

THE POLITICS OF PARANOIA: AFFECT, TEMPORALITY, AND THE
EPISTEMOLOGY OF SECURITIZATION

by

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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The concept of “national security” has been an essential part of the political lexicon of the United States since the aftermath of World War II. Although it could be said that security in one way or another has always been a concern for societies, and a central political concern for the western world at least since the seventeenth century, it took its full-fledged official form in the United States with the 1947 National Security Act which established the National Security Council and the Central Intelligence Agency, as well as shaping the direction of the post-World War II foreign policy. National security constitutes the frame through which many political practices attain their meaning and justification today. My dissertation is devoted to understanding precisely this process wherein there is a particular political rationality at work that not only renders certain kinds of political practices preferable, but also insists on their necessity and inevitability. I call this the politics of paranoia. I argue that the concept of paranoia has explanatory power in relation to an array of political decisions, processes, and practices. It is descriptive of a diagram of power that is operative in contemporary practices of securitization. It is not only that these decisions, processes, and practices produce paranoid effects (or affects), but that they themselves entail a paranoid logic. To this end,

I rethink Melanie Klein's account of paranoia through a Foucaultian decolonial feminist lens. I examine this paranoiac logic in four layers: expulsions, anticipatory temporality, masculinist politics, and paranoid affects.

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For my grandmother, who taught me to be kind,
and my mother, who taught to me fight.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION:

THE STATE OF PARANOIA

“Fear is a primal human state. From childhood on, we fear the monsters of our imaginations, lurking in dark closets, under beds, in deserted alleyways, but we also now fear monsters in the deserts of Yemen and the mountains of Pakistan. But perhaps it is possible to pause and subdue our fears by carefully observing reality — just as we might advise for trying to calm and comfort a fear-stricken child. We might find that, in reality, the more immediate danger to our democratic society comes from those who lurk in the halls of power in Washington and other national capitols and manipulate our fears to their own ends.”

- Peter Ludlow, “Fifty States of Fear”

The War on Terror has created a massive machinery around securitization whose effects continue to be felt today both in and outside of the United States. It has led to the establishment of new institutions within the United States such as Homeland Security and Transportation Security Administration (TSA), whose budgets for the fiscal year 2017 are respectively \$40.6 billion¹ and \$7.6 billion.² The London-based, multi-national private security company G4S is now the world's third largest private corporation, following Wal-Mart and Foxconn. Securitization has consequently become an incredibly large and profitable industry, whose operations are tied to techniques around policing, detention, deportation, surveillance, and incarceration. In what follows, I argue that paranoia is a notion that is descriptive of a diagram of power that is at work in these practices.

Paranoia provides the framework through which these practices attain their meaning and legitimacy. The politics of paranoia names an assemblage of techniques, methods, and

¹ “Budget in Brief Fiscal Year 2017,” *Homeland Security*, Accessed: July 21, 2016.
https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/FY2017_BIB-MASTER.pdf

² Peter Neffenger, “TSA's 2017 Budget – A Commitment to Security (Part I),” *Transportation Security Administration*, March 1, 2016. Accessed: July 21, 2016.
<https://www.tsa.gov/news/testimony/2016/03/01/hearing-fy17-budget-request-transportation-security-administration>

approaches around national security that are tied to a set of preemptive practices that are inherently exclusionary and violent.

Within political theory, it has become commonplace to claim that these practices are irrational, nonsensical, unnecessary or dysfunctional. Daniel Wirls, for instance, demonstrates in *Irrational Security* that “despite the dramatic cuts at the end of the Cold War, the United States perpetuated and maintained as much as possible a Cold War national security state in style and size for reasons that have as much or more to do with domestic politics than international imperatives.”³ He goes on to suggest that the practices around national security are “systematically dysfunctional,” and subsequently, “the United States failed to adjust military spending and policy in a *rational* manner to the end of the Cold War, which in turn did significant damage to itself and its national security with the military policies and budgets that a 'global war on terrorism' made possible.”⁴ In other words, Wirls suggests that in the case of the United States, domestic politics have given rise to an unreasonable foreign policy that came at a great cost. The emphasis is put on the “irrationality” of these decisions that have had devastating results, economic and otherwise.

Similarly, highlighting that the politics of security is inherently irrational, Mark Neocleous writes:

Take...the 2003 House of Commons Research Paper on the law of occupation in Iraq. Describing one of the main tasks during the 'war on terror' as overcoming the resistance of the Iraqi security forces, it also suggests reforming those same security services. This is 'to demonstrate to

³ Daniel Wirls, *Irrational Security: The Politics of Defense from Reagan to Obama* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 7.

⁴ *Ibid.* Emphasis added.

the Iraqi people that our quarrel is not with them and that their security and well-being is our concern'. At the same time, the Report suggests that the task is to secure the sites of 'weapons of mass destruction' and to 'provide for the security of friendly forces'. Taken in a literal sense...the argument seems to be: security forces must be removed in order to improve security; something that does not exist (weapons of mass destruction) must be secured; that which must also be secured we must first partially destroy; that which is called security is not security. The whole thing is unintelligible.⁵

Security, in this regard, is self-contradictory and non-sensical. Yet the project of exposing the irrationality of security misses something that is pivotal within the practices of securitization, namely, the violence that they inflict. A rebuttal of security based on its apparent irrationality fails to account for not only the specific logic through which these mechanisms of security operate, but also how much violence is involved in these practices. A recent investigation by Homeland Security, for instance, has shown that the security measures put in place by the TSA failed 95% of the time when undercover investigators attempted to smuggle bombs and guns onto planes (they succeeded 67 out of 70 times).⁶ The inefficiency and superfluousness of these measures, however, are only the tip of the iceberg in a context where a UC Berkeley student Khairuldeen Makhzoomi, an Iraqi refugee, was removed from his flight and searched extensively by the FBI for using the word *inshallah* (God willing) in a private phone conversation, which was mistaken by

⁵ Mark Neocleous, *Critique of Security* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 2.

⁶ Justin Fishel, et al., "EXCLUSIVE: Undercover DHS Tests Find Security Failures at US Airports," *abc News*, June 1, 2015. Accessed: July 21, 2016. <http://abcnews.go.com/US/exclusive-undercover-dhs-tests-find-widespread-security-failures/story?id=31434881>

another passenger for the word *shahid* (martyr).⁷ It seems shortsighted to suggest that these measures are simply ineffective, given that they are bound up with larger concerns about border security, about who may cross, who poses a threat, and who shall be expelled. In this sense, these concerns are very much tied to racial profiling, especially when sanctioned by legislation like the Patriot Act. In addition to what Dylan Matthews suggests in a *Vox* article,⁸ we need to rethink airport security not only because removing one's shoes and separating one's liquids are burdensome tasks, but because these practices are connected to a broader framework of securitization that has served to criminalize certain populations by deeming them suspect and thereby also dispensable.

It seems inadequate, in other words, to suggest that securitization is self-contradictory or inefficient, given the severity of the violence that has been at work in these practices, which is overshadowed by such framing. I am much less interested, therefore, in whether or not securitization is irrational or the extent to which it is irrational, than I am in how it connects to a particular kind of political rationality. The politics of paranoia, I suggest, names a certain kind of political rationality, a particular style of governance, that has attained a dominant status in matters around national security. I borrow the notion of political rationality from Michel Foucault who suggests in *The Birth of Biopolitics* that his inquiry on the art of government is a study “of the rationalization of governmental practice in the exercise of political sovereignty.”⁹ An art of government, according to his definition, is “the way in which the domain of the

⁷ Justin Salhani, “Iraqi Man Removed From Southwest Flight for Speaking Arabic,” *ThinkProgress*, April 16, 2016. Accessed: July 21, 2016. <http://thinkprogress.org/world/2016/04/16/3770159/iraqi-banned-from-flying/>

⁸ Dylan Matthews, “The TSA is a waste of money that doesn't save lives and might actually cost them,” *Vox*, May 17, 2016. Accessed: July 21, 2016. <http://www.vox.com/2016/5/17/11687014/tsa-against-airport-security>

⁹ Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics* (New York: Picador, 2010c), 2.

practice of government, with its different objects, general rules, and overall objectives, [which] was established so as to govern in the best possible way.”¹⁰ Similarly, I look at the different components that comprise securitization, in an effort to articulate paranoia as a type of political rationality (or an art of government) that constitutes a framework for the intelligibility of these political practices today.

In developing the notion of a politics of paranoia, I take Melanie Klein's and Eve Sedgwick's writings on paranoia as a starting point. Within Klein's psychoanalytic approach, paranoia designates a “position,” or a stage in development, where the infant develops persecutory fears and sadistic desires toward the mother due to the status of the breast as an object that is both gratifying and frustrating. The infant, according to Klein, moves past this stage by learning to cope with anxiety inducing situations and learning to relate to the world with trust rather than suspicion. She writes: “[T]he child conceives of [certain objects] as actually dangerous— persecutors who it fears will devour it, scoop out the inside of its body, cut it to pieces, poison it—in short, compassing its destruction by all the means which sadism can devise...In paranoia the characteristic defences are chiefly aimed at annihilating the 'persecutors', while anxiety on the ego's account occupies a prominent place in the picture.”¹¹ Paranoia, in Klein's account, involves an obsession with the annihilation of dangerous objects, which incessantly pose an existential threat to the infant. It comprises the particular lens through which the infant experiences the world, herself, and others. Sedgwick rethinks Klein's conceptualization of paranoia and suggests that it has a hermeneutical import. She notes that paranoid reading practices have become synonymous with critique itself, where the reader displays a

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Melanie Klein, “A Contribution to the Psychogenesis of Manic-Depressive States,” *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 16 (1935): 145-7.

commitment to exposure, an inability to cope with surprise or unknowability, and a totalizing tendency.¹² The project at hand involves reconceptualizing paranoia not only as a hermeneutical or critical practice, but also a political one. In this way, I propose a diagnostic project. I argue that the concept of paranoia has explanatory power in relation to an array of political decisions, processes, and practices. It is not only that these decisions, processes, and practices *produce* paranoid effects (or affects), but that they themselves entail a paranoid logic. Moreover, the imperative force of paranoia insists on a sense of necessity and inevitability in dealing with a national crisis. For this reason, when an expert on peace studies like George Lakey offers non-violent strategies against terrorism, for instance, he is told by the Pentagon that these strategies could never be implemented as the government does not function in this manner.¹³ At a time when a militarized response to crisis has become so engrained that it is seen as incontestable and immutable, one needs tools to understand the underlying logic of securitization. I offer the concept of the politics of paranoia as such a tool to be used to make sense of the political rationality that is operative within the practices of securitization.

The politics of paranoia entails a commitment to the annihilation of threats, which has led to the codification of particular bodies as threatening. Securitization, in this way, takes place by way of racialization and against the backdrop of a biopolitical order in which certain lives do not count as lives. In the first chapter, I explore expulsions as a primary mechanism through which a politics of paranoia operates. I trace different forms of expulsion, including detention and deportation, and situate them within a genealogy of

¹² Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay is About You," in *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003), 124.

¹³ George Lakey, "Can There Be a Nonviolent Response to Terrorism?," *QuakerSpeak*, April 7, 2016. Accessed: May 24, 2016, <http://quakerspeak.com/nonviolent-response-to-terrorism/>

the nation-state, whereby the identity of the nation is consolidated through these expulsions that are historically linked to processes of racialization. I examine in the second chapter how a paranoid temporality is at work within the practices of securitization that are preemptive. It is not only that the threat is located in the racialized Other, but that threat is often understood in terms of the future possibilities that are made to actualize in the present. In the third chapter, I suggest that the politics of paranoia does not only rely on racialization, but also on a practice of gendering the nation through an economy of desire that is attached to vindictive masculinity, which mediates these practices of racialization. There is, in other words, an enmeshment of race and gender in the way in which securitization operates in tandem with militarization. In the fourth chapter, I look at the intersubjective dimension of a politics of paranoia whose affective significations infiltrate the encounter with the racialized Other, suggesting an affective epistemology at work through which certain bodies attain the characteristic of being perceived as threatening. I offer decolonial feminist poetry as a discursive practice that puts forth an epistemological intervention, which could serve as a ground for establishing alliances across difference.

While my focus here is primarily on contemporary practices of securitization in and beyond the United States, it is worth noting that the concept of “national security” has been an essential part of the political lexicon of the United States since the aftermath of World War II.¹⁴ Although it could be said that security in one way or another has always been a concern for societies, and a central political concern for the western world at least since the seventeenth century,¹⁵ it took its full-fledged official form in the United

¹⁴ Joseph J. Romm, *Defining National Security* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1993), 3.

¹⁵ Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* is a paradigmatic work to take up security as the sole purpose of civil and political life.

States with the 1947 National Security Act which established the National Security Council and the Central Intelligence Agency, as well as shaping the direction of the post-World War II foreign policy. Melvin Goodman notes: “U.S. Militarization, reliance on the military to pursue foreign policy objectives better achieved by other means, has continued to expand since the end of the Cold War, when we might have expected and experienced a peace dividend.”¹⁶ As the Pentagon was given “an unprecedented position of power and influence, including huge increases in defense spending and a dominant voice in the making of national security and foreign policies”¹⁷ under the administrations of Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama, what we may call borrowing from Foucault, “a culture of danger”¹⁸ was set in place. As early as 1964, Richard Hofstadter wrote about what he called “the paranoid style in American politics” to highlight the prevalence of irrational tendencies that came in the form of “heated exaggeration, suspiciousness, and conspiratorial fantasy”¹⁹ in political discourse. What made the phenomenon compelling for him was “the use of paranoid modes of expression by more or less normal people,”²⁰ which rendered it something of a political norm. Yet in the 21st century, the politics of paranoia operates far beyond the level of rhetoric. Goodman writes: “The United States lacks a strategic vision for a world without an enemy, and it continues to spend far more on defense, homeland security, and intelligence than the rest of the world combined. We are the only nation in the world that deploys its military primarily to support foreign policy rather than to defend our borders and people.”²¹ This

¹⁶ Melvin Goodman, *National Insecurity: The Cost of American Militarism* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2013), 11.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 66-67.

¹⁹ Richard Hofstadter, “The Paranoid Style in American Politics,” *Harper's Magazine* (November 1964): 77.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Goodman, *National Insecurity*, 10.

political history comprises the background of my investigation as I take as my scope the particular mechanisms in which the politics of paranoia operates on a transnational level and their historical conditions of possibility.

While I draw some parallels between Klein's and Sedgwick's psychoanalytic accounts of paranoia and practices around securitization, the project at hand is neither one of political psychology nor an attempt at a psychoanalysis of the political. I am by no means interested in pathologizing securitization. While paranoia is suggestive of a stage in Klein's writings that is part of an infant's natural development, my account of the politics of paranoia is historically grounded. I see paranoia in this political formulation to be neither necessary nor inevitable, despite the fact that the framework of paranoia itself claims such imperative force. There are historical conditions of possibility that have produced and continue to sustain this framework. I chose the concept of paranoia as descriptive of a framework that upholds the practices of securitization because the concept is suggestive of a logic that relies on an affective disposition, or a type of political rationality that is laden with affect and desire. While security is tied to massive industries that are representative of economic and political interests (and thereby is an important part of global capitalism and must be taken up within this broader global economic and social order), I am also attentive to the circuits of desire that are at work that support and connect with, but also diverge from, and at times even conflict with, these interests. My goal is to give an account of the circuits of desire that are at work within the practices of securitization, without attempting to reduce these practices to a matter of interest.²² Much of the political theory on securitization has been written from

²² Although it would be a huge oversight to disregard the role interest plays, given that there are a massive industries around securitization.

the standpoint of interest and thereby deemed wholly irrational. Yet from the perspective of desire, denouncing securitization as irrational offers an incomplete picture, as securitization is also tied to a particular kind of rationality (invested by desire) that comprises the framework for its legitimization. While the politics of paranoia has its conundrums, contradictions, and paradoxes (which I explore at length in what follows), what is more striking to me is that it also has its own set of justificatory mechanisms that are not only legally and politically upheld, but also receive support from the masses. Paranoia therefore denotes an epistemological ground for the implementation and legitimization of these practices.

My aim in putting forth this analysis is not simply about exposing the operations of a politics of paranoia. There is a certain kind of naïveté involved, I think, in the assumption that once something is known, once the public knows the facts, once we can persuade others to see the truth, then everything will change. Yet as Foucault points out, the issue at stake is much more persistent and tenacious than one that can be addressed merely by exposing the truth. “It is not because the governed do not know what is happening,” he writes, “or it is not because some of them know but others do not, it is rather because they know and it is to the extent that they know, to the extent that everyone is actually aware of the evidence of what is happening, it is precisely to that extent that things do not change.”²³ For this reason, I am much less interested in a paranoiac project of systematization or of exposure than one that can inspire and perhaps offer some direction to the practice of “critical creative politics,”²⁴ to borrow from Jasbir Puar. As the issue at hand is also one of desire, it is my hope that the diagnostics that I

²³ Goodman, *National Insecurity*, 10.

²⁴ Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007), xx.

offer here in an effort to make sense of the practices around securitization is one that could in some way translate into a project of creating alternative possibilities for resistance, or as Foucault puts it, a project that would “seek to give new impetus, as far and wide as possible, to the undefined work of freedom.”²⁵

²⁵ Foucault, “What is Enlightenment?,” in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Vintage Books, 2010b), 46.

CHAPTER II

EXPULSIONS:

WHOSE FREEDOM? WHOSE SECURITY?

“Well, I think home spat me out, the blackouts and curfews like tongue against loose tooth. God, do you know how difficult it is, to talk about the day your own city dragged you by the hair, past the old prison, past the school gates, past the burning torsos erected on poles like flags? When I meet others like me I recognise the longing, the missing, the memory of ash on their faces. No one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark. I've been carrying the old anthem in my mouth for so long that there's no space for another song, another tongue or another language. I know a shame that shrouds, totally engulfs. I tore up and ate my own passport in an airport hotel. I'm bloated with language I can't afford to forget.

They ask me *how did you get here?* Can't you see it on my body? The Libyan desert red with immigrant bodies, the Gulf of Aden bloated, the city of Rome with no jacket. I hope the journey meant more than miles because all of my children are in the water. I thought the sea was safer than the land. I want to make love, but my hair smells of war and running and running. I want to lay down, but these countries are like uncles who touch you when you're young and asleep. Look at all these borders, foaming at the mouth with bodies broken and desperate. I'm the colour of hot sun on the face, my mother's remains were never buried. I spent days and nights in the stomach of the truck; I did not come out the same. Sometimes it feels like someone else is wearing my body.

I know a few things to be true. I do not know where I am going, where I have come from is disappearing, I am unwelcome and my beauty is not beauty here. My body is burning with the shame of not belonging, my body is longing. I am the sin of memory and the absence of memory. I watch the news and my mouth becomes a sink full of blood. The lines, the forms, the people at the desks, the calling cards, the immigration officer, the looks on the street, the cold settling deep into my bones, the English classes at night, the distance I am from home. But Alhamdulillah all of this is better than the scent of a woman completely on fire, or a truckload of men who look like my father, pulling out my teeth and nails, or fourteen men between my legs, or a gun, or a promise, or a lie, or his name, or his manhood in my mouth.

I hear them say *go home*, I hear them say *fucking immigrants, fucking refugees*. Are they really this arrogant? Do they not know that stability is like a lover with a sweet mouth upon your body one second; the next you are a tremor lying on the floor covered in rubble and old currency waiting for its return. All I can say is, I was once like you, the apathy, the pity, the ungrateful placement and now my home is the mouth of a shark, now my home is the barrel of a gun. I'll see you on the other side.”

- Warsan Shire, “Conversations About Home (at the Deportation Centre)”

The audience cheers “Build that wall! Build that wall!” as Donald Trump unabashedly smiles and winks at the crowd during a rally on February 12, 2016 in Tampa, Florida. A few months prior, he had told Yahoo News that he would not be against establishing a database for Muslim Americans or issuing special identification cards that would note religious affiliation. In the same interview, he praises the New York City Police Department's controversial mosque surveillance program that was abandoned

in 2014.²⁶ He states: “We're going to have to do things that we never did before. Some people are going to be upset about it, but I think that now everybody is feeling that security is going to rule.”²⁷ Building a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border is a part of that larger plan where the racialized Other is kept out and security finally reigns. Or so would Trump have us believe.

Of course, it is not only Trump who encourages discriminatory surveillance practices and racial profiling in the name of security. Following the terrorist attacks in Brussels, Ted Cruz told a CNN reporter that Muslim neighborhoods need to be patrolled and secured by the police.²⁸ The Republican debates often turn into a screaming match of who can deport the highest number of immigrants in the shortest amount of time. But one must note that in the context of the United States, it is not only Republicans who put the emphasis on security understood in terms of the abjection of the racialized Other. Hillary Clinton, who voted for a bill that authorized building a fence along the U.S.-Mexico border in 2006, proclaims that the borders are now “secure” and the time has come for immigration reform. Similarly, on the website for his campaign, even the self-identified “democratic socialist” Bernie Sanders emphasizes the importance of border security for “immigration of law and reform,” albeit rejecting the need to increase it.²⁹ In mainstream political discourse in the United States, then, the point of contestation is not whether border security is *good* or *necessary* or *useful* but rather, how it shall be maintained.

²⁶ Hunter Walker, “Donald Trump has big plans for 'radical Islamic' terrorists, 2016 and 'that communist' Bernie Sanders,” *Yahoo News*, November 19, 2015. Accessed: July 22, 2016.

<https://www.yahoo.com/politics/donald-trump-has-big-plans-1303117537878070.html>

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Jeremy Diamond, “Ted Cruz: Police need to 'patrol' Muslim neighborhoods,” *CNN*, March 23, 2016. Accessed: July 22, 2016. <http://www.cnn.com/2016/03/22/politics/ted-cruz-muslim-neighborhoods/index.html>

²⁹ “Border Security,” *Feel the Bern*. Accessed: July 22, 2016. <http://feelthebern.org/bernie-sanders-on-immigration/#border-security>

Securitization in and of itself is not up for debate, but only the way in which it shall be undertaken. The inherent necessity of security is something which all presidential candidates would agree on. This unspoken concurrence in mainstream politics in the United States, in this way, would exemplify what Uriel Abulof has called “deep securitization,” where “*to politicize is to securitize.*”³⁰ What sets apart deep securitization from practices of securitization as responsive to particular needs is that while these practices may be undertaken for a given period of time, often no longer than the span of a few months or sometimes a few years, deep securitization names a process whereby a “prolonged and widespread public discourse on probable and protracted threats to the very existence of the nation/state”³¹ discursively produce the nation-state as that which is always already threatened and in need of securitization. The threat then becomes constitutive of the nation-state itself, which needs to be guarded against dangers, where the nation-state can no longer be thought separately from the threat. In Trump's vision, where “security rules,” building a wall is a necessary but not a sufficient condition, for one can never be secure enough. The rule of security necessitates new measures to be taken, new techniques to be developed, and new policies to be implemented, as securitization is a never-ending process. And yet, it is also an “autoimmune” process, as Derrida calls it, for in its excessiveness, it often tends to self-destruct, much like an ouroboros, a serpent eating its own tail.

In the following, I argue that the discursive practices around securitization involve a paranoid framework. Melanie Klein's account of the paranoid-schizoid position describes a developmental stage where the subject (i.e. the infant, in her account)

³⁰ Uriel Abulof, “Deep Securitization and Israel's 'Demographic Demon',” *International Political Sociology* 8, no. 4 (2014): 400. Emphasis in the original.

³¹ Ibid.

experiences the world as an inherently dangerous place and commits themselves to eliminating all possible threats. Even those objects that sustain the subject (like the mother's breast) induce anxiety and are sought to be expelled. I suggest that Klein identifies here a framework that is also descriptive of a diagram of power that is manifest in practices of securitization. These practices that I take up are indicative of deep securitization, in that they are not temporary measures but the very means of the consolidation of the identity of the nation-state as always already threatened.

While the discursive construction of the nation-state as a security state is admittedly more evident in the Republican rhetoric in the context of the United States, I suggest that the paranoiac framework that undergirds the practices that the Republicans call for is often taken for granted by the Democrats as well. In particular, the uncritical embrace of border security by Sanders and Clinton overshadows certain important questions that bear on border security, such as, what border security entails and who it benefits, especially in relation to the history of the U.S.-Mexico border. There is ultimately little difference between the assertion that the U.S.-Mexico border is secure and that it is not, with regards to the absence of a discussion of the purposes the security of that border serves and the underlying history. Moreover, when it comes to deep securitization, the U.S. is hardly an exception. There is a growing trend toward securitization taking place globally in tandem with militarization. The most recent example would perhaps be the European Union's despicable approach to the Syrian refugee crisis as indicative of a politics of paranoia that seeks to expel the racialized Other as a self-sustaining mechanism.

In this chapter, I examine the differential logic of securitization understood in terms of systematic expulsion. I argue that the nation-state attains its identity by the expulsion of the racialized Other misconstrued as an existential threat. The nation-state is identified as that which needs to be secured, that which is always already threatened, where securitization entails a purification of the body by expelling the racialized Other. In this sense, underlying securitization as such is a paranoid framework, insofar as paranoia names a relational mode whereby subjectivity can only be sustained by means of the annihilation of threats. In its political formulation, I suggest that “the threat” gets attached to the Other, whose emergence as the threatening Other coincides with racialization. In other words, the racialized Other emerges as that which is threatening and thereby needs to be expelled for the survival of the nation-state. Moreover, I suggest that this process is biopolitical, insofar as the most pertinent question here is whose life matters and who shall be sacrificed for whom. I wish not, however, to raise this as a metaphysical point about the political (in the way that Arendt and Agamben do), but rather as a historically contingent one. For that purpose, I explore the link between the logic of expulsion at play in securitization and situate it in the legacies of western colonialism.

2.1 Building That Wall: Border Security and the Logic of Expulsion

At moments of national crisis, the first order of business is to secure the borders, much like France did following the terror attacks in Paris in November 2015, in declaring a state of emergency and closing their borders, which admittedly proved problematic at the very least, given that it has been years since France had systematic border checkpoints as it is a part of the Schengen zone. Border security, however, is by no means limited to a temporary closing of the borders, but often entails the implementation and

institutionalization of a set of techniques, tactics, and policies. Within this broader trend for securitization, the nation discursively emerges as that which needs to be protected from the threat posed by the Other. Consider, for instance, the “vital mission” that the Department of Homeland Security, established in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, purports to have: “to secure the nation from the many threats we face.”³² According to the classical securitization theory that came out of the Copenhagen School in the early 1990s, securitization first involves a “securitizing move,” which is a “discourse that takes the form of presenting something as an existential threat to a referent object.”³³ This speech act then in turn constitutes the justification for the measures taken in the name of securitization.

Yet in many cases, in the context of Europe and the United States, not only do we see that the existential threat gets attributed to the racialized Other, but also that the process whereby that attribution takes place often constitutes the very process of racialization. I consider, in the following, three historical examples to unpack this point: the arbitrary deportations of Arab and Muslim men in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, the imprisonment of Japanese Americans during World War II, and the controversial deal EU made with Turkey that the refugees arriving on Greek shores be sent back to Turkey.

Natsu Taylor Saito reports: “In the immediate aftermath of the attacks, the Justice Department began rounding up hundreds of noncitizen residents, most of them—perhaps all of them—men of Middle Eastern or South Asian origin. These men have literally disappeared: taken without notice from their homes or workplaces, held incommunicado,

³² “About DHS,” *Homeland Security*. Accessed: July 22, 2016. <https://www.dhs.gov/about-dhs>

³³ Barry Buzan et al., *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc, 1997), 25.

moved from prison to prison, questioned without charge, forbidden from contacting their families or lawyers.”³⁴ Not only were the selection criteria unclear in these practices, there was also no evidence that these men posed any danger. American Civil Liberties Union's 2004 report *Worlds Apart* shows, however, that despite the fact that none of these men were found to have a connection to the terrorist attacks, the Department of Justice continued to present these deportations as part of their successful efforts at securitization, “boasting,” to use the language of this report, that “hundreds of immigrants 'linked to the September 11 investigation' have been deported.”³⁵ As of 2005, the number of men who were detained without being charged with a crime reached five thousand, many of whom were deported based on technical violations of the immigration law. Hundreds of men who *voluntarily* came in for an interview with the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in order to comply with the new requirements were also deported.

Yet these practices of arbitrary detention and deportation on the basis of ethnicity (“terrorists by association”) are hardly unprecedented in the United States. There is, in fact, a parallel one could draw between these practices and the imprisonment of 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II, almost sixty percent of whom were U.S. citizens by birth. Saito writes:

Hearing these reports [of post-9/11 arbitrary deportation practices], a deep uneasiness lodged itself in the pit of my stomach, and stories from my childhood came flooding back. I remembered my father talking about how he came home from junior high in Aberdeen, Washington, in December

³⁴ Natsu Taylor Saito, “The Costs of Homeland Security,” *Radical History Review* 93 (2005): 54.

³⁵ “Worlds Apart: How Deporting Immigrants After 9/11 Tore Families Apart and Shattered Communities,” *American Civil Liberties Union*, December 2004. Accessed: May 24, 2016: 2, <https://www.aclu.org/files/FilesPDFs/worldsapart.pdf>.

1941 to find that his widowed mother had disappeared and FBI agents were ransacking the house; how it took his brother and sister three weeks to figure out that she was being held in the Seattle jail as a 'dangerous enemy alien'; how, after interrogation, she was cleared in January but was not released until after Easter, just in time for the family to pack what they could carry and, under armed guard, board a darkened, dirty train that took them across the desert to the internment camp at Tule Lake in northern California, where they remained for several years.³⁶

What purpose do these practices really serve? Is it the case that they actually make the nation more secure? It would seem that the existential threat is attributed to the individuals who are subject to these practices by association. At best, these practices serve a temporary relief at moments of national crisis, creating a “sense” of security, what some scholars have called a “security theater.” At worst, they are indicative of systemic racism that continue to plague the United States as well as Europe. In any case, it would be incomplete to say that these practices are solely prompted by terror attacks, as they are emblematic of a logic of expulsion that is at the heart of the nation-state. After all, detention and mass deportation are hardly the only tools of expulsion and abandonment directed at racialized groups who are deemed threatening. Let us not forget police brutality, environmental racism, incarceration, and outright murder that comprises the daily reality of the lives of people of color in the United States, indicative that the mechanisms of expulsion are systematically in place within the order of things. In such context, these securitization measures comprise only the tip of the iceberg, a moment when systematic exclusion perhaps becomes most salient. Consider, for instance, the

³⁶ Saito, “The Costs of Homeland Security,” 57.

FBI's covert operations, many of which were illegal, under the name COINTELPRO between 1956 and 1971 directed at the Black Panther Party and other organizations for social and economic equality, and the subsequent the legalization of the very same activities under 2001 USA Patriot Act and their practical implementation. The notice sent by the FBI director to all offices in 1967 states: “The purpose of this new counterintelligence endeavor is to expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities of black nationalist hate-type organizations and groupings.”³⁷ This secret counterintelligence program is noted to be a matter of “internal security.” The testimony of some of the members of the Black Panther Party and other organizations reveal illegal surveillance, infiltration, wrongful imprisonment, false arrests, assaults, and various fear tactics employed by the Bureau during this time in efforts to “neutralize” these organization.³⁸ Many of these activities have now been legalized under the USA Patriot Act as part of the War on Terror. National security, in this case, is invoked to legitimize and legislate practices that had been employed illegally for decades against people of color. It would seem that despite the fact that targets change, the existential threat that gets attached to particular racialized groups justifies these practices of expulsion undertaken in the name of securitization.

Yet misattributing the existential threat to the racialized Other is hardly a securitizing move that is peculiar to the United States. Following the terror attacks in Paris and Brussels, the European countries responded by tightening its borders in the face of the growing refugee crisis. Poland refused to honor its deal with the European Union

³⁷ “COINTELPRO Revisited: Spying & Disruption,” *WRH*. Accessed: July 22, 2016.

<http://whatreallyhappened.com/RANCHO/POLITICS/COINTELPRO/COINTELPRO-FBI.docs.html>

³⁸ *COINTELPRO 101*, Film, directed by Freedom Archives (2010; San Francisco: PM Press, 2010).

to take in 7,000 Syrian refugees,³⁹ while the European Union made a deal with Turkey to send all the refugees who arrive at the Greek shores back to Turkey, despite Amnesty International's warnings and Doctors Without Borders' boycotts. The European Union would rather hand over €6 billion to the Turkish government to keep the refugees away than to ensure their safety, a government whose key figures are notoriously involved in corruption, fraud, bribery, and money laundering, a country that is not admitted to the European Union due to numerous human rights violations (which apparently do not matter when the refugees are on the receiving end). What awaits many refugees who are sent back to Turkey, a state with no official asylum procedures for non-European refugees, is a life of statelessness, poverty, or some in some cases, deportation back to their countries of origin that are war-ridden. The European Union would rather spend billions on border control than on the safety and protection of the refugees, despite the fact that no Syrian refugee has been implicated in the recent terror attacks in Europe. “No one leaves home,” Warsan Shire writes, “unless home is the mouth of a shark.”⁴⁰ These refugees are escaping terror when they flee Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq, among other countries. What purpose does border security serve in this context, exactly? Whose security does it ensure? Certainly not the security of those who are in the most vulnerable position. The border security seems to secure nothing but the privilege of a few, while thousands of refugees are put in harm's way. According to the International Organization for Migration, close to 4,000 migrants had been reported dead or missing crossing the Mediterranean. Since the beginning of 2016, more than 500 migrants have been reported

³⁹ “Poland Refuses to Accept Refugees After Brussels Attack,” *Al Jazeera*, March 23, 2016. Accessed: July 22, 2016. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/03/poland-refuses-accept-refugees-brussels-attack-160323132500564.html>

⁴⁰ Warsan Shire, “Conversations About Home (at the Detention Centre)” in *Teaching My Mother How to Give Birth* (UK: mouthmark, 2011), 24.

missing or dead in the Mediterranean. These fatalities occur as the migrants are left with no choice but to travel via “flimsy rubber dinghies or small wooden boats” that are often overcrowded.⁴¹ Reports show that many refugees “get robbed, face extortionate ransom demands and are tortured”⁴² at the hands of the smugglers/kidnappers. Some reports note that despite the fact that the police were alerted, they failed to intervene in these crimes. Sending the refugees back to Turkey would subject the refugees to the same conditions where they are forced into poverty and live without legal protection. According to the Amnesty International, the Global South countries (mostly in the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa) currently host 86% of a total of 19.5 million refugees.⁴³ In the famous words of Aimé Césaire, “*Europe is indefensible.*”⁴⁴ It is “unable to justify itself either before the bar of 'reason' or before the bar of 'conscience'.”⁴⁵ Border security, in this case, is no more than a euphemism for abandonment; it serves no other function than to leave the refugees to die.

Moreover, border security often gets paired up with militarism, where the result is not simply (passive) abandonment, but (active) extermination. Shortly after Turkey made a deal with the EU, an Afghan man in a group of refugees trying to enter Bulgaria was shot dead by a Turkish police officer. The officer claimed to have been firing warning shots as the refugees resisted arrest, when one refugee got wounded by a ricochet and died on the way to the hospital. *The Guardian* reports: “In a move to buttress its porous

⁴¹ “Migrant Crisis: Migration to Europe Explained in Seven Charts,” *BBC*, March 4, 2016. Accessed: July 22, 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34131911>

⁴² Henriette Johansen, “After fleeing persecution, kidnapping and genocide, what awaits the refugees in Greece?,” *Middle East Monitor*, March 28, 2016. Accessed: July 22, 2016. <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/articles/europe/24703-after-fleeing-persecution-kidnapping-and-genocide-what-awaits-the-refugees-in-greece>

⁴³ “8 Ways to Solve the World Refugee Crisis,” *Amnesty International*. Accessed: July 22, 2016. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2015/10/eight-solutions-world-refugee-crisis/>

⁴⁴ Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1972), 1. Emphasis in the original.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

260km (160-mile) border with Turkey, Bulgaria built a 30km razor-wire fence along part of it and dispatched some 2,000 border guards, police and army to guard the rest.”⁴⁶ In a context where Turkey, a heavily militarized state that shows little regard to human life, is put in charge to make sure that no refugees enter Europe, I suspect that this incident will constitute the first of many more to come. The next phase, it seems, is the active annihilation of those refugees who do not perish fast enough through abandonment, so that the borders can once again be secure.

It is not only European countries that use border security to practice and justify abandonment. In order to discuss the full significance of Clinton's proud proclamation that the U.S.-Mexico border is secure thanks to the fence that she voted for, one must consider the history of this border, the history wherein Mexico lost almost half of its land to the U.S., following the illegal invasion of Texas in the 1800s by Anglos who committed “all manner of atrocities against [*tejanos* (native Texans of Mexican descent)].”⁴⁷ Gloria Anzaldua recounts this history in *Borderlands/La Frontera*: “The Gringo, locked into the fiction of white superiority seized complete political power, stripping Indians and Mexicans of their land while their feet were still rooted in it.”⁴⁸ Beginning from the mid-20th century, multinational corporations took over the land on the Mexican side of the border, building *maquiladoras*, factories that would pay its workers, the majority of whom are women, as little as six dollars a day. These workers report unsafe working conditions, being (illegally) denied a severance package when the factories shut down and move to South Asia for cheaper labor, not being allowed

⁴⁶ “Afghan refugee shot dead by police while trying to enter Bulgaria,” *The Guardian*, October 16, 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/16/afghan-refugee-shot-dead-police-turkey-enter-bulgaria>

⁴⁷ Gloria Anzaldua, “The Homeland, Aztlan / El otro Mexico” in *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2012), 28.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 29.

bathroom breaks, lead poisoning, and other serious health issues that are work-related.⁴⁹ “For many *mexicanos del otro lado*,” Anzaldúa writes in 1987, “the choice is to stay in Mexico and starve or move north and live.”⁵⁰ Given the persistence of these exploitative conditions, this still holds true for many. Those who cross the border illegally are subject to similar conditions as the refugees traveling to Europe: they get robbed, tortured, beaten, and raped. Border security here in Clinton's discourse, who has supported economic liberalization via policies like NAFTA that paved the way for this crisis in the first place, serves to overshadow not only these legacies of imperialism, but also the brute reality surrounding the lives of those who cross. Borders that divide “us” from “them” discursively produce “us” and “them” against the backdrop of a history out of which the hierarchal relations of power have emerged. Disregarding the U.S. involvement in this history, a continuing involvement given global corporatization, economic liberalization, and the War on Drugs,⁵¹ is what the decontextualization of the notion of “border security” allows for. The term is used to relinquish responsibility, to take a position of privilege and superiority for granted, as if it has not been built on conquest and exploitation. While a fence that Clinton voted for may keep away those who cross illegally, a wall that Trump calls for would help render this reality altogether invisible. It is also worth noting that the

⁴⁹ *Maquilapolis: City of Factories*, Film, directed by Vicky Funari and Sergio De La Torre (2006; Mexico: Independent Television Service, 2006).

⁵⁰ Anzaldúa, “The Homeland, Aztlan / El otro Mexico,” 32.

⁵¹ Greg Grandin writes about this in the following way: “The transnational gangs and drug cartels that rule large swaths of Central America and Mexico are direct blowback from the Cold War (in the case of Central America) and the War on Drugs (Mexico). Washington’s relentless promotion of trade and financial liberalization and its push for biofuels and mining have destroyed regional agricultural markets and driven down wages, leading to rural dislocation. The disaster in Central America and Mexico...can be traced back to Bill Clinton’s three signature Latin American initiatives: escalation of the drug war (Plan Colombia); economic liberalization (NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement, which paved the way for similar treaties with Central America and Colombia and will culminate in the Obama-backed Trans Pacific Partnership); and the militarization of the Mexican-US border” (Greg Grandin, “Here's Why the US Is Stepping Up the Deportation of Central Americans,” *The Nation*, January 21, 2016. Accessed: July 22, 2016. <http://www.thenation.com/article/heres-why-the-us-is-stepping-up-the-deportation-of-central-americans/>).

Republican call for a wall is taking place in a context where under a Democratic administration, the Homeland Security has been raiding the homes of and deporting thousands of Central Americans and Mexicans since the beginning of 2016.

