

Introduction

The Child in the Broom Closet

In the Broom Closet

Ursula Le Guin's "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" tells the tale of a city, Omelas, where the happiness and well-being of its inhabitants depend on a small child's being confined to and humiliated in a small, putrid broom closet. It is critical to Le Guin's fiction-based ethical wager that Omelas's happiness is not ideological in Louis Althusser's sense, nor naive. It is experientially unmediated, materially substantive, and morally desirable. This happiness is what every average Joe and moral philosopher might wish

for. But it is, nevertheless, dependent on a child's being naked and constrained in a cramped space and being covered with festering sores from sitting in its own excrement, and on these facts being known by all Omelas inhabitants. Some actually visit the child's fetid chamber. Some have merely heard of it since they were children themselves. But every member of Omelas must assume some relationship among his or her present personal happiness, their solidarity with the present happiness of the millions inhabiting Omelas, and the present suffering of one small human being. A child is being beaten, and unlike Freud no one in Omelas can pretend it is mere psychic fantasy. Some offer facile excuses for preferring their happiness to the child's. At this point, they reason, the child is "too degraded and imbecile to know any real joy." She is so destroyed and so used to her destitution that liberating her would do more harm than good. Others face the true paradox. For them "their tears at the bitter injustice dry when they begin to perceive the terrible justice of reality, and to accept it."¹ Others leave Omelas. Not en masse. They leave one by one: "The place they go is a place even less imaginable to most of us than the city of happiness. I cannot describe it at all. It is possible that it does not exist. But they seem to know where they are going, the ones who walk away from Omelas."²

"The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" was conceived as a fictional engagement with William James's "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life" and more broadly to the moral philosophy of American pragmatism, of which James was a leading voice. James begins his essay with the position that "there can be no final truth in ethics any more than in physics, until the last man has had his experience and said his say."³ This ethical position was deeply influenced by the semiotic musings of James's colleague Charles Sanders Peirce. More specifically, James broadly borrows Peirce's understanding of the temporal and modal structure of the "final interpretant" and applies it to the question of ethical truth. Ethical readings of the kind that interested James have a specific temporal and modal structure; a variant of the future anterior. Ethical readings are the "toward which the actual," as the sum total of all interpretants, "tends."⁴ But this actual is already in the durative present. The future anterior is what will have been the ultimate truth, good, and justice of this existing action, event and experience, after every last man has had his experience and his

say. This truth might only become available with the point of view of the last man. But this last man is supposedly simply standing where we are standing, seeing what is front of our eyes but outside our field of vision.

Regardless of her agreement or disagreement with James, Le Guin's account of temporality, eventfulness, and ethics opens a productive avenue for critically engaging the affective attachments and practical relationship of subjects to the unequal distribution of life and death, of hope and harm, and of endurance and exhaustion in *late liberalism*, a phrase I will elaborate below. One reading of Le Guin would alter three ways in which liberal subjects normally understand and experience the social tense, eventfulness, and ethical substance of thriving, suffering, and lethality. First, as opposed to those who would read ethics from the perspective of future ends, this reading of Le Guin would insist that there is no horizon in which a changed material version of this child could be incorporated into the material and emotional good of the city without that good being compromised. The ethical nature of the relationship between the residents of Omelas and the child in the broom closet cannot, therefore, be deferred to some future anterior perspective—what will have been the positive outcome of this suffering from the perspective of a future interpreter we cannot as of yet know. In late liberalism, as opposed to Omelas, the future anterior is sometimes marked by the perfective, sometimes the imperfective. But in both cases the ethical nature of present action is interpreted from the point of view of a reflexive future horizon and its cognate discourses, such as that of *sacrificial love*.⁵ The child's suffering disappears when seen from the perspective of what it will have been—or been for. Because Le Guin refuses to grant to Omelas the truth of this ethical point of view, the ethical relationship that links the citizens of Omelas to the child in the broom closet cannot be removed from the durative present of her suffering. Hers is not so much a sacrifice in the city as an organ of the city. To be sure, whether the political life of the city should be based on an alternative ethical tense—the durative present—and whether the question of politics should bear any relation to the question of ethics are important, if separate, questions that I explore later.

Second, the nature of the suffering that interests Le Guin is ordinary, chronic, and cruddy rather than catastrophic, crisis-laden, and sublime.

Granted the child in the broom closet is covered in sores and, every so often, is given a kick. But for the most part her misery is a quieter form of abjection, despair, impoverishment, and boredom. She is not a part of a system of disposability because she cannot be disposed with. In the oscillation between this state of neither great crisis nor final redemption there is nothing spectacular to report. Indeed, nothing happens that rises to the level of an event let alone a crisis. The small child's life-as-suffering will drift across a series of *quasi-events* into a form of death that can be certified as due to the vagary of "natural causes." As a result any ethical impulse dependent on a certain kind of event and eventfulness—a crisis—flounders in this closet. How does one construct an ethics in relation to this kind of dispersed suffering?

Finally, any goods generated from the kind of misery found in this broom closet must be seen as socially cosubstantial as well as temporally nontransferable. The happiness of citizens of Omelas is substantially within the small child's unhappiness; their well-being is part of a larger mode of corporeal embodiment in which her carnal misery is a vital organ; the usefulness of the child is inseparable from the distension of her body through the bodies of the citizens of Omelas. And these are not metaphors. She and they are not *like* a shared body; they are a shared body. Or, as I have put it previously, they share a mutual, if distributed, form of *enfleshment*.⁶ The solidarity the citizens of Omelas share with each other must, as of necessity, loop through her. As a result, the ethical imperative is not to put oneself in the child's place, nor is it to experience the anxiety of potentially being put in her place. Le Guin's fiction rejects this ethics of liberal empathy. Instead, the ethical imperative is to know that your own good life is already in her broom closet, and as a result, either you must create a new organization of enfleshment by compromising on the goods to which you have grown accustomed (and grown accustomed to thinking of as "yours" including the health of your body) or admit that the current organization of enfleshment is more important to you than her suffering.⁷

That Le Guin allows some people to walk away from Omelas rather than stay and fight its injustice may seem a cop-out. That Le Guin is unable to describe the place they go seems even more of one. How to come to grips with Le Guin's refusal, or inability, to provide a substantive alter-

native to her devastating paradox of the good life — and après Derrida, a philosophy of ends more generally⁸ — is the last point that this book will address. Other issues about Le Guin’s short story and her opus more generally will be raised through a set of encounters with a number of alternative social worlds and their *social projects*. Of particular emphasis will be the contrast between Le Guin’s interest in the emergence of “the liberatory *novum*, of individual initiative, of understanding and communication,” which correspond to the “classical utopian aspirations of Western philosophy” and, say, the science fiction writer Samuel Delany’s interest in “the dominance of *dispersion*, of compelling convention, of statistical typicality, of delusion and a systematic distortion of communication,” which emerged from his encounter with Michel Foucault’s notion of the heterotopic.⁹ My reading of “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas” and Le Guin’s ethical reflections on civic responsibility merely provides a convenient narrative starting point for the concerns of this book: How do specific arrangements of tense, eventfulness, and ethical substance make affectively and cognitively sensible and practical, late liberal distributions of life and death, of hope and harm, and of endurance and exhaustion across social difference? Given these arrangements, what are the conditions in which new forms of social life emerge? And, if we believe that all potential social life is material, that it is embodied, then how does the materiality of the social otherwise matter to critical theory?

This is especially pertinent since outside of Omelas no one is simply happy. Citizens in actually existing states do not live in the perfect grace that prevails in Omelas. Nor is the difference between those who have and those who have not as precisely defined and located.

Obviously this is a large and unwieldy set of concerns. And the meanings of the terms I have already used — “projects,” “social projects,” and “alternative social worlds”; “events” and “quasi-events”; “tense,” “eventfulness,” “ethical substance”; “sacrificial love”; “late liberalism” — demand some initial specification. So let me begin by describing the specific social worlds and projects that interest me; why I am interested in these kinds of worlds and projects; and what of this has to do with tense, eventfulness, and ethical substance. I will then describe how the general space and time in which this book was written has made understanding these kinds of concerns unavoidable and explain why I use the chronotrope of

late liberalism rather than other available chronotropes such as liberalism, neoliberalism, postcolonial liberalism, or diasporic liberalism. And finally I will describe how the following chapters slowly unpack late liberal techniques of power and the concepts I use to understand them.

Spaces of Otherwise

My analysis of the social worlds and projects that provide the sociographic core of this book emerges from very longstanding friendships—for instance a twenty-six-year relationship with friends in north Australia—and much shorter ones—I have been in deep conversation with members of alternative queer projects for only six years. Throughout this book I discuss how my friends in Australia have been working on an augmented reality project as a way of maintaining within late liberalism an ethical relationship to themselves and their country. My discussions of alternative projects of embodied sociality have a more diffused focus. But what interests this book about these social worlds is fourfold. First, I am interested in them as *projects*, a term that is loosely modeled on the meaning that the moral philosopher Bernard Williams gave to the concepts of moral projects and actions. Responding to utilitarian understandings of the good, Williams argues that moral projects cannot be measured, as many utilitarian approaches would have it, by assessing happiness or pleasure, or any action for that matter, from the point of view of a systemized impartial perspective. Happiness, goodness, and justice are never judged by a set of impartial decisions or from the perspective of “the view from nowhere.”¹⁰ And this is because happiness depends on a person “being taken up or involved in any of a vast range of projects” and commitments.¹¹ “To be taken up” and “to be involved” has a much stronger meaning for Williams than to be merely interested in something. Projects are the thick subjective background effects of a life as it has been lived; and these thick subjectivities provide the context of moral and political calculation. All judgments and views always occur within thick and particular life projects—a point most anthropologists would take as axiomatic. But it is also a point that foregrounds the fact that in any given social world, multiple moral and political calculations proliferate because no one ever lives the exact same project—in Omelas, for instance, the good life would be the

contested space between the child in the broom closet and each and every citizen's project, including those who decide to remain in the city and those who walk away from it.

