Not In The Mood

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Abstract *This essay explores the sociality of moods as a sociality that does not simply bring us together. Reflecting specifically on how attunement creates strangers (as those who are only dimly perceived) the essay explores how some have to work to become attuned to others. The essay concludes by reflecting on how national moods are measured and made, taking up the political potential of affect aliens, those who are alienated from the nation by virtue of how they are affected.*

Keywords mood, nation, attunement, affect aliens, happiness

I might say 'I am not in the mood'. Or 'I am not in the right mood'. These sayings relate mood to conduct: they imply that one has to be in a mood for a course of action to be agreeable or possible. Indeed the phrase 'not in the mood' (one does not even need 'right' as an addition or qualification) can imply that one is not willing to do something: you might have to be in the mood *for* to be willing *to*. I could also say 'I do not feel like' but this expression sounds less forceful. Is this because a mood can feel or sound less volitional than a feeling? A mood can be what assails from the outside; deciding for us what we can and cannot do. A mood can imply something that hangs around, despite our best intentions, despite even our own selves. Moods are often hangers on.

We might *have* a feeling, but be *in* a mood. In thinking of these sayings as implying different relations, we do not have to assume that these differences are intrinsic, that moods and feelings have different logics or belong to different orders. We would become attuned instead to what sayings are doing; or how sayings are doings. If we take moods as our starting point, we would be thinking of the languages around mood, and how they imply a relation to mood such that moods can even become those relations. In their introduction to a special issue of *New Literary History* on mood, Rita Felski and Susan Fraiman note: 'Recent work on affect in literary and cultural studies, for example, often pivots on a language of intensities and flows that seems ill suited to the phenomenology of mood. Moods are usually described as ambient, vague, diffuse, hazy, and intangible, rather than intense, and they are often contrasted to emotions in having a longer duration. Instead of flowing, a mood lingers, tarries, settles in, accumulates, and sticks around. It is frequently characterized by inertia'.[1] If we are describing how moods feel, or how it feels to be in a mood, then we might come up with different kinds of descriptions. When what we are describing comes with its own languages then those languages need to become part of the description.

1. Rita Felski and Susan Fraiman, 'Introduction', *New Literary History*, 43 (2012): vi. http://doi.org/vzm ; http://doi.org/vzn

It is not that moods are always heavy or stuck. Moods are often themselves given different affective qualities. If I am in a good mood, I might feel light and buoyant; which is to say, the world seems light and buoyant. A mood becomes *an affective lens*, affecting how we are affected. René Rosfort and Giovanni Stanghellini differentiate moods as 'sustained emotional states' from affects that are more transitory. Moods thus 'attend to the world as a whole, not focusing on any particular object or situation'.[2] Being in this mood or that makes the worlds appear this way or that. But perhaps given this state of general attention, specific things or situations are more likely to come into focus. If am in a bad mood, I might zoom in on certain things, those things that bother me might appear larger and more proximate. The world as a whole can then become implicated in how one is involved in a particular object or situation. I can express my feeling of being disaffected by how I am affected by x. So if I am feeling down, things are down. Things are given the affective quality of being 'downers'. I can become more down as things come at me; or feel as if they come at me, as a confirmation of what is wrong; another thing that is wrong. Or perhaps something that happens can dislodge my mood, such that I swing away from the mood by swinging toward that thing. If I am in a good mood, and something bad happens, I might feel better able to handle that thing; approaching the problem with a certain lightness or care. The thing appears not so bad, viewed through this affective lens; it might appear smaller than it would otherwise appear. A thing can appear differently depending on the mood we are in. Moods matter as the how of what appears.

2. René Rosfort and Giovanni Stanghellini, 'The Person Between Moods and Affects', *Philosophy, Psychiatry and Psychology*, 16, 3 (2009): 208.

In this essay I want to explore what it means to think of moods as something we have in deciding whether or not we are willing to do something. How do moods become something we are in or not in, rightly or wrongly? My task will be to develop my own thinking on the sociality of emotion by taking moodiness as my organizing term.[3] If moods are vague (and the word vague has certain 'stray' qualities, deriving from the same root as *vagabond*) then I hope to explore how we come to feel with or not with others through impressions that do not quite become clear or distinct. I reflect on what we can call simply 'mood work',[4] and its relation to what Arlie Hochschild described as emotional labour. I want to reflect on how strangers become moody figures, those who are not attuned, or who get in the way of attunement. And finally, I will ask questions about how national moods are generated with reference to the creation of strangers, or those we can call 'affect aliens', estranged by virtue of how they are affected.

3. See Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2004 and *The Promise of Happiness*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2010.