The practices of the Department of Homeland Security, Trump's call for a wall, and the EU's response to the refugee crisis are not isolated instances. They are not only tied together by virtue of a politics of paranoia at work in the political commitment to annihilate the threat that is located in the racialized body of the Other, their significance also must be considered within the broader histories and legacies of colonialism and imperialism. For this purpose, in what follows I consider Hannah Arendt's account of the nation-state in "The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of the Rights of Man" alongside Aníbal Quijano's notion of "the coloniality of power and knowledge." While Arendt's account diagnoses a hostility toward difference built into the nation-state as a political formation, the difference that the nation-state seeks to erase is left under-theorized. I suggest that racial classification, which, according to Quijano, comprises a fundamental axis of the coloniality of power, is pertinent in that historically it is not any kind of difference whose elimination has been sought, but particularly, the elimination of the difference that has been projected onto groups that are racially marked. Moreover, this process of racialization can be traced back to the history of colonialism, whereby white supremacy makes up what Charles Mills calls "the unnamed political system that has made the modern world what it is today."⁵²

2.2 Racialization, Expulsions, and the Nation-state

According to Arendt, at the heart of the nation-state lies a fundamental exclusion. Her historical account shows that with the emergence of many new nation-states in the

⁵² Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997), 1.

aftermath of the First World War around a national identity, “the minority” became “a permanent institution.”⁵³ Although there may have always been minorities, with denationalization taking place on such a massive scale, millions were left to live “outside normal legal protection and needed an additional guarantee of their elementary rights from an outside body.”⁵⁴ Denationalization emerged as “a powerful weapon of totalitarian politics” at this time.⁵⁵ The Armenian genocide, denied by the Turkish state to this day, constitutes an example of such mass denationalizations that took place, which, for Arendt, “were something entirely new and unforeseen.”⁵⁶ The representatives of nation-states, Arendt notes, responded to this crisis by contending that the minorities “must sooner or later be either assimilated or liquidated,” and thus repatriation and naturalization became the sole means to solve this problem.⁵⁷ The nation-states, in other words, insisted on a national homogeneity that must be upheld at any cost. As Arendt puts it, the nation-state is a political formation that “would rather lose its citizens than harbor people with different views.”⁵⁸ There is, in other words, something intrinsically anti-pluralistic in the nation-state. This resonates with not only the rhetoric that continues to be used by conservative politicians in Europe against refugees from Muslim countries, but also an internalized understanding on the part of the public. A poll made by the French newspaper *Le Monde* in 2011 shows that a majority of French and German citizens considered Islam “a threat” to their national identity and noted that Muslims have not been “integrated properly.” *Le Monde* characterized the efforts at religious “diversity”

⁵³ Hannah Arendt, “The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of the Rights of Man,” in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1951), 274.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 268.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 277.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 272.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 277.

on the part of France and Germany as a “failure.”⁵⁹ These sentiments have now been heightened with the growing refugee crisis and the terror attacks in Europe.

In a context where “the minority” poses a threat to the national identity, Arendt's account, written in 1951, continues to aptly describe the political climate of our time in many places in the world. On exile, Arendt comments: “What is unprecedented is not the loss of a home but the impossibility of finding a new one. Suddenly, there was no place on earth where migrants could go without the severest restrictions, no country where they would be assimilated, no territory where they could found a new community of their own.”⁶⁰ In this sense, citizenship is not only a matter of belonging (where statelessness becomes the severest mode of non-belonging produced by the nation-state), it is also a racialized concept.⁶¹

Arendt concludes that throughout history all developed political communities have been concerned with homogeneity and conceptualized difference as dangerous, and therefore as that which must be destroyed:

The reason why highly developed political communities, such as the ancient city-states or modern nation-states, so often insist on ethnic

⁵⁹ Peter Allen, “Islam now considered 'a threat' to national identity by almost half of French and Germans, according to new poll,” *Daily Mail*, January 6, 2011. Accessed: July 22, 2016. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1344624/Islam-seen-threat-national-identity-half-French-Germans.html>

⁶⁰ Arendt, “The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of the Rights of Man,” 291.

⁶¹ One example that we may consider here includes the differential treatment of captured “war criminals” who were U.S. citizens. Saito reports: “U.S. citizens...have been indefinitely imprisoned in military custody, without charge, hearing, access to counsel, or any other constitutional rights on the government’s unsubstantiated assertion that they are 'enemy combatants', Yaser Esam Hamdi and Jose Padilla, both U.S.-born citizens, have been held in this manner for nearly three years. They were kept in custody for more than two years before being allowed to even talk to their lawyers, and then only as a matter of military 'discretion', not as a civil right. Hamdi, like John Walker Lindh, was captured in Afghanistan; but unlike Lindh, Hamdi did not receive a hearing in a civilian criminal court. One could argue that the only discernable difference in their cases was that while Lindh is a Euro-American, Hamdi is of Middle Eastern descent. The Supreme Court finally concluded, in the spring of 2004, that Hamdi, as well as the hundreds of noncitizens held without charge at the Guanta namo Bay naval base, were entitled to some minimal judicial hearing. In response, the Justice Department, rather than having any sort of hearing on his detention, released Hamdi on the condition that he renounce his U.S. citizenship and return to Saudi Arabia” (“The Costs of Homeland Security,” 55).

homogeneity, is that they hope to eliminate as far as possible those natural and always present differences and differentiations which by themselves arouse dumb hatred, mistrust, and discrimination because they indicate all too clearly those spheres where men cannot act and change at will, *i.e.*, the limitations of the human artifice. The 'alien' is a frightening symbol of the fact of difference as such, of individuality as such, and indicates those realms in which man cannot change and cannot act and in which, therefore, he has a distinct tendency to destroy.⁶²

Based on this account, it could be inferred that a politics of paranoia has been at work in all kinds of political communities throughout history, insofar as hostility toward difference and commitment to homogenization comprises an axis of this kind of politics, manifesting itself in practices of dispossession, expulsion, and assimilation. I would, however, like to resist this characterization, which universalizes paranoia by locating it at the heart of politics. I am much more interested in the specific mechanisms at work in the operations of a politics of paranoia and the ways in which those mechanisms have historically been accumulated, tinkered with, and assembled from disparate elements. In the context of securitization, I contend that the politics of paranoia that locates and seeks to annihilate threats operates through racialization. Racialization here serves in the codification of certain groups as threatening and therefore marking them as those who must be expelled.

While Judith Butler's reading of Arendt claims that "the nation-state as a political formation...requires periodic expulsion and dispossession of its national minorities in

⁶² Arendt, "The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of the Rights of Man," 297.

order to gain a legitimating ground for itself,”⁶³ it is important to add that this “periodic expulsion and dispossession” has often taken place on the basis of race. After all, it is not *any* kind of difference that calls for hostility or creates a crisis in the identity of the nation-state. The differences that matter in this regard could be said to be wholly arbitrary and historically contingent, yet nonetheless central to the differential workings of power on, between, and by certain subjects. For Quijano, the coloniality of power names those operations of power that contemporary societies inherit from the history of colonialism. Race and racial identity, insofar as they serve as “instruments of basic social classification”⁶⁴ on a global scale comprise an axis of such operation of power. Quijano explains that while “race” in its modern sense (as that which ascribes phenotypical differences to biology) did not exist before the colonization of America, during European colonial expansion, race served the purpose of organizing “the distribution of work of the entire world capitalist system, between salaried, independent peasants, independent merchants, and slaves and serfs,”⁶⁵ the effects of which persist today, as can be observed in racial disparities in wealth around the world. In the context of securitization, race serves a function of marking particular groups as threatening and is decisive in terms of who shall be expelled. The expulsions that the nation-state relies on for the perpetuation of a national identity, in other words, take place by means of racialization. These expulsions may take various forms. While mass deportations may be the most salient form, other forms of marginalization include ghettoization, incarceration, and so on.

⁶³ Judith Butler and Gayatri Spivak, *Who Sings the Nation-State? Language, Politics, Belonging* (London and New York: Seagull Books, 2007), 33.

⁶⁴ Anibal Quijano, “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism and Latin America,” *Nepantla: Views from South* 1, no. 3 (2000): 534.

⁶⁵ Anibal Quijano, “Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality,” *Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2/3 (2007): 171.

Given that it deploys racialization, I understand the politics of paranoia as linked to the coloniality of power.

Insofar as racialization names a process, rather than a pre-given “race,” one can trace how different groups have been racialized on the basis of different categories of identity. One may consider, for instance, Benedict Anderson's observations regarding the census and its function for the nation-state in conjunction with the establishment of racial identities and disappearance of religious identity “as a primary census classification.”⁶⁶ While the ideal of homogeneity has remained in place, what homogeneity consists of has radically changed.⁶⁷ Under colonial rule, Anderson notes, race had become the primary identity category for classification which has left no room for ambiguity. “These ‘identities,’” he writes, “imagined by the (confusedly) classifying mind of the colonial state, still awaited a reification which imperial administrative penetration would soon make possible. One notices, in addition, the census-makers' passion for completeness and unambiguity. Hence their intolerance of multiple, politically 'transvestite,' blurred, or changing identifications. Hence the weird subcategory, under each racial group, of 'Others' – who, nonetheless, are absolutely not to be confused with *other* 'Others.' The fiction of the census is that everyone is in it, and that everyone has one – and only one – extremely clear place.”⁶⁸ We must remember while the census may have lost its status as an important biopolitical tool in the United States (as opposed to its status, say, in the first

⁶⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London and New York: Verso, 2006), 165.

⁶⁷ Jasbir Puar's examination of “homonationalism,” that is, the position assumed by the nation-state of inclusion and tolerance toward homosexuality for the purposes of nation building (a position that justifies the invasion of states that are “intolerant”) is an example of this. Puar explains: “In the case of what I term 'U.S. sexual exceptionalism,' a narrative claiming the successful management of life in regard to a *people*, what is noteworthy is that an exceptional form of national heteronormativity is now joined by an exceptional form of national homonormativity, in other words, homonationalism. Collectively, they continue or extend the project of U.S. nationalism and imperial expansion endemic to the war on terror” (*Terrorist Assemblages*, 2).

⁶⁸ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 165-6.

half of the 20th century), racial (and gender) ambiguity is far from a comfortable position to occupy. Moreover, religious categories have not only made a comeback as one of the primary identifiers for classification, but have also now become racialized. This may be observed in the racialization of Muslims in Europe, where religion has become an identity category that racially marks individuals. It can also be observed in the hate crimes in the United States following the September 11 attacks and the Bush administration's official response targeting Muslims, Arab Americans, and those of Middle Eastern descent, but also others who had been mistakenly labeled as Muslim based on arbitrary phenotypes are examples of such racializations. The murder of Kimberly Lowe, a twenty one year old Native American woman, by two white men who yelled “Go back to your country!” as they assaulted her illustrates, as Saito puts it, “both the climate of fear and suspicion fostered by the so-called war on terror and how the Other in the United States has been constructed to exclude even those truly native to this land.”⁶⁹ Sikh men wearing turbans are another group who have been affected by these hate crimes disproportionately, which, according to Jasbir Puar, has included:

verbal harassment (being called 'bin Laden', 'son of bin Laden', 'Osama'), especially on the phone and while driving; tailgating; hate mail; defecating and urinating on Sikh gurdwaras; Islamic mosques, and Hindu temples, leading in some cases to arson; blocking the entrance of a Sikh temple in Sacramento with a tractor and truck and jumping into the sacred holy water at the temple; throwing bricks, gasoline bombs, garbage, and other projectiles into homes of Sikhs and Arabs and slashing car ties; death threats and bomb threats; fatal shootings of taxi drivers, the majority of

⁶⁹ Saito, “The Costs of Homeland Security,” 53.

whom have been turbaned Sikhs; verbal and physical harassment of primary and secondary school children, as well as foreign students on college campuses; and attacks with baseball bats, paintball guns, lit cigarettes, and pigs' blood.⁷⁰

Insofar as racial classification involves a hierarchal grouping of individuals based on arbitrary physical characteristics, these crimes in particular manifest a process of racialization of religion, both in the sense of incorrect labeling and grouping and in terms of the recodification of the turban as a racialized symbol of the terrorist. Puar writes: “The turban is accruing the marks of a terrorist masculinity. The turbaned man – no longer merely the figure of a durable and misguided tradition, a community and familial patriarch, a resistant antiassimilationist stance – now inhabits the space and history of monstrosity, of that which can never become civilized.”⁷¹ Within the political framework of paranoia that seeks to eliminate threats, the 'threat' gets attached to certain bodies, and the process through which this attachment often takes place is racialization.⁷²

Race continues to be a central category through which power operates today, and unsurprisingly, not only in the United States. As racialization takes place in conjunction with other categories of identity, we also need to attend to the ways in which the Muslim identity gets racialized in intersection with gender. One may observe that the Muslim refugees are racialized differently on the basis of gender. While Muslim women are seen as subservient, docile, and oppressed, Muslim men are seen as violent, dangerous, and oppressive. In the codification of the Muslim refugee as threatening, which can be seen in

⁷⁰ Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, 179.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 175.

⁷² The fourth chapter of this dissertation focuses on the infiltration of intersubjective relations by means of racialization and the process of codification of certain bodies as threatening.

the commonplace rhetoric that attributes the increase in the number and frequency of terror attacks in Europe to the refugee crisis (despite the fact that none of the refugees have been implicated in these crimes), we witness a universalization of the “threatening” Muslim masculinity to stand in for “the refugee” at large, and thereby an erasure of women. Women only emerge in the scene as those who must be saved from the oppression of Muslim men, despite the fact that some women are actively involved in the terrorist activities of Daesh (an acronym for the Arabic name *al-Dawlah al-Islamiyah fi al-‘Irāq wa-al-Shām*, also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, a Salafi jihadist militant group that separated from al-Qaeda in 2014). In terms of securitization, the point of reference is Muslim masculinity as constructed in the white imaginary; it is the racialized male body in particular that gets codified as threatening, which in turn becomes generalized for the Muslim identity.

One may say after reading Hardt and Negri's *Empire* that the nation-state is now an irrelevant site of analysis for political theory with the emergence of “a global order, a new logic and structure of rule – in short, a new form of sovereignty,”⁷³ that is, Empire. “Empire,” they write, “is the political subject that effectively regulates these global exchanges, the sovereign power that governs the world.”⁷⁴ Here, Hardt and Negri announce the death of the nation-state and its replacement by multi- and transnational organizations that are the main players in the political arena today. That is to say, for them, the nation-state is not the appropriate object when undertaking an analysis of power. While I am sympathetic to this account and wish to take up the nation-state by means of the operations of a politics of paranoia that is transnational in nature, that is,

⁷³ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2000), xi.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

beyond the confines of a claimed territory, I do find the nation-state to be a relevant and valuable object for political analysis insofar as the focal point for such analysis is *forms of governance*, as opposed to simply the apparatuses of the state. In this project, the politics of paranoia is taken up as a form of governance or a political rationality that is operative in the construction of the nation-state, but which at the same time, operates beyond its borders. This can be observed, most notably, in what I call the return of the sovereign power in a biopolitical form to which the state lays claim. The next section is devoted to this phenomenon, as it operates at the hinge of freedom and security as discursive productions. I take up two primary examples to explore this phenomenon, namely, the drone strikes and indefinite detention. It would seem that the state's claim for sovereignty surpasses and trumps that of transnational organizations like the United Nations as well as international law in these instances, although one must not overlook the role multinational corporations play in the same surpassing, given that war is also an industry. I thereby do not reject Hardt and Negri's account when choosing the nation-state as my object of analysis, but I rather try to attend to the shifting dynamics in the ways in which power operates today.

In conclusion, securitization yields a differential logic of expulsion at work. As it operates within a paranoid framework, with the imperative that threats must be annihilated, the threat is misplaced in the racialized body of the Other. As the refugees seek asylum fleeing war and terror, closing the borders and keeping them out as terrorists by association is justified through the notion of "border security," just as the imprisonment of thousands of Japanese Americans for being "the enemy" by association and the arbitrary detainment and deportation of thousands of Arab and Muslim men were

matters of national security. These practices of purification are emblematic of a politics of paranoia that prioritizes the annihilation of threats by locating it in the racialized Other. Securitization, in this way, cannot be thought separately from racialization: it is the abjected body of the Other that is deemed threatening and therefore must be expelled.

Whose security is at stake in these practices of securitization? Who is made more secure and at what cost through these expulsions? In the next section, I turn to the differential operations of the notions of freedom and security, in an effort to show that the account I give of security is not merely a critique based on a defense of civil liberties. Despite often being seen as at odds, the way in which freedom and security get articulated in political discourse reveals that they in fact entail one another: freedom discursively emerges as that which is always already threatened and thereby necessitates securitization. This necessity is performed by employing an anachronistic sovereign practice of power that is at once biopolitical, comprising an assemblage that is characteristically both sovereign and biopolitical.

2.3 Freedom, Security, and Assemblages of Power

The debates around the measures taken in the name of anti-terrorism are often framed in terms of a trade-off between freedom and security. While many civil libertarians suggest that the practices around securitization curtail civil liberties, many conservatives argue for the value of safety over certain kinds of freedom. The issue becomes a matter of how much freedom one is willing to sacrifice for security. The framing seems to hinge on the kind of picture Thomas Hobbes illustrates in the *Leviathan* with the stark contrast between the state of nature being one of total freedom (where life is “nasty, brutish, and short”), and a commonwealth where the sovereign is responsible for the safety of the

people in exchange for their freedom (a state of total security). Yet what this framing conceals are the important questions, *whose freedom*, *whose security*, and *for whom*, as well as the history through which these notions emerge not in conflict, but instead as interdependent, a history that continues to be relevant today. Practices like torture, surveillance, indefinite detention, mass deportations neither affect all groups of individuals equally nor are acted on the population as a homogenous body, as presupposed in a Hobbesian framework. As Mariana Ortega and Linda Martin Alcoff put it, “Hate crimes as well as the practices of Homeland Security are less a rational response to real threats than a prompt, and alibi, for preexisting cultural chauvinisms and varied racisms.”⁷⁵ I hope to trace the historical lineage here in which freedom and security are intertwined by engaging with Foucault's account of liberalism and explore the particular link these two notions attain in the context of the United States by analyzing the rhetoric that constructs the nation as “the land of the free.”

Foucault approaches liberalism not simply as an ideology or an economic theory, but instead as a “new type of rationality in the art of government.”⁷⁶ He contrasts it to *raison d'Etat* which sought to strengthen the state and expand the scope of its influence. While *raison d'Etat* aims at full control of the society through disciplinary practices constituting a “police state,” liberalism begins with “the premise that government [that is, the act of governing]...cannot be its own end.”⁷⁷ This comparison also comprises the basis of Foucault's development of biopower which names a new set of relations that seek to practice power over life by way of regulating a population, in contrast to disciplinary

⁷⁵ Mariana Ortega and Linda Martin Alcoff. “Introduction: The Race of Nationalism,” in *Constructing the Nation: A Race and Nationalism Reader* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2009), 3.

⁷⁶ Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 20.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

power, which acts on individual bodies. What *raison d'Etat* is to a police state, liberalism is to a security state, Foucault contends. The latter, he suggests, corresponds to a liberal society, one of self-regulation.

Tracing this genealogy, Foucault shows that security has historically addressed some economic concerns, in that its principles had been implemented to govern the processes whereby different elements (goods, services, and even people) circulate. Insofar as liberalism denotes a “type of rationality in the art of government,” however, the scope of security is by no means exclusive to the economy, but it becomes a way of life, as it were. He explains that a culture of danger has been constructed in the nineteenth century, which he notes is “very different from those great apocalyptic threats of plague, death, and war which fed the political and cosmological imagination of the Middle Ages, and even of the seventeenth century.”⁷⁸ Here we see the emergence, proliferation, and the spread of “everyday dangers,” where security apparatuses are deployed in the management of fear. The “liberty” in liberalism and the prevalence of everyday dangers, according to Foucault, are interlinked such that freedom is “nothing else but the correlative of the deployment of apparatuses of security.”⁷⁹ In this sense, Foucault contends, fear becomes “the condition, the internal psychological and cultural correlative of liberalism.”⁸⁰ Freedom, in other words, is inextricably tied to security, insofar as it is contingent on security, in this historical formulation.⁸¹ In his 1978-79 lectures, Foucault states: “There is no liberalism without *a culture of danger*.”⁸²

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population* (New York: Picador, 2007a), 48.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ A similar argument is made by Mark Neocleous in *Critique of Security* where his engagement with Locke's account of prerogative shows that “liberalism's key concept is not liberty, but security, and this is so because security is the supreme concept of bourgeois society” (2008: 7).

⁸² Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 66. Emphasis added.

This “culture of danger,” of everyday danger, is something that one continues to observe in liberal societies. Under liberalism, freedoms are produced as “permanently endangered (by their own conditions of production) and require mechanisms of security.”⁸³ Thomas Lemke explains that “[d]anger and insecurity (the threat of unemployment, poverty, social degradation, etc.) are not only unwanted consequences or negative side-effects but essential conditions and positive elements of liberal freedom.”⁸⁴ In this context, we may consider the construction of a culture of danger in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks as a *reconstruction*, in that it constitutes an intensification, rearrangement, and redirection of the dynamics of danger and insecurity already in place at the level of everydayness in an average liberal society. The Department of Homeland Security's color-coded terrorism threat advisory scale, the misleading inflation of the numbers in the reporting of terrorist activity revealed by the Department of Justice's Internal Controls Over Terrorism Reporting,⁸⁵ and the meticulous TSA screenings at airports constitute not only a management of but a “theater of fear,” whereby certain dangers are prioritized over others, often in statistically untenable ways. One comes to fear what is less dangerous or what is statistically less likely to take place. As Peter Ludlow writes: “We are conditioned to fear persons in caves in Pakistan but not the destruction of our water supply by frackers, massive industrial accidents, climate change or the work-related deaths of 54,000 American workers every year.”⁸⁶

In the context of the United States, where freedom has become a tenet of the

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Thomas Lemke, “Liberalism, Biopolitics, and Technologies of Security,” in *Foucault, Governmentality, and Critique* (Boulder and London: Paradigm Publishers, 2011), 46.

⁸⁵ The report shows that activities like marital crimes and illegal immigration had been classified as terrorist-related where these misleading figures are used to assess the terrorist threat against the U.S. and constituted a basis for budget decisions. Source: <https://oig.justice.gov/reports/plus/a0720/final.pdf>

⁸⁶ Peter Ludlow, “The Fifty States of Fear,” *The Philosopher's Stone*, January 19, 2014. Accessed: May 24, 2016. http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/01/19/fifty-states-of-fear/?_r=1

national identity,⁸⁷ there is a paranoid formulation of freedom, as that which is always already threatened and in need of defense. George W. Bush's speeches in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks are exemplary in that they recite this identification and underscore freedom as endangered: “[N]ight fell on a different world, a world where freedom itself is under attack...Americans are asking, why do they hate us?...They hate our freedoms - our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other...This is the fight of all who believe in progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom...Freedom and fear are at war.”⁸⁸ What this war, construed here as a defense of freedom, entailed includes the deportation of thousands of immigrants from Muslim countries, the indefinite detention of individuals suspected of terrorist activity at Guantanamo Bay, the drone strikes in Pakistan, a war in Afghanistan, and another one in Iraq. Within this logic, the defense of freedom necessitates the elimination of the threat, much like in Klein's account of the paranoid-schizoid position.⁸⁹ In the kind of rhetoric Bush uses, pitting freedom and fear against one another, freedom serves as an empty signifier, with “no fixed content” and capable of embracing “an open series of demands,”⁹⁰ that stands for the identity of the nation whose defense necessitates the suspension of the rule of law. It would seem that the threat of terrorism is not only

⁸⁷ As Jasbir Puar puts it, the rhetoric of freedom is “a mainstay in philosophies of liberal democracy and is indeed a foundational tenet of American exceptionalism” (*Terrorist Assemblages*, 23).

⁸⁸ “Text of George Bush's Speech,” *The Guardian*, September 2001. Accessed: May 24, 2016. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/sep/21/september11.usa13>

⁸⁹ Klein writes: “[T]he child conceives of [certain objects] as actually dangerous— persecutors who it fears will devour it, scoop out the inside of its body, cut it to pieces, poison it—in short, compassing its destruction by all the means which sadism can devise...In paranoia the characteristic defences are chiefly aimed at annihilating the 'persecutors', while anxiety on the ego's account occupies a prominent place in the picture” (“A Contribution to the Psychogenesis of Manic-Depressive States,” 145-7).

⁹⁰ Dirk Nabers, “Filling the Void of Meaning: Identity Construction in U.S. Foreign Policy After September 11, 2001,” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 5, no. 2 (2009): 196. He also writes: “To perform the task of filling a void in an articulatory field, a signifier has to assume the role of an empty or a floating signifier. Empty signifiers are characterized by an indistinct or non-existent signified, that is, terms that can have different meanings and can thereby serve to unite disparate social movements. They have no fixed content and can embrace an open series of demands” (Ibid).

against individual lives, but a particular *way of life*, of freedom, with which the nation identifies. What is ultimately at stake, then, is the very identity of the nation, as a place of freedom. Yet freedom is much less at war with fear, in this case, than it is discursively produced as endangered, thereby phenomenologically entailing fear, which securitization supposedly attempts to suspend.

It is, of course, not unique to the United States that freedom (as well as the corresponding ideas like progress and tolerance) is claimed as the identity of the nation-state, for the history of European colonialism is full of examples where freedom is seen as a property of the west.⁹¹ What *is* peculiar, however, is the position that the United States assumes as the vanguard of freedom for the whole world. In the same speech, Bush also remarks: “This is not, however, just America's fight. And what is at stake is not just America's freedom. This is the world's fight. This is civilization's fight. This is the fight of all who believe in progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom...The advance of human freedom - the great achievement of our time, and the great hope of every time - now depends on us. Our nation - this generation - will lift a dark threat of violence from our people and our future. We will rally the world to this cause by our efforts, by our courage. We will not tire, we will not falter, and we will not fail.”⁹² Here, freedom is not

⁹¹ Paraphrasing Mannoni's condescending remarks on Madagascans, Aimé Césaire writes: “Don't let the subtleties of vocabulary, the new terminology, frighten you! You know the old refrain: “The-Negroes-are-big-children.” They take it, they dress it up for you, tangle it up for you. The result is Mannoni. Once again, be reassured! At the start of the journey it may seem a bit difficult, but once you get there, you'll see, you will find all your baggage again. Nothing will be missing, not even the famous *white man's burden*. Therefore, give ear: “Through these ordeals” (reserved for the Occidental), “one triumphs over the infantile fear of abandonment and acquires freedom and autonomy, which are the most precious possessions and also the burdens of the Occidental.” And the Madagascan? you ask. A lying race of bondsmen, Kipling would say. M. Mannoni makes his diagnosis: “The Madagascan does not even try to imagine such a situation of abandonment... He desires neither personal autonomy nor free responsibility.” (Come on, you know how it is. These Negroes can't even imagine what freedom is. They don't want it, they don't demand it. It's the white agitators who put that into their heads. And if you gave it to them, they wouldn't know what to do with it)” (“Discourse on Colonialism,” 15).

⁹² “Text of George Bush's Speech,” *The Guardian*, September 2001. Accessed: May 24, 2016. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/sep/21/september11.usa13>

only claimed as the identity for the nation, but the nation-state, as the possessor of such identity, sets itself up as “the power that guarantees world order and peace – and therefore every threat against the US is a threat against the world as a whole.”⁹³ This self-understanding is by no means confined to the kind of rhetoric the Bush administration chose to use. In the *National Security Strategy* released in February 2015, President Barack Obama states: “As Americans, we will always have our differences, but what unites us is the national consensus that American global leadership remains indispensable. We embrace our exceptional role and responsibilities at a time when our unique contributions and capabilities are needed most.”⁹⁴ While the broader rhetorical framing has by and large shifted since 2001 (Obama states in this document, for instance, “we have to make hard choices among many competing priorities, and we must always resist the over-reach that comes when we make decisions based upon fear. Moreover, we must recognize that a smart national security strategy does not rely solely on military power,”⁹⁵ thereby resisting alluding to emergency in the way that the Bush administration did in 2001), the U.S. continues to assume its position as the guarantor of the world's freedom.

Yet there is a paradox in this position assumed by the United States. Lars Svendsen notes that while assuming this position as the gatekeeper of “the continued existence of peace and liberal values,” the United States' own actions seem to be “exempt from these values in the fight to preserve them.”⁹⁶ He notes that just like the sovereign in Hobbes' account, the United States stands outside the very order it is committed to

⁹³ Lars Svendsen, *A Philosophy of Fear* (London: Reaktion Books, 2008), 115.

⁹⁴ “National Security Strategy,” *The White House*, February 2015. Accessed: July 22, 2016. https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015_national_security_strategy.pdf

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Lars Svendsen, *A Philosophy of Fear*, 115.

maintain. Employing Carl Schmitt's notion "state of exception," that is, the sovereign capacity to suspend the law in a state of emergency, Agamben suggests that the concept has become "the dominant paradigm of government in contemporary politics."⁹⁷

Referring to the investment of governments with the power to suspend constitutional rights, the notion "appears as a threshold of indeterminacy between democracy and absolutism."⁹⁸

The state of exception, or the practice of sovereignty by suspending the law, can be observed in two post-9/11 practices in particular: the rise of the drone strikes and the indefinite detention of individuals without trial in Guantanamo Bay. In both of these examples, a sovereign decision is made to "to *take* life or *let* live,"⁹⁹ which, according to Foucault, has historically been "replaced by a power to *foster* life or *disallow* it to the point of death"¹⁰⁰ in modern nation-states. I suggest that this anachronistic sovereign, however, operates in a biopolitical fashion, in that what is at stake is the protection of a population (of "our way of life") at the expense of another. Race, a biopolitical tool, is again central to this linking of sovereign power and biopower. As Judith Butler provides an extensive account of the permanent state of emergency established by the practice of indefinite detention,¹⁰¹ I will focus specifically on the drone wars in order to explore the

⁹⁷ Giorgio Agamben, *The State of Exception* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 2.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁹⁹ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality vol. 1* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 136. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 138. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁰¹ In "Indefinite Detention," Butler writes: "The state, in the name of its right to protect itself and, hence, and through the rhetoric of sovereignty, extends its power in excess of the law and defies international accords; for if the detention is indefinite, then the lawless exercise of state sovereignty becomes indefinite as well" (64). While "an illegitimate exercise of power," indefinite detention is also a "part of a broader tactic to neutralize the rule of law in the name of security" (67). In this way, indefinite detention serves as "the means by which the exceptional becomes established as a naturalized norm" (*Ibid.*). Similarly, in *State of Exception*, Agamben notes that the state of exception is a common practice today as "the voluntary creation of a permanent state of emergency (though perhaps not declared in the technical sense) has become one of the essential practices of contemporary states, including so-called democratic ones" (2). In this way, exclusion is built into the political system of these states: "[M]odern

linking of sovereign power and biopower.

Drone strikes have become a primary military strategy in the War on Terror, with the promise that these remotely piloted aircrafts armed with weaponry can isolate and take out known terrorists, without risking the lives of any U.S. military personnel. While began under the Bush administration in Pakistan, the drone strikes increased in number and frequency and were expanded to Yemen and Somalia under the leadership of Obama. While the rhetoric around the drone strikes is that they are “precise,” recent reports show an accuracy rate of 1.5-2%, with 98% of those killed by a strike being civilian casualties.¹⁰² *The Guardian* reports that “[a]n analytically conservative Council on Foreign Relations tally assesses that 500 drone strikes outside of Iraq and Afghanistan have killed 3,674 people.”¹⁰³ Multiple strikes are made at each target given the low accuracy rate of the drones. The top five targets whose (attempted) killings have resulted in the highest number of casualties as reported by *The Guardian* are the following: Baitullah Mehsud, who was killed after 7 strikes, which resulted in 164 casualties; Qari Hussain, killed after 6 strikes, with 128 casualties; Abu Ubaidah al Masri, killed after 3 strikes, alongside 120 casualties; Mullah Sangeen Zadran, killed after 3 strikes, with 108 casualties; and Ayman al-Zawahiri, who is still alive after 2 strikes that resulted in 105 casualties. Many of these casualties were children.

totalitarianism can be defined as the establishment, by means of the state of exception, of a legal civil war that allows for the physical elimination not only of political adversaries but of entire categories of citizens who for some reason cannot be integrated into the political system” (Ibid). In the case of the United States, Agamben notes that the practices of indefinite detention sanctioned by the PATRIOT Act exemplify how the state of exception allows for the radical erasure of “any legal status of the individual, thus producing a legally unnamable and unclassifiable being” (3), thereby reproducing, in the case of the suspected “terrorist,” the Roman law's figure of the Homo Sacer, who can be killed but not sacrificed.

¹⁰² “Get the Data: Drone Wars,” *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism*. Accessed: July 14, 2016.

<https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/category/projects/drones/drones-graphs/>

¹⁰³ Ackerman, Spencer. “41 men targeted but 1,147 people killed: US drone strikes – the facts on the ground,” *The Guardian* November 24, 2014. Accessed: July 14, 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2014/nov/24/-sp-us-drone-strikes-kill-1147>

The list of targets is passed from the CIA director to the President, who must approve each strike as he is “authorized to use all necessary and appropriate force”¹⁰⁴ by the Authorization for Use of Military Force that was passed by the Congress on September 14, 2001. Aside from a list of targets with names of known terrorists based on intelligence, “signature strikes” are made on those who are deemed suspicious. Any behavior from carrying a weapon to socializing with known terrorists could constitute suspicion and prompt a strike. This preemptive method where the target does not constitute an immediate threat violates international law. The United Nations Human Rights Council has expressed concern numerous times over these strikes being in violation of international law and human rights, stressing that these are extrajudicial killings that take place without the consent of the Pakistani government.¹⁰⁵

While a sense of sovereignty is very much present in the way in which drone strikes are authorized, by suspending the law, by the President's approval who is authorized to “use all necessary and appropriate force,” by means of a decision “to *take* life or *let* live,” such exercise of power is not wholly sovereign in the traditional sense for at least two reasons. First, “the sovereign,” who, in Foucault's account, exercises “his right of life only by exercising his right to kill, or by refraining from killing,”¹⁰⁶ is not a “he” in this case. Even though it would seem that the President is the sole subject of such exercise, there is, nonetheless, a complex network of power – assessments, calculations, reports, and so on – of which the President is not the originator, but instead within which

¹⁰⁴ “Public Law 107-40,” *GPO* September 18, 2001. Accessed: July 14, 2016. <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-107publ40/pdf/PLAW-107publ40.pdf>

¹⁰⁵ AFP, “UN wants investigation into drone attacks inside Pakistan,” *Dawn* June 7, 2012. Accessed: July 14, 2016. <http://www.dawn.com/news/724665/un-wants-investigation-into-drone-attacks-in-pakistan>
Cloud, David S. “U.N. report faults prolific use of drone strikes by U.S.,” *Los Angeles Times* June 3, 2010. Accessed: July 14, 2016. <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/jun/03/world/la-fg-cia-drones-20100603>

¹⁰⁶ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality vol 1*, 136.

he too is implicated, at work in these practices. This is, of course, due to how the government operates as a complex network. There are no “true sovereigns,” as Judith Butler puts it, in such practices, but instead, “their power is delegated, and they do not fully control the aims that animate their actions. Power precedes them, and constitutes them as 'sovereigns', a fact that already gives the lie to sovereignty.”¹⁰⁷ The kind of sovereignty that one observes in the adjudications of life and death today, then, is not a reversion to the original form of sovereignty, but is instead suggestive of a new form of governmentality, a new formulation of power, an “updated” sovereignty. William Connolly explains this new form of sovereignty in the following way: “[T]he sovereign is not simply (as Agamben and Schmitt tend to say) *he* (or *she*) who first decides that there is an exception and then decides how to resolve it. Sovereign is *that* which decides an exception exists and how to decide it, with *that* composed of a plurality of forces circulating through and under the positional sovereignty of the official arbitrating body.”¹⁰⁸ In other words, even though the exercise of power today may be sovereign in its operation, it is not necessarily located or grounded in a particular person or a particular institution, but is instead dispersed. This is one reason why I suggest that the kind of power that is exercised in such practices is a *hybrid* or an *assemblage*: it is both sovereign and biopolitical.¹⁰⁹

Another reason that is demonstrative of this assemblage is the following: this practice (the drone strikes), despite all its shortcomings, is defended as a matter of “life

¹⁰⁷ Judith Butler, “Indefinite Detention,” in *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London and New York: Verso, 2006), 62. Emphasis added.

¹⁰⁸ William Connolly, *Pluralism* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005), 145. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁰⁹ One way in which Foucault contrasts sovereign power and biopower is that sovereign power is centralized or located in a specific person or an institution, while biopower is dispersed, it is not centrally located.

necessity,” an essential tool in the elimination of threats (“the terrorists”) primarily in an effort to preserve and foster life for a whole population, the people of the United States, in the way in which this practice is framed. At a time when even the self-identified “democratic socialist” candidate Bernie Sanders has stated that he has no reservations about the use of drones (“and more”) as a strategy for anti-terrorism,¹¹⁰ we might want to question why this is the weapon of choice of the U.S. military despite its terrible accuracy rates. Here, we may again consider Foucault's distinction between sovereign power and biopower. Foucault notes that while sovereign power essentially consisted of “a right of seizure: of things, time, bodies, and ultimately life itself; it culminated in the privilege to seize hold of life in order to suppress it,”¹¹¹ the deployment of “power over life” takes a different form after seventeenth century: it is now a matter of preserving life, fostering it. He considers the phenomenon of genocide as a possible counterexample to his claim that now power organizes itself around the preservation and fostering of life:

Yet wars were never as bloody as they have been since the nineteenth century,¹¹² and all things being equal, never before did regimes visit such holocausts on their own populations. But this formidable power of death – and this is perhaps what accounts for part of its force and the cynicism with which it has so greatly expanded its limits – now presents itself as the counterpart of a power that exerts a positive influence on life, that endeavors to administer, optimize, and multiply it, subjecting it to precise controls and

¹¹⁰ Matthew Cantor, “Bernie Sanders says he would use drones to fight terror as president,” *The Guardian* October 11, 2015. Accessed: July 14, 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/oct/11/bernie-sanders-drones-counter-terror>

¹¹¹ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality vol 1*, 136.

¹¹² Here Foucault seems to completely disregard the colonization of the Americas and the Native American genocide that followed.

comprehensive regulations. *Wars are no longer waged in the name of a sovereign who must be defended; they are waged on behalf of the existence of everyone; entire populations are mobilized for the purpose of wholesale slaughter in the name of life necessity: massacres have become vital.* It is as managers of life and survival, of bodies and the race, that so many regimes have been able to wage so many wars, causing so many men to be killed...The atomic situation is now at the end point of this process: the power to expose a whole population to death is the underside of the power to guarantee an individual's continued existence. The principle underlying the tactics of battle that one has to be capable of killing in order to go on living – has become the principle that defines the strategy of states. But *the existence in question is no longer the juridical existence of sovereignty; at stake is the biological existence of a population.* If genocide is indeed the dream of modern powers, this is not because of a recent return of the ancient right to kill; *it is because power is situated and exercised at the level of life, the species, the race, and the large-scale phenomena of population.*¹¹³

In other words, what is now at stake is the existence of a threat directed at the biological existence of a population, which serves as a justificatory mechanism for war. While the exercise of the sovereign right to kill may very well pertain to a threat against sovereignty, here, within the realm of biopolitics, both the object of the threat and what follows from it are different. The paradox of biopower is that it kills in the name of life and that life deems these killings necessary. It is precisely at this juncture that race becomes an issue, as biopower functions through race and by way of establishing,

¹¹³ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* vol. 1, 136-7. My emphasis.

securing, and operating through racial categories. There is a differential logic at work in the protection of life, for it is always the protection of life of a particular group at the expense of another. This is precisely what is at stake in the use of drones: the drone strikes are a biopolitical tool in that they are used in the name of preserving life that *counts* (the life of the people of the U.S.), while the fact that they kill over a hundred more people when attempting to kill one has little moral (and political) weight, in that those lives *do not count as lives*, thereby their deaths do not count as deaths. This differential logic is embodied in the concept of race whereby in the use of the notions of freedom and security underlie a matter of freedom and security *of a particular group*, at the expense of others. Securitization, in this context, utilizing an assemblage of sovereign power and biopower, is always about the security of one particular group at the expense of another, even when these differences are sought to be erased on the level of discourse with the use of generalized terms like “humanity,” “the world” or “American people.” Securitization, in this context, does not make the world safe. Securitization does not make U.S. Americans safe.¹¹⁴ Securitization is the prerogative of a privileged group over others, perpetuating the notion that some lives matter more than the others, a notion that manifests itself in the process of racialization. While the drone strikes annihilate whole communities, they are not understood as an act of genocide, but rather a matter of securitization. What determines the meaning here, of course, is the question: whose security?

