

Bodies of Terror/Terrorizing Bodies

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## Abstract

### Bodies of Terror/Terrorizing Bodies

Chris Gutierrez

*Bodies of Terror/Terrorizing Bodies* is an examination of the biopolitical manifestations of the global military and security operations that have taken place under the conditions set forth by the War on Terror. By tracing the discursive movements that place the body at the locus of the ongoing War on Terror, this project aims to uncover the alignment of several power operations directed at the flesh of those individuals at the center of, and on the peripheries of, this war. Through a reading of several historical sites and present day occurrences from within the discourse of the War on Terror, including images available from popular culture, the torture photographs from Abu Ghraib, and political arguments presented within the popular press, this thesis aims to answer four simple questions. Firstly, how did the body become the central site of power operations within the War on Terror? Secondly, to what extent are the biopolitics of the War on Terror related to other discourses of the body, and even more particularly, how are dominant notions of masculine, white heterosexuality revealed within the War on Terror? Thirdly, what are the implications of the actualization of these biopolitics on the lives of individuals who may, or may not be, the targets of the War on Terror? And finally, what avenues for resistance, and what new assemblages, are opened up to bodies and individuals through the corporeal discourse of the War on Terror?

## **Dedication**

First and foremost, I need to thank Chantal Nadeau for her hard work, support and enthusiasm for this project. Her tough questions, careful readings, and well warranted criticisms were exactly what I needed to complete this work and I consider myself to be incredibly fortunate in all of the insight and guidance I have received as her student. I also want to thank Marcie Frank and Maurice Charland for making time for me and for working me into their already very busy schedules. Marcie, in particular has gone out of her way to accommodate me, and has been far too kind in her help and future advice.

I need to thank my parents, Ken and Pat Gutierrez, for their support (both financial and emotional) and their enduring patience. Without their willing acceptance of the things I needed to do to work on this project, and without their constant support (all sarcasm not withstanding) I never would have been able to complete this project. I want to thank Jaime Schachar for always pushing me to work on new things and to extend myself further than I feel comfortable. These pushes (along with the constant reassurance and support that came with them) made it possible for me to even pursue this degree and this life.

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## **Introduction**

### **Private Desires and Public Dreams**

*Planes going into buildings.*

*Planes going into buildings.*

*Bodies falling...*

*...They thought there would be thousands of injured people. Unconscious people. People without memories. They thought there would be thousands of bodies.*

*- Jonathan Safran Foer, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close**

I was going to bed early on the morning (or late in the evening) on July 7<sup>th</sup> when several bombs went off across the London transit system. The initial reporting was much like that following the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, there were stories of upwards of 9 bombs being detonated, there were stories that claimed that the explosions had been an accident – a simple electric surge that shot through the subway system – there were images of people running, of bloodied hands and faces, of police officers and firefighters. The scene was eerily familiar to ones that we have seen unfolding several times in the past few years. The location was always different; London, Dar-Es-Salaam, Jerusalem, Madrid, Bali, Baghdad, Jakarta, New York, Washington, Kabul, Istanbul, Riyadh, Beirut, Tel Aviv, Sharm-El-Sheik, Nairobi; but the story was always the same. People were dead, people were hurt; families, friends and countries were all wounded; more than these losses though, confusion, panic, anger and terror rose above all and defined these experiences.

You cannot count the number of people who have died in these attacks, and if you tried, you would never successfully feel the loss of all these lives. How many strangers die before you cry? Before you feel a loss? Before you worry about your own life and your own loved ones? And how close do they have to be to feel these sentiments? How much do they have to look like you? How familiar does the target, the city, or even the country have to be before you know this pain; next door, down the street, in the same city, country, the same continent, the same world? Is empathy even an appropriate response to these attacks or should one feel anger? Sorrow? Despair? Where should you turn to find answers? Are there even answers to look for? Does it even matter how you go about making yourself feel better?



I wasn't feeling anger or sorrow while I watched the London attacks unfold, nor did I feel these things after September 11<sup>th</sup> or the Bali bombings. Each of these moments directed my mind (and every witness's mind) in different ways. After Bali, I felt worried about a trip I had just returned from in South East Asia and even more worried about a trip I had planned to Indonesia the next summer. I wondered if Sumatra was far enough away, different enough, to be safe from the violence that had erupted in Bali. I wondered if the rebels in Aceh (who, until a Tsunami crushed their resistance, had been quietly fighting a war of independence against the Indonesia Government) would be inspired by these attacks, or if I would be as safe there as I had been in Malaysia and Thailand just a few months ago. After September 11<sup>th</sup>, I felt excited and optimistic. No matter how many times I write this down, it feels cruel, but still it was what I felt as I spent days watching planes crash into buildings, buildings collapsing over and over again, and people mourning on every channel. I know now that I was not alone in thinking that September 11<sup>th</sup> was a hopeful moment, that I wasn't alone in thinking that it would open a space for meaningful and important dialogue that the world (and the North American world in particular) had been neglecting for far too long. I recognize the moral problems of feeling hope in the death of others, a feeling I never planned on having or knew could grow inside of me, but I still balance this feeling with a recognition that somewhere I hoped that those that had died on that clear September morning could be a symbol for change, a symbol for a new and better world unfolding, and a symbol that could live up to the infinite good of each of those lost lives. Rowan Williams, the recently appointed Archbishop of Canterbury, summed up this speculative and delicate hope in the face of trauma when he wrote that, "...trauma can offer a breathing space; and in that space there

is the possibility of recognizing that we have had an experience that is not just a nightmarish insult to *us* but a door into the suffering of countless other innocents.” (Williams, 2002, p. 67). Years later, it is clear September 11<sup>th</sup> came in just this form, as a space to take a breath and see what is around us, but simultaneously as a space that invited us to seek vengeance and seek the suffering of other innocents. Still, I was hopeful that this open space would be a productive one; a space that would make things better.

Ultimately though, it was nothing more than an empty space, one that was filled with old discourses, old fears, but new bloodshed. It was with these new developments that I knew my initial hope was wrong, and in the weeks following this empty space, I mourned those strangers more than I ever could have in the hours immediately after the attacks. In my naïve hope, there was a history I was missing; a long series of conjunctures and connections which, while they certainly didn’t determine the events to come, undeniably played a part in them.

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### **Interlude 1: Private Desires**

At the core of this research there are two central themes: the mechanisms of biopolitical and sovereign power and the moments and discourses that at once represent and enable the collusion of these two forces. To this end, this research works to identify explicit moments when these powers meet head on, and when, rather than presenting the triumph of one power over another, these moments show two systems of power overlapping and collapsing at their absolute limits. These moments, as subtle and fragile as they are, are understood as unknowable signs; as vacuous spaces that challenge and

confront their audiences, and as spaces that, in turn, guarantee a reconfiguration of power.

Before we can address the moments where these two powers meet though, it is important to retrace the supposedly binary development of these powers, their unique limits and mechanisms, and their relationship to our primary site of investigation – the body. From here then, we must begin by considering the relationship of biopolitical and sovereign power to the body, these relationships that define the epistemological base for critical discourses of human/subject/flesh, and these relationships which find their roots centuries ago, in a time when blood was the medium through which all power spoke.

For centuries, the most basic, the crudest and most rudimentary commodity of power was located in the exchange of blood. Monarchs were granted privilege and position, status and standing, through their inherited blood; aristocrats passed title and land to their descendents through blood. These were not simple familial relations, as Anne Norton explains, “Traditional authority is based not on kinship alone but on bloodlines, bloodties.” (Norton, 2002, p.44). To be included in another of society’s crudest and most basic denominators, the family, could not in itself guarantee the extension of privilege. Rather, it was blood and blood alone that granted succession and in this sense, power flowed simultaneously through both one’s own blood and the spilled blood of another.

In writing on the sovereign’s right to decide life and death, Foucault noted that this power manifested itself almost entirely through death, explaining that, “The sovereign exercised his right to life only by exercising his right to kill, or by refraining from killing; he evidenced his power over life only through the death he was capable of

requiring.” (Foucault, 1990, p.136). This right to death was the locus of power for the sovereign. The power to spill blood was legitimized through his own blood, and a claim to authority arose simultaneously through his blood and the blood of others.

But, it is important to remember that Foucault spoke of the right to decide *life and death* which was granted to the sovereign. Through revolutions, resistances, and repeated engagements, the power of the sovereign to kill dwindled, and conversely, the power to administer life was born. Power was reframed then, stepping away from the right to suppress and limit and focusing instead on the right to create and construct. This, for Foucault, marks the shift from a society of blood to a society of sexuality. This new society of sexuality is one where power is, “...addressed to the body, to life, to what causes it to proliferate...” (1990, p.147). Rather than running through blood then, power is reconstituted through sexuality and becomes focused on productive maneuvers. That is, power is enabled through its ability to construct life, rather than through its ability to take it.



One of the most moving representations of this power is found in Gustave Courbet's 1866 painting, 'L'Origine du Monde'. Coming less than a hundred years after

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<sup>1</sup> From: <http://www.artchive.com/artchive/C/courbet/origin.jpg.html>

the French Revolution and the beheading of Louis the XVI, Courbet's work is a chilling foreshadow of the developing mechanisms of power. Through this piece, we are given all power to create through the body, or even more specifically, through the genitals. The headless and fragmented female naked body in the painting *is* the origin of the world - through it all life and all movement are created - but the headless body is still just that, a beheaded one. Without her head, this body, like that of the disposed king, is devoid of power. The power that is evident in Courbet's painting is not *in* the body, but rather is written *on* the body. The openness of this body is the focus of the viewer's gaze; it is the observer, not the woman, who gains power in this operation of excess. Her openness compels the gaze, and compels an ordering of her body. The power made explicit in 'L'Origine du Monde' is the power of a society with a sexuality, it is, "...a power bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them..." (1990, p.147).

The transition from a society of blood to a society with a sexuality is marked on this body. Without her head, she echoes back to the fallen sovereign and the disposition of power in blood; with her genitals she opens her body as the site of contention for a power in sexuality. And with our gaze, the operations of power of a society with a sexuality are mapped on her. Her openness invites ordering. Her excess compels discourse, and this discourse reconstitutes her body. Her body becomes a site of construction whereby meaning is imbued on her. Besides this though, she is at once a site of construction and a site of meaning; discourse is built on her and deployed through her. To this end, the body in Courbet's painting resembles a structure akin to a monument, a government building or a temple. Both her body and these structures are built out of symbolic value, and both recast this value through their presence. We can read Courbet's

body as a temple built for the power operations of a society with a sexuality, because it (literally) embodies these power operations and (figuratively) confirms their right over a subject's flesh.

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All of these stories make up but a tiny portion of the discourse enveloping politics today. Terrorism and counter-terrorism, globalization and anti-globalization, security states and rogue nations, Islam and the West, tyranny and freedom, good and evil, life and death; these are but a few of the nodal points that solidify and perpetuate a peculiar vision of politics today; a vision that is ever tightening the accepted limits of thought and action and a vision that is drawing the lines of tolerance not just on global politics but on national and local politics as well.

These changes, both in my own life and in the lives I watched end on live television and in newspaper pictures are exactly what jarred me into this particular research project. Without breaking off into an unapologetic autobiography here, and without risking further over-dramatization of my own experiences through the last few years, I would rather end this line of thought by only reminding myself, if no one else, that this research has been simultaneously an intensely personal and totally foreign process; a balancing act of voyeurism and lived experiences; and a balancing act between the actual and the phantasmic.

I would like to think of this whole project in just those terms; somewhere between the actual and the phantasmic, between the reality and the representation, and between the real lives lived and the stories, images and snapshots of life that we digest everyday. I am thinking of the tension that exists between the discourse and the moment, between the

event and its aftermath, or even more particularly between the narratives we hear and the lives behind them. These tensions play themselves out in this thesis in several ways, at the most grandiose, these are the tensions between Media Studies and Philosophy, between the image and the audience and between the flesh and the body. More finely tuned though, these tensions emerge in the difference between real torture and simulated torture, between the human and the subject, and between the state and its people.

The most direct entry into all of these delicate balancing acts that I could ever discover always came in the form of graphic images of war and torture. Sometimes jokes and sometimes deadly serious, these images constantly blurred the lines between several different stories of today's ongoing War on Terror.