Whereas Williams is interested in projects from the point of view of individual moral agents, I am interested in them from the point of view of the social worlds in which these projects are situated, and not all of these equally. I am interested in those *social projects* that attempt to capacitate an alternative set of human and posthuman worlds. (The "view from nowhere" is from this perspective a social project that has as its background assumption that background assumptions can be emptied out.) When I say I am interested in *social projects* I am gesturing to specific arrangements (*agencements*) that extend beyond simple human sociality or human beings. As will become clear, a social project is dependent on a host of interlocking concepts, materials, and forces that include human and nonhuman agencies and organisms. Focusing primarily on the human dimension of these social projects, critical social theory has used many phrases to describe these worlds. Michael Warner has used the term "counterpublics," Charles Taylor "new social imaginaries," and Nancy Frazer "subaltern counterpublics." I have used the phrase "radical worlds."¹² Much earlier, Foucault coined the term "heterotopia" to refer to a set of countersites (*sortes de contre-emplacements*) that are real localized sites in the world and yet contested inversions of the world ("je suis là-bas, là où je ne suis pas").¹³ Some of these worlds may, from one perspective, seem more voluntarist than others. Alternative spiritual publics that I discuss in subsequent chapters might seem to be this sort of voluntarist counterpublic. It may appear that members of these social projects choose to place themselves within this or that alternative world. Others may seem to be structurally located within normative worlds in such a way that their everyday actions are heterotopic whether they intend them to be or not. My Indigenous friends in Australia would seem good candidates for this less voluntary form of the otherwise. But I hope the following chapters give lie to such simple divisions of the *will*—and put serious pressure on the quasi-mystical concept of "the will" itself—but there is nevertheless a discursive power of the fantasy of the will and its volitions that needs to be noted.

In any case, we have social worlds, social projects, and individuated

projects, each of which conveys a slightly different aspect of human life as this life unfolds in equally complexly organized material compositions. Social worlds are the most encompassing. But specifying even the location and composition of contemporary social worlds is quite difficult. What composes a human social world may be anything but proximate to it, let alone human. The dissemination of various forms of sociality and meaning vis-à-vis various emergent communicative and market linkages creates anonymous and yet intimate linkages and supports across social worlds. Moreover, no social world is simply organized or unorganized, coherent or incoherent, unified or fractured. Instead, social worlds are multiply partially organized and thus always multiply partially disorganized. Social projects disaggregate aspects of the social worlds and aggregate individual projects into a more or less whole—a definable and describable thing. But social projects are not fixed things. Indeed, they are not “things” so much as aggregating practices, incessantly fixing phenomena and cosubstantiating practices.

This book is particularly interested in a certain moment, or condition, in the life of alternative social projects—those moments, or those conditions in which a social project is neither something nor nothing. This indeterminate oscillation—the virtual space that opens up between the potentiality and actuality of an alternative social project—has attracted the attention of a range of immanent critical theorists even as Foucault presented his lecture on heterotopia in 1967.¹⁴ Since the mid-1960s, immanent critique has sought to conceptualize the source and space of “new possibilities of life” independent of philosophical notions of transcendental consciousness.¹⁵ In his Vincennes lectures on Spinoza, Gilles Deleuze, for instance, slowly differentiated between a mode of thought defined by its representational character (ideas) and a mode of thought that is not defined representationally (affects).¹⁶ Deleuze concedes that affects can have an ideational form (“there is an idea of the loved thing, to be sure, there is an idea of something hoped for”) and that ideas have a chronological and logical primacy in relation to the affects (“In order to will it’s necessary to have an idea, however confused or indeterminate it may be, of what is willed”). But he insisted that affects like hope and love “represent nothing, strictly nothing.”¹⁷ Affects may be ultimately determined by the given system of ideas that one has, but they are not “reducible to the

ideas one has,” whether one considers these ideas in their objective extrinsic reality or in their formal intrinsic reality.¹⁸ Ideas and affects are “two kinds of modes of thought” that differ “in nature.” An idea represents something while an affect does not. An affect is not nothing, but it is also not something in the same way as an extrinsic or intrinsic idea. An affect is a force of existing (*vis existendi*) that is neither the realized thing (an idea), nor the accomplishment of a thing (an act, *potentia agendi*). This perspective on the force of existing is clearly engaging Spinoza’s claim that things, finite and determinate kinds of existence, strive (*conatus*) to persevere in their being. For Deleuze, the perpetual variation between *vis existendi* and *potentia agendi*—between striving to persevere and any actual idea or action that emerges from this striving—provides a space of potentiality where new forms of life can emerge. But it is exactly in this ontotheoretical spacing that a different, sociological question emerges: How do new forms of social life maintain the force of existing in specific social spacings of life? How do they endure the effort it takes to strive to persevere? And how in answering these questions do new, if not ontotheoretical, then political and ethical concerns emerge?

The question of how new possibilities of life are able to maintain their force of existence in specific organizations of social space becomes especially acute in the wake of Giorgio Agamben’s reflections on Deleuze’s immanent philosophy and his own work on the biopolitical. In his reflections on Deleuze’s “Immanence: A Life,” Agamben calls for the development of a coherent ontology of potentiality (*dynamis*) that would upend the primacy of actuality (*energeia*).¹⁹ For Agamben potentiality has a dual nature: while the actual can only be, the potential can be or not be.²⁰ And it is exactly within this ontological duality of the potential that new possibilities of life are sheltered. But for Agamben, not all potentialities have the same potential when it comes to the kinds and degrees of difference necessary to disturb current biopolitical formations. In the difficult last few sections of *Homo Sacer*, Agamben turns to a series of “uncertain and nameless terrains” where life and death enter “zones of indistinction.”²¹ The American comatose patient Karen Quinlan exemplifies such spaces: “Karen Quinlan’s body—which wavers between life and death according to the progress of medicine and the changes in legal decisions—is a legal being as much as it is a biological being. A law that seeks to decide on life

is embodied in a life that coincides with death.”²² Death and life, “far from having become more exact, now [oscillate] from one pole to other with the greatest indeterminacy.”²³ Failing to be actual, death and life become pure potential. They can be or not be. And it is in these maximally intensified zones of oscillation and indeterminacy that new forms of life and worlds will emerge and the “ways and the forms of a new politics must be thought.”²⁴ But rather than answering our question of how new forms of social life can survive the perpetual variation of being, Agamben’s examples intensify it. How can new forms of life, let alone the political thought they might foster, persevere in such spaces? How can new social worlds endure the “wavering of death” that defines these spaces?²⁵ Indeed, so unlikely are the possibilities of new life surviving in these spaces that, cribbing off Brian Massumi, we might describe instances of survival as moments of “miraculization.”²⁶

The social projects that interest this book may not have the force to act in the sense of making anything like a definitive event occur in the world (becoming a counterpublic is an achievement), but they exist, nevertheless, in the Spinozan sense of persisting in their being. And insofar as they do, these alternative worlds maintain the otherwise that stares back at us without perhaps being able to speak to us.

But if the point is not to discover the eternal or the universal, but to find the singular conditions under which something new is produced, then two specific aspects of social life need to be emphasized. This is of special concern to those trying to write an anthropology of the otherwise. On the one hand, attempting to address the question of the endurance, let alone the survival, of alternative forms of life in the gale force of curtailing social winds opens a set of new ethical and political questions. If the possibilities of new forms of life dwell and are sheltered within the variation between the force of existing and the power of acting within these intensified zones of being and not being, then what does immanent critique demand of those who live in these zones? This problem becomes particularly clear if we think of potentiality as the ethical substance of immanent critique. If, as Michel Foucault defined it, ethical substance is the prime material (*matière principale*) of moral reflection, conduct, and evaluation, then the ethical substance of immanent critique would be intensified potentiality, insofar as intensified potentiality is the ma-

terial on which ethical work (*travail éthique*) is carried out. But this ethical work is distributed across different social groups. Thus it is important to note, again following Foucault's reading of the use of pleasure among the Greeks and the practice of critique more generally, that pleasure and critique are generally available materials and practices, irrespective of the fact that only some people make use of them. But the general availability of intensified potential doesn't seem to be equally available in the same way. Certainly all subjects exist in the variation between *vis existendi* and *potentia agendi* and between modes of being and not being. But the intensity of this variation and its zoning are neither uniform nor uniformly distributed. As a result a gap seems to open between those who reflect on and evaluate ethical substance and those who are this ethical substance. Thus, on the other hand, we need to understand, first, that late liberalism is a social project—it is a metadiscourse that aggregates aspects of the social world—and we need to understand, second, how this aggregation occurs through and across other social projects and their material supports.

This book argues that a key means by which late liberalism aggregates social worlds is through figurations of tense, eventfulness, and ethical substance. So let me say a few things about how I understand the tense, eventfulness, and ethical substance in late liberalism, beginning with tense.

Tense, Eventfulness, Ethical Substance

The aspect of tense that interests me is broadly social rather than strictly linguistic. I am interested in the *social* divisions of tense that help shape how social belonging, abandonment, and endurance are enunciated and experienced within late liberalism. From a grammatical perspective, tense and event are themselves difficult to disambiguate. Metapragmatic approaches to discourse, for instance, understand tense and event to emerge from the intersection between what is being narrated and the act of narrating it—the time during or over which the state or action denoted by a verb occurs. In the grammatical past, for instance, the event being narrated is marked as prior to the act of narrating, while in the grammatical present tense the event being narrated coincides with the act of narrating it. Languages demonstrate a wide variety of ways of configuring

the temporal relationship between what is being narrated and the act of narrating it.²⁷ French marks this relationship in a different way than does English; English in a different way than the Australian Indigenous language Emiyenggal. Emile Benveniste noted long ago, “In one way or another a language always makes a distinction of tense.” Sometimes, as in French and English, “a past and future” is “separated by a ‘present’”; sometimes, as “in various Amerindian languages,” the “preterite-present” is “opposed to a future or a present future” or “distinguished from a past.” But for Benveniste what is shared across these differences is a “line of separation” whose reference is the “present,” a time that Benveniste puts in scare quotes to emphasize its performative nature.²⁸ Thus, how various narratives of belonging, abandonment, and endurance are socially enunciated and experienced depends in part on the ways that the relationship between the time of narration and the event narrated, or, put in another way, the event of narration and the narrated event, is grammatically marked. What Le Guin is doing, for instance, is arguing that the event of the child’s misery cannot be narrated as if it were in the past perfect or the future anterior. The grammar of the child’s misery must be written in the durative present.

What interests me is how these strictly grammatical figurations are absorbed into other discourses, affective attachments, and practices of late liberalism. Take, for instance, teleological and eschatological discourses. Grammars might differently mark the temporal relationship between what is being narrated and the act of narrating it, constituting in the process the linguistic event, but in late liberalism this linguistic variation is inflected by a shared teleological discourse that apprehends events “as [the] realization of an already given end or telos” and a shared eschatological discourse that waits for “‘extreme’ or ‘ultimate’ moments and events which immediately precede or accompany the end of history” and “its reversal into eternity.”²⁹ In other words, the differences in narrative tense are metadiscursively refigured through teleological and eschatological discourses such as sacrifice and sacrificial love. As chapter 5 unpacks in more detail, discussions of sacrificial love can figure death, whether an individual’s death in war or a generation’s loss in structural readjustment, as best understood from the perspective of the redemptive end from which this death gains its meaning.

Teleological and eschatological are not the only tense-laden discourses of late liberalism. Take, for instance, liberal constitutional events. Constitutions can be said to presuppose and project into social space a division of tense, that is, the before and after the event of the constitution.³⁰ Constitutionality divides national time between the liberal state of exception (the foundational violence of the constitutional event) and liberal exceptionalism (the exclusion of further foundational violence that the constitution guarantees). Likewise, in previous writings, I have tried to suggest how the *intimate event* is similarly laden with this performative tense, but in the case of the intimate event this performative tense projects into global space a temporally inflected civilizational division (the *autological subject* and *genealogical society*).³¹ In this book the autological subject and genealogical society, the brackets of recognition, the governance of the prior, and sacrificial love are all examined as techniques of social tense that are at hand when accounts of ongoing structural social harm are explained from a neoliberal or late liberal perspective. I will discuss this projection in more detail below; for now it is important merely to note that these complex, interrelated figurations of tense transform everyday liberal life into problems of threshold, scale, and performative realization. They continually deflect moral sense and practical reason from the durative present to an absolute difference between presence and absence or the critical difference between the future anterior and the past perfect.

While time and the event have an internal relation vis-à-vis tense, there is another aspect of the event and eventfulness that concerns this book. Like Le Guin, I am interested in forms of suffering and dying, enduring and expiring, that are ordinary, chronic, and cruddy rather than catastrophic, crisis-laden, and sublime. In other words, this book is interested in the *quasi-events* that saturate potential worlds and their social projects. If events are things that we can say happened such that they have a certain objective being, then quasi-events never quite achieve the status of having occurred or taken place. They neither happen nor not happen. I am not interested in these quasi-events in some abstract sense, but in the concrete ways that they are, or are not, aggregated and thus apprehended, evaluated, and grasped as ethical and political demands in specific late liberal markets, publics, and states, as opposed to crises and catastrophes that seem to necessitate ethical reflection and political and civic engage-

ment. Crises and catastrophes are kinds of events that seem to demand, as if authored from outside human agency, an ethical response. Not surprisingly then, these kinds of events become what inform the social science of suffering and thriving, the politics of assembly and dispersal, and the socially constituted senses of the extraordinary and everyday, as the work of Veena Das and João Biehl have helped make clear.³² What techniques, such as statistics, allow nonperceptual quasi-events to be transformed into perceptual events, even catastrophes? What are the temporal and epistemological presuppositions that foreclose an anthropology of ordinary suffering and thus an anthropological understanding of the dynamic by which extraordinary events of violence are folded into everyday routines — and *visa versa*? How and why do things move from potentiality to eventfulness to availability for various social projects? How might we turn from an ontology of potentiality to a sociology of potentiality in which potentiality is always embodied in specific social worlds? How can we grasp some of the qualities of a material object that is nevertheless a discursive object? How can we talk about subject-effects and object-effects without making materiality disappear or making its different manifestations irrelevant to the unequal organization of social life? And finally, how can we simultaneously recognize that discourse makes objects appear, that it does so under different material conditions, and that the matter that matters forth from discourse is not identical to discourse?

These questions become especially pertinent when we turn to the problem of ethical substance in late liberalism. If we take seriously Le Guin's narrative of the cosubstantiality of bodies in *Omelas*, then how should we understand the relationship between ethical substance and critical theory? Attempting to address the question of the endurance, let alone the survival, of alternative forms of life in the gale force of curtailing social winds opens a set of new ethical and political questions. As noted above, if the possibilities of new forms of life dwell and are sheltered within the variation between the force of existing and the power of acting within these intensified zones of being and not being, then what does immanent critique demand of those who live in these zones? This problem becomes particularly clear if we think of potentiality as the ethical substance of immanent critique.

When I use the phrase "ethical substance," I am clearly thinking here of

Michel Foucault's understanding of ethical substance as he enunciated it in *The Uses of Pleasure*. And here I return to the issues, raised above, about the sociology of potentiality in immanent critique. In *Pleasure*, Foucault argued that in the Greek episteme ethical substance was bodily pleasure insofar as it was the prime material (*matière*) of moral reflection, conduct, and evaluation.³³ The ethical work (*travail éthique*) of the self was to establish proper conduct in relation to this ethical substance—a substance that was material (*matière*)—so as to bring into being the self that was the object of one's behavior.³⁴ As is also well known, Foucault's colleague at the Collège de France, the classicist Pierre Hadot, deeply influenced Foucault's thinking about *askesis* (exercise; self-mastery) and about freedom as a kind of heterotopic spacing of the otherwise. As Foucault began reconceptualizing his second two volumes of *The History of Sexuality*, Hadot engaged Foucault in conversation about various forms of post-Socratic *askesis*: the Platonic renunciation of the pleasures of the flesh under a specific dietary regime; Pyrrhonian indifference; the Cynic endurance of hunger, cold, and insults; Epicurean limitation. Hadot believed that understanding practices of life within these post-Socratic schools would help dislodge the hermeneutic bias of contemporary philosophical practice by demonstrating the classical emphasis on philosophy as self-transformation. These discussions with Hadot were central to how Foucault would come to think about critique as a type of virtue organized around the question of governance (how not to be governed *like that*, rather than how not to be governed *at all*). Central to these virtues of critique was an examination of forms of "eventualization" (*évènementialisation*)—the relay between mechanisms of coercion and contents of knowledge likely to induce behaviors and discourses, affective attachments and analytic tendencies.

And yet, as I noted above, in relation to the variation between *vis existendi* and *potentia agendi*, and between modes of being and not being, while all subjects are subject to forms of eventualization, not all forms of eventualization are the same—nor are their powers of coercion and incitement and intensities of variation and zoning equally distributed. As a result, once again we see a gap open between those who reflect on and evaluate ethical substance and those who are this ethical substance. What I will suggest throughout this book, but especially in the last three

chapters, is that the ethical substance of immanent critical theory is embodied potentiality insofar as embodied potentiality is the prime material of moral reflection and evaluation. In some ways the gap between those who reflect on and evaluate ethical substance and those who are ethical substance mirrors a much older gap in critical theory. We can think here of the ways that Louis Althusser struggled to specify how intellectuals and the proletariat were differently situated in and represented class struggle.³⁵ But rather than dwell on the question of critical theory's proper stance toward the subject that it posits as the engine of history, in this introduction I want to examine a slightly different set of concerns. First, I should note that I am myself aligned with the general project of immanent critique to find a source of a social otherwise outside a gesture of transcendental consciousness. My alignment with immanent critique is no doubt due to a certain aesthetic and theoretical predisposition to this framework. But it also emerges out of a longstanding commitment to a set of local Indigenous Australian understandings of the immanent geontological (the being of geology) source of life and its possibilities. Second, given these commitments I want to turn from an ontology of potentiality to a sociology of potentiality. Rather than the question of the variation of being and not being or affects and ideas in general, I want to understand this variation in specific historical contexts. But I am making a general claim; namely, that potentiality and its perpetual variations never occur in a general way, but always, as Deleuze himself noted, in specific *agencements*—arrangements of connecting concepts, materials, and forces that make a common compositional unity.

Before elaborating what an alternative glossary might consist of, let me turn to what I mean by neoliberalism and by way of this explain why I use the chronotope of *late liberalism* rather than other available chronotopes such as liberalism, neoliberalism, postcolonial liberalism, or diasporic liberalism. It is critical to this discussion that even as I describe how I am using these terms I do not think that they are referring to some given state of affairs. Liberalism, late liberalism, and neoliberalism do not exist as things in the ordinary sense of the term but rather as actions like a sighting or a citing. They exist insofar as they are evoked to conjure, shape, aggregate, and evaluate a variety of social worlds, and each of these conjurings, shapings, aggregations, and evaluations disperse liberalism as a global terrain.

Neoliberalism

First to what I mean by neoliberalism. The term “neoliberalism,” as used by writers as diverse as Immanuel Wallerstein, David Harvey, and Michel Foucault, marks the transformation of state politics and market relations between the postwar Bretton Woods agreement (loosely the Keynesian period) to its collapse in the 1970s and marks two different philosophies about the proper relationship among markets, state, and civil society.³⁶ In general Keynesians believed—and still believe—that because capitalism is subject to periodic unemployment crises, it should be regulated by state and international monetary and fiscal policy, one pillar of which is the redistributive compromise among state, corporation, and labor. With the collapse of Bretton Woods, neoliberals argued for the privatization and deregulation of state assets, the territorial dispersion of production through subcontracting, and a shift in tax policies that favored the rich. Central to neoliberal thinking is the idea that the market naturally pays people what they are worth—and that bargaining power organized through extant institutional arrangements should have nothing to do with income distribution. Indeed, so the argument goes, “intervening” in the market through group bargaining distorts fair distribution based on the ultimate rationality of the market to pay people what they are worth.

But whatever neoliberalism is, what it refers to is not an event, but a set of uneven social struggles within the liberal diaspora. Ronald Reagan’s assault on the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization in 1981 and Margaret Thatcher’s confrontation with the National Union of Mineworkers in 1984–85 occurred more than a decade before the Australian prime minister John Howard confronted the waterfront unions in 1997. Likewise, a formal relationship among state, corporations, and labor came much earlier in Europe than Australia.³⁷ In Australia, this formal compromise came with the 1983 Prices and Incomes Accord (colloquially known as “The Accord”) even as both the Hawke and Keating governments instituted key pillars of neoliberalism—privatization of state corporations, floating the currency, and dropping trade barriers.³⁸ Conceptualizing neoliberalism as a series of struggles across an uneven social terrain allows us to see how these heterogeneous spaces provide the conditions for new forms of sociality and for new kinds of markets and market instruments (or “products”). The derivative trade is perhaps

exemplary of new markets and instruments. Prior to 1970 “no organized financial-derivative exchange existed anywhere in the world.” By the end of 2006, “exchange-traded derivatives totaling 84.4 trillion dollars” were globally outstanding.³⁹ And by 2010, the United States was attempting to reregulate this vast network of capital speculation.

Begun in 2003, the writing of this book stretched across the global boom and bust of the first half of the twenty-first century, the height of the neoliberal ascendancy. At the turn of the century, debates focused on the shape of the neoliberal relationship among state, market, and empire. For instance, Giovanni Arrighi proposed that “the *concentration* of power in the hands of particular blocs of governmental and business agencies has been as essential to the recurrent *material* expansions of the capitalist world-economy as the competition among ‘approximately equal’ political structures.”⁴⁰ That is, capital expansion and empire were intimately linked whether or not empire took the form of older multinational states such as the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires or the form of the Westphalian nation-state.⁴¹ From this perspective, Arrighi claimed that we were witnessing the last stages of the material and financial expansion of the U.S. empire, the heir of the British Empire, and the first stages of an Asian century.⁴² Although less sanguine about the imminent demise of the American empire, David Harvey, writing in the wake of the Bush war on terror, argues that, whether of a British, American or Chinese shape, all imperial undergarments of capitalist expansion have a similar cut, namely, accumulation by dispossession.⁴³ As in previous centuries, what we were witnessing in neoliberal capital was the “displacement of peasant populations and the formation of a landless proletariat.”⁴⁴ What has changed, Harvey argues, is the location of accumulation by dispossession, not the process. In the last three decades the displacement of peasant populations has been occurring in “countries such as Mexico and India” where “many formerly common property resources, such as water, have been privatized (often at World Bank insistence) and brought within the capitalist logic of accumulation.”⁴⁵ The political theorist Glen Coulthard has extended and refashioned Harvey’s argument by focusing on the foundational and ongoing events of Indigenous dispossession.⁴⁶

The internal spoils of this new organization of neoliberal governmentality did not lead to a general rise in the life-worlds of all people.⁴⁷ Rather

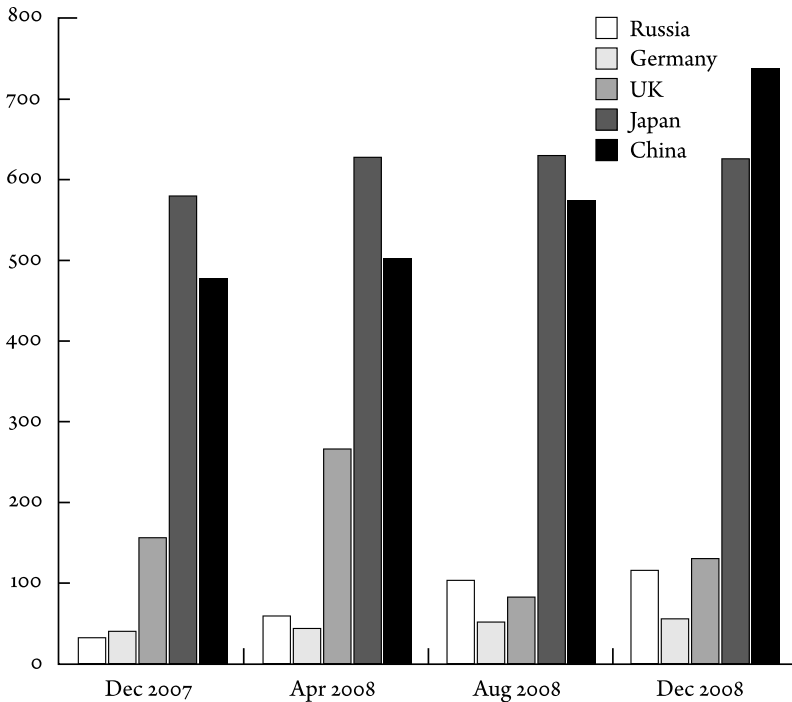
than the doors of various broom closets being swung open, the occupants of these closets were shuffled around while new justifications for belonging and abandonment emerged. Some continental disparities continued. Africa remained mired in what Achille Mbembe calls a necropolitics—the spatial demarcation of Africa as a society of spectacular killing and death.⁴⁸ Other continents emerged as major economic and social forces. China and India of course—but also South America—emerged as major centers for a renewed revolutionary Left fueled by such means as petrol pesos (Venezuela) and production centers (Brazil) even while the material benefits of the revolution remains unclear. (If Harvey is right, the rise in the capital power of these states corresponds with the formation of a new landless proletariat.) In other, long-developed contexts, wealth was reorganized. Andreas Cornia and Julius Court have shown that from the 1960s to the 1990s, inequality of wealth has increased in the vast majority of developed and developing countries and has decreased only in France and Norway.⁴⁹ In the United States, countless economists on the right and left have noted a dramatic concentration of wealth in the top one percent of the population. If middle- and working-class Americans didn't feel the shift in wealth, this was largely due to consumption practices that depended on the acquisition of a huge middle-class debt through easy credit.

What new political opportunities are made available by these old wine-skins is unclear. Some think that the new globally striated nature of accumulation by dispossession will provide the possibility for new supranational grassroots political alliances, such as alliances between residents of small American towns in Maine fighting the company Poland Springs for control of municipal waters and residents of the Indian city of Varanasi protesting Coca-Cola Company's access to scarce water supplies.⁵⁰ Others propose that class struggle might be giving way more generally to the "multitude" or to a loosely organized anarchist Left.⁵¹ What does seem clear is that neoliberalism is not a thing but a pragmatic concept—a tool—in a field of multiple maneuvers among those who support and benefit from it, those who support it and suffer from it, and those who oppose it and benefit from it nevertheless—each action changing if only slightly the field of maneuver itself.⁵² Again, from a certain logical point of view, this field of maneuver is available to anyone, but in the actual worlds

of neoliberalism, the generally available is always distributed in specific ways.

What seemed clear when I began this book was that, with the United States mired in a disastrous war in Iraq and the emergence of potential market counterhegemony in China, India, and Russia, whose political forms resist or outright reject the typical conjuncture of capitalism and democracy, liberalism as a broader formation was in crisis. Key pillars of liberalism as a general theory of political governance—that there is a self-evident relationship between a political form (democracy) and economic form (capital market)—no longer seemed so self-evident to key global players. Socialism with Chinese characteristics seemed to be providing a major engine for an unparalleled rate of world growth and, consequently the capital to expand into and transform long-stagnant zones in Africa and elsewhere. This rise of counterhegemony subsequently opened new potential for South-South relations, unmediated by the G8, even as it challenged liberal democracy as the horizon of a world political economy.⁵³ In other words, the G8 faced increasing competition not merely for economic authority but also for political legitimacy from the G20. The liberal–neoliberal G8 was not *late* in the sense of near to the end of its life, but *late* in the sense of being belated—that fundamental assumptions about the inevitable relationship between capitalism and liberal democracy were being decentered and provincialized.⁵⁴ Thus the problem was not simply, as Wallerstein noted, that neoliberal capital expansion in the first world was financed by the “fantastic expansion of borrowing (indebtedness) via the sale of U.S. treasury bonds to the controllers of world energy supplies and low-cost production facilities.”⁵⁵ The problem was that the major holder of this escalating debt (China) was not a liberal democracy, nor did it seem to need to be to be a driving market force. Perhaps unsurprisingly, it was exactly during this period that a form of neo-conservatism reemerged in the United States, proposing that the United States use its economic, political, and military strength and influence to impose liberalism, market capitalism, and democracy on other countries even as it claimed that this triumvirate was the natural destiny of all civilizations.

But neoliberalism is not merely a set of arrangements among the markets, labor, and state, nor is it merely an older form of *laissez-faire* capi-



Changing amount of U.S. Treasury Securities held by selected states, in billions of dollars. (source: "Major Foreign Holders of Treasury Securities," February 27, 2009. Department of the Treasury, Federal Reserve Board)

talism. By the time Foucault was giving his 1978–79 lectures, *The Birth of Biopolitics* (*Naissance de la Biopolitique*), he had become interested in what he called “today’s liberal . . . or neoliberal program” (“la programmation libérale ou, comme on dit, néolibérale à notre époque”). Of decisive import for Foucault was the noncorrespondence between laissez-faire liberalism and neoliberalism. Neoliberals did not merely wish to free the economy from the Keynesian regulatory state; they wished to free the truth games of capitalism from the market itself—the market should be the general measure of all social activities and values.⁵⁶ In a recent *New York Times Book Review* essay, Tony Judt asked how and why liberal democracies like the United States, Britain, and Australia stopped assessing social programs and actions on the basis of political philosophy and instead restricted themselves to issues of profit and loss, and languages of

efficiency, productivity, and benefit to gross domestic profit.⁵⁷ As Wendy Brown has noted, in neoliberalism the market is no longer seen as a self-perpetuating machine but as a normative achievement that is the result of aggressive social policies.⁵⁸ Thus the ascendancy of neoliberals in Germany and the United States was not the resurgence of old forms of liberal economic ideology formulated in the eighteenth and nineteenth century but a new form of *governmentality*, namely, a new way in which power over and through life and death was being organized and expressed.

What Foucault did not discuss was that neoliberalism transformed an older liberal governance of life and death. Neoliberalism has not merely mimicked the move from *faire mourir ou laisser vivre* to “*faire*” *vivre et “laisser” mourir*. It has resuscitated *faire mourir* into its topology of *faire vivre* and *laisser mourir*, even as the more dominant powers of making live and letting die have changed the techniques of state killing. Any form of life that could not produce values according to market logic would not merely be allowed to die, but, in situations in which the security of the market (and since the market was now the *raison d’être* of the state, the state) seemed at stake, ferreted out and strangled. This way of killing is not commensurate with an older sovereign power Foucault so viscerally described in the opening of *Discipline and Punish*. There are not public spectacles of drawn and quartered bodies—or lynched bodies. Secret agreements are made to remove the body to be tortured far away from public sight and scrutiny. Moreover these new semipublic and secret ways of making die have their counterpart in market disciplines. Any form of life that is not organized on the basis of market values is characterized as a potential security risk. If a social welfare program, for instance, can be shown to lengthen life and increase health, but cannot at the same time be shown to produce a market value, this lengthened life and increased health is not a value to be capacitated. Indeed, it is a value to be actively attacked and rooted out of the state and national psyche. Once we understand that neoliberalism is neither *laissez-faire* liberalism nor Keynesianism—neither a social formation in which the state allows the market to proceed on the basis of one set of principles and the market allows the state to proceed on another set of principles, nor a well planned form of state and market regulation—but something much more aggressive, then we can understand why we get nowhere within neoliberalism argu-

ing whether this or that person did or didn't care about the vulnerable or that this or that social welfare program was or was not a failure. Instead we need to start asking what are the measures of failure, the arts of failure, such that people believe and experience cultural recognition and social welfare as failures. After all, as I hope subsequent chapters will make clear, failure is not an ideal form floating outside social space. Failure is instead a socially mediated term for assessing the social world. When chapter 4 asks why social welfare in Australia suddenly seemed to stop working at the turn of the century, it doesn't try to first define what failure is or isn't. Instead it demonstrates how within a neoliberal framework any social investment that does not have a clear end in market value—a projectable moment when state input values (money, services, care) can be replaced by market output value (workers compensated and supported by nothing except the market)—fails economically and morally. And a social investment is an economic and moral failure, whether or not the investment is life-enhancing.

By 2003, in Australia where I have focused most of my quarter-century or so of research, the neoliberal reorientation of global economic hegemony seemed well under way as well as the accumulations by dispossession it sparked. The global commodity boom fueled by the production boom in China and Southeast Asia raised the Australian dollar to near parity with the American dollar (by 2011 it had achieved parity). The Australian mining industry led the way in producing a twenty-two billion dollar federal surplus in 2008. (Other primary exporting states were seeing similar surplus booms.) In this economic environment, Australia seemed sheltered by the double-digit expansion of the Chinese economy and vigorously courted new trade agreements with it. But rather than expanding social welfare to its Indigenous citizens, the conservative federal government reversed a longstanding commitment to cultural recognition and reconciliation. I discuss this at length in the next chapter, but here is just a taste. In July 2007, the government announced an “intervention” in Aboriginal affairs in the Northern Territory. The government pegged its declaration of emergency to the release of the *Little Children Are Sacred* report that claimed that some Aboriginal children were being sexually abused because of the fetid nature of Indigenous communities. The government called for a move “beyond” the politics of recognition

and reconciliation to a free market approach to Indigenous affairs. Everyone agreed that Indigenous life would initially be much worse. But, in a move readers should now be able to anticipate, from the perspective of the future good that market integration would bring, this present suffering, we were told, should be bracketed. Focus on the future.

This form of neoliberal governance was itself shaken at the end of my writing of this book. By the fall of 2008 the crisis of capitalism and liberalism wasn't merely formal in sense of what kinds of state forms could not only be compatible with capitalism but were necessary to its current formation. It was now linked to a very different set of circumstances. A global financial credit crisis arose in large part from the collapse of a host of new financial instruments intended to manipulate the assets of long-term market investments for enormous short-term profit. The collapse of the credit market led to the collapse of consumption in the United States, production in China, commodity exports in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and Australia, and currencies in Eastern Europe. China did not immediately emerge as an independent engine of growth as widely hoped, although it continued to grow and, by this growth, buffer the effects of the recession in commodity export centers such as Australia. But Russia, Venezuela, and Dubai were caught banking too heavily and exclusively on high oil revenues.⁵⁹ By March of 2009, the World Bank predicted that worldwide gross domestic product would shrink for the first time since the Second World War.⁶⁰ The Brussels Forum followed suit, with the president of the World Bank, Robert Zoellick, stating that 2009 would be a "dangerous year," with issues going "beyond the economic to political and social instability."⁶¹ In the midst of these events many proposals were advanced to fix global capitalism or to bring it finally to its knees. To those arguing that we were witnessing the end of neoliberalism and, subsequently, the end of capitalism, Amartya Sen reminded the readers of the *New York Review of Books* that even Adam Smith envisioned a world of diverse economic formations (free markets and government-controlled social domains such as education) within capitalism. Smith never thought that capitalism, with its signature characteristics of market transactions, profit motivation, and individually based private property, was sufficient.⁶² That Sen was incited to defend capitalism by differentiating it from neoliberalism suggests something *late* about liberalism, not

in the sense that we are seeing its last hurrah, but that it has entered a new stage of reflexivity. With the calming of the markets, the loosening of credit, and the tentative return to consumption, some of this reflexivity may yet wane. And how this globally systemic crisis is resolved in liberal democracies, if it is resolved, is as of yet unclear. We see some contours of a post-post-Bretton Woods world emerging—the return of a more robust regulatory environment, the partial nationalization of industry and banks, and the call for a global currency independent of the U.S. dollar.⁶³

If this book seeks to understand how social projects that lie on the cusp of being endure, then it turns not to an ontotheoretical answer, but to a sociographic which roots analysis in the actual conditions of neoliberalism—and late liberalism.

Late Liberalism

So why do I use the phrase “late liberalism”? By “late liberalism,” as distinct from these varieties and specificities of capitalism and state, I mean the shape that liberal governmentality has taken as it responds to a series of legitimacy crises in the wake of anticolonial, new social movements, and new Islamic movements. But in a broader sense late liberalism is a belated response to the challenge of social difference and the alternative social worlds and projects potentially sheltered there. From the 1950s onward, and culminating in the dramatic world events of 1968, anticolonial and new social movements transfigured the prior way in which liberalism governed alternative forms of life by putting extreme pressure on its legitimating frameworks—imperial arts of paternalist and civilizational governance. Anticolonial and new social movements refigured these paternalistic arts of civilizational care into acts of colonial domination and dispossession. Activists and their theorists, such as W. E. B. Du Bois and Frantz Fanon, claimed that Western arts of caring for the colonized and subaltern were not rectifying human inequalities but creating and entrenching them. But this legitimacy crisis was, over time, turned into a crisis of culture for the governed as state after state instituted formal or informal policies of cultural recognition (or cognate policies such as multiculturalism) as a strategy for addressing the challenge of internal and external difference that they faced. The political theorists

Wendy Brown and Patchen Markell have described this as the culturalization of politics.⁶⁴ In the wake of the liberal state's recognition of past harm, the crisis would no longer be a crisis of liberal legitimacy but a crisis of how to allow cultures a space within liberalism without rupturing the core frameworks of liberal justice. In short, in late liberalism to care for difference is to make a space for culture to care for difference without disturbing key ways of figuring experience — ordinary habitual truths. And thus to assess care in late liberalism is to assess the capacity of culture as an agent of care.

No matter how superficially they might seem the same thing, the culturalization of politics was not the same as the colonial critique of liberalism. As the first two chapters elaborate in more detail, late liberal cultural recognition incorporated and disciplined the challenge that anticolonial and new social movements posed to liberal forms of government by shifting the locale of the crisis and creating a definitive, though undefined, limit on the formative legal and social power of cultural difference. For this shift to become practical, culture had to become pliant to legal and social science analysis and political and social incorporation. In the first instance, culture had to become equivalent to an artifact — something that could be said to have specific qualities that could then be measured and evaluated. Anthropologists of a certain structural and structural-functionalism ilk were helpful here. They truly believe(d) that culture is a set of rules — rules of descent and kinship or ritual and symbolic orders — that people do or do not follow as one follows a recipe. The soufflé rises or fails to — and its success depends upon what the rules are for making it and whether one follows them. In the second instance, this version of culture had to come out of the mouths of others. But even here, only a specific kind of other will do — the general other, the other that complies with the rules.

Not only was culture made into an object that one could possess or insufficiently create, the actions of different cultures were assigned different tenses — not merely different times, as Johannes Fabian so nicely demonstrated, but different tenses.⁶⁵ And this is what I tried to suggest in *The Empire of Love* by way of the division between the *autological subject* and the *genealogical society*. In brief the autological subject refers to multiple discourses and practices that invoke the autonomous and self-

determining subject, and which are therefore linked to, but not exhausted in, liberalism's emphasis on "freedom," more narrowly conceived as a political philosophy. The genealogical society, on the other hand, refers to discourses that stress social constraint and determination in processes of subject constitution and construe the subject as bound by various kinds of inheritances. But these discourses of freedom and constraint are themselves animated by an imaginary of national and civilizational tense. Foucault noted as much in his Collège de France lectures, *Society Must Be Defended*, where he argued that Europe witnessed "an inversion of the temporal axis of the [political] demand." Reading the work of Abbé de Sieyès in the broad context of new-regime France, Foucault argued that the political demand would no longer be made "in the name of a past right that was established by either a consensus, a victory, or an invasion." Instead the demand would be "articulated in terms of a potentiality, a future, a future that is immediate, which is already present in the present because it concerns a certain function of Statist universality that is already fulfilled by 'a' nation within the social body, and which is therefore demanding that its status as a single nation must be effectively recognized, and recognized in the juridical form of the State."⁶⁶

But the temporal inversion Foucault diagnosed was not merely a transformation of Europe in relation to itself. The "inversion of the temporal axis of the demand" had a dual address. It constituted a division of tense within Europe (what it had been and what it was now becoming) and a division between Europe and non-Europe (what Europeans were becoming and what non-Europeans were). This doubly situated inversion of tense connects the two major if fitful developments (the consolidation of *demos* and *colons*) that marked the long European *durée* from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century and was consolidated in the eighteenth to the nineteenth. It locates this *durée* in a topological knot in which Europe (*demos*) is in the body of the colonies (*colons*) as surely as the citizens of Omelas are in the body of the child in the broom closet. As democracy fitfully expanded across Europe and European conquest across the globe the truth of some would be increasingly judged in terms of a past perfect being—their already having been or, their potential to stop being what they are still in essence—while the truth of others would be judged from their potentiality. The futures of some, or the hopes that

they have for their future, can never be a *future*. They can only drag others into the past (“Osama bin Laden [Radical Islam ← going backward] coordinated the bombings”). And for others, no matter what harms they do, the truth of these harms is deferred into the future. What is happening isn’t happening because it is what it will have been when the last man has his say. The society of potentiality (*demos*) seemed to demand societies of fixity (*colons*), as if the future anterior of freedom demanded the clawing determination of the customary to make its difference visible and palpable. Indeed, so fundamentally is this history internal to modern Europe’s language of itself that its foundational terms of critical reference are saturated by this temporal inversion. Even the seemingly neutral social scientific term, “the social” cannot escape these same historical conditions, on the contrary: the historicity of the autological subject and genealogical society is internal to the historicity of the sign, “the social,” and consequently to the divisions of *social* belonging, social worlds, and social projects that I am examining.⁶⁷ That we can say, “the social as opposed to the individual,” and that we can compare different (individual) “social worlds” presupposes the division between the autological subject and genealogical society.⁶⁸

Late liberalism is not an epochal form that emerged in the wake of national, anticolonial, and new social movements, and subsequently ceased to adapt to new conditions. Late liberalism is no more a unified thing than is neoliberalism: they are both uneven terrains of social maneuver. This has become exceedingly clear in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. Though not born at this moment, a reactionary position to cultural difference, especially Anglo-American forms of multiculturalism, has taken on new force since the attacks. The rise of this reactionary movement is perhaps exemplified by the influence of Samuel P. Huntington’s *The Clash of Civilizations* in neoconservative circles, but no matter whether we use this text or another as a marker, we have witnessed over the last decade a new and intensive shift in the governance of social difference. As the next two chapters make clear, culture is once again being inflected by a civilizational rhetoric. And this civilizational rhetoric has been articulated to national and international security. British, French, and German politicians such as David Cameron, Nicolas Sarkozy, and Angela Merkel have declared state multiculturalism a failure and called for a robust defense of western liberal principles.⁶⁹ As chapter 3 argues, however, this seeming

shift from cultural recognition to liberal defensiveness is drawing on two modes already within state multiculturalism, namely, cultural espionage and camouflage.

Although I make a distinction between late liberalism and neoliberalism, I do not conceptualize these two as external to each other, for two main reasons. First, state forms of late liberalism arose within the struggle between Keynesian liberals and neoliberals. The culmination of key anticolonial and new social movements occurred in the same decades as the collapse of the Bretton Woods agreement and the election of pro-neoliberals such as Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. The apparent conflict between neoconservatives and neoliberals to multiculturalism (and other robust forms of cultural recognition) clouds the fact that both emerged as powerful social forces in the same few decades. Second, late liberal ways of framing social difference through specific configurations of tense, eventfulness, and ethical substance are utilized by laissez-faire liberals, Keynesian liberals, and neoliberals to legitimate differential belonging. These configurations are ready to hand across these ideological positions because they lie in the deep integrated background of late liberal life, making sense of pockets of abandonment and differential belonging. They allow the killing of all social projects that do not produce market forms of life to be justified on the basis of a distinction between societies of freedom and those of constraint, and the security risk of allowing the latter to gain a footing in the former. They make these forms of killing and letting die seem right, reasonable, and good. They figure the relationship between dominant forms, justifications, and experiences of social belonging, abandonment, and endurance and changing economic forms such as the recent dramatic cycle between capital accumulation and concentration and capital contraction and realignment.

Again, if a social otherwise is to emerge from the potentialities of this ordering of governance, then it must find a way of persisting and enduring in these late liberal ways of making live, making die, and letting die.

An Alternative Glossary for Late Liberalism

Economies of Abandonment not only looks at how late liberal figurations of tense, eventfulness, and ethical substance distract the eye from potential social worlds and their social projects but also offers an alternative

vocabulary for understanding these spaces as lived worlds. My argument is that specific, if mobile, figurations of tense, eventfulness, and ethical substance aggregate harm in such a way that its ethical and political demand is dispersed and dissipated. But this book is also interested in how alternative social projects are able to open a space in these assumptions as they endure this dissipation—and more, to become more than merely persistence. As a result, I make use of an alternative glossary that seeks to illuminate ways that alternative social projects aggregate life diagonal to hegemonic ways of life.

Espionage and Camouflage. I begin by returning to Johannes Fabian's classic text, *Time and the Other*, placing it in recent debates in Australia and the United States on social difference in order to show how the tense of the other is available—is at hand—whenever the problem of cultural recognition arises. I spend time elaborating this point in order to show not merely that the tense of the other is always at hand when confronting the problem of cultural recognition—the major feature of modern late liberalism—but that recognition itself should be understood as simply one modality of a larger triadic dynamic of *recognition-espionage-camouflage*. By “espionage” I mean actual practices of spying and being spied on, as well as a much broader and diverse set of assumptions that someone is trying to penetrate a socially sealed space. In espionage, value circulates in such a way that both those circulating it and those trying to impede its circulation avoid the initial confrontation underlying the imaginary of recognition. By “camouflage” I mean the art of hiding within a given environment via embodied disguise. These actual practices of cloaking are part of a much broader and diverse set of discourses about modes of concealment that allow otherwise visible organisms or objects to remain indiscernible from the surrounding environment.⁷⁰ Obviously camouflage, as I am using it, has a genealogical relationship to mimicry and colonialism, say the work of Fanon, Bhabha, and Serres, and equally obviously perhaps, they are not merely spectral qualities but involve the entire sensory apparatus.

Many scholars, including myself, have for some time now argued that, rather than adjudicating between antagonistic worlds, liberal forms of cultural recognition project an internal incommensurability within lib-

eralism onto the subject of recognition. Liberal exceptionalism pivots on the commonsense truth of two competing, or at least incommensurate, political and social discourses and their affective entailments—that in cases of cultural conflict the problem of difference is solved through public reason and in these same cases moral reason must draw red lines across which difference cannot proceed, or a bracket must be put around the difference so that it can be removed from public debate until that time its challenge can be managed. In moments when these two impulses collide, liberal cultural recognition shifts the burden and responsibility for maintaining liberalism's exceptionalism from dominant to subaltern and minority members of society. The subjects of recognition are called to present difference in a form that feels like difference but does not permit any real difference to confront a normative world. In these moments, recognition cannot be separated from its modal twins, espionage and camouflage, and thus the precarious potentiality of each is continually oscillating across all three states. They are the modes of recognition that become visible when, as a result of some threat to late liberal security, the tense of the other is written as a bracket. In these redlined and bracketed moments, difference is given a tense and mood—say, the past perfect and subjunctive—and recognition is transformed into the modality of espionage and camouflage.

Endurance and the Endurant. Because the types of social projects that interest me exist in the precarious zone of being and not being and between *vis existendi* and *potentia agendi*, this book is interested in three modes of their life: social belonging, abandonment, and endurance. Each of these aspects of existence presents a different angle on the issue of tense, eventfulness, and ethical substance. Approaching ethical substance from the perspective of belonging and abandonment can—tends to—figure substance as a secondary condition. On the one hand, we have the social logics of belonging and abandonment and, on the other hand, the how or to what material condition one belongs or is abandoned; for example, the child is abandoned and the material conditions of this abandonment are such and such. These second-order questions are often not sufficiently probed, leading to some questionable conflation of various states of so-called bare life. The question of endurance—and its social

antonym, exhaustion—refuses to consider the substance of being as a secondary quality. Internal to the concept of endurance (and exhaustion) is the problem of substance: its strength, hardness, callousness; its continuity through space; its ability to suffer and yet persist. We get a glimpse of what is at stake here in ordinary English exchanges. If we hear someone has been abandoned, we might ask how she is doing. But if we are told that someone is enduring a tragedy, we do not usually ask how she is doing but how we might help. Moreover, endurance encloses itself around the durative—the temporality of continuance, a denotation of continuous action without any reference to its beginning or end and outside the dialectic of presence and absence. Enduring isn't a singularity. As will become clear, especially in chapter 4, endurance is not a homogenous space. Every scene of endurance, and certainly the scenes that concern this book, is shot through with multiple and incommensurate configurations of tense, eventfulness, and ethical substance and aggregations of life. The alternative social projects that lie within these stretched and striated spaces must survive eventfulness that is below the threshold of the catastrophic and ethical substance as sacrifice.

Immanent Obligation, the Dwelling Sciences, and the Demand to Capacitate. The kind of immanent critical theory that this book supports and worries constantly confronts the problems of adjudication, ethical commitment, and political action. How, among the variety of alternative worlds struggling for dominance, does one assess which should live on? Habermas insisted that any critical project must have recourse to norms on which evaluative judgments about specific social projects, goals, and values can be made. Nancy Fraser, among others, took up Habermas's argument and criticized Foucault for a dual failure. She argued that because his work lacked a normative commitment it could not, on the one hand, adjudicate among a variety of antagonistic alternative worlds nor, on the other hand, provide prescriptive solutions to empirical reason. While disagreeing with how Habermas and Fraser ground adjudication, I think they are right that the way that immanent critique adjudicates among antagonistic worlds cannot emerge from a normative commitment. If we believe that life is cosubstantial, then whatever forms of adjudication we have must be equally cosubstantial within the space we are adjudicating.

The kinds of cosubstantial potentiality and its adjudication I propose are simple and I am sure unsatisfactory. First, immanent critique will have to abandon any gesture to the difference of the will when answering why some people persist in striving to be and others do not, or why certain potentialities achieve the miraculous state of counterpublics and others do not. The will has long been an alibi of late liberal and neoliberalism. The will becomes a way of holding those who suffer accountable: “Look, this one had the will to lift herself up by her own bootstraps”; and “If she could, why can’t you?” And those who are able to be the miracle aggregate the hope of the Right and Left, leaving in the analytical shadows the far greater number of those who could or did not. Here we might remember Spinoza’s view of the concept of human free will as a result of men being “conscious of their actions and ignorant of the causes by which they are determined.”⁷¹ Thus rather than will, I press heavily on the notion of immanent obligation as a no-man’s-land between choice and determination. By “immanent obligation” I am referring to a form of relationality that one finds oneself drawn to and finds oneself nurturing, or caring for in the midst of critical reflexivity. This being “drawn to” or “repelled” is often initially a very fragile connection, a sense of an immanent connectivity. Choices are then made to enrich and intensify these connections. But even these choices need to be understood as retrospective—the subject choosing is herself continually deferred by the choice. In other words, she is and is beginning to be different in the vicinity of this choice; she is belated to herself, arriving too late to be any use to adjudication. I might be able to describe why I am drawn to a particular space and I may try to nurture this obligation or to break away from it, but still I have very little that can be described as “choice” in the original orientation.

This leads to my second point, equally simple, if unsatisfactory. Assessment—adjudication—will always emerge in the queasy space of dwelling within these potential worlds, a dwelling within that is reshaping the subject who will then assess these worlds. Judith Butler makes a similar argument when she claims that Foucault’s contribution to normative theory lies in the *poiesis* of desubjugation and self-making.⁷² Adjudication arises not via some transcendental gesture, no matter how fragile, but from a continual reflexively practiced dwelling within the worlds to be adjudicated. Thus adjudication is not merely internally tethered to ethi-

cal commitment and desubjugating obligation but also to the capacitating of potential life in late liberalism. This demand to capacitate foregrounds without sidestepping the queasy and uncertain terrain between epistemology and deontology and the constant uncertainty of capacitating life at the threshold of being and not being.

Governance of the Prior. If this book was written in a particular moment, it was also written from a particular point of view — indigenous politics and socialities within the settler colony. The chapters that follow do not draw exclusively on ethnographic research in Indigenous Australia, though they do concentrate their thought on two settler nations, Australia and the United States. Other materials include contemporary struggles within the radical ecological movement, religious jurisprudence, and state tactics in the shadow of the war on terror. But, in the first instance, I think it is important to note my vantage on these issues has been deeply influenced by twenty-five years spent working closely with Indigenous Australians. From this point of view of the issues I discuss seem unavoidable. As a fact of daily life, Indigenous subjects face the disciplinary nature of late liberal tense, eventfulness, and ethical substance through a specific mode of governance I am calling the *governance of the prior* — the priority of the prior across political, market, and social relations. The governance of the prior is, however, striated with other social divisions of tense such as the division of the autological subject and genealogical society. And throughout this book I will argue that although originating in settler nationalism and concentrated there, the governance of the prior provides an essential formation of tense and event to the governance of difference in late liberalism.⁷³

Others have discussed the relationship between settler nationalism and prior occupancy. The political scientist Jeremy Waldron has discussed whether the general duty of a government to do justice to all citizens within its territorial jurisdiction is trumped by any special duty to Indigenous people based on the claims of first and prior occupancy.⁷⁴ Waldron argues against the triumph of indigeneity by first differentiating two foundations of Indigenous claims — first occupancy and the claim of prior occupancy — both of which he believes fail to pass a basic test of Rawlsian justice. Indigenous claims made on the foundation of first occupancy face

two problems, according to Waldron. The first is evidentiary (first occupancy is nearly impossible to prove because its truth stretches into pre-recorded history); the second is the hierarchies of justice (the fact of being first, even if it could be proved, is only one of a set of values that must be assessed when deciding issues of justice). According to Waldron, Indigenous claims made on the basis of prior occupancy gain moral force from “the human interest in stability, security, certainty, and peace, and for the sake of those values it prohibits overturning existing arrangements irrespective of how they were arrived at.”⁷⁵ But they also suffer from an ever-decreasing moral weight as the event of dispossession recedes into historical time.

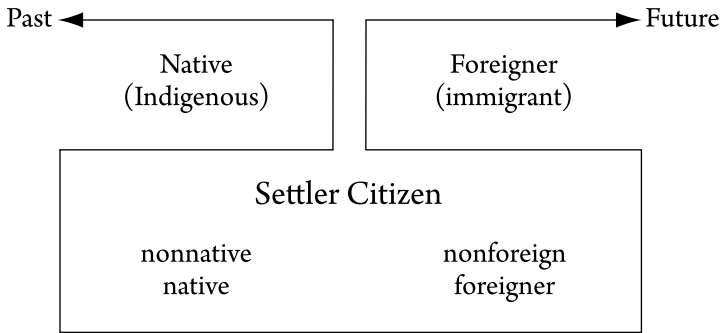
In a brilliant critique of Waldron, Robert Nichols slowly unpacks the assumptions built into his model and analysis. Nichols notes that in order to divide Indigenous claims into the categories of first and prior occupancy, Waldron must assume that contract theory, the principles of personhood it presupposes, and the ontological categories of being it projects are also *indigenous* categories—that is, universal, general epistemological and ontological categories. Numerous Indigenous studies scholars, from Vine Deloria to Dale Turner in the United States, and Deborah Bird Rose to Irene Watson in Australia, have decisively demonstrated this not to be the case.⁷⁶ Moreover, scholars such as Glen Coulthard and J. Kēhaulani Kauanui have shown dispossession is not a historical event but an on-going process.⁷⁷

When I speak of the governance of prior, I am specifically interested in the social genealogies of these kinds of political theoretical abstractions. There is not enough space here to discuss at length the conditions that gave rise to the governance of the prior in the modern settler nation-state, the nation-state system more generally, or the Indigenous as a specific and general formation within the history of colonial settlement, let alone the variations and complexities of these interlocking relations of the governance of the prior with the divisions of the autological subject and genealogical society.⁷⁸ This much I can say, if all too briefly. The conditions of the governance of the prior were in place before the emergence of the modern liberal nation-state. And this is true whether we believe that the modern nation-state emerged in the eighteenth-century Americas, as does Benedict Anderson, or only after the Second World War, as

do John Kelly and Martha Kaplan.⁷⁹ What matters is how nationalisms emerged. And what Anderson emphasizes is that “one of the justifications, sooner or later” for the new nationalism was their creole nature: “their distinctive history, and especially their demographic blending of settler and indigenous peoples, to say nothing of local traditions, geographies, climates, and so forth.”⁸⁰ This manner of strategically claiming that inhabitation in a continent took priority over a foreign colonial homeland became the modular form of the modern national imaginary. Projecting themselves against the metropolitan state, non-Native Americans could claim and experience themselves as the prior occupants of the Americas.

But in acceding to the logic of the priority of the prior as the legitimate foundation of governance, the settler state projected those who already inhabited the land before the settlers’ arrival as spatially, socially, and temporally before it in the double sense of “before”—before it in a temporal sequence and before it as a fact to be faced. Susan Scheckel examined this dynamic in the American literary nationalisms of the early nineteenth century. Anxious that the Revolutionary War would lead not to a new and lasting peace but to an endless series of subsequent revolutions, “many literary nationalists of the early nineteenth century suggested that the history and myths of American Indians could provide the new nation with a sense of ‘primitive’ origins.”⁸¹ But while solving one problem, literary creolization created another, namely the governance of the prior as a temporal sequence and event: “Who had the right to own and govern the land originally possessed by Indians and inherited through the Revolution?”⁸² Thus we see another source of the deep belatedness of late liberalism.

This division of tense within the social fabric of emerging settler nationalism bifurcated the sources and grounds of social belonging in such a way that the relationship between settler and Native/Indigenous was transformed from a mutual implication in the problem of prior occupation to a hierarchical relationship between two modes of prior occupation, one oriented to the future, the other to the past. As the governance of the prior crossed the truth-value of the future anterior and past perfect, the priority of the human as ultimate signature of liberal democratic sovereignty was detached from the priority of the descent of persons even as the priority of certain persons, colonizers, was safeguarded against the priority of others, the colonized. And this division became available to be applied to other grounds within the nation and against the nation.



The governance of the prior. The settler citizen differentiates, localizes, and temporalizes its territorial claims by creating two distinct and contrasting categories, the native and the foreigner, locating their territorial claims in the past (native) and future (foreigner).

To see what is at stake here let us return to Anderson's argument in *Imagined Communities* that nationalism emerged as a new political imaginary in settler societies and that the political community it imagined reorganized previous forms of state sovereignty. According to Anderson, the emergence of the print media broke previous socialities organized around face-to-face relations, vertically oriented to kingly authority, and without clear territorial borders. It installed a new horizontally oriented, homogeneous peoplehood whose internal integrity was defined in relation to the border. This homogeneous space-time written against state borders, institutionalized in market, public sphere, and state function, displaced the older imaginary of radial monarchical sovereignty. Numerous refinements and critiques of Anderson have been written since the publication of *Imagined Communities*, many of them quite incisive. But Anderson's basic point remains quite important: the diffuse imaginaries of stranger sociability, value abstraction, and social objectification that emerged in settler nations came to provide a metaframework within which the discussion of sovereignty persists. The problem with Anderson's account of the imagined political community of nationalism is not that it locates the origin of the nation-state at the wrong moment or in the wrong place. Rather, the problem is that Anderson doesn't account for a division that emerged internal to the otherwise homogeneous space-time of nationalism. When we look at these differential narrative structures we find that although all people may belong to nationalism, not all people occupy the same tense of nationalism.

Because I assume that settler colonialism as much as liberalism is a diasporic object, I am as interested in the dispersion of the governance of the prior as much as its unity. A full discussion of the governance of the prior would include the different ways that Spanish and English colonialism invoked the customary.⁸³ Even across the major British settler colonies—North America, Australia, and New Zealand—the governance of the prior did not have a uniform application, even though wherever the British went, they carried the governance of the prior with them. In the British Americas, for example, the priority of the prior was acknowledged and then annulled through treaty, land seizure, and passive and active genocide. The newly constituted United States of America levered its subsequent legitimacy on a similar toolbox of acknowledgment and annulment in its relations with Native Americans. But the ever-expanding United States also incorporated the logic of the governance of the prior into its own sovereign identity. In the United States, this creole logic coiled around the Jacksonian concept of manifest destiny in such a way that foreign invaders (settlers) were transformed into autochthonous domestics (nationals), the former inhabitants (an empty set created by the foreclosures of settlement) into domestic dependent sovereignties (natives). But the logic of creole nationalism did not merely allow the creole state to claim a form of priorness in relation to the newly foreign metropole and foreign domestics (natives). It also allowed the creole state to make numerous other internal and external sovereign distinctions. For instance, the so-called Marshall Trilogy that established the notion of domestic dependent nationalism was as much about the relationship between federal and state governments as the federal government and tribes—Native Americans provided a convenient setting for negotiating the competing powers of federal government.⁸⁴ These decisions about the status of the natives were then extended into other jurisdictions, as with the U.S. seizure of Puerto Rico.⁸⁵

Like other settler colonies, Australia articulated a creole form of nationalism that stretched from early celebrations of the bushman to more recent characterizations of the Dreaming during the Sydney Olympics in 2002. But the Australian settler colony had a different strategy for addressing the claims of the prior. By 1788 the British found it more convenient to bracket the presence of prior inhabitants through the doctrine of

terra nullius than to negotiate treaties with the variety of inhabitants they confronted. More generally, according to Kathleen Wilson, the projection of Englishness was increasingly authoritarian and paternalist by the time it reached Australia.⁸⁶ The 1901 Federal Constitution, which established Australia as an independent Commonwealth, for the most part continued to treat the “aboriginal native” population as a spectral presence, referring to the Indigenous population in just two of its sections. Section 51(xxvi) gave the federal parliament the power to make “laws for the peace, order, and good government . . . with respect to people of any race, other than the aboriginal race in any State, for whom it is deemed necessary to make special laws.” Section 127 prohibited the parliament from counting “aboriginal natives” in the consensus. To be sure, the frontier was rife with organized and disorganized violence, seizures, resistances, and informal land agreements.⁸⁷ Which is merely to say that in Australia the problem of the priority of the prior was confronted through a variety of tactics — warfare, genocide, and illegal property transfers. Unlike in the United States, all of these huddled under the cover of the doctrine of *terra nullius*. But like in the United States, in Australia specific tactics for maneuvering around the governance of the prior were not merely about Indigenous-state relations but about federal dynamics. Sections 51(xxvi) and 127 were less about the state in relation to Indigenous people than about struggles between Commonwealth and state powers. Internal power within the federal government was also at stake in the 1967 referendum that provided the federal government with the power to make laws with respect to “people of any race, other than the aboriginal race in any State, for whom it is deemed necessary to make special laws,” giving rise to the modern land rights regime.

And yet, even given these diverse histories, what the governance of prior shows is that from a critical point of view, the Indigenous does not confront the state, nor does the state confront the Indigenous. Both are caught in strategic maneuvers around a shared problematic; the nation-state and the Indigenous cite a shared discourse originating in a history that predates both of their emergence. A formation of power articulated as tense and event — the governance of the prior — is foundational to the imaginary of sovereign power to both settler and Indigenous as such and to late liberalism more generally.

While it seems clear to me that the social tense, events, and ethical substance are unavoidable from the point of view of settler nationalism, I think it is legitimate to ask what relevance the above discussion has for other forms of historical and contemporary social difference. For instance, how does this discussion help us understand the unequal distribution of life and death, of hope and harm, and of exhaustion and endurance when the social referent of these distributions seems to be based on sexuality and race? There are several ways of answering the question of how the interests of this book relate to problems of social belonging, abandonment, and endurance outside the Indigenous context.

The first would point out isomorphisms cutting across Indigenous and non-Indigenous contexts. In Israel, for instance, tactics of disenfranchisement of Palestinians operate as if they were culled from a condensed settler manual. An initial Israeli creole nationalism, organized around the image of the *sabre*, indicates how many Israeli Jews attempted to ground their territorial claims in the past perfect of indigeneity—literally writing these claims as facts on the ground.⁸⁸ Israel, however, also presents its difference from Palestine as a difference of social tense, rooting its general being in the autological destiny of Europe as opposed to the customary past of a socially primitive Palestinian population.⁸⁹ These temporal discourses have spatial entailments. In East Jerusalem, Palestinians must show an unbroken residency to their homes and lands in order to maintain their right over their homes. Persons leaving for school or work abroad are claimed to have severed their traditional attachment and thus annulled their rights of place. This method of disenfranchisement is isomorphic to the way in which the Australian Native Title Act (1993) recognizes Indigenous native title. Indigenous claimants must prove an unbroken physical and cultural connection to their traditional lands even if previous governments forcibly removed them. In France, too, we hear similar strains of civilizational tense. Although interested in the viability of racial analysis to discourses of *laïcité*, in *Da la question sociale à la question raciale?*, Eric and Didier Fassin demonstrate, in a painful irony, how the homosexual has become a figure of the autological subject wielded against the backward-looking Muslim migrant.⁹⁰ And in Turkey, Dicle Koğacıoğlu has shown how the “tradition effect” (the genealogical society) continues to frame so-called honor killings in contemporary Tur-

key.⁹¹ Transformations of local modes of belonging through discourses of tense, such as the governance of the prior, are clearly seen in various regions of the African continent. As numerous scholars have shown, many African groups had complex understandings of the dynamic relationship between, not the Indigenous and settler, but the autochthon (first comer) and allochthon (new comer). David Lan, Mathieu Hilgers, Michel Izard, and Peter Geshiere have shown how this dynamic relation between autochthon and allochthon allowed a constant negotiation between new comers and first comers.⁹² But they have also shown how these dynamics were disrupted by the rigid categories of the governance of the prior that sharpened and froze the distinction between first comers and new comers, transforming these categories into the Indigenous and settler.

This is all very different from the second way of answering the question of how an understanding of the social tense, eventfulness, and ethical substance of late liberalism helps us critically understand the distribution of life and death in late liberalism outside an Indigenous context. This answer provincializes in one way or another alternative forms of social belonging, abandonment and endurance. Take, for example, one of the struggles that define critical indigenous theory in the United States today: its relationship to critical race theory. Is critical indigenous theory a modality of critical race theory? Is it a subset? What would critical race theory look like if it were a subset of critical indigenous theory? Why does the scholarly public within the United States often find it hard to conceive of the centrality of the Indigenous-settler division, so palpable and unavoidable in Canada, New Zealand, and Australia, outside theories of race as race has been defined by the histories of African enslavement in the United States? Surely part of the answer is that the specific history of race internal to U.S. nationalism has become universal because American cultural hegemony has made it so. Already scholars are thinking, if not through critical indigenous theory, then about the techniques by which, as Nancy Bentley recently argued, modern race was the dekinning of African Americans.⁹³

But what these debates are actually asking, it seems to me, is, what are the various relationships informing social imaginaries and concepts? Race, indigeneity, the divisions of the autological subject and genealogical society, collective power and individual freedom, the governance of

the prior: these are not abstract theoretical truths but socially invested aggregating tools that transform the variegated space of liberalism with its multitudinous collection of ways of immanent life in order to make them conform to a set of expectations and accountings that do work in the actual world. This is why I try to describe the two broad conditions in which this book was conceived and written. It is not to argue that the social division of tense and its relation to eventfulness and ethical substance exist at all modes and levels of analysis of *late liberalism*. But that they are available across all modes and levels of practicing late liberalism, of justifying its exclusions and inclusions, of making good of its goods and good of its harms.

Chapter by Chapter

This introduction can be thought of as a robust presentation of the thematics and concepts that organize this book. Chapters should be read together and in sequence. One *can* read them separately. Although all these thematics and concepts are always in the scene, each chapter takes a different aspect on the tense, eventfulness, and ethical substance of late liberalism. If a reader is mostly interested in the dynamics of recognition in late liberalism, she could read the first two chapters. If a reader is interested in the problem of embodiment and endurance in late liberalism she could start with chapters 3 and 4. However, because later chapters assume material discussed in previous chapters, the argument makes the most sense if read consecutively.

The first two chapters examine the contemporary politics of recognition—in the contemporary moment often voiced as an opposition to the politics of cultural recognition—as a central technique of late liberalism. Chapter 1, “The Part That Has No Part,” examines two unrelated cases of social difference in two different national settings with two seemingly different outcomes. I examine the recent national emergency in Aboriginal affairs in Australia prompted by a report on sexual abuse in Aboriginal communities and the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision upholding a preliminary injunction exempting the religious group, União do Vegetal, from the Controlled Substances Act. I pick these two examples for their contrasts: they are situated in different national traditions (Australia and

the United States); they touch on different kinds of social panics (sexual panics and drug panics); and they involve different aspects of the state apparatus (parliament and judiciary). They also come to opposite conclusions: the Australian Intervention argues against protecting traditional customs; *Gonzales v. O Centro Espírita Beneficente União do Vegetal* decides to offer protection to religious expression. But I chose these two cases because they demonstrate how the tense of the other is available whenever the problem of cultural recognition arises and how this tense is inflected by the question of security. This availability means that the divisions of social tense provide a unified, if mobile, discursive field that makes maneuvers within it appear as if they were antagonistic to it. The support of or assault on the genealogical society seems opposed to the support of or assault on the autological subject, rather than merely a movement in a dead division. And this movement within a given order allows us to ask what is and is not a moment of the political—what part has no part in the social divisions of tense and what political potential might this part have.

Chapter 2, “The Brackets of Recognition,” continues my examination of the late liberal politics of recognition and my interest in the potentiality of “the part that has no part” within this mode of governance. Chapter 1 examined how various forms of social tense (the divisions of autological subject and genealogical society; the governance of the prior) manage the line between policing and politics in order to make difference intelligible in late liberalism. The second chapter puts more pressure on recognition itself. It asks what form, or mode, recognition takes when the moment of intelligibility is deferred, bracketed, or denied and recognition is not able to overcome liberal intolerance. I argue that when viewed from the brackets of recognition, recognition as such is only one of three modalities of how late liberalism governs difference, the others being camouflage and espionage.

Chapters 3 and 4 examine how the part that has no part in the given orders of the sayable and visible endures in these kinds of social spacings. Chapter 3, “Road Kill,” asks what the conditions are of life lived within these brackets from the point of view of an ethics of substance. Moving across an ethnography of the radical green movement and an Indigenous Australian mixed-media project, I pivot the discussion on the relationship between ethical substance and biopolitics, especially as these intersect

around the problems of excess, exhaustion, and endurance in late liberalism. If *ethics* is the realm in which we reflect and act at the intersection of right conduct and the good life, then our ethical relation to life within these differential zones of abandonment and vulnerability is fraught, to say the least. The life worth living is not necessarily found within these zones because the zones create such reduced conditions of life that the political desire for them to spawn or foster alternative worlds can seem naive at best and sadistic at worst. What would happen if, on the one hand, we allowed for a wider field of substantiality into our critique of biopolitics and substance, and on the one hand, we dwelled more fully in the conditions of excess, exhaustion, and endurance that characterize the spaces and zones of late liberal exposure and abandonment?

Chapter 4, “Events of Abandonment,” returns to Indigenous Australia. In this chapter, I examine modes of eventfulness and discourses of lethality in contemporary Australia, focusing first on the contemporary carnal conditions of Indigenous life and second on recent state security measures said to be a reaction to the post-9/11 world. I do so in order to understand the dynamic conditions that qualify one kind of lethality as “state killing” and another as a more amorphous condition of “letting die.” I do so in order to understand how present-tense modes of living and dying are transformed into future anterior modes of the proper life.

Chapter 5, “After Good and Evil, Whither Sacrificial Love?,” continues this discussion but turns it to eschatological discourses of sacrifice and sacrificial love, the imaginary of a form of killing as a mode of life giving, in late liberalism. The question whether this or that sacrifice is worth it opens the events of suffering and dying, if not to the problematic of being and time, then to the problematic of being and tense—the narrative relation among social, economic, and political values and subjective finitudes and how, where, and whether subjective finitudes are seen to occur and lead. I embed arguments between the Bush administration and its critics about the competing rhetorics of good and evil and sacrifice and sacrificial love in contemporary critical theory’s romance with Christian modes of sacrificial love. It concludes by asking what lies beyond good and evil, if sacrifice and sacrificial love provides a means of memorialized denial of human suffering.

The conclusion, “Negative Critique, Positive Sociographies,” returns

to Le Guin's decision to let some members of Omelas leave without specifying where they are going. In the long shadow of negative critique I discuss the role of positive sociography to a form of critical theory that is oriented to progressive life and yet refuses to be lulled by the promises of miraculous endurance or sacrificial love.