, books, radios, magazines, billboards, meeting with friends, fleeting glimpses with strangers and our day to day interactions with families’ or what Connolly refers to as the dimension of micropolitics ‘that operates below the threshold of large legislative acts and executive initiatives’ (2002, page 21). Importantly, there is a pre-condition for this agreement; that the offense caused must *only* be as a result of misinformation or ignorance, with a necessary lack of intent or malice.

This sits comfortably with guidelines around the definition of hate-speech and what should be considered tolerable. In order for speech to be tolerated, any lack of confidence, psychological disturbance or feelings of isolation that may occur as a result, must be unintended effects (Altman 1993). Furthermore, it has also been suggested that the permissance of such mistakes also avoids any discomfort that might otherwise arise from a failure to know how to adequately respond when individuals encounter difference, which as Tromski and Doston (2003) have suggested, can often cause individuals to avoid participation, as was evident in Chapter 6. The space of the workshop is therefore a space within which oppressive, offensive or ignorant comments can be confronted so as to unpack the dominant cultural values that are institutionalised and further solidified by ‘social, legal and political practices’ (Boler 2001, page 322). In this particular case, an additional requirement was added by a workshop participant who agreed to tolerate the mistakes of others only on the grounds that it is part of a necessary learning curve, to ensure that something positive can emerge from any offense that may be caused along the way. When speaking with Royston about NCBI’s notion of ‘making mistakes’ he highlighted the mutual obligation that it emphasises:

Royston: “‘Making mistakes’ is about acknowledging that we make mistakes - because a lot of us don’t - and acknowledging that people make mistakes around us. You know? And I *can* be tolerant if I understand that you are really trying your best” (interview 2009).

Of course, as Royston suggests, participants agree to tolerate comments or thoughts that they may dislike or find offensive on the condition that their own comments will be tolerated in turn. Quite clearly such a call for tolerance is made easier if there is a sense that it may aid or instigate some form of change – or that the person in question is ‘trying their best’. Much like The Parents Group in the last chapter, this is a pragmatic negotiation of difference in order to achieve something more positive for the future. As Wasema outlined in her diary:

There have been some moments when I have felt tolerant with help from the training. I know that you can't judge a book by the cover and I feel that as long as someone is making a genuine effort to change and understand, then that should be supported as much as possible (Wasema diary entry).

This small account of tolerance is placed within a wider project of transformation – as part of a learning *process*. Tolerance, therefore, is not simply a political end or value, but exhibits a temporal structure that is orientated towards the future and is part of a wider telos of social change and ethical praxis. These accounts therefore begin to illuminate the ways in which tolerance may be part of, and perhaps even necessary to larger projects such as those of justice, respect, acceptance and equality.

### **3. First Impressions**

As Chapter 2 made so clear, discourses of tolerance repeatedly utilise and further solidify essentialised identities and antagonisms (Brown 2006) and the previous chapters are littered with empirical examples of such tendencies. I have detailed the ways in which perceptions are formatted and instantaneous judgements made when bodies encounter each other; how particular bodily readings conflate race and religion, or orientate movement. Whether in the playground, where lines are drawn between white and Asian parents or on the bus where particular bodies are already marked out as being more or less prone to causing trouble, we see a common-sense understanding that produces subjects and difference through the garnering of often visible characteristics and visceral cues. For the most part such readings are done unconsciously; they become habitual and occur instantaneously (Brubaker et. al 2004). The question is, how then, might attention be drawn to such habits of thinking so that we might encounter others with an ‘expanded consciousness’ in the future? How might we begin

to undo some of the normative practices of judgement that produce difference as otherness in these many and varied ways?

The last chapter finished with a series of critical reflections or the beginnings of what Connolly (2002, page 80) has called a 'micropolitics of self modification', which responds to a call for a much greater focus upon one's own practices and ways of thinking in order to work on the ways in which one relates to another. This chapter began with such a call. In the opening encounter, the facilitator pointed out that diversity work is not only a process of learning about others, but is about turning 'the spotlight upon ourselves'. As I have indicated, an important aspect of the NCBI programme is its concern with facilitating a closer scrutiny of one's own behaviour as a start point for developing tolerance of others. For Connolly, tactical work on the 'texture of one's own thought' might enable one to act in a more generous way towards others (2002 page 88). As he suggests:

'Appreciating the dual role you play as both thinker and student of brain processes that support thought enables you to explore actively how technical intervention might alter the ethos of thinking. You can apply techniques to yourself experimentally to ascertain what new possibilities become discernable in your thinking, even though you are unable to translate the third-person or external perspective *on* thought into the experimental terms *of* thinking' (page 90)

In appreciating how one's thoughts about others might be altered by an intervention – how thought can become more reflective – we can develop techniques that enable individuals to rethink cultural conventions and challenge the 'established scripts of normalisation' (page 95) that pattern some of the dominant circulations of tolerance and ideas around the more or less tolerable body. Such appreciation has been dubbed a 'critical consciousness', which as Kumagai et. al (2007) argue, evidences an examination of personal assumptions and biases so as to accept responsibility and enact solutions. Elsewhere there have been experiments that have sought to shift consciousness and push out preconceived ideas and perceptions through an engagement with Buddhism and transpersonal psychotherapy (see for example Vacarr 2001; Connolly 2005). Such engagements advocate a way of seeing and saying things that are not borne out of reactions governed by memory or habit; but outline a new way of 'seeing in the moment' and a reconnection with their source of 'knowing' (Vacarr 2001, page 290). This

work thus seeks to explore and further enable the transformative possibilities of encounter through developing an expanded consciousness and practice of mindfulness.

As much work on diversity training suggests, self-awareness is paramount. An acute awareness of one's own 'biases, stereotypes, language, and interactions with individuals who are different from herself or himself' (Tromski and Doston 2003, page 53), ensures that participants take on a degree of responsibility, rather than assuming that the burden of change and ethical responsibility lies with others. Such a nurturing of what Kumagai et.al (2007) refer to as a 'critical consciousness' is exactly the kind of training that is needed to go beyond the 'pedagogical approaches and curriculum development' (Vacarr 2001 page 289) that are so common to the 'teaching of tolerance' and diversity issues, which as many have suggested, often overlook the self-consciousness that is required to question one's relations with others. With NCBI such questioning begins with an 'Ups and Downs' exercise.

### Ups and Downs

In a workshop that aims to 'eliminate discrimination on the grounds of nationality, race, gender, religion, class, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, occupation or life circumstance' (NCBI 2009), it is perhaps inevitable that particular readings and judgements will be called upon, alignments formed and demarcations made. It is perhaps all too easy to enter in to such a programme with the assumption that one is free from prejudice and is therefore less in need of the training ahead; to position oneself from the outset as somehow morally superior to one's fellow participants – and I admit I was no exception. Yet as the two previous chapters have highlighted, everyday encounters are constantly shaped by ubiquitous, often unconscious mental processes; habits of visual discrimination and categorisation that carry expectations about others to sort and divide social space along various lines. So how might such habits of thought be consciously brought out? Such visual categorisations not only place importance upon singular identity traits to create 'false antinomies between groups', but are further in danger of doing so at the expense of recognising other commonalities (Parekh 2008, page 48). Given that such perceptions can destroy the grounds for encounter, all NCBI workshops begin by addressing the ways in which lines of solidarity are drawn, to illuminate the mentality that positions some bodies variously with or against others in an 'Ups and Downs' exercise:

We are asked to stand up when we identify with something that is called out and further applaud others when they stand. Royston begins with the easier categories of 'recognition'; age, gender, nationality. When we stand up we are reminded to take note of whom we might be standing with; to note what we have in common. The questions continue: religion's up next. Are we religious? Are we Hindi? Christian? What denomination? I am embarrassed – caught between a desire to remain seated and a desire to be open with the remainder of the group. I don't want people to judge me. I stand. So does half of the room (fieldwork diary, Birmingham workshop).

In this instance, the question of religion was followed by place of birth, family order, class, parents, appearances, language, schooling, nationality, heritage, disabilities, sexuality and what might perhaps be considered to be more private identities – experiences of criminal records, abuse, drugs, bereavement and so on. By the end of the exercise it is more than likely that each of the participants will have stood side-by-side with every other individual within the room at least once. This exercise thus marks the starting point for the mutual recognition and coalition building that is the wider goal of the workshop – working to disrupt any assumptions that individuals may have already (un)consciously made about their fellow participants. It also encourages participants to think beyond the more visible identities that are so often central to the perception of others and recognise that some identity traits or characteristics are wrongly given priority over others. As one participant later remarked:

" [Y]ou do discover things that you don't necessarily think you're going to find out, I'm referring to that sort of stereotype as well, that sort of perception as to what a person is or isn't. I thought actually, I don't know if other people felt this as well, but I thought actually it did highlight some of the similarities as well, rather than just how different we are..." (Jayna focus group)

For Jayna, the exercise highlighted how easily false antinomies between individuals had been created and based upon initial perceptions or stereotypes, later describing the exercise as 'people standing together with people they didn't expect to be standing with...'. Not only did this exercise encourage people to rethink their perceptions of others but it also developed a more expansive and fluid understanding of 'identity' as Alison explained:

I discovered how many facets there are to my identity and what has become a part of me. And this was true of everyone participating in the workshop. The exercise we did created awareness of the

different religions, heritages, nationalities, genders, histories and upbringings that we had (Alison website, NCBI 2009a)

For many individuals, the Ups and Downs exercise worked to highlight the multifaceted nature of identity and the extent to which one's sense of self is shifting and contingent (Boler 1999). For some, it highlighted just how easily they had already formed judgements about other participants and in particular how such judgements had automatically been interpreted as difference. During these introductory exercises some participants suggested that identifying with, or perhaps being labelled with particular identities, was at times an uncomfortable task, whilst for others it was embarrassing. Yet for others, being asked to identify with the accounts of identity available was too restrictive, and failed to recognise that individuals ascribe varying importance to particular aspects of their identity as Afzal, an NCBI facilitator, highlighted:

'In the first workshop the main problem was that some people felt that er... they had they found that they were forced to be part of an identity group, for example white women and (.) a couple of people said that they wouldn't really see themselves as white women in everyday life.' (Afzel interview).

In having to label themselves as 'white women', it was felt that 'whiteness' was given an ontological significance that was not necessarily felt or was to some extent unrecognisable to the individuals in question. Thus it was felt that whilst acknowledging the plurality of identities held by any one individual, the exercise allowed no room for acknowledging the plurality of identity practices, how they might be subjected to influences of experience, past encounters and so on or how they carry particular (often false) expectations. Of course this is an argument made quite forcibly by Wendy Brown (2006), who notes how the mobilisation of tolerance and the regulation of aversion in particular contexts has relied upon and further enforced processes of subject formation that create individuals that are expressed purely as cultural, sexual or racialised beings, as they were to some extent in Chapter 6. Yet in highlighting just how uncomfortable and restrictive such processes of recognition and labels might be, this particular exercise encourages participants to *reflect* upon the ways in which they recognise and attach labels to others. They invite the question as to why, if they were uncomfortable about the way in which their bodies were read, did they so readily read others and to what extent were such readings an 'accurate account'? As one participant noted;

Saqiba. Did you not think that the ups and downs made you attach labels to yourself?