The challenge within these images lies directly within their own claim to authenticity. Susan Sontag grabs onto this claim to authenticity by reminding us that, "Something becomes real – to those who are elsewhere, following it as 'news' – by being photographed." (Sontag, 2003, p.21) and in this sense, photographs are meant to speak the truth, to objectively capture a moment, and to transmit this moment to another audience. The realness of these images relies on a long discursive history that understands not just the photographer, but the camera in and of itself, as being capable of detached and objective witnessing. Today's news then, meant to be an objective and truthful source of information for the population, is built along this very understanding. By providing the absolute truth of a moment (the camera doesn't lie, after all), the camera at once creates and legitimizes this claim to truthfulness. While this understanding proves problematic in the light of many factors, from the unique political-economic situations of the major news agencies to the always present insertion of military and governmental

ensorship, it is still a discourse which masks the challenges of photojournalism because, “...the seeming transparency of photographic technologies legitimizes claims of the real in ways that ignore how racial and gendered categories are encoded within these visual perspectives.” (Kozol, 2004, p.5). The reality available to us in photographs isn’t a strictly real one, rather it is a long equation of symbols and signs, each left open for us to unpack and decode. This operation is one we are all too familiar with: seeing violence, making sense of lives lost and blood shed, gaining some weak understanding of foreign (or domestic) events and moving forward with our own ideas and a reconfirmed understanding of reality. But, on top of the daily event of learning about the world through images that we believe (or maybe just hope or better yet don’t really hope) are real, is an ongoing reflection and reconfiguration of these events through our own reality. On top of pain there is imagined pain, on top of the nation there is an imagined nation, on top of people there are an imagined people, and on top of the enemy there is an imagined enemy.

More than the reality of these events, it was these imaginations that piqued my interest in this research.

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## **Interlude 2: Public Dreams**

Courbet’s headless body is a symbol that can only be extended so far. Her’s is a body that is alone, existing only within the realm of the painter and herself, a body that – as malleable and open as it is – is only malleable and open in a private sphere.

Other bodies are public domain though; these are the bodies that are explicitly and intrinsically meant to be displayed. These are the bodies that are meant to tell us



something more than the colour and smell of the flesh, more than desire, and something more than the ultimate insides of us all. These bodies speak to politics in an entirely different way than 'L'Origine du Monde' does.



While both are obviously political, these public bodies are explicit in their politics; they wear their politics on their skin. There is still desire in these photos, just as there is intimacy and flesh, but here the desire extends outside of one body and is instead meant to be symbolic of the desires of a nation, of a people and of a population.

This isn't to say that death is always the desire of a nation (and certainly not a desire of all of a people) but rather is here to take note that death is a desire marked by national and international dreams. Just as Courbet's body opened the flesh to power, so too are these bodies open – here in the most visceral sense – to power. In this sense, these are again operations of double articulation where power is conceived of in its most blunt form, literally as the bullet that penetrates the flesh, but where power is simultaneously

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<sup>2</sup> From: <http://www.nowthatsfuckedup.com/bbs/ftopic24985.html>

<sup>3</sup> From: <http://www.thenausea.com/elements/usa/iraq%202004/08/mujahideen/mujahideen.htm>

imposed as a disciplinary technology on the audience<sup>4</sup>. War propaganda at its best, these images operate as warnings to the flesh, and expose the desire to root out and destroy the bodies that cannot, or will not, fit into an essential order. These are national and imperial dreams; dreams of conquest, of hegemony, and of homogenization.

But what do these bodies and Courbet's body have in common? Or more importantly, how do they differ from one another? Both are open symbols, both are malleable and speak to a multitude of potential readings, both are representative of power – but these are two very different powers. Each is, of course, a power of the body, but the means are different and the ends are different. The question at the very core of this research then, is not what these bodies mean, but how they speak to each other. How does the object of desire become entangled in the enemy? How does the enemy present itself as such? And how does victory show itself in these images?

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Between the reality and the representation of all of these events, exactly where the imagined takes over for the actual, is a point where discursive power is aligned. That is, more so than the actual event, our *understanding* of the event is guided by the discourse that surrounds it. This research hones in on just this space, one between the soft and the hard, and instead of looking for answers to the questions that surround issues such as political violence, international warfare, sexuality and citizenship, it places an emphasis on the construction and structures of knowledge that surround these issues.

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<sup>4</sup> There is no better analogy for this disciplinary power than the one offered by a member of the website, [www.nowthatsfuckedup.com](http://www.nowthatsfuckedup.com) from which this image came, who argued that everyone should view these graphic images because, "I've seen state sponsored movies with heads ending up like that just from not wearing a seatbelt. Now I always wear a seatbelt. If *they* or whoever controls what **they** see, showed these pictures to **them**, then **they** wouldn't run checkpoints, would **they**?" (<http://www.nowthatsfuckedup.com/bbs/sutra657556.html&highlight=>)

This decision was at once theoretical and pragmatic. On top of this particular theoretical standpoint, there was the equally challenging fact that very few images of bodies and people, and of the death and pain that one can only imagine goes alongside a global conflict, ever managed to enter the mainstream Western press. The literal erasure of death from this conflict proves to be both morally problematic and intellectually challenging, as Norris explains, “When censorship reduces the dead to phantoms of speculation they stop being evidence (in empirical language) capable of serving as the locus of ethical debate and are merely figures impossible to verify and locate and therefore incapable of serving in any intellectual operation...” (Norris, 1995, p.290). Lacking in the types of images that many thought marred earlier conflicts such as the United States’ efforts in Vietnam<sup>5</sup>, the few images that seemed to regularly circulate the West came in an entirely different and new format. These new circulation routes, provided through email accounts, internet sites and independent blogs, opened up not just a different understanding of the reality of the War on Terror, but also made visible new ways of imagining this conflict.

It seems fitting then that the earliest images to produce any noticeable shock waves within the mainstream press came not in the now heavily censored forms of photojournalism that had been the hallmark of earlier conflicts, but rather were images leaked from the soldier’s own digital cameras. The torture images produced at Abu Ghraib prison are still today, well over a year after they were first leaked, the dominant images available from the War on Terror and more particularly the current conflict in Iraq. These images were immediately recognizable as a counter-narrative to the official story that military and government officials were working tirelessly to weave together,

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<sup>5</sup> Pultz, 1995, p.116

and maybe even more importantly, they were pointed notices of another node of power that had somehow seeped into the discourse of the War on Terror. A node that stood simultaneously alongside the stories we had all heard before: freedom, security, war and terror had all suddenly become visible in operations of sex.

When I first saw the images produced at Abu Ghraib, I remember quickly being reminded of something that I had seen months earlier, an image that was meant to be a joke but never struck me as particularly amusing, and an image that seemed then to be nothing more than graphic foreshadowing for the events that transpired in that Iraqi prison.



Side by side, these images tell two very different stories about the War on Terror, one imagined and one that is sadly meant to be reality. Of course, I recognized that the infusing of rape and sex into war was far from a historic anomaly, but there was something striking and unique about these two images put together that spurred me into this research. I can't claim to offer any insight into why soldiers rape their enemies, or

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<sup>6</sup> From: <http://www.antiwar.com/news/?articleid=2444>

<sup>7</sup> From: <http://pearyhenson.org/you-got-mail>

why sex plays such an integral role in how we understand violence and especially national and international violence. The list of incidents that I would have to consider for such a journey would be too long to compile in an entire book let alone in a graduate thesis, so instead of trying to work my way through the larger questions, I decided to start with something smaller. Why, I wondered, had sex and sexuality become an appropriate marker for how we understand our current ‘enemy’? And how did this understanding play itself out within the larger power dynamics of the War on Terror, a set of dynamics that seemed to be ever shaping global and local politics at once, and a set of dynamics that seemed to always find its locus within the flesh.

These two questions guided much of my inquiry into this particular topic. I was motivated by trying to connect several discursively linked nodal points that all placed the body and sexuality at the front of the War on Terror, but also by other nodal points that shaped our current understanding of the body within the nation, and the body within an ‘increasingly globalized’ world. To this end, I had to begin this research at the very beginning, by making sense of the particular positioning of the body in politics and political thought, and by tracing a line of development for our current understanding of the body.

Chapter 1 (*Generalissimo Francisco Franco is still dead: On the Limits of Bio and Sovereign Power*) then, takes on several different moments from a broad range of historical periods (the Holocaust, the death of Francisco Franco, and the creation of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights) and considers all of these moments as markers that enabled the construction of a particular understanding of the body. Throughout this chapter, taking off exactly where our last interlude ended, the body is

considered in relation to two particular notions of power developed by Foucault - sovereign power and biopower - that each imply a unique relationship between power and the flesh. The ultimate goal of this chapter is to break from a binary understanding of these two powers and rather consider how these two separate entities have come to exist alongside on another today, and to consider how this alignment influences the operation of the War on Terror.

Chapter 2 (*Temples, Planes, Bombs, Torture. Terrorists, Monsters, Fags and Real Men. Ambiguity and Excess in the War on Terror*) builds on top of the theoretical connections made in Chapter 1 and works to move this understanding into the current configurations of the War on Terror. By looking at several unique images and instances produced within the discursive alignment of the War on Terror through the last few years, this chapter hones in on the alignment between the enemy and a peculiar understanding of sexuality, and between the challenging ramifications of this alignment. While this chapter is centered on a collection of images that deal explicitly with 'foreign' figures and events, a large emphasis is placed on the 'local' discourses that are at once a part of the production of this knowledge and simultaneously the targets of these 'foreign' attacks.

Finally, Chapter 3 (*Becoming a Body of Terror! Or You Don't Have to be a Suicide Bomber in a Liberal Democracy, but Maybe You Should be One!*) works to open a space for future political action and resistance from within the tightening discursive control of the War on Terror. By honing in on the connections between state power, sexuality, national sovereignty and identity politics, this chapter works to consider what avenues for meaningful political thought and action have been opened by the War on

Terror, what ones have been closed down, and figures to look for as potential sites of resistance.

Before we can consider all of these things though, we must retrace the body and its unique construction and entrance into today's politics, and for this, we must go backwards and reconsider a moment that Foucault marked as "...a minor but joyous event [that] symbolizes the clash between two systems of power: that of sovereignty over death, and that of the regularization of life." (Foucault, 2003, p.249). We must go back to the death of Generalissimo Francisco Franco.

## **Chapter 1**

### ***Generalissimo Francisco Franco is still dead:* **On the Limits of Bio and Sovereign Power****



This chapter begins exactly where our earlier interludes trailed off. The ever pressing question of how different, individual bodies address one another, and furthermore how they address the population at large is still hanging in the air, and to answer this question we must return to a particular notion of double articulation that is present in Courbet's 'L'Origine du Monde'. As a sense of double articulation that mixes form and substance, Courbet's body (when placed beside the public corpses presented earlier) points to a particular mechanism which makes visible a horizon of flesh. That is, these private/public bodies, by being broken down from subject to flesh, create a space where isomorphic bodies can emerge – giving birth to the idealized citizens and essentialist standpoints from which to understand *all* bodies<sup>8</sup>.

Courbet's body is still the important figure here, because on top of the movement evidenced in this body, from a society of blood to a society with a sexuality this body also opens up the body as a space for double articulation. The body becomes a site of construction in an operation that Deleuze and Guattari explain as being one in which, "The first articulation chooses or deducts, from unstable particle-flows, metastable molecular or quasi-molecular units (*substances*) upon which it imposes a statistical order of connections and successions (*forms*)." (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.40). Here then, the body and its most basic substances (hips, skin, face, genitals...) becomes the site that imposes order onto all-bodies through a recognition of their inherent forms. At the same time though, these forms are implicit in our understanding of the body's substance, and, "This second articulation establishes functional, compact, stable structures (*forms*), and

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<sup>8</sup> It is interesting here to note the connection between the body, the flesh and finally the corpse. The tension between Courbet's body and the corpses I presented in the introduction arise through a type of Cartesian split of the body. That is, this tension is only present when one considers the body/corpse as separate and distinct from the self. Without this split, it seems clear that power can operate at once through a body and a corpse – through the self and the live/dead flesh.

constructs the molar compounds in which these structures are simultaneously actualized (*substances*). (1987, p.41). In this movement, the body's form tells us about its structures; the categories through which we construct the body imbue its most basic structures with meaning. It is in this sense that Courbet's body is at once able to embody the power operations of a society with a sexuality and simultaneously confirm the existence of this power over all bodies. By building up Courbet's body through her most basic substances (her genitals, her missing head) we are able to understand the formation of all bodies in this new society, and by reducing this universal form back onto her body, we are able to take note of all bodies most basic substances.