4. This term is also usefully employed by Ben Highmore, 'Feeling our Way: Mood and Cultural Studies', *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 10, 4 (2013): 427-438. http://doi.org/vzp

MOOD AND ATTUNEMENT

Martin Heidegger's discussion of mood or attunement (*Stimmung)* is a useful starting point. For Heidegger a mood is not something specific that belongs to me first; it is *not* possible *not* to be in a mood. Mood or attunement 'makes

manifest "how one is and coming along"'.[5] Mood is being in relation to others. In his analysis of boredom, Heidegger considers mood as fundamental but also qualitatively differentiated. A mood is treated as something *there*; or perhaps *around*, such that we come to be around mood. He further specifies:

> A human being who - as we say - is in good humour brings a lively atmosphere with them. Do they, in so doing, bring about an emotional experience which is then transmitted to others, in the manner in which infectious germs wander back and forth from one organism to another? We do indeed say that attunement or mood is infectious. Or another human being is with us, someone who through their manner of being makes everything depressing and puts a damper on everything; no-body steps out of their shell. What does this tell us? Attunements are *not side-effects*, but are something which in advance determine our being with one another. It seems as though attunement is in each case already there, so to speak, like an atmosphere in which we first immerse ourselves in each case and which then attunes us through and through (*Fundamental Concepts*, pp66-7).

5. Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (trans), Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1995, p127. Hereafter cited in text as *Fundamental Concepts*.

A mood is thus rather like an atmosphere: it is not that we catch a feeling from another person but that we are caught up in feelings that are not our own. Note the implication here that an atmosphere is what is with someone, or around them; if a body might bring a lively atmosphere *with* them, that situation becomes lively. This 'withness' is striking: moods become almost like companions; what we carry with us is how we are carried. It is not then that a person is in a mood that is then simply spread to others: if there is a spreading it does not begin with an 'in'. Heidegger thus dismisses what he calls 'the psychology of emotions in which emotions' come from within and then move out (we could call this the 'inside out' model of emotions) and re-describes moods instead as 'a fundamental manner' one that 'sets the tone for such being' (*Fundamental Concepts*, p67). If an atmosphere is around, if it seems to float above and beyond this or that person, it is still generated by those who are around, becoming something that can be picked up as well as put down by others. A cheerful mood is thus 'out and about', but it is not without those who are cheerful. Sometimes, a cheerful mood dissipates when some bodies leave the room. Other times cheerfulness can linger, as a trace of what a body leaves behind.

Even if Heidegger does not assume that a mood goes inside out, the implication is that if moods 'wander back and forth' what wanders is in some way at least some thing (or even the same thing). A lively atmosphere is generated by a person who brings a lively mood with them. If there is a passing of mood the passing is, at least in this description, successful. But of course to wander can also be to go astray; wandering can imply deviation. If a person is down, or brings with them a dampening atmosphere, they can dampen the atmosphere. But they can also have no effect on the atmosphere

whatsoever; others might even become livelier as a way of not having the atmosphere brought down. How can we describe these mechanisms?

Heidegger does consider what he calls the '*lack of attunement*'. He says of this lack: 'in which we are neither out of sorts nor in a "good" mood' (*Fundamental Concepts*, p68). By implication a lack of attunement is a mood that is neither bad nor good. A lack of attunement is not without attunement ('we are never without an attunement'), that is to say, a lack of attunement is not 'not' attunement. What is this lack? It is here that Heidegger seems to almost stumble or fall over: a lack of attunement is 'seemingly hard to grasp,' such that it 'seems to be something apathetic and indifferent' and yet it is 'not like this at all'. And then he adds: 'There is only ever a change of attunement' (*Fundamental Concepts*, p78). Heidegger is not able to say what a lack of attunement is other than what it is not. Perhaps one consequence of the argument that attunement is fundamental is that a lack of attunement becomes hard to register.

Perhaps one difficulty is that attunement is understood not only as being with, but being with in a similar way. It is possible in some situations that bodies can bring with them moods that are not picked up by others. It is also the case that one can arrive 'with' a mood but lose that mood given the situation one is thrown into. It is very hard to know in advance what happens to moods. Perhaps moods, insofar as they happen, are affected by what happens; moods even if they are implied by many scholars to have a long duration can be hapfull. We do not know in advance what will happen to a body that is moody in a room that is moody (and bodies and rooms are always moody in one way or another), given this contingency, given the hap of what happens; we do not know 'exactly' what makes things happen in this way and that. Attunement might register *that* we are affected by what is around, but it does not necessarily decide *how* we are affected. Could misattunements be an expression of the contingency of this how?

Perhaps what is at stake here is not only what happens to the moods we are with, but how moods are directed, whether toward the world or to things. Max Scheler in *The Nature of Sympathy* suggests that 'infection' has been assumed too quickly as the mechanism for how feelings become sociable.[6] Scheler usefully differentiates different ways of understanding the social emotions, suggesting that many who dismiss certain kind of emotion (for example Nietzsche's dismissal of pity) because they have assumed that all social emotion works as infection (what scholars today have called contagion or transmission).[7] Max Scheler does not argue that infection does not happen: he notes how we might enter a situation in hope that we will be infected by good humour, or how we might avoid a situation in fear of being infected by bad humour. It is, given this possibility of infection, that feelings become consciously regulated.

Scheler argues that infection is simply one way feelings become social or shared. He differentiates infection from 'communities of feeling' when we

6. Max Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, Peter Heath (trans), New Brunswick, Transaction Publishers, 2008, pp15-17. Hereafter cited in text as *The Nature of Sympathy*.