This differential logic that operates through racial categories has now been integrated within sovereign exercises of power as in the case of drone strikes, indefinite

¹¹⁴ I will unpack this point in the next section: securitization in tandem with militarization works to radicalize more individuals, leading to less security in the long run.

detention, and the illegal invasion and occupation of Iraq. It would seem that the lines between biopolitics and sovereignty have by and large been blurred in the exercise of power over life and death. In making the claim that there is a conjunction between sovereign power and biopower, I would, however, like to differentiate my position from that of Agamben's, who suggests that far from replacing sovereign power (as suggested by Foucault), biopower has always been at the very heart of sovereignty. He writes:

The present inquiry concerns precisely this hidden point of intersection between the juridico-institutional and the biopolitical models of power. What this work has had to record among its likely conclusions is precisely that the two analyses cannot be separated, and that the inclusion of bare life in the political realm constitutes the original – if concealed – nucleus of sovereign power. *It can even be said that the production of a biopolitical body is the original activity of sovereign power.* In this sense, biopolitics is at least as old as the sovereign exception. Placing biological life at the center of its calculations, the modern State therefore does nothing other than bring to light the secret tie uniting power and bare life, thereby reaffirming the bond (derived from a tenacious correspondence between the modern and the archaic which one encounters in the most diverse spheres) between modern power and the most immemorial of the *arcana imperii*.¹¹⁵

Agamben's claim that power has always been biopolitical is a claim about the very nature of politics which has endured throughout history. It involves, in other words, a metaphysical inquiry into power, one which I do not wish to undertake. Rather than

¹¹⁵ Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 6. Emphasis in the original.

decontextualizing the specific mechanisms through which power operates today, my approach is to attempt to situate them in history. My contention is that the politics of paranoia, in its implementation within and by the United States (yet not restricted to this particular implementation), is very much tied to the broader histories and legacies of colonialism and imperialism. It is particularly within these broader histories that we must consider the politics of race in the United States both before and after the September 11 attacks, for it is hardly the case that the government came to commit these violations in the name of national security only in the aftermath of these attacks. As the Westside Story song “America” suggests, “Life is alright in America/If you are all white in America” (although racial hierarchy is certainly not the only form of oppression, so perhaps we might rephrase this as “Life is alright in America/If you're a white, able-bodied, rich, cis, heterosexual, etc. man in America”), the notion of freedom in this country has always been tainted by racial oppression, as national security has always been used as a tool for subjugating racialized minorities. Freedom which, according to Bush, the United States represents, is a way of life only for a lucky few, while underlying this notion of American exceptionalism is ultimately exception, in the form of a set of expulsions, domestic and abroad, justified within the framework of national security through the codification of racialized bodies as threatening. As Saito writes: “When we look at the treatment of immigrant groups of color in the United States, we see that while the motivation both to bring in and to exclude has generally been economic, the rhetoric used to deny them rights and benefits has not only been framed in racialized terms; these terms, in turn, are linked to the rhetoric of national security. The oft-evoked goal of 'preserving 'our' way of life' thus has both a racial and a more explicitly political dimension. This is interesting because the United States is consistently

characterized as a nation of immigrants—a framing necessary to maintain an appearance of legitimacy, given that it is, in fact, a settler-colonial state occupying someone else’s land—but, at the same time, immigrants are the first to be attacked as threatening to the social, economic, and/or racial status quo.”¹¹⁶

It is not a contradiction per se, then, that Bush called for securitization in the name of freedom, or that national security is tied to freedom both conceptually and in practice, for freedom in question seems to have always entailed the elimination of enemies (both internal and external) who are almost always racialized groups. The identity that the U.S. assumes for itself as the guardian of freedom hinges on its ability to annihilate threats, much similar to Klein's account of the infant in the paranoid-schizoid position seeking to preserve oneself only by means of eliminating danger. The questions that are pressing within the framework of the politics of paranoia are *whose freedom* and *whose security*, for these notions are racially differentiated. While the expulsion and dispossession of (racialized) minorities, intolerance to difference and ambiguity, obsession with categorization demonstrate some of the ways in which the politics of paranoia functions, and while, based on this history, one may claim that the nation-state itself may very well be a paranoid political formation, attending to the specific practices undertaken by the state and the colonialist/imperialist legacies that ground these practices give us a more intricate, contextually specific picture of the workings of the politics of paranoia. It is my contention that the operations of the politics of paranoia within and by the United States only make sense within the larger framework of colonialist/imperialist legacies and the globalization of white supremacy.

¹¹⁶ Saito, “The Costs of Homeland Security,” 59.

2.4 Paranoia as Autoimmune Politics

The biopolitical order that operates through a logic of expulsion is based on arbitrary, artificial distinctions (i.e. race) that are historically contingent. Cesare Pavese famously states, “[E]very war is a civil war,” in that the sight of the dead brings into question the arbitrariness and the substitutability that wars inherently entail, yet the sight of death erases the artificial distinctions that are made, which are meant to be the driving force of war: “Looking at certain dead is humiliating. One feels humiliated because one understands – touching it with one's eyes – that we might be in their place ourselves: there would be no difference, and if we live we owe it to this dirtied corpse.”¹¹⁷ Perhaps it is for this reason, in the case of drone strikes, that the civilian deaths are very much kept out of sight. Yet, as Judith Butler makes clear in “Violence, Mourning, Politics,” death is not mourned if the life of the deceased had never counted as life in the first place and the forcefulness that their death would have in compelling one to face one's own fragility thereby gets lost.

What happens, then, when the War on Terror is presented as something that is never-ending, in the way that the Bush administration has done? What happens when the preemptive measures that are taken in the name of securitization are never enough, for one can never be safe enough? In the context of deep securitization where the identity of the nation cannot be thought apart from the existential threats posed on it (in the case of the public discourse around “freedom” that emerges as always already endangered), securitization names an ever-growing machinery, an insatiable monster that swallows everything whole, even its own makers. Security, in such formulation, is inherently excessive: it has no end point, it constantly remakes and unmakes itself, it creates more

¹¹⁷ Pavese, *The House on the Hill* (NY: Walker & Co, 1961), 176.

enemies, bigger enemies, just so it can defeat them. It is in this sense, then, that the politics of paranoia is inherently self-destructive, for its excessive measures for securitization ultimately results in bigger endangerments. It betrays its own purpose.

Melanie Klein's account of the paranoid-schizoid position in infants show that the mother's breast is at once a gratifying and a frustrating object for the infant, and thus the infant at this particular stage of development rejects the breast, deems it threatening, despite the fact that as a primary source of nourishment, the rejection of the breast risks the infant's own survival. Kristeva's account of abjection draws on a similar mechanism of expulsion that is inherently self-destructive. The process of abjection is precisely the process whereby the ego attempts to eliminate the threat, but only to end up harming itself, because of the object's disruptive ontological status as that which blurs the lines between the subject and the object. She describes "food loathing" as "the most elementary and most archaic form of abjection"¹¹⁸ in following words: "I want none of that element...I do not want to listen, I do not assimilate it, I expel it. But since the food is not an 'other' for 'me', who am only in their desire, I expel *myself*, I spit *myself* out, I abject *myself* within the same motion through which I claim to establish *myself*."¹¹⁹ The paradox of abjection, then, is that it is a self-destructive move made for the sake of self-preservation. This is the case because the primary difference between an object and the object is that the object is not definable in the way that an object is, it is rather "the jettisoned object...radically excluded and draws me toward the place where meaning collapses."¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 2.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, 3.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, 2.

Underlying abjection is a specific logic of expulsion that is inherently self-destructive in its efforts of (what it perceives as) self-preservation. Abjection is not only a psychological mechanism but also a political tool, as in the case of expulsions. Derrida's characterization of the September 11 attacks as symptomatic of the *autoimmunity* of the foreign policy of the United States, for instance, shows this very dimension of self-destruction within a politics of paranoia that centralizes the elimination of danger or the annihilation of threats as a necessary project for the nation-state under a state of emergency. Derrida writes:

As we know, an autoimmunitary process is that strange behavior where a living being, in quasi-*suicidal* fashion, 'itself' works to destroy its own protection, to immunize itself *against* its 'own' immunity...Immigrated, trained, prepared for their act in the United States by the United States, these *hijackers* incorporate, so to speak, two suicides in one: their own (and one will remain forever defenseless in the face of a suicidal, autoimmunitary aggression – and that is what terrorizes the most) but also the suicide of those who welcomed, armed, and trained them. For let us not forget that the United States had in effect paved the way for and consolidated the forces of the 'adversary' by training people like 'bin Laden', who would here be the most striking example, and by first of all creating the politico-military circumstances that would favor their emergence and their shifts in allegiance.¹²¹

¹²¹ Jacques Derrida, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jurgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida*, ed. Giovanna Borradori (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 94-5.

If we were to consider the significance of Derrida's account in the context of today, a similar occurrence can be observed in the rise of Daesh, which is at least partly due to their success in getting a hold of Iraqi stocks of equipment, many of which had been left there after the Iraq War by the United States.¹²² What makes this even more striking is the fact that a report released by American intelligence agencies in 2006 actually predicted the likely emergence of new terrorist organizations, as their assessment shows that “the American invasion and occupation of Iraq has helped spawn a new generation of Islamic radicalism and that the overall terrorist threat has grown since the Sept. 11 attacks.”¹²³ The autoimmunity that one can associate with these strategies of securitization is particularly pertinent at a time when the U.S. just recently gave up on training “moderate” rebels in Syria, instead choosing to provide other groups with basic military equipment in their struggle against Daesh.¹²⁴

Furthermore, in terms of the excess relayed by these strategies, one may want to consider the process through which the United States Special Forces' kill list of seven targets gradually turned into a kill list of hundreds, which then in turn became a kill list of thousands.¹²⁵ The War on Terror has “made the world a much less safe place,”¹²⁶ in that these strategies have led to the creation of more enemies than the ones that have been defeated, even by the government agencies' own calculations. If we were to take the former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's words to heart that “the war against

¹²² Van Buren, “Dude Where is My Humvee? Iraq Losing Equipment to Islamic State at a Staggering Rate,” *Reuters*, June 2, 2015. Accessed: July 21, 2016. <http://blogs.reuters.com/great-debate/2015/06/02/dude-wheres-my-humvee-iraqi-equipment-losses-to-islamic-state-are-out-of-control/>

¹²³ Mazzetti, “Spy Agencies Say Iraq War Worsens Terrorism Threat,” *New York Times*, September 24, 2006. Accessed: July 21, 2016. http://www.nytimes.com/2006/09/24/world/middleeast/24terror.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

¹²⁴ “US to scrap Syria rebel training programme,” *Al Jazeera*, October 9, 2015. Accessed: July 22, 2016. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/10/overhaul-syria-rebel-training-programme-151009133250518.html>

¹²⁵ See: Jeremy Scahill, *Dirty Wars: The World is A Battlefield*. New York: Nation Books, 2013.

¹²⁶ Svendsen, *A Philosophy of Fear*, 114.

terror would have been won when Americans could once more feel secure,” then, as Svendsen puts, “it would seem that a war is being fought that cannot be won.”¹²⁷

Yet perhaps this is a war that is *not meant to be won once and for all*, waged against a shifting, unknown enemy; a permanent war to ceaselessly feed the military-industrial complex and a handful of corporations that are its profiteers.¹²⁸ There is a lot of money to be made in war, a fact that “the rich and powerful of America have remained keenly conscious of” ever since World War II, which brought an end to the Great Depression by resolving the disequilibrium between supply and demand as “the state 'primed the pump' of economic demand by means of huge orders of a military nature.”¹²⁹ An economic system that is dependent on war for maximizing profit has given rise to a political system that constantly needs to create new enemies and new threats, without regard to human life or the wellbeing of the planet, as war is one of the primary culprits in environmental degradation. Corporate interests are central to this historical process in which the United States has morphed into a national security state, regardless of the status of immediate threats to security. Even after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 that marked the end of the Cold War (and the triumph of capitalism), for instance, “the United States perpetuated and maintained as much as possible a Cold War national security state in style and size.”¹³⁰

As one protester's sign that has recently been popularized online reads: “If war is an industry, how can there be peace in a capitalist world?” While a major driving force

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ For lists of companies that profit the most from war, please see: “The 25 Most Vicious Iraq War Profiteers,” *Business Pundit*, July 22, 2008; Samuel Weigley, “10 companies profiting the most from war,” *USA Today*, March 10, 2013; Vince Calio & Alexander E.M. Hess, “Here Are the 5 Companies Making a Killing Off War Around the World,” *Time*, March 14, 2014.

¹²⁹ Pauwels, “Why America Needs War,” *Global Research*, November 9, 2014. Accessed: July 21, 2016. <http://www.globalresearch.ca/why-america-needs-war/5328631>

¹³⁰ Wirls, *Irrational Security*, 7.

for these practices of securitization (i.e. practices of war) is most certainly economic interest, this hardly give us the full story. The politics of paranoia, as I argued, operates as a political rationality with its own set of tools, techniques, and justificatory mechanisms. The logic of expulsion that I explored in this chapter is a thread in that web of power relations that make up securitization. Securitization, after all, takes place at the intersection of global capitalism, militarization, and white supremacy, and its operations, as I suggested, ensue in a paranoid political framework. The destruction that these practices bring about are not limited to the paradox of autoimmunity where securitization brings with it more insecurity. The drone strikes in particular (and war in general) do not only destroy communities and result in thousands of civilian deaths, but also have a devastating impact on the environment. Militarization is one of the primary causes of environmental degradation, which brings with it a planetary emergency that affects us all. The interconnectedness of these issues is the reason why environmentalist groups like Deep Green Resistance argue: “Militarism is a feminist issue, rape is an environmental issue, environmental destruction is a peace issue.” The struggle against securitization, therefore, cannot be a “single-issue struggle,”¹³¹ to borrow from Audre Lorde, as these issues are very much connected. The excess that is inherent to these security measures may be affecting different populations differently at this point in time, yet that is bound to change, be it in the form of a “boomerang effect” of violence or in the context of climate change as a looming issue for the entire planet.

2.5 Conclusion: “Fuck Your Racist Borders”

I wish to end this chapter with a little personal anecdote that is of much relevance to my approach to securitization at large and border security in particular. I land in Los

¹³¹ Audre Lorde, “Learning from the 60s” in *Sister Outsider* (Berkeley: Crossing Press, 2007), 138.

Angeles after a 14 hour flight and go through passport control. I get my fingerprints scanned and my picture taken, as usual. As I rush to the exit, exhausted and longing for sleep, I recognize the growing queue to go through customs. When it is finally my turn, the officer asks the standard questions, where do you come from, what type of visa do you have, where do you study...He then asks when I'm going to Oregon, where my institution is located, and I tell him Saturday. That is three days later. He asks me where I'm staying. I say with some friends. What friends, how do you know them, where did you meet, he demands to know. "Well, actually," I say, "they are the parents of my boyfriend. They are here to pick me up. I'll be staying with them for a few days." He gives me a disconcerted look. "Is your boyfriend an American citizen?" he asks. "Yes," I answer. He looks at me as if I am a thorn on his side. "So you're never leaving, huh?" he says. The question sounds rhetorical. I force a smile. I suffer from homesickness often and I'm heartbroken about all I had to leave behind. It pains me that I live two separate lives that I fail to reconcile, I pause and restart each time, speak in two languages, both of which fail me in my attempt to express the split, the alienation, the uprootedness I experience on a daily basis. I force a smile. For I have to convince him that I am no leech. Yet I stutter, for I do not know what to say. "I will leave," I say, "when I finish my program," or something to that effect. He remains unconvinced. He dismisses me and I can finally go out. I recall a news story that I read, about a white British family arriving in my home country Turkey, whose four year old had a toy passport with dinosaurs. The child handed the "passport" to the officer at passport control, and he stamped it without even looking. One has to have the right kind of government issued passport, I think, and the right skin color, so that she can move freely. Yet I know that I am still far more

privileged than many others in these spaces, those who have Irani passports, Iraqi passports, those who have no passports at all. Years later, I read a poem by Ijeoma Umebinyuo entitled “Diaspora Blues” and all of these thoughts come back to haunt me: “So, / here you are / too foreign for home / too foreign for here. / never enough for both.”

Today, Trump supporters continue on chanting, “Build that wall.” Under the Obama administration, Central Americans and Mexicans continue to be deported by tens of thousands, their houses raided in the middle of the night. Nearly 90,000 people had been deported to Central America alone in 2015.¹³² Meanwhile, immigrant-rights activists Kica Matos, Ana María Rivera-Forastieri and Alicia R. Schmidt Camacho, get arrested at a rally by the White House calling to end these deportations, 83 of which resulted in the death of those deported in 2014.¹³³ In pro-refugee rallies all over the United States, protesters hold signs that read “Will Trade Racists For Refugees.” Clinton and Sanders seek to assure the voters that the borders are secure. Meanwhile, decolonial activist groups declare, “Fuck your racist borders.”¹³⁴ And they have a point.

Within the framework of the politics of paranoia where the expulsion of the racialized Other constitutes a primary means for eliminating existential threats, what border security ultimately signifies is the securing of a biopolitical order where privilege is limited for a few, the Other's life is “disallowed,” and the nation-state sustains itself by

¹³² Grandin, Greg. “Here's Why the US Is Stepping Up the Deportation of Central Americans,” *The Nation* January 21, 2016. Accessed: July 14, 2016. <https://www.thenation.com/article/heres-why-the-us-is-stepping-up-the-deportation-of-central-americans/>

¹³³ “New Haven Immigrant Rights Professor Arrested At White House,” *New Haven Independent* February 23, 2016. Accessed: July 14, 2016. http://www.newhavenindependent.org/index.php/archives/entry/new_haven_immigrant_rights_protesters_arrested_at_white_house/

¹³⁴ One example is a UK based activist group called Black Dissidents who shared a video on their Facebook page depicting an act of hanging colorful balloons on top of the fence at Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre, a detention center in UK where foreign nationals, many of whom are women. They captioned the video with the following words: “Fuck your racist borders. Their days are numbered. #EndDetention #ShutDownYarlsWood”

way of purification. Desecuritization, in this context, as an undoing of these practices and a deconstruction of their discursive significance, is a decolonial project insofar as it recognizes the historical ties of these practices to coloniality and seeks their abandonment. It entails a decodification where the Other would no longer signify a threat, but would hold instead the possibility of an encounter of another kind.

CHAPTER III

TEMPORALITY

In the previous chapter, I discussed the exclusionary logic of paranoia that has historically worked through racialization. Racialization is the identification of groups and individuals that are to be subjected to mechanisms of expulsion, in order for the dominant classes to maintain their status, a process that is understood as (and seen to be justified by) securitization. The practices around national security in the United States in particular have relied on racialization as well as the expulsion of racialized groups, which has taken many forms including detention and deportation. The expulsion of the racialized Other in Europe during the ongoing refugee crisis justified by a discourse around border security attests to similar investments. While economic interest has been at play historically in the development of these practices around national security, the politics of paranoia also involves kinds of attachment that cannot be explained merely through interest, but more appropriately through the concept of desire.

Yet, given that the annihilation of threats is its primary objective, the politics of paranoia involves a temporal dimension, in that the threat as threat is always structured as futural. Insofar as securitization works through preemption that allows for the management of future possibilities, the politics of paranoia entails a future-orientation of a specific kind. There is, in other words, a paranoid temporality at work within the practices of securitization. As Sedgwick explains, paranoid temporality indicates a particular relation to the future that seeks to eliminate the possibility of surprise: “This unidirectionally future-oriented vigilance of paranoia generates, paradoxically, a complex relation to temporality that burrows both backward and forward: because there must be no bad

surprises, and because learning the possibility of a bad surprise would itself constitute a bad surprise, paranoia requires that bad news be always already known”¹³⁵ This imperative, that bad news must “always already be known” entails an intolerance toward indeterminacy, uncertainty, and unknowability. This intolerance calls for the use of preemptive mechanisms that ought to annihilate the *possibility* of threats before they actualize.

Louise Amoore's account of “the politics of possibility” that seeks to *preempt* rather than to *prevent* (a distinction she makes by drawing on two different logics at work in the “preemptive” use of risk management that hinges on possibility, as opposed to the “preventive” use of statistical data that draws on probability) names a current trend in securitization (and beyond, in her account) that is linked to a paranoid temporal structure. According to Amoore, the politics of possibility, which I see as a genre of a politics of paranoia, “seeks not to forestall the future via calculation but to incorporate the very unknowability and profound uncertainty of the future into imminent decision.”¹³⁶ In other words, in contemporary political practice, preemption offers a way to deal with anxiety that is produced by unknowability and uncertainty, not by means of the prevention of certain events taking place, but instead through the projection of possibilities, managing risks, and making decisions “in anticipation of the uncertain future.”¹³⁷ As Amoore's account shows, “the very calculus of risk had changed.”¹³⁸ It now entails “the imperative of action...when there is *low probability but high consequence*.”¹³⁹

In the following, I explore preemption as a set of political practices that entails a paranoid temporal structure through the example of the FBI's sting operations where the

¹³⁵ Sedgwick, “Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading,” 130.

¹³⁶ Louise Amoore, *The Politics of Possibility: Risk and Security Beyond Probability* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2013), 9.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 23.

¹³⁹ Ibid, 24.

target that is deemed to be a “future threat” is encouraged and provided all the necessary means to carry out a terror attack by undercover FBI agents. I suggest that these practices not only are indicative of a will to manage future possibilities, but they also seek to fold the future possibilities into the present in that they make a “future threat” actualize in the present, serving as, as it were, a self-fulfilling prophecy. As the calculus of risk moves away from high probability toward low probability/high consequence, these practices mimic those of the fictional organization Precrime in Philip K. Dick's famous short story “The Minority Report,” which seeks to arrest “criminals” before they actually commit any crime. While Amore's account is helpful in mapping out the temporal logic of preemption, it falls short of identifying the process of racialization that is at work in these practices, to which one must attend. Even though the process of weeding out future threats emphatically entails an agential practice, the illusion provided by data, calculation, algorithms, and so on, serves to “deny the politics of all decision,”¹⁴⁰ and thereby to relinquish all responsibility. In the last section, I investigate alternatives to this paranoiac relation to the future that would instill an open sense of futurity and underscore political responsibility, by exploring a politics of hope as an alternative.

3.1 The Politics of Paranoid Temporality

“The Minority Report” is a short story written by Philip K. Dick published in 1956 that explores the notion of predictive policing through Precrime, an organization that detains “individuals who have broken no law...but...*surely will*,”¹⁴¹ with the aid of three “precog” mutants who see into the future: “In our society we have no major crimes’, Anderton went on, ‘but we do have a detention camp full of would-be

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 163-4.

¹⁴¹ Philip K. Dick, “The Minority Report” in *Selected Stories of Philip K. Dick* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013), 224-5. Emphasis added.

criminals'.¹⁴² The protagonist of the story is the head of Precrime named John A. Anderton. As the story progresses, the question whether “criminals” who have yet to commit a crime are in fact criminals gets complicated for Anderton who in the beginning was convinced that the system he set up is “something of tremendous social value.”¹⁴³ “If we let one criminal escape – as we did five years ago,” he states in the story, “we've got a human life on our conscience. We're solely responsible. If we slip up, somebody dies...It's a public trust.”¹⁴⁴ Yet, upon receiving a card from the predictive machinery with his own name as a would-be murderer, he knows “[w]ith absolute, overwhelming conviction” that it cannot be true.¹⁴⁵ Convinced that there is a conspiracy against him, he begins suspecting everyone around him, including his wife, Lisa:

To plant the card in the machines would require an accomplice on the inside – someone who was closely connected with Precrime and had access to the analytical equipment. Lisa was an improbable element. But the possibility did exist...Of course, the conspiracy could be large-scale and elaborate, involving far more than a 'rigged' card inserted somewhere along the line. The original data itself might have been tampered with. Actually, there was no telling how far back the alteration went. A cold fear touched him as he began to see the possibilities. His original impulse – to tear open the machines and remove all the data – was uselessly primitive. Probably the tapes agreed with the card: He would only incriminate himself further.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² Ibid, 225.

¹⁴³ Ibid, 227.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 228.

Helplessly caught up within the system he himself helped create, whose work is premised upon the elimination of the *possibility* of crime, Anderton is in absolute denial throughout the story that he would actually commit this crime, the murder of Leopold Kaplan, a man he had never met. Upon hearing on the radio that there might be a minority report, a report by one of the precogs showing an alternative future where Anderton does not commit the crime, he seeks to prove his innocence by obtaining the minority report. The reporter on the radio explains: "...unanimity of all three precogs is a hoped-for but seldom-achieved phenomenon...It is much more common to obtain a collaborative majority report of two precogs, plus a minority report of some slight variation, usually with reference to time and place, from the third mutant."¹⁴⁷ As he expects, one of the precogs' reports demonstrates that upon finding out that he will kill someone, Anderton decides not to: "The preview of the murder had canceled out the murder; prophylaxis had occurred simply in his being informed. Already, a new time-path had been created."¹⁴⁸ Yet, since the collaborative report suggests otherwise, if Anderton ends up not committing murder, this brings the whole Precrime system into question. When he shares the information he found in the minority report with Lisa, she says: "Perhaps a lot of the people in the camps are like you."¹⁴⁹

"No," Anderton insisted. But he was beginning to feel uneasy about it, too.

"I was in a position to see the card, to get a look at the report. That's what did it."

"But —" Lisa gestured significantly, "Perhaps all of them would have reacted that way. We could have told them the truth."

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 240.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 243.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 244.

“It would have been too great a risk,” he answered stubbornly.

Lisa laughed sharply. “Risk? Chance? Uncertainty? With precogs around?”¹⁵⁰

This is the point in the story where the legitimacy of the Precrime system is irrevocably undermined. Nothing can justify the detainment of those who have committed no crime any longer, as the precogs are revealed to show only future *possibilities*, rather than events that inevitably happen. If knowledge of the future alters the future, Anderton is forced to face the reality that detaining the “would-be criminals” (or rather, “could-be criminals”) may not have been the only option – even though he insists that it is the necessary option since the alternative would be “too great a risk.” Refusing to lose faith in the system, however, Anderton is afraid if he fails to kill the man he was “prophesied” to kill, the Senate will end up bringing down Precrime, on the grounds that it is inherently flawed: “They are going to demand the Senate disband us, and take away our authority. They're going to claim we've been arresting innocent men – nocturnal police raids, that sort of thing. Rule by terror.”¹⁵¹ Anderton believes that there is only one option: “We've got ourselves boxed in and there's only one direction we can go. Whether we like it or not, we'll have to take it...Very obviously, I'm going to have to fulfill the publicized report. I'm going to have to kill Kaplan. That's the only way we can keep them from discrediting us.”¹⁵²

Interestingly, Anderton not only stubbornly refuses to doubt the legitimacy of Precrime upon reading all three reports, he also goes on to fulfill the prophecy willingly,

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 244-5.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 253.

¹⁵² Ibid.

while being in denial about his own criminality:

“They won't stop you?”

“Why should they? They've got that minority report that says I've changed my mind.”

“Then the minority report is incorrect?”

“No,” Anderton said, “it's absolutely correct. But I'm going to murder Kaplan anyhow.”¹⁵³

In the speech his target Kaplan gives on the illegitimacy of the Precrime system, he notes:

“John Allison Anderton is innocent of any crime in the past, present, and future. The allegations against him were patent frauds, diabolical distortions of a contaminated penal system based on a false premise – a vast, impersonal engine of destruction grinding men and women to their doom...Many men have been seized and imprisoned under the so-called prophylactic Precrime structure...[a]ccused not of crimes they have committed, *but of crimes they will commit*. It is asserted that these men, if allowed to remain free, will at some future time commit felonies...But there can be no valid knowledge about the future. As soon as precognitive information is obtained, *it cancels itself out*. The assertion that this man will commit a future crime is paradoxical. The very act of possessing this data renders it spurious. In every case, without exception, the report of the three police precogs has invalidated their own data. If no arrests had been

¹⁵³ Ibid, 253-4.

made, there would still have been no crimes committed.”¹⁵⁴

While Anderton knows that Kaplan is absolutely right, he refuses to see Precrime dissolved. He knows that he has no interest in killing Kaplan, but ends up doing so regardless, so that the majority report is proven to be true and that there are no doubts raised about the accuracy of the system. He recognizes his position as a unique one, not willing to admit that others who might be in the same position, upon being told that they will commit murder, might very well not do it.

The logic of Precrime that Anderton becomes a murderer in order to defend, rests not on probability but on possibility, for that which prompts those arrests is revealed to be the possibility of crime, rather than the actual likelihood. In this way, this logic is indicative of preemption rather than prevention, in that the future possibilities get folded into the present: the objective is to preempt the crime by presuming it “actualized” in the present, rather than to prevent it in the future. The way in which the story unfolds is indicative of a paranoid logic in at least two ways, in parallel to contemporary preemptive practices such as the FBI's sting operations or the signature drone strikes where a target is selected based on involvement in “suspicious activity.” First, there is a paranoid temporality at work in these practices as they are not only anticipatory in nature, but also “only act on a potentiality that is already actualized as a possibility.”¹⁵⁵ Secondly, despite hiding behind the massive machinery that legitimizes these practices as “scientific,” calculative, or “neutral,” they heavily rely on “the inductive incorporation of suspicion, imagination, and preemption,” as opposed to “the deductive proving or disproving of scientific and statistical data,”¹⁵⁶ suggesting that they involve a paranoid

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 257. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁵⁵ Amoore, *The Politics of Possibility*, 26.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 13.

affective disposition in order to ground themselves. The performance of this affect, which I aim to underscore with the term “the politics of paranoia,” runs throughout “The Minority Report.” I unpack these two points in the following by drawing connections between the underlying logic of Precrime and the FBI's sting operations.

Trevor Aaronson reports in his journalistic work *Terror Factory* that since 2001, “the FBI has built the largest network of spies ever to exist in the United States – with ten times as many informants on the streets today as there were during the infamous Cointelpro operations under FBI director J. Edgar Hoover – with the majority of these spies focused on ferreting out terrorism in Muslim communities.”¹⁵⁷ While they began under the Bush administration, these sting operations became much more frequent under Obama's presidency, which led to the prosecution of seventy-five terrorism sting targets in the first three years that Obama was in office.¹⁵⁸ Aaronson writes:

By August 2011, with nearly ten years of terrorism prosecutions since 9/11, we had a database of 508 defendants whom the U.S. Government considered terrorists. The way the data broke down was illuminating. Of the 508 defendants, 243 had been targeted through an FBI informant, 158 had been caught in an FBI terrorism sting, and 49 had encountered an agent provocateur. Most of the people who didn't face off against an informant weren't directly involved with terrorism at all, but were instead Category II offenders, small-time criminals with distant links to terrorists overseas. Seventy-two of these Category II offenders had been charged with making false statements, while 121 had been prosecuted for

¹⁵⁷ Trevor Aaronson, *The Terror Factory: Inside the FBI's Manufactured War on Terrorism* (Brooklyn: Ig Publishing, 2013), 16.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 33.

immigration violations. Of the 508 cases, I could count on one hand the number of actual terrorists, such as failed New York City subway bomber Najibullah Zazi, who posed a direct and immediate threat to the United States.¹⁵⁹

This data suggests that the practices undertaken in the name of War on Terror has practically created a monster which constantly needs to be fed. In the absence of real terrorists, terrorists must be created out of troubled individuals who fit the terrorist profile that the Bureau has, with the help of, of course, \$3 billion that it receives each year “to prevent the next 9/11,” an amount larger than the allocation to fight organized crime.¹⁶⁰ What matters is not that “Islamic terrorism in the United States is not an immediate and dangerous threat,”¹⁶¹ since the focus now is on the “low probability, high consequence events.”¹⁶² What is particularly striking about the logic that underlies these sting operations is how despite the rhetoric that the government officials use, that these operations in turn “prevent” the real threat of terrorism, their modus operandi is preemption rather than prevention.

Amoore notes that the preventive approach of the twentieth century has recently been replaced by preemptive techniques: “Supplying diverse domains, from border security to public space surveillance to fraud detection in insurance, the programs deploy data mining and analytics in order to derive indicators of differential risk: risk flags, maps, and scores that signal possible future risks. The individual elements of data may have low probabilities as risks in themselves, but once they are disaggregated,

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 15.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 17.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Amoore, *The Politics of Possibility*, 56.

reaggregated, and assembled as associated elements, novel and possibility-based forms of risk calculus begin to emerge.”¹⁶³ These risk assessments offer a way to manage future possibilities that are ultimately unmanageable: “the vast proliferation of data mining and analytics for security is taking place against a backdrop of the impossibility of prediction. Seeking out precisely the unpredictable and the potentially catastrophic, algorithmic systems supply the sovereign with partial, incomplete knowledge of possibility.”¹⁶⁴ Yet far from constituting an impasse, the impossibility of prediction is the very force that drives these practices that are much less concerned with probabilities than with possibilities.

The management of future possibilities as a central project for securitization yields something more radical than a passive mapping out of future possibilities and the mere elimination of the “threatening” ones. If the imperative of paranoid temporality is that “there must be no bad surprises,” the FBI’s sting operations show that those bad surprises are not only weeded out through threat assessments, but are also *made to actualize* to prove those assessments true. Much like the organization Precrime in “The Minority Report,” which operates under the presumption of the necessity to eliminate *the possibility* of crime (rather than the probability, which is not taken into account until Anderton himself is implicated), the FBI’s preemptive practices seek not only to meticulously calculate the future threats, but also to *make* some of those possibilities take place in order to eradicate them. Within the logic of preemption, as Amoore puts it, “it is necessary to act to preempt what they *would* do, if they *could*.”¹⁶⁵ Thus paranoid temporality in this case is not only anticipatory in that it seeks to “identify future events

¹⁶³ Ibid, 56.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 54.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 24.

before they take place,” it also folds the future into the present: “[T]his is a form of governing that can only act on a potentiality that is already actualized as a possibility – a plane that would have been boarded, a border that would have been crossed, a future violence that would have been fully realized.”¹⁶⁶ Just as the agents in “The Minority Report” are convinced that the crime would have been committed if they were not there to stop it, the sting operations seek to actualize a future possibility that would otherwise actualize if the “pre-criminals” were to be approached by “real terrorists” rather than the informants of the FBI.

It is within this paranoid logic of preemption that folds the future possibilities into the present that U.S. Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein's statement about Antonio Martinez's plea agreement, who was caught as a result of a sting operation, attains its meaning: “We are catching dangerous suspects before they strike, and we are investigating them in a way that maximizes the liberty and security of law-abiding citizens...That is what the American people expect of the Justice Department, and that is what we aim to deliver.”¹⁶⁷ Rosenstein's statement could very well have been taken out of “The Minority Report.” What renders these suspects “dangerous” is their potentiality of danger that has already been actualized as a possibility. In the paranoid temporal structure, while the threat that they pose is located in the future, it gets folded into the present: by virtue of being “pre-criminals,” they are already criminals. The practice of “catching dangerous suspects before they strike,” the idea that Precrime was built on, is one that is premised on the paranoid imperative “there cannot be bad surprises,” therefore the “surprise” must always already be known (and thereby is not a

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 26.

¹⁶⁷ U.S. Attorney's Office, “Maryland Man Pleads Guilty to Attempted Use of a Weapon of Mass Destruction in Plot to Attack Armed Forces Recruiting Center,” January 26, 2012. Accessed: July 21, 2016. <http://trevoraaronson.com/documents/FBI-Martinez.pdf>

surprise at all). Moreover, Rosenstein asserts that this practice “maximizes the liberty and security of law-abiding citizens,” thus suggesting a natural link between paranoid practices and security (and liberty!), despite the fact that no data exist that could corroborate such link. While this link is not evinced by facts, it is perhaps suggested by a *feeling* or a spectacle of security, a putative epistemology that recognizes no alternative to the politics of paranoia when it comes to security.

It is evidently the possibility, and not probability, of crime that drives these operations, much like in “The Minority Report.” Yet these practices demonstrate the Bureau's threat assessments to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the very logic of paranoid temporality found in the world of “The Minority Report” is now implemented in contemporary police work. Just as Anderton *had to kill* Kaplan in order to make “the prophecy” come true, the FBI agents provide their targets with all the means, the plot, weapons, equipment, and sometimes even cash, for a terror attack, in order to make their threat assessments come true. In an interview with Aaronson, the retired FBI special agent Peter Ahearn, who directed the Western New York Joint Terrorism Task Force, states: “Real people don't say, 'Yeah, let's go bomb that place.' Real people call the cops,”¹⁶⁸ despite the fact that most of the targets of these sting operations are susceptible individuals living in poverty and suffering from mental health issues. Just as the question of whether the majority report may very well be wrong – and it would have been wrong unless Anderton made a conscious decision to kill Kaplan only to prove it right – gets sidetracked in the story, the same question about the validity of the threat assessments is pushed aside by Ahearn in this statement. The question whether these individuals would have ever been approached by terrorist groups is rendered

¹⁶⁸ Aaronson, *The Terror Factory*, 28.

irrelevant, given that the sting operations prove that *if they were*, they would have been terrorists, and that possibility is all that matters. A future possibility is thus folded into the present or better, the future is created in the present, through a process that does not understand itself as one of “creation,” but instead as one of “exposure.” In fact, echoing Lisa who questions the legitimacy of Precrime by suggesting that perhaps these people would never have committed the crime if only they were told about the possibility ahead of time, just like Anderton, Joseph Balter, a federal public defender, told the judge in Martinez's sentence hearing, “that the entire case could have been avoided had the FBI counseled, rather than encouraged, Martinez.”¹⁶⁹ Yet the FBI, much like Anderton, would most likely suggest that the risk would have been too high; as putting people away rather than offering them help is not only easier perhaps, but it is also seen as *the* necessary solution within the framework of a politics of paranoia irrevocably committed to the elimination of threats.

Just as practices of surveillance today hinge on piles and piles of data that are used to render the decision making process more “scientific” (despite the fact that many of these decisions come down to questions of biopower about whose lives matter and who counts as human as I argued in the previous chapter), we see in “The Minority Report” an intricate setup of processing “data” received from the precogs, who, at the end of the day, simply see different possibilities in the future that are yet to actualize: “Ahead of them rose impressive banks of equipment – the data-receptors, and the computing mechanisms that studied and restructured the incoming material. And beyond the machinery sat the three precogs, almost lost to view in the maze of wiring.”¹⁷⁰ The piling

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 23.

¹⁷⁰ Dick, “The Minority Report,” 225.

of data and the use of algorithms and high-tech equipment make the “prophesying” process seem very calculative and scientific. Yet, as Amoore makes clear, these practices “hold out the promise of managing uncertainty and making an unknowable and indeterminate future knowable and calculable,”¹⁷¹ thereby serving the important role of mitigating anxiety elicited by uncertainty, indeterminacy, and unknowability. They serve a much needed role, a comforting illusion of being in total control, in the face of overwhelming anxiety. As the politics of paranoia involves a particular affective and cognitive relation to the future (one that seeks to eliminate bad surprises), the algorithms used for security fulfill precisely the function of annihilating threats *before* they actualize. Operating within and deeply attached to a framework of paranoia, Anderton is not willing to admit that detaining “possible” murderers may not be justified, for not detaining them would be “too great a risk.” The priority is given to the elimination of threats, and no other alternative is considered. This denial involves a foregoing of responsibility, a refusal to recognize that preemption very much involves decision and is not a simple function of the “[s]ecurity techniques, algorithmic technologies, and knowledges” that are designed to “identify future events before they take place,”¹⁷² of what comes out the machine. There is a denial of agency that is particularly problematic in these cases, which leads to a destructive attitude of indifference.

Foucault underlines this “indifference,” which I perhaps understand rather differently than the way he did, in his account of the apparatuses of security that emerged under liberalism, that simply “let things happen,” as opposed to discipline, which “allows nothing to escape.” He writes: “The basic function of discipline is to prevent everything,

¹⁷¹ Amoore, *The Politics of Possibility*, 7.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 17.

even and above all the detail. The function of security is to rely on details that are not valued as good or evil in themselves, that are taken to be necessary, inevitable processes, as natural processes in the broad sense, and it relies on these details, which are what they are, but which are not considered to be pertinent in themselves, in order to obtain something that is considered to be pertinent in itself because situated at the level of the population.”¹⁷³ In other words, security is ultimately indifferent toward the possibilities that it seeks to fold into the present, as long as it achieves the actualization of the future possibilities in the present. The possibilities in themselves, in other words, ultimately do not matter. What security attends to here, instead, is the threat of terrorism, which in its absence ought to be created. If in moral terms, the status of security is ultimately marked by indifference, if, in these practices, a moral attitude of indifference is paired with affective and cognitive dispositions that are paranoiac, the question of responsibility must be at the center of this discussion, which the rhetoric of necessity and inevitability denies.

The sting operations are marked by indifference as those who undertake them simply see themselves to be allowing future possibilities to take place, rather than exercising agency in any way: “The preemptive temporality of derivative forms of risk does not seek to predict or prevent a particular future, as in systems of pattern recognition that track forward from past data, for example, because it is precisely indifferent to whether a particular event occurs or not. What matters instead is the capacity to act in the face of uncertainty, to render the gaps in what can be collected or known actionable.”¹⁷⁴ It is this self-understanding that grounds the legitimacy of the FBI's stings operations, a legitimacy that holds up in court time and again, that is left unquestioned. It is through

¹⁷³ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population* (New York: Picador, 2007a), 45.

¹⁷⁴ Amoore, *The Politics of Possibility*, 62.

this deceptive self-understanding that the former FBI special agent insists that “real people call the cops,” perhaps willfully forgetting that the men they target are already troubled, susceptible individuals, who do not have the means themselves to carry out an act of terror.