Ellen. Yeah (.) But then did you not find it really difficult to do?

Saqiba. Hmm...[I]

Ellen. I found it difficult, but I do it to other people all the time... (focus group 2009)

This particular exercise thus encourages individuals to not only think beyond the more common-place identity strands and visual registers that are so-often drawn upon to form opinions of others, but to begin to address how labels become attached to particular bodies. Of course, this is not to suggest that standing together in the ‘Ups and Downs’ exercises necessarily leads to a shared understanding or experience, as some of the participants made quite clear, but that it encourages participants to think differently about others; to begin to question how thoughts are formed, and how solidarities and differences are imagined and further constructed<sup>100</sup>. The moments or relations of recognition that often emerged during the ‘Ups and Downs’ exercises, were often ‘plurally intersubjective, collaborative and ongoing’ (Noble 2009 page 53), as patterns of association variously emerged, faded and overlapped across the exercise. Such frequent disruption of initial assumptions, reminded participants of the need for openness, something, which as Noble suggests, does not necessarily qualify as a particular form of encounter, but rather marks the beginning of a series of encounters (ibid) – or in this context, lays the foundations for a series of ongoing practices that are crucial to developing something other out of antagonism.

Whilst acknowledging how easy it to misrecognise and judge others is crucial to recognising how perceptions are habitually formed, the greater task is to question *how* such perceptions of others are formatted – to question why, for example, some bodies are read as more or less tolerable and how our perceptions are informed by stereotypes and work to further compound them. If the workshop is to instigate change in the ways in which people think about others, such examination is vital. As Connolly suggests:

“It is wise for us from time to time to dissect the elements that make up the organisation of perception- when, for instance, we are confronted with the

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<sup>100</sup> Of course, it should be made clear that in highlighting the commonalities within groups, it is not the aim of NCBI to treat everybody the same, which would have the unintended consequence of ignoring histories of struggle, inequality or privilege. As Ahmed (2007) suggests, in diversity work more generally, histories of struggle for equality are too often detached from a commitment to equality and justice.



cruel effects our perceptual habits have on those marginalised or demonised by them, or when some ingrained habits of perception foster debilitating anxieties or depression. In those circumstances, and many other besides, it becomes ethically incumbent or prudentially important to examine the structure of perception, and sometimes, to devise strategies to work on the cultural dispositions now installed in it" (2002, page 29)

Throughout this thesis, patterns of thinking have been crucial to my accounts of tolerance, but as Connolly attests, such patterns of thinking need to be dissected if strategies to alter them are to be successful. If we want to alter the instincts that work to limit our tolerance of others, we need first, to be made aware of the instincts that are patterning our thoughts. Then, on becoming more aware of such instincts, one needs to examine what organises them, before being able to consider how that instinct might be altered. As NCBI states, "[e]verything that we have heard about, or have been told about another group is internalised, forming a literal record inside us. Even when our thoughts and experiences refute these records, they still exist and influence our behaviour" (fieldwork diary, Birmingham workshop). I turn now to the techniques utilised by NCBI to interrogate the formation of stereotypes.

#### **4. First thoughts, or a lesson in stereotype**

We are asked to work with a partner and each choose an identity that we recognise as being present within the group and preferably one that we feel we might hold prejudices against, however small they may be - although we are asked that the identity chosen is not one that our partner relates to. Having selected the identities that we wish to explore, our partner is to repeat the name of the group we have selected. Each time the identity is repeated we are to say the first thing that comes into our head, ensuring that we don't censor whatever that may be. As a way of further encouraging us to vocalise our uncensored responses, we are reminded that this does not necessarily mean that we agree or believe the comments that we have made public, but simply offers us a chance to note what we may have unconsciously internalised - thoughts that may 'get in the way of being an ally to members of that group'.

This account was taken from a leadership training event and is typical of NCBI's 'First Thoughts' exercise. Given that the exercise works only on the basis that individuals make audible those initial thoughts that arise instantaneously and might ordinarily be suppressed, there is a certain degree of trust that people will be honest in the responses that they give. However,

this is a particularly difficult task and the tendency to try and manage responses was often difficult to resist:

My partner turns to me and shouts the selected identity.

I respond with little hesitation;

"ARROGANT"!

Whilst I am more hesitant to voice some of the initial thoughts that come to mind, as the exercise develops, they come out so quickly that my instinct is to clap my hand over my mouth...As the pace of the exercise quickens, it becomes more and more difficult to check what I say and my face reddens with embarrassment. (Birmingham workshop, fieldwork diary)

These exercises often revealed surprising and needless to say unsettling assumptions. Dispositional attributes were assigned to particular characteristics and whilst both negative and positive stereotypes were mentioned, those attached to negative behaviour were often most common. In some workshops, participants made lists and worked in collaboration and while embarrassing and sometimes shameful, the exercises were often completed with relative ease; very rarely did participants find themselves in a position where they had nothing to say.

When followed by a more open group discussion that asks participants to reflect on the origin of these stereotypes, NCBI encourages their groups to 'brainstorm solutions to problems' (Tromski and Doston 2003, page 57), adopting a strategy that is typical of many instructional programmes (ibid). Such exercises begin to acknowledge how identities and perceptions of others 'can be bound up with popular histories, self images, investments and beliefs reiterated through the mass media, school textbooks, and dominant cultural values' (Boler 1999 page 179), which, whilst regularly called upon, are not necessarily consciously acknowledged.

As one participant stated, "for me the best thing was (...) reminding myself that our prejudices are always lurking around in the undergrowth' (participant anon, NCBI 2009a). The idea that they may be 'lurking' attests to the way in which they might be concealed or have become so habitual as to disappear from conscious reflection. Of course, such an exercise effectively highlights, how, in everyday encounters, stereotypes might 'click in at the possibility of

intimacy' (Connolly 2002 page 35), such that they close down or significantly shape the potential for encounter. Think for example how particular passengers on the bus might already be read as undesirable or perhaps even intolerable based upon a particular and often stereotypical reading of their person, and how during everyday interaction *memories* of past encounters might be brought forward to shape the present in particular ways. Whilst the exercise might be underlined and further shaped by a conscious concern with how the presentation of our own prejudices might be read by our partners and further used to assess our character, it highlights how and to what extent affect-imbued markers operate below the surface of conscious reflection to encourage and shape decision making in particular ways (Connolly 2002, page 35). Of course, as this study attests while such perceptions are kept from public view and in some instances from one's own self-awareness, there are moments when such thoughts are rapidly brought to the fore in the most public of ways. As Royston suggested;

"You know what happens when someone cuts in front of you when you're waiting for the bus? You know in that moment, words do come out, you know? And because it's coming out attached to rage, you might not notice what's come out? Yeah? But when you do it when there is no rage attached, you think "oh my goodness! I did not know that was there!"

As I have argued it is often in a moment of irritation or anger when our capacity for tolerance is significantly reduced that such prejudices are brought to the surface and made visible (Swanton 2010a) - and several of the examples considered in previous chapters would certainly attest to this. More specifically however, Royston is quite clear that in times of such agitation, it is likely that our capacity for self-reflection and critical thought is significantly compromised.

By encouraging individuals to be open and honest about their first thoughts in an environment that enables time to further reflect upon them, it is intended that participants can take stock of those things that so often evade conscious thought and can begin to think critically about them. As Connolly suggests, "memory traces' as intensive thought fragments in a self or culture- can affect thinking and judgement without themselves being articulable' (2002, page 18), and whilst this exercise and the workshops more widely, do not necessarily make them articulable, it does at least require that the workings of such traces are acknowledged and

participants begin to question how some of their perceptions are formed. As Kate wrote in her diary:

I think what is left with me is an accumulation of the various experiences that I have had with NCBI over the past two years. First and foremost it is an ever-increasing awareness of my own prejudice and stereotyping, even if I believe that I do not hold those, I am now so much more aware and catch myself immediately when those thoughts arise. I think that awareness is the most significant aspect of any goal in human development and this then needs to lead on to challenging the way of thinking and then, redirecting thoughts. NCBI has been instrumental in this.

As Kate suggested, while exercises such as these encourage an expanded consciousness and an attention to those instantaneous thoughts that arise out of encounters, there appears to be little here to necessarily encourage participants to change their ways, or work upon their processes of thought beyond the confines of the workshop; a common criticism of managed contact. As Kate reflected, perhaps one of the most important aspects in 'human development' is to develop self-awareness and then further use this to *challenge* one's way of thinking. To this point however, the exercises that I have addressed are individualised – they encourage self-reflection, but whilst turning the critical gaze upon the self, do not necessarily demand change for as Boler (1999) argues, to 'know thyself' does not necessarily lead to self-transformation.

Of course, there is much to be said about the extent to which one can ever fully 'know' or give an account of oneself (Butler 2005) and I will return to this in the concluding chapter. For now however, it is worth noting that the 'First Thoughts' exercise takes place between two individuals that are of relatively equal status, in that neither identifies with the prejudice or stereotype that is addressed during the exercise. It is therefore very different from the encounters observed across the study, which have predominantly occurred between individuals of unequal status and it is thus perhaps easy to voice one's own prejudices, when one is not confronted with their 'cruel effects' (Connolly 2002, page 29). They 'slip out' easily, are occasionally greeted with laughter when their absurdity is acknowledged or cause embarrassment or shame when their malice is exposed, but nonetheless occur within a relatively safe environment where their articulation is unlikely to have any consequence. This is similar to some of the more conventional techniques utilised by diversity programmes or

stereotype negation exercises, which present photographs of different people and ask participants to respond with their first thoughts or impressions (see for example Stewart et. al 2010). These allow participants to anonymously articulate their initial responses to the individuals pictured, without the anxiety of causing offense or being judged in any way.

So what happens when people are asked to face ‘the other’ and confront the cruel effects of their prejudice and more importantly, what does such a confrontation do to tolerance? In the next section I turn to a feedback session run by NCBI to examine these very questions.

### **5. Confronting Cruel Effects**

As Steven reads out some of the prejudices and stereotypes on his list he changes colour, gradually becoming redder – almost flushed; rubbing the back of his neck and looking down at his piece of paper. He lists them slowly, hesitating before each one, as though summoning up the courage to say them out loud. The paper gives away his nerves; it trembles slightly. He laughs nervously after some of them to indicate that he appreciates just how ridiculous they are, occasionally claiming “I don’t know where this came from but...”. After a long five minutes, he is applauded by the group or ‘given appreciation’ to acknowledge his bravery in making public some of his own prejudices. The facilitator asks whether anyone would like to share what it felt like to hear them. Michelle raises her hand and claims that it actually made her feel really uncomfortable and then really quite angry. The group is silent. She pauses for a moment and then turns to look at Steven, telling him that even though she had heard them all before and knew that they weren’t about her personally, it still somehow felt that way. (London workshop, 2009)

This particular part of the exercise is clearly difficult for both of the individuals involved and it is perhaps here that a participant’s tolerance of ‘mistakes’ might be put to the test. Whilst Steven is evidently uncomfortable with sharing his ‘First Thoughts’, it is Michelle’s felt discomfort and feeling that she has been personally targeted that acknowledges the degree of endurance that is required in order to listen to and further apprehend Steven’s list<sup>101</sup>. Steven’s embarrassment and discomfort is given away by his nervous laughter, trembling hands and neck rubbing as the remainder of the group listens. Of course, as Steven highlighted when he was unable to account for some of the stereotypes on his list, this was normally a difficult task, often leaving participants to simply state “I don’t why but...”. When considering that the limits

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<sup>101</sup> Boler in particular has noted how listening may be one of the hardest things to do in diversity education and is often ‘fraught with emotional landmines’ (1999 page 179)

of tolerance and the many perceptions that we form on a day-to-day basis are unconsciously developed, such an inability to give an account of their origin is perhaps not surprising and further attests to the ways in which they are unconsciously learned (Connolly 2002).