7. See Lisa Blackman, *Immaterial Bodies: Affect, Embodiment and Mediation*, London, Sage, 2013, for a useful genealogy of the idea of affective contagion.

both experience a feeling in relation to an object that is shared: we might both be sad because we lost someone we loved (*The Nature of Sympathy*, p12). He also introduces a class of social emotions called 'fellow feeling' in which one person shares the feeling of another person, but not the object of their feeling (p13): in the case of when we are both sad because you lost someone I did not know, my sadness refers to your sadness; I am sad because you are sad. In *The Promise of Happiness* (2010) I explore how fellow feeling can be experienced as crisis: you might be made happy by another person's happiness, but not made happy by what makes them happy.

What difference does it make when we think about these different mechanisms in relation to mood? As I have already noted moods are often understood as more general or worldly orientations rather than being oriented toward specific objects or situations. Moods seem to have less distinct intentional objects. However, when we think of mood as a social phenomenon it is clear that the situation matters. When you enter into the mood of a situation (for example by being picked up by the good cheer of others) the situation can become the shared object. Perhaps this is how the object can still become a crisis. For example, I might enter a situation that is cheerful, and be picked up by that good cheer, only to realise that this is not a situation I find cheerful. Say people are laughing at a joke I do not find funny, or even a joke that I find offensive; I start laughing *too* before I hear the joke. When I hear it, and I find it offensive not only would I lose my good cheer, but I would become affectively 'out of tune' with others. My whole body might experience the loss of attunement as rage or shame, a feeling that can become directed towards myself (how did I let myself get caught up in this?).

Partly what this analysis suggests is the need to reflect on the career of moods as not unrelated to objects despite or even *given* that these objects are vague and indistinct. After all, sharing a mood can still involve an affective valuation (what causes good cheer as being good) and thus a way of orientating the body. To be attuned to each other is not only to share in moods (good or bad, lively or unlively) but also a certain rhythm. When we 'pick up' a feeling we can pick each other up. We are laughing together, we might face each other; our bodies shaking; we are shaken together, mirroring each other. When I stop laughing, I withdraw from this bodily intimacy. I can even break that intimacy; an intimacy can shatter like a broken jug. I might be left having to pick up the pieces. Sometimes we might keep laughing in fear that otherwise we would cause a breakage.

If attunement is openness to what is around us, it does not follow that we are open to anything. Medard Boss describes, drawing on Heidegger, how 'the prevailing attunement is at any given time the condition of our openness for perceiving and dealing with what we encounter; the pitch at which our existence, as a set of relationships to objects, ourselves and other people, is vibrating'.[8] A vibration can be the sound of bodies in tune. What I am suggesting is that attunement is not exhaustive: one might enter the room

8. Medard Boss, *Existential Foundations of Medicine and Psychology*, Oakland, University of California Press, 1979, p110.

with certain leanings. To be attuned to some might simultaneously mean not to be attuned to others, those who do not share one's leanings. We can close off our bodies as well as ears to what is not in tune.

An experience of *non-attunement* might then refer to how we can be in a world with others where we are not in a responsive relation, where we do not tend to 'pick up' on how they feel. This sense of not being in harmony might not even register to consciousness. We might even have screened out from our awareness that which is not consistent with our own mood, which might include a screening out of the bodies that lean another way. When this screening is not successful, then those bodies (and the moods that might accompany them) become registered as what or who causes the loss of attunement. Attunement might create the figure of the stranger not necessarily or only by making the stranger into an object of feeling (the stranger as the one we recognise as not being with), but as the effect of not leaning that way. Strangers thus appear at the edges of a room, dimly perceived, or not quite perceived, lurking in the shadows. No wonder a stranger is a rather vague impression.

MOOD WORK

How is that we can enter a room and pick up on some feelings and not others? I have implied that one enters not only *in* a mood, but *with* a history, which is how you come to lean this way or that. Attunement might itself be an affective history, of how subjects become attuned to others over and in time.

It is worth noting that attunement is often affectively registered as a good thing (as a happy or positive state of affairs). In some forms of psychotherapy, attunement is understood as an attachment to life, as a technique that enables flow, empathy and connection. For example, Mitchell S. Kossak describes how 'attunement and connection overcomes the isolation and alienation of being disconnected from being'.[9] The therapeutic relation becomes defined musically: the therapist uses the piano, and mistunes a note, as a way of performing and discussing what it means to be out of tune with clients. Attunement becomes a way of being for, as well as being with others in a relation of harmony.

Attunement as an attachment to life can also become a technique for modifying behavior. One of the texts often cited in studies of attunement is Daniel Stern's *The Interpersonal World of the Infant*, which as a study of developmental psychology, focuses on the 'affective attunement' between mother and child.[10] As a model of inter-affectivity, Stern's work is enormously valuable and compelling: he focuses on how the inter-affectivity is not about the repetition of gestures, or imitation, but the 'performance of behaviours that express the quality of feeling of a shared affective state without imitating the exact behavioral expression of the inner state' (*Interpersonal World*, p142). I think some curious consequences follow if we reflect on how affective description can become prescription. Social experience (being with

9. Mitchell A. Kossak, *Attunement: Embodied Transcendent Experience Explored Through Sound and Rhythmic Improvisition*, Cincinnati, Ohio, Union Institute and University, 2007, p109.