Moreover, as “the inductive incorporation of suspicion, imagination, and preemption”¹⁷⁵ into practices of securitization very much guides (and is guided by) racial profiling, even though not discussed by Amoores, the question of responsibility is again brought to the fore. Aaronson's account shows that prior to the Boston Marathon bombings, although Tamerlan Tsarnaev, who planted the bombs at the Boston Marathon with his brother Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, had been on the Bureau's radar, the agents had focused instead on “another potential 'terrorist' – a naïve, easily influenced, likely mentally ill man named Rezwana Ferdaus, whom they had ensnared in one of their informant-led sting operations,”¹⁷⁶ and who, unlike the Tsarnaev brothers, was of South Asian descent.¹⁷⁷ Upon receiving an inquiry by Russian intelligence officers about Tamerlan Tsarnaev in January 2011, the Bureau conducted a threat assessment and “determined that Tsarnaev wasn't linked to foreign or domestic terrorists, and thus wasn't a threat to national security.”¹⁷⁸ Yet, in the case of the Bangladeshi Ferdaus, on whom the Bureau conducted a threat assessment the very same month that they conducted one on Tsarnaev, the FBI was convinced that he constituted a threat, despite the fact that by that point Ferdaus's mental health had worsened and as his father reports, he began wearing diapers.¹⁷⁹ “On September 28, 2011, at the end of a nine-month sting operation,”

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, 13.

¹⁷⁶ Aaronson, *The Terror Factory*, 23.

¹⁷⁷ Ferdaus was of Bangladeshi descent. The Tsarnaev brothers were half-Chechen and half-Avar.

¹⁷⁸ Aaronson, *The Terror Factory*, 238.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, 241.

Aaronson reports, “the FBI delivered 'explosives' to Ferdaus – twenty-five pounds of fake C-4 and three inert grenades. Agents then rushed in and arrested Ferdaus, charging him with, among other offenses, attempting to destroy a federal building and providing material support to terrorists.”¹⁸⁰ Threat assessment, here, seems to be no more than a subterfuge for racial profiling, given that the FBI is known to target specifically men of Middle Eastern and South Asian origin in the War on Terror, as evident from the data I surveyed in the previous chapter on the arbitrary detainment and deportation of individuals after the September 11 attacks. The terrorist is profiled as a “brown” man – a category created by lumping together those with Middle Eastern and South Asian heritage. Aaronson reports that the FBI's profile of a potential terrorist is a *lone wolf*, a single male between the ages of sixteen to thirty-five; yet it is often men of color who are named terrorists. Meanwhile, the white male mass shooters like Robert Lewis Dear, who often fit this profile, are seldom named a terrorist. The terrorist, therefore, is a racial category.

While we do not have direct access to the algorithms used for threat assessment and thus do not know how exactly they work, it is safe to say that the objectivity or impartiality claimed by these assessments serve to overshadow other important variables that are evidently at play, as in the case of racial profiling. The important function fulfilled by the use of algorithms, more so than their “objective” assessment, is their capacity to release the agents of all responsibility and to legitimate indifference and thoughtlessness as prerogatives. Securitization in a paranoid framework, thus, urges us to consider the ethical question of responsibility. Amoore notes: “While contemporary security techniques work hard to annex judgment from politics – to replace visual

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 241.

profiling with algorithmic profiling or to evacuate the touch of the pat-down search with whole body imaging, for example – *they deny the politics of all decision*. Rather as the actions taken on the basis of possibility eviscerate all potentiality, so the automated decision is equipped to make judgments *but never to decide*.¹⁸¹ Nobody takes responsibility for the devastating results that these practices yield because the accountability supposedly lies in the data, the algorithms, calculations, and not the moral agents who act based on these. In this sense, they take themselves to be agents that are devoid of agency, as they are “simply doing their jobs.” As Amoore states: “On the surface of the sovereign decision there is an appeal to the objective and impartial logics of mathematics, computer science, and business consulting. Beneath that glossy surface there are layers upon layers of incompleteness, multiple moments of intuition and proxy judgment, whose political effects are scarcely seen.”¹⁸² So long as the machinery of securitization is in place and up and running, no one has to burden themselves with assuming responsibility for the consequences of these practices where lives (that apparently do not count as lives in the current biopolitical order) are at stake.

Sara Ahmed's recounting of her experience at the airport attests to the pretense under which “agents without agency” operate:

I arrive in New York, clutching my British passport. I hand it over. The airport official looks at me, and then looks at my passport. I know what questions will follow. “Where are you from?” My passport indicates my place of birth. “Britain,” I say. I feel like adding, “Can't you read. I was born in Salford,” but I stop myself. He looks down at my passport, not me.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 163-4. Emphasis added.

¹⁸² Ibid, 54.

“Where is your father from?” It was the same last time I arrived in New York. It is the question I get asked now, which seems to locate what is suspect not in my body but as that which has been passed down the family line, almost like a bad inheritance. “Pakistan,” I say, slowly. “Do you have a Pakistani passport?” “No,” I say. Eventually, he lets me through. The name “Ahmed,” a Muslim name, slows me down. It blocks my passage, even if only temporarily. I get stuck, and then move on. When I fly out of New York later that week, I am held up again. This time it is a friendlier encounter. I find out I am now on the “no fly list,” and they have to ring to get permission to let me through. It takes time, of course. “Don't worry,” the officer says, “my mother is on it too.” I feel some strange comradeship with his mother. I know what he is saying: he means “anyone” could be on this list, almost as if to say “even my mother,” whose innocence of course would be beyond doubt. I know it is a way of saying, “It's not about you. Don't take it personally.” It isn't about me, of course. And yet it involves me. My name names me after all. It might not be personal but neither is it about “anyone.” It is my name that slows me down.¹⁸³

One pretends that getting held up has nothing to do with one's last name, that it could have been “anyone” who was held up, including the officer's mother. Yet it is not anyone but a woman with a Pakistani name. One pretends that threat assessments have nothing to do with race, yet the majority of those targeted by the FBI's sting operations are men of color. One pretends that these sting operations catch “terrorists” before they

¹⁸³ Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006), 140.

have a chance to act, yet providing helpless men living in the fringes of society with all the means to carry out an attack, the FBI does no less than to *create* terrorists. As Aaronson writes: “Since 9/11, the FBI and the Justice Department have labeled as terrorists a mentally troubled man who worked at Walmart, a video game store clerk whose only valuable possession was a set of stereo speakers, a university student who was about to be evicted from his apartment, and a window washer who had dropped out of college, among others. All of these men were involved in FBI terrorism stings in which an informant came up with the idea and provided the necessary means and opportunity for the terrorist plot. While we have captured a few terrorists since 9/11, we have manufactured many more.”¹⁸⁴ Yet as the FBI refuses to take responsibility for “creating” these terrorists, they would never call this process “manufacturing,” but instead a way to allow the threatening possibilities to materialize. As Amore puts it, “The political decision to prevent someone from boarding a plane, to detain them at a border or a railway station, to deport them on suspicion of posing a threat, to freeze their assets is increasingly obscured in a computational judgment that is ever more possibilistic and difficult to challenge.”¹⁸⁵ When contemplating alternatives to the politics of paranoia or the preemptive practices that it entails, one must place the question of responsibility at the very center. One must recognize that far from relieving the moral agents of the burden to make a decision, the anticipatory disposition of preemptive practices “produce[s] a particular economy of decision.”¹⁸⁶ How does one assume responsibility for not only what one *lets* happen, but also what one very much *makes* happen as in the case of these sting operations? How do we hold the federal government accountable for sanctioning the

¹⁸⁴ Aaronson, *The Terror Factory*, 17.

¹⁸⁵ Amore, *The Politics of Possibility*, 52.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 18.

practices of racial profiling under bills like the Patriot Act? How do we recognize that the practices that are undertaken in the name of national security are not inherently necessitated by the situation, but rather, decisions are made not only to implement them, but also to not question their legitimacy? How do we face the fact that fear does not in and of itself legitimate violence and that violence is always a decision? How does one assume responsibility for all the decisions made under the pretense of necessity, which are yet to be recognized as decisions? And ultimately, how do we assume responsibility for a collective future that is ultimately unknowable in the midst of panic and anxiety?

In an attempt to tackle these questions, I turn to some viable alternatives to a paranoid relation to the future and the possibility of their political implementation in the next section. I argue that while hope offers an alternative, it brings with it a set of problems that call for caution. I then call for a resistant hope in struggles against the politics of paranoia that can at once be critical and transformative.

3.2 A Critical Analysis of the Politics of Hope

Insofar as paranoid temporality entails a foreclosing of a relation to the future based on openness and surprise, what is needed is a different relation to futurity – one that does not seek to define it solely in terms of the threats it poses, but attends to the possibilities it bears for social and political change. In *Terrorist Assemblages*, Jasbir Puar gives a brief reading of paranoid temporality as a machinery for producing more of the same to no end. She writes: “Paranoid temporality is...embedded in a risk economy that attempts to ensure against future catastrophe. This is a temporality of negative exuberance – for we are never safe enough, never healthy enough, never prepared enough – driven by imitation (repetition of the same or in the service of maintaining the same) rather than innovation (openness to

disruption of the same, calling out to the new)...A paranoid temporality therefore produces a suppression of critical creative politics.”¹⁸⁷ The paranoid temporality that underlies preemptive politics, thereby, not only obscures the question of responsibility by making recourse to necessity, but it also undermines the possibility of the emergence of the new or forecloses the possibility for exercising what Puar calls “critical creative politics” that may bring about such emergence. Its insistence that paranoia provides the only tenable relation to the future, the necessary one, and does violence to other possible temporal modes.

What other relations to the future are available for political practice that are more amenable to what Puar calls “critical creative politics”? In her hermeneutical account, Sedgwick contrasts paranoid reading with an alternative practice she names, borrowing from Klein, 'reparative reading':

To recognize in paranoia a distinctively rigid relation to temporality, at once anticipatory and retroactive, averse above all to surprise, is also to glimpse the lineaments of other possibilities...to read from a reparative position is to surrender the knowing, anxious paranoid determination that no horror, however apparently unthinkable, shall ever come to the reader *as new*; to a reparatively positioned reader, it can seem realistic and necessary to experience surprise. Because there can be terrible surprises, however, there can also be good ones. Hope, often a fracturing, even a traumatic thing to experience, is among the energies by which the reparatively positioned reader tries to organize the fragments and part-objects she encounters or creates. Because the reader has room to realize that the future may be

¹⁸⁷ Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, xx.

different from the present, it is also possible for her to entertain such profoundly painful, profoundly relieving, ethically crucial possibilities as that the past, in turn, could have happened differently from the way it actually did.¹⁸⁸

In contrast to the rigidity of paranoid temporality that seeks to identify future threats, hope offers an alternative affective mode marked by an openness to unforeseen possibilities and the unpredictability of the future. Moreover, it echoes a transformative sentiment, insofar as in the sense of openness that hope fosters, one develops a sensibility that the future will not simply be the repetition of the same (as in the case of paranoid temporality) as well as an understanding that the past and the present could also have been otherwise. That is to say, rather than committing to a sense of necessity, hope is instead very much tied to a sense of contingency. What would, then, a politics of hope look like, if we were to apply hope, an affective textual relation in Sedgwick's articulation, to the political? Sara Ahmed's recounting of coming into feminism through a range of emotions can serve as a guide in the political articulation of hope:

One can reflect on the role of emotions in the politicisation of subjects. When I think of my relationship to feminism, for example, I can rewrite my coming into being as a feminist subject in terms of different emotions, or in terms of how my emotions have involved particular readings of the worlds I have inhabited. The anger, the anger that I felt about how being a girl seemed to be about what you shouldn't do; the pain, the pain that I felt as an effect of forms of violence; the love, the love for my mother and for

¹⁸⁸ Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading," 146. Emphasis in the original.

all the women whose capacity for giving has given me life; the wonder, the wonder I felt at the way in which the world came to be organised the way that it is, a wonder that feels the ordinary as surprising; the joy, the joy I felt as I began to make different kinds of connections with others and realise that the world was alive and could take new shapes and forms; and the hope, the hope that guides *every moment of refusal* and that structures *the desire for change* with the trembling that comes from an opening up of the future, *as an opening up of what is possible*.¹⁸⁹

Hope, in its political application, would then seem to involve, in this case, an openness and desire to change, an attitude that accompanies acts of resistance as well as the interrogation of the limits of the possible. It is, in other words, an affective attunement of a political imaginary that recognizes injustice and suffering, and demands a safe, just, and equal world. In contrast to the logic of paranoid temporality that mimics and repeats, folding the future possibilities into the present, that is, making the future the same as the present, a politics of hope would not only long for a different, better future, it would undertake the labor of bringing that future into reality. As Amy Billingsley puts it, “When I am hopeful, my anticipation is cast out toward a future that resounds with positive potential, offering possibilities for amelioration, renewal, or survival that otherwise would seem distant.”¹⁹⁰

Far from constituting a passive relation to future possibilities, hope lies at the heart of activism. Jean-Pierre Reed's account of the role of emotions in the Nicaraguan revolution shows that affects like hope and moral outrage comprise “emotional climates

¹⁸⁹ Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 171. Emphasis added.

¹⁹⁰ Amy Billingsley, “Hope in a Vice: Carole Pateman, Judith Butler, and Suspicious Hope,” *Hypatia* 30, no. 3 (2015): 600.

through which revolutionary participation is coalesced.”¹⁹¹ Hope, in this way, acts as what Reed calls a “revolutionary accelerator,” providing an appropriate emotional climate for revolution. I argued elsewhere¹⁹² that the shifts in the public affective makeup may act as catalysts to bring about social change, as in the case of the 2013 protests in Turkey where the atmosphere of hope, love, camaraderie, and humor that came about has not only provided the conditions for the continuation of a thriving movement of resistance against police brutality, but also led to forms of community building that may have long lasting, albeit not immediate, results. Hope, in this way, does not denote blind optimism or passive waiting, but rather serves as a driving force for social movements that demand and collectively work toward a better future, however that may be defined.

Consider Deb Gould's analysis of the role of hope in the ACT UP movement. She suggests that “common feelings in the realm of activism, like rage, anger, indignation, hope, pride, and solidarity” are “fundamental to political life,” as “there is an affective dimension to the processes and practices that make up 'the political', broadly defined.”¹⁹³ “In addition to filling our lives with intensity and a sense of meaning and purpose,” she reports, “the exciting swirl of ACT UP’s protest actions and meetings allowed us to reinvent ourselves, to carve out a place where we could be angry, oppositional, defiant, hopeful, sexual, and happy, a place where we could engage in collective projects of world-making.”¹⁹⁴ As the AIDS pandemic continued to grow, ACT UP's meetings, protests, and calls for legislation, research, and treatment, generated an atmosphere of

¹⁹¹ Jean-Pierre Reed, “Emotions in Context: Revolutionary Accelerators, Hope, Moral Outrage, and Other Emotions in the Making of Nicaragua's Revolution,” *Theory and Society* 33. no. 6 (2004): 656.

¹⁹² Ibrahimhakkioğlu, “Demolishing the Empire of Fear: Affective Transformations, Queer Trajectories, and Eroticism in 2013 Protests in Turkey,” presented at *NASSP Conference*, July 2014, Ashland, OR.

¹⁹³ Deb Gould, *Moving Politics: Emotion and ACT UP's Fight Against AIDS* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 3.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 210.

hope and solidarity amongst the activists, that resulted in a thriving social movement. In fact, it is only when the activists began to lose hope, Gould notes, that ACT UP began to falter: “Despair destroyed ACT UP...Scholars and activists alike tend to put movement and hope in one basket and demobilization and despair in another. And in the moment of ACT UP’s decline, there was certainly reason to despair. Even amid striking victories, more and more ACT UP members were dying. The death toll was staggering.”¹⁹⁵ She urges us, however, to not simply consider hope in terms of mobilization and despair in terms of immobilization, since the political possibilities opened up by each one of these affective modes may differ: “Despair sometimes flattens political possibilities, exacerbating a sense of political inefficacy and hopelessness and generating apathy and withdrawal, but it also sometimes works to open new political horizons, alternative visions of what is to be done and how to do it. The period when the direct-action AIDS movement emerged illustrates the latter; the period of its decline illustrates how despair and its companions sometimes do paralyze and demobilize. We need to explore why and under what conditions despair and its companions have the one effect rather than the other. Those engaged in fighting for a more just, equitable, and joyous world have an urgent need to reckon with the pervasiveness of feelings of powerlessness, political inefficacy, apathy, and despair, and to explore how such sentiments influence struggles for social change.”¹⁹⁶ Thus, it would be an oversimplification to assume that hope is *the only* viable attitude for social movements, since the lack of hope could possibly open up new forms of activism. Furthermore, there is nothing inherent in hope that makes it revolutionary. In fact, it could very well have the opposite effect. Cornel West, for

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, 395.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, 396.

instance, suggests that “real hope” which must be “grounded in a particularly messy struggle” could be “betrayed by naïve projections of a better future that ignore the necessity of doing the real work.”¹⁹⁷ Hope, then, could have a distracting effect, one of hollow optimism that may take one even further from, rather than leading to, where one wants to go.

Hope can also be misleading. The famous “Hope” poster of the 2008 Barack Obama campaign implied fundamental social change; yet in the last eight years, Obama embraced national security “as a central tenet of his presidency.”¹⁹⁸ Both outside the United States, from the substantial increase in the drone strikes in Pakistan during his presidency to the secret wars in Somalia and Yemen, and within, from the increase in the frequency of the FBI's sting operations as well as surveillance practices to ordering “six prosecutions under the 1917 Espionage Act involving leaks of government documents – double the number of Espionage Act prosecutions under all previous presidents combined,” Obama, as Aaronson puts it, “has been an aggressive president,” despite the Nobel Peace Prize he received in 2009.¹⁹⁹ These show that the “Hope” campaign was no more than a guise for “more of the same,” for the continuation of preemptive practices and mechanisms of exclusion, for a politics of paranoia sequel, rather than bringing about fundamental social change that a politics of hope would demand. While hope could certainly be revolutionary, it could also very well be misleadingly used in a presidential campaign for a president who has centralized national security by way of embracing and further developing a politics of paranoia, for pragmatic purposes or otherwise.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁷ West, *Hope on a Tightrope*, 6.

¹⁹⁸ Aaronson, *The Terror Factory*, 33.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Aaronson argues that “Obama's national security posture is a pragmatic political one, as the public has historically perceived Democrats as weak on national security and unwilling to be as aggressive on terrorism as their Republican counterparts.” He notes that “Obama was able to reverse that perception

In her articulation of radical democracy, Judith Butler develops an account of an alternative relation to futurity that is outside of the framework of a politics of paranoia:

To assume responsibility for a future...is not to know its direction fully in advance, since the future, especially the future with and for others, requires a certain openness and unknowingness; it implies becoming part of a process the outcome of which no one subject can surely predict...Democracy does not speak in unison; its tunes are dissonant, and necessarily so. It is not a predictable process; it must be undergone, like a passion must be undergone. It may also be that life itself becomes foreclosed when the right way is decided in advance, when we impose what is right for everyone and without finding a way to enter into community, and to discover there the 'right' in the midst of cultural translation. It may be that what is right and what is good consists in staying open to the tensions that beset the most fundamental categories we require, in knowing unknowingness at the core of what we know, and what we need, and in recognizing the sign of life in what we undergo without certainty about what will come.²⁰¹

Here Butler makes clear that a lot is at stake when politics cannot cope with a certain level of unknowability that the future necessarily involves and makes attempts to determine that future. In the context of indifference elicited by reliance on a preemptive framework, bringing responsibility back into politics entails the recognition of a fundamental unknowability necessarily built into a democratic order. Yet such unknowability does not

during his first years in office, and public opinion polls during his fourth year as president showed that most Americans gave him high marks on national security" (*The Terror Factory*, 34).

²⁰¹ Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 39.

revoke responsibility, on the contrary, it makes it more important if not burdensome. Not only does Butler suggest that maintaining the unknowability of the future is an integral part of the democratic process, she also offers an understanding of futurity in terms of an attitude of openness as opposed to the determinism that a politics of paranoia would entail. Yet this temporal understanding should be differentiated from certain versions of the politics of hope, which not only involve the aforementioned pitfalls (hollow optimism or a guise) but also relies on a myth of linearity in its understanding of progress.

I now turn to two critiques of the liberal politics of hope, one by Lee Edelman, who suggests that the political obsession with the future demarcates the limits of politics as thoroughly heteronormative, and another one by decolonial thinkers like Anibal Quijano and Enrique Dussel, who show that future-orientation is often embedded in the history of colonialism and capitalism and relies on a progressive, teleological narrative that equates the non-western with inferiority. Through engaging with these critiques, I hope to show that the underlying problem is less of a matter of future-orientation, than of an implicit commitment to a linear understanding of temporality, whose futurity yields nothing but “more of the same.” The future, in this (paranoiac) model, serves as a mirror of the past. In this way, the politics of hope in its linear temporal formulations often does nothing but conceal the politics of paranoia that is otherwise operative. Yet, going back to Butler's formulation, if democracy is like a “passion” that “must be undergone,” then what she is gesturing toward by placing unknowability at the heart of politics is not merely the reproduction of the same, but is instead a non-linear process that could only be characterized as an experiment. I end this section with a discussion of the forms that this experiment can take in resisting, subverting, and dismantling the politics of paranoia.

According to Edelman, political discourse is marked precisely by what he calls “reproductive futurism,” which poses “an ideological limit on political discourse as such” through the image of the Child that signifies the future.²⁰² The image of the Child, he writes, “invariably shapes the logic within which the political itself must be thought.”²⁰³ The image of the Child, not to be confused with living, breathing children, is *the* figure that not only “serves to regulate political discourse – to prescribe what will *count* as political discourse,”²⁰⁴ but also “marks the fetishistic fixation of heteronormativity.”²⁰⁵ In this way, the liberal obsession with future is nothing more than “an erotically charged investment in the rigid sameness of identity that is central to the compulsory narrative of reproductive futurism”²⁰⁶ that fundamentally excludes queerness which marks the end of children and childhood. Ultimately providing a cop-out for progressive politics as “an always about-to-be-realized identity,”²⁰⁷ the figure of the Child and the futurity it represents colonizes our entire political imaginary to its very fabric of being: “[W]e are no more able to conceive of a politics without a fantasy of the future than we are able to conceive of a future without the figure of the Child.”²⁰⁸ Yet, for the sake of queer politics, Edelman argues that the Child “as futurity’s emblem must die” and we must acknowledge that “the future is mere repetition and just as lethal as the past.”²⁰⁹

The futurity that grounds Edelman's criticism of liberalism, however, is one that is thoroughly paranoiac. It is the kind of future that never ultimately brings about anything

²⁰² Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004), 2.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

new, but merely reproduces the same, as a reproduction of the heteronormative order sanctioned through the sanctity of the figure of the Child whose sacralization “necessitates the sacrifice of the queer.”²¹⁰ “And so what is queerest about us, queerest within us, and queerest despite us,” he concludes, “is this willingness to insist intransitively – to insist that the future stop here.”²¹¹ It is not clear, however, why Edelman sees no alternative to the paranoid temporality that undergirds liberalism, other than the outright rejection of any sense of futurity. It is also not clear what queer politics would look like without any sort of recourse to the future. It seems as if Edelman mistakes the implied inevitability of paranoid temporality for actual inevitability, leaving politics forever stuck in a *Groundhog Day*-esque universe of heteronormativity, with Sex Pistols' “God Save the Queen” endlessly playing in the background, whose closing refrain phrase “No Future” ironically became the icon of the thoroughly commercialized band to whom Edelman pledges allegiance. Yet what gets us out of the loop of paranoid temporality is precisely the understanding that things could have been otherwise, that is, allowing for a sense of contingency that replaces necessity. Sedgwick notes that the logic that underlies paranoid temporality is in fact “a generational narrative that's characterized by a distinctly Oedipal regularity and repetitiveness”²¹²: “it happened to my father's father, it happened to my father, it is happening to me, it will happen to my son, and it will happen to my son's son” is ultimately no different than “[t]he dogged, defensive narrative stiffness of a paranoid temporality...in which yesterday can't be allowed to have differed from today and tomorrow must be even more so.”²¹³ But it is precisely “a feature of queer possibility,” a feature of a politics of

²¹⁰ Ibid, 28.

²¹¹ Ibid, 31.

²¹² Sedgwick, “Paranoid Reading, Reparative Reading,” 147.

²¹³ Ibid.

hope, that “our generational relations don't always proceed in this lockstep.”²¹⁴ The work of queer politics, then, for Sedgwick, takes place precisely at this conceptual space of contingency, where the inevitability of the repetition of the same is shown to be nothing but illusion. Future, after all, bears the possibility of change; change that is not necessarily “more of the same.”

^ Much like the figure of the Child in our political imaginary, who eventually grows up, becomes a productive citizen, gets married, and has children of their own (that is, reproduces the very heteronormative order they are destined to reproduce), “the future” denotes in decolonial thought, a magical realm where the underdeveloped countries finally become “like Europe.” Quijano writes that as a result of colonialism, “history was conceived as a evolutionary continuum from the primitive to the civilized; from the traditional to the modern; from the savage to the rational; from pro-capitalism to capitalism, etc. And Europe thought of itself as the mirror of the future of all the other societies and cultures; as the advanced form of the history of the entire species. What does not cease to surprise, however, is that Europe succeeded in imposing that ‘mirage’ upon the practical totality of the cultures that it colonized; and, much more, that this chimera is still so attractive to so many.”²¹⁵ The notion of linear progress that underlies Modernity is premised on not only an understanding of western superiority but also the erasure of alterity and difference. The west denotes the only possible future for any non-western context that supposedly is “behind on things.” Moreover, the “underdeveloped” nations are often construed as “the past” of Europe, a sentiment often expressed by its western visitors via statements such as “It is like going back in time!” Dussel aims to rethink modernity not as a

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Quijano, “Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality,” 176.

property of Europe, but attends to the world history in order to show that while “undoubtedly a European occurrence,” it also “originates in a dialectical relation with non-Europe.”²¹⁶ He writes: “Modernity is a world phenomenon, commencing with the *simultaneous* constitution of Spain with reference to its periphery, Amerindia, including the Caribbean, Mexico, and Peru. *At the same time*, Europe, with diachronic precedents in Renaissance Italy and Portugal, proceeds to establish itself as the center managing a growing periphery...When one conceives modernity as part of a center-periphery system instead of an independent European phenomenon, the meanings of modernity, its origin, development, present crisis, and its postmodern antithesis change.”²¹⁷ He replaces, in other words, the linear temporal understanding that sets up Europe as the universal goal with that of *simultaneity* which accounts for both intercultural exchange (that takes place within a context of domination) and alterity (that is systematically eradicated through colonization). The linear sense of history that comprises the ideas of progress is often understood in terms of colonial/capitalist expansion and growth. Dussel's project of situating this narrative in history and showing its dependence on the “discovery, conquest, colonization, and integration of Amerindia – all of which give [Europe] an advantage over the Arab world, India, and China”²¹⁸ allows a sense of historical contingency and opens up futurity to other possibilities. Europe is not a mirror for the future of the rest of the world and neither is the past for the future. Just as Beauvoir proclaims “biology is not destiny,” one may find solace in the idea that neither is capitalism. It is time we dissociate the future from a paranoid temporal framework that understands progress in terms of imitation or the repetition of the same.

²¹⁶ Enrique Dussel, *The Invention of the Americas* (New York: Continuum, 1995), 9.

²¹⁷ *Ibid*, 11. Emphasis in the original.

²¹⁸ *Ibid*.

Yet one must admit that this teleology of linear progress is quite a powerful narrative that is widely believed. The hegemonic relations set up by this history are not only overwhelming, but also seem all-encompassing, allowing for the exercise of no other alternative, thereby making hope seem like an indefensible joke that has no genuine place in the political. The kind of hope I see as politically relevant, however, is not a naïve, misguided attitude that leads to nowhere but to wishful thinking. It is a kind of vigilant, resistant hope that is attentive to all of these pitfalls associated with a politics of hope: that it can be misleading, useless, distracting, and so on. It is the kind of hope that accompanies the awareness that notions of hope have historically been used at the service of sanctioning the heteronormative order (as Edelman shows) as well as to establish and naturalize western superiority and non-western inferiority (as Quijano and Dussel show). It is not necessarily the opposite of despair, but indicates, perhaps, a persisting will to continue in the face of despair. It is perhaps the opposite of cynicism instead, which simply gives in to the order that it supposedly critiques, much like Edelman. And perhaps most importantly, it is the kind of hope that is committed to action; committed to an understanding that the future can be otherwise and collective action can make that happen. It is critical, defiant, irreverent. It is experimental and has a revolutionary impulse. It seeks not to distract, silence, manipulate, neutralize or to promote conformism. Its relation to the future is through imagining and seeking out better alternatives and bringing them into fruition.

While paranoia is a totalizing mode that hinges on the foreclosure of surprise, suspicion, insofar as it is linked to critical possibilities for resistance, offers another alternative. As Billingsley suggests, hope can very well coexist with suspicion,²¹⁹ and often times necessarily so at the service of liberatory politics. As Foucault puts it, his “point is

²¹⁹ Billingsley, “Hope in a Vice.”

not that everything is bad, but that everything is *dangerous*.²²⁰ Despite Sedgwick's contention that Foucault is “stuck in the paranoid logic of repression-liberation,”²²¹ Lauren Guilmette's re-reading of Foucault as an affectively complex thinker suggests that he is a suspicious but not a paranoid thinker, precisely because, as Foucault puts it, “[i]f everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do.”²²² Foucault's genealogies are not intended to map out systems, structures or totalities of power, but instead document the development of certain techniques and procedures that serve particular functions and offer particular mechanisms for the practice of power. To say that there is always something to do is quite a different disposition than that of the paranoid's, whose relation to the future is deterministic rather than open. While both attitudes may be said to be concerned with future possibilities, they involve different dispositions toward those possibilities: while the former is one of control, the latter seeks critical possibilities for resistance. Hence I employ a Foucaultian method in my own thinking (and activism) as I take it to be a non-paranoid (and even an anti-paranoid) model, where suspicion is employed only as instrumental for a critical analysis used at the service of resistance. Foucault states: “So my position leads not to apathy but to a hyper- and pessimistic activism.”²²³ It is my contention that we are in need of a revolutionary politics of hope that is both vigilant and critical, one that actively resists paranoid practices and seeks to imagine and create alternatives to rethink and transform politics. As Angela Davis notes, borrowing from Gramsci, pessimism of the intellect must be accompanied by the optimism of the will. “It is in collectivities,” she suggests, and not in individualistic thinking, “that we find reservoirs of hope and

²²⁰ Foucault, “On the Genealogy of Ethics,” 343.

²²¹ Lauren Guilmette, “In What We Tend to Feel is Without History: Foucault, Affect, and the Ethics of Curiosity,” *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 28, no. 3 (2014): 288.

²²² Michel Foucault, “On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress” in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Vintage Books, 2010a), 343.

²²³ *Ibid.*

optimism.”²²⁴

Resistant hope entails an attitude of openness, of wonder in the act of imagining alternatives, and a will to bring about change. Without hope, without the understanding that things could have been otherwise, that is, a commitment to contingency rather than necessity (which need not be a metaphysical commitment, but a political one), there is no critique. Foucaultian critique which suspends judgment seeks not to evaluate but, as Judith Butler puts it, “to bring into relief the very framework of evaluation itself.”²²⁵ Critique, Foucault writes, “is an instrument, a means for a future or a truth that it will not know nor happen to be, it oversees a domain it would want to police and is unable to regulate.”²²⁶ The question that critique traces for Foucault is “how not to be governed *like that*, by that, in the name of those principles, with such and such an objective in mind and by means of such procedures, not like that, not for that, not by them.”²²⁷ In this way, the critical attitude is one that is accompanied by a certain kind of hope, insofar as critique seeks to reveal “the limits of that epistemological horizon itself, making the contours of the horizon appear, as it were, for the first time, we might say, in relation to its own limit”²²⁸ in order to identify its points of fragility, tenuousness, and transformability. Butler writes: “One does not drive to the limits for a thrill experience, or because limits are dangerous and sexy, or because it brings us into a titillating proximity with evil. One asks about the limits of ways of knowing because one has already run up against a crisis within the epistemological field in which one lives.”²²⁹ There is, in other words, a sense of urgency involved in the work

²²⁴ Angela Davis, *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundations of a Movement* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2016), 49.

²²⁵ Butler, “What is Critique? An Essay on Foucault's Virtue,” *eipcp.net*. Accessed: June 5, 2016. <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0806/butler/en>

²²⁶ Foucault, “What is Critique?” in *The Politics of Truth* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2007b), 42.

²²⁷ *Ibid*, 44.

²²⁸ Butler, “What is Critique? An Essay on Foucault's Virtue.” <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0806/butler/en>

²²⁹ *Ibid*.

of critique which shows that “our reigning discourses have produced an impasse.”²³⁰ As resistant hope involves an attitude of openness and a revolutionary will, it guides critique in the task of facing these limits in an effort to map out “how not to be governed *like that*” and to create the conditions for the undoing of those discourses that sustain and uphold the practices of governance. Critique, in this context, as “the art of voluntary insubordination, that of reflected intractability”²³¹ takes as its goal political transformation, and resistant hope embodies this commitment.

3.3 Conclusion: The Minority Report of Masculinity

In this chapter, I argued that preemptive practices around national security rely on a paranoid temporality which is committed to the elimination of all possible threats in the future, at times by making these “threats” actualize. No responsibility is assumed for actualization within this framework. That is to say, the agents of the politics of paranoia often deny the politics of decision, as they insist on the status of objectivity, necessity, and the inevitability of their practices. I suggested that these dynamics closely resemble the problematics we see in “The Minority Report.”

There is, however, another pertinent dimension in this short story that is in need of explication. The protagonist John A. Anderton is an aging man distressed in his anticipation that he will soon get replaced by his new assistant, Witwer. The story begins with the following words: “The first thought Anderton had when he saw the young man was: *I'm getting bald. Bald and fat and old.* But he didn't say it aloud. Instead, he pushed back his chair, got to his feet, and came resolutely around the side of his desk, his right hand rigidly extended. Smiling with forced amiability, he shook hands with the young

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Foucault, “What Is Critique?,” 47.

man.”²³² In this way, “The Minority Report” could be said to perform the Oedipal anxieties and the fear of emasculation of an aging man as he dreads the idea of getting older and unavoidably being replaced by a younger, more virile man. Upon receiving the card with his name as a “would-be” murderer, Anderton is convinced that he is being framed by Witwer, who is clearly determined to be the next head of Precrime. It is precisely through his anxieties around his masculinity that Anderton is looking at the situation. He suspects that his wife Lisa and Witwer are working together to frame him: “Warily, Anderton introduced his new associate. Lisa smiled in friendly greeting. Did a covert awareness pass between them? He couldn't tell. God, he was beginning to suspect everybody – not only his wife and Witwer, but a dozen members of his staff.”²³³ He even suspects that Witwer might be sleeping with his wife, as the fear of emasculation takes over: “Startled, Anderton backed off. What were the chances of his wife's friendliness being benign, accidental? Witwer would be present the balance of the evening, and would now have an excuse to trail along to Anderton's private residence. Profoundly disturbed, he turned impulsively, and moved toward the door.”²³⁴ “The Minority Report,” in this sense, is not only a story that explores the temporal paradox of predictive policing (that is, the question whether these detainees are criminals if they have not yet committed a crime), but it is also a story about masculinity, or more precisely, a crisis in masculinity. The kind of paranoia traced throughout the story by way of exploring the psyche of Anderton is one that is triggered by perceived threats against his sense of masculinity. “The Minority Report,” thereby, links paranoid thoughts and feelings, a paranoid sense of temporality and the preemptive practices that ensue, and masculinity itself, by offering a

²³² Dick, “The Minority Report,” 223.

²³³ Ibid, 228.

²³⁴ Ibid, 229.

fictional account of a politics of paranoia as masculinist politics. In fact, at the end of the story, Anderton redeems his masculinity by sacrificing himself for the Precrime system, thereby becoming a hero. While his worst fear in the beginning was getting replaced by Witwer, he hands Precrime over to Witwer willingly, upon figuring out that what is at danger is not simply himself but his brilliant, life-long creation of a system that catches and imprisons people before they commit a crime. The next chapter examines the politics of paranoia as masculinist politics, by suggesting that the paranoid obsession with the future comes from an understanding of past laden with harm and trauma, which offers a ground of justification for the violence that ensues.

CHAPTER IV

MASCULINITY

The events that followed the September 11 attacks indicate a vindictive, militarized response to loss and trauma, marking the beginning of a global war on terrorism. On September 21, 2001, George Bush remarks during his State of the Union address: “Great harm has been done to us. We have suffered great loss. And in our grief and anger we have found our mission and our moment.”²³⁵ The “mission” that emerges out of grief and anger elicited by such victimization, he explains, is waging a war on terror, without resting until every terrorist group in the world is annihilated: “Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated.”²³⁶ His rhetoric relays a sense of heroism, self-assuredness, and commitment that accompanies a discourse around victimization, much like in the Hollywood action movies of the 1980s that feature an indestructible powerful male figure who overcomes all the difficulties and always wins in the end, no matter how impossible the circumstances may seem. In fact, some of his statements could very well have been directly taken out of one of these movies that reflect the Cold War anxieties of the era and the construction of the figure of a powerful American hero who would mitigate those anxieties: “Whether we bring our enemies to justice or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done...Our nation – this generation – will lift a dark threat of violence from our people and our future. We will rally the world to this cause by our efforts, by our courage. We will not tire, we will not falter, and we will not fail.”²³⁷

²³⁵ “Text of George Bush's Speech,” *The Guardian*, September 2001. Accessed: May 24, 2016. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/sep/21/september11.usa13>

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid.

Justice, in this context, is retributive: it is about making those who are responsible pay. Retributive justice is offered as the necessary or natural outcome of the linking of a victimization discourse to American exceptionalism, highlighting loss and harm whilst illustrating a picture of a heroic nation, the guarantor of world's freedom, that brings its enemies to its knees. For many national security states (which non-coincidentally also happen to be heavily militarized states), the notion of retributive justice embodied in the linking between the victimization discourse and recourse to sovereignty (the supreme power that the state holds) is commonplace. Much of the rhetoric around counter-terrorism measures undertaken in different parts of the world attests to this phenomenon, and in particular, the discursive practices around the global war on terrorism employed by the United States, the United Kingdom, Israel, and Turkey. The justifications offered for the Israeli control and occupation of Gaza, which Noam Chomsky has called “the world's largest open-air prison, where some 1.5 million people on a roughly 140-square-mile strip of land are subject to random terror and arbitrary punishment, with no purpose other than to humiliate and degrade,”²³⁸ offers one such example. Binyamin Netanyahu's recent proposal that the families of Palestinian attackers to be expelled to Gaza as part of preemptive measures that would “lead to a significant decrease in terrorist attacks”²³⁹ (which closely resembles the logic behind the arbitrary post-9/11 deportations of Muslims) is also indicative of this linking. Another recent example includes Turkey's criminalization of the group Academics for Peace, which issued a statement entitled “We Will Not Be a Party to This Crime,” condemning the war in southeast Turkey and demanding that the state of

²³⁸ Noam Chomsky, “The World's Largest Open Air Prison,” *Truth Out*, November 9, 2012. Accessed: July 22, 2016. <http://www.truth-out.org/opinion/item/12635-noam-chomsky-my-visit-to-gaza-the-worlds-largest-open-air-prison>

²³⁹ “Netanyahu calls for expulsion of the Palestinian attackers' families to Gaza,” *The Guardian*, March 3, 2016. Accessed: July 22, 2016. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/03/netanyahu-calls-for-expulsion-of-palestinian-attackers-families-to-gaza>

Turkey abandons “its deliberate massacre and deportation of Kurdish and other peoples in the region.”²⁴⁰ This criminalization has taken place by way of charging the group with “lending support to terrorism,” as the statement condemns only state violence and not the violence perpetuated by “terrorists.” Held accountable for what they did *not* state, many of the signatories of this statement have been fired, suspended, arrested, sued, and are subjected to investigation or disciplinary action. The Turkish state claimed to have been victimized by this statement, this call for peace, and sought justice retributively, while the AKP administration responded to the recent terror attacks in Turkey (seven to be exact, since June 2015) by escalating the retaliatory military operations, which have been shown only to result in more terror attacks and civilian deaths. All of these measures are indicative of an underlying political rationality encompassed by the notion I have called a politics of paranoia. They are cut from the same cloth, in that the justificatory mechanisms for each bespeak a violent response to harm (real or perceived) that is taken to be necessary. Retributive justice, in this way, constitutes a tenet of the politics of paranoia, grounding the practices around securitization.

Thus far, I have given an analysis this logic of securitization by examining its relation to the processes of racialization as linked to an assemblage of biopower and sovereign power. These practices, however, are also gendered: underlying this logic is a particular understanding of masculinity, equated to power and formulated in conjunction with militarism. In this chapter, I argue that not only the political response to harm (a vindictive, violent response, a response through militarization), but also the way in which trauma is experienced as well as the language through which that experience is articulated

²⁴⁰ Academicians for Peace, “We Will Not Be a Party to This Crime!,” *Europe Solidaire*, January 10, 2016. Accessed: July 22, 2016. <http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article36944>

is gendered, pointing to a masculinist framework that undergirds political discourse and practice. In the context of the September 11 attacks, Vaheed Ramazani writes: “Whether or not one wishes to accord any significance to the phallic iconicity of the World Trade Center, it is obvious from the administration's pronouncements following the attacks that the collapse of the Towers was experienced as emasculating.”²⁴¹ While the press has preferred to use the term “humiliating” “to describe the sudden wound to our national pride,”²⁴² as Ramazani puts it, the wound is experienced as “emasculating” insofar as the masculine identification of the nation, understood in terms of impermeability, is called into question. Ramazani's reading of mainstream political discourse yields that in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, healing requires sex reassignment surgery, whereby the nation is turned “from the passive (female) recipient of a violating aggression into the virile progenitor of world solidarity.”²⁴³ Retributive justice that grounds the War on Terror is situated precisely within this gendered political framework, which resembles, as Ramazani points out, “the Hollywood revenge plot,”²⁴⁴ which frequently makes use of a hypermasculine hero figure to save the day.