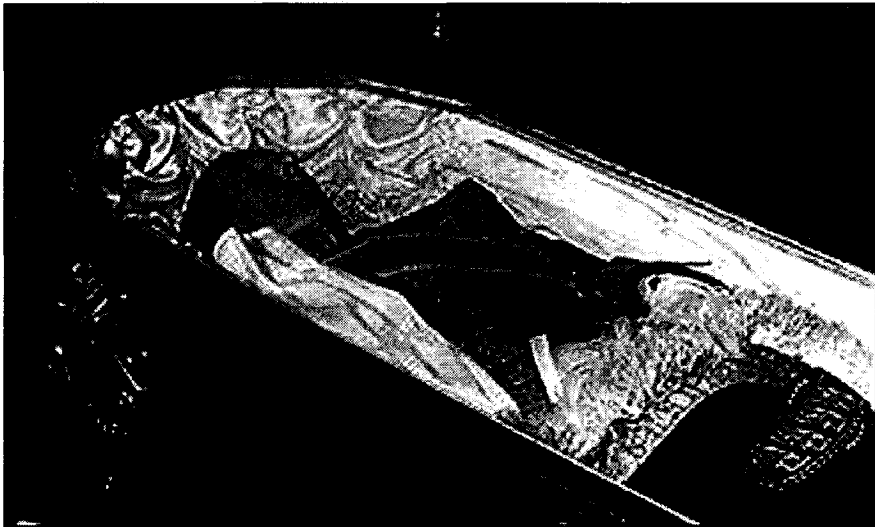
This sense of double articulation creates a space whereby bodies can be classified, controlled and understood against larger backdrop of the entire population. To this end, it is able to construct both normalized and abhorrent bodies by imposing substance onto form, and by reducing form to substance. The body then, as a site of double articulation where form and substance imbue one another with meaning, makes visible the two poles on which biopolitics are built: the body and the population. Each understood as organic compounds, the body (the *individual* body) and the population (the *social* body) are then placed under disciplinary technologies that are each directed towards the most basic of power operations, life and death. Foucault recognizes the biological nature of these techniques and explains that, "Both technologies are obviously technologies of the body, but one is a technology in which the body is individualized as an organism endowed with capacities, while the other is a technology in which bodies are replaced by general biological processes." (Foucault, 2003, p.249). The issue at hand then is how these two powers can act concurrently, that is, the concern here is to make sense of how a society

with a sexuality, marked by technologies addressed to the social body, can exert power on individual bodies. These concerns point to one of the obvious issues that is present in the shift from a society of blood to a society with a sexuality, which is localized in the abhorrent and individual bodies that fail to cross-over to this new society. These bodies, that cannot or will not fit within the forms and substances imposed by the society with a sexuality become throwbacks to the society of blood; because they cannot or will not work within the mechanism of power available to the society with a sexuality, it follows that they exist still within a realm of blood.

Foucault's shift, at first glance, appears to be rudimentary and binary under this light. As though the emergence of a society with a sexuality ruled out all possible displays of power through blood, and as if these two societies could only exist on mutually exhaustive terms. Giorgio Agamben noticed this binary element to Foucault's work, then saw it collapse through the presentation of Franco's body upon his death in 1975, explaining that, "...for Foucault, the two powers, which in the body of the dictator seem to be momentarily indistinguishable, remain essentially heterogeneous; their distinction gives rise to a series of conceptual oppositions (individual body/population, discipline/mechanism of regulation, man-body/man species) that, at the dawn of the modern age, define the passage from one system to the other." (Agamben, 1999, p.83). This movement from the power of blood to the power in sexuality, from the sovereign power to take life or let live to the power to make live and let die, or even more specifically, from the *individual* body to the *social* body, points to a paradox in Foucault's theory in that it implies a total transformation of power in society, but fails to address the remnants of the old system that are still present. So, while we can recognize

in Courbet's painting a moment of double articulation that makes explicit a biopolitics that works simultaneously on a single body and an entire population, we are still left with the unanswered questions surrounding the body of the dictator and the abhorrent bodies of everyday life.

These abhorrent bodies are exemplified by the public bodies from the introduction as this is the flesh that cannot be neutralized through biopolitical discourse and must be dealt with through sovereign mechanisms. Despite the obvious presence of these bodies, they are suspiciously absent from Foucault's work, and to understand this absence we must return to a moment Foucault marked as a climax and we must reconsider this climax under the weight of these graphic bodies.



Franco's body is a pressing symbol here because, despite the claim that it represents a peak for biopower, it still speaks to the middle ground between these two powers. As a very public body that was meant to represent all of Spain, Franco's body underwent a series of infinitizations during his long rule, as Massumi and Dean explain, the body of the emperor, "...undergoes a process of infinitization...it surfaces stretch

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<sup>9</sup> From: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/spanish/especiales/franco/galeria.shtml>

forever...its heights are higher, its permutations more numerous.” (Massumi and Dean, 1992, p.138). This process, one symbolic of fascist rulers, places the body of the emperor at the very core of the state itself, stretching it as an infinite symbol and using it in the, “...totalitarian phenomenon of blurring the boundaries between leader, country and people.” (Pavlovic, 2003, p. 19). Franco, and even more specifically, Franco’s body, was the most pertinent symbol of Spanish fascism, and through his own bloody and violent rule, it became a pertinent symbol for the blood and violence of all sovereign power.

For this reason, amongst others, it is in his corpse that we can see the supposed collapse of sovereign power. Up until his death in 1975, Franco was the last of the West’s all-powerful sovereigns. (Of course, it is important to remember that there are still a large number of these sovereigns that exist today, but Franco was the last to hold on to this power, at the least, in Western Europe). Upon his falling then, we are presented with an unknowable sign: the death of death. As the last all-powerful sovereign to hold his population at the point of a sword is laid to rest, we see through this extinguishing a total absolution of death.

But Franco’s death wasn’t clean, it wasn’t certain, and this is exactly where the lines between biopolitical and sovereign power ultimately become blurred. Unlike Louis the XVI who lost his head and spurned a nation in his blood, Franco’s death existed in a state of limbo, momentarily stuck in a purgatory between life and death. All in all, Franco spent his last 37 days in a semi-comatose state, and when he finally did succumb to death, it was because of the decision of a cohort of doctors<sup>10</sup>. His body becomes a symbol for these two clashing powers because, as Foucault noted, “...at the moment when he himself was dying, he entered this sort of new field of power over life which

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<sup>10</sup> From: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/october/30/newsid\\_2464000/2464945.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/october/30/newsid_2464000/2464945.stm)

consists not only in managing life, but in keeping individuals alive after they are dead.” (Foucault, 2003, p.248). Here then, the sovereign’s power is confronted with a fully emerged biopower, a biopower that at once, eclipses and works alongside his own power. His body, with all the symbolic weight that had been placed upon it, is suddenly no longer his own, and all the power that he had centered within himself is swiftly dispersed to the outside. We can read this moment in two ways: either as a culminating point where biopower erases sovereign power, or as a symbolic point where the two powers meet head on and, rather than destroying each one or the other, actually end up existing side by side.

If we decided to read this moment as a triumphant finale for sovereign power, we do so only by reinstating the heterogeneity of those very conceptual oppositions that Agamben laid out. That is, we would have to equate the destruction of an individual body with a power over a population, and we would have to work along a line where body and population remain ontologically divided. Rather than enabling these oppositions, it is important to reconsider the earlier argument of the body as a site of double articulation that at once speaks to the individual and the population. Under this light, Franco’s long drawn out death marks not a shift from one movement from another, but rather displays the possibility that each of these powers can exist concurrently in a single moment.

Of course, it did take 37 days and a team of medical professionals to finally finish off Franco, and of course, these 37 days do exemplify the new power to make live and let die, but in the end this is all moot; Franco’s death (the deafening whisper that it was) was just that, the individual death of an individual body. All symbolism aside, Franco’s death marked a moment where the everlasting power to take life was reasserted by taking the

life of an all-powerful sovereign. Thus, while this overdue death (and here we must return to symbolism) certainly made visible the new power to make live, it didn't do so by killing death, but rather, used that time in limbo to transform death into a ghost. No longer a swinging axe; death is rearticulated as a specter that haunts the social and individual body at once. Not in the foreground, but pushed towards the back, Franco's body doesn't symbolize the triumph of biopower over sovereign power; rather it shows us the undercurrent of blood and death that exists within biopower. It makes visible an undercurrent ready and waiting to be activated when it is needed, and furthermore, it exhibits an undercurrent that, specter or not, is always-already present.

This specter of death may have been best articulated by a long running gag on the American comedy show, *Saturday Night Live*. Inspired by the weeks leading up to Franco's inevitable demise when the world's news media, being unable to ever confirm his passing, was forced to report on his still living condition, the writers and actors at *Saturday Night Live* decide to subvert these declarations in the weeks following his death<sup>11</sup>. The joke was a simple one reported in the program's fake news segment for weeks after Franco's eventual passing, in which Chevy Chase would report that, "Generalissimo Francisco Franco is still dead" and through this small piece of ironic subversion, would reconfirm the finality of the power of death and simultaneously articulate death's new position as an underlying current, a simple joke and a specter, and a power that is far from nascent. Yes, Generalissimo Francisco Franco is still dead, but this death is recast as secondary to his living; his living was news, his death is a joke.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> From: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saturday\\_Night\\_Live/Generalissimo\\_Francisco\\_Franco\\_is\\_still\\_dead](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saturday_Night_Live/Generalissimo_Francisco_Franco_is_still_dead)

<sup>12</sup> There are two references at work in this joke: the first is a simple rhetorical turn, twisting the perceived incompetence of the media, the second and more interesting reference points to the performative aspect of Franco's death, making clear the body/screen work that Franco did to at once interpolate Spain into himself

What we witness here is a reconfiguring of the relationship between these two powers, a moment that shows how they can exist simultaneously without relying on the old dichotomies that once divided these powers, and the issue at hand then switches to the question of how, and through what discourses, this undercurrent of blood and death is able to activate itself in a society ruled by biopower, sexuality, and the power to make live? The question here may be even better formulated through the language of appropriation, that is, to what end is biopower able to learn from, and appropriate as its own, the rudimentary axes of sovereign power?

If we think of how sovereign power emerged and articulated itself throughout the twentieth century, we are immediately faced with a long and difficult list of rulers who imposed their own bloody rule on a nation; Joseph Stalin, Mao Tze-Dong, Adolph Hitler, Pol Pot, Suharto, Saddam Hussein, Idi Amin, Charles Taylor, Augusto Pinochet, Papa Doc Duvalier, Kim Il-Sung, Francisco Franco; these are all names that immediately spring to mind. This list, while hardly exhaustive, presents the immediate challenge in attempting to quantify sovereign power as we see here a hodgepodge of powerful individuals, whose ideologies range from Fascist to Communist and whose power ranged from within a single nation to across the majority of a continent. Despite this though, there is strangely enough a particular continuity amongst all of these names which is that, regardless of the more pragmatic reasons for the mass killings they enforced, almost all of these leaders *sold* their populations on the necessity of these murders by appealing to ideas of a unique and predestined nation. That is, from Stalin to Hitler and from Pol Pot to Pinochet, there is a strange language of homogeny, of ‘enemies of the state’, of

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and simultaneously extrapolate the nation from his body. The fact that a population must continually be reassured of his corpse further continues this performance; reminding all that fascist Spain is indistinguishable from the leader’s body *and* the leader’s corpse.



national glory and of past victories that is employed to rally a murderous population.<sup>13</sup>

Based mainly on xenophobia and nationalism, not all of these mass-killings were rooted in racism, but it is undeniably difficult not to see a consistent racist logic emerging from these particular themes. And for this reason, it is again not surprising to see that biopower itself relies on these particular themes, and on a particular homegrown racist logic, to appropriate the mechanisms of sovereign control.

Racism then, is obviously not invented alongside the rise of biopower, but rather is rearticulated under biopower as, "...a way of introducing a break into the domain of life that is under power's control: the break between what must live and what must die." (Foucault, 2003, p.254). Racism proves to be the grounding where sovereign mechanisms of power are able to be appropriated into a system that produces life. In turn, racism reinvents itself at this moment in both popular and state discourse. This reinvention is grounded in the words of biopower, but maintains as its final tactic the sovereign power to take life. Thus racist discourse finds itself appealing to ideas embedded in the discourses of society, and more particularly, in discourses of population. No longer an individualized pathology, racism becomes a protectionist discourse aimed at preserving the 'purity', 'hereditary lineages' and general 'cleanliness' of a population. (Of course, sexuality becomes deeply entangled in this discursive shift, but for the moment we must place this idea aside, leaving only with the promise to return to it soon).