10. Daniel N. Stern, *The Interpersonal World of the Infant*, New York, Basic Books, 2000, pp138-169. Hereafter cited in text as *Interpersonal World*.

others) would be referred back to an idea of the mother/infant relation as 'first relation' to that extent that that relation is defined in positive terms. Stern writes that attunement is an expression of 'the quality of feeling of a shared affective state'. Perhaps affective training is training in expression: by expressing the quality of shared feeling, we share a feeling of quality. Shared feeling might be what we create when we 'express' things in the right way.

It is worth noting here that Daniel Stern refers to a class of experience he calls misattunement. As with Heidegger, when he speaks of misattunement as phenomena, he speaks of a certain trouble: indeed he describes misattunements as 'troublesome' (*Interpersonal World*, p211). Misattunements do not simply refer to those moments when mother and child are 'out of synch,' when they, as it were, bump into each other. Misattunements are instead described as a parental technique for modifying the behaviour of the child: they are 'the covert attempt to change the infant's behaviour and experience' (ibid, p213). In one example, a mother watches her infant chew a doll. The mother does not want him to chew the doll. The mother then 'slips inside the infant's experience by ways of attunement and then steals the affective experience away from the child'. She matches the affect ('she makes a number of attunements to his expression of pleasure') so she can take the doll from the child. The mother then hugs the doll. The process is relatively straightforward. First, an affect is matched to snatch the object. Second, the object is given back by miss-matching not the affect (which is sustained) but the action. Misattunement is how the mother modifies the action, or at least, how she aims for this modification. The object is returned to the child in the hope that the child will act differently toward the object. Here expression of shared feeling can be a technique to modify how feelings are expressed.

Stern's model of attunement has been used to describe the sociality of becoming responsive to others through sharing rhythms and tendencies, such that feelings become shared independently of their objects. But we can see from this discussion of misattunement, how the sharing of feeling becomes a technique for modifying behaviour by attaching feelings not to objects but to the behaviours themselves, which are *directions taken toward objects*, ways of handling things. This is how sharing mood (the murmurs that seem to express pleasure, become louder through being reciprocated by others) becomes direction and directive. Stern thus shows how affective training works by re-signalling affect states, or by re-directing how we are affected by *this*. For example, the mother might use 'yuck' in relation to mouthing, to get the child to learn the association between mouthing and what is bad (*Interpersonal World*, p222). Misattunement is used to 're-attune' the child such that they come to re-match an affect with the right action. Mood work - re-tuning through attunement - is how feelings become matched to the appropriate actions. What is implied, of course, is that we become attuned to some with specific ends in sight (the capacity of some to modify a relation as part of what is achieved in a relation), even if attunement does not have

to be assumed as *about* those ends.

The example of misattunement reveals the utility of attunement as a pedagogic technique. This is a quite different example than the 'lack of attunement' or non-attunement I referred to earlier because it takes place once an attunement is given. However from this example, we can recognise how misattunements manifest as different orientations towards objects (some of which might be narratable as failed orientations). Let's stay with Stern's example of the child and her doll. The mother hugs the doll in an attempt to modify the child's action. A hug, one assumes, expresses 'the quality of feeling of a shared affective state': the doll becomes not only a thing to be hugged but in being hugged becomes a loveable thing. Let's take another example of an encounter between a child and a doll offered in Toni Morrison's novel *The Bluest Eye* (1979). Claudia, the narrator, reflects on being given dolls:

> it had begun with Christmas and the gift of dolls. The big, the special, the loving gift was always a big, blue-eyed Baby Doll. From the clucking sounds of adults I knew that the doll represented what they thought was my fondest wish … which were supposed to bring me great pleasure, succeeded in doing quite the opposite … Traced the turned-up nose, poked the glassy-blue eyes, twisted the yellow hair. I could not love it. But I could examine it to see what it was that all the world said was lovable … I destroyed white baby dolls.[11]

11. Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*, London, Picador, 1979, pp13-15. For a fuller discussion of this passage from Toni Morrison see Sara Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, op. cit., pp80-82

Claudia encounters the doll she is supposed to wish for, that she is supposed to love, as an unlovable thing. Her misattunement is expressed in how she handles the thing (she pokes and twists the doll rather than clucks), a handling that would, no doubt, be registered by others as violence and aggression, or as disaffection. You can be alienated by virtue of how you are affected by things. More than this: if a misattunement is expressed as a mishandling of things, then misattunements are also worldly. In Claudia's case, she is alienated from the world of whiteness that elevates some things as loveable things.

Objects bring worlds with them. To be misattuned can thus mean being out of synch with a world. The problem with attunement is not that it does not happen (it most certainly does) but that it can easily become not just a description of an experience but also an ideal, as if the aim is to be in harmony, to be in tune with others. When attunement becomes an aim, those who are not in tune or who are out of tune become the obstacles; they become what gets in the way not only of attunement, but all that it promises: life, connection, empathy, and so on.