Drawing from the historical production of hegemonic masculinity and extending that onto the level of the nation, Bush is the embodiment of a distinctively American understanding of manhood in that he conjoins a “1950s cowboy rhetoric”²⁴⁵ with good old fashioned white saviorism that has led to a borderless, never-ending war whereby the nation not only assumed the position of a hero who, in his words, “will lift a dark threat

²⁴¹ Vaheed Ramazani, “September 11: Masculinity, Justice, and the Politics of Empathy,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*, XXI no. 1&2 (2001): 118.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid, 121.

²⁴⁴ Ibid, 119.

²⁴⁵ Bonnie Mann, *Sovereign Masculinity: Gender Lessons from the War on Terror* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 9.

of violence,” but also of a hero who is set out to save “the damsels-in-distress” (i.e Afghan women). The historical account of masculinity provided by Michael Kimmel shows that the development of capitalism in the United States from the nineteenth century on has rendered masculinity fragile and that the economic insecurity brought onto American men paired with the growing disillusionment with the status of power that masculinity supposedly denotes has created a new phase in the hegemonic form of masculinity where it is produced as threatened and thereby in need of constant affirmation: “Beginning in the early part of the nineteenth century, the idea of testing and proving one's manhood became one of the defining experiences in American men's lives.”²⁴⁶ In this context, the events that followed the September 11 attacks reflect these anxieties that emanate from the condition of masculinity as that which is *fragile*, yet whose survival depends on the denial of that very fragility. The sovereign nation which “builds itself on the conceit of its own inviolability”²⁴⁷ draws from this paradoxical formulation of masculinity and seeks retribution in an attempt to reassert its status, a status of power understood as domination.

Yet the masculine identification of the nation and retribution as a gendered model of justice are hardly peculiar to the United States, given that the War on Terror has become globalized, and relatedly, securitization as directly or indirectly linked to militarization has been on the rise. Bush's macho “charm” continues to reign in other parts of the world today, most notably in Putin's Russia and Erdogan's Turkey, a “charm” that is the epitome of masculinist politics strongly upholding the operations of a politics of paranoia. While the meaning of masculinity is not only historically and culturally

²⁴⁶ Ibid, 2.

²⁴⁷ Ibid, 3.

specific, but also plural, and accordingly, the specific formulations of national masculinity that describes a gendered identity that the nation-state assumes may vary, one must also note that within the context of global militarization, where the political rationality of the politics of paranoia are embraced by many nation-states, certain meanings of masculinity as linked to securitization and militarization exceed national borders and are carried over onto different contexts. There is, in other words, a “spilling” of masculinity taking place, wherein masculinity is (re)formulated in conjunction with securitization/militarization. At the intersection of militarism and masculinity, there is an economy of desire at work that has resulted in a tripartite alignment: an equation of political power with masculinity, masculinity with domination, and power with domination. In many cases, the figure of the militarized masculine constitutes a metonym for the nation-state: the all-powerful, yet wounded; strong, yet hurt; sovereign, yet compromised. What gets carried over transnationally is this paradoxical formulation of masculinity as inviolable yet violated that stands for the nation-state, a nation-state for which the measures to be taken in the name of securitization have become necessary, unavoidable, and inevitable. The figure of the militarized masculine is grounded in a masculinist political framework that offers retributive justice as the only viable option, foreclosing any other possibilities. Militarized masculinity is vindictive, in that it relies on the necessity of violence in responding to harm, despite the devastating effects that follow. He is the man of “at all costs,” standing for a sovereign nation-state of “by all means necessary.”

I investigate the transnational resonance of this figure in three different moments, each offering a spectacle on militarized masculinity: the (re)production of the post-9/11

paranoiac masculinity in the television series *American Dad!*, the aestheticization of violence through the narrativization of militarized masculinity in the photographs from Turkey's very own War on Terror, and a Daesh militant's testimony. Each of these performances offer a linkage between masculinity and militarism, a linkage that is presented as necessary, inevitable, and also desirable. My argument is not that the operations of militarized masculinity are one and the same regardless of the context. I instead attend to the complex interconnectivities between these different moments and the interesting ways in which they echo one another, suggesting a crisscrossing, rather than a unified global structure. Each of the examples that I take up offer a discourse around an experience of a “wound,” of harm and trauma, that brings about a crisis of masculinity, against which masculinity must be restored through the infliction of violence. These instances thereby reveal militarized masculinity to be a paranoiac formulation in that its self-identity is linked to a threat that it seeks to annihilate through violence. What it wages a war against is the very limits to its own inviolability, the limits that have become much salient and impossible to ignore. There is, furthermore, a masculinist economy of desire at work politically that legitimizes, and even celebrates, these practices of retributive justice, where the infliction of violence is aligned with power and domination. By drawing these connections, I do not wish to erase the particular and culturally specific ways in which militarized masculinity operates nor do I wish to essentialize it by suggesting a necessary or natural link between masculinity and militarism. On the contrary, I wish to problematize and denaturalize such links, offering this analysis as an invitation to consider the similar logics in which militarized masculinities work in different contexts, as they uphold the operations of a politics of paranoia.

4.1 The Wounded Male Ego: Victimization and Retributive Justice

In responding to the September 11 attacks, Bush's victimization discourse has served as a legitimating ground for military action. Judith Butler writes: "We now see that the national border was more permeable than we thought. Our general response is anxiety, rage; a radical desire for security, a shoring-up of the borders against what is perceived as alien; a heightened surveillance of Arab peoples and anyone who looks vaguely Arab in the dominant racial imaginary."²⁴⁸ This "radical desire for security" and the practices that followed, including surveillance, detention, deportation, and war, are linked to a desire to restore sovereignty, understood in a gendered fashion. These practices are situated in the history of the nation-state as marked by masculinity, wherein masculinity and sovereignty are both understood in terms of a denial of violability. Accounts by Susan Faludi and Michael Kimmel show an overlap between hegemonic masculinity in the aftermath of the World War II as that which constantly needs to be tested and proven and the self-identification of the nation-state. Kimmel writes: "We cannot understand manhood without understanding American history. But I believe we also cannot fully understand American history without understanding masculinity. How has American history been shaped by the efforts to test and prove manhood – the wars we Americans have waged, the frontier we have tamed, the work we have done, the leaders we admire?"²⁴⁹ Kimmel's account of masculinity shows that the will to dominate arises as a compensation for the fear that emerges when masculinity is threatened. In these moments of crisis, masculinity is that which needs to be secured, asserted, and reclaimed. Masculinity, at this historical juncture, is a *paranoiac achievement* insofar as it is marked

²⁴⁸ Butler, "Indefinite Detention," 39.

²⁴⁹ Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 2.

by a threat that in turn constitutes it. Although this achievement is based on a denial of vulnerability, it remains ever vulnerable, for it is haunted by a constant endangerment that makes up its conditions of possibility. The paradox of the wounded male ego is in its claim to imperviousness despite its inherent fragility. Its weakness, in other words, lies in the denial of its weakness and the inability to cope with the fact of its own vulnerability. Yet this is not simply a psychological state from which men suffer under patriarchy. We see this operate politically when events such as 9/11 produce a crisis of masculinity which calls for the reassertion of dominance through militarized means.

Throughout this dissertation, I have sought to show that securitization works through racialization in efforts to affirm and consolidate a biopolitical order. These practices (of expulsion) also serve to *gender the nation*, in that they are linked to a masculine national identification, whereby “sovereign masculinity,” to borrow from Bonnie Mann, seeks to deny “its own constitutive injurability” and attempts to “relocate injurability in the other.”²⁵⁰ While this phenomenon, the paradoxical formulation of the inviolable yet wounded masculinity, has largely been explored in its framing of the political within the United States,²⁵¹ I would like to suggest that it finds resonance outside of the United States as well, especially in other militarized contexts. The linkage between sovereignty and masculinity has farther implications that are manifested transnationally, such that the political gets marked by masculinity seen as power seen as domination in the context of militarization. There is, in other words, a transnational import of the trope of the wounded male ego that resonates beyond the confines of national borders, as it serves as a ground of justification for retributive justice through militarized action.

²⁵⁰ Mann citing Judith Butler: *Sovereign Masculinity*, 3-4.

²⁵¹ Please see: Susan Faludi, *Stiffed* (New York City: Harper Perennial, 2000); Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Bonnie Mann, *Sovereign Masculinity: Gender Lessons from the War on Terror* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014)

Such import can be observed in Israel's use of the victimization discourse to justify its military operations in Gaza, including “carrying out extensive air attacks...and authorizing a major call-up of army reserves for an extended campaign against militants.”²⁵² We are led to believe, as Waleed Ahmeed ironically puts, that “[t]he peace-loving nation of Israel is yet again at the brink of an existential annihilation due to home made rocket attacks from Gaza.”²⁵³ In 2014, during a period of escalation of the conflict, Israel's Minister of Justice Tzipi Livni stated that although Israel is reluctant to carry out a ground operation, they are prepared to do so if necessary. She stated: “If Hamas does not allow Israelis to live in peace, and then we too will be forced to carry out actions that we don't fundamentally wish to perform, and that are not our primary goal.”²⁵⁴ Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu stated in response to the rocket fires: “Hamas will pay a heavy price for firing on Israeli citizens...Our army is strong, the home-front is firm, and our people are united. That combination is our answer to the terrorist organizations that want to harm us...We are all united in the aim of hitting the terrorist organizations and restoring the quiet.”²⁵⁵ Here, again, a recourse to sovereignty accompanies a victimization discourse, where Israel's self-victimization serves as the legitimating ground for military action despite the important asymmetries between Israel and Hamas (while Israel receives \$3.1 billion in aid from the United States – almost all of which is in the form of military assistance – Hamas has a budget of \$70 million, most of which is devoted to

²⁵² Steven Erlanger and Isabel Keschner, “Israel and Hamas Trade Attacks as Tension Rises,” *The New York Times*, July 8, 2014. Accessed: July 22, 2016. http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/09/world/middleeast/israel-steps-up-offensive-against-hamas-in-gaza.html?_r=1

²⁵³ Waleed Ahmed, “9 Reasons why Israel is under rocket attack,” *Mondoweiss*, July 23, 2014. Accessed: July 22, 2016. <http://mondoweiss.net/2014/07/reasons-rocket-attack/>

²⁵⁴ Erlanger and Keschner, “Israel and Hamas Trade Attacks as Tension Rises.”

²⁵⁵ Herb Keinon, “Netanyahu: Israel to Expand Operation Protective Edge,” *The Jerusalem Post*, July 9, 2014. Accessed: July 22, 2016. <http://www.jpost.com/Diplomacy-and-Politics/Netanyahu-Israel-to-expand-Operation-Protective-Edge-362110>

social services). Simona Sharoni's account in *Gender and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* shows that hegemonic masculinity in Israel is heavily militarized and closely linked to a sense of nationalism. Insofar as the critical components of militarized masculinity in the context of Israel are comprised of “emotional toughness” and “readiness to sacrifice one's life for the homeland,”²⁵⁶ one may suggest that such formulation of masculinity intersects with an understanding of sovereignty as expressed in Netanyahu's statement by way of alluding to military power, presenting, again, the tripartite equation of masculinity-power-domination.²⁵⁷

Similarly, the exploitation and manipulation of grief through the figure of “the weeping mother” and the spectacle of mourning for the soldiers who died during the military operations against the Kurdish liberation movement PKK in southeast Turkey poses a comparable situation. While these spectacles of mourning are used as a basis to justify further military operations, which would result in more casualties, the discourse around “martyrdom” in Turkey serves as a form of emotional manipulation to misplace the burden of responsibility. Mourning, in other words, serves to justify violence, even though the cause of mourning is nothing other than violence. It is the state that must assume responsibility for these deaths as they refuse to continue peace negotiations and choose instead to sacrifice uneducated, low income young men who are unable to buy their way out of the compulsory military service. Accompanying such victimization discourse is often a rhetoric of nationalism about the greatness of the Turkish nation,

²⁵⁶ Simona Sharoni, *Gender and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: The Politics of Women's Resistance* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995), 44.

²⁵⁷ The Queer BDS group Pinkwatching Israel's attempts at problematizing the pinkwashing of Israel (that is, in their words, the efforts to “transform public perception of Israel from an Apartheid settler state to a harmless, liberal, gay-friendly playground by juxtaposing this false image with a portrayal of Palestinian and Arab societies as backwards, repressive and intolerant”) show the importance of recognizing this link between (hetero)masculinity and sovereignty, and resisting the allure of homonationalism. For more information, please see: <http://www.pinkwatchingisrael.com/about-us/>

understood in a gendered fashion.²⁵⁸ In the third section of this chapter, I explore this conjunction further as is manifest in the aesthetic production of militarized masculinity in the ongoing war in Turkey.

The use of the victimization discourse in order to legitimate violence through a linkage of sovereignty and masculinity is not peculiar to nation-states either. In the documentary *Vice News* released on Daesh, we see a former resident of Belgium who joined Daesh, asking his very young son: “Who is over there [in Belgium],” to which his son answers, “Infidels.” He asks again, “Why do we kill the infidels? What have infidels done?” His son responds: “They kill Muslims.” The man then turns to the camera: “God willing the Caliphate has been established, and we are going to invade you as you invaded us. We will capture your women as you captured our women. We will orphan your children as you orphaned our children.” When he is uttering the words “as you orphaned our children,” his voice cracks and he begins crying. He continues: “I swear to God my brothers, we are living in joy that I can't describe.”

Other Daesh militants seem to share this vindictive sentiment given that many of them came from Europe to join Daesh, where they lived in segregated Muslim communities in the face of growing Islamophobia. Of course, the report the United Nations released last year shows that Daesh has killed far more Muslims than any other group, as the fundamentalist Wahhabi doctrine that they propagate dictates that the apostates (those who diverged from “true Islam”) be executed.²⁵⁹ But these contradictions aside, this

²⁵⁸ For a historical account of the gendering of the Turkish nation, please see: Ibrahimhakkioglu, “Beyond the Modern/Religious Dichotomy: The Veil and Feminist Solidarity in Contemporary Turkey,” *Philosophical Topics* 41. no. 2 (2013): 131-156.

²⁵⁹ For statistics, please see: “Report on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict in Iraq: 6 July-10 September 2014,” *Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) Human Rights Office*. Accessed: July 22, 2016. http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/IQ/UNAMI_OHCHR_POC_Report_FINAL_6July_10September2014.pdf

particular reclaiming of power not only resonates with the Bush administration's response to the September 11 attacks (which in some sense had led to the Daesh's unforeseen success in the region over a decade later when they got a hold of the weaponry left in Iraq by the United States), but it also embodies the trope of wounded masculinity, which in turns need to be reasserted through militarized means. In this case, marginalization has translated into a sense of emasculation where masculinity/sovereignty needs to be restored. This man understands his mission to be one of resistance, justified by his prior victimization. The victimization discourse, laying the ground for the necessity of retributive justice, serves to perpetuate the vicious cycle of violence. Derrida writes:

[A]ll terrorism *presents itself* as a response in a situation that continues to escalate. It amounts to saying, 'I am resorting to terrorism as a last resort, because the other is more terrorist than I am; I am defending myself, counterattacking; the real terrorist, the worst, is the one who will have deprived me of every other means of responding before presenting himself, the first aggressor, as a victim.' It is in this way that the United States, Israel, wealthy nations, and colonial or imperialist powers are accused of practicing state terrorism and thus of being 'more terrorist' than the terrorists of whom they say they are the victims.²⁶⁰

While Derrida pinpoints the danger of the victimization discourse that serves to justify retributive justice, one must recognize that masculinity is central to these practices and thereby key to their undoing as well. Masculinity, in these instances, is claimed as a compensation for a loss. It promises empowerment in the face of powerlessness. Of course, there are important differences in these two cases. The U.S. enjoys a privileged

²⁶⁰ Derrida, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror*, 107. Emphasis in the original.

position as the world's superpower, whose violability was unfathomable before the September 11 attacks. The hegemonic masculine identity it assumes had been based on a blindness to its own permeability, where it has built itself “on the conceit of its own inviolability.”²⁶¹ The securitization measures in this sense also serve as an attempt, a *wish* perhaps, to go back to this original blissful state of ignorance, while perpetually reminding us of the loss of that state and the impossibility of going back. While in the case of Daesh, the militants do not speak from a lost position of privilege that they seek to restore, but instead from a position of subjugation for which they seek revenge. There is no symmetry here. While the recounting of the sense of violation and the experience of permeability display important differences, visibility offers another point of divergence: the trauma that the September 11 attacks caused is also linked to the sudden, disruptive visibility of that which had been previously unfathomable. For the Daesh militants who recount their stories in the documentary, there was nothing invisible about their permeability, it was made clear to them on a daily basis. Based on these testimonies, the discourse is marked by a sense of powerlessness, in the face of which power is sought, as opposed to the discourse offered by Bush, in which the rhetoric of American exceptionalism is conjoined with an account of victimization. Even though both accounts seem to be marked by a sense of masculine pride, the repudiation of vulnerability takes place on a different register in each case: while this repudiation serves as an attempt to reassert an irresistible position of dominance in the case of the United States, the claiming of masculinity coincides with laying claim to power from a place of powerlessness in the case of Daesh. Militarization in both cases serves to establish what Mann calls “sovereign masculinity” by way of banishing vulnerability, which in turn is relocated in the body of the

²⁶¹ Mann, *Sovereign Masculinity*, 3.

Other. This paranoiac formulation of masculinity comprises the framework that undergirds militarization as well as other practices of expulsion. Both cases suggest a political deployment of a paranoiac formulation of masculinity, as an abjection of vulnerability and its violent projection onto the Other.

Despite the fact that Daesh militants justify their cause as a response to oppression, perhaps even as an anti-colonial project of sorts (though not quite in these words), the power to which they lay claim is of course false and misguided as they continue their massacres in efforts to destroy what is perhaps the only viable alternative to western imperialism and capitalism in the region, the democratic confederate structure in Rojava. By attempting to dismantle the master's house with the master's tools, to borrow from Audre Lorde, this project that is implicitly formulated as anti-colonial is anything but decolonial. As Daesh continues its invasion, occupation, and colonial expansion in the region by destroying various communities, they are very much caught up within the capitalist/imperialist machinery against which they supposedly wage a war. As Gloria Anzaldúa suggests, “We need a new masculinity and the new man needs a movement.”²⁶² As the crisis that comes out of wounded masculinity continues to bring about more destruction, retributive justice is in need of a replacement by better alternatives that can undo its rhetorical force and bring about global justice. As the linkage of masculinity and sovereignty saturates the political field on a transnational level and comprises the horizon through which political practices attain their meaning and legitimacy, the political is in dire need of being divested from the paranoiac formulations of masculinity that uphold the workings of a politics of paranoia.

In the next section, I examine the particular formulations of paranoiac masculinity

²⁶² Ibid, 106.

in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks in the United States through an analysis of the television series *American Dad!*. By engaging with Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, I suggest that there is an economy of desire at work that valorizes a particular kind of masculinity politically, and it is through such economy that paranoiac masculinity attains its political legitimacy and desirability.

4.2 *American Dad!* and the Post-9/11 Paranoiac Masculinity

Suggesting that paranoia today has become synonymous with theory itself, where the male paranoiac in particular is seen as the embodiment of a great thinker, Sianne Ngai writes: “[T]he male conspiracy theorist seems to have become an exemplary model for the late twentieth-century theorist in general, and conspiracy theory a viable synecdoche for 'theory' itself.”²⁶³ In a similar vein, one may suggest that in the context of ever-expanding securitization, the political too is in danger of becoming synonymous with paranoiac masculinism. While the figure of the paranoiac male is ubiquitous within popular culture in television series like *The X Files* and *24* (and now with the more recent series *Homeland Security* it is a woman who occupies this position), nowhere does it become more salient, perhaps, than in the animated television series *American Dad!*. The protagonist Stan Smith, the “American Dad,” is a satirical embodiment of post-9/11 paranoiac masculinity. The series also takes up the theme of paranoia by paying homage to many established conspiracy theories, like the existence of aliens (Stan Smith lives with an alien named Roger whom he rescued from Area 51) and top secret, bizarre CIA experiments (including memory erasure and switching the brain of an East German ski-jumper with that of a goldfish so that East Germany would not win the 1986 Winter Olympics). Often the absurdity relayed by the plot is playfully tied to these paranoiac

²⁶³ Ibid, 299.

tropes.

Stan is a hypermasculine, neoconservative Republican CIA agent, living with his wife and two children. He is portrayed as a thoughtless, inconsiderate man who does not shy away from getting what he wants by coercing others at gunpoint. Although his overbearing personality is often the cause of contention between him and his family members, his disposition is also shown as what makes him a great CIA agent and a strong role model for his son. Stan takes pride in his virility, which is depicted in terms of physical perfection, specialized skills, relentless suspicion, deep voice, and emotional detachment. In the episode “Rodger Codger,” he informs his son Steve who is taken aback by his father's lack of emotions upon the death of a dear friend: “Son, feelings are what women have. They come from their ovaries.” It is common for Stan to make such sexist remarks as his performance of excessive, aggressive masculinity is often contrasted with the sensible role that his wife Francine plays in their marriage. By the end of that same episode, it is revealed that Stan was simply repressing his feelings in order not to be ridiculed by his co-workers, who later mock him for being “a lady” when he gets emotional during a therapy session. On the show, masculinity is often shown to be a performance or “a guise,” to borrow from Jackson Katz, which is rendered humorous: “Sorry I'm late,” Stan Smith says in the same episode as he walks into a meeting, “I was getting a piping hot cup of coffee. It's far too hot to drink, but luckily my leathery man mouth can take it.” Parody and humor, in this sense, work to denaturalize masculinity, as it is rendered ridiculous to the point of meaninglessness. Yet masculinity is also valorized and made desirable in other ways, as Stan never manages to completely overcome his macho tendencies. Even when Stan's hegemonic masculinity is ironized – like in the Pilot

episode when Stan attempts to help his son impress a girl by stealing her purse so his son can catch him and save the day, but gets carried away and starts tackling everyone on his way, bursting through a window after performing some incredible acrobatic moves, landing on a car and finally running off to leave Steve behind (in the next scene, he admits, “Okay, I got a little carried away,” with a bunch of glass stuck on his face) – he is still depicted as an exceptional man with an incredible set of skills and abilities, albeit a little too ardent perhaps. Although Stan's character is a parody of paranoiac masculinity, it is much less a critique of it in the true sense of the word, in that his heroism is shown to be undeniable in the narrative.

Stan is also a self-proclaimed patriot who would do anything for his country and is obsessed with his mission of catching terrorists. This obsession instigates his incessant paranoia where he always anticipates a terror attack to take place particularly in his suburban neighborhood. He suspects even his own daughter Haley in the pilot episode, who unlike her father holds left-wing views, tackling her to the ground when the alarm sounds as she walks into their house. He finds an unidentified object upon frisking her, which Haley informs him is just a pack of gum. He runs outside, throws the pack of gum really far, holds his ears, waiting for an explosion, which never comes. “Alright, it is gum,” he says, finally convinced. The show often depicts the ridiculousness of the measures taken in the name of securitization, thereby problematizing the logic of inevitability and necessity that often accompany these. Moreover, the narrative often links these measures fittingly to Stan's sense of masculinity, as Stan feels like a “real man” only insofar as he can keep his family and his country safe. Stan's sense of manhood, in other words, is very much linked to his commitment to the mission of

national security and its securitizing measures. He takes this mission very seriously and often to the point of excess, as he is prone to get carried away with his delusions. A stereotypical white cis heterosexual male CIA agent, he is also depicted as a racist and as completely ignorant and politically incorrect, though, again, in a tongue-in-cheek fashion. In the episode “Homeland Insecurity,” convinced that the Iranian couple who live on his street are terrorists, he turns his backyard into a detention center for all the neighbors living on his block. “So, what part of Islam do you hail from?,” he asks his neighbor. “My parents were from Iran, I was born in Cleveland,” his neighbor answers. Stan responds: “We also have a Cleveland here in America. It'd be super if you didn't blow it up.” Parodying the “guilty until proven innocent” rule that Homeland Security adopted after the September 11 attacks with respect to the Muslim communities living in the United States (a principle that was sanctioned by legislation like the Patriot Act), he poses the following rhetorical question to Haley who tells him that what he is doing is racial profiling: “They're trying to destroy us and you want proof?”

Stan's paranoiac masculinity is not only tied to his racist prejudice, but also his sexist remarks. “Check out what I bought online,” Stan urges his coworker in the Pilot episode, “It’s a pencil, and the eraser is stuck up Bin Laden's pooper. Best 40 bucks I ever spent.” While the audience laughs at his silliness and immaturity, it is worth noting that this remark also brings to mind all the sexualized ways that the U.S. soldiers tortured prisoners as shown by the leaked Abu Ghraib prison photographs (as well as the prisoners' testimonies), all the while cheerfully smiling and giving thumbs up to the camera, apparently amused by the pain and humiliation that they are inflicting. The laughter, in this context, partakes in that violence; it is complicit in cruelty. While humor

can be used to problematize and deconstruct, it can also be used to normalize, obscure or cover up, and in this case, it serves to trivialize the violence by disburdening it of its ethical weight. *American Dad!* serves as no more than a comical relief to the severe consequences of securitization and the War on Terror borne by others, thereby perpetuating the violence it supposedly parodies.

However, while various forms of paranoiac masculinity are by and large valorized in popular culture, in this particular satirical production, Stan Smith is hardly your typical invincible hero. On the contrary, he often becomes the butt of the joke whenever he acts on his delusions. He is almost always wrong in his suspicions and often makes a fool of himself in the process (he is, after all, supposed to be the incarnation of a Bush-esque type of masculinity, the masculine embodiment of George Bush's "Mission Accomplished"). Toward the end of the episode "Homeland Insecurity," for instance, he is convinced that *he* is the terrorist and begins torturing himself in order to extract information. He is often depicted as a ridiculous character whose suspicions lack any sense. "Francine, you be careful when out there today," he warns his wife in the pilot, "we're at terror alert orange! Which means something could go down somewhere in some way at some point in time, so look sharp!" Shortly thereafter, the toasts are ready in the toaster, and the popping sound sets Stan off, who immediately takes out his gun and begins shooting the toaster, the entire family is taken aback and staring at him in shock. "It's just toast, dad," his daughter proclaims, to which he responds, "This time it was toast, Haley...This time!"

In the world of Stan, anything can go down anywhere at any point, and one needs to be prepared. Of course it is rather unclear what 'being prepared' entails other than a

particular affective disposition that renders everything suspect – as my friends asked me when I told them to be safe after the latest terror attack in Ankara, “how, exactly?” Yet from where Stan stands, far from constituting a ridiculous act, shooting the toaster was an act of necessity, for what if it wasn't just toast, but an actual threat? The possibility of threat renders the entirety of the world threatening. While we saw how this logic is operative in preemptive practices in Chapter 2, we also saw that this type of reasoning holds up in court, legitimizing the sting operations as an essential part of securitization, despite the fact that no data exist to back up this claim. Yet here, in this scene in particular (and many others throughout the series), the absurdity of such logic is shown in Stan's exclamation, “This time it was toast!” This constitutes a moment of critical political commentary, a depiction of how ill-founded and ridiculous paranoid reasoning in actuality is. (Although, I must note, again, the violence involved in these practices is often severely downplayed in the show, to the point where this downplaying becomes a form of violence).

Of course, one must remember that Stan Smith is a parody – the real Stan Smiths of the world are much less delusional paranoids who shoot at everything (I guess sometimes they can be) than bureaucrats simply going about “business as usual” in a paranoid political order. What Stan Smith parodies is not the individual disposition of agents working for the CIA or any other governmental institution for that matter which concerns itself with matters of national security, but rather the *logic* beneath the rhetoric around national security and the practices that follow. Although his point of view is often delegitimized as he is forced to face his own delusions as the events unfold, he still continues to hold much authority simply by virtue of being a strong, capable man and a

silly, lovable character. In this sense, one may very well read Stan Smith as situated within the historical lineage of post-Cold War American heroes in Hollywood productions, the characters that are played by Arnold Schwarzenegger, Jean Claude van Damme, Sylvester Stallone, who embody the epitome of masculinity as men who are able to “get the job done.” Stan too “gets the job done” and performs grandeur displays of virility albeit in a tongue-in-cheek fashion, like in the Pilot episode when he is shown to be admiring his perfect physique in the mirror, flexing in his white underpants. While he is not necessarily a respectable character in the traditional sense, he is still valorized by virtue of being a capable agent who performs his duties and in the end, manages to save the day, much like the 1980s American heroes, with the addition of being almost always wrong about everything. Yet, as J. Halberstam points out, “Though we both punish and naturalize female stupidity, we not only forgive stupidity in white men, but we often cannot recognize it as such since white maleness is the identity construct most often associated with mastery, wisdom, and grand narratives.”²⁶⁴ Stan's stupidity, far from suggesting an epistemic illegitimacy, often gets folded into his masculine mastery whereby he emerges as heroic. Richard Butsch's analysis of the depictions of working-class men on network television family series from 1946 to 2004 shows that Stan's position is far from peculiar. While these men were shown to be “typically well intentioned, even lovable,” they were also “dumb, immature, irresponsible, and lacking in common sense.”²⁶⁵ In this sense, even though Stan as a parody of paranoiac masculinity offers some critical moments for the challenging of some of the ideals of masculinity and their political import, overall, his characterization hardly deconstructs these narratives

²⁶⁴ J. Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 55.

²⁶⁵ Richard Butsch, “Ralph, Fred, Archie, Homer, and the King of Queens: Why Television Keeps Re-Creating the Male Working-Class Buffoon,” *Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Critical Reader*, ed. Gail Dines and Jean M. Humez. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2011), 101.

that not only grant epistemic legitimacy (if not authority) to white male stupidity, he also makes it charming and adorable.

The danger that is involved in this rendering can be observed in the massive support such figures who embody white male stupidity receive. George Bush's observed failures as a masculine figure and perceived stupidity existed alongside his atrocious political approach that accompanied his macho cowboyisms. A similar association can also be observed in the presumptive GOP nominee Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign, throughout which he has continuously made sexist, racist, and ableist remarks as he was defending border security and anti-immigration policies, all the while, of course, talking about his penis size and how "hot" his daughter is on national television. The figure of the wall-building billionaire hero keeping the nation secure no doubt is a strong selling point for millions of U.S. Americans who find this foul-mouthed, aggressive man who often seems to have no idea what he is doing to be charming, powerful, and accessible. What this form of masculinity relays is a sense of power. While Linda Alcoff has attributed the strong showing of Trump to the epistemology of ignorance as one of the tenets of whiteness²⁶⁶ (which is going to be central to the discussion around affect in the next chapter), there is also a certain economy of desire at work that is linked to the valorization of masculinity, and in this case, the valorization of white male stupidity, in particular. What a presidential candidate who embodies this epistemic ideal promises is a sense of empowerment, in a context where power is linked to (racial) domination. One might say that in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, the politics around securitization has become closely linked to masculinity where this link

²⁶⁶ Alcoff, Linda Martín. "Why Trump is Still Here," *The Philosophical Salon*, February 8, 2016. Accessed: May 24, 2016. <http://thephilosophicalsalon.com/why-trump-is-still-here/>.

now serves as a selling point in electoral politics. While Trump is seen as a joke by many – and he is, though a deadly serious one, – Maria Alekhina of the Russian feminist punk rock collective Pussy Riot stated: “When Putin came to his first term or second term, nobody [in Russia] actually thought that this is serious. Everybody was joking about it. And nobody could imagine that after five, six years, we would have a war in Ukraine, annexation of Crimea, and these problems in Syria...Everybody [is] joking about Donald Trump now, but it's a very short way from joke to sad reality when you have a really crazy president speaking about breaking every moral and logic norm.”²⁶⁷ As Alcoff suggests, within the context of the epistemic dominance of white ignorance, Bernie Sanders offers a counterexample to whiteness:

When activists from Black Lives Matter presumptively attacked him from the floor of one of his stump speeches last summer; he let them speak. He invited them for further conversations. He hired them into his campaign, not just to knock on doors, but to help lead strategy and develop agenda. He sat down for a five hour videotaped interview with Killer Mike, the brilliant Hip Hop artist and cultural analyst, filmed in Mike’s barbershop in Atlanta. In other words, Sanders admitted there were things he didn’t know, and he sought knowledge from the people who did. This is a true political revolution.²⁶⁸

We may add, however, that Sanders also offers a counterexample to white masculinity, one that is not linked to stupidity, entitlement, and aggression as in the case

²⁶⁷ Lance Gould, “Pussy Riot on Trump: We Laughed When Vladimir Putin Rose to Power, Too,” *The Huffington Post* December 18, 2015. Accessed: July 14, 2016. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/pussy-riot-donald-trump-vladimir-putin_us_56741df9e4b0b958f65644d0

²⁶⁸ Alcoff, “Why Trump is Still Here.” <http://thephilosophicalsalon.com/why-trump-is-still-here/>

of Stan Smith, George Bush, and Donald Trump, but rather to receptivity, listening, responsibility, coalitional thinking, and allyship. While the former serves to perpetuate the ideals around the valorization of a certain kind of toxic masculinity, the latter challenges and seeks to replace these ideals with better alternatives. The epistemic arrogance that the former puts forth thereby is replaced by the epistemic humility that the latter propels.

The large support that the former kind of masculinity receives from the masses is an important indicator not only of a widespread uncritical outlook on masculinity but also of a serious problem of desire that is politically at work. It would be inadequate to presume that Trump's supporters are simply ignorant, stupid or duped, for they are also very much invested in and intimately attached to a racist, sexist framework that carries with it a certain sense of empowerment, however misguided. They desire what that white masculine ideal stands for; they feel affirmed by it; they find it exhilarating. As Deleuze and Guattari put it, “when subjects, individuals, or groups act manifestly counter to their class interests – when they rally to the interests and ideals of a class that their own objective situation should lead them to combat – it is not enough to say: they were fooled, the masses have been fooled. It is not an ideological problem, a problem of failing to recognize, or of being subject to, an illusion. It is a problem of desire, *and desire is part of the infrastructure.*”²⁶⁹ Masculinity, in this sense, offers a sense for empowerment, by way of aligning oneself with the power of the state (a state that has been historically racist). Here, the practices around securitization are linked to a masculinist economy of desire whereby the nation itself takes on a masculine identity by laying claim to power

²⁶⁹ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: Continuum, 2004), 114.

defined as domination.

The gendering of the nation as such takes place through the practices around racialization, just as sovereignty relies on systematic expulsions as discussed in the first chapter. This points to an intermeshing of racism and sexism. In the linking of security and masculinity in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, what one observes is the valorization of a particular type of hegemonic masculinity that is built on white supremacy. Within the context of securitization, the masculinist economy of desire involves an enmeshment of racism and sexism.

While this enmeshment is visible in the kind of representation of political masculinity (i.e. paranoiac masculinity) as offered by Donald Trump, George Bush, and Stan Smith as discussed above, such linking between racism and sexism as operative in a masculinist economy of desire can also be observed in the counter-terrorism efforts of nation-states other than the United States. In the next section, I focus on the aesthetic (re)production of such linkage in the context of Turkey, whereby militarized masculinity is offered as a discursive assemblage of nationalism, militarism, and masculinity.

The displays of militarized masculinity, the alignment they propose between masculinity, power, and domination, not only present a distorted view of reality, but also involve a perversion of desire, where desire is “made to desire its own repression.”²⁷⁰ Nowhere does this problem of desire become more visible than in the aestheticization of violence, which seeks to excite, provoke, and fascinate desire. What social change would entail, then, is the transformation of desire, by way of creating alternative circuits of desire. These alternative circuits would be liberatory insofar as are divested from, situated against, and subversive to the framework of masculinist politics. As Foucault famously

²⁷⁰ Ibid, 115.

puts it in his preface to Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, “the major enemy” being the “fascism in us all, in our heads and in our everyday behavior, the fascism that causes us to love power, to desire the very thing that dominates and exploits us,”²⁷¹ how do we get rid of the fascist within; how do we transform ourselves to “rid our speech and our acts, our hearts and our pleasures, of fascism?”²⁷² Following Walter Benjamin's suggestion that against the aestheticization of violence, “communism responds by politicizing art,” I look at the critical, creative language that emerges out of the art and activism of women's peace movements as an example of the politicization of art that can potentially subvert the racist/masculinist desiring production of the state.

4.3 Turkey's War on Terror: Aestheticizing War, Desiring Masculinity

After a two year long peace negotiations to resolve the ongoing conflict since 1978 between the Republic of Turkey and insurgent Kurdish groups, Turkey announced, on July 24, 2015, a military operation against PKK (*Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan* or Kurdistan Workers' Party) targets. As the operations continued, the images from the ongoing war in southeast Turkey began circulating in the social media. One Twitter page in particular has become notorious for sharing gruesome, uncensored photographs of tortured, disfigured bodies with sardonic, chauvinistic commentary. The screen name for this page is JITEM, taken after the controversial secret governmental organization, *Jandarma İstihbarat ve Terörle Mücadele* or Gendarmerie Intelligence and Counter-Terrorism infamous for extra-judicial killings of around seventeen thousand people, alongside the kidnapping and torture of those affiliated with PKK since 1987. The user name they picked, @BeyazToroscular (“the white Torossers”), refers to the white Renault

²⁷¹ Foucault, “Preface” to *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: Continuum, 2004), xiv-xv.

²⁷² *Ibid*, xv.

12 Toros automobiles, the official vehicle for the police and gendarmerie under military rule in Turkey in the 1980s, driven by officers for the purposes of surveillance, intimidation, and detaining suspects for “questioning” (i.e. torture). Reclaiming this horrifying history and purposefully aligning the ongoing military operations with it, the page receives a lot of support from thousands in its celebration and exaltation of a militaristic, nationalistic, racist formulations of masculinity, consolidated through the displays of the torture, humiliation, and extermination of Kurdish bodies. There is, undoubtedly a link, both historically and ideologically, between the ongoing operations and this history that is shamelessly being reclaimed by this act of self-naming. That link, in contrast to the intent of this page, is precisely what renders this war indefensible, putrid, and criminal. In the context of the United States, an analogous act would be to open up a Twitter account with the name COINTELPRO and sharing photographs of the killings of people of color at the hands of police and vigilantes, whilst celebrating these atrocities. While the page in question serves as a tactic of psychological warfare of intimidation and suppression, creating the impression that the sovereignty of the nation-state cannot (and ought not) be questioned or challenged, it also propels to fulfill another purpose.

The spectacle of violence serves as a discursive site for the reproduction of militarized masculinity at the intersection of racial and gender oppression. Attesting to the masculinist investment within the practices of securitization in conjunction with militarization, this discursive reproduction is primarily an aesthetic one, hinging on the aestheticization of violence. These aggrandized displays of militarized masculinity serve to produce a tripartite alignment of masculinity-power-domination. Many of these images

feature soldiers²⁷³ in heavy military gear, wielding assault weaponry that serves as a phallic surrogate in the fashioning of militarized masculinity. Many of them also include messages written by the soldiers, through which they seem to be seeking to amuse their audience, while intimidating the resistance movement. In one of the most controversial photographs from this war that has been circulating on the social media, we see a soldier who had entered somebody's home and into their bedroom. He is in his military uniform, holding a machine gun, lodged in front of the bedroom mirror, on which he wrote with red lipstick, "Aşk Yüksekova'da Başka Yaşanıyor," or in English, "Love in Yüksekova [a county of the city of Hakkari] is unique." He drew a heart around this message, signing not with his name, but with his hometown, "From Beyşehir, Konya." The photograph not only portrays an invasion, but also intimates that this invasion be understood in terms of "love," a euphemism for rape in this case, figuratively and perhaps also literally. The use of red lipstick mimics the notes lovers leave for each other on the mirror in popular music videos broadcasted in Turkey in the 1990s, yet it is also resonant of the message the psychopath leaves on the mirror for its victims in horror movies. Encompassing this double meaning, the term "love" stands for a threat. The message of "love" conveys the idea of invasion, not only of one's home but also one's body; the idea of being "owned," of domination. If love here signifies rape, it does so through the suggestion that the opponent is completely overpowered. This is what makes "love" so "unique" in Yüksekova: the total domination of Kurds at the hands of the Turkish military.