Foucault further argues that this discourse becomes a hallmark of statehood, and makes the claim that, "...the modern state can scarcely function without becoming

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<sup>13</sup> For a more thorough reading on these notions of purity and national glory, see Klaus Theweleit's psychoanalytic reading of early Nazi soldiers, *Male Fantasies*, Stanley Payne's work on Francoism, *Fascism is Spain*, or Kiernan's work on the Cambodian genocide, *The Pol Pot Regime: Race, Power, and Genocide in Cambodia Under the Khmer Rouge, 1975-79*.

involved with racism at some point...” (Foucault, 2003, p.254). Biopower, statehood, and ideas of home all collide at this point, and populations begin to mark themselves off, close themselves in, and define themselves along racial lines. Here we are seeing a confrontation between two forces; one focusing on our own understanding of our selves, and another, focusing on the implicit and explicit role of biopower in shaping this understanding.

To establish a home requires one to mark a territory and a space as one’s own, and for Deleuze and Guattari, home becomes entirely constructed then, in that home, “...does not preexist: it was necessary to draw a circle around that uncertain and fragile center, to organize a limited space.” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.311). The entire function of tracing this arbitrary line is, at the very least, another protectionist movement; a movement meant to keep the inside safe and free from danger. To this end, “The forces of chaos are kept outside as much as possible, and the interior space protects the germinal forces of a task to fulfill or a deed to do.” (1987, p.311). Home may be the most personal and intimate space that we imagine, and in some sense, is not unlike the nation-state that we envision, as Slotkin explains, “...the health of the state requires a myth of national identity, to sustain its solidarity against external enemies and to overcome the disintegrative potential of internal divisions.” (Slotkin, p.470-471, 2001). To this end, home and the nation are imagined and built side-by-side; one as the further extension of the other. If we can take this simple deconstruction of the idea of home and nation a little further, infuse it with Foucault’s claim that *the modern state can scarcely function without becoming involved with racism*, it leads to another simple question, to what ends?

Internment. Eugenics. Apartheid. Genocide. The history of state enforced racism is long and teeming with atrocities. Canada itself is not free from these indignities; the internment of Japanese-Canadians in British Columbia, the eugenics movement in Alberta, and the Native reservation system that so closely mirrors South Africa's apartheid; each of these moments point to the collusion of biopower, racism, and that fragile center that we call home.

Furthermore, each of these moments works as a break within the general population. These breaks are more of a phantasmic movement than an actual fissure, in that they break one group of people from another, despite their obvious inherent connections. As Agamben explains, "The concept of people always already contains within itself the fundamental biopolitical fracture. It is what cannot be included in the whole of which it is a part as well as what cannot belong to the whole in which it is always already included." (Agamben, 1996, p.32). Home, that fragile and arbitrary line that demarcates a safe space from the forces of chaos, is shown at its most fragile and arbitrary here. Not even a territory or a border on a map, home is revealed as nothing more than an othering; a divisive movement where populations that are entirely linked are divided and placed in opposition. Hall noted that the primary fantasy of the modern nations racial politics has been, "...to *represent* what is in fact the ethnic hotchpotch of modern nationality as the primordial unity of 'one people'; and of their invented traditions to project the ruptures and conquests, which are their real history, backwards in an apparently seamless and unbroken continuity towards a pure, mythic time." (Hall,

1993, p.356). Here too we see a misguided belief that in the past or (even more terrifyingly) somewhere in the future, a collective of 'pure' people exists.<sup>14</sup>

All of these movements, the fractures and reconstructions of people, work to offer biopower a space to appropriate the right to kill into its own particular vocabulary. As Mbembe explains, biopower reworks the mechanism of sovereign control through these constructs because it is entirely dependant on their existence, arguing specifically that, "This control presupposes the distribution of human species into groups, the subdivision of the population into subgroups, and the establishment of a biological caesura between the ones and the others." (Mbembe, 2003, p.17). A simple *biological caesura between the ones and the others* is all that biopower requires to enter into the realm of sovereign power, and to this end, it is important to further elaborate on the misleadingly simple term racism.

It seems obvious here that the biologic caesura created by biopower is not always built along racial lines, and even more obvious that race is not the only fault which can break off one people from another. The term racism is best understood here as an encompassing one that builds from biopower's racist discourses and particular pseudo-scientific genealogy that provided the inspiration and epistemological base for innumerable discourses of difference that arise alongside biopower.

Siobhan Somerville, along with many other scholars, has argued convincingly, that, "...a discourse of race – however elusive – somehow hovered around or within the study of sexuality." (Somerville, 2000, p.15). Somerville traces the connections between

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<sup>14</sup> While Hall is speaking more to the far-right movements within today's liberal democracies, it is interesting none the less to consider how these movements mirror early fascist ideals. Franco, himself, worked tirelessly at the beginning of his rule on a, "...conscious attempt to root the formation of this new forcefully homogenous nation in a glorious and imagined past." (Pavlovic, 2003, p16).

racial and sexual discourses back to the moment when scientific interests began to seriously consider these classifications and hence argues that, "...the structures and methodologies that drove dominant ideologies of race also fueled the pursuit of knowledge about the homosexual body." (2000, p.17). While racial discourse was undergoing a biopolitical shift from an, "...old, loose concept of race as a matter of heritage, language and manner...and made into a technical, scientific category..." (McWhorter, 2004, p.49), a similar scientific discourse begins to analyze and understand sexuality along much the same lines. Therefore, just as races are divided and (even more importantly) hierarchized through these dissections, so too are sexual practices stratified along a biological and developmental line. Falling prey to a misguided activation of social Darwinism, categories of race and categories of sexual identity were each charted and ranked in evolutionary terms, to the end where some races, and some sexual categories, are considered less developed than others<sup>15</sup>.

These pseudo-scientific discourses of racial and sexual categories shift at times from individual bodies to larger notions of population control, but throughout these movements they constantly restate developmental hierarchies; hierarchies that eventually breakdown into a simple binary of *normal* and *abnormal*. Thus, miscegenation and procreation become the simple signifiers of abnormal and normal sexual behaviour. Miscegenation is abnormal because it at once produces an abnormal body and infects a populations bloodlines, and simultaneously, sex without procreation is equally abnormal, in that it fails to advance (and worse yet, degenerates) a bloodline while simultaneously marking these activities and the bodies that enact them as abnormal. This long history of

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<sup>15</sup> McWhorter, 2004, p. 48 and p.54

sex and race being tied to notions of abnormality points to the moment when these discourse intersect, as McWhorter explains:

As a result of these shared history and consequent similarity in structure and potential function, in present-day discourses and institutions, race and sex intersect primarily at points where people think in terms of normality and abnormality or deviance, where people have major managerial goals for large populations, and where there is a strong desire to control human development. (McWhorter, 2004, p.54)

It follows then that sexual taboos become drawn along these lines, and that biological fissures become possible along both racial and sexual markers simultaneously. Thus, we can see but one other possible break under the general movement of ‘racism’ that was described by Foucault. It is important to acknowledge that while these lines do intersect, they also each stand up on their own as possible breaking points, and to this end, each one becomes a viable line of fault for biopower to return to the sovereign power to kill.

Finally then, we have a reasonable sense of how biopower and sovereign power are able to coincide with one another, a sense of how the specter of death continues to haunt the power to make live, and a sense of the discursive movements on which this collaboration rests, but again, we must pose the simple question, to what ends?

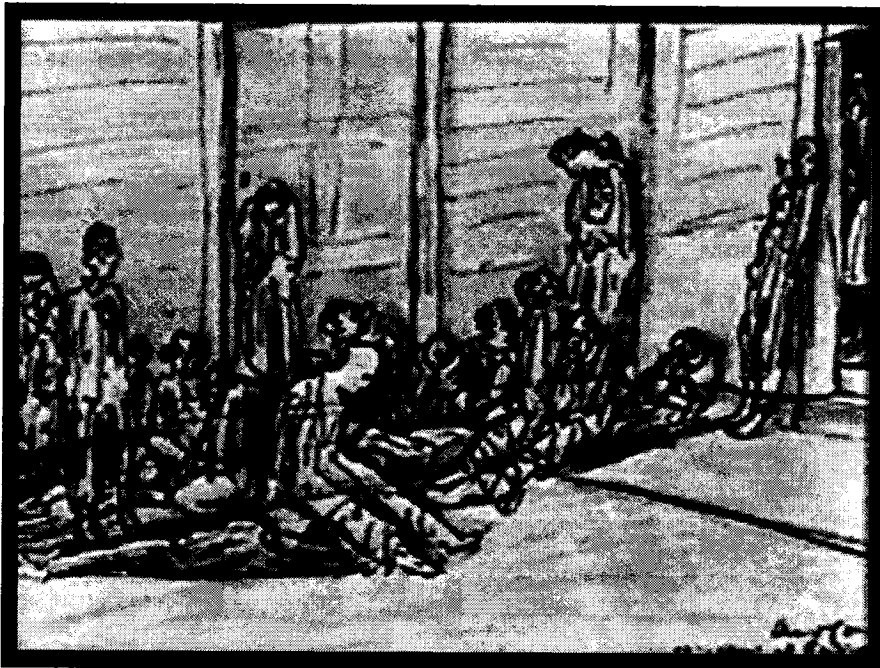
It would be neglectful here to simply open up the possibility that biopower could appropriate these powers without recognize the moments where this has happened before. To do so would be to simply argue that biopower held a proverbial ‘ace in hand’, a type of notwithstanding clause that contained merely symbolic value, and was a rarity in practice. The reality, maybe not surprisingly, is quite the opposite. Since the rise of biopower, we have seen almost innumerable moments where this exceptional state has become the rule, and where biopower has seized the power to kill and appropriated it within itself. To this end then, we must consider the moments when biopower turns

deadly, and furthermore, we must consider how these moments simultaneously construct and challenge our understanding of the lineage between human, subject, and flesh.

For Giorgio Agamben, the ultimate appropriation of sovereign power within biopowers rule is situated (both literally and figuratively) inside the war camp:

Inasmuch as its inhabitants have been stripped of every political status and reduced completely to naked life, the camp is also the most absolute biopolitical space that has ever been realized – a space in which power confronts nothing other than pure biological life without any mediation. (Agamben, 1996, p.41)

The camp here represents the culmination of biopower's right to kill; a space in which individuals are reduced to a state of non-being and a space where life is reduced to its most rudimentary base. But, the movement to the camp is not an instant one, rather it is a point of culmination for a long series of discursive alignments. So, where does one begin to tell the story of the camp? An arbitrary point as any, it seems fitting to begin this story at the very limits of this space.



<sup>16</sup> From: <http://www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/holocaust/art.htm>

Aldo Carpi, an Italian artist who was deported to Gusen in 1944, survived the holocaust because he was repeatedly commissioned by members of the German SS to paint pictures<sup>17</sup>. During his time incarcerated he was, not surprisingly, forbidden to reproduce any images that he witnessed at the camp, and instead spent most of his time working on the family portraits and landscapes paintings that he had been ordered to complete<sup>18</sup>. For this reason then, it wasn't until after his release that he penned a series of drawings that remains, along with some films and photographs produced by camp liberators, as one of the remaining visual references that exists of these camps.

'Jews at the Hospital' shows us the very limits of life at the camps. A series of hunched, transparent masses, existing momentarily at the threshold between life and death, sit huddled in front of the unflinchingly ironic war camp hospital. Not quite ghosts, but far from human, the figures in Carpi's drawing (like Franco's corpse) stand in between two distinct realms. Unlike Franco though, whose transparency was created by a power to life that held off death, the figures in Carpi's piece are brought to the limits of death by a power that produces life. This distinction is an important one. While it is clear that in each of these symbols we see the precise moment where biopower and sovereign power meet, the Carpi image is distinct in that it shows us the operations of a state that is at once protecting and killing its population. Even those in death camps are subject to the protection of life. If Franco showed us the moment where sovereign power and biopower meet, it was at the absolute limit of sovereign power, whereas, 'Jews at the Hospital' shows us where they meet at the absolute limit of biopower. Again we see these two

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<sup>17</sup> Agamben, 1999, p.50

<sup>18</sup> Agamben, 1999, p.50



forces intersecting, but this time it is in the figure of a state so bent on protecting life it began to kill itself, and to that end, made visible the very limits of human existence.