Take the case of attunement as an intercorporeal experience. Say we are walking along a street together. We are in unison, becoming as if one body. When we are out of time with each other, we might notice each other's timing and pace; the other might appear as awkward or clumsy. Or we might turn toward each other in frustration, as we bump into each other yet again.

Clumsiness can also be an experience you have of yourself: as being in the way of yourself as well as others. A body can be what trips you up, catches you out. Indeed the feeling of clumsiness can be catchy: once you feel clumsy, you can feel even clumsier; you seem to lack the coordination to coordinate yourself with yourself let alone yourself with others. Some bodies become the 'non' attuned whose clumsiness registers as the loss of a possibility. So what Heidegger stumbles over, the question of the lack of attunement might be how some bodies stumble, become those that get in the way, even of themselves. For those deemed to lack attunement, attunement might become a form of affective labour. In order not to cause non-attunement they have to become attuned.One of Hochschild's examples is the bride on her wedding day, the 'happiest day of her life', who does not feel right, in other words, who does not feel happy.[12] The bride tries to convince herself that she is happy although there can be nothing more unconvincing than the effort to be convinced. Perhaps we are convinced when the effort to be convinced disappears: willing comes to be experienced 'happily' as spontaneous.

If emotional work involves closing the gap between how one does feel and how one should feel, it does not follow that emotional work is simply working on oneself. The affective register of 'should' again reminds us that there is a right way to feel in a certain situation. So one might try and convince oneself to be happy to feel the way we are supposed to feel in that situation. It is the happiness of the situation (and not just one's own happiness) that one labours to preserve. Once it has worked, attunement returns. So it might be that we just *happen* to be attuned. But attunement can be an effect of work, of how some labour to be in tune with others. If the labour is successful, it disappears as labour. The smoothness of attunement might even require the disappearance of labour.

Closing the gap between how one does feel and should feel can thus also aim to achieve a shared mood. Arlie Hochschild considers how flight attendants become responsible for collective moods. The labour relation becomes relational labour: the flight attendant 'checks on people's moods, and warms up ties so individuals can become a team' (*The Managed Heart*, p115). Hochschild notes 'the needed mood determines the nature of the worker's talk' (ibid). To keep things up certain topics would be excluded from the discursive terrain. Being responsible for mood requires becoming responsive not only to the moods of others but to what the situation requires or demands. Whilst Hochschild's analysis is of the service sector, the implications are far reaching for an understand of the moodiness of everyday life: one's ability to preserve the mood of a situation requires working not only on feelings, but drawing on tactic knowledge about how moods are shaped, even created. You might learn not to bring certain topics up. You might adjust the lighting or perform other tasks that register how mood is affected by the physicality of space. As Ben Highmore notes, mood is thus not only 'worked and maintained through degrees of labour that is at once "our" labour but also embedded

12. Arlie Russell Hochschild *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2003, p59. Hereafter cited in text as *The Managed Heart*. For a more detailed discussion see, Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, op. cit., p41.

in what Science Studies people refer to as non-human delegates (the mood work of the dimmer switches and curtain motors, for instance)'.[13] Mood work requires working with actors of various kinds.

13. Highmore, op. cit, p433.

It is important to note that even if mood work involves multiple human and non-human actors it can be unevenly distributed as a requirement. Some bodies have to become attuned to others, those who are already, as it were, 'in the room'. There has been a considerable attention to rooms as moody containers within feminist of colour scholarship and activism (even if this attention has not been expressed in quite these terms). A body can enter the room and cause a shift in the atmosphere because of what that body brings with it; histories that linger as mood. Listen to this description from bell hooks of what happens when a woman of colour enters a feminist room: 'a group of white feminist activists who do not know one another may be present at a meeting to discuss feminist theory. They may feel bonded on the basis of shared womanhood, but the atmosphere will noticeably change when a woman of color enters the room. The white women will become tense, no longer relaxed, no longer celebratory'.[14] bell hooks shows how meetings can be full of a light and cheerful mood because of who is there, and who is not there, which allows a certain content for discussion (bonding over shared womanhood). A woman of colour can just enter the room and the atmosphere becomes tense. Perhaps moods become shared when there is an agreement about the causes of this tension. Tension is also experienced here as a loss of a prior attunement. Some bodies become the cause of this loss of attunement; we learn from this example that complexity of this causality, how it involves histories that matter precisely because they are not registered by consciousness. Here attunement becomes a technique for occupying space, of claiming a room as one's own.

14. bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: from Margin to Centre*, London, Pluto Press, 2000, p56.

If you are the cause of misattunement, you might have to labour to recreate the possibility of attunement. Much of what I have called 'diversity work' involves the effort to minimize differences so that those who arrive can appear more 'in tune' with those who are already here.[15] The labour of attunement is unevenly distributed because bodies do not arrive at the same time. For those who come after, or who are deemed as coming after (that the arrival of some bodies is noticeable is how they are judged as coming after), attunement becomes work. Simply put: some have to work to become attuned to others. Attunement is thus a matter of precedence. Becoming a citizen, for instance, could involve the work of attunement: you identify with the nation not only by making it the object of feeling, but by becoming attuned to national rhythms.