Yet if "love" relays "domination" here as part of the psychological warfare, it is only because of the gendered meaning that the message purports. It is the domination of

²⁷³ The counter-terrorism divisions of the police are also involved in this war. Since the police in this context are heavily militarized, I use "soldiers" here to refer to both military officials and police officers, for the sake of brevity.

the feminized Kurdish enemy by the Turkish soldier who claims a masculine identity precisely through that domination. Some other photographs, not as popularized as the aforementioned, depict police officers and soldiers who wrote similar messages on walls which discursively seek to establish domination by way of the feminization of the Kurdish liberation movement and thereby its degradation. In these photographs, the soldiers are anonymous, their faces are covered. They never sign their messages with their own name, but either with their division's name or their hometown, such that their individual identity has been subsumed under the militaristic nationalism that their uniform stands for. In one photograph, we see a soldier who wrote in red in the background, “Bahar'da Tanga Giydircem Size,” or “This Spring, I'll make ya wear a thong.” Another photograph features a rocket that is insinuated to be an American made M40, which is “an 106mm breech-loaded, single-shot, man-portable, crew-served recoilless rifle,”²⁷⁴ as described by GlobalSecurity.org, a website devoted to providing military information. We see a man's hand holding the rocket on which he wrote, “HAVAN KİME FİSTANLI GÜZEL '106 mm' :),” or “Who are you sassing, the beauty in *fistan*? '106 mm' :),” taking catcalling to a whole new level in the context of war. “*Fistan*” is a traditional woman's dress, but it also refers to the kilt-type garment traditionally worn by Greek, Scottish, and Albanian men. The use of “*fistan*” in this way serves to conflate all these cultures together and the Kurdish culture, which has little historical connection to the rest (if at all), in a xenophobic manner that is also sexist, in that the move seeks to degrade by way of feminization. Enacting a willful xenophobic ignorance, the statement insinuates that the particular identity of the enemy does not matter, whether they are

²⁷⁴ “M40 106mm Recoilless Rifle,” *Global Security*. Accessed: July 14, 2016.
<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/systems/ground/m40rclr.htm>

Greeks, with whom the Turkish state historically has had contentious relations, or Kurds, given that they are all *fistan*-wearers, all inferior to the virile Turkish man. The modification of what is traditionally a catcall in Turkey, “Havan kime, güzelim?” or, “Who are you sassing, beautiful?” also suggests an important connection between everyday gender violence that serves to discipline women as they navigate the public space and the context of war wherein the enemy is being “catcalled” as they are bombed. The violence here operates on multiple levels: physically, ideologically, discursively... Much like the interpellation that Althusser describes in the calling of the individual on the street by the policeman through which Althusser examines the relation between ideology and subjectivity, the message written on the rocket is a fatal “hey you!” directed at the Kurdish rebel, seeking to eradicate both the physical and the ideological presence of the bodies that partake in the resistance movement. Given that Althusser's description attempts to show that ideology denotes a situation whereby the individual is “always already interpellated” by the state, that is, s/he is always already the subject of the state (yet, we may add, in differential ways by virtue of one's social location), the exclamation, “Who are you sassing, beautiful?” is linked to the particular subjectivation of the Kurdish population in relation to the state. “Sassing” is resisting delegitimized *because* it is feminized. It insinuates a (mis)recognition whereby the existence of the resisting subject is acknowledged yet ridiculed by way of feminization. Within the sex/gender system that is imposed and enforced, it is traditionally women who wear a dress and who are sassy, thereby not to be taken seriously, frivolous and weak. It is not only women, but particularly “sluts” who wear a thong, thereby the statement, “I'll make ya wear a thong” not only feminizes the Kurdish fighters by way of threatening them, but also sexualizes

and slut-shames them. These significations are indicative of a masculinist economy of desire at work that gets projected onto “the enemy.” The militarized aesthetics draws from and aggrandizes the everyday hostility that toxic masculinity breeds by carrying it onto the context of war. In this way, it not only enacts violence against women, but connects that to the violence against marginalized ethnic groups. The racialization of Kurds here takes place *through* the marginalization of women as militarized masculinity serves a racist and sexist function at once as an apparatus of the state.

In another photograph, a police officer, holding a Turkish flag in one hand and doing a “wolf sign” with the other (which symbolizes Turkish nationalism), is standing in front of writing on the wall that reads: “Aşk Bodrumda Yaşanıyor Güzelim :) PÖH :),” or, “The basement is where the love is at, darling” with two smiley faces, signed with the acronym for Police Special Action (*Polis Özel Harekat*), a division of law enforcement for counter-terrorism. Below the writing, there is a stain on the wall that resembles a blood splatter. The basement in question refers to the basement that many of those who had been wounded by the attacks had turned into a refuge, which the Turkish army and the police blew up last February, killing over sixty people. The operation was particularly controversial as the wounded had been denied medical care for days before they were executed and some sources report that civilians were also hiding in the basement.²⁷⁵ If the basement is “where the love is at,” love signifies nothing but torture and extermination, victoriously celebrated by the Turkish soldiers. Not only is the state massacring these people, but it is also mocking them for being massacred and eroticizing the massacre. Given that being a woman is shameful and humiliating in and of itself

²⁷⁵ “Cizre'de bodrum kati ve cevresine operasyon: Onlarca olu,” *Cumhuriyet* January 7, 2016. Accessed: http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/477359/Cizre_de_bodrum_kati_ve_cevresine_operasyon_Onlarca_olu.html

within the masculinist framework in which the state operates, feminization serves as the primary psychological weapon against “the enemy.” Being called a woman is the worst insult.

I suggest that while the messages accompanying these grand displays of militarized masculinity comprise a tactic of intimidation and suppression, they also indicate something larger and perhaps more significant. When Foucault discusses the deployment of sexuality in the context of the history of its “invention,” as it were, he notes that while sex by itself constituted “a political ordering of life,” what was at stake was rather “*the self-affirmation of one class [the bourgeoisie] rather than the enslavement of another [the proletariat]: a defense, a protection, a strengthening, and an exaltation that were eventually extended to others – at the cost of different transformations – as a means of social control and political subjugation.*”²⁷⁶ Similarly, I argue that while these images seek to intimidate and humiliate the Kurdish rebels by feminizing them (many of whom, one must note, are women), their primary purpose is rather to consolidate a masculine identity for the Turkish nation. Such consolidation takes place through a performance of militarized masculinity whereby the exaltation and valorization of masculinity at the intertwining of militarism, sexism, and racism constitutes a self-affirming move: it establishes a positive self-understanding for the nation-state as masculine, rather than simply seeking the repression of the enemy. Militarized masculinity and its proud display becomes the very embodiment of this masculine national identity.

These images constitute a discursive production of militarized masculinity taken on as the identity for the nation. Militarized masculinity as a discursive production entails

²⁷⁶ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality vol. 1*, 123. Emphasis added.

what Foucault describes as the “displacement, intensification, reorientation, and modification of desire itself.”²⁷⁷ These displays of militarized masculinity are linked to a particular shaping of desire, an economy of desire which constitutes the valorization of masculinity on a national level and its equation to power. In the context of Turkey, where military service remains compulsory for men, but optional for those who can afford to “buy out,” the soldiers featured in these images are most likely uneducated men from urban lower class and rural backgrounds. The allure of masculinist nationalism is that it offers (an illusion of) power in the face of powerlessness. Much like the “phallic appropriation” described by Carol Clover through the picking up of a gun by young women in horror movies, an act through which they shed their victimhood, there is a phallic appropriation of lower class men taking place once they put on the military gear: they are no longer vulnerable and powerless; but heroic and inviolable. The reality of class oppression is mitigated and overcome through becoming the seamless embodiment of militarized masculine domination, despite the fact that, to borrow from Audre Lorde once again, “the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house.” Even though the victimization discourse is not explicitly present here (though I must note that it is very much present in the discourse the state uses to justify these operations), victimhood is operative in the background, the overcoming of which hinges on the embodiment of this national masculine ideal. Militarized masculinity, in this sense, offers an opportunity to assume the position of the oppressor in an effort to no longer be in the position of the oppressed – and this is quite similar to the move we saw offered by the Daesh militant's testimony. Yet this is primarily a move of desire and not necessarily of self-interest – for there is no real empowerment here. As Deleuze and Guattari put it, “For it is a matter of

²⁷⁷ Ibid, 23.

flows, of stocks, of breaks in and fluctuations of flows; desire is present wherever something flows and runs, carrying along with it interested subjects – but also drunken or slumbering subjects – toward lethal destinations.”²⁷⁸

In their representations of militarized masculinity, as the kind of masculinity that dominates and violates, the kind that is desirable and sublime, these photographs attest to the phenomenon Walter Benjamin famously called the aestheticization of violence. The supporters of the Twitter page JITEM are overjoyed by these images, lending support to the “courageous” soldiers. Violence is aestheticized; war is rendered beautiful, desirable, and naturally linked to the masculine body that serves as a metonym for the nation at large. Benjamin famously states: “This is the situation of politics which Fascism is rendering aesthetic. Communism responds by politicizing art.”²⁷⁹

4.4 Politicizing Art Against Vindictive Masculinity

The politicization of art constitutes a rallying point to combat the economy of desire around masculinist nationalism. Out of art, of politicized, critical art, which could offer a retraining of sensibilities, new economies of desire can emerge.²⁸⁰ In response to the leaked photographs circulating in the social media of the exposed, naked body of a guerrilla woman, Ekin Wan (also known as Kevser Eltürk), who was killed by the Turkish forces in August 2015 in Varto, Muş, a demonstration was staged in front of the Swedish parliament in Stockholm, along with others (including a sit-in protest at the historical square in Cologne, Germany and a gathering in Varto of women's rights activists from all over Turkey, where Wan was killed and tortured). The demonstration in

²⁷⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 115.

²⁷⁹ Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” *Marxists.org*. Accessed: May 24, 2016, <https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/ge/benjamin.htm>.

²⁸⁰ I explore the question of art and social change in more detail in the next chapter through an account of decolonial feminist poetry.

Stockholm featured a woman lying naked on her stomach in tan underpants and with red paint smeared all over her back, to mimic the photographs. She is surrounded by the photographs of killed guerillas and the ruins left from war. The sources report that she lay in front of the parliament for an hour, then the others covered her body with a white sheet. This event was not only a protest against war, but also resembled a funeral. The gathering served as an opportunity to publicly mourn for Ekin Wan and many others, to hold a funeral that would not otherwise have been held.

The photographs that were leaked were meant to humiliate and dishonor the resistance movement by exposing the naked body of a guerrilla woman. They were meant to delight those who support the state's counter-terrorism warfare (and they did) and normalize the monopoly of violence assumed by the state (and they continue to do so). Yet these gatherings for protest not only bring attention to these war crimes, but also perform in a subversive manner and thereby resignify the very violence inflicted by the Turkish state, playing it against itself. This mimesis has a different effect than that of the original photographs. It shocks and unsettles. It disturbs and provokes. It performs a refusal to aestheticize politics (which the photographs seek to accomplish) and instead politicizes aesthetics. Refusing to share the original photograph of the stripped naked dead body of Ekin Wan, many news outlets had used an illustration by the artist Serpil Odabaşı, which memorializes Wan. In Nusaybin, Mardin, a group of Kurdish activists wrote on a banner: “Ekin Wan is the most naked phase of our struggle.” In this way, the exposed body of Wan has become a site of resistance, and not of degradation, humiliation, and shame as was intended. In Varto, the civil rights activist group Peace Mothers “threw off their white scarves at the place [where Ekin Wan was tortured, killed

and stripped naked],”²⁸¹ Ruken Işık reports. “Throwing off the scarf has a symbolic meaning in Kurdish culture,” she notes, “where women can stop the fighting by throwing the scarf to the ground.”²⁸²

While Peace Mothers have not been able to stop this war at this moment in time by throwing off their scarves, it is such organized action that is going to bring an end to it as the public refuses to buy into the aestheticization of violence. The politicization of art intimidates the state. Nine activists were detained by the police in Izmir, Turkey on May 11, 2016 during a photography exhibit entitled “Where is the war?” depicting scenes from Kurdistan, as part of the events for celebrating the International Day on Conscientious Objection. An officer reportedly stated, “What is happening there is no war, it's cleaning.”²⁸³ As the state persistently holds onto this rhetoric of “weeding out” the terrorists, and glorifies these acts through the displays of militarized masculinity, the activists respond by showing this war for what it is. While the term the officer used “cleaning” is meant to convey the meaning of the elimination of threats, it is also resonant of ethnic cleansing. One must remember that Turkey continues to be haunted by a history of genocide and ethnic cleansing, with the systematic extermination and displacement of Armenians, Christian Assyrians, Syrians, Chaldeans, and Greeks in 1915, the population exchanges between Greece and Turkey in 1923, and the mob attacks fueled by the governing party against the Greek minorities living in Istanbul in 1955 (also known as the Istanbul pogrom). The resonances of these events continue to be felt today,

²⁸¹ Isik Ruken, “From Memories to Pictures: The War in Kurdistan,” *The Kurdish Question*, August 22, 2015. Accessed: May 24, 2016, <http://kurdishquestion.com/oldsite/index.php/kurdistan/north-kurdistan/ekin-wan-from-memories-to-pictures/1081-ekin-wan-from-memories-to-pictures.htm>

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ “Izmir'de Vicdani Ret Haftasi'na polis mudahalesi: 9 aktivist gozaltina alindi,” *Vicdani Ret Dernegi* May 11, 2016. Accessed: July 14, 2016. <http://vicdaniret.org/izmirde-vicdani-ret-haftasina-polis-mudahalesi-9-aktivist-gozaltinda/>

as the state continues to define the nation through the homogenous category of “the Turkish race.” Militarized masculinity embodies these exclusions and enacts them as it racializes by way of gendering. It serves as a tool for homogenizing the nation. Politicizing art, in this context, involves an intervention to and a transformation of the established economies of desire whereby masculinity has become synonymous with power (as domination) and the nation. In her powerful piece entitled “Your Body is My Life,” Gülfer Akkaya notes that while guerilla men too are tortured (like Hacı Lokman Birlik, whose body was tied to a police vehicle and dragged for several feet), these actions are not undertaken with “sexist rage,” but instead with “malice toward the enemy,” as “revenge.” Yet women's bodies are subject to methods of torture that are sexualized in nature, that are specific to women's bodies. She writes: “What we have here is not a clash of enemies as seen in standard wars, but a male brutality used in the struggle between the genders.”²⁸⁴ While Akkaya assiduously points out that the treatment of guerilla women is gender specific and particularly reflective of a culture of misogyny, I would like to add that the politics of gender is also very much at work in the violation of the bodies of men. As the commentary on the Twitter page JITEM shows, the degradation of women takes place not only by virtue of the gender-specific ways in which women's bodies are violated, the misogynistic practices of the state or the sexist commentary directed at women in particular, but also through the feminization of men, the feminization of “the enemy” at large, in an attempt to discredit the movement. This is indicative of the masculine identification of the nation through the degradation of the feminine: the nation-state establishes its masculine authority through a fundamental

²⁸⁴ Gülfer Akkaya, “Senin Bedenin Benim Canımdır,” *Siyasi Haber*, August 24, 2015. Accessed: May 24, 2016. <http://siyasihaber3.org/senin-bedenin-benim-canimdir-gulfer-akkaya>.

exclusion of women. Rape as a weapon of war operates in a similar fashion, as something that not only violates and degrades, but also *feminizes* while affirming and consolidating masculinity, where masculinity is tied to domination. The leaked photographs from the Abu Ghraib prison upon the invasion of Iraq similarly demonstrate the intertwining of racialization and gendering in practices of torture, suggesting that such practices of feminizing the racialized enemy in an effort to humiliate and torture comprise a rather commonplace military tactic. Similar practices are also employed by the Israeli authorities toward Palestinian rebels. Julie Peteet notes that while imprisonment and physical violence inflicted by Israeli authorities have generated and empowered a new generation of Palestinian men involved in resistance as these practices have come to serve as a rite of passage to manhood, the tactics have since been changed as sexualized forms of violence are introduced to break the sense of masculinity of these men and thereby to break the resistance: “One cannot return from prison and describe forms of torture that violate the most intimate realm of gendered selfhood. If knowledge of such sexual tortures circulates widely, violence and detention will be diluted of their power to contribute to a gendered sense of self informing political agency.”²⁸⁵ In such cases, violence serves as a practice of gendering, which has direct bearing on both political and individual senses of agency. What these practices show is the state operates through the established meanings and hierarchies of gender and has a stake in their violent perpetuation. As Angela Davis stated in a speech she gave at the University of Oregon on May 11, 2016, “State violence relies on intimate violence and intimate violence

²⁸⁵ Julie Peteet, “Male Gender and Rituals of Resistance in Palestinian 'Intifada': A Cultural Politics of Violence,” *American Ethnologist* 21, no. 1 (1994): 45.

reproduces state violence.” Gender violence, in this way, serves as a hinge between state violence and intimate violence, as it is operative in both.

Such a logic of gendering through violence often exceeds military settings, saturating the political field as a whole. In the context of Turkey, even those who are critical of the actions of the government tend to use similar masculinist language. After a Russian bomber aircraft was shot by a Turkish jet near the Turkey-Syrian border due to border violations, the social media was flooded with various photographs of Putin depicting his virile masculinity, some of which were photoshopped by Turkish users (probably the most popular photoshopped image was Putin riding a bear shared with the commentary, “Putin rides a BEAR. Erdogan can't even ride a horse,” referring to the time when Erdogan fell off a horse). In the sharing of these images, the political and military power that Russia had has been equated with Putin's masculinity, which is contrasted with the perceived failure of Erdogan's masculinity. It is clear based on this equation that in the social imaginary, it is commonplace to equate political power with masculinity, and masculinity with domination. The dominant social imaginary, in other words, has been colonized by these equations through which individuals become invested in masculinist politics. Masculinism is prevalent in politics because it *sells*; it is *desired*. As Deleuze and Guattari note, “It was not by means of a metaphor, even a paternal metaphor, that Hitler was able to sexually arouse the fascists.”²⁸⁶ Similarly, many nationalists in Turkey are thrilled by these images depicting gruesome violence circulating in the social media. Social change requires a dismantling of this masculinist framework itself, by disrupting the circuits of desire that are at work. Art can give rise to the creation of new circuits of desire. Having a critical outlook on the politics of masculinity entails paying close

²⁸⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 114.

attention to the links between sexism, racism, and militarism that have become particularly salient in the representations and practices of militarized masculinity. In her piece about the leaked photographs of Ekin Wan's exposed naked body and the history of state violence against the Kurds, Ruken Işık writes: "The Kurdish Women's Movement has taught women that honor cannot be reduced to women's bodies, honor is struggle, honor is not to be ashamed of resistance."²⁸⁷ This message should find its rightful place in the social imaginary, at a moment when gender is seldom a point of discussion in the context of this war, despite all the ways in which gender is operative in the forms of violence that are inflicted. The role of gender (and of gendering) in this war shows that insofar as the dehumanization of women and racialized groups operate through one another, our oppressions are bound up together. So will be our liberation.

4.5 Conclusion: Jin, Jîyan, Azadî

While masculinity is a social construct that is historically specific and context-dependent, there are pertinent connections, crisscrossings if you will, between the kinds of masculinity that get conjoined to securitization/militarization transnationally. These forms of masculinity often times serve as a site of investment for the racist and sexist practices of the state, while constituting an identity for the nation. The resonance of this intertwinement between race, gender, and nationality is felt beyond the confines of the military, infecting the social imaginary by aligning masculinity with (political) power. In the ongoing war in Turkey (which is yet to be recognized as a war, apparently), the body of the soldier constitutes a site for the reinscription of the national masculine ideal, the

²⁸⁷ Isik, "From Memories to Pictures: The War in Kurdistan."
<http://kurdishquestion.com/oldsite/index.php/kurdistan/north-kurdistan/ekin-wan-from-memories-to-pictures/1081-ekin-wan-from-memories-to-pictures.html>

majestic Turkish male who slaughters his enemies like he slaughters his women.²⁸⁸ In the post-9/11 United States, the figure of the stupid white male has attained an epistemic (and political) hegemony, prompting the writer of the dystopia *Idiocracy* (2003) to remark “I never expected [this film] to become a documentary,” in reference to the 2016 presidential race.²⁸⁹ All the while, the retributive justice sought by the same masculine figure is one and the same as the self-proclaimed mission of the terrorist groups he hopes to annihilate. In this global war against terrorism, where masculinity often gets folded into the narratives about sovereignty, power, and revenge cloaked as justice, both by states *and* jihadists, feminists chant in Kurdish, Jin, Jîyan, Azadî, against state terror, against gender violence, racialized violence, and all other forms of violence inflicted in the name of justice. Jin, Jîyan, Azadî, this is no justice. Jin, Jîyan, Azadî, power with, not power over. Jin, Jîyan, Azadî, people over profit. Jin, Jîyan, Azadî. Woman. Life. Freedom.

²⁸⁸ For an account on the prevalence of gender violence in Turkey, please see: Sertan Sanderton, “Domestic violence in Turkey reaches boiling point,” *DW* July 11, 2015. Accessed: July 14, 2016. <http://www.dw.com/en/domestic-violence-in-turkey-reaches-boiling-point/a-18576377>

²⁸⁹ Jessica Chasmar, “Etan Cohen, *Idiocracy* Writer: 'I never expected' movie would 'become a documentary,’” *The Washington Times* February 25, 2016. Accessed: July 14, 2016. <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/feb/25/etan-cohen-idiocracy-writer-i-never-expected-movie/>

CHAPTER V

AFFECT

“In our very flesh, (r)evolution works out the clash of cultures.”

- Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*

“We recognize that all knowledge is mediated through the body and that feeling is a profound source of information about our lives”

- Audre Lorde

Throughout this dissertation, I have argued that the imperative epistemic force of paranoia serves as a self-justifying mechanism within contemporary political rationality, particularly around practices of securitization. Brian Massumi's analysis of a “toxic substance alert” in Montreal attests to such self-justification relayed by a fear-invoked sense of urgency. He notes that “[a]ll of the actions that *would be* taken if the powder were anthrax are taken preemptively.”²⁹⁰ Even though the substance found at the airport was later revealed to be flour, the incident did not come to be known as “flour alert” thereafter. What names the incident is the reality of fear surrounding the substance, rather than its actual compound. As Massumi puts it, “Flour has been implicated. It is tainted with the fear of anthrax, guilty by association for displaying the threatening qualities of whiteness and powderiness.”²⁹¹ It is, thereby, not only the *possibility* of that substance being toxic that determines the meaning of the situation, but also the affective conditions that surround that possibility, namely the fear evoked by an unidentified powder found at an airport. There is, in other words, an affective epistemology at work in that the possibility of knowledge is mediated by affects that circumscribe an encounter.

²⁹⁰ Brian Massumi, “The Future Birth of the Affective Fact: The Political Ontology of Threat” in *The Affect Theory Reader* ed. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010), 57. Emphasis in the original.

²⁹¹ *Ibid*, 57-8.

It is possible to read various practices of securitization through the lens of affective epistemology. In this chapter, I turn to affect as a notion that sheds light on *the lived dimension* of the politics of paranoia. I argue that the affective economy of fear put forth by a politics of paranoia very much shapes intersubjective relations, that is, it sets up the conditions of possibility for relating to the Other and the meaning of that encounter. The explosion in the number of hate crimes in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks that I examined in the first chapter would be a pertinent example here. The affective economy of fear, in the context of the politics of paranoia at work in the United States, involves a codification of certain bodies as threatening, thereby a determination of whose body shall inspire fear. In the first chapter, I took up racialization as that process of codification in the practices of the state. Now I turn to the intersubjective dimension of this process, where the meaning of the encounter is predetermined by the affective economy of fear that codifies particular bodies as threatening. Insofar as affect determines the meaning of these encounters, I suggest that there is a particular *affective epistemology* at work where fear is the affective enactment of mistaken knowledge.

Many of scholars who deal with affective investments of a political kind do so in a way that is detached from the lived dimensions of these affects and feelings such as paranoia, fear, panic, and anxiety, so as not to psychologize them. Breaking away from this current in the scholarship, in this chapter, I employ a phenomenological approach to examine the affective economy of paranoia that operates intersubjectively, thereby bringing phenomenology to bear on the political. In the last section, I discuss how these patterns of relationality are disrupted and replaced by alternatives in decolonial feminist

poetry, which offers an epistemological intervention to dominant practices of knowing whose meanings are taken for granted.

5.1 An Epistemology of Paranoia: Fear, Ignorance, and Entitlement

In his testimony, Darren Wilson, the police officer who shot and killed the 18-year-old Michael Brown, told the grand jury: “[W]hen I grabbed him, the only way I can describe it is I felt like a 5-year-old holding onto Hulk Hogan.”²⁹² The same height as Wilson, Brown had, as Wilson reports, “the most intense aggressive face. The only way I can describe it, it looks like a demon, that's how angry he looked.”²⁹³ Based on this testimony, Wilson was exonerated (twice!) of any criminal wrongdoing, by a grand jury as well as the Department of Justice. A year before Brown was killed, George Zimmerman was acquitted of shooting the 17-year-old Trayvon Martin on the grounds that it was self-defense. Zimmerman's testimony must have convinced the jury that Martin, a hoodie wearing young black man, seemed suspicious and thereby constituted a threat. It was Zimmerman's suspicion that not only defined the meaning of that encounter, but also served to justify the killing in court, whereas Martin's fear as he was being chased by an armed grown man did not seem to count for anything. It was Wilson's fear of Brown, who made him feel completely powerless, insignificant, and vulnerable, despite the fact that Wilson was an armed police officer whereas Brown was an unarmed teenager, which, again, held up in court. Perhaps the jury agreed that they too would have been horrified if they had been in Wilson's or Zimmerman's shoes. In a context where black masculinity is codified as inherently threatening by virtue of its mere presence, and thereby dispensable, it is perhaps easier to empathize with the perpetrators rather than

²⁹² Krishnadev Calamur, “Ferguson Documents: Officer Darren Wilson's Testimony,” *NPR* November 25, 2014. <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2014/11/25/366519644/ferguson-docs-officer-darren-wilsons-testimony>

²⁹³ *Ibid.*

imagining the constant harassment faced by young Black men, who seem to inspire fear and hostility in others simply by virtue of their bodily presence. In this sense, the fear that Wilson's and Zimmerman's testimonies express is hardly peculiar to them, but is instead linked to an affective economy of fear whereby the threat gets attached to particular bodies.

Affective economies denote, as Agathangelou et al. put it, “the circulation and mobilization of feelings of desire, pleasure, fear, and repulsion utilized to seduce all of us into the fold of the state – the various ways in which we become invested emotionally, libidinally, and erotically in global capitalism's mirages of safety and inclusion.”²⁹⁴ In other words, a way in which power operates is through the circulation of affect, whose investments shape and situate subjectivity itself. These operations take place on an intimate, bodily level, such that these investments are often enacted pre-reflectively, in that they need not rely on a reflective consciousness. Wilson characterizes Brown as “demonic,” for that is the association that arises for him upon the sight of a young, heavysset Black man whom he perceives as threatening. Upon Zimmerman's acquittal, Christopher Myers wrote: “Images matter. They linger in our hearts, vast 'image libraries' that color our actions and ideas, even if we don't recognize them on a conscious level. The plethora of threatening images of young black people has real-life effects. But if people can see us as young dreamers, boys with hopes and doubts and playfulness, instead of potential threats or icons of societal ills, perhaps they will feel less inclined to kill us.”²⁹⁵ As power works through these affective circuits, the codification of certain bodies as dangerous or threatening suggests a reified positionality in a larger system of

²⁹⁴ Anna Agathangelou, et al., “Intimate Investments: Homonormativity, Global Lockdown, and the Seductions of Empire,” *Radical History Review*, no. 100 (2008): 122.

²⁹⁵ Christopher Myers, “Young Dreamers,” *The Horn Book*, August 6, 2013. Accessed: July 21, 2016. <http://www.hbook.com/2013/08/opinion/young-dreamers/>.

meaning that in turn amounts to the dispensability of those bodies. These significations, as affective investments, colonize these encounters by predetermining their meaning and foreclosing other possibilities. Black masculinity becomes that which cannot manifest anything but a threat. When Wilson characterizes Brown as “demonic,” his expression is tied to these investments that are linked to an affective economy, by which his perception has been shaped. The meaning of that encounter was predetermined and his exoneration attests to the fact that that meaning is all too self-evident for the court.

The term 'affective economy' suggests that “feelings do not reside in subjects or objects, but are produced as effects of circulation.”²⁹⁶ Fear as a cardinal affect of the politics of paranoia is lived both personally, in that it is Wilson's fear felt privately in its pressing urgency, and impersonally, as an element in a circuit of affect, insofar as it is generalized in that it saturates the social field itself, consolidating the misconception that fear is the appropriate reaction to the sight of black masculinity. One's fear, in this context, is both theirs and not only theirs. Who is to be feared and what shall follow from that fear are constituencies of an affective economy of fear. As John Protevi puts it, “[A]ffect is concretely the imbrication of the social and the somatic, as our bodies change in relation to the changing situations in which they find themselves.”²⁹⁷

Yet, insofar as affect denotes “a body's *capacity* to affect and to be affected,”²⁹⁸ it highlights relationality or intersubjectivity over subjectivity. Further, since its operation is relational, it always takes place within a particular social and political context. It is my contention that paranoid formulations of securitization operate by putting forth fear as a

²⁹⁶ Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 8.

²⁹⁷ John Protevi, *Political Affect: Connecting the Social and the Somatic* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), xiv.

²⁹⁸ Melissa Gregg & Gregory J. Seigworth, “An Inventory of Shimmers” in *The Affect Theory Reader* ed. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010), 2.

prominent affective economy not necessarily in response to a world that has become a more dangerous place, but rather because one of the important ways in which securitization takes place is through the installment of particular circuits of affect and desire. Moreover, while fear serves a self-justifying imperative force, it only does so when claimed by particular subjects who hold epistemic authority in that their claim fits within the established affective economy. The potency of the affect stems from its ability to determine the meaning of a situation or an encounter, yet, again, only when claimed by certain subjects.

Just as the incident in Montreal was named a “toxic substance alert” rather than a “flour alert” precisely because the fear was so pressing that it defined the situation, rendering the actual compound of the substance irrelevant, the killings of young black men are not named “murder” in that the fear felt by the shooters trump that of the victims. Fear, in this case, serves to define a situation by means of a distortion such that it is not only linked to judgment but also epistemic authority. After all, it is not *anyone's* fear that determines the meaning of that encounter. It matters whose fear counts and whose does not. For this reason, while fear comprises one of the primary affects put forth by a politics of paranoia, its effects must be taken up in conjunction with the epistemic practices with which it is bound up. It is only through this connection, through an understanding of fear as linked to an affective epistemology, would one be able to analyze the process of codification of certain bodies as threatening. The reason I choose to focus on fear in particular, despite the fact that by no means do I wish to claim that it is the *only* affective economy linked to a politics of paranoia, is how salient it becomes in intersubjective encounters, as opposed to, say, anxiety that may be more subtle and persistent, and not

necessarily linked to a particular object. In the following, I look at how the fear of Black bodies serves as a self-justifying mechanism for the infliction of violence. I offer a phenomenological analysis of white ignorance that manifests itself through the fear of racialized bodies. Fear (and the violence that it serves to justify) here is indicative of internalized racism based upon a coding of black masculinity as threatening, a coding that is historically contingent and with no basis in reality. As Angela Davis puts it, “[T]he development of new ways of thinking about racism requires us not only to understand economic, social, and ideological structures, but also collective psychic structures.”²⁹⁹ For this purpose, I offer this analysis as an example of how a politics of paranoia operates on an intersubjective level by means of an affective economy. The paranoid epistemological framework is used here to justify the dispensability of the marked bodies as fear justifies violence, as can be seen in the trial of Zimmerman, which hinged on whether “this young black boy, with his bag of candy and his iced tea and his sweatshirt, was a threat.”³⁰⁰

In her famous work *Epistemic Injustice*, Miranda Fricker explores how suspicion operates in epistemic practices. While the question of whose testimony is granted credibility is certainly relevant here, I am more interested in looking at the role of affect itself in epistemic practices. I suggest that there is an affective epistemology at work in the process through which an encounter attains meaning and the determinant affect is that which grabs a hold of the subject who holds epistemic authority. Epistemic authority, in this case, is linked not only to one's social location but also to where one is positioned with regards to an epistemology of ignorance that criminalizes black masculinity. In other words, when it comes to epistemic justice, it is not only a matter of whose testimony is

²⁹⁹ Davis, *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle*, 89.

³⁰⁰ Myers, “Young Dreamers.” http://www.hbook.com/2013/08/opinion/young-dreamers/#_

granted credibility, but also a matter of whose affective disposition determines the meaning of the encounter, depending on where that disposition fits in the social imaginary.

The imperative force yielded by paranoiac epistemic practices undoubtedly has a colonial history, which is decisive in whose fear shall count, whose paranoia shall be granted epistemic legitimacy, and whose affect gets to determine the meaning of an encounter. The epistemological framework that undergirds the politics of paranoia is still very much shaped by what Nelson Maldonado-Torres calls “Manichean misanthropic skepticism.” This “permanent suspicion,” born in the sixteenth century, is “a form of questioning the very humanity of colonized peoples.”³⁰¹ “Misanthropic skepticism,” Maldonado-Torres writes, “provides the basis for the *preferential option for the ego conquiero*, which explains why security for some can conceivably be obtained at the expense of the lives of others.”³⁰² What underlies the dehumanization and the related dispensability of the peoples of darker races, for Maldonado-Torres, is this deep suspicion that is decisive in who is dispensable, whose status as human is suspect, who fully counts as human, and also, perhaps most relevant for our purposes, whose fear is granted legitimacy.

The suspicion and fear that are expressed by the perpetrators (and legitimized by the court) in these trials are systemically linked to questions about biopower, about whose life counts. As African-Americans are deemed dispensable per Manichean misanthropic skepticism, the Black Lives Matter movement emerged as “an ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for

³⁰¹ Nelson Maldonado-Torres, “On the Coloniality of Being: Contributions to the development of a concept,” *Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2/3 (2007): 245. Emphasis in the original.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 246.

demise,” to celebrate those lives, affirm their humanity, and seek “resilience in the face of deadly oppression.”³⁰³ While I focus on these two trials in particular, it is worth noting that these are by no means isolated instances but are instead indicative of a larger structure of anti-Black racism entrenched in and perpetuated by practices of policing. As Angela Davis points out, we must, at the same time, attend to “the way in which anti-Muslim racism has really thrived on the foundation of anti-Black racism,”³⁰⁴ as both of which operate through an affective economy of fear that deems particular bodies to be threatening and thereby dispensable. It is also worth noting that the police brutality against women of color, and especially trans women of color, receives even less attention, as the mainstream media often exclusively depicts men as the victims. The Say Her Name movement seeks to render visibility for those Black women who are the victims of anti-Black police brutality. While police brutality against both Black men and women is linked to larger questions about biopower, of whose life matters, who counts as human, and who is deemed dispensable, there is a gender difference in that it is often black men who are codified as particularly threatening as a justification for their violability. As much as I do not wish to erase those women who are the victims of anti-Black violence, in the following I focus particularly on the codification of Black masculinity as threatening, given that my interest lies in examining the workings of fear as demonstrative of an affective epistemology. In this sense, I attend to these killings at the intersection of race and gender: Black masculinity as the object of fear within a racialized affective economy.

³⁰³ “Guiding Principles,” *Black Lives Matter*. Accessed: July 14, 2016. <http://blacklivesmatter.com/guiding-principles/>

³⁰⁴ Davis, *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle*, 39.

In the case of Martin, it was the hoodie that he wore paired with his black skin that rendered him suspicious in the eyes of Zimmerman. Though it would be a worthwhile effort to give a genealogical account of the hoodie as an article of clothing that came to be associated with dangerous black masculinity, I am more interested in how that signification persists in the social imaginary such that it serves as a justification of violence. There is an epistemology of ignorance at work in that a myth (the myth of the dangerous black man with a hoodie) passes for knowledge. Zimmerman's suspicion and fear are indicative of a larger system of meaning in which black masculinity is codified as threatening and thereby must be annihilated. Even though that codification itself is based on myth rather than reality, it continues to serve as justification for the killing of young black men. Charles Mills's account of the epistemology of ignorance is pertinent here, yet one must consider it as a kind of epistemology that is linked to an affective economy (of fear, in particular) – in other words, an affective epistemology. Mills argues that ignorance is a “structural group-based miscognition.”³⁰⁵ It is understood not simply as an epistemic gap or a lack, but rather a mechanism that reproduces and sustains the oppression of marginalized groups. In this sense, ignorance is systematic, socially sanctioned, and productive.³⁰⁶ It is invested with power in that it both conceals and upholds the privileges of dominating groups, as well as the oppression of marginalized groups. White ignorance, like other “group-based cognitive handicap(s)”³⁰⁷ is productive insofar as it passes for knowledge in creating an epistemic hegemony based on “*white misunderstanding, misrepresentation, evasion, and self-deception on matters related to*

³⁰⁵ Charles Mills, “White Ignorance,” in *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*, ed. Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tuana (Albany: SUNY Press, 2007), 13.

³⁰⁶ Systematic and socially sanctioned, because ignorance is both backed up and practiced on a structural level; and productive, because it produces and reproduces racism as well as its subjects.

³⁰⁷ Mills, “White Ignorance,” 15.

race.”³⁰⁸ While Zimmerman identifies as Latino, this does not make him immune to this epistemic hegemony, for “white ignorance” does not take its name by virtue of the fact that all those who subscribe to it are white, but because it is the product of a social order whose beneficiaries are whites as a group. While not all those who suffer from this “miscognition” are whites, not all whites suffer from it either. Regardless, the term *white ignorance* refers to a condition that is structurally sustained where distortions on matters surrounding race serve as a knowledge, as this takes place in a white supremacist political context.

Ignorance, in this way, denotes an epistemic hegemony based on appropriation of facts through various means including willful misinterpretation, evasion, distortion, and shrouding. It is an outcome of the Europeanization of epistemic norms, a process whose roots can be traced back to colonialism, whereby the forms of knowing that do not fit into European standards are marginalized, if not completely eliminated.³⁰⁹ It is the case, then, that the white epistemic norm not only establishes mass hallucination on matters of race by way of obscuring facts, but also entails a violent omission of non-European ways of knowing. Further, ignorance of this kind, far from indicating mere naïveté on part of the members of the dominant groups, names an integral part of white subjectivity today.

In this sense, ignorance may represent something more expansive than a mere cognitive handicap, as subjects act on, abide by, and live their lives by virtue of the kind of ignorance that passes for knowledge under the epistemic hegemony. Ignorance could be further scrutinized as a constitutive component of white subjectivities. My purpose here is to offer an analysis of ignorance as not only a cognitive phenomenon, but an

³⁰⁸ Mills, *The Racial Contract*, 19. Emphasis in the original.

³⁰⁹ See the third section for an elaborate account of this.

embodied practice. Ignorance as a systemically sustained condition that endorses white domination is repeatedly enacted on the world by agents of knowledge and perception in the form of mistaken knowledge, whereby it establishes its full meaning in embodied practices and shapes the agents' embodied subjectivity.

Mills characterizes the epistemology of ignorance as “*an inverted epistemology*”³¹⁰ that relies on a distorted moral psychology, or as he puts it, “white moral cognitive dysfunction.”³¹¹ As such, ignorance and the “moral cognitive distortion” it involves “can potentially be studied by the new research program of cognitive science.”³¹² Thus, for Mills, white ignorance is, first and foremost, “a cognitive phenomenon.”³¹³ Subjects of racism, then, are taken up as “cognizers,” and the dysfunctions of their perception, conception, and memory, among other things, are what need to be examined.³¹⁴ However, as Mills' interlocutors as well as other feminist and anti-racist work on ignorance have shown, this cognitive based approach does not exhaust the meaning of ignorance.³¹⁵ In order to grasp the extent to which ignorance of this kind achieves its full meaning, the ways in which it finds entrenchment in the body as a part of bodily knowing within a racist social context must be explored. Such investigation will shed light on not only the ways in which ignorance is embodied or rather, embedded in the body, but also how ignorance becomes a constituent of white subjectivity, precisely in this very embodiment. Since ignorance denotes a *specific* way of knowing (that is

³¹⁰ Mills, *The Racial Contract*, 19.

³¹¹ *Ibid*, 95.

³¹² *Ibid*.

³¹³ Mills, “White Ignorance,” 20.

³¹⁴ This is what Mills undertakes in his article “White Ignorance.”

³¹⁵ See: Alison Bailey, “Strategic Ignorance” in *Race & Epistemologies of Ignorance* ed. Nancy Tuana & Shannon Sullivan (Albany: SUNY Press, 2007); Mariana Ortega, “Being Lovingly, Knowingly Ignorant,” *Hypatia* 21, no. 3 (2006): 56-74; Cynthia Townley, “Toward a Reevaluation of Ignorance”; Shannon Sullivan, *Revealing Whiteness* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2007).

distorted, skewed, or false) and acts as “knowledge” under the given truth regime, “knowledge” which is in fact ignorance will be indicated in quotation marks in the rest of this chapter.