The commonly deployed understanding of these figures in Carpi's drawing is that they represent a threshold within the threshold of the holocaust camp: *the muselmann*. Most likely a derogatory derivation of the word Muslim, the muselmann finds its meaning in, "...the legends concerning Islam's supposed fatalism, legends which are found in European culture starting with the Middle Ages..." (Agamben, 1999, p.45). Besides this derogatory etymology, the ultimate signifier of the muselmann is found in a belief that these particular individuals are so resigned to their situation that they reach a point of non-existence. That is, the muselmann (who's physical symptoms likely resulted from a combination of malnutrition, exhaustion, and any other malady that accompanies life in a forced labour camp) presents us with another unknowable sign in that they show us the very limits of life and the moment when a body slips from physical entity to an ethical one; they represent the transition from an individual in a camp to the essence of bare life and to the very limits of human. To this end, the muselmann is an artificial break in the camp; a distinction in a space free from distinction, an attempt to rupture 'life' in a camp where its inhabitants have been *reduced completely to bare life*, a final "...distinction of what in the camps, has become indistinguishable: the human and the inhuman." (1999, p.58).

It seems then that the muselmann is a break made for and by the other prisoners. It is an attempt, from within a space that is strikingly homogenous, to maintain a sense of subjectivity and being that has been stripped from its inhabitants. By recognizing those who have been stripped of life itself, the other prisoners can see, in the near horizon, a

final line left to cross. This line, and indeed this horizon, is all but invisible from outside the camp. While the muselmann is a biological caesura (in the sense that death is the ultimate biological caesura), it is a break within a space that is already marked by a split with the outside world. This original break is why the camp is such a strikingly homogenous abstraction, not just for Agamben, but for all of us when we see it from the outside. Its inhabitants all appear as bare life to the outside observer because they have already been stripped of the political rights that originally marked them as subjects. It is therefore obvious that those of us who stand above the camp see nothing but a population of subjects reduced to mere flesh, and those trapped within the barbed-wire of the camp are forced to divide themselves up between the still human and the inhuman. It is not surprising then that these camps are seen as dehumanizing from above, and it is even less surprising that it is this distinction between inhuman and human that the post-holocaust movement to protect life originally finds its footing.

At the conclusion of the Second World War, the United Nations was formed, and as Evans explains, “The creation of the United Nations placed universal human rights at the centre of global politics.” (Evans, 2001, p.14). Within a year and a half of its inception, the UN wrote and ratified the Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>19</sup>, a massive accomplishment that saw much of the world agreeing to protect its population. Still covered by the shadow of the holocaust, it should come as no surprise that the international community felt obliged to guarantee the rights of all the globe’s humans. The plan was to protect all humans by placing their rights above and beyond the rights of subjecthood and the difference was one of rooting; a subject’s rights were thought to be rooted in statehood, a human’s rights were thought to be rooted in bare existence. All

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<sup>19</sup> Evans, 2001, p.14

good intentions aside though, the conception of universal human rights that emerged in the post-holocaust period was largely a classic liberal phenomenon, one that aimed at understanding human rights as universal while simultaneously guaranteeing the powers of state sovereignty, and one that never took into consideration the internal figure of the muselmann.

This understanding of human rights proves problematic at almost every juncture. Firstly, the categorization of human rights as universal is immediately suspect, because, as Zizek explains, "...the Universal is simultaneously *necessary* (unavoidable) and *impossible*; necessary, since the symbolic medium as such is universal, and impossible, since the positive content of the Universal is never purely neutral but is always (mis)appropriated, elevated, from some particular context that 'hegemonizes' the Universal." (Zizek, 2000, p.53). Universal human rights here are revealed to be far from universal, and rather, to be a particular construct of a particular hegemonizing force. What this force may be is entirely irrelevant, because the explicit point here is to note that the empty signifier, Universal, is always appropriated by some force, and in turn, ends up being far from Universal. While Zizek's argument is well taken, the reality is that in terms of the UN guided development of human rights, the empty signifier of the Universal never even reaches a point where it would be problematic, because the Universal never even tried to pass itself off as that. Through an attempt to work between balancing the Universal aspect of human rights, and protecting the power of state sovereignty, there was never any meaningful attempt at creating a Universal conception of rights.

These issues with the conception of universal extend and are part of the (arguably) more interesting problem with the employment of *human* in this context. Given the atrocities that the world had just witnessed at the UN's inception, it should not come as surprising that there was a movement to imbue humans with a particular inalienable essence. Much of our understanding of warfare and the war camp focuses on the particular dehumanizing character which hopes to explain the ways in which the enemy is understood as being somehow not-human, or at the very least less than human, and in turn, helps alleviate the pain and guilt that should be associated with murder. The belief then was that the holocaust came about as a result of a process of dehumanization that reduced the diverse individuals that were destroyed in the camps, whether they be Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals or political opponents, to a type of sub-species fit to be murdered. Under this light, the logic behind this push towards Universal Human Rights is essentially flawless: *if we understand the atrocities of the holocaust to be the results of a process of dehumanization, we can prevent any future genocide by marking 'human' as a protected and meaningful category.* The problem with this thought becomes evident when this attempt to make 'human' a meaningful category is constructed alongside the haunting character of the muselmann. If to be human is to be universally recognized as having a specific set of undeniable rights, then it would follow that humans have rights that extend above and beyond the powers of state sovereignty; humans are above subjects. Simultaneously though, we have the distinction between human and inhuman that is found in the muselmann, where camp prisoners divided themselves off between two extremities and still remained locked as the fleshy victims of state sovereignty; humans are below subjects.

This bizarre balancing act is played out throughout the document, where it is declared at the beginning that, “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights...” and that, “...no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs...” (From: <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>) which obviously endows the category human with meaningful attributes independent of the state, but simultaneously the declaration reminds its members that, “Everyone has the right to a nationality...” and that, “No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality...” (Ibid). Despite the early intentions, it is obviously increasingly difficult to understand how exactly the division between human and citizen are made in this document, and increasingly challenging to understand what the meaning behind each of these categories is meant to be.<sup>20</sup>

This paradox is even further clouded by another of the United Nations’ initial actions: the creation of the state of Israel. If all Jews, the primary victims of the holocaust, were granted certain inalienable rights through the Declaration of Human Rights regardless of their nationality, then why was it simultaneously necessary to grant them a new state and national sovereignty? If the Jewish diaspora was truly freed from the violent ravages of the holocaust simply by being human, wasn’t the creation of Israel redundant? Why the emphasis of citizenship and subject hood, when mere humanness should be enough to keep them safe? In this sense, the challenge of a human/subject

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<sup>20</sup> It is even more interesting to consider how, as the UN was working diligently to establish these rights, Franco was still working just as hard to crush any resistance to his regime, as Preston explains, “At least as late as the 1940s Franco’s prisons still held hundreds of thousands of political prisoners, who were being executed as fast as they could be ‘tried.’ (Preston, 1994). While Franco and the entire Spanish government was barred entrance to this early formation of the UN, it is ironic to consider the barbarity that was invisible to the UN because it fell under the guise of civil war and an issue of national sovereignty.

binary becomes most visible: humans are either above or below subjects; they are either free from persecution or still prey to it; they are either permitted to live or selected to die.

So, which one is it? Which of these two is endowed meaning by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? The unfortunate and troubling response is that both of them are. Human is an essentially split category. What the Universal Declaration of Human Rights does (and in fact guarantees through international law) is provide the absolutely necessary break within the encompassing term, human, that the biopolitical state can then actualize to force further breaks within the population and revitalize sovereign power.

This break certainly doesn't explain the long list of atrocities that have been perpetrated since the rise of Human Rights discourse, but rather, it simply points to the fundamental biopolitical reasoning behind them. In both its guarantee to protect life and its enshrinement of an essential break between humans, this movement is able to reinforce biopower's mechanisms of control. In the end then, this split character of the human becomes emblematic of a history of ruptures and connections. It marks but another point where people are broken off from each other and another moment where power is able to activate these differences and coalesce its own mechanisms of control. Whether these moments culminated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Courbet's painting, Franco's corpse, or in Carpi's ghostly muselmann is essentially irrelevant. These points are not meant to be understood as climaxes. Rather, they are meant to be recognized as nodes, not notches along the sweeping arc of history, but rather moments of conjuncture that make visible the discursive alignments of biopower. To this end, they also speak to the intersections of those original categories, human/subject/flesh,

that were hinted at throughout this chapter. These categories, which are somehow meant to be ontological breaks that help explain the shifting degrees of biopower's control of bodies, in that they are meant to be emblematic of people and populations that are prey to either the positive or negative mechanism of power, are fraught with tensions here. These categories ultimately prove to be incredibly fragile barriers. One cannot rely on these categories, either as a means of living or as a method of inquiry, because they are always split, always overlapping, and always present in all bodies. Within every body we can locate pieces and moments of human/subject/flesh, and to mark one category without recognizing the others implies yet another hierarchy and yet another essential fissure.

To this end then, the focus of this project then must not be on these fundamental categories, but instead must hone in on the fractures and breaks which imbue these categories with meaning, the moments at which these categories split and overlap with one another, and the discourses of difference that enable these movements. From here then, this project takes in hand this long history of blood and sex – the centuries of biopolitical rule and the ever-present undercurrent of sovereign power – and work to understand how these tactics are deployed today under the logic of 'The War on Terror'. The next chapter begins at a rupture, at a precise instance that tore open a seam and opened up a history written with blood and a future guaranteed to be filled with it. Far from a singularity or a rapture, this is a rupture and a break that is wrapped and insulated with history, a nodal point and a rallying cry; the next chapter begins with the destruction of a temple.

## **Chapter 2**

**Temples, Planes, Bombs, Torture.  
Terrorists, Monsters, Fags and Real Men.  
Ambiguity and Excess in the War on Terror.**



Early on in the introduction, I referred to the body in Courbet's painting as a temple: a work built out of symbolic value that recasts this value back onto the horizon. I was speaking, of course, to this sense of double articulation that shifts between form and substance, but more to the point, I was also speaking generally about symbols. Temples are, again in very simple terms, monumental symbols. They are spaces built out of adulation and they represent this adulation in their presence. One can hardly recognize a temple without thinking – at least in passing – of the time, energy, hope and love that went into its construction. Furthermore, one can hardly recognize these labors without acknowledging the systems that produced such praise. To this end then, temples are always explicit or implicit symbols of power.

What separates a temple from a basic structure is this very sense of double articulation. Temples are built out of adulation and, at once, are able to recast this adulation across all who come to bear witness. They simultaneously speak to the past and the future (though strangely they rarely, if never, address the present) in that they show us the dedication of the past while promising to honor this dedication in the future, and because of this, temples are always politically vulnerable sites. To build a temple speaks to a commitment to an idea, and to destroy a temple speaks to a unilateral rejection of this idea. Spivak explains this vulnerability when she writes that, "...from about the sixth century on, images and temples associated with dynastic authority were considered politically vulnerable." (Spivak, 2004, p.90). Temples here are shown as being more than just symbolic of an idea, but rather are pointed towards a particular power. A temple's symbolic value then, doesn't lay with an adulation and dedication to an idea, but rather is

located in the power of this idea, in the momentum created by this power, and in the imposition of this power on its subjects.

It is fitting then that Spivak chose to read the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> in the simplest of terms – as an attack on a temple. By stepping aside much of the rhetoric surrounding this event, and instead working to “...represent the confrontation in September as the destruction of a temple – world trade and military power – with which a state is associated...” (2004, p.90) it is possible to pull together the actual meaning of such an unimaginable event.

More than anything else, reading September 11<sup>th</sup> as an attack on a temple allows us to reconsider the value of this temple, and the value of its destruction. If temples rarely speak to the present, it is surely true that they do so in the very moment of their destruction. That is, at the moment when the two commercial airliners sliced into the two towers, and at the very instance of the tower's collapse, the monumental presence of these two towers became visible in the clearest terms. Only as the towers fell to the ground was their particular symbolic weight made present, as Baudrillard explains, “So the towers, tired of being a symbol which was too heavy a burden to bear, collapsed, this time physically, in their totality. Their nerves of steel cracked. They collapsed vertically, drained of their strength, with the whole world looking on in astonishment.” (Baudrillard, 2002, p.44-45). At work here are two explicit processes: firstly, there is the moment of the actual event – the destruction and collapse of the temples; and secondly, there is the aftermath of the *whole world looking on in astonishment*. It is in the combination of these two processes that we can mark out the actual event, not located solely in action, the event here is made up by the moment and the impression. As Derrida explains:

The event is made up of the 'thing' itself (that which happens or comes) and the impression (itself at once 'spontaneous' and 'controlled') that is given, left, or made by the so-called 'thing'. We could say that the impression is 'informed', in both senses of the word: a predominant system gave it form, and this form then gets run through an organized information machine (language, communication, image, media, and so on). (Borradori, 2003, p. 189)

To this end, September 11<sup>th</sup> is a total event, not just in the *presentness* of the temples, but in the discourses and impressions that spurned from within this moment. Finally then, we have reached the driving force behind this research. An event, the destruction of a temple, and an aftermath, three years of engaged warfare, that each interrupt and convolute this long history of the Western world as a society with a sexuality that was presented in the first chapter. Not unlike the other moments offered in the first chapter, September 11<sup>th</sup> presents itself as an unknowable sign and an unimaginable event, and still like the moments presented in the first chapter, what is most pressing about it is not the thing itself, but rather the ongoing wake of this event. That is, while the moment of the towers collapse on live television marked the beginning, it is the ongoing 'War on Terror' that continues to shape, and reconfigure, this event.