15. See Sara Ahmed, *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2012, p63. http://doi.org/vzq

What is at stake in attunement, then, is also the creation of the very figure of the stranger, the one whose proximity is registered as dangerous ('stranger danger'), until they meet the condition of attunement (integration as the loss of danger). The stranger becomes a moody figure, charged with estrangement, as potentially causing our loss of 'with.' The stranger is not

simply created as a figure by becoming the object of feeling, or the cause of tension.[16] Rather as I explored in the previous section, the stranger is an effect of how some become attuned with others (and not with other others). The stranger becomes the body we are not with: 'a not' that can be all the more encompassing given that it is blurred.

16. For a discussion of how some bodies are recognised as strangers and as the cause of danger see Sara Ahmed, *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality*, London, Routledge, 2000.

NATIONAL MOODS

Public moods have long been measured by governments as well as corporations: most of the major 'mood indexes' relate to consumer satisfaction and confidence (The Conference Board's Consumer Confidence Index; the Thompson Reuters/University of Michigan Index of Consumer Sentiment; and the Bloomberg Consumer Comfort Index). In this context public mood becomes indexical with the interests of global capitalism: an 'up' mood means more spending, a 'down' mood means less spending. There is no clearer way to demonstrate how mood indexes are motivated by a set of interests, nor how moods are material, even tangible, as well as being intangible and ephemeral. That capital is an affective logic is not simply made evident by the use of mood indexes by corporations, but also by the very atmospheric qualities of the market place. Scholars have demonstrated how markets are performative.[17] Talking prices 'up' is often a question of sending out cheerful signals, in the hope they might get 'picked up.' We could call the logic being exercised here 'hopeful performativity,' which is a similar logic used in the field of positive psychology: the hope we can talk ourselves into feeling better by talking about feeling better.[18]

17. See for example Donald A. Mackenzie, Fabian Muniesa Lucia Siu (eds) *Do Economists Make Markets: On the Performativity of Economics*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 2007.

18. For a discussion of 'hopeful performatives' see Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, op. cit., p200.

Public mood indexes are used by governments during election times as a technique for working out which policies would enable their own electoral value to be 'picked up'. Teena Gabrielson notes, referring to the work of Cobb and Elder, that 'researchers in American politics have posited the importance of public mood in constraining electoral official's behaviour'.[19] Public mood is thus defined as the 'prevailing public sentiment as to what constitutes appropriate matters for governmental attention' (p88). Public mood becomes understood as thermostatic. What is difficult to establish here is the relation of the techniques of measurement (which have an end in sight, the increasing of the chance of re-election) to what is being measured. For instance certain policies are designed to appeal; and when those policies become 'appealing' we have a confirmation of policy. It is this narrowing of a gap between policy and public that might be measured by the appeal.

19. Teena Gabrielson, 'Obstacles and Opportunities: Factors that Constrain Elected Official's Ability to Frame Political Issues', in Karen Callaghan and Frauke Schnell (eds), *Framing American Politics*, Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, p88.

We can identify the success of these feedback loops in governmental use of public mood to justify immigration policy. Governments often defend these policies as being responsive or receptive to public feeling (in particular by evoking the figure of the ordinary citizen who feels threatened by incoming migrants). And it is important not to assume that when they evoke this figure that all that is happening is the fabrication of feeling (even if there

is fabrication happening). Between government and a mood-public is of course many layers of mediation: from mainstream press to the blogosphere, in which words and narratives frame and contest not only who is this public (who counts as being part of the public) but the form of feeling.

Take for instance the use of polls by the mainstream press. In this article, it is the headline that matters: 'Public mood hardens against migrant workers'.[20] Underneath that headline, it becomes clear that the poll was asking quite specific questions that were framed in a certain way (through the use of highly coded language 'British jobs for British workers'). But the specificity of the coding is 'lost' in the headline where the verb 'harden' gets attached very quickly and easily to the word 'migrant'. The use of polls as evidence of hardening becomes a technique for hardening. To find is to form. It might be then, when the citizen reads such an account, they can feel themselves to be or not in tune with the public. Attunement becomes a way of participating in a shared body without even being proximate to other bodies.

20. http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/public-mood-hardens-over-migrant-workers-8772739.html

To describe these mechanisms is not to say that public mood is simply a fiction. To explore the tangibility of national mood we might first need to think of how the nation becomes given as a body through the injunction to feel. In *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* I explored how multiculturalism becomes an injunction that the 'would-be' or 'could-be' citizens must love the nation and its values (law, liberty, tolerance, democracy, modernity, diversity and equality - all these terms are presented as if they are attributes of a national body). It seems in such rhetoric that anyone can love these values: shared beliefs become how a nation bonds. This idea that the national body acquires coherence through a systems of belief only appears to separate the nation from race. For these beliefs become 'ours' and even if this 'ours' seems open (to others who might share our beliefs) it is only possible as a gift, as what we already have and 'they' must acquire, often through force or compulsion. The national body can then appear to love diversity *at the very same time* as requiring those who embody diversity to give their allegiance to its body (where allegiance remains predicated on giving up other kinds of allegiances that cannot be incorporated into this body - hence a nation can love diversity whilst demanding that Muslim women unveil).