The question of the body has a special place in matters of race and gender, for it is the racially marked and the feminine body that is subjugated. Perhaps when Merleau-Ponty announced, ‘I am my body’, he overlooked the condition that some of us are *more* his or her body than others, and that this is by no means a pleasant or a liberating experience, but rather a thoroughly violent one, under the normative white/male gaze. As many feminist and antiracist works have shown, the aesthetic dimension, how the body is *seen* by others, has everything to do with how the body is lived and *can be* lived. (The black body is lived, for example, according to Lewis Gordon, “as a form of human deficiency.”³¹⁶) As the body is objectified under the white/male gaze,³¹⁷ it becomes a *thing*, from which one is distanced.³¹⁸ It is this experience of objectification Fanon had in mind when he wrote: “I came into this world anxious to uncover the meaning of things, my soul desirous to be at the origin of the world, and *here I am an object among other objects.*”³¹⁹ The body under the white/male gaze is the racially marked, sexually deviant, or the feminized body, always overdetermined and impeded in its objectification. The marked subject seeking transcendence is distanced from h/er body which s/he experiences as a burden whereby h/er status as a constituting subject is rendered problematic as s/he lives her subjectivity as always already restricted. Whereas the

³¹⁶ Lewis Gordon, *Bad Faith and Antiracist Racism* (Amherst: Humanity Books, 1999), 101.

³¹⁷ White and male here does not necessarily denote white or male bodies or identities. The gaze can be employed by different agents, yet it is tied to the systems of oppression that privilege whiteness and masculinity.

³¹⁸ See: George Yancy’s *Black Bodies, White Gazes* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers), 2008: 15.

³¹⁹ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 2008), 89. Emphasis added.

unmarked subject experiences no discrepancy between how his body is seen and lived, thereby his status as “the origin of the world” eludes any sort of problematization.

One's embodiment becomes an issue precisely when one's body is *marked*. Thus, it makes sense for us to take the body as a site of political contestation, as so many times one's capabilities as a human being are reduced to one's body, or rather what that body signifies. Further, many feminists and antiracists have made the point that we not only *are* our marked bodies, but we *become* them in perpetually adopting and inhabiting the meanings that our bodies carry. This is demonstrated by Iris Young in her examination of the physical timidity of feminine bodily comportment:

Typically, the feminine body underuses its real capacity, both as the potentiality of its physical size and strength and as the real skills and coordination which are available to it. Feminine bodily existence is an inhibited intentionality, which simultaneously reaches toward a projected end with an ‘I can’ and withholds its full bodily commitment to that end in a self-imposed ‘I cannot.’³²⁰

The feminine body *learns* to be timid through its interaction with the world, and it “knows” that it is “a thing which exists as *looked at and acted upon*”³²¹ as opposed to a fully capable agent of action. Hence the feminine body *becomes* a fragile body through habituation, and enacts the fragility that it became. The “knowledge” that the feminine body acquires (that it is weak and fragile) is a piece of knowledge that interferes with the achievement of the full potentiality of that body.

When thinking about white ignorance, the issue lies more within the embodiment of the privileged than the oppressed, in other words, within those who are unburdened by

³²⁰ Iris Marion Young, “Throwing Like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment, Motility, and Spatiality” *Human Studies* 3. no. 2 (1980): 146.

³²¹ *Ibid*, 148.

a body that carries with it the mark of inferiority. Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of the body as the primary site of subjectivity can offer a way to understand white subjectivities as they are bound up with ignorance. Merleau-Ponty writes: "Bodily experience forces us to acknowledge an imposition of meaning, which is not the work of a universal-constituting consciousness, a meaning which clings to certain contents."³²² This imposed meaning is an accumulation of the body's interaction with the environment, through which the body *learns*. Thus, based on this give-and-take relation, one may characterize this interaction as some sort of transaction with the world, a process through which the world comes to inhabit the body as much as the body inhabits the world. In his famous phantom limb example, Merleau-Ponty explains that the patient still acts as if she is not missing a limb, even though she is perfectly aware on a conscious level that she cannot perform certain tasks in the way she used to be able to. She attempts to open the door by way of turning the doorknob, yet the doorknob cannot be turned as she is missing her arm. From this, we can infer that her "habitual body" involves the knowledge that one is to turn a doorknob in order to open the door. The habitual body is comprised of the sedimentation of such knowledge whereby the body acts on the environment based on that knowledge, with no necessary awareness on a conscious level. As the conditions of sedimentation change (as in the case of losing a limb), the ways in which the body acts on the world will gradually change (that is, the subject will eventually develop new habits to adjust to the changing circumstances). Thus, the subject can learn to inhabit the world otherwise.

Merleau-Ponty's insight about the body as the site of knowledge offers a means through which we can examine the sedimentation of ignorance in the body. As white subjectivities are shaped through bodily interactions with a racist world, the accumulation

³²² Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (New York: Humanities Press, 1962), 46.

of “knowledge” that gets sedimented in one’s habitual body will involve the kind of “knowledge” that is wrong, deceiving, and detrimental. Taken alongside Mills’s account of epistemology of ignorance, this suggests that the body *knows*, yet what it knows is the ignore-ance of white privilege which gets passed on as knowledge under the current truth regime. The codification of the black (and brown) masculine bodies as threatening is precisely linked to this process of sedimentation, where the body reacts in fear in that encounter, regardless of whether or not there is real threat.

What the body knows, the body takes for granted. No awareness need be directed toward that “knowledge,” nonetheless the “knowledge” itself is enacted continuously. If we were to take this up as a way of accounting for white subjectivities whose racial experience is not marked (thereby the body is not lived as a burden), we can see the ways in which ignorance is acquired through bodily habituation and sedimentation, and in turn enacted without conscious awareness. Such ignorance that is embedded in one’s body and enacted in one’s bodily engagements with the world is a critical component of the epistemology of ignorance.

In order to see how this plays out in a racialized context, one may consider Fanon’s account of the body schema. The implicit knowledge that is sedimented in the body is at play in Fanon’s depiction of reaching for cigarettes as well. If he wants to smoke, all he needs to do is to stretch his arm to pick up the pack of cigarettes at the other end of the table. And to light the cigarette, he would need to open the drawer where the matches are. He suggests that he performs these moves by virtue of an “implicit knowledge,”³²³ as his body moves around space based on this very knowledge that it acquired over time. What Merleau-Ponty calls “habitual body,” then, is linked with

³²³ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 90.

Fanon's "body schema," which he defines as "[a] slow construction of myself as a body in a spatial and temporal world."³²⁴ Similar to Merleau-Ponty's account of the habitual body, the body schema in this context denotes a free transaction between the body and the world, a transaction that Fanon calls "a genuine dialectic,"³²⁵ through which "a definitive structuring of myself and the world" takes place.³²⁶ Yet, beneath this body schema, according to Fanon, there emerges a "historical-racial schema," whereby the racially marked body is "woven...out of a thousand details, anecdotes, and stories,"³²⁷ which interrupts and indeed renders impossible a free transaction between a racist world and a racially marked subject. The historical-racial schema is marked by a violent imposition whereby "white people's racist perceptions of [Fanon] as a savage subperson"³²⁸ (i.e. white ignorance) are demanded to be incorporated into the body schema. This marks a break down in the free flow of the body schema, instead "giving way to an epidermal racial schema."³²⁹ In the context of racism, then, a race-neutral³³⁰ body schema is shattered and superseded by the historical-racial schema, which debases and restrains the racially marked body in substantial ways.

Shannon Sullivan sums up this situation in the following way: "In a world infused with white privilege, a black person's bodily comportment is always being constituted by

³²⁴ Ibid, 91.

³²⁵ Fanon explains genuineness as the absence of "imposition." Even though there is imposition in Merleau-Ponty's account, it is important to note that Fanon and Merleau-Ponty uses "imposition" in a different way. For Fanon, it denotes the world "determining" the body, whereas for Merleau-Ponty there is no such determination, but instead a set of constraints imposed onto the body.

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ Sullivan, *Revealing Whiteness*, 102.

³²⁹ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 91.

³³⁰ Even though this is how Fanon puts it, we may question what racially neutral means in this context (especially in the all-pervasiveness of racism), and whether the historical-racial schema is, as it were, superimposed. We may also ask whether this free-flow, or true dialectic, is in fact a real condition, granted that our embodiment is always already constrained in different ways by virtue of being shaped through the world. For example, what Fanon takes to be a neutral, standard body schema may very well be a masculine one, taking itself to be natural and concealing its own history achieved through masculine entitlement.

the raced and racist space in which he or she lives.”³³¹ By implication, the white body schema is taken as “normal,” as that which eludes or remains uninterrupted by the detrimental effects of the historical-racial schema. However, this is problematic, for the white body schema that is shaped by racism is not “normal” or “standard” by any means, but normative and standardized, and one may even add, pathological.³³² Sullivan attempts to mitigate this problem by explaining that “the lack of racialized obstacles to the formation of white person’s body schema exists precisely because of the historico-racial schema that privileges whiteness,” whereby “[t]he same historico-racial schema described by Fanon both disrupts the black person’s and enables the white person’s composition of their bodily schemas.”³³³ Thus, for instance, white cleanliness/purity and black dangerousness/criminality are established in the same move when whites immediately lock their car doors upon the sight of a Black person approaching.³³⁴

Even though this approach to the white body schema/black historical-racial schema as bound up with each other is helpful in understanding racially differentiated forms of lived bodily experience, it lacks precision in its failure to specify modes of racist embodiment, as white embodiment is simply seen in terms of a *lack* of impediment. Yet, if we are to take up ignorance as a positive notion that is productive of subjectivity, we are compelled to address the specific modes in which it is embodied. Only then these modes can be de-naturalized by exposing how the white body schema is a function of a system of racial oppression. In other words, it is not that the white body schema is simply uninhibited and the non-white body schema is, but rather that they are both impacted by

³³¹ Sullivan, *Revealing Whiteness*, 103.

³³² Pathological insofar as the uninhibited, entitled white body schema is enabled by the historical-racial (racist?) schema. That is to say, it is pathologically racist.

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ Yancy, *Look, a White!* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012), 31.

the historical-racial schema. If we were to make an analogy, we could say that the uninhibited masculine body cannot be understood as a simple diametrical opposition of the impeded feminine body as explicated by Young, but rather it involves its own modes of motility and comportment. Looking back on my own experience of going to junior high school in Turkey where it was mandatory to wear uniforms (skirts for girls, and pants for boys, *of course*), this differentiation in bodily comportment becomes clear. Girls tend keep their legs closed, have a modest posture, they hunch over to hide their breasts, and so on. Boys, on the other hand, have a much more “expansive” posture as they stretch their legs, keep their shoulders up, and move around and fidget. It would be wrong to assume that the masculine comportment, in this case, is natural or ideal, whereas the feminine comportment is simply its impediment, as we very well know that not all aspects of this expansive comportment is desirable or ideal (for instance, bullying, or even just crowding others). The question, then, is whether one can pinpoint an analogue of these feminine/masculine modes of embodiment as inhabitation of gender in white embodiment of ignorance.

Racialized modes of ignorance, I would like to suggest, are the functions of sedimented “knowledge” of bodies. What the body “knows” and enacts based on that “knowledge,” in this model, is white ignorance. While it is not only white bodies that enact that “knowledge,” whose schema is shaped by the sedimentation of ignorance as mistaken knowledge, that “knowledge” that is enacted itself is situated in a white supremacist social context. In this sense, regardless of one's particular subjective position, there is a certain complicity, an internalization of whiteness as it were, at work in the enactment of that “knowledge.” However, given that I am interested in bringing out

the peculiarity of that which is rendered invisible in its universality, normativity, and unmarked status, I shall work with the specific example of the white body in order to map the impact of historical-racial schema onto the white body schema. In this sense, this project is similar to that of Peggy McIntosh's in her essay "White Privilege," where she enumerates the ways in which whites are privileged, yet at the same time are blind to those privileges. Once pinned down, the unthought dimension of the body may be transformed.

Caroline Knowles's account of race as "made through corporeality and comportment, through bodily movement and intersections with space"³³⁵ may prove helpful to map out the ways in which whiteness is *made* as a specific mode of corporeality and comportment. She notes that the "[t]echniques of the body, posture, attitude, movements and habits are also performances of ethnicity, race and hybridised cultural practices which lend their (orchestrated) mobile character to the architecture of the streets."³³⁶ Thus, by looking at "how people comport themselves," one can gain insight into "both enactment and composition of (raced) subjectivity."³³⁷ This way, modes of embodiment that are marked by whiteness do not go unnoticed. She notes, "[r]outine corporeality and comportment also intersect with entitlement and territory," as whites "walk with a sense of (historical) entitlement, an unchallengeable right to be there" in cities and towns where whites historically have resided.³³⁸ White entitlement, here, corresponds to feeling of discomfort, fear, and vigilance on the part of non-whites.

According to Sara Ahmed, this territorialization is linked to "the regulation of bodies in

³³⁵ Caroline Knowles, "Theorising Race and Ethnicity: Contemporary Paradigms and Perspectives," in *The SAGE Handbook of Race and Ethnic Studies*, ed. Patricia Hill Collins & John Solomos (London: SAGE Publications, 2010), 31.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*

³³⁷ *Ibid.*

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 32.

space through the uneven distribution of fear.”³³⁹ Thus, spaces that become territories are “claimed as rights by some bodies and not others.”³⁴⁰ As the public spaces are territorialized as masculine, for example, Elizabeth Stanko explains that feminine bodies are produced as fearful and restricted mobility.³⁴¹ Vulnerability, then, far from being “an inherent characteristic of women’s bodies,” is “an effect that works to secure femininity as a delimitation of movement in the public, and over-inhabitation in the private.”³⁴²

This dyadic affective economy of entitlement/fear transforms the body schema so that the social space is arranged in a certain manner. Fear, Ahmed notes, “involves shrinking the body”³⁴³ so that the body takes up less space, turns inward, tightens up, seals onto itself. Entitlement, on the other hand, is lived as uninhibited “movement or expansion,” causing the Other to feel fear as a restricted body.³⁴⁴ Just as masculine entitlement is bound up with feminine fear and vulnerability, white entitlement (not as mere lack of inhibition but as expansion) precipitates fear and vulnerability in those who are not white, and thus are not welcome in white spaces.³⁴⁵

Yet, one may suggest that whites do not always experience their bodies as expansive, entitled bodies in relation to disadvantaged non-whites. What about, one may ask, when whites find themselves fearful, in what they perceive as a dangerous situation in their encounter with non-whites, for instance, sitting in their car in a black

³³⁹ Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 70.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ Elizabeth Stanko, *Everyday Violence: How Women and Men Experience Sexual and Physical Danger* (London: Pandora, 1990).

³⁴² Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 70.

³⁴³ Ibid, 69.

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

³⁴⁵ Jackson Katz gives an account of how masculinity offers a sense of empowerment to men of color in his reading of the media depictions of masculinity in his documentary *Tough Guise*. This offers an interesting way to think about how racial domination and gender domination are linked.

neighborhood? What does fear do, in such cases? Does it involve a shrinking of the body to give way to uninhibited black expansion?

White vulnerability, in such cases, operates as an oppressive mechanism against non-whites in its consolidation of white purity and innocence, for white purity and innocence are established only in relation to black criminality. There is an insidious feeling of entitlement at work in white fear. We must ask who gets to fear, whose fear is legitimized, under what conditions, and at the expense of whom. In one of the very first scenes of the provocative 2005 film *Crash*, in which racial dynamics in Los Angeles are explored, a white woman holds her husband tight upon the sight of two black men. This is noticed by one of these men who goes on to tell his friend:

Man, look around you, man. You couldn't find a whiter, safer, better lit part of the city right now. But yet this white woman sees two black guys who look like UCLA students strolling down the sidewalk and her reaction is blind fear? I mean, look at us dog, are we dressed like gangbangers? Huh? No. Do we look threatening? No. Fact: if anybody should be scared around here, it's us. We're the only two black faces surrounded by a sea of over-caffeinated white people, patrolled by the triggerhappy LAPD. So you tell me: Why aren't we scared?³⁴⁶

Affective economy of fear operates in such a way that renders irrational, racist fear of whites legitimate. This kind of fear reinforces “the stability of white identity qua normative,”³⁴⁷ while consolidating the black identity as the dangerous, inferior Other.

³⁴⁶ It must be noted that right after giving this speech, this man goes on to pull out a gun and hijack a car. It later becomes clear that he sees his own criminality not simply as a reproduction of a stereotype, but instead an act of resistance in the face of racism. The movie was clearly going for the shock value with this scene.

³⁴⁷ Yancy, *Look, a White!*, 31.

White fear, then, is linked to entitlement insofar as whites are entitled to feel fear, even when they are in a safe white space, i.e. white territory, whereas non-whites have to deal with the consequences of this fear.³⁴⁸ Fear is also a bodily expression, a symptom, of white ignorance. It enacts a certain knowledge claim, or a series of knowledge claims that not only permeate one's cognitive states, but are also operative in one's bodily comportment, in that one's comportment is shaped through fear. Thus, upon the sight of a black (or brown) man, white people act upon this "knowledge" ("Black is dangerous," "Black is criminal," "The Black is going to kill me," "The Black is going to rob me," and so on) that is sedimented in their habitual body. In reacting with fear, the body "knows" black criminality, and responds immediately based on that "knowledge."

White fear, then, is not a kind of fear that shrinks the white body, but instead, it shrinks the black body. This is not only because the white body shames, degrades, and expels the black body in fearing, but also because white fear becomes a real, and sometimes fatal, threat. White fear not only violates and degrades, but also kills black bodies which it takes as its object. Hence, vulnerability is displaced: a black body is the truly vulnerable body when confronted with an entitled, fearful white body. Ahmed notes that while affect involves "readings of openness of bodies to being affected," fear in particular "reads that openness as the possibility of danger or pain," as opposed to hope, which "reads that openness as the possibility of desire or joy."³⁴⁹ This particular reading projected onto black masculinity that anticipates harm is linked to an affective epistemology wherein fear performs white ignorance, in the form of mistaken knowledge. Ahmed writes: "These readings reshape bodies. Whilst fear may shrink the body in

³⁴⁸ In fact, toward the end of the film, one of these men gets killed as a result of a white man's fear.

³⁴⁹ Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 185.

anticipation of injury, hope may expand the contours of bodies, as they reach towards what is possible.”³⁵⁰ Yet this particular economy of fear, in contrast, expands the body that is positioned vis-à-vis black masculinity in its anticipation of injury. This expansion takes place both in the infliction of violence and the legitimization of that violence within juridical settings. The fearing body may experience oneself as vulnerable, as the to-be victim. That experience, and not that of the actual victim, is what counts in trial. That possibility of harm, that perception of danger is decidedly the sole perspective through which adjudication takes place, where a racialized logic of preemption is operative. Fear determines the meaning of the encounter in its linked to an affective epistemology of ignorance.

In an act of reversal, fear shrinks the racially marked body, while expanding the non-marked body. Within the rhetoric of safety, “We want our streets to be safe” so often reads, “We want only good white folks on these streets.” The little boy who thinks that Fanon is going to “eat him” is afraid, and his fear reconfigures Fanon’s body by reshaping its comportment: “My body was returned to me spread-eagled, disjointed, redone, draped in mourning...”³⁵¹ Fanon begins trembling with fear felt as coldness, misread by the little boy as rage. Fanon cannot be trembling with *fear*, as Blacks do not fear: fear is a privilege reserved to whites; it is a white prerogative to fear a Black man and end his life on the basis of that fear. Whites are entitled to be vulnerable, in their enactment of ignorance, which operates through fear as an embodied “knowledge” that “Blacks are dangerous.” This very “knowledge” that fear conveys establishes white subjectivity in the form of purity.

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

³⁵¹ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 93.

Ahmed notes that “[f]ear’s relation to the object has an important temporal dimension.”³⁵² As a felt intensity in the present, fear “projects us from the present into a future,” through “an *anticipation* of hurt of injury.”³⁵³ That very anticipation rests on an overdetermination of the fear’s object (“Black as evil,” “Black as dangerous”), rather than a felt anxiety that comes from uncertainty (“What is that stranger going to do to me?”). There is a paranoid epistemology at work as the encounter is overdetermined by the possibility of injury. There is a presumption on the part of the subject of fear that s/he is going to be hurt, or harmed in some way. This presumption is linked to bodily ignorance, insofar as the overdetermination that is imposed on the fear object is that which the body “knows.” In this sense, fear is not only a projection of the present into the future by way of anticipating hurt, but a culmination of the past sedimented knowledge of the body which make up that very anticipation. The temporal continuum of fear thereby shows that fear is not a “natural” reaction of the body, but is linked to the epistemology of ignorance that one embodies. Fear, then, is the performance of that ignorance, and as such, it involves a certain disclosure: it is the disclosing of one’s own status as an oppressor to oneself. It is this disclosure that we do not find in the undisrupted modes of white embodiment³⁵⁴ whereby ignorance prevails. Yet in the disruption of the body schema by the previously concealed historical-racial schema emerges the very possibility to undo that “whiteness,” to borrow from Marilyn Frye, in the form of white ignorance.

It is important to note that fear is not the only affect through which white ignorance is expressed, but there are milder forms that are just as expressive, as will be shown through a reading of an episode of the situational comedy television series, *The*

³⁵² Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 65.

³⁵³ *Ibid*, 65.

³⁵⁴ For instance, comfort, complacency, and entitlement that comes with “whiteness,” to borrow from Marilyn Frye.

New Adventures of Old Christine. These include distress, anxiety, discomfort, unease, apprehension, among others, all of which are tied to racial entitlement in varying degrees.

The New Adventures of Old Christine is a television series that ran from 2006 to 2010. It is a comedy about the life of a white single mother Christine (Julia Louis-Dreyfus) after her divorce. She owns a gym with her best friend/business partner Barb (Wanda Sykes). Unlike the majority of white American sitcom characters portrayed as “good whites,” Christine’s whiteness and egalitarian commitments are repeatedly problematized throughout the show. Numerous episodes expose and deal with Christine’s ignorant progressivism, and one in particular (“White Like Me”) takes up Christine’s insidious racism lurking behind her self-proclaimed colorblindness. In this episode, Barb gets featured in a business journal about Black women, hoping to get new members in the gym. As soon as the interview is published, Christine finds that the gym gets crowded with new members, all of whom are Black women. Upon her brother and ex-husband’s visit, she looks unusually busy and stressed out. Her brother, amused by the change in the demographics of the clientele, comments, “You own a black gym!” to which Christine responds, “What? Where did you get that?” and goes on to say that of course she has not noticed that everyone in the gym is black, because she is “a Democrat.” “What does that mean?” her ex-husband asks, to which she responds: “I drive a Prius. I don’t see color.”

Christine’s self-proclaimed colorblindness is in direct conflict with her feelings of discomfort around the new black female members of the gym. Her responses to her brother’s and ex-husband’s questions regarding this are short and dismissive. She looks highly tense and uncomfortable, as her ex-husband and her brother continue asking her questions. “What color is your Prius?” her brother asks, mocking her “colorblindness.”

Christine responds: “No idea. I’m not a racist.” When her ex-husband tries to explain that it does not make her a racist to *notice* that somebody is black, she snaps and says that she does not want to talk about this anymore. As her brother asks, “What’s wrong with you, you’re so stressed out, it’s like the muscles in your jaw are so tight, you’re developing a tick,” the camera turns to Christine whose eye started twitching.

What causes Christine’s unusual stress is not revealed, at least until the next day. Barb, having been overwhelmed by having to deal with everything by herself asks Ali (the socially awkward white gym worker who seems to be rather enjoying the change in the gym as she is dancing to the stereotypically black music) where Christine is. Ali points at Christine’s office, where we see Christine staring through the glass door at the new members with an uneasy look on her face. Barb gets Christine to come out and help out with the signing up process for two new members. As Christine is introduced to them, her comportment gives away that she feels very uncomfortable. As they carry on an awkward conversation in which Christine makes little sense, Christine’s eye starts twitching again. When Barb asks, “What’s going on with your face,” Christine responds, “Equality... Hope...” She cannot wait to flee the situation. She finally says, “Now if you will just excuse me, I will pop black into my office.” She pauses, embarrassed because of her slip of the tongue, and corrects herself, “Back. Not black,” nervously laughing. She goes on to make things worse saying, “So if you’ll excuse me, I will be white black.”

Christine’s feelings of unease are precipitated by her close proximity to black women, which makes absolutely no sense to her. Her middle class suburban life style and egalitarian values (such as driving an environment-friendly car, sending her son to a posh private school, always being surrounded by white people, etc.) hitherto had been able to

mask her white ignorance.³⁵⁵ Her body is signaling something which Christine had been ignorant about and is reluctant to face: her own racism. Here we have a case of white ignorance exposed through bodily discomfort: twitching, nervous laughter, and slips of the tongue. White ignorance can be lived unproblematically insofar as one keeps one's distance from non-whites – which is why my students often tell me, they never really had to think about race because there were no people of color in the town where they grew up, as if whiteness constitutes a racially “blank slate.” Christine's body schema, then, is enabled precisely by the historical-racial schema: a body unrestricted, entitled, and oblivious, unaware that its lack of restriction comes at the expense of others' suffering.³⁵⁶ This is revealed by the disruption of her bodily schema, which leaves her feel threatened, in distress, and confused.

Christine's case makes it clear that it is not so much that the white body is untouched by the historical-racial schema, but rather, that the modes of its comportment are racially differentiated, namely, comfort/discomfort, extension/shrinkage, complacency/fear, arrogance/distress... Whereas the first end of the spectrum entails a forgetting, denial, and ignore-ance of white privilege (while at the same time benefitting from it to the extent of abuse), the second end denotes a problematized state of white ignorance whereby the body enacts, consolidates, and discloses its own ignorance. Further, the two ends of the spectrum are inherently tied to one other, as white complacency, arrogance, and ignorance are bound up with white fear, discomfort, and feelings of unease.

³⁵⁵ That is, insofar as she is ignore-ant of her own privileged status precisely by virtue of being ignore-ant of others.

³⁵⁶ Various effects of racial marginalization exemplify this suffering. Christine's body schema (i.e. white bodily ignorance) conceal both this marginalization and her own privilege (for she does not have to deal with it so long as she holds egalitarian beliefs – yet her body reveals the racism embedded within).

George Yancy calls the disclosure of one's own racism (be it through affective forms such as fear, or otherwise) enabled by the disruption of white body schema, "white ambush."³⁵⁷ Whiteness, not a physiological trait, but a social becoming for Yancy, entails an embodiment of racism in a racist society. The ways in which racism is "embedded within one's embodied habitual engagement with the social world and how it is weaved within the unconscious, impacting everyday mundane transactions"³⁵⁸ lead to experiencing whiteness as ambush, precisely because one catches oneself off-guard, realizes one's ignorance, and undergoes a certain estrangement and distancing from oneself. Yancy suggests that these moments of ambush are manifestations of one's own racism that had gone unnoticed, and they may become the occasion for self-transformation. If white ignorance is mistaken, racially motivated, skewed knowledge that is sedimented in the white habitual body thereby comprising the white body schema, the very undoing of that ignorance will involve "performing the body's racialized interactions with the world differently,"³⁵⁹ rather than merely a cognitive shift.

The necessity for such transformation becomes clear in the case of Christine, where Christine does not *believe* that she is racist or that blacks do not belong in her gym, yet her body still reacts to being in close proximity to black women. Attending to her feeling of discomfort, Christine admits to Barb, "For the last two days every time I walk into this gym, I feel nervous...I just want to hide in my office and not talk to anyone. Do you have any idea what it's like to be a minority?" Barb, of course, as a black woman, very well knows "what it's like to be a minority," about which Christine is clueless. Yet, the issue is neutralized in Barb's attempt to comfort Christine that she is not a racist by

³⁵⁷ Yancy, *Black Bodies, White Gazes* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008).

³⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 230.

³⁵⁹ George Yancy, "Elevators, Social Spaces and Racism," *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 34, no. 8 (2008): 843.

saying, “Everyone feels more comfortable when they are surrounded by people who look like them. That's why Martha Stewart bought Connecticut.” Except, of course, that white discomfort is linked to a very specific history of white racism, and finds embodiment as a form of white entitlement. It is not the case that *any* white person in Christine’s situation would feel uncomfortable, either: Christine’s discomfort at the gym contrasts with Ali’s enhanced comfort. Rather than dealing with her racist sentiments and looking for ways to undo them, Christine decides to “integrate” the gym by getting white people to sign up, so that she would feel more comfortable around “people who look like [her].” The disruption of her body schema as a disclosure of her whiteness is suspended as Christine goes back to her blissful ignorance and white complacency. Returning to her comfort zone, she refuses to attend to her own affective states as symptoms of the problematic manner in which she inhabits whiteness. The possibility of inhabiting whiteness otherwise is foreclosed upon the decision to ignore her body and bodily ignorance. There is, of course, another path to take. Instead of going back to blissful ignorance, one may choose to spend time with one’s own distress and retrain one’s body to employ other modes in the encounter with the Other, namely, wonder, curiosity, openness, sympathy, generosity, and so on. This involves an ethics of self-transformation, which has been articulately explicated by a number of scholars.³⁶⁰

In this context, ignorance, conceptualized as a positive notion, is productive of white subjectivity, rather than its deficient aftereffect. As seen in the white person’s encounter with the Other, fear operates as an oppressive mechanism that not only degrades, expels, and shames blackness (and inhibits the black body schema), but also

³⁶⁰ Including Irigaray, Lugones, and Foucault. Saba Mahmood’s “Positive Ethics and Ritual Conventions” in *Politics of Piety* is also very insightful on this subject.

establishes white subjectivity as purity, innocence, and moral superiority. In this sense, there is an affective economy in which fear partakes whereby white bodily comportment is marked by entitlement. When the white subject experiences fear, s/he experiences h/er own ignorance as distorted, sedimented, embodied “knowledge.” Fear, then, marks a disclosure whereby the white body schema is threatened and disrupted, and this disruption can potentially become the occasion for self-transformation as inhabiting whiteness otherwise. As seen in the character of Christine, a white woman with egalitarian values, one’s body can enact sedimented white ignorance despite one’s own personal or political commitments. This experience of one’s ignorance expressed through bodily comportment and affectivity offers insight into forms of white ignorance that are irreducible to a cognitive framework that prioritizes cognitive states over that of the body. By attending to these bodily reactions, the ways in which ignorance is a bodily inhabitation can be explored. Such exploration could provide a basis for the transformation of the body schema and the affective economy at work in such encounters in a racialized context.

The investment of bodies with certain meanings that indicate threat or danger is linked to a politics of paranoia. The practices of securitization take place in a racialized context where intersubjective relations are colonized by these meanings. While my focus here has been on the codification of black masculinity in particular as threatening, it should be noted that this codification has a specific genealogy that may overlap with others (for instance, how the turban that Sikh men wear has been misconstrued to denote Muslim masculinity and thereby terrorism). The affective economy of fear operative in these encounters is indicative of a certain epistemological framework. While I explored

this link in terms of an epistemology of ignorance, in the next section, I take up decolonial feminist poetry's intervention to these practices of knowing that opens up other forms of relationality that are not laden with fear, suspicion, and loathing. This intervention shows that while an ethics of self-transformation is useful and necessary, a broader epistemological shift is needed. I suggest that in order for that shift to be viable, we also need social systems that would accommodate for it, as well as uphold and sustain those patterns of relationality. The nation-state and the way it is currently situated in global capitalism renders this unlikely.

5.2 The Epistemological Intervention of Decolonial Feminist Poetry

Walter D. Mignolo defines decoloniality in terms of the “struggles to bring into intervening existence an-other interpretation that brings forward, on the one hand, a silenced view of the event and, on the other, shows the limits of imperial ideology disguised as the true (total) interpretation of the events.”³⁶¹ Decoloniality, in other words, entails a project of epistemological decolonization which seeks to undo the effects of the epistemology of ignorance whereby unknowing passes for knowledge as previously discussed. Decoloniality as an epistemological project, as Aníbal Quijano puts it, “clear[s] the way for an interchange of experiences and meanings, as the basis of another rationality which may legitimately pretend to some universality.”³⁶² In contemporary poetry, works by women of color, which I present here under the heading of “decolonial feminist poetry,” offer an epistemological intervention that brings about new ways to think about relationality, historicity, and difference. Other kinds of rationality emerge out of these works that challenge the paranoiac epistemic framework through which the racialized

³⁶¹ Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America*, 8.

³⁶² Quijano, “Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality,” 177.

Other is codified as threatening, deemed to be dispensable, and sought to be expelled. Decolonial feminist poetry serves to disrupt the affective economies that are tied to a politics of paranoia by way of articulating another way of relating to others, oneself, and the world, informed by a politics of healing (as opposed to retribution). In attempting to shift these sedimented practices of knowing, decolonial feminist poetry seeks to rectify the epistemic violence propelled by the affective economy of fear that permeates the intersubjective dimension of the politics of securitization. These poems, in other words, entail an epistemological shift through transformative affective circulations.

The contemporary poets that I bring together here under the umbrella term “decolonial feminist poetry” are of different national origins, use different themes, and employ different styles. One might therefore suggest that perhaps they have little in common. Yet I argue that their projects are linked in that they each write from the standpoint of identifying as what Cherríe Moraga called “refugees of a world of fire.”³⁶³ “What if,” Moraga writes, “we declared ourselves *perpetual* refugees in solidarity with all refugees?”³⁶⁴ The work of these poets is not only a practice of solidarity in an abstract sense, but they begin from the experience of displacement. For these works, the colonized body is a starting point. They are a reflection of the poetic reverberation of suffering, fissures, silence, exploitation, trauma, fragmentation, ambivalence, abandonment, self-love, self-loathing, pain, joy, and countless others, all of which are historically, socially,

³⁶³ Jacqui Alexander takes up this characterization that Moraga employs in her foreword to the second edition of *This Bridge Called My Back* by thinking about what might it mean, for women of color, to see ourselves as “refugees of a world on fire.” She writes: “Not citizen. Not naturalized citizen. Not immigrant. Not undocumented. Not illegal alien. Not permanent resident. Not resident alien. But refugees fleeing some terrible atrocity far too threatening to engage, ejected out of the familiar into some unknown, still-to-be-revealed place. Refugees forced to create out of the raw smithy of fire a shape different from our inheritance, with no blueprints, no guarantees” (265).

³⁶⁴ Cherríe Moraga, “Refugees of a World on Fire” in *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color 20th Anniversary Edition*, ed. Moraga and Anzaldúa (Berkeley: Third Woman Press, 2002); June Jordan, *Affirmative Acts* (New York: Anchor Books, 1998), 94.

and politically grounded. Taking to heart Carol Hanisch's famous formulation that “the personal is political,”³⁶⁵ these poets show that the political is also personal. Their poetic telling of the colonized body attests to the violence involved in the hegemonic epistemological framework and creates a space for its undoing.

My contention is that this epistemological intervention offered by decolonial feminist poetry can bring about a shift in terms of relationality, both in its conceptualization and practice. It is not knowledge as mastery or conquest or knowledge as ignorance that grounds these epistemic practices of alliances across difference. Knowledge itself becomes a matter of resistance, a matter of educating oneself about the struggles of others, seeking beyond what is presented within the framework of the epistemology of ignorance. This serves the epistemological ground for establishing alliances across difference. Following Jacqui Alexander's reformulation of Beauvoir's famous phrase, “We are not born women of color. We *become* women of color,” poetry offers a platform for coming to a “woman of color consciousness,” which “at the very least...requires collective fluency in our particular histories, an understanding of how different, gendered racisms operate, their old institutionalized link to the histories of slavery in the United States as well as their newer manifestations that partly rely on the 'foreignness' of immigrants who have not been socialized into the racial/racist geographies of the United States.”³⁶⁶ Part of this education takes place through an affective engagement with the writings of women of color. Poetry, in this sense, serves as a ground for establishing decolonial feminist alliances. As Alexander puts it, “No matter our countries of origin, decolonization is a project for *all*.”³⁶⁷

³⁶⁵ Carol Hanisch, “The Personal Is Political,” *carolhanisch.org*. January 2006. Accessed: July 21, 2016. <http://www.carolhanisch.org/CHwritings/PIP.html>

³⁶⁶ Jacqui Alexander, “Remembering *This Bridge Called My Back*, Remembering Ourselves,” in *Pedagogies of Crossing* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005), 269.

³⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 272. Emphasis in the original.

Decolonial feminist poetry, in short, calls for and brings about an epistemological shift by writing the colonized body as a practice of healing. In this practice, it is not the abstracted body, but the body in its historical specificity that serves as a ground for the articulation of both difference and interconnectedness. The process of healing, in this context, does not merely happen on an individual level, as delinked from history or sociality. Individual healing takes place on the level of intersubjectivity and within the larger context of collective struggles for social transformation. My body, in this context, as Judith Butler puts it, “is and is not mine.”³⁶⁸ “[T]o be a body,” Butler writes, “is to be given over to others even as a body is, emphatically, 'one's own.'”³⁶⁹ In this sense, writing the body is not a solipsistic act nor does it take place in isolation. The body that is the subject and the starting point of decolonial feminist poetry is one that is vulnerable and exploited in its vulnerability, but also one that loves, creates, heals, moves, resists, rejoices, and constitutes the locus of political agency in standing in solidarity with others.

Gloria Anzaldúa characterizes writing as “a gesture of the body...a working from the inside out.”³⁷⁰ Highlighting the centrality of the body for the practice of writing, Anzaldúa writes: “My feminism is grounded not on incorporeal abstraction but on corporeal realities. The material body is center, and central. The body is ground of thought.”³⁷¹ We have seen, in the previous section, that the epistemology of ignorance operates through the body as unknowing is sedimented in the body schema. Decolonial feminist poetry, in this context, is the telling of the story of the colonized body, particularly as marked by race and gender, the body that bears the memory of trauma, as

³⁶⁸ Butler, *Undoing Gender*, 21.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁰ Gloria Anzaldúa, *Light in the Dark/ Luz En Lo Oscuro* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2015), 5.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*

Nayyirah Waheed's poem expresses: "we write from the body. / it remembers everything. / - melanin | bone and soil."³⁷²

It is through this particular lens, this centrality of the colonized body, that one may read the work of Rupi Kaur. The poems in her book *Milk and Honey* are laden with sensuousness, where the movement of poetic thought is very much grounded in the body, its senses and sensations. It is the body that is broken, bruised, abused, violated, abjected: "i don't know why / i split myself open / for others knowing / sewing myself up / hurts this much / afterward,"³⁷³ "you must have known / you were wrong / when your fingers / were dipped inside me / searching for honey that / would not come for you,"³⁷⁴ "you / have been / taught your legs / are a pit stop for men / that need a place to rest / a vacant body empty enough / for guests but no one / ever comes and is / willing to / stay,"³⁷⁵ "you pinned / my legs to / the ground / with your feet / and demanded / i stand up,"³⁷⁶ "the rape will / tear you / in half / but it / will not / end you,"³⁷⁷ "he guts her / with his fingers / like he's scraping / the inside of a / cantaloupe clean,"³⁷⁸ "our knees / pried open / by cousins / and uncles / and men / our bodies touched / by all the wrong people / that even in a bed full of safety / we are afraid."³⁷⁹ It is the body that is in longing or one that has been abandoned: "my tongue is sour / from the hunger of / missing you,"³⁸⁰ "i was music / but you had your ears cut off,"³⁸¹ "i am undoing you / from my skin."³⁸² But it is also the body that resists, heals, desires, and flourishes: "your body / is a museum / of natural

³⁷² Nayyirah Waheed, *Salt* (San Bernardino: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015), 238.

³⁷³ Rupi Kaur, *Milk and Honey* (Kansas City: Andrew McMeel Publishing, 2015), 125.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 101.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 13.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 25.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 26.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 31.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 36.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 116.

³⁸¹ *Ibid*, 115.

³⁸² *Ibid*, 112.

disasters / can you grasp how / stunning that is,”³⁸³ “i like the way the stretch marks / on my thighs look human and / that we're so soft yet / rough and jungle wild / when we need to be / i love that about us / how capable we are of feeling / how unafraid we are of breaking / and tend to our wounds with grace / just being a woman / calling myself / a woman / makes me utterly whole / and complete,”³⁸⁴ “my issue with what they consider beautiful / is their concept of beauty / center around excluding people / I find hair beautiful / when a woman wears it / like a garden on her skin / that is the definition of beauty / big hooked noses / pointing upward to the sky / like they're rising / to the occasion / skin the color of earth / my ancestors planted crops on / to feed a lineage of women with / thighs thick as tree trunks / eyes like almonds / deeply hooded with conviction / the river of punjab / flow through my bloodstream so / don't tell me my women / aren't as beautiful / as the ones in / your country.”³⁸⁵ This book is structured much like a notebook or a collection of notes that Kaur kept of her thoughts on hurt, love, and healing, occasionally accompanied by scribbled drawings that bear some relevance. The poetic language that she employs here is simple yet powerful. The simplicity of the language is paired with profundity of thought, performed through corporeal imagery.

The very first poem in the book reads, “*how is it so easy for you / to be kind to people* he asked / milk and honey dripped / from my lips as i answered / *cause people have not / been kind to me.*”³⁸⁶ Remaining “soft” despite hurt and trauma is underscored in the works of decolonial feminist poets. To fight back not with revenge but by cherishing life comes to the fore. Kaur's book in particular is a log of survival, yet not simply in an individualistic sense. The body that is articulated here is also a starting point for feminist

³⁸³ Ibid, 173.