In the weeks following the tower's collapse, tourists from across the globe slowly began to return to New York, but instead of attending Broadway plays or visiting the MOMA, these tourists filled in to return to the site of the event: *Ground Zero*. Throughout these 'pilgrimages' (as they were commonly dubbed in the media) the meaning of this site began to slowly take shape: Ground Zero was more than just a space in New York, it was the site of a tearing, a moment of rupture, a place where politics, mourning, and blood all met head on.

For many of the pilgrims returning to the site of the event, the journey was made in an attempt to reconcile what they had witnessed on television with a reality that could

only be attained by a physical viewing of the site. In a New York Times article about the tourists returning to Ground Zero, one Japanese visitor summed up this desire neatly, explaining that he brought his young daughter along, "...to show her what the biggest moment in history in her life was...Not like a picture, not like a video game, not like a movie. I wanted to show her this reality." (Cooper, *New York Times*, 2001). These pilgrimages reinvented the meaning of Ground Zero, and forced the site's viewers to challenge their own understanding of this event. Gone were the references to the cinematic and fantasy like qualities of the event that were oft repeated by the millions of people who watched the event unfurl on television, and replacing them instead was a different understanding of the reality of the site. The shift was one from distant voyeurism to a totally personal affair, and not surprisingly, the reality that was now confronted at this site was consistently framed as a visit to a very corporeal site, just as one visitor commented on the future reconstruction, "They should leave it as is...Just leave it. Like a scar. A horrifying scar." (Kingston, *National Post*, 2001). It isn't strange that many of these pilgrims returning to the site of the attacks understood Ground Zero through bodily tropes because the physical site of ground zero was oft framed in just such terms, as a wound, a penetration, a scar, a site where a seam had been torn open. These bodily metaphors did not rise anew from thin air, but were even sanctioned at the highest levels of government, as the president himself promised that he will, "...not forget the wound to our country or those who inflicted it..." (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>). This peculiar, though certainly not unique, linguistic shift to understanding the attack through corporeal metaphor likewise didn't rise from thin air for the presidential speech writers. It is clearly linked to an

understanding of the nation as *national body*, and even more particularly to this national body as a pure space and a virgin land.

The narrative of virgin land has been the dominant myth of the conquest and subsequent population of the Americas. The story of America as virgin land wipes clean the vast native populations that existed here prior to European arrival, and in so doing wipes clean the blood on the hands of those original settlers and their subsequent generations. The story of virgin land then is an act which erases historical reality and creates a space for the arrival of a national myth, and as Donald Pease explains, "...the substitution of the national fantasy for the historical actuality enabled Americans to disavow the resettlement and in some instances the extermination of entire populations." (Pease, 2003, p.4). And so, while the narrative of virgin land places the national body in an ahistorical and unique position of radical innocence, the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> and the new mythology of ground zero tears open more than just a seam in the Manhattan skyline, it also rips open the bloodless history of the nation<sup>21</sup>.

At its most basic then, the idea of ground zero is a space where, "...the fantasy of radical innocence on which the nation was founded encountered the violence it had formerly concealed." (Pease, 2004, p.5). That is, ground zero forces a society with a sexuality to recognize its foundation as a society of blood. The society with a sexuality works to mask the crudest and least efficient power operations, those located in blood, that exist within it. The myth of the radical innocence of the United States is enabled because power is, supposedly, bloodless, and its focus is instead on assuring life and

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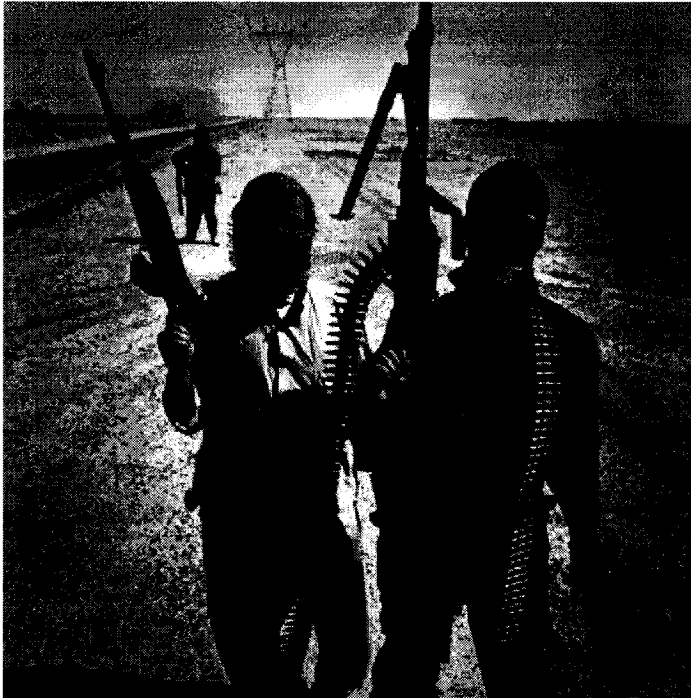
<sup>21</sup> The myth of virgin land is also one that masks the original (and still present) racialized space of the Americas. That is, while it masks the entire extermination of some populations, it also quite bluntly masks the fact that these populations were not white, were not European, and today are still not understood as the 'founders' of the Americas.

controlling that which enables life. Along with the destruction of temples evidenced on September 11<sup>th</sup>, the myth of a society free from blood was also destroyed.

Ground Zero and its symbolic wake then becomes the physical site of a rupture in the Western world. It is entirely without irony then that the marked campaign of warfare, The War on Terror, begins at this very site. While it was weeks and months before the ongoing military action in Afghanistan and Iraq was to begin, the first act of violence was undoubtedly set in motion at Ground Zero, when President Bush addressed a group of rescue workers and assured them that, “I hear you, the rest of the world hears you, and the people who knocked these buildings down will hear all of us soon...”

(<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/#>). Of course, neither the words nor the setting were accidental. What better place to reintroduce blood politics into a society than the very site that initially revealed the nation’s own bloody history, and what better promise than to earn retribution for blood loss by guaranteeing future bloodshed?

But, to read the aftermath of September 11<sup>th</sup> and the subsequent War on Terror as simply a return to sovereign power and the politics of blood would be naïve. Rather, it is important to remember the historical moments presented in the first chapter, the moments where blood and sex met head-to-head, and to consider the means through which a society with a sexuality is able to appropriate and use as its own the rudimentary powers of blood. It is fitting then to begin this investigation at the most concentrated nexus of blood in the discourse of the War on Terror, at the *people who will hear all of us soon*, at the mysterious and ambiguous terrorist enemy.



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Purely relegated to a future of destruction, the individuals involved with, associated with, or active as terrorists are afforded neither recognition nor reconciliation. The primary enemy of the War on Terror represents nothing more than the collective members of a 'shadowy evil', a monstrous hodgepodge of individuals of unique racial, national and class backgrounds.

The very diversity of this group is their greatest strength, but, at the same time, this diversity is a node of power for the discourse of the War on Terror. Less like a hierarchal and organized army, and more like a discontinuous swarm, the enemy here is a clandestine and unidentifiable one. This ambiguity allows these shadowy members to move silently through society and to infiltrate their desired targets of destruction, simultaneously though, this ambiguity allows the discourse of the War on Terror to constitute the enemy through whatever means seem fit.

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<sup>22</sup> Paolo Woods, 2004. From: [http://www.worldpressphoto.nl/index.php?option=com\\_photogallery&task=view&id=260&Itemid=87&type=&selectedIndex=5&bandwidth=high](http://www.worldpressphoto.nl/index.php?option=com_photogallery&task=view&id=260&Itemid=87&type=&selectedIndex=5&bandwidth=high)

This shadowy unrecognizable network presents itself at its base a being monstrous. Tied to historical discourses that firstly connect the monstrous with a particular innate criminality, the terrorist also emerges as monstrous in Derridean terms, that is:

...it shows itself – that is what the word monster means – it shows itself in something that is not yet shown and that therefore looks like a hallucination, it strikes the eye, it frightens precisely because no anticipation has prepared one to identify this figure... (Derrida, from Rai, 2004, p.552)

The monstrous here, and particularly the terrorist-monster, is most frightening simply because of novelty. The unimaginable event of September 11<sup>th</sup> marked a new enemy, one that was unknown and unrecognizable, and one that needed to be bordered in before it could be understood and attacked. For Derrida though, this novelty is ultimately short lived. A monster is not a monster for very long, but rather is almost immediately quarantined and wrung through a process of normalization, as he explains further in the same excerpt:

...But as soon as one perceives a monster in a monster, one begins to domesticate it, one begins, because of the 'as such' – it is a monster *as* monster – to compare it to the norms, to analyse it, consequently to master whatever could be terrifying in the figure of the monster. (Derrida, from Rai, 2004, p.553)

Here, the novelty of the monstrous figure is wiped clean through a process of normalization, and what is most frightening in this figure is laid to rest by rearticulating it as something more familiar.

Thus, the terrorist-monster, like those literary monsters that Derrida refers too, requires an abnormal process of familiarization within the public imagination in order to steady a nation's shaken psyche. Of course, there were obvious figureheads to identify with – Osama Bin Laden being the most obvious – but these (and this) particular figurehead was not solely responsible for the atrocities of September 11<sup>th</sup>, and the very



individuals who were most directly involved remained suspiciously absent from the public's eye. Of the nineteen hijackers, only Mohammed Atta's face and name was ever able to truly stick within the public's understanding of the event. Even Zacharias Moussaoui, the only person in the United States facing criminal charges in connection to the attacks, has remained at the very least sketched, if not entirely absent, from the public. So while those involved directly in the attack remained strangely absent, those other enemy figures captured or defeated in the War on Terror, the inmates at Guantanamo Bay for example, are even paraded as faceless entities for the public's viewing. The long, hooded masks that shroud the faces of these individuals restates the very ambiguity that is such a part of the terrorist *modus-operandi*. Strangely here, the discourse of ambiguity that is a hallmark of 'terrorism' is recapitulated by those who are meant to be fighting a war against it.



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<sup>23</sup> Paolo Woods, 2004. From: [http://www.worldpressphoto.nl/index.php?option=com\\_photogallery&task=view&id=260&Itemid=87&type=&selectedIndex=2&bandwidth=high](http://www.worldpressphoto.nl/index.php?option=com_photogallery&task=view&id=260&Itemid=87&type=&selectedIndex=2&bandwidth=high)

What can be said of this mutual pact of ambiguity? Why would both sides of this conflict be equally committed to assuring the anonymity of one side? Why keep an enemy faceless? And why would one, figuratively, mask your victories in, literal, masks?

The answers to these questions are, of course, limitless. Faceless enemies can't be prey to the forces of sympathy or canonization that could undermine a war effort. (One can hardly be sympathetic to a ball of clothing). Furthermore, faceless detainees can't be recognized and identified by their comrades. Less pragmatically though, the faceless enemy ensures the constant rearticulation of the enemy, and furthermore, ensures that the enemy remains always as a monstrous figure, as an unknown entity.

This mutually assured ambiguity, in one sense, works to combat Derrida's claim that the monstrous immediately undergoes a process of normalization; simultaneously though, it opens up the terrorist to other process of normalization. That is, while Derrida's monstrous novelty implies an equally novel process of normalization – the new monster is understood through new discourse – the discourse of ambiguity here cuts short the possibility of novel understanding, and instead relegates the terrorist-monster to older, more tested discursive alignments.

So, how then to constitute this new enemy, the terrorist-monster? Through what tropes can we imagine the unimaginable, and through what well-rehearsed discourses of monstrosity can we construct our targets of destruction?