Today this idea of a loving multiculturalism seems far removed from political vocabularies regularly exercised across Europe. Multiculturalism has itself been sentenced to death: as if the act of welcoming diverse others endangered the security and well-being of the nation. When the British Prime Minister David Cameron called for a 'muscular liberalism' in 2011, echoing and echoed by other political leaders, we could witness a narrowing of the gap between mainstream and fascist uses of political love. It is *out of love*, according to Cameron, that we must exercise our muscles; that we must stand up against those who have stopped us from standing up, those forms of political correctness, that have prevented us from defending our values and beliefs.[21] And here Cameron re-attaches beliefs quite explicitly to race: 'So,

21. For the written copy of Cameron's 2011 Speech see: http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/pms-speech-at-munich-security-conference/

when a white person holds objectionable views, racist views for instance, we rightly condemn them. But when equally unacceptable views or practices come from someone who isn't white, we've been too cautious frankly - frankly, even fearful - to stand up to them'. Racism becomes understood as something that is 'rightly' condemned. But the immediate implication is that the tendency to condemn racism in white people is the same tendency as the one that does not object to what is unacceptable in 'someone who isn't white'.

The speech carefully creates the impression that racism in white culture is not acceptable (it is this very idea that participates in *obscuring the very ordinary nature of acceptable racism*) whilst implying again that 'our tolerance' of others has stopped those others from being more tolerable, more acceptable in terms of their beliefs. This nervous white subject who is unable to stand up to the non-white others then becomes a national subject: 'A passively tolerant society says to its citizens, as long as you obey the law we will just leave you alone. It stands neutral between different values. But I believe a genuinely liberal country does much more; it believes in certain values and actively promotes them. Freedom of speech, freedom of worship, democracy, the rule of law, equal rights regardless of race, sex or sexuality. It says to its citizens, this is what defines us as a society: to belong here is to believe in these things. Now, each of us in our own countries, I believe, must be unambiguous and hard-nosed about this defence of our liberty'. A muscular liberalism is one that is hard about belief and demands that others believe as we do. And we note the nervous slide between the individual and collective subject: it is the nervousness that creates a bond, implying that the national subject is the white subject, the one who must regains its nerves, becoming more 'hard-nosed' about others (*The Cultural Politics of Emotion* began with the image of the 'soft touch' nation, as the nation that is easily bruised by incoming others).

At the time of the speech the security minister Baroness Neville-Jones said to the *Today* radio programme on BBC 1: 'There's a widespread feeling in the country that we're less united behind values than we need to be'. Speeches like Cameron's are affective because they pick up on feelings, and give them form. In giving them form, they direct those feelings in specific ways. Feelings of nervousness or anxiety might be prevalent, they might even be widespread (we are living in times which make such feelings *make sense*). Political discourse transforms feeling by giving that feeling an object or target. We could call this projection: negative feelings are projected onto outsiders, who then appear to threaten from without, what is felt as precariously within. But projection is not the right word insofar as it implies an inside going out. I think these feelings are in some way *out and about*. They circulate at least in part through being understood as in circulation (the speech act which says the nation feels this or that way does something, it becomes an injunction to feel that way in order to participate in the thing being named, such that to participate in feeling or with feeling becomes a confirmation of feeling).

Let's return to the question of atmosphere. In naming or describing

an atmosphere, whether to ourselves or others, we also give it form. In the case of a tense atmosphere, we might search for an explanation: someone or something becomes *the cause of tension*. Some attributions 'take hold' becoming shared explanations for an event or situation. Once someone or something is agreed to be the cause of tension, then shared feelings are directed toward that cause. Something 'out there' which is sensed and real, but also intangible, is made tangible. In 'finding' a cause feelings become even more forceful. Political discourse is powerful as it can turn intangible feelings into tangible things that you can do things with. If we feel nervous, then we can do something by eliminating what is agreed to be making us nervous. I still think the Marxist model of commodity fetishism helps to describe these mechanisms: feelings come to reside in objects, as if magically, only by cutting those objects off from a wider economy of labour and production. It is then as if fear originates with the arrival of others whose bodies become *containers* of our fear.