³⁸⁴ Ibid, 169.

³⁸⁵ Ibid, 170.

³⁸⁶ Ibid, 11.

solidarity around decoloniality, the abjection of which ties women by way of what Alexander calls a woman of color consciousness. The body that is written here therefore is also a collective body, the body that connects one to others by way of the sharing of suffering. As Kaur writes: “our backs / tell stories /no books have / the spine to / carry / - *women of color*.”³⁸⁷

The exploration of the colonized body, the body as wounded, exploited, raped, and sold, is undertaken by various decolonial feminist poets. Nayyirah Waheed writes: “i am a woman of color. / my bones have been / bought and sold every morning. / so, now I carry a machete / in my / mouth.”³⁸⁸ The machete that Waheed carries in her mouth is the power to speak, to articulate injustice, to use language as a form of resistance. Similarly, Ijeoma Umebinyuo writes:

You are made
of
water
distance
dreams
mother's tears
father's pain
broken tongue
forced language
colonized eyes
bastardized religions

You lost cultures
You lost language
You lost religions
You lost it all in the fire
that is colonization
so, do not apologize
for owning every piece of you
they could not take, break
and claim as theirs³⁸⁹

³⁸⁷ Ibid, 171.

³⁸⁸ Waheed, *Salt*, 189.

³⁸⁹ Ijeoma Umebinyuo, *Questions for Ada* (San Bernardino: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016), 154.

In the articulation of trauma, what decolonial feminist poets put forth is not victimization discourse, nor is it call for retribution. The focus is always on healing, on embracing life in the face of suffering. Waheed writes: “the wounds have changed me. / i am so soft with scars / my skin / breathes and beats stars.”³⁹⁰ Umebinyuo's poem entitled “Survival” expresses a similar sentiment of remaining soft despite the wounds: “I have always wondered / how women who carry war / inside their bones / still grow flowers / between their teeth.”³⁹¹ While carrying war inside their bones, these women still grow, flourish, celebrate life, and continue to remain kind and beautiful, they still “grow flowers between their teeth.” Yet this does not mean that suffering is taken lightly. In her exploration of how a body carries the pain of war, of displacement and colonization, Warsan Shire notes that one becomes “ugly” with the burden of embodying loss. In her poem entitled “Ugly,” she writes:

Your daughter is ugly.
She knows loss intimately,
carries whole cities in her belly.
...
You are her mother.
Why did you not warn her,
hold her like a rotting boat
and tell her that men will not love her
if she is covered in continents,
if her teeth are small colonies,
if her stomach is an island
if her thighs are borders?

What man wants to lie down
and watch the world burn
in his bedroom?

³⁹⁰ Waheed, *Salt*, 235.

³⁹¹ Umebinyuo, *Questions for Ada*, 8.

Your daughter's face is a small riot,
her hands are a civil war,
a refugee camp behind each ear,
a body littered with ugly things.

But God,
doesn't she wear
the world well?³⁹²

She knows “loss intimately” as her body is the very site that has endured, and continues to sustain, loss. She is the very embodiment of loss in that the war lives in her body, which has deemed her “ugly” or undesirable. Yet this “ugliness” is embraced as valuable, perhaps even beautiful in its own right for its truthfulness, in Shire's rhetorical question, “doesn't she wear the world well?” As Umebinyuo reminds us in a poem, “you are not alive / to please the aesthetic / of colonized eye.”³⁹³

In contrast to the masculinist rhetoric around retribution and power-over, these poems are about healing and solidarity, or power-with: “if we / wanted to. / people of color / could / burn the world down. / for what / we have experienced. / are experiencing. / but / we don't. / - how stunningly beautiful that our sacred respect for the earth. for life. is deeper than our rage.”³⁹⁴ Softness that is presented as a virtue may be said to be perpetuating a gender stereotype of traditional femininity, yet this presentation serves to valorize softness as a human virtue in the face of suffering, as expressive of strength and empowerment: “it is being honest / about / my pain / that makes me invincible / - yield,”³⁹⁵ “You did not carry yourself / away from pain / to become pain itself. / A little kinder, darling. / A little softer, sweetheart,”³⁹⁶ “Where / your soul cracks open / to reveal flaws, /

³⁹² Shire, *Teaching My Mother How to Give Birth*, 31-2.

³⁹³ Umebinyuo, *Questions for Ada*, 117.

³⁹⁴ Waheed, *Salt*, 197.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 169.

³⁹⁶ Umebinyuo, *Questions for Ada*, 74.

plant flowers.”³⁹⁷ The story of the loss of softness, as entailed by hegemonic masculinity, is told as a tragedy: “what / massacre / happens to my son / between / him / living within my skin. / drinking my cells. / my water. / my organs. / and / his soft psyche turning cruel. / does he not remember / he / is half woman. / - from,”³⁹⁸ “if / a man / can / only show vulnerability / for / what is between my legs. / can / only / be / a / heart / during / sex. / if an orgasm / is / the only way / he / can / weep. / what is his life / but / a cage. / - prison.”³⁹⁹

What is particularly underscored in the poems of Waheed, Umebinyuo, Shire, and others is survival, not merely as a continuation of one's physical presence, but as flourishing: “A black woman / can write of / loneliness. / or / love / or softness. / or the moon. / you may try valiantly / to cripple her. / but she will still grow flowers in her flesh. / - a genocide of flowers.”⁴⁰⁰ Writing, in this context, is an act of resistance, an act of growing flowers in the flesh. In a similar vein, Audre Lorde suggests that the poetic exploration of feeling as a form of articulating thought is a liberatory act. She writes: “The white fathers told us: I think, therefore I am. The Black mother within each of us – the poet – whispers in our dreams: I feel, therefore I can be free. Poetry coins the language to express and charter this revolutionary demand, the implementation of that freedom.”⁴⁰¹ According to Lorde, poetry is a place for thinking, for birthing ideas that are already felt, a means through which one gives “name to the nameless so it can be thought.”⁴⁰² In this way, poetry cannot be reduced to rhetoric or “sterile word play”⁴⁰³ or an exercise of “imagination without insight.”⁴⁰⁴ “For within living structures defined by profit, by linear power, by

³⁹⁷ Ibid, 118.

³⁹⁸ Ibid, 8.

³⁹⁹ Ibid, 123.

⁴⁰⁰ Waheed, *Salt*, 148.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid, 38.

⁴⁰² Audre Lorde, “Poetry Is Not a Luxury” in *Sister Outsider* (Berkeley: Crossing Press, 2007), 37.

⁴⁰³ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

institutional dehumanization,” she writes, “our feelings were not meant to survive. Kept around as unavoidable adjuncts or pleasant pastimes, feelings were expected to kneel to men. But women have survived. As poets.”⁴⁰⁵ As a means of survival, poetry constitutes an act of resistance, it offers a site to articulate the workings of oppression on an intimate level as well as to create a poetic world of survival.

In beginning from the colonized body and its felt reality, decolonial feminist poetry constitutes a healing practice. In the process of healing, it taps into what Lorde calls “the erotic.” The erotic is defined as “an assertion of the life force of women; of that creative energy empowered, the knowledge and use of which we are now reclaiming in our language, our dancing, our loving, our work, our lives.”⁴⁰⁶ The erotic, according to Lorde, is a reserve for knowledge and empowerment that lies within, “a considered source of power and information within our lives,”⁴⁰⁷ which is linked to the experience of “the fullness of...depth of feeling.”⁴⁰⁸ Flourishing, or to “grow flowers in [the] flesh,” is tied to the exploration and celebration of the erotic. The colonized body, in Lorde's account, serves as a site of knowledge whose erotic expressions constitute forms of resistance. She writes: “Our erotic knowledge empowers us, becomes a lens through which we scrutinize all aspects of our existence, forcing us to evaluate those aspects honestly in terms of their relative meaning within our lives. And this is a grave responsibility, projected from within each of us, not to settle for the convenient, the shoddy, the conventionally expected, nor the merely safe.”⁴⁰⁹ The erotic, then, becomes a guide for healing, rejoicing, thriving, and flourishing, which finds expression in the writing of the colonized body. As

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid, 39.

⁴⁰⁶ Lorde, “Uses of the Erotic” in *Sister Outsider* (Berkeley: Crossing Press, 2007), 55.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid, 53.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid, 54.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid, 57.

we have seen previously, the body also serves as a site for the inscription of ignorance that passes for knowledge in the operation of the epistemology of ignorance in conjunction with the affective economy of fear. Yet in this case, decolonial feminist poetry involves the writing of the subjugated knowledge located in the body, the unheard, dismissed, doubted, ignored thought and feeling. Lorde notes that the erotic is a source of our “deepest and nonrational” knowledge whose power “we have come to distrust.”⁴¹⁰ She writes: “Beyond the superficial, the considered phrase, 'It feels right to me', acknowledges the strength of the erotic into a true knowledge, for what that means is the first and most powerful guiding light toward any understanding. And understanding is a handmaiden which can only wait upon, or clarify, that knowledge, deeply born. The erotic is the nurturer or nursemaid of all our deepest knowledge.”⁴¹¹ While knowledge here is that which emerges out of feeling and is turned into an understanding of what is already known, poetry is the expression of that knowledge, the very process of its articulation; it is knowledge made into understanding. This, again, is a liberatory project, a project of resistance and empowerment in that it brings to fore and valorizes subjugated knowledge.

The erotic is very much central to Rupi Kaur's poetry in particular. It is the writing of a desiring woman, a relentless exploration of sexual agency, of eroticism as a creative project, of survival, of self-affirmation: “the very thought of you / has my legs spread apart / like an easel with a canvas / begging for art,”⁴¹² “my heart quickens at / the thought of birthing poems / which is why i will never stop / opening myself up to conceive them / the lovemaking / to the words / is so erotic / i am either in love / or in lust

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹¹ Ibid, 56.

⁴¹² Kaur, *Milk and Honey*, 57.

with / the writing / or both,”⁴¹³ “i am learning / how to love him / by loving myself”⁴¹⁴ (paired with a scribble of a masturbating woman). Her poems are unabashedly sensual. In her writing, she taps into that hidden reserve that is the erotic as a way to empower. Embracing the erotic takes place against the backdrop of rape, abuse, and trauma, which she recounts in the first part of her book. Aurora Levins Morales calls this process “reclaiming the wounded erotic.”⁴¹⁵ She writes:

Right here in our bodies, in our defense of our right to experience joy, in the refusal to abandon the place where we have been most completely invaded and colonized, in our determination to make the bombed and defoliated lands flower again and bear fruit, here where we have been most shamed is one of the most radical and sacred places from which to transform the world. To shamelessly insist that our bodies are for our own delight and connection with others clearly defies the predatory appropriations of incestuous relatives and rapists; but it also defies the poisoning of our food and water and air with chemicals that give us cancer and enrich the already obscenely wealthy, the theft of our lives in harsh labor, our bodies used up to fill bank accounts already bloated, the massive abduction of our young people to be hurled at each other as weapons for the defense and expansion of those bank accounts – all the ways in which our deep pleasure in living has been cut off so as not to interfere with the profitability of our bodies. Because the closer I come to that bright, hot center of pleasure and trust, the less I can tolerate its captivity, and the less

⁴¹³ Ibid, 200.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid, 55.

⁴¹⁵ Levins Morales, “Radical Pleasure,” 284.

afraid I am to be powerful, in a world that is in desperate need of unrepentant joy.⁴¹⁶

The sexual agency that is reclaimed in decolonial feminist poetry through the exploration of the erotic has repercussions that are more far-reaching than individual achievements of sexual pleasure, body-positivity, love, and acceptance. This poetic practice nurtures a kind of self-love that is not only empowering, but also critical, resistant, and subversive to the subjugation, abjection, and exploitation of bodies. “I am dripping melanin and honey. / I am black without apology,”⁴¹⁷ Upile Chisala writes. The embracing of the erotic, in this way, is disruptive to these interlocking systems of oppression that not only systematically drain one's life energies, but also deem one to be dispensable. The erotic, in this context, serves as an instrument for resistance. Anna Agathangelou's account of the protests and revolutions in the Middle East and North Africa traces precisely this liberatory effect of the erotic in poetics. She writes: “Emerging revolutionary sexual poetics, I argue, ride the transformative power of the erotic while resisting and interrupting tired gendered and universal portrayals of the local-feminine backward East region and masculine rational forward West-global.”⁴¹⁸ She notes that the use of poetry is a driving force for transformation. She reads these protests as “erotic insurgencies.”⁴¹⁹ The revolutionary poetics seeks to coin new language, explore new thought, and lead an affective transformation through which new sensibilities and relationalities are able to emerge. These practices involve articulations of new ways of being and relating that revolve around the celebration of life. As Todd May suggests,

⁴¹⁶ Ibid.

⁴¹⁷ Upile Chisala, *soft magic* (San Bernardino: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015).

⁴¹⁸ Anna Agathangelou, “Making Anew an Arab Regional Order? On Poetry, Sex, and Revolution,” *Globalizations* 8, no. 5 (2011): 581.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid, 588.

“[T]here can be no such thing as a sad revolutionary. To seek to change the world is to offer a new form of life-celebration.”⁴²⁰ It is at this conjunction, to celebrate life and to change the world, that the work of decolonial feminist poetry takes place.

Erotic knowing, however, is not some hedonistic exercise where the poet is simply following the pleasure principle, as it would have made to be in what Lorde calls “an exclusively european-american male tradition”⁴²¹ that relegates the erotic to the matters of sexuality. On the contrary, the poetic exploration of erotic knowledge is often times very difficult and painful, much more so than in poetry as “word play” that operates within the western masculinist framework. Lorde expresses this in the beginning of her poem “Power,” by writing:

The difference between poetry and rhetoric
is being ready to kill yourself
instead of your children.

In a social context where the children of Black women are systematically killed, poetry as “sterile word play” is complicit; it does nothing but contribute to these killings in its silence, in its failure to address. Yet the kind of poetry that Lorde calls for undertakes precisely this difficult exploration that is painful and burdensome. As Gloria Anzaldúa puts it, “‘Knowing’ is painful because after ‘it’ happens I can’t stay in the same place and be comfortable. I am no longer the same person I was before.”⁴²²

Anzaldúa’s account of her own process of writing attests to the pain involved in the articulation of erotic knowledge. She notes that she gets “physically ill” when she does not write down for a while the images that come to her, yet since some of these

⁴²⁰ Todd May, “To Change the World, To Celebrate Life,” *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, 31, no. 5/6 (2005): 529.

⁴²¹ Lorde, *Uses of the Erotic*, 59.

⁴²² Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 70.

images are linked to trauma, she gets sick when she *does* write. She states: “I can't stomach it, become nauseous, or burn with fever, worsen. But, in reconstructing the traumas behind the images, I make 'sense' of them, and once they have 'meaning' they are changed, transformed. It is then that writing heals me, brings me great joy.”⁴²³ Here, again, Anzaldúa demonstrates the process through which she brings understanding through writing to that which is already known on the level of bodily situatedness. The experience is erotic insofar as it brings healing and joy, albeit through a difficult process of articulating suffering. As a poem by Kaur's goes: “the thing about writing is / I can't tell if it's healing / or destroying me.”⁴²⁴ Decolonial feminist poetry, in this way, serves as a practice of healing, albeit not in a linear fashion, by way of starting from the colonized body. In the articulation of thought and feeling as they emerge out of that bodily situatedness, it offers an epistemological intervention, a de-centering of sedimented forms of knowing that work through affective economies.

Yet under the hegemonic epistemological framework, contrary to what Lorde suggests, it is not only that feeling is subordinated to thought indiscriminately, but also that only certain kinds of affect felt by certain subjects receive recognition. Whether or not an affect is granted epistemic legitimacy as a subjective state that is justifiably linked to a practice of knowing depends on where it fits within the affective economies that are in place. In the previous section, we have seen that the perception of young Black men as threatening and the fear that is elicited by this perception has deemed them dispensable. In this context, it is not the fear of Michael Brown or Trayvon Martin that counts in their encounter with an armed police officer or a vigilante relentlessly chasing him down, but the

⁴²³ Ibid, 92.

⁴²⁴ Kaur, *Milk and Honey*, 148.

fear of those who kill, which in turn is used to justify the killing. Only a certain kind of fear is granted recognition within the framework of an epistemology of ignorance that operates through an affective economy. In this way, decolonial feminist poetry's intervention entails problematizing this unjust asymmetry in terms of whose feelings count, what affects are granted legitimacy, and why. Nayyirah Waheed, for instance, writes: “i think one / of the most pathological / things i have ever seen / is / stabbing / someone / and / then telling them that / their / pain and anger / over being stabbed / is / making you sad. / - white guilt.”⁴²⁵

The poetry of Waheed, and others, in this way, is not only an exploration of feeling from a bodily situatedness, from the standpoint of being oppressed or marginalized. Poetry also offers a direct critique of the mechanisms through which only certain affects, as linked to larger relations of power, are heard and valorized. Poetry as an exploration of feeling then becomes a site of resistance in the insistence of these poets that their feelings are not merely irrational excess in a context where only certain kinds of feelings are seen as justifiable, but rather that they are valuable, legitimate, and lie at the heart of a decolonial feminist project.

Offering a site for an epistemological intervention, poetry also provides a space for mourning and for establishing alliances that organize around decoloniality. Mourning, in this sense, is an act of solidarity. The Nigerian poet Ijeoma Umebinyuo writes in a poem entitled “Summer of lies and blood”: “it seems the cracks / in the pavements / down in America / are revealing the bodies / of young black souls.”⁴²⁶ Similarly, Waheed writes: “have you ever / heard / a black woman weep over her skinmurdered / child. / it is the splitting of atoms. / it it billions / of / voices screaming their children's names / through /

⁴²⁵ Waheed, *Salt.*, 214.

⁴²⁶ Umebinyuo, *Questions for Ada*, 181.

her death wail. / - trayvon martin ii”⁴²⁷ Feeling, in decolonial feminist poetry, is a “feeling-with,” something that does not take place in isolation but is shared with others. Lorde writes that for women, “poetry is not a luxury. It is a vital necessity of our existence. It forms the quality of the light within which we predicate our hopes and dreams toward survival and change, first made into language, then into idea, then into more tangible action.”⁴²⁸ While these ideas that are mobilized for tangible action emerge out of “our feelings and the honest exploration of them”⁴²⁹ through poetry, this exploration that comes out of one's bodily situatedness always takes place in connection to others. Decolonial feminist poetry, in this way, is practiced not merely in order to turn inward, but to reach outward. The process of the poetic exploration of feeling involves a mindfulness that my feelings are never simply mine, but that they are shared and that they connect me to others. If in the poetic exploration, one's feelings “become sanctuaries and spawning grounds for the most radical and daring of ideas,”⁴³⁰ it is thanks to this capacity to “feel-with” that serves as a ground for the practice of solidarity.

A recent example of how poetry has become an occasion for public mourning and the practice of the feeling-with is when the following two poems were shared by thousands in the social media in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015. The first one is a poem by Warsan Shire: “later that night / I held an atlas in my lap / ran my fingers across the whole world / and whispered / where does it hurt? / it answered / everywhere / everywhere / everywhere.” The second poem is by Karuna Ezara Parikh, a blogger from India, written specifically about the trending “Pray for Paris” hashtag that was popularized on Twitter following the terror attacks:

⁴²⁷ Ibid, 211.

⁴²⁸ Lorde, “Poetry Is Not a Luxury,” 37.

⁴²⁹ Ibid.

⁴³⁰ Ibid.

It is not Paris we should pray for.
It is the world. It is a world in which Beirut,
reeling from bombings two days before Paris,
is not covered in the press.
A world in which a bomb goes off
at a funeral in Baghdad
and not one person's status update says 'Baghdad',
because not one white person died in that fire.
Pray for the world
that blames a refugee crisis for a terrorist attack.
That does not pause to differentiate between the attacker
and the person running from the very same thing you are.
Pray for a world
where people walking across countries for months,
their only belongings upon their backs,
are told they have no place to go.
Say a prayer for Paris by all means,
but pray more,
for the world that does not have a prayer
for those who no longer have a home to defend.
For a world that is falling apart in all corners,
and not simply in the towers and cafes we find so familiar.

These two poems not only offer a means for public mourning, but also problematize the selective forms in which mourning often takes place and the differential representations of life and death. Parikh's poem in particular (and Shire's as well, in the context of her larger work) raises the question whose life can be mourned, as connected to the question whose life counts and whose life is deemed valuable. The epistemology of ignorance can be seen to be at work in these practices of mourning, in that these practices take place in a racialized context. While the attacks in Lebanon, Iraq, and one may add, Pakistan, Nigeria, Libya, Egypt, and Turkey among others, neither receive as much coverage by the western media nor lead to public mourning on an international scale, these acts of public mourning are practices of solidarity. When the lives in the Third World cannot be mourned, it is because violence has become normalized and is seen as something inherent to these places. It is seen as expected and inevitable, which decontextualizes violence and the complex

histories of colonization that have led to this normalization. Decolonial feminist poets challenge this normalization and question the selective and exclusionary practices of solidarity. Upile Chisala writes: “when black blood bleeds it is minor / it is commonplace / it is expected. / so when black blood bleeds, / a system doesn't cry.”⁴³¹

Decolonial feminist poets also underscore the differential ways in which individuals and communities are tied together by suffering, as those who suffer and those who partake in the systematic infliction of suffering onto others, sometimes simultaneously by virtue of one's situatedness within global capitalism. Nayyirah Waheed, for instance, writes in a poem on decolonization: “decolonization / requires / acknowledging. / that your / needs and desires / should / never / come at the expense of another's / life energy. / it is being honest / that / you have been spoiled / by a machine / that / is not feeding you freedom / but / feeding / you / the milk of pain. / - the release.”⁴³² Rethinking solidarity within decolonial feminist poetry involves writing from a place of interdependency and interconnectedness where only a small minority has benefited from “advancement” understood in economic terms, at the expense of the majority of the world. It entails an attentiveness to the global networks of power and what ensues from their operations. In this sense, decolonial feminist poetry does not only seek to be educative, but also subversive by way of coining a new language, constructing a decolonial feminist discourse of poetry, which offers a ground for resistance and transnational alliances for solidarity.

The solidarity that decolonial feminist poetry calls for also entails rethinking difference. Insofar as poetry concerns itself with differential workings of power and the

⁴³¹ Chisala, *soft magic*.

⁴³² Waheed, *Salt.*, 84.

entanglement of the colonized body within the larger systems that are at work, it involves an exploration of difference. There is no one single colonized body or a single set of experience to which these poets speak. Solidarity is not about homogeneity, but rather about partaking in alliances across difference. Lorde notes the persisting exclusion of women of color in feminist circles in the 1970s and 1980s where the efforts for inclusion had gotten no farther than promoting *tolerance* of difference. Yet difference, Lorde asserts, “must not be merely tolerated, but seen as a fund for necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic.”⁴³³ It is the denial of difference rather than difference itself that is the cause of separation, and any feminist politics that attends to interdependency must engage difference in a meaningful way. “[I]n a profit economy which needs outsiders as surplus people,” Lorde writes, difference continues to be “misnamed and misused in the service of separation and confusion.”⁴³⁴ Poetry is a space for redefining difference, for rectifying those instances of misnaming and misuse. As the affective modes through which we relate to human difference are often laden with fear and suspicion (as I explored in the previous section), poetry offers ways to “identify and develop new definitions of power and new patterns of relating across difference.”⁴³⁵ Given that the old definitions and patterns are put to work in order to sustain a exploitative social and political system that relies on separation, poetry involves relating to difference in empowering ways that recognize our interdependency and interconnectedness. “In our world,” Lorde writes, “divide and conquer must become define and empower.”⁴³⁶

⁴³³ Audre Lorde, “The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House,” in *Sister Outsider* (Berkeley: Crossing Press, 2007), 111.

⁴³⁴ Audre Lorde, “Age, Race, Class, and Sex,” in *Sister Outsider* (Berkeley: Crossing Press, 2007), 115.

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*, 123.

⁴³⁶ Lorde, “The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House,” 112.

As the poet is the one who works with erotic knowledge, that hidden source of power within, which encompasses all that we know on a very intimate, affective level, poetry is also the means through which the old patterns of relating to difference can be transformed. Lorde writes: “*I urge each one of us here to reach down into that deep place of knowledge inside herself and touch that terror and loathing of any difference that lives there. See whose face it wears.*”⁴³⁷ More than a mere self-reflexive exercise, this is a discovery that would enable us to collectively seek better ways to relate to difference, some of which are yet to be articulated through poetry that helps fashion a language that “does not yet exist.”⁴³⁸ It is a call to recognize how one is implicated in systems of oppression, how one replicates the cruelty that she may hope to eradicate in other contexts. It is a call to attend to the complexity of the reality of oppression, wherein one may find herself in the position of both the oppressed and the oppressor simultaneously. This constitutes a starting point for establishing alliances across difference, for thinking solidarity in expansive terms.

Lorde calls feminists to “devise ways to use each others' difference to enrich our visions and our joint struggles.”⁴³⁹ Alliances across difference would be attentive to the intricate ways in which we are all linked together. For Anzaldúa, this is part of “*el conocimiento*” (spiritual knowledge) that “we're connected by invisible fibers to everyone on the planet and that each person's actions affect the rest of the world. Putting gas in our cars connects us to the Middle East. Take a shower squandering water and someone on the planet goes thirsty; waste food and someone starves to death.”⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁷ Ibid, 113. Emphasis in the original.

⁴³⁸ Lorde, “Poetry Is Not a Luxury,” 37.

⁴³⁹ Lorde, “Age, Race, Class, and Sex,” 122.

⁴⁴⁰ Anzaldúa, *Light in the Dark / Luz En Lo Oscuro*, 15.

Decolonial feminist poetry puts that spiritual knowledge into work in offering ways to organize around difference whilst exploring our inherent interconnectedness. In

“Outlines,” an unpublished poem, Lorde writes:

*We have chosen each other
and the edge of each others battles
the war is the same
if we lose
someday women's blood will congeal
upon a dead planet
if we win
there is no telling
we seek beyond history
for a new and more possible meeting⁴⁴¹*

As we have seen in the previous section, the current forms of relationality are colonized by paranoid affective economies. Lorde is particularly attentive to the ways in which these affects are promoted structurally as the mode in which one relates to difference, as it sustains the racist patriarchal structure of capitalism. The feelings of suspicion, fear, loathing, and so on, that comprise our affective relation to difference are very much systemic and linked to our epistemic practices. Decolonial feminist poetry explores the possibilities for other ways of relating and other forms of knowing that are empowering. In the works of these poets, the poetic implementation of a decolonial feminist epistemological intervention can be observed. Poetry as “a revelatory distillation of experience”⁴⁴² can potentially disrupt the affective economies around difference (the circuits of fear and suspicion) upheld by our social and economic systems.

5.3 Conclusion: Epistemological Shifts and Alternative Forms of Governance

In this chapter, I argued that the logic underlying securitization is linked to particular economies of affect and desire. I analyzed fear as an affective economy that

⁴⁴¹ Lorde, “Age, Race, Class, and Sex,” 123.

⁴⁴² Lorde, “Poetry Is Not a Luxury, 37.

operates through the codification of certain bodies as threatening. I noted that this codification is linked to an epistemology of ignorance, where misinformation passes for knowledge not only on a cognitive level of belief, but also in terms of the bodily enactment of those practices of “knowing.” I suggested that decolonial feminist poetry offers an intervention to these affective epistemic practices by rethinking difference and exploring forms of relationality that are non-hierarchical and empowering. Yet it is also necessary to reconstruct our political and economic systems to uphold and sustain these forms. An epistemological shift would only be viable when politically implemented, as is the case with coloniality as an epistemological framework that emerged out of the history of colonialism and shaped the institutions and the political commitments of the modern nation-state. This shift that I traced as put forth by decolonial feminist poets cannot be seen simply as a matter of individual enlightenment, but as a ground for liberatory political practice.

Some alternative forms of governance that have recently emerged, which stand firmly against the interlocking mechanisms of militarism, environmental destruction, and global capitalism, thereby challenging the assumed inevitability and necessity of a politics of paranoia, rely on this epistemological shift. One such example is the autonomous region of Rojava located in Northern Syria, built upon “principles of equality and environmental sustainability,” as stated in their official social contract.⁴⁴³ Rojava names the cantons Afrin, Jazira, and Kobanê, the latter only recently became known in the West as a result of being besieged by Daesh until January 2015. Often likened to the Zapatista movement, the roots of the Rojava revolution go back to *The*

⁴⁴³ “The Social Contract of Rojava Cantons in Syria.” Accessed: March 22, 2015. <https://civiroglu.net/the-constitution-of-the-rojava-cantons/>

Declaration of Democratic Confederalism crafted by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) leader Abdullah Öcalan in 2005 after his imprisonment by the Turkish state, where he calls for a “democratic confederalism of Kurdistan” which is not “a state system, but a democratic system of the people without a state.”⁴⁴⁴ Abdullah Öcalan had been leading an armed struggle against the Turkish state since 1978, but in the last decade PKK's form of struggle has shifted from guerrilla warfare to a bottom-up transformation by way of establishing, securing, and proliferating autonomous zones. Influenced by Murray Bookchin's social ecology and his position that the state always and necessarily involves hierarchy and institutionalized coercion, the Rojava revolution entails what Alexander Kolokotronis (2014) has called a no-state solution. Inasmuch as this region is referred to as Kurdistan, this movement was not organized around a single identity (as evident from the beginning words of the Rojava Charter, “We, the people of the Democratic Autonomous Regions of Afrin, Jazira and Kobanê, a confederation of Kurds, Arabs, Syriacs, Arameans, Turkmen, Armenians and Chechens, freely and solemnly declare and establish this Charter”⁴⁴⁵). It is instead fully committed to “mutual and peaceful coexistence” and “the spirit of reconciliation, pluralism and democratic participation” as sanctioned by the Charter.⁴⁴⁶ It replaces hierarchy with horizontality; exclusivism and discrimination with inclusion, pluralism, gender and racial equality; representational democracy with grassroots democracy; and environmental degradation with sustainability. As indicated in the Charter, Rojava is built as “a society free from

⁴⁴⁴ Alexander Kolokotronis, “The No State Solution: Institutionalizing Libertarian Socialism in Kurdistan,” *Kurdish Question*, February 2015. Accessed: May 24, 2016. <http://kurdishquestion.com/oldsite/index.php/kurdistan/no-state-solution-libertarian-socialism-kurdistan.html>.

⁴⁴⁵ “The Social Contract of Rojava Cantons in Syria.” Accessed: March 22, 2015. <https://civiroglu.net/the-constitution-of-the-rojava-cantons/>

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid.

authoritarianism, militarism, centralism and the intervention of religious authority in public affairs.”⁴⁴⁷ As activists from Chiapas stated at the 2005 World Social Forum in Brazil, the attempt to combat militarism with more militarism was futile as the state always had more guns.⁴⁴⁸ Hence it is not *conflict* that drives movements like that of Zapatistas' and the Rojava revolution, but rather the collective practice of world-building, which Hannah Arendt understood to be the work of freedom. As Andrea Smith writes about projects of decolonization in Latin America: “The principle undergirding these models is to challenge capital and state power by actually creating the world we want to live in now. These groups develop alternative governance systems based on principles of horizontality, mutuality, and interrelatedness, rather than hierarchy, domination, and control.”⁴⁴⁹ In building alternative forms of governance from the ground up, these movements offer strong alternatives to the models of liberal democracy and capitalism that work in tandem with military control in today's world, and thereby challenge the very logic of a politics of paranoia premised on control, securitization, preemptive violence, and hostility toward difference.

The pluralistic mode in which movements like this operate is on an altogether different register than “the tolerance of cultural diversity” that “has become a 'politically correct' value in Empire, but only in the sense that diversity is useful for the reproduction of capital.”⁴⁵⁰ The commitment to pluralism in these movements does not involve an instrumentalization of diversity for the sake of profit or development, but instead takes it as valuable and desirable in itself. It echoes, in this sense, what José Medina calls a

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁸ Andrea Smith, “Unsettling the Privilege of Self-Reflexivity” in *Geographies of Privilege* ed. France Winddance Twine and Bradley Gardener (New York and London: Routledge, 2013), 276.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid, 275.

⁴⁵⁰ Santiago Castro-Gómez, “The Missing Chapter of Empire: Postmodern reorganization of coloniality and post-Fordist capitalism,” *Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2&3 (2007): 441.

kaleidoscopic social sensibility: “We need to move toward a kaleidoscopic (rather than merely dual) perspective on racialized identities...what is needed is a *kaleidoscopic consciousness* that remains forever open to being expanded, that is, a subjectivity that is always open to acknowledge and engage new perspectives.”⁴⁵¹ Diversity, in this way, is not blindly celebrated against the background of war, incarceration, and poverty. Intersectional and rooted in the particularity of a context, the epistemological shift performed in decolonial feminist poetry gives rise to new kinds of political rationality and governance that provide alternatives to the paranoiac model that is bound up with global capitalism today.

⁴⁵¹ José Medina, *The Epistemology of Resistance: Gender and Racial Oppression, Epistemic Injustice, and Resistant Imaginations* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 224.

CONCLUSION

RESISTANT IMAGINATIONS AND TRANSNATIONAL COALITIONS

In *The Epistemology of Resistance*, José Medina calls for a *resistant imagination*, which is “ready to confront relational possibilities that have been lost, ignored, or that remain to be discovered or invented.”⁴⁵² Throughout this dissertation, I have argued that the politics of paranoia, operative in the practices around securitization, serves to infiltrate the social imaginary by insisting on the necessity and inevitability of a response of violence. Normalization (and glorification) of violence in this way requires resistant imaginations that are critical, that can envision other possibilities and bring them to fruition through a collective work of building the world anew. Even though this collective work often begins in the local in response to the injustices that affect a particular community, I contend that there is a need to draw connections with other localized struggles for building transnational coalitions. Attending to the links between these struggles, the local can thereby be connected to the global. As we have seen, the politics of paranoia operates across borders and within an established biopolitical order on a global scale. Resistance too, therefore, must move beyond the confines of a claimed territory.

Intersectionality, which within feminist theory and praxis describes the simultaneous operations of different aspects of identity, provides a relevant methodological framework here for thinking resistance in terms of transnational coalitions. Intersectionality understood not simply in terms of the intersectionality of identities, but as Angela Davis puts it, as the “intersectionality of struggles”⁴⁵³ offers a

⁴⁵² Medina, *The Epistemology of Resistance*, 299.

⁴⁵³ Davis, *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle*, 144.

tool for imagining these coalitions. The struggles that situate themselves against the workings of a politics of paranoia are interconnected insofar as these differential workings are bound up together, both conceptually and in terms of their material conditions. Securitization denotes a global network of power relations, where the Israeli police train the U.S. police on counterterrorism and crowd control,⁴⁵⁴ where the gas canisters produced by the U.S.-based company Combined Systems, Incorporated are used in Egypt, Tunisia,⁴⁵⁵ Palestine, and Ferguson to quell protests,⁴⁵⁶ where the U.S. condemns the suppression of democratic dissent in Peru and Algeria to which it continues to export arms that are used precisely for these purposes.⁴⁵⁷ It is these connections and the kinds of solidarity that can emerge in response to them that I would like to highlight here in my conclusion of this analysis that I have given of the politics of paranoia.

While I have not undertaken a project of reconstruction in this dissertation, I offer my analysis as a possible starting point for thinking about coalition building around the issues that emerge out of the context in which securitization has become globalized. The work of critique, according to Foucault, involves “a historical investigation into the events that have led us to constitute ourselves and to recognize ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying.”⁴⁵⁸ Yet this historical investigation is not undertaken simply for its own sake. Its primary purpose is to “separate out, from the contingency that has made us what we are, the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we

⁴⁵⁴ Gardner, Justin. “U.S. Police Routinely Travel to Israel to Learn Methods of Brutality and Repression,” *The Free Thought Project* August 30, 2015. Accessed: July 14, 2016.

⁴⁵⁵ <http://thefreethoughtproject.com/u-s-police-routinely-travel-israel-learn-methods-brutality-repression/>
⁴⁵⁶ <http://www.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/01/28/egypt.us.tear.gas/>

⁴⁵⁶ Angela Davis writes: “When Palestinian activists noticed these canisters in Ferguson, what they did was to tweet advice to Ferguson protesters on how to deal with the tear gas” (*Freedom Is a Constant Struggle*, 140).

⁴⁵⁷ Zach Toombs and R. Jeffrey Smith, “Why Is the U.S. Selling Billions in Weapons to Autocrats?,” *Foreign Policy* June 21, 2012. Accessed: July 14, 2016. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/06/21/why-is-the-u-s-selling-billions-in-weapons-to-autocrats/>

⁴⁵⁸ Foucault, “What is Enlightenment?,” 46.

are, do, or think.”⁴⁵⁹ Critique, therefore, names an endeavor that seeks transformation by opening up a critical space for resistance. The critical space that I have attempted to open up here is one that is attentive to the connections between different practices, connections that become manifest when studying the political rationality that is at work in these practices. A genealogy of the nation-state that I trace in the first chapter shows that the detention of Japanese Americans during World War II, the arbitrary deportations of Muslim men in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, the contemporary political discourse around border security both in the United States and in Europe are tied by virtue of a logic of expulsion that is at work in these practices, despite the fact that each of these examples involve a complex, specific history of racism that may not be collapsed into one another. Similarly, in the third chapter, I have shown some ways in which the national masculine identity is consolidated through racialization in different cultural contexts, which is suggestive of a transnational import of vindictive masculinity within the context of global militarization. These connections, I suggest, offer a way to think about possible coalitions that may organize around these issues and situate themselves against the operations of a politics of paranoia.

In the context of Oregon where I currently live, some examples that come to mind include groups like Cascadia-Rojava Solidarity Network and Cascadian Friends of Cuba and Venezuela, both of which are online communities that are devoted to sharing information and having discussions about the practice of solidarity and possible courses of action. Cascadian Friends of Cuba and Venezuela, for instance, define themselves as “[a] group for residents of the Cascadian region to learn about and discuss the ongoing people's revolutions in Cuba and Venezuela, as well as to discuss ways of showing

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

solidarity and opposing the U.S. government's attempts at subverting the people's movements in these countries. It is also hoped that through studying the left-wing movements of Cuba, Venezuela, and other parts of the Americas we can learn how to better create radical change here in Cascadia. ¡El proceso va pa'lante!"⁴⁶⁰ As power operates across borders, movements of resistance follow suit.

Given that the operations of the politics of paranoia take place both on a national and a transnational level, the response must be both situated locally and connected globally. Chandra Talpade Mohanty writes:

In fundamental ways, it is girls and women around the world, especially in the Third World/South, that bear the brunt of globalization. Poor women and girls are the hardest hit by the degradation of environmental conditions, wars, famines, privatization of services and de-regulation of governments, the dismantling of welfare states, the restructuring of paid and unpaid work, increasing surveillance and incarceration in prisons, and so on. And this is why a feminism without and beyond borders is necessary to address the injustices of global capitalism.⁴⁶¹

In a similar vein, I suggest that decolonial feminism provides a common ground for organizing against the operations of a politics of paranoia: not because the effects of these practices are felt the most by women in the Global South, but because the politics of paranoia involves an enmeshment of race and gender, whereby the processes of racialization coincide with that of gendering, both of which take place simultaneously within a racist, masculinist framework. Attending to these connections provides a broader

⁴⁶⁰ Source: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/891434874238823/>

⁴⁶¹ Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes' Revisited: Feminist Solidarity Through Anti-Capitalist Struggles," *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003), 514.

scope that could account for the ways in which different oppressions and the struggles against them interlock.

The practices around securitization, I have argued, are very much marked by the legacies of colonialism. As global capitalism denotes the political and economic system built upon a colonial history, a system which has replaced colonial institutions whilst continuing the exploitation of the Global South, decolonial struggles are necessarily anti-capitalist. As militarization is tied to both global capitalism and a biopolitical order that renders racialized populations as dispensable, it also operates in conjunction with kinds of masculinity that consolidate the identity of a nation. These links are suggestive of a need for a decolonial feminist framework in both understanding and combating against these practices, and the National Security Council of Egypt's recent proclamation, in particular, that unmarried women constitute a national security threat attests to the growing importance of approaching securitization from a critical decolonial feminist lens.

It would, therefore, be worthwhile to explore, in a future work, the connections between various decolonial feminist struggles (i.e. what Mohanty has called Third World feminisms) and how these connections lay out a possible common ground for establishing alliances that are situated against the operations of the politics of paranoia. While each of these categories are tied to multiple movements that organize themselves around different issues, there is much to be learned, I think, within that multiplicity, by way of a simultaneous engagement of these struggles as they crisscross. Exploring these connections would serve to inspire resistant imaginations to discover and invent new ways of relating across difference in the practice of building coalitions. As Gloria Anzaldúa states, “Nothing happens in the 'real' world unless it first happens in the images

in our heads.”⁴⁶²

⁴⁶² Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 109.

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