This approach might best be described as part of what Boler refers to as a 'pedagogy of discomfort' (1999, page 175) in its demand for an address of perspectives that are both difficult to speak of and further listen to. As Jake, a participant suggested, 'I was faced with my own prejudices and misconceptions and having to speak out about them, frankly, was deeply uncomfortable' (Jake, NCBI 2009a). The group develops a process whereby long-term beliefs and assumptions are put under the spotlight and the critical gaze of others, without allowing people to withdraw or respond defensively. Of course, responses are carefully monitored by the facilitator, so that any reactions to the prejudiced remarks are minimised. Whilst it is vital that participants encounter unfamiliar and at times uncomfortable situations, opinions and topics, the facilitators role is to encourage confrontation, whilst maintaining a 'safe and interactive environment' (Kaumagai 2007, page 335), which is of course very different from everyday life.

In everyday life, encounters with prejudice are more likely to affect a more immediate response or action. An encounter on a bus for example and the insult caused by a harsh word might normally affect a more urgent need to minimise its effects and oppose its aggression. Here however, Michelle is able to respond only in the way allowed by the workshop rules of engagement. She is required to listen to Steven's account and to allow him to finish before describing how she felt about it – in short, she is required to tolerate his remarks in order to apprehend them; to reflect before responding when she is invited to comment. She is not allowed to address Steven's list or challenge the stereotypes that were outlined, but instead only describe how they made her *feel*. The significance of this was made clear when NCBI facilitators were forced to intervene when these rules of engagement were overstepped and participants responded with anger. In preventing participants from challenging the prejudiced comments these exercises not only enable an apprehension of them, but further allows the group to witness their 'cruel effects' (Connolly 2002) – without either violence or interruption – to enable further reflection. The cruel effects of Steven's words are described by Michelle, so that the group may witness them and further acknowledge Steven's complicity to them – whether or not the effects had been intentional.

Importantly, the kind of inaction demanded of Michelle by the workshop, whilst comparable to Jenkins' (2002) account of 'suspended condemnation' is also akin to the suspension that Butler describes as being necessary 'in order to apprehend' the other (2005 page 44). It is thus a necessary part of the process of recognition<sup>102</sup> for as she notes, moral judgement or condemnation alone, creates an ontological difference between the judge and the one who is judged, which prevents the development of any form of relationship. This would be counterproductive to the wider goals of diversity programmes, further discouraging others from talking honestly and openly. As Butler (2005) continues:

'if we forget the relation we lose the chance to consider what their 'personhood' says about the range of human possibility that exists, to prepare for or against such possibility' and thus 'it may be that only through an experience of the other under conditions of suspended judgement do we finally become capable of an ethical reflection on the humanity of the other, even when that other has sought to annihilate humanity (page 45)'.

In highlighting the room for reflection that such suspension might develop, I am not supposing that it necessarily leads to a shared point of view or understanding, or that any change in thought might occur as a result. Whilst offering a public commitment to recognise that, like others, we are all complicit to prejudice, these exercises alone fail to address any private hostility that participants such as Michelle may have felt towards Steven. Thus, on its own, such an exercise might be a fruitless task (as might tolerance), for whilst the public suspension of moral judgement might be achieved, the private hostilities or prejudices can continue and perhaps even grow relatively unchecked (Dussel 2004).<sup>103</sup> Understandably, there is as Herman (1996) contends, the very real danger that participants may tolerate the public articulation of prejudice and listen to each account, without actually paying any attention to it. This concern might be furthered by the fact that such tolerance is borne out of necessity in accordance with the workshop rules (Horton 1996) rather than out of any moral conviction on the part of participants, which undermines what is often considered to be its intrinsic value. Whilst the question may remain as to how such tolerance and refrain from action might usefully address and further alter patterns of thought, these exercises clearly open up the *possibility* for something other to emerge through the suspension of condemnation.

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<sup>102</sup> Tolerance has been described as recognition elsewhere (see Galeotti 2002; Jones 2010)

<sup>103</sup> This is further solidified by calls for diversity training and conflict management schemes to go beyond tolerance and heightened awareness (Hostager and De Meuse 2008; Vacarr 2001)

In the next section, I take forward this account of the possibility of tolerance and suspended condemnation to examine a very different form of feedback.

## 6. Speaking Out

Diversity training courses are said to commonly avoid the use of personal accounts so as to minimise the likelihood of affecting particularly intense, often negative emotional responses (Ogilvie and Carsky 2002). Yet as Sandercock (2003, page 162) has argued, personal stories are a 'vital vehicle' in instances when issues are unapproachable 'in a solely rational manner'. They enable individuals to speak about their feelings however painful they may be; to thus 'speak the unspeakable' and in so doing, 'deal with history' (page 161). Speak outs can therefore perform a 'cathartic function' whilst also making it possible for stories to be heard in all of their anxious, joyful, sorrowful, angry or hateful states by others who have previously failed to listen (ibid). In this regard, such personal accounts are considered *transformative* and a potential way of developing or further increasing tolerance of difference through 'affective or experiential learning' (Tromski and Doston 2003, page 52). Here we see very different way of confronting the cruel effects and affects of prejudice and intolerance.

This approach was particularly encouraged by NCBI as a key part of their training, to provide participants with the chance to share a personal experience of prejudice with the rest of the group. In addition such 'story telling' was followed by a chance to 'vent'; to imagine that they could go back to an encounter with prejudice and say what they would have liked to have said at the time, further transforming the speak out into a form of role-play, as in this example:

The facilitator explains that he is going to give the participant a chance to speak back to the prejudiced individual that she had described in her account and offers her his clenched fists to hold on to. She colours slightly, and wipes the palms of her hands on her jeans before placing her hands on top of his.

The facilitator insults her, using the bigoted comment taken from her 'speak-out' - playing the role of the individual who had tormented her all those years ago. She begins by trying to reason with the facilitator "Why are you saying this?" The facilitator claims that it should be obvious. She tries again "Do you know how this makes me feel?". The facilitator stops her; tells her to talk from her gut. She looks confused. They start the exercise again. This time the participant asks more difficult questions; tries to reason with the facilitator as he continues to repeat the bigoted comments. She is starting to lose her composure, and her words are slightly strained. The facilitator whispers to her,



tells her she's much too polite - far too reasonable. He starts to repeat the bigoted comment over and over. The participant starts to get flustered. Exasperation. He challenges her again and she tells him that she wants him to explain himself. She is now shaking her head from side to side, seems to be trying to compose herself. The facilitator laughs at her inability to respond, taunts her with his name-calling. "Fuck you!" The participant is suddenly transformed, meets his bigoted remarks with her own, releases her hold on his hands and starts jabbing her finger in his face. The facilitator takes a couple of steps back, eyebrows raised. She continues; recounting past events, telling him how they made her feel. He nods, listens for a couple of minutes. She is taken-up with her anger. (Birmingham workshop 2009)

While the wider goal of this exercise is to increase tolerance of difference amongst the audience through the presentation of the harmful effects of prejudice, this particular example also provides an account of the *taking place* of tolerance – or the point at which it is diminished. By repeating bigoted remarks about the participant, the facilitator diminishes her capacity to tolerate until she can stand no more and the negative feelings that are hidden beneath the surface are brought to the fore in an angry outburst. The facilitator's insistence that the participant speak from the gut attests to those visceral cues that are understood as thought-imbued energies (Connolly 2002) and this encounter demonstrates what can happen in those moments when our capacity for tolerance is considerably weakened – when action or violence is no longer suspended. It further hints at the unstable nature of tolerance (Fletcher 1996) and its temporality, for as the facilitator stated 'the past resurfaces when you least expect it'. Of course, such strategies of conflict management are minutely engineered to produce what is considered to be the ideal speak out. The NCBI handbook offers guidance on how to 'help the person get the angry words that he or she will *want* to say' (my emphasis), which outlines the structural conditions of address in which this account took place (Butler 2005). Furthermore, the presence of the audience, the anxiety of exposing oneself and the close proximity of the facilitator may combine to 'affectively energise' the encounter to unknowable effects.

However, what this exercise does illuminate is the considerable degree of work that is oft-required to tolerate something that it is so clearly causing discomfort or pain, which renders its description as 'indifference' or 'inaction' insufficient (Dussel 2004). Tolerance is more than simply keeping a check on one's tongue, for it also demands the maintenance of bodily composure. As anger rises, or discomfort takes over, it can require a considerable degree of effort to slow down the rapid breathing, relax the shoulders or conceal the rising blush that can so easily give away one's feelings towards another. As Connolly (2002) highlights:

'Thoughts are invested with affect... Part of the affective energy mixed into thought becomes available to consciousness as feelings and concept-imbued emotions; but other thought-imbued energies find symptomatic expression in the timbre of our voices, the calmness or intensity of our gestures, our facial expressions, the flush of our faces, the rate of our heartbeats, the receptivity, tightness, or sweatiness of our skin, and the relaxation or turmoil in our guts' (page 76).

Speak outs are thus ideal for addressing and further understanding the embodied nature of conflict and emotional involvement (Sandercock 2003), which as the previous two chapters have indicated can be bound up with anxieties, fears, hopes, memories or resentment. Sandercock (2003) in particular, has highlighted their political potential as a way of tackling planning disputes, as current planning and communicative action literature she claims, has thus far failed to recognise the importance of attending to such embodied comprehensions; comprehensions which were made clear in the following encounter:

The first speak-out is about to begin. I feel a growing apprehension; grip my chair. The person doing the speak-out is recounting some awful experiences; countless acts of prejudice that she has tolerated over many years. They numb me. I am sat behind her and can only see the back of her head, but it is held high. She seems strong, feet apart and shoulders thrown back. Deep measured breaths maintain her composure, her vulnerability only exposed momentarily when her voice occasionally cracks. When she finishes, there is discomfort. Heavy silence. People seem ill-prepared, uncertain as to how they should react. Do we watch? Express sympathy? Applaud? She is now offered the chance to vent - to address one of the individuals that has clearly caused her so much pain. There is silence. Moments drag on. I take this pause to digest some of what she has said and try to imagine what it must feel like. I am distracted for a while. When I look up, I realise that she is crying. Uncontrollably. Silently. Words won't come out; completely fail her. The facilitator is holding her hands tightly. She tries to speak between sobs - almost squeaks. Occasional words. No sense. Tears sting my eyes and my face crumples. I look to the others. The facilitator places her hands on the speakers shoulders and tells her that she can push - vent her feelings through actions rather than words. As she begins to push, somebody stands behind the facilitator with their hands on her back to support her as the speaker pushes against her. For what seems like minutes, the three engage in a quiet struggle, the speaker shaking as she pushes. The room is silent. The speaker finally stops pushing, steps away and stands quietly. She swallows hard. "Thank you".