When a feeling becomes an instrument or a technique it is not that something is created from nothing. But something is being created from something: a wavering impression of nervousness can strengthen and straighten its hold when we are given a face *to be nervous about*. To track how feelings cohere as or in bodies, we need to pay attention to the conversion points between good and bad feelings. It was noteworthy in the UK that when anger about cuts to public spending (justified under the affective language of austerity - of shared peril) moved people to march onto the streets, the government responded by calling for a happiness index.[22] Is happiness here a technique of distraction, a way of covering the nation with the warmth of a blanket? After all, at the very moment public anger was being expressed as demonstration, there was an announcement of a Royal Wedding. The Prime Minister said immediately 'everyone would want to put on record the happy news that was announced yesterday' and opened for public debate whether there should be a national holiday.[23] Happiness became a gift to the nation, one that was given as a counter-gift, a way of countering a sense of national exhaustion and misery (and note even the idea of a tired miserable nation was a way of pacifying the potency of the signs of rage).[24] Those who did not participate in this national happiness were certainly positioned as killjoys or 'affect aliens', alienated from the nation by virtue of not being affected in the right way.[25]

Like all weddings, this one was always meant to be a happy occasion. It was a time of good cheer; a time for good cheer. It was a celebration of the love of a heterosexual couple (this is a love *we can believe in*, a love we are happy to love). And not just any couple of course: an especially shiny privileged white couple. In anticipation of the event one commentator noted: 'They will help form our collective imagination. They are now part of what we are as a nation, how we define ourselves as individuals, and how we are seen by foreigners'. The love for the couple becomes a form of national membership

22. http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/2011/dec/01/happiness-index-david-cameron

23. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-11791929

24. The pacification of the potency of rage has been an important part of the media and political response to the protests. The 'anger' was typically projected onto militant outsiders, those who were intent on destroying the march for others, rather than being understood as what compelled people to march in the first place. It is almost as if the media 'willed' the marches *to be of tired rather than angry feet*.

25. http://swns.com/killjoy-post-office-bosses-ban-royal-wedding-flags-281501.html

resting quite explicitly on self-consciousness about how we appear to those deemed 'foreigners'. To love the couple is to want their appearance. The same writer concludes his article with a flourish:

> But the monarchy is also about magic. It sets Britain apart. It reminds us that this is a very antique nation, with a history and an identity which goes back for thousands of years. Just as a royal funeral is a moment of collective national sadness and mourning, a royal wedding is a moment of overwhelming joy and renewal. We all share in it. When the marriage itself takes place on an as-yet-unspecified date next year, the nation will take to the streets, rejoicing.[26]

26. http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/peteroborne/100064013/prince-william-and-kate-middleton-to-marry-we-all-have-a-stake-in-this-couple%E2%80%99s-future/

An institution that has been reproduced over time becomes magic: cut off from the labour of its own reproduction. And note, as well, how description (this is a happy occasion) becomes evaluation (this is good for the nation) and command (be happy, rejoice!). To share in the body of the nation requires that you place your happiness in the right things.

The wedding in 2011 was followed in 2012 by the Royal Jubilee: and the flags came out again. Many of the pictures of the jubilee appear jubilant in part as the effect of so many flags waving, creating its own kind of blanket. Flags are moody signs, though we shouldn't assume they do what they seem to say. In both national events, the cause for celebration took us back to history, to class as heritage, to class as continuity, to class as solidarity rather than antagonism. Commentators again claimed in advance that the event would be a day of national happiness: 'It will be marked by great national happiness - and hopefully by good weather'.[27] If good weather can only be hoped for (in the UK, much good cheer is gained by moaning about weather), great national happiness is given the safety and wisdom of prediction. And this happiness is tied directly to the singularity of a Royal body, a body who has survived the comings and goings, the ups and downs, of hard national democratic time:

27. http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/jun/01/editorial-queen-jubilee-diamond

> The jubilee is an opportunity to have a party amid hard times, but it should also be an opportunity to debate the institution more thoughtfully - because it defines this country and it will have to change after Elizabeth II's reign is over. Yet it would be churlish not to acknowledge that the principal public feeling this weekend is respect for a woman who has done her strange, anachronistic and undemocratic job with tact and judgment for far longer than most of the rest of us could ever contemplate doing ours (ibid).

The singular body becomes an object of shared feeling, a way that the national body can cohere in recognition of the longevity of a history it can call its own. A bond of belief still turns upon a body, one that can concretize or 'hold' that

belief and convert it into memory. A national belief system became belief in a Royal Family, such that their bodies come to represent most perfectly our own.

The investment in national happiness has much to teach us about the moody politics of citizenship. Citizenship becomes a requirement to be sympathetic: as an agreement with feeling. To be a sympathetic part is to agree with your heart. After all, who could fail to be touched by the endlessly repeated images of the young queen coming to the throne after the death of her father? Who could fail to be touched by the memory of the young prince following the coffin of his dead mother? Here being touched into citizenship is to be touched by the trauma of a past and the prospect of its conversion. Not to feel happiness in reaching these points is to become not only unsympathetic but also hostile, as if your unfeeling masks a disbelief in the national good, a will to destroy the nation. To be part of the nation is to remember these histories of national trauma: to recall them on route to national pride. To be part of the nation, to become attuned, was to right a wrong, to feel right having felt wronged. National mood was predicated quite specifically on *the happiness of this conversion*.

Not to be made happy is to refuse the promise of this conversion. Not to cheer is to withdraw from the situation. Not being in the mood for happiness becomes a political action. And you know what: I am not in the mood.