The enemy of the War on Terror is ambiguous and unidentifiable, and to this end, they must be represented as an enemy that is already visible and already understood. Here then, the cleavage between blood and sex is made visible. Here, we see discourses of blood being imbued meaning through discourses of sex, and perhaps most importantly, here we see the docile and controlled figure of the *fag* being superimposed atop the frightening and monstrous qualities of the *terrorist*. Jasbir Puar argues that these prevalent images work because, "...queerness as sexual deviancy is tied to the monstrous figure of the terrorist as a way to otherize and quarantine subjects classified as 'terrorists'..." (Puar, 2002, p.126). Discursive alignments that tie the homosexual body to the monstrous one do double duty here, they present an identifiable enemy and they reconstitute this enemy through the terrorist body<sup>25</sup>. This monstrous body that is

<sup>24</sup> From: <http://pearyhenson.org/you-got-mail>

<sup>25</sup> It is a viable argument here to seriously consider the importance of Orientalist discourse as a reason for why these images are deemed acceptable. The Orient, within Orientalist discourse, has always been marked as a particular male dominated sexual paradise where bodies are open to consumption, as Said explains, the Orient is an, "...exclusively male province...women are usually the creatures of a male power fantasy.

superimposed atop the terrorist traces its roots back hundreds of years, as Foucault explains that in the nineteenth century, "...monstrosity is systemically suspected of being behind all criminality." (Foucault, 1999, p.82). It is important to acknowledge that this monstrosity that is behind all criminal activity is always located within the body, and particularly the aberrant and hybridized body. The monster is considered, "...both half an animal and a hybrid gender..." (Puar, p.119, 2002) and as such is the central figure of, simultaneously, juridical power and apparatuses of sexual disciplining<sup>26</sup>.

The terrorist-monster presented through these images is opened up and simultaneously situated on two planes of existence. At its base, it confronts the monstrous and frightening qualities ascribed to the terrorist other, working to sap this figure of its unknown qualities by rendering it docile and controllable. Above this though, these images also exist as mechanisms of sexual disciplining, in that they address localized groups of gays and lesbians. Since these images are most often circulated as 'joke' emails and on various 'anti-terrorist' webpages, it is important to acknowledge their intended audience. This audience is obviously not the Taliban or Al-Qaeda members, but rather the vast network of the western world that routinely sees their email inboxes filled with this type of humor. These were not leaflets dropped over invaded countries, nor were they attempts to debase popular support for 'terrorists' across these countries, rather these images circulated primarily in an attempt to control the terrorist figure by those who were

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They express unlimited sensuality, they are more or less stupid, and above all are available." (Said, 1978, p.3). Furthermore, this understanding is transferable to male subjects in a culture where, "...male homoeroticism is deep within their cultural roots!" (Powers, speech given in 2000 taken from Massad 2002).

<sup>26</sup> The tight relationship between the monstrous body and accidents of procreation and misplaced sexual desire can be traced back across several centuries. This discourse spans from Aristotle's understanding of women as 'deformed males' to Diderot's work on hermaphrodites to the literary construction of gothic characters such as Dracula to more recent films such as *Invasions of the Body Snatchers* and *Gods and Monsters*. For a more complete reading of this discursive formation see Marie Helene Huet's *Monstrous Imagination*.

most frightened by it. But, and this point is at once obvious and important, by tying sexual practices with the marked evil of terrorism (an evil that has oft been framed as a attack on the very basis of western civilization) these images framed queer sex as being part of, or at least sympathetic too, an evil that threatens to destroy us all<sup>27</sup>. In this sense then, these images work not just on the terrorist figure, but also (and perhaps more importantly) on the population at large; dividing people through sexual practices as either friend or enemy to our very civilization.

Through both of these movements, the terrorist-monster makes a shift from Derridean terms to Foucauldian ones. The novelty and unknown quality of the Derridean monster is what made it most terrifying, but here the same figure is shifted from the unknown monster to a known and far less frightening monster. Instead of opening up a space for new dialogue, the unknowable sign of September 11<sup>th</sup> and the impossible figure of the terrorist-monster was normalized by older discourses of monstrosity and a rearticulation of blood within a society with a sexuality, or to borrow from Foucault, the terrorist-monster becomes the terrorist-abnormal. This movement also shifts the locus of power in the War on Terror from the political, religious and ideological grievances behind the event to the individualized and pathologized body. Biopower returns to a moment of double articulation here, honing its power on an individual body and using this singular body to discipline the larger public body. That is, it uses the terrorist figure to discipline the entirety of the population.

To begin with then, we can consider how these images confront the frightening qualities of the terrorist figure by marking the criminality of its movements. That is, we

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<sup>27</sup> The notion of the homosexual as being a particular threat to the nation and national security is far from new, as is demonstrated Mosse (1985).

can say that the sheer incomprehensibility of the events on September 11<sup>th</sup> immediately marked the perpetrators as abnormal; as an evil for which we had no name. This is the moment where the terrorist-abnormal is recognizable to juridical power, as a radically criminal body responsible for a radically criminal act. This radical criminality though, remains outside of the identifiable and categorized means available to us. Reasonable political grievances aside, vague notions of blinding hate aside, and recognizable signs of criminal madness aside, the staggering spectacle of September 11<sup>th</sup> and the abnormal bodies behind it remained, despite juridical condemnation as terrorists, incomprehensible and terrifying.

The superimposing of the homosexual body atop the terrorist one accomplishes two feats then, first, it makes the terrorist-monster an identifiable one, and second, it saps this monster of its most frightening characteristics by marking it as docile and already suppressed, as simply abnormal. This new hybridization, to borrow Puar's words – the terrorist-fag – is at once recognizable and controlled. From this docile and controlled existence then, the meaning of the terrorist-fag shifts from a singular marked body to a body that addresses the entire population.

In this movement the terrorist-fag firstly acts as a rearticulation of a well rehearsed discourse of homophobia that equates violence with the homosexual body. In writing on the notion of tolerance within American society, and particularly on the case of the integration of black students to a white high school in Arkansas, Janet Jakobsen and Ann Pellegrini note that minorities are, "...assumed to be potentially violent because...they [are] opposed by violent forces." (Jakobsen and Pellegrini, 2004, p.59). This equation works along many lines, including sexual minorities, whereby gays and

lesbians are cast as *militants* against a collection of violent enemies and to this end, "...it becomes impossible to distinguish between the perpetrators of racism or homophobia or misogyny...and the objects of various forms of discrimination..." (2004, p.59). Violence is then ascribed to the homosexual body because it is read as being at the pole of a violent conflict between gays and lesbians and the perpetrators of hate crimes. Here another level of abstraction becomes visible within the image of the terrorist-fag, which is the threat of, and legitimization of, violent retaliation directed towards localized groups of perceived *militant* gays and lesbians. This, again, is a convergence of blood and sex, but where as before the discourse of sex was imposed atop the power of blood and sex is used as a marker to neutralize blood, here we see the discourse of blood reigning atop the sexualized body where blood acts as a disciplining force atop of sex.

What is evidenced then are the two floating poles of biopower and sovereign power; the body and the population. The rearticulation of the terrorist through the homosexual body at once calls for the destruction of queer-terrorists and the disciplining of mere queers, and through this call, discourses of blood and sex are concurrently realized. The terrorist-fag in this sense operates on two fronts simultaneously, first, it reconfigures the terrorist-monster as a docile and controllable sexualized abnormal, and second, it works to discipline localized gay and lesbian communities, or as Puar explains, these images, "...not only suggest that if you're not for the war, you're a fag, [they] also incite violence against queers and specifically queers of color." (Puar, 2002, p. 126). This coalition between powers of blood and powers of sexuality speak to the undercurrents of blood that has always existed within a society with a sexuality<sup>28</sup>. The interruption created

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<sup>28</sup> It is important here, given Puar's specification of 'queers of color' to momentarily reintroduce the connection between race, sexuality and gender that has so far been left out. Puar's own words 'queers of

by the War on Terror pushed these representations into a more visible light and the on-going warfare fought under this guise made these equations more acceptable. That is, the discourse of the War on Terror pushes deeply homophobic and racist representations into a space where they are considered acceptable because they are associated with the shadowy evil of terrorism. This then is the new biopolitics of the War on Terror, a biopolitics that is grounded in longstanding discourses of sexual deviancy, but activated through the call for blood and retaliation that exists within warfare.

Through all of this though, it is important to acknowledge that this operation that creates a space whereby traditional discourses of homophobia are legitimized is only possible through a discursive movement that places the body, and biopolitics, at the center of the War on Terror. That is, while this figure begins at its base through a history of disciplining aberrant sexualized bodies, it is reinforced through the political operations that shift the focus on the War on Terror from individuals to bodies, and from subjects to flesh.

The biopolitical grounding of the War on Terror, beginning with the corporeal tropes for describing September 11<sup>th</sup>, moving to the *abnormalizing* of the terrorist-monster through the homosexual body, and reaching even the highest levels of government when national and human rights were stripped from those deemed to be 'enemy combatants', all point to a simple alignment that works to reintroduce blood into politics. It boils down then to a simple operation of inscribing a biological caesura within the population. By shifting the meaning of each of these moments from the lived-political

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color' obviously calls upon a reading that introduces racist and orientalist discourse at an intersection with sexuality, at the same time though it ignores the larger religious signifier 'Muslim' which spans across several racial markers and for this reason, I have placed a larger emphasis on more 'hidden', ambiguous, and malleable markers such as sexuality and sexual desire.



grievances that exist in the world to the presence of unruly bodies, a clean break (both in representation and reality) has been made; a division of bodies and populations. This distinction creates a space whereby two mechanisms of power are able to exist simultaneously, at one end we see a population in need of total protection and at the other we see bodies in need of destruction. As discussed in the first chapter, this division is far from a historical anomaly, and rather, is actually a well-rehearsed movement that affords biopolitical power the right to appropriate the means and mechanisms of sovereign power.



The torture images produced at Abu Ghraib testify to the actualization of these operations. Sitting at one pole of these powers and reduced to mere flesh, the inhabitants of this prison existed within a vacuum, a veritable judicial non-space, a state of exception that was void of regulation. That torture should arise in a war prison is, in itself, nothing surprising given the absolute biopolitical power present in such a site, as Agamben explained earlier in the first chapter:

Inasmuch as its inhabitants have been stripped of every political status and reduced completely to naked life, the camp is also the most absolute biopolitical space that has ever been realized – a space in which power confronts nothing other than pure biological life without mediation. (Agamben, 2000, p.41)

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<sup>29</sup> From: <http://www.antiwar.com/news/?articleid=2444>

These movements coalesce at this site, where, inevitably, accusations and images of torture were created. Why would flesh be treated any other way?

The challenge here is to avoid abstracting Agamben's 'war camp' onto all camps, and instead to consider the limits of Abu Ghraib against the foil of the holocaust camps where a line of flight from the repealing of rights, to the dehumanization of the enemy, to violence and murder, is a reasonably straight forward journey (and one that, sadly, has been traveled many times before). Instead then, it is important to consider how this pathway is shattered when sex is included in the equation. To be more specific, the important issue here is how Abu Ghraib, a site of unmitigated biopower, became a site of sexual torture. If one is granted the *de facto* power to kill, why stop at the power to rape? And furthermore, if this stripping of rights did truly construct subjects as dehumanized pieces of flesh, then how do offending soldiers, "...justify sexual intercourse with a 'non-human'?" (Littlewood, 1997, p.13).

Before we can address these issues then, it is important to make a conceptual distinction between the action (the physical torture at Abu Ghraib) and its aftermath (the discursive responses to this torture). While this distinction challenges the Derridean understanding of the event as being the sum of these parts that was discussed earlier in relation to September 11<sup>th</sup>, it is absolutely necessary here nonetheless. This distinction is necessary here because, just as the figure of the terrorist-fag exists on two simultaneous planes, and just as these two planes worked to address different subjects, so too does the actual torture at Abu Ghraib and the subsequent media discourse call for a separate understanding of these two entities.

To begin with then, we can look at the discursive response to this torture, a response that displayed a total failure to address the difficult nature of what had transpired in this prison and instead offered a stunning display of notably simple abstractions. These abstractions are exemplified by one commentator who wrote, “Methods of torture, of course, also reflect the fears of the torturers. Tacit in these images – as well as in S&M porn – is the Western belief that sexuality is a central core to human identity.” (Kingston, *National Post*, May 2004). While this equation of nonconsensual sexual torture and rape to sadomasochistic pornography is obviously problematic, there is a small grain of truth to this axiomatic explanation. What is true here is the implicit acknowledgment that a battle over sexuality has become inextricably linked to the discursive formation of the War on Terror. Just as the doctored images of the terrorist-fag presented earlier equated the homosexual body with the terrorist body in an attempt to master the terrorist figure and to discipline more localized communities, here the media framing of the sexually explicit Abu Ghraib images facilitates the entrance of this equation into the mainstream lexicon.