There is a long pause. The facilitator waits, allows people to digest what they have just heard. After several minutes, she

speaks softly, "who here is willing to commit to better understanding the discrimination that has been faced here?" Arms are raised without hesitation, some people punching the air to demonstrate how forcefully they feel. (London Workshop day 2)

The effects of tolerating particularly painful and hurtful comments over many years have rendered the participant unable to speak of her experiences. Instead, she 'vents' by pushing against the facilitator; expressing herself through her body to which the facilitator responds accordingly. It is these embodied accounts that are too often missing from diversity workshops and policy debates concerned with tolerance and social encounter. Yet, as the NCBI handbook suggests, it is expected and indeed desired that speak outs are moving for both the participant and the audience and so the question remains as to what such personal and emotional accounts do to produce more tolerant individuals and communities in the longer term. How does this account for instance, inspire a pledge from the group to better understand the particular discrimination faced and more importantly, how does it change their own behaviour towards others?

Emotions clearly play a key role in the strategies adopted by groups such as NCBI. Participants are repeatedly asked to describe them and share them with the rest of the group and are reminded by the facilitators that they 'are no bad thing'; that they are better shared and 'out in the open'. Unsurprisingly, the exercises variously produce or enable anger, shame, joy, grief, happiness or sadness to varying degrees and are designed precisely to encourage and foster such emotional expression through the correct timbre of voices, the facilitation of personal and often quite painful accounts of prejudice and the development of a 'safe' environment and space within which these can occur. For the most part, the emotions explored were often personal. Participants expressed anger at the way in which they had been treated in the past, shame when they recounted their own prejudices or grief at the loss of a loved one. So how then, might these personal accounts develop a sense of solidarity between participants – to encourage a collective pledge for change and how does such a pledge shape tolerance?

Following this particular speak out exercise, two participants expressed the following:

"...people shared really personal stuff (.) with complete strangers (.) and I think it's too emotional to actually sit back and actually rationalise and think about it logically and try and think about it really – and not just from our own perspective"  
(Aadarshini focus group)

In the speak outs, you really get a very intimate view of how everyone has gone through prejudice in their life and how it is endemic to how we live and view each other. We think we have to accept it and that it is a part of life and to just get over it. I think the speak outs really allow us to feel the compassion for others. (Kate diary)

In allowing participants the chance to discuss not only their own personal experiences of prejudice but also the prejudices that they themselves might hold – without interruption or condemnation – participants are able to see the cruel effects of prejudice first hand. In unpacking the nature of prejudice further and interrogating its origins through attending to the ways in which perceptions and stereotypes are formatted and socially produced, Boler (1999, page 188) suggests that one might experience ‘moral anger’ – or the anger that might arise when one feels that a moral value has been violated. One might feel anger for example, upon hearing how a fellow participant may have encountered homophobia. While as Aadarshini suggested, trying to think about these encounters from anything other than one’s own perspective is a difficult task, in pledging to commit to better understanding the form of discrimination that speakers have outlined rather than the personal experience, whether it be racism, sexism, homophobia or any other form of discrimination, the call for action, or anger, is aimed more specifically at the configurations of hegemonic *social relations* that variously perpetuate such injustices or normalise whiteness, masculinity or heterosexuality and so on.

It is possible then, that within these workshops, we might see what Ruitenberg (2009) has described as the education of *political* emotions and the opportunity to place personal accounts within the context of wider societal relations. Ruitenberg has highlighted the necessity of placing emotions at the heart of political education – not ‘as a private site of control or means to success’, but rather as a collaborative construction by a political collective (page 276). The NCBI programme not only enables a sense of solidarity to develop between participants, but further develops the ability ‘to feel anger on behalf of injustices committed against those in less powerful social positions rather than on behalf of one’s own pride’ (page 277)<sup>104</sup>.

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<sup>104</sup> Elsewhere, such learning of political emotions has been specifically placed at the heart of the education of political adversaries, which has been deemed to be a crucial part of a more ‘radical democratic citizenship education’ (Ruitenberg 2009, page 277). Drawing upon Mouffe’s critiques of deliberative democracy and her subsequent outline of an agonistic public sphere, Ruitenberg argues

Of course, a commitment to better understand discrimination, let alone feel compassion for another is not always possible or particularly easy. As I noted at the beginning of this thesis, followers of different faiths may exhibit different degrees of tolerance towards different sexualities (Fletcher 1996; Zaid 2004), while others may feel that they may have greater claim to citizenship and so on. Indeed as Connolly argues:

‘The most complex ethical issues arose in those ambiguous contexts where suffering is intense and the injuries suffered by some contribute to the sense of self-confidence, wholeness, transcendence or cultural desert of others’ (1996, page 255).

It was in those instances when not all participants were able to commit to better understanding the ‘discrimination’ faced by a participant, that different and sometimes incompatible accounts and limits of tolerance were exposed. On these occasions, NCBI provided an agonistic space within which these differences could be explored by the group. However, providing such a space was not always considered satisfactory as one participant highlighted:

“I don’t agree with this methodology because people need justice and until people have justice I don’t think that things could change as we would like them to.” (Saqiba diary page 6)

As far as Saqiba is concerned while NCBI speak out exercises enable people to address some of the negative feelings that they have held on to through some form of venting, it is not enough. She makes a clear distinction between the aims of this exercise and those projects that aim for more positive action in the form of seeking equality or justice. Across this thesis, one question that has refused to go away is how and indeed whether, tolerance might function as part of a wider project of equality or justice. Of course, Brown (2006) is quite clear in her belief that tolerance, for the most part, actively works against such projects in favour of maintaining particular hierarchies of power and belonging, while others have argued that it is no more than a suspended condemnation, which will inevitably resume. Thus, in this kind of diversity work, tolerance can never be an end point; a political end to strive for, but can only ever be the

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that in placing emotions at the heart of education in this way, we might see a form of agonism in practice (Connolly 2002).

beginning of a wider transformation. As a way of thinking through how this might be achieved under such conditions, I want to first consider the relationship between tolerance and the kind of suffering that Connolly (1996) has referred to.

### **7. Tolerance, Vulnerability and Suffering**

As Connolly suggested (1996), some of the most difficult issues arose in those instances when the suffering of some participants quite clearly contributed to another participant's sense of self. Witnessing the personal injury of one participant however, did not always make it possible for another to agree to change their ways or views and this was perhaps most clear in those instances when religion or sexuality became the point of focus. Yet as Connolly argues, whilst it may not always be possible or easy to agree to change one's stance, 'another voice in you [might] worry about the indignity of suffering imposed on others by such patterns of insistence' (2005, page 127).

Throughout the workshops that I attended, the exercises undertaken often illuminated the relations of power and powerlessness that often underlie encounters with difference. In the earlier feedback example in section 5 when Steven revealed his list of stereotypes to the group, Michelle's vulnerability to prejudice was revealed and Steven's complicity to it was made apparent. Yet, whilst this particular account revealed unequal relations of power, the exercise also required that Michelle recounted her own prejudices in much the same way. In moving between different accounts of suffering across these varying exercises, I suggest that we might see the kind of ethical encounter put forward by Butler (2004) as the basis for developing community and a commitment to others.

Whilst Butler's discussion centres more fully on humanity's exposure to violence (particularly the global violence that has emerged in the period following the attacks of 9/11), her argument that each of us could be 'constituted politically by virtue of the social vulnerability of our bodies' (2004, page 24), has considerable overlap with NCBI's programme and much potential for the development of tolerant relations. Of course, it is quite clear that we are all vulnerable and indeed exposed to the violence of intolerance in the form of various prejudices and it is this exposure or vulnerability that NCBI encourages participants to recognise as being something held in common. However, and perhaps more important, is the understanding that

the value of recognising our shared vulnerability, can only be fully realised when accompanied by the concurrent acceptance that each and every individual is also *complicit to* such violence. In so doing, Butler (2004) argues that we may be presented with a way in which to recognise that we are all dependent on and further vulnerable to each other. Only then can we affirm relationality 'not simply as historical fact but of a normative condition of our social and political lives' (page 25). In a similar vein, Vacarr (2001), advocates that in order to transform boundaries 'from dividing lines that separate us into lines that connect us more deeply' there must be a willingness to 'experience the fear of being seen and known' – or quite simply, to (re)learn vulnerability (page 294). It should be noted however, that this does not mean that we are to overlook difference, as this is a condition that whilst shared, we all have separately.

What might be seen across some of these exercises is the development of a new imaginary – of a community that is developed through a heightened awareness of interdependence (McRobbie 2006). Whilst the groups participating in NCBI workshops are diverse and their experiences of prejudice are multifaceted, their vulnerability to its effects and affects is mutual. However, if NCBI is successful in highlighting and further developing mutuality through attention to societies vulnerability to the damaging effects of prejudice, then the much greater task is to develop an ethical responsiveness that might adequately address habits of encounter. Of course, it is hoped that participants suffering under their current constitution such as those detailed in the last section, will demand or invite a change in the 'constellation of identity/difference' already in place within the room (Connolly 1996, page 259) to 'alter part of the context in which judgements are formed and negotiations are pursued' (Connolly 2005, page 127). This is evident in NCBI's call for a commitment from its participants so as to facilitate the movement of a suffering participant from below the register of tolerance or acceptance on to 'one or more of those registers' (ibid, page 122). As Connolly argues:

'When such crossings are explored without resentment, they can evolve into reciprocal commitment to inject generosity and forbearance into public negotiations between parties who reciprocally acknowledge that the deepest wellsprings of human inspiration are to date susceptible to multiple interpretations. They evolve toward a public ethos of agonistic respect rather than devolving entirely into the public tolerance of private differences' (Connolly 2005, page 125).

Yet whilst in many instances, this was done with little difficulty, as I have suggested, in some cases, this could only be achieved with the aid of facilitation, or what Connolly (ibid) describes as a 'militant experimental and persistent political movement' that works to open up 'a line of flight' from induced suffering. It is perhaps here that the role of conflict management groups such as NCBI is best placed, for the workshops provide a space within which such crossings can be explored fully, without interruption, condemnation or violence, which becomes possible through tolerance and the space of suspended action that it affords. Of course this demands a great deal of work, and as one facilitator said, "[i]t should be about constantly checking yourself. It is a process that involves an incredible amount of labour". Such work, as the workshops make clear, is not only on 'rational' or deliberative thoughts but on the 'visceral register', the gut feelings and the 'refined concepts previously brought to these issues' (2002, page 126).

In theory, NCBI prepares participants for exactly this kind of political becoming (Connolly 2005), to explore how patterns of thinking about others, might be in need of 'selective recomposition' (page 127). However, such exploration, requires not only the cultivation of the self, but public negotiation that changes the way in which responsibility to others – and their suffering – is defined (ibid 1996). For the last section I want to consider how this exploration might be achieved in practice.

### **8. NCBI in practice: Role plays and Effective interventions**

Role plays and effective interventions are the last part of any NCBI one-day workshop. To this point, participants will have had a chance to unpack the origins of prejudice, appreciate their own complicity to it, witness its cruel effects and pledge a commitment to make a change and become an ally to others. As an exercise, role plays enable an audience to participate and work collaboratively to overcome a particular problem. In their work on forum theatre, Pratt and Johnston (2007) note how such creative spaces develop a space in which spectators can 'physically enter the theatrical 'fiction' to devise political options' (page 94). Whilst there has been some criticism about the value of engineered or fictional encounters and the 'unreal' nature of workshop spaces where it is thought that the inequalities of the 'real world' are difficult to replicate, the spaces are designed to empower individuals so that 'when they enter the real world they are better equipped to deal with it' (2000, page 321). Indeed, Boal, when



discussing the role of legislative theatre suggested that it enables individuals 'to rehearse forms of struggle and then return to reality with the images of their desires... [providing] an uneasy sense of incompleteness that seeks fulfilment through real action' (Boal in Pratt and Johnston 2007, page 94). In many instances, an example of a prejudiced encounter or account, was taken from the previous speak out exercises and on one occasion, the individual that was unable to commit to better understanding the discrimination that had been accounted was asked to partake in a role-play with the participant that had presented the speak out, providing the chance for the two to come face to face in a 'safe' environment.

Across the workshops, having developed a greater appreciation of one's own habits of thought and how they are organised, participants should, in theory, be better placed to think through their criteria of judgement and identity and recognise the multiple interpretations of 'human inspiration' that exist (Connolly 2005, page 125). In the final 'controversial issues' process, we might see how such a thinking through takes place and is further negotiated. Two participants, both with opposing, seemingly entrenched views on a particular topic are given the chance to face each other. In the NCBI handbook, it uses the example of two individuals who have clear and very set opinions about the issue of abortion and appear unwilling to listen to the others account. Having been 'charged by public rhetoric' on the topic which has been intensified through repetition, it is assumed that each participant already knows the opinion of the other before having entered into the encounter. For reasons that are not disclosed, a decision is made to stop talking over each other and to listen to each other, enabling each to put forward their point of view and explain why it is important to them. Numerous issues were put forward during these exercises, some perhaps more controversial or personal than others, but each of which were explored in the same manner as this following example, which was taken from a one day workshop in Birmingham:

We begin the controversial issues process. Charlene stands facing Gary, arms folded, head tilted to one side. She states her position with confidence and then explains how she came to it, uncrossing her arms to emphasise each point with her finger. When she finishes, she is given the chance to vent. She gets embarrassed by this, begins slowly but then picks up the pace as she gets into it and becomes defensive. Gary now has to repeat back everything that she has said to show that he has listened and to ensure that he has heard it correctly. She nods at him as he repeats each of her points and notes them down on a flipchart. When he finishes recounting her main points, it is opened out to the floor to ask if there was anything missed by Gary. He seems to have done well and a few of the points on the flipchart are refined with the aid of two other participants. The process is repeated, this time with Gary talking through his point of view.

Charlene listens. The account is far more detailed and draws heavily upon personal experiences. At several points Charlene raises her eyebrows in evident surprise. She has a lot to remember and needs help from Gary when it comes to repeating back what she has heard. The two work together to complete the task with help from the audience, working collaboratively to add the detail that is missing. At one point Gary corrects a point that Charlene seems to have misheard or misunderstood.

Gary is given the chance to vent. He talks slowly and recounts a very personal experience that he feels has made an impact upon his point of view. His voice shakes slightly and his face reddens. Charlene looks slightly uncomfortable. He finishes and for a couple of seconds there is an awkward silence before Charlene leans in to give him a hug. The two are asked to go away and look for any similarities that the positions may have - not to change their opinions - but to reframe the debate in a way that brings the two together. (London workshop, 2009)

Whilst this encounter does not necessarily mean that either participant will change their stance, it draws upon many of the skills developed across the one day workshop to work towards a greater and more generous apprehension of the other. In demanding that each participant repeat back the points presented by their opponent they are not only required to let the other speak, but must listen attentively if they are to complete the task. Both sides are presented with an opportunity to rethink the ways in which their beliefs are framed in relation to the other's and to further reflect upon the legitimacy of both points of view. In hearing Gary's personal and particularly painful account, Charlene is clearly surprised and is better able to appreciate why Gary held the views that he did. In so doing, she is reminded of the need to 'sustain a nonjudgemental stance towards the full range of other experiences...' (Vacarr 2001, page 293), and as one diary writer noted, it is the strategies of intervention that made such recognition possible:

On that 3 day workshop in particular, there was an exchange between two members where tension existed (Gary and Charlene) and then the intervention strategies used in a role play were extremely helpful in allowing more understanding to emerge.

Without a way for this to happen, those tensions remain and become destructive...and I would even go so far to say they destroy on huge levels, at a national and international level, i.e. conflict and war. (Diary extract)

Whilst I have only touched upon this process and it is difficult to assess the extent to which understanding actually emerged as a result, this exercise demonstrates how tolerance can be

both a conditioning factor *and* outcome of social relations. In these instances tolerance is maintained by a third party; kept in check by a facilitator who outlines the conditions of encounter and ensures that condemnation is suspended whilst each participant has a chance to speak. Two people, who, under normal circumstances would not listen to, or indeed tolerate the other's point of view, are brought together in this encounter. In so doing, it is hoped that tolerance between the two might be further developed as each is given the chance to apprehend the other.

## 9. Conclusion

*'There is always hope when people are forced to listen to both sides (of an argument); it is when they attend only to one that errors harden into prejudices, and truth itself ceases to have the effect of truth by being exaggerated into falsehood' (Mill 1974, cited in Pattie and Johnston 2008).*

Through close attention to the work of NCBI and the long traditions of managed contact and diversity training that it draws upon, I have examined the ways in which tolerance is not only a conditioning factor of social relations, but how it might also be developed and further expanded through carefully regulated encounters. In focusing upon NCBI's aims to cultivate an expanded 'consciousness' through intervention, I have outlined a series of exercises that aim to draw attention to the habits, affects, emotions, temporalities and spacings that pattern thought and orientate movement and perception to further expose and undo some of the homonormative tendencies of social relations. However, whilst the programme is concerned with encouraging self-transformation, the spaces of the workshop are clearly designed and carefully engineered to effect the outcomes desired by NCBI, which at times may present somewhat of a paradox. The development of affective relations between participants, the priority given to 'moving accounts', the enthusiastic applause, the very particular seating arrangement, soft voices and supportive embraces, all produce an atmosphere that further aids and intensifies such transformation. Of course, this invites the question as to whether such cultivation of thought is possible or indeed sustainable beyond the confines of the workshop. If such self transformation requires such extensive and careful regulation by others, how might the techniques of thought learned within this programme be effected in everyday life when encounters take place beyond its reaches and the support of co-participants?

Of course, whilst a large degree of the encounters that take place within the workshops that I attended were regulated or coerced in some way, such engineered contact is quite clearly intended to be only *part* of a much wider telos of social change. Simply put, these engineered encounters mark only a starting point. In many instances, as Butler (2005) remarked, it might only be under certain conditions of suspension that an ethical reflection might be made possible, highlighting the intrinsic value of tolerance to wider projects of justice and equality. Examined here through attention to NCBI's commitment to 'welcoming mistakes', we can see how, through extending tolerance towards another, a 'risky connection' becomes possible and the humanity of the other might be better apprehended. Whilst so many of the literatures and policies around tolerance seem to position it as a political end, this chapter highlights its temporal nature. If Butler's work illuminates the ethical reflections made possible under conditions of tolerance, William Connolly outlines the ways in which such potential reflection might be used to cultivate critical responsiveness so as to develop 'new lines of flight' – perhaps expanding our capacity for tolerance, or moving beyond it to develop such relations as agonistic respect. The exercises outlined in this chapter thus hold much potential for developing a politics of becoming and there are certainly many instances in which participants highlighted the ways in which they felt they had recomposed the ways in which they thought about others and their obligations to them.

In noting the potential that managed encounters might afford, I am not suggesting that the kind of tolerance developed here is any more desirable or effective than the kind that I examined in the previous chapters. Certainly, it is crucial to attend to such spaces for conflict management and managed encounter have received increased government attention and funding as a way of producing more tolerant communities and individuals (e.g. DCLG 2008; 2009a). Yet there are important considerations to take into account when asking how effective such a model might be in developing mutuality. It should be noted for example, that while no one perspective was given precedence over another, the programme was nevertheless facilitated in a space underwritten by a series of cultural norms – however unintended. Confrontational approaches and the direct communication of negative messages, along with direct eye contact or physical touch, both of which are at times required, might, to some, be deemed highly offensive or disrespectful and thus uncomfortable for some participants (see for example Hubbard 1999). Work around conflict resolution projects have repeatedly argued that differences of status or cultural biases within programmes of prejudice reduction, hinder their success, particularly if the prism of power relations within which they work go

unaddressed (Hubbard 1999). Further still, some critics have suggested that regardless of the programme, inequalities of social relations *outside* of the programme mean that it is impossible to ever achieve true reconciliation under such circumstances (ibid), which was evident in those instances when participants felt that the workshop was perhaps too intent upon transformation and future encounter, without seeking justice for past subordinations and inequality.

It is also worth noting, that the encounters examined within this chapter were confined to workshops where participants had either signed up voluntarily, or were already involved in diversity work in some way. It is thus likely that the exercises examined, whilst successfully executed in the workshops that I attended, would look very different in an environment where participants were less willing to participate and would undoubtedly provide some very different accounts of tolerance in practice.



## 8. Conclusion

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Tolerance takes place. It is coordinated, produced or perhaps compromised by situated encounters between all manner of bodies, things and spacings. It is embodied, felt and affected. In the chapters of this thesis it is clear that the current accounts and critiques of tolerance and its politics, policies and virtues that I addressed in Chapter 2, can only tell us so much about its everyday occurrence in contemporary multicultural societies such as Birmingham. Without doubt, these accounts of tolerance are most certainly crucial to understanding its political mobilisation and drawing attention to the political agendas and civilising tendencies that are bound up with its contemporary promotion in Western societies. They acknowledge the complete transformation of the landscape within which it finds itself and the historical roots that enable it to circulate as an unchallenged civic good, duty of citizenship and foundation of freedom and equality. Whilst these accounts have clear ramifications for everyday encounters with difference and the necessary *conditions* of tolerance, in theorising the relationship between tolerance and encounter more explicitly, this thesis has illuminated the *additional* constituents of agency that shape its taking place. In so doing, I have provided an account of tolerance that is more plural, unpredictable and in many cases, more optimistic than some prevalent accounts would attest.

My account is by no means complete and is certainly exploratory in nature. It confronts the difficulties of 'witnessing' (Dewsbury 2003) tolerance as a social practice, value, moral, skill, virtue and so on, while attending to its multiple interpretations across nations, cultures, religions, individuals and groups. It has endeavoured to exhibit the ways in which it operates as many different things simultaneously, as both an outcome *and* conditioning factor of social relations and further illuminates its various temporalities, ever-changing circumstances and

emergent properties. Importantly, my account is not intended to replace existing accounts and critiques of its current political use, but rather takes them forward to demonstrate how they might be thought about differently as a means to (re)locate their conditions of possibility. In focusing upon encounters, I have built upon the familiar accounts of majority-minority relations that characterise discourses and studies of tolerance, to accommodate the multifarious, intersecting differences and complexities that make up everyday life. Crucially, this account attends to the gap in current debates, which detail how tolerance is understood in relation to specific events (e.g. Derrida in Borradori 2003), how it is used to tackle specific problems (e.g. Altman 2006) and how it is mobilised to achieve particular outcomes (Brown 2006) in various contexts, places and spaces, but are neglectful of its prosaic practice. In focusing upon encounters, I argue that it is much easier to acknowledge difference as ‘a space of identification that is not fixed or based on ontological claims’ (Fortier 2010, page 27), but is rather relational and variable. It enables an account of political difference in terms of ‘material, symbolic and cultural variations that positions people differently’ at different times and in different spaces (ibid). Such space for acknowledgment, as Fortier argues, is sorely lacking in the current agendas that have sought to design and manage interaction and behaviour to provide a somewhat narrow vision of the challenges of living with difference.

In this final chapter, I want to tease out some of the key implications of this study, to detail what an account of tolerance through everyday encounters can contribute to current debates around the discourses and politics of tolerance as a way of responding to, and further managing difference. In section 1, I provide an overview of the way in which the relationship between tolerance and encounter has been theorised within the study before attending to the different accounts that were developed across the three sites. After briefly highlighting the difficulty of giving such an account of tolerance, section 2 outlines what implications my account of tolerance has for understanding ordinary multiculturalism through accounts of convivial culture, to not only expand our definition of difference, but to further argue that the ‘banal’ intermixture that Gilroy (2004) has outlined overlooks the continuous and important struggles that work to expand existing conceptions of belonging. Taking this account forward section 3 therefore considers how these struggles alter the ways in which we might think about the relationship between tolerance, citizenship and the state. Finally, I return to the question that has persisted throughout the thesis, to outline what part tolerance might play – as an everyday practice, civic value and political tool – in wider projects of justice and equality.



## 1. Theorising Tolerance through Encounter

As I have argued, central to the recomposition of tolerance is a concern with affect and its emergence from events of relation in their various forms. By attending to the fluctuation of capacities to affect and be affected, I suggest that we can better answer the question as to why different encounters can and often do bring forth very different reactions from us, to further complicate accounts of both causality and agency. It enables a better attention to the changing capacities for tolerance; how they might be diminished by irritation or multiplied by a particular atmosphere. It highlights the visceral intensities that are crucial to the apprehension of tolerance and the means through which it is further qualified and named *as tolerance* which, as I have suggested, is vital given the many ways in which tolerance is conceptualised and further made sense of. In outlining three points of focus – materialities, ways of thinking and the geographies of place, I have drawn attention to just three aspects that are further crucial to the taking place of tolerance and yet are often entirely neglected from current accounts (Bennett 2010; Connolly 2002; Parker and Karner 2010).

In particular I have detailed the ways in which materialities might impede or block the will of individuals, how they might act as agents of their own and further interleave with sense to precipitate sensibilities of tolerance (Anderson and Wylie 2008). I have attended to bodily materialisms, to illuminate how the material differences of bodies work to sort and further affect their relations, intimacies and spatialities, to demonstrate how tolerance and intolerable bodies are produced through encounters. In attending to body materialisms, the encounters detailed in this study, further highlight the habits of visual discrimination and categorisations that read such materialisms and further illuminate the processes of thought that influence judgements and shape tolerance. I have detailed the ways in which tolerance is shaped by thoughts that are not always available to conscious reflection and the subsequent techniques that have been utilised to draw attention to them and better enable 'good judgement' (Connolly 2002). In acknowledging ways of thinking more explicitly the accounts of this study better grasp the temporality of tolerance and the play between 'newness, repetition and immanence' (Amin 2010, page 5). Finally, in attending to the geographies of place and the relations that work through it to form its different spatial configurations, I have identified the distinctive institutional cultures, affective possibilities, population demographics, socio-

economic conditions and informal histories of inequality that inflect tolerance on a day-to-day basis in the city of Birmingham.

### Spaces of Encounter

Whilst attending to these multiple constituents of agency, I have also presented three very different situated accounts, each of which exhibit a different taking place of tolerance. These accounts are not intended to be comparative, but rather offer different ways into the various conditions of tolerance. The spaces explored are not those that are so often prioritised by planners or enjoy much public attention (Watson 2006) – although there would seem to be a growing interest in strategies of conflict management – but are rather spaces that make up some of the ordinary routines of daily life. Each are full of their own challenges, unwritten rules, sanctions and temporalities where togetherness, alienation, distancing and sharing are constantly trained and negotiated. Within the confined and cramped moving space of the public bus, where handrails, bodies, bags and seats constrain movement and impose upon the body, we find a particularly challenging arena for ‘throwntogetherness’. Tacit negotiations and codes of conduct orientate bodies and are inflected by judgements that are formed by visual and visceral markers of difference. It is a space of intense materiality where bodies constantly interact with other unacquainted bodies to develop an unusual intimacy. Differences are negotiated on the smallest of scales and the constant jolts, pushing, sudden breaks, accelerations and squeezing pasts are felt *through* the body. Here, tolerance of other people is as much dependent upon the (dis)comfort of the body as it is on preconceived ideas of others and it is bound up with the unwritten rules of travel, or the fatigue brought on by a long day at work. In short, the atmosphere of a bus journey is produced through the combination of multiple positions, materialities, identities, differences and temporalities that are brought together in moments of encounter under a general obligation to get along.

The primary school on the other hand, whilst also a space of routine encounter, is a site of much more structured contact; a space that is central to the pedagogical promotion of core societal values and where tolerance is expected to develop. However, it is also a space of intense encounter, where competing claims are made and contested and here I presented the unusual circumstance of a minority group that was required to tolerate a majority. Whilst narratives of encounter illuminated a scrutinised and conditioned account of acceptance that

outlined the limits of tolerance quite clearly within the context of wider discourses of belonging, the habitual practices and encounters – both in the playground and beyond the school gates – often presented quite surprising accounts. Here, very different etiquettes of space, which were bound up with parenting responsibilities, a desire to achieve the best for the children and a school commitment to foster cohesion, worked to shape behaviour, to foster and further encourage tolerance of others within particular spaces of encounter. Whilst this might beg the question as to whether etiquettes of space and the containment of prejudices – which were so apparent in the *narratives* of encounter garnered at the site - can ever be enough, there were points at which prejudices and intolerances were clearly brought into contestation, challenged and in some cases altered. Such alterations and recomposition of the conditions of tolerance were, in some instances, brought about by interventions, such as those encouraged by The Parents Group. These interventions were guided not by the school's obligation to promote community cohesion, but by parent concerns for the future well-being of their children and the desire to set a good example. Other, less planned interventions were affected by the children themselves, who brought parents together in the playground, at play dates and birthday parties and engaged them in their (multi)cultural learning. As a result, I suggest that the encounters observed across this chapter highlighted the inadequacy of current understandings of 'cross-cultural' contact within schools (Cantle 2001; 2005) which are insufficient in attending to the relationship between tolerance and encounter.

Towards the end of Chapter 6 I located a degree of critical consciousness that enabled a more generous tolerance of others and detailed the ways in which patterns of thought might be subjected to scrutiny. This left open the question as to what would happen if such patterns of thought were more explicitly acknowledged and further cultivated. In Chapter 7 the conflict management workshop was a space of careful and often minute regulation, where encounters with difference were closely monitored and sometimes staged. Here, the primary aim was to develop tolerant individuals through a series of exercises designed to cultivate techniques of self modification and thought. If the encounters examined at the primary school provided example of the ways in which patterns of thought might be gradually changed through repeated encounter, then this space demonstrated what might occur when such patterns of thought were purposefully engineered. Whilst the group placed the responsibility of cultivating tolerance and affecting change with individual participants, workshop encounters were heavily regulated. From the careful positioning of chairs and the strategic placement of a supportive hand, through to the rehearsed programme of work and deliberate wording, the cultivation of

self-reflection was far from an individual endeavour. The affective atmosphere of the workshops, the emotive language, enthusiasm and desire to affect change produced highly emotional encounters and charged confrontations, which were felt through tensed muscles, tears and quickened heart rates. Above all else, the workshop encounters purposefully drew attention to the conditions of tolerance, to unpack the development of stereotypes and perceptions of others, encourage reflection on personal biographies and draw attention to past encounters and patterns of thought.

In so doing, Chapter 7 accounted the means through which individuals might move *beyond* tolerance. In so doing I am not suggesting that tolerance was, or should be replaced, but rather that it facilitated the development of something other. Drawing upon a plethora of conflict management techniques, I suggest that the work of William Connolly and to some extent Judith Butler, provides not only a philosophical base for such programmes of intervention, but helps theorise how tolerance might take place and further facilitate the development of alternative relations, to which I will return in section 4 of this final chapter.

Whilst each of these spaces provides a very different account of tolerance, each draws attention to its ethical possibility as a response to difference. Whilst the accounts addressed in Chapter 2 outline a relation that fixes differences, reifies hierarchies of belonging and only temporarily suspends condemnation of others, through attention to its everyday practice, we might see its temporal structure and position within a much wider telos of social change and ethical praxis. Of course, this is not to ignore the exclusionary practices, subjectivations and aversions that were quite clearly bound up with, and at times furthered by relations of tolerance – whether it be the prejudice that it concealed on the bus, the bodies to which it was oft-attached in the playground, or the ill-feeling that it harboured in the workshop – and it is certainly not to ignore the ways in which such practices and encounters were inflected by particular state practices and political mobilisations. Rather, it is to suggest that tolerance as a relation is continuously evolving, unfixed and open-ended. Whilst the suspension of condemnation that it affords, might, in some instances only be temporary, it enables an apprehension of another or a connection, which, no matter how risky or fragile, lays the ground for possibility.

Of course, the scope for such possibility constantly changes. The potential for alternative ways of living with difference might have been most apparent within the NCBI workshops, where

encounters were specifically engineered with this in mind. Yet whilst the case for something other to emerge may have been most forcefully made within Chapter 7, I am not suggesting that such managed encounters are always necessary, or indeed successful. The forms of tolerance evident at the school for instance, whilst perhaps developed over a much longer period, gave way in some instances to a greater scrutiny of one's own position – a shift in thinking that may, in the long term, be more effective than the kind witnessed in the diversity workshops, which may not have lasted beyond the parameters of the training. Having noted these multiple accounts of tolerance and their possibilities, I want to briefly reflect upon the difficulties and limitations of presenting an account of tolerance as something which links these three empirical chapters.

#### Giving an account...

As I suggested in Chapter 4, developing a set of methodological tools that were better able to examine the embodied and affectual conditions of tolerance, its visceral intensities and diverse compositions of relation, was fraught with difficulties of address and representation. Yet I want to focus specifically here on the problems of accounting for the conditions of tolerance or as Butler puts it, of 'giving an account of oneself' (2005; 2001). What links the three empirical chapters, is a limit of self-knowledge that necessarily accompanies the question of what somebody tolerates and why. Given the more-than-representational nature of the taking place of tolerance, when individuals were 'compelled' to account for the conditions of their personal tolerances – whether it was myself on the bus, the parents at the school or the participants at the workshop – 'the limits that the unconscious poses on the narrative reconstruction of a life...[made] a full such giving impossible (ibid, page 20). This was perhaps most pertinent in those instances when NCBI participants were asked to reflect upon and in some instances further present, the link between their actions and another's suffering. Faced with an audience and the need to *account* for their actions, it was common to find participants lost for words. Furthermore, as Butler argues, an account in discourse – of tolerance or encounter – 'never fully expresses or carries the living self ... for the time of a discourse it not the same as the time of life' (page 36). Whilst such distinctions are of course significant, I am not suggesting here that narratives of encounter such as those explored in Chapter 6 are somehow less valuable or 'true', for how individuals *make sense* of tolerance is clearly vital to critical reflection and their negotiation of others. Rather, such distinctions highlight the

different temporalities through which tolerance is understood and further illuminates how tolerance is differently sensed across different places, spaces and contexts. Thus, the narratives of account are 'superseded by the structure of address within which it takes place' (page 39). At the school, an account of tolerance develops an account of race, while in the workshops we see how particular 'truth-telling' requirements demand a very particular form of self-reflection (ibid). Such difficulties of coherency not only illuminate the messy, unpredictable and continuously shifting nature of tolerance and the subsequent limits of producing a singular account of it – as is so often done in discourses of its politics – but can further a conception of ethical responsibility as some of the calls for methodological innovations in Chapter 4 quite clearly stressed.

## **2. Tolerance and convivial culture**

As I indicated in Chapter 3, this study has presented an expanded account of the 'politics of conviviality' (Hinchliffe and Whatmore 2006), to focus upon more than just the ways in which 'people accommodate one another in everyday life' (ibid, page 125) to include a concern with the coming together and accommodation of more-than-human things and concerns. It might also be possible to see examples of the kind of convivial culture or 'banal intermixture' that Gilroy claims has 'spontaneously evolved' from the ordinary multiculturalism of the 'postcolonial metropolis' (2004, page 75). In everyday encounters people routinely negotiate others, manage their ill-feeling or perhaps overcome it often without conscious direction or further reflection. We might observe a 'low-level sociability' (Laurier and Philo 2006) in the form of people offering seats to those who need them or assisting a parent with their buggy; small micro-scale encounters (Valentine 2008) that are often overlooked or quietened to some degree by more pervasive and enduring accounts of fear and animosity. Whilst the politics of multiculturalism may be 'dead' (Mitchell 2004), multiculturalism as a lived reality is still very much alive (Clayton 2009). More importantly, it would seem to look very different to the kind of society that is depicted by the ubiquitous call for tolerance, which as Brown (2006) has argued, outlines a society necessarily leashed against the pull of its own instinct to violence.

However, in presenting these small encounters as examples of convivial culture, I by no means intend to suggest that they amount to respect or mutuality. As I have argued, in many instances, tolerance of others is shaped by etiquettes of space or a more general set of

expectations about what is deemed to be appropriate behaviour in different spaces and at different times (see also Valentine 2008). Whilst in some instances it may certainly seem be the case that encounters with difference appear to have become 'banal', Gilroy's ambitious account of a convivial culture and banality of intermixture in which intolerance fades and such difference as 'race is stripped of its meaning' is far removed from my account of convivial culture and the multicultural city. The accounts developed across this study attend to the many cruelties and hostilities that diminish capacities for action (Thrift 2005) alongside the wider discourses that ruin the desire or grounds for encounter, to work against the kind of self-reflexivity that Gilroy claims should necessarily develop as a result of living together with difference. As Sandercock (2003, page 21 my emphasis) attests, alongside such banal intermixture within the multicultural city is a 'constant *struggle* to expand existing conceptions of belonging' to negotiate what is always a 'contemporary consensus'. It is precisely these struggles and constant negotiations that I argue provide 'the resources for continuous invention' (Amin and Thrift 2004, page 233) and it is out of these struggles and negotiations from which the creative possibilities of tolerance so-often emerges. It is thus no coincidence that tolerance was described as both a life-skill and tool for living with difference in both the school and NCBI workshops. Positioning it as a necessary skill in this way hints at the 'intercultural *labour*' that Noble (2009a my emphasis) speaks of and reveals a certain interest in the relation that distinguishes it from a banal indifference.

In drawing attention to such struggles we might better acknowledge the small challenges and thus accomplishments of daily urban life - the negotiation of bodies on a packed bus, or the impromptu encounters of a primary school playground – where heterogeneity is 'juxtaposed within close spatial proximity' (Amin 2004, page 38). There is much to be said about the ability to respond to, and further account for such unpredictable challenges; to develop techniques or 'skills' to respond appropriately. Each encounter, as Bissell argues, contains within it 'the ethical potential to redraw and renegotiate the field of what might be possible' (2010, page 286), and this is most certainly apparent across the chapters of this study. In the next section, I want to take forward Sandercock's (2003) account of struggle for belonging to consider the relationship between tolerance, citizenship and the state.

### 3. Tolerance, citizenship and the state

Given the degree of academic scrutiny that has focused upon the way in which the state increasingly seeks to regulate aversions (Brown 2006), criminalise behaviour (Burnett 2004) and further shape the way in which we feel about ourselves and each other (Johnson 2010), it is perhaps surprising as Painter (2006) suggests that so little work has been done to examine the extent to which such state endeavours have been achieved. To what extent for example, is behaviour codified by public institutions or civic pedagogy, or is anxiety and shame affectively manipulated by state discourse? Of course, this absence may be down to the difficulty of researching such a topic, for as my empirical chapters have highlighted, constituents of agency are ever-changing, multiple and difficult to study in isolation. Yet there is still much to be done by way of examining the changing values, attitudes and behaviour of multicultural societies *on the ground*. As I have advocated, one way in which to approach this is through a more refined theory of encounter. A focus on the encounter, is one way in which we might better grasp the multiple bodies, things, objects, thoughts, and so on that momentarily collide to shape and orientate behaviour. An analysis of encounter, allows us to see when and how various constituents come to the fore, in what spaces and at what times. While as I have argued, we can never gain a full account, we can better grasp its temporal nature and deal with its many manifestations, codifications and means of dissemination – whether this be through zero tolerance initiatives on public transport, Values Education programmes in primary schools or the support or sanctioning of conflict management initiatives such as those developed by NCBI. An account of tolerance through encounter can grasp all of these and further illuminate the points at which these might push into everyday lives.

In Chapter 2, I outlined the many ways in which tolerance has been mobilised as a means to regulate aversions and construct particular accounts of citizenship and belonging. As Brown (2006) argued, the politics of tolerance appears to go far beyond a concern with reducing social conflict, to tactfully *produce* citizens to the exclusion of others (see also Tyler 2010). Political discourses target the affective citizen (Ahmed 2004; Fortier 2010; Johnson 2010), whose conduct arises from anxieties (Hage 2003), shame (Povinelli 1998) or pride (Fortier 2005), to outline the limits of tolerance and send out ‘signals’ of what it means to be a citizen today (ibid). Of course, such discursive formations and affective economies (Ahmed 2004) inflect everyday encounters and certainly hold a degree of regulatory power, which can pull or constrain encounters with difference and any subsequent negotiations. Yet in focusing upon



everyday encounters, it becomes clear that there is a degree of uncertainty and thus potential, which serves to remind us of the 'intrinsic openness and heterogeneity of everyday life' and the extent to which it can challenge such 'monological authoritative accounts' (Painter 2006, page 760). The accounts in this study certainly challenge the idea of the so-called 'passivity' of the everyday to illuminate how judgements about who does and does not belong reside in daily prosaic practices on the bus, in the playground, in the workplace or within conflict management workshops.

As Massumi argues (in Zournazi 2003), it is something about the event of relation – the coming together of movements, obligations, materials, bodies, experiences, affects and so on – that flips even the 'strictest of constraints' into conditions of potential (page 19). Whilst the politics of tolerance might work to define citizenship and belonging and further limit the potential for 'adversarial politics' (Fortier 2010; Mouffe 2005), my three empirical chapters presented various accounts of the ways in which such definitions of belonging have been challenged. Indeed, each one of the sites presented in this thesis might be considered a site of 'insurgent citizenship' (Sandercock 2003, page 20). As Sandercock argues, these various sites of struggle are continuously created by the multicultural city, where diversity is 'thrust together' with anxious nostalgia (ibid), to call notions of belonging into question. Of course such struggles are not always successful in challenging normative conceptions of belonging.

In Chapter 5, a confrontation over a seat on the bus was understood through an account of race and nationhood, whilst in the primary school accounts of belonging and rightful presence were constantly contested, negotiated and reworked. These examples demonstrate that belonging and 'citizenship [are] not based solely on contestations with the state' (Pine 2010, page 1103) and so trouble the ways in which the relations between tolerance, citizenship and the state is understood. Chapter 7 detailed the more purposeful practices of resistance that are taught and further cultivated by groups such as NCBI. The exercises that I detailed, illuminate the ways in which the 'management' of unease and the subsequent corrosive effects of fear (Johnson 2010) that have characterised the governance of affective subjects and have limited tolerance, might be directly addressed and challenged to resist what has been described as a form of 'governing through neurosis' (Isin 2004). If the circumstances of political subject-hood work against the 'more diverse styles of self-reflexivity that emerge from encounters with others' (McRobbie 2006, page 74), then NCBI might be said to reverse the effects of such fearful circumstances to encourage a more 'conscious' conviviality than the

kind outlined by Gilroy (2004) elsewhere. However, it should be noted, that what we see here is an *alternative* politics of emotion or affective citizenship in the form of empathy. Thus, whilst NCBI most certainly endeavours to undermine particular mode of governmentality, the ‘emotional regime’ and feelings of solidarity with others that it replaces them with should not be overlooked, for, as I noted at the end of Chapter 7, these also rely heavily on particular conceptions of the good.

Coupled together these multiple accounts challenge current thinking about the ways in which state practices effectively regulate behaviour and the ways in which we live with, and further respond to difference. In so doing, they also locate the inadequacy of current framings of ‘encounter’, which were positioned at the centre of so much of New Labour’s policies on cohesion and meaningful interaction. As I argued in Chapter 3, Cattle’s typology of encounter or classification of social-interaction (2005; DCLG 2009) is negligent of the diverse affects and relations that make up the encounter and focuses too heavily upon an understanding that privileges the individual, autonomous body. This lacks any appreciation of the multiple commitments that an individual may have and so assumes autonomy ‘through one set of affective bonds’ (Mookherjee in Fortier 2010, page 27). Furthermore, whilst promoting relations of tolerance, such policies and framings of encounter fail to address the hierarchies of power that are necessarily built into such relations and thus overlook both the effects and affects of encounters between differently positioned bodies – an oversight which has significant implications as was particularly evident in the primary school.

In focusing upon the ways in which ‘encounter’ has been theorised within recent public policy, this study also challenges Cattle’s assertion that ‘social cohesion can be easily measured’ (McGhee 2005, page 80). In the last part of this section I want to present one example, taken from the primary school in Chapter 6, to highlight the difficulties or perhaps impossibility of ‘measuring’ cohesion. As I outlined earlier, primary schools are now required to report on their duty to community cohesion, the success of which is measured by Ofsted. Following its most recent report the school was presented as an excellent example of the effective implementation of a multicultural programme of education. Interestingly, the development of The Parents Group is cited as one indication of its success; of the effective implementation of a multicultural programme which has worked to develop tolerance and cohesion. Yet as my account acknowledged, upon closer scrutiny, the motivation for the development of the group is much more complex and indeed was set up independently of the school from which it was

unable to gain support. The group was motivated by concerns about segregation, its impacts upon the development of the children and a desire to achieve the best for their future. These actions and influences however, are lost within policy discussions. Presenting this group as an indication of the correct implementation of multicultural curricula thus tells us little about the relationship between schools and the development of community cohesion and how this *takes place*. As Painter has argued (2006), such measurements overlook the everyday actions of teachers, parents, guardians, school governors, children, classroom assistants and Ofsted inspectors and all those things that work to influence these individuals; their hopes, media, new events, personal biographies, past encounters, materialities and affects. I thus argue that it is only by attending to the everyday practices that make up these organisations that we might begin to unpack the ways in which values, beliefs and attitudes are shaped on a day to day basis and how the *motivations* for change develop.

#### **4. Tolerance, equality and justice**

In attending to the many examples of tolerance that I have offered, it is necessary to question whether the management of ill-feeling is ever enough. If tolerance of other parents in a playground prevents public disagreements or conflict to provide a space within which children can learn and play without exposure to violence or hostility, is there a need to work for something more? If we can tolerate another person long enough to share a seat with them on the bus should we desire anything different or should we be content with getting along with others under various conditions of obligation? As one parent in Chapter 6 asked; ‘do we really need to do anymore?’ Given that one of the greatest charges held against tolerance is its instability and further tendency to block or impede projects of justice, equality, respect and so on, I want to spend the last part of this concluding chapter addressing this particular issue.

Quite clearly, the very act of tolerating prevents violence in those instances where it is felt that differences cannot be overcome – where disapproval or disgust continues to remain. Small acts of tolerance allow people to get on, to negotiate others peacefully or with civility in their day to day encounters. Yet throughout the thesis I have identified dissatisfaction with the ways in which tolerance is too often considered to be static; a political end that would seem to permanently fix others at a distance – without a means to change. Its current usage does not intimate any degree of process or hint at its creativity. Whilst the extension of tolerance may

enable a certain 'getting along', the chapters of this thesis have also highlighted the disastrous consequences of its sudden withdrawal, when encounters accumulate and the capacity for tolerance radically diminishes. The initial dislike upon which tolerance is founded too often returns and here I support some of the prevalent concerns about its recent promotion. If the management of ill-feeling is ever really going to be enough, then it could only be under conditions of mutuality – which as I have argued, is a difficult task to achieve beyond spaces of minute regulation – for to be happy with tolerance as a long term solution is to overlook the power relations that reside in its practice. As the student in the graduate classroom at the very beginning of this study pointed out; nobody likes to be tolerated.

It is of course necessary to continue to pursue political debates on what should or should not be tolerated and these debates should continue to challenge and carefully scrutinise its periodically defined limits; a project which is made urgent in light of the ways in which the politics of tolerance often subordinates some bodies in the pursuit of domination (Brown 2006; Hage 2003; 1998). Yet, while tolerance quite clearly carries negative connotations and has civilising tendencies, in my accounts, the idea of tolerance was often accepted on the condition that it was part of a wider telos of social change. That is, tolerance was accepted on the understanding that those tolerating were trying their best to alter their views and subject them to critical reflection. It is to this notion of change and the role that tolerance might play in it, to which I now turn.

In the last chapter tolerance was presented as part of a wider telos of social change and ethical praxis. Whilst tolerance in this instance was demanded as part of the workshop requirements and refrain from action was closely monitored, it serves to illustrate the role that tolerance might play in projects of equality and justice more widely. In so doing, we might begin to question how everyday acts of tolerance might further transform judgement of others for the suspension of action that tolerance affords or demands creates a space in which an apprehension of another is made possible and enables a pause within which the initial negative attachment might be rethought. It is worth drawing upon Butler's account of self-knowing at length here;

'Consider that one way we become responsible and self-knowing is facilitated by a kind of reflection that takes place when *judgements are suspended*. Condemnation, denunciation, and excoriation work as quick ways to posit an

ontological difference between judge and judged, even to purge oneself of another. Condemnation becomes the way in which we establish the other as nonrecognisable or jettison some aspect of ourselves that we lodge in the other, whom we then condemn. In this sense, condemnation can work against self-knowledge, inasmuch as it moralises a self by disavowing commonality with the judged. Although self-knowledge is surely limited, that it not a reason to turn against it as a project' (Butler 2005, page 46, my emphasis)

Whilst tolerance is regularly criticised for being no more than a 'suspended condemnation', I argue along with Butler, that such suspension can facilitate reflection and as Heyd (1996) suggests, can be intrinsic to the recognition of another's humanity and their right to remain without interference. Such suspension thus creates a space within which we might be 'ethically addressed' by what another's personhood says about 'the range of human possibility that exists' (Butler 2005, page 44). Of course, as Massumi (in Zournazi 2003) argues, to a point, this requires an abdication of self interest and opening oneself up to a 'risky connection' with another (Jenkins 2002), which, whilst inevitably open to failure, has the potential to produce or develop something quite different as a result. Crucially then, tolerance can play an important part in redirecting attention towards *relations* or commonalities with the judged, rather than 'denouncing them or championing particular identities or positions' (Massumi in Zournazi, page 12). Again, it is imperative to remember that such a redirection of thought is just one possible outcome, for as this study and other accounts have quite clearly demonstrated, tolerance can also have the effect of further solidifying difference and generating negative affects (Brown 2006).

To redirect attention to *relations* with others however, is to go beyond an expression of sympathy or 'moral outrage' on behalf of another – which, as Saqiba suggested in Chapter 7, may not necessarily be satisfactory in the long term – to actively question the category by which the other is defined in the first place (Heyd 1996). In so doing, such a revision necessitates a partial and comparative revision of the tolerator themselves, which opens up various 'lines of mobility' in what they are, for as Connolly states, 'every affective movement of difference [necessarily] moves the identities through which it has been differentiated' (1996, page 267; 1991). There have been multiple examples of such self-revision across this study. When one parent endorsed the diverse religions celebrated at the primary school in Chapter 6, she also acknowledged how the importance of Christianity had been constructed through her

own expectations and schooling, effecting a comparative ‘denaturalisation’ of her own position and stance of superiority (ibid). This small account of revision emerged from a relation of tolerance – a putting up with what she had originally felt was an unfair prioritisation of other religions within the school. This account illuminated what might be possible when taken-for-granted habits of thought become a topic of reflection. As Butler argues, ‘ethical generation is bound up with the operation of critique. And critique finds that it cannot go forward without a consideration of how the deliberating subject might actually live or appropriate a set of norms’ (2005, page 8).

This ‘critical responsiveness’ as Connolly terms it, *stretches* tolerance, to create new terms of contrast and similarity:

[It] takes the forms of careful listening and presumptive generosity to constituencies struggling to move from an obscure or degraded subsistence below the field of recognition, justice, obligation, rights or legitimacy to a place on one or more of those registers’ (2005, page 126).

This movement of position challenges established codes of belonging and ethico-political judgement to ‘propel a fork in political time’ (ibid) and apply the language of discrimination, injustice and oppression more easily to subjugated constituencies (Connolly 1996). It is here then, that we can see how, in those situations where negative feelings exist, tolerance might work as part of a wider project of justice or equality, for without first learning or agreeing to tolerate another it would be difficult to move from such a circumstance to a position where justice or equality was immediately possible. Importantly, this potential is not just relevant to those circumstances where encounters are engineered and techniques of thought are actively encouraged – although there is considerable scope for the development of prejudice reduction techniques here – but is possible in any instance in which tolerance takes place – regardless of the obligations and conditions under which it might occur.

As Connolly highlights, critical reflection upon the ways in which identity/difference (Connolly 1991) is constructed and upon the norms that continue to condition the possibility of recognition (Butler 2005), can be taken further to question the *patterns* of thought that shape these very processes of construction as Chapter 7 so clearly demonstrated. As Bennett (2010) argues, this moves beyond the unhelpful thinking in politics that equates political agency with

human agency. It might invite recognition for instance of the fatigue that diminishes our capacity to respond to another generously, the affective atmospheres that ignite anxiety or to recognise when our past experiences of encounter inflect our judgement of an individual we have just met for the first time. Such a shift in reflection, as Adam and Groves (2007) make clear, helps lay the foundation for new knowledge practices that enable us to alter how we see our 'role and implication in potential effects', to acknowledge the relation between action, knowledge and ethics (page 187). As they argue, the potential for doing something differently can always be located at the 'level of implicit assumptions and naturalised habits of mind' (ibid). It is here and in this work that a much greater apprehension of the *everyday* conditions of tolerance – whether it be patterns of thought, affective energies, materialities and so on – becomes necessary and further useful if we are to move towards an 'ethic of cultivation'. Such cultivation is rather more than 'a judgement of tolerance', it is as Connolly argues 'ethico-political' and the grounds for the successful enactment of a more plural society (2005, page 33).





## Appendix 1.

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List of interviews and diaries completed over the course of the research. This list encompasses both informal and formal interviews and discussions with participants over a nine month period. All names have been changed.

### **Interviews and focus groups:**

Aakash, interview, Birmingham City Council – 19/10/2008

Diversity workshop, Birmingham 31/10/2008

Afzal, interview Library 06/11/2008

Afzal, interview, library 17/11/2008

Diversity Forum meeting/focus group, Birmingham 21/11/2008

Afzal, interview C. Row Birmingham 9/01/2009

Afzal, interview LRHouse 16/01/2009

Afzal, Sifa Fireside, 25/01/2009

Diversity Workshop, Birmingham 26/01/2009

Teacher, interview 3/02/2009

Afzal and Steven interview Coffee Shop 4/02/2009

Afzal, interview LRHouse 27/02/2009

Afzal, interview centre for voluntary action 1/03/2009

Teacher, interview, school 27/04/2009

Afzal, meeting, library cafe 29/03/2009

Diversity Leadership training, London 14,15,16/05/2009

Kate, discussion community centre 14/05/2009

Jayna, discussion community centre 14/05/2009  
Karen, discussion, community centre 14/05/2009  
Tia, discussion, train 15/05/2009  
Saqiba, discussion, community centre 15/05/2009  
Ellen, interview, lunch 15/05/2009  
Charlene, interview, lunch 16/05/2009  
Molly, interview lunch 16/05/2009  
Waseme, discussion walking home from workshop, 16/05/2009  
Aadarshini, discussion walking home from workshop, 16/05/2009  
Diversity Forum meeting/focus group, Birmingham 22/05/2009  
Focus Groups Day 1, school 29/05/2009  
Emma, interview classroom, 29/05/2009  
Debbie/Deb, interview classroom, 29/05/2009  
Sandra, interview classroom, 29/05/2009  
Zoe, interview classroom, 29/05/2009  
Angela, interview classroom, 29/05/2009  
Gemma, interview classroom, 29/05/2009  
Focus Groups Day 2, 30/05/2009  
Ryan, phone interview 8/06/2009  
Royston, phone interview 17/06/2009  
Christine, interview school classroom 22/06/2009  
Carolyn, interview school classroom 22/06/2009  
Diversity Workshop, Birmingham 29/06/2009

### **Diary participants**

Kate, NCBI

Saqiba, NCBI

Wasema, NCBI

Aadarshini, NCBI, followed by phone interview 15/06/2009

Ellen, NCBI



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