Thus the media responses laid out a delicate balance of either blaming the torture on the inherent homophobia and misogyny of its victims, telling us how, “...this form of abuse is calculated to humiliate Muslims...” (*Toronto Star*, May 9th, 2004) or else laying the blame at more localized gays and lesbians by explaining that, “..the depravity exhibited at Abu Ghraib was modeled after gay porn which gave military personnel, ‘the idea to engage in sadomasochistic activity and to videotape it in a voyeuristic fashion.” (Giroux, 2004, p.7). What is evidenced in both of these equations (besides a seething homophobia) is an attempt to protect the sexual desires of the torturers, and problematize

the sexuality of victims. Furthermore, what is evidenced in these responses is the fine line between discipline and destruction, and the fine line that separates the totality of Agamben's War Camp from the simple prison of a society with a sexuality. That is, what may have spared these prisoners from total destruction (and instead sentenced them only to sexual abuse and torture) was the infusing of sexuality with the War on Terror.

This movement to infuse the War on Terror with a particular sexuality likely began at the very site where this conflict began: at the site of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks. Here it is fruitful to consider how, of all the responses to the 'wound' of September 11<sup>th</sup>, one of the most prevalent analysis honed in on the symbolic castration of the event. An attack on a virgin land, on soil that had never been penetrated by an enemy in decades, was often described as an emasculating event; an event that attacked the collective phallus of the United States<sup>30</sup>. While these readings often attributed shallow and near baseless psychoanalytic meaning to events more firmly grounded in actual lived political grievances, they were, at the least, incredibly useful in extrapolating the highly gendered ideologies at play in both the attack, and the response. The roots of this particular sexuality within the War on Terror were built right alongside these highly gendered readings of the event, and these reading continue to play a role in our understanding of both terrorism and counter-terrorism discourse.

In her book, *The Demon Lover: On the Sexuality of Terrorism*, Robin Morgan argues that, "The terrorist is the logical incarnation of patriarchal politics in a technological world." (Morgan, 1989, p.32). Morgan understands political violence to be a logical extension of patriarchy, in that the terrorist appropriates men's means (violence) into men's games (politics). This understanding infuses terrorism with a particular

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<sup>30</sup> Zizek, 2002, p.51

masculinist logic and value, an image of the brave and swaggering terrorist man is offered up against *feminine* values in much of the literature produced by violent revolutionaries, and Morgan offers up Necheav's *Catechism of the Revolutionary* as testimony to this fact:

The revolutionary is a doomed man. He has no interests of his own, no affairs, no feelings, no attachments, no belongings, not even a name...All the tender and effeminate emotions of kinship, friendship, love, gratitude, and even honor must be stilled in him by a cold and single-minded passion...(Necheav, from Morgan, 1989, p.73).

While Morgan was writing this book at a very different time, when terrorism was still primarily associated with revolutionary left-wing movements across the world, her foresight into the masculinist values of terrorism was still visible after September, 11<sup>th</sup>. But, given the reported emasculating attack on the United States, any attempt to attribute masculine values to the hijackers was met with stiff opposition. That is, in an attempt to refute the masculinity of the terrorist, counter-terrorist discourse developed its own manly virtues, as one reporter explained, "Apparently one of the ways the world changed forever after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attack on western civilization is that popular culture rediscovered an appreciation for manly men." (Bunner, *The Report News Magazine*, Dec. 2001). One of the most flagrant violations of the new appreciation for manly men was witnessed in the remarks of television host Bill Maher, who argued on his television show that, "We have been the cowards lobbing cruise missiles from 2,000 miles away. That's cowardly. Staying in the airplane when it hits the building, say what you want about it, it's not cowardly." (<http://www.answers.com/topic/bill-maher>) and was then promptly fired from as host role of ABC's *Politically Incorrect*. It wasn't Maher's suggestion that these men were not cowards that was the problem, rather, it was his argument that the United States army was more cowardly than the terrorists that struck a

chord. Here cowardly is the antonymous to masculinity, and cowards are antonymous to men.

It is fitting here to return momentarily to the photoshopped images presented earlier, and to consider the simple fact that in those images (and in almost all images like those) Osama Bin Laden is placed in a 'receiving' position of these imposed sexual acts. Even as these images mark the terrorist as queer, they always reinforce this image by placing the terrorist's body in the stereotypical 'feminine' position. This opposition then, between the dominating American manly man and the faggy docile 'bottom' terrorist seems to illustrate a particular homophilia – a desire to control the enemies flesh not just through death, but through sexuality as well.

This movement of disallowing the masculinity of the terrorists is, at once, tied to the homophobic representations that were addressed earlier, and also, a notion of masculinist protectionism that organizes the current War on Terror. Young explains this logic by arguing that it is analogous to the patriarchal household, or to be more specific, that, "State officials adopt the stance of the masculine protector. Their protector position puts us, the citizens and residents who depend on their strength and vigilance for our security, in the position of women and children under the charge of the male protector." (Young, 2003, p.226). Given the equation of the homosexual body to the monstrous terrorist one that was visible through popular representations of terrorists, it seems fitting to add the homosexual to Young's list of infantilized citizens. That is, while masculinist protectionism reduces citizens to women and children, it also reduces them to another second class citizen, the homosexual.

Here then, we can see a correlation between the sexualized torture at Abu Ghraib, the movement to strip detainees of their national and human rights, and the particular gendered understanding of the War on Terror. The movement described in Agamben's war camp to reduce the enemy to simple piles of flesh was stopped short here, and instead merely reduced these detainees to menial citizens; women, children and homosexuals. Besides being a chilling thought on the fragility of citizenship in the Western world, this shift from terrorist to homosexual works to answer how a soldier would 'justify sexual intercourse with a non-human', in that it argues that the prisoners who were abused at Abu Ghraib were not non-human, but rather, less-than-human.

The punishment that is relegated to these individuals becomes one of sexualized torture because these bodies were always already sexualized. To insure that the terrorist body remained in its relegated position of less-than-human, it was important that the punishment reaffirm the less-than-masculine, less-than-citizen discourse that had been put in place. To this end then, "...the terror inherent in the punishment had to take up the crime again; the crime had to be somehow presented, represented, actualized or reactualized in the punishment itself..." (Foucault, 1999, p.82) and for this representation to be complete, the punishment at Abu Ghraib reinforced the equation of terrorism as less-than-masculine by equating it with the homosexual body.

Just as the representations of the terrorist-fag worked double duty by reducing the threat of the terrorist and simultaneously controlling localized discourse, so to does the torture at Abu Ghraib work double duty. Bozovic has argued that since the presentation of Bentham's panopticon, the most important function of punishment is to recognize that, "...punishment itself is less intended for the punished, that is, the guilty person, than it is

for everyone else, the innocent...” (Bozovic, 2000, p.99) and in this sense, Abu Ghraib is at once an actualized and phantasmic site of the biopolitics of the War on Terror. Abu Ghraib is actualized as a war camp just as Agamben described, as a site where, “...power confronts nothing other than pure biological life...” (Agamben, 2000, p.41) and where the abstract operations of a war confront flesh in lived realities, but it is also still a phantasmic site, because the confrontation that took place there is imbued with the invisible discursive arrangements of a society with a sexuality. The victims that were assaulted there were met with a power that spoke through their flesh, a power that addressed their bodies and used their bodies to address others, and a power that was stopped short from destroying them only because it was bent on disciplining them.

This fine line then pulls us all the way back to the distinguishing of biopower and sovereign power. If we mark these powers as Foucault did, whereby sovereign power is understood as the “...power over life only through the death he [the sovereign] is capable of requiring...” and biopower is that which is, “...addressed to the body, to life, to what causes it to proliferate...”, one can obviously see the two poles on which the conflict of the War on Terror is built. This announcement may come off as relatively obvious if one follows the War on Terror’s trajectory since that clear September morning, a movement from a retaliatory invasion of one country to the preemptive protective invasion of another country, and from the creation and acceptance of a series of paradoxical maxims (*We defend your sovereignty by destroying a sovereign nation. We maintain your human rights by ignoring the other’s rights. We protect your lives by bringing death to others...*) to a permanent *state of exception* where the rule of law supercedes law itself. Currently then, we find ourselves in a position whereby all fundamental signs, previously taken for



granted (law, democracy, human rights) are found to exist only in their inverse, as Žižek explains, “It is okay if human rights are ‘rethought’ to include torture and a permanent emergency state, if democracy is cleansed of its populist ‘excesses’.” And it is this very populist excess that this chapter aimed to hone in on, the marking of the terrorist body as homosexual renders the terrorist docile, but more importantly, it disciplines and skims this excess off the population.

Queer sex, sadomasochism, lesbian, gay and trans identities and desires all become targeted in these operations, and are all left outside of the population that is marked for security<sup>31</sup>. As the excess to this population, these markers all exist outside, and just as human rights fall wayside in the name of defending human rights, here a portion of the population is sacrificed to protect the whole. This then is the biopolitical manifestation of the War on Terror, a reflexive autoimmunity that finds us sacrificing ourselves in order to save ourselves. This biopolitics though, is more than just the very limits of biopolitical power, whereby the power becomes so tenuous it begins to purge itself, and is rather a collusion and collapsing of biopolitical and sovereign power into itself; death becomes the disciplining force of biopower, and discipline becomes the marker of death for sovereign power. Security and terror become indistinguishable, and any and all *excesses* become simultaneously the targets of the apparatuses of discipline and the mechanisms of death.

All of these moments then, the corporeal tropes for Ground Zero, the superimposing of the homosexual body atop the terrorist, and the torture and subsequent

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<sup>31</sup> In a recent article, “Queer Times, Queer Assemblages’ Jasbir Puar firmly establishes these queer figures outside position both in historical discourse and in contemporary politics, explaining that, “...homosexuals have been the traitors of the nation, figures of espionage and double agents, associated with Communists during the McCarthy era, and, as with suicide bombers, bring on and desire death...” (Puar, 2005, p.127).

response to Abu Ghraib, straddle a line between phantasmic and actualized, and between the body and the population. Each of these moments addresses, at once, the very skin atop our flesh and the excesses atop our population. Through a movement of double articulation then, a coalition of biopower and sovereign power is made visible; a coalition that simultaneously calls for the death of individual bodies and the disciplining of the entire social body.

## **Chapter 3**

**Becoming a Body of Terror!**

**Or**

**You Don't Have to be a Suicide Bomber in a Liberal Democracy, but  
Maybe You Should Be One!**

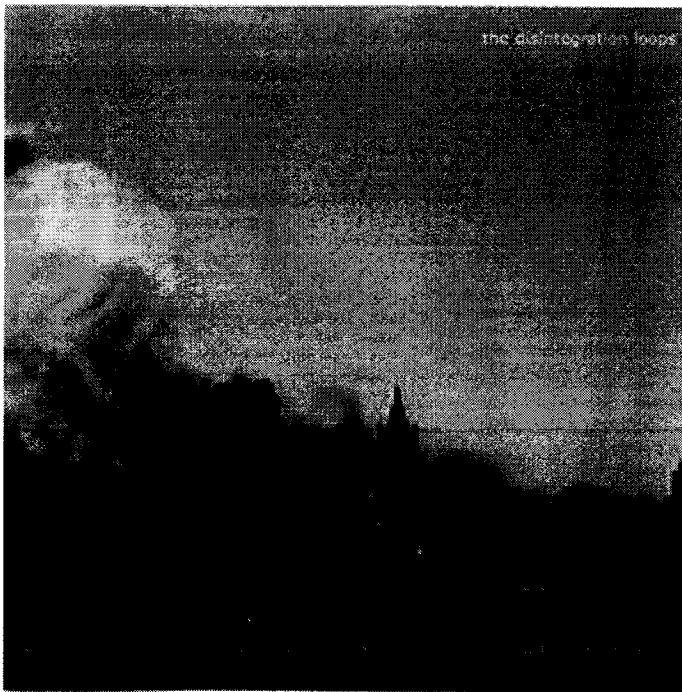
*But now a strong man has entered the race and is outstripping them all. Strong Man! Youth and glory are with thee...Europe is thy father, bear him on thy Atlantean shoulders. Asia, thy grandchild, regenerate him. Africa, their ancient abused...bondman. Give him his freedom.*

- Ralph Waldo Emerson (Journal Entry)

*All of a sudden it is as if the collective body of the notary publics were advancing like Arabs or Indians, then regrouping and reorganizing: a comic opera where you never know what is going to happen next...*

- Deleuze and Guattari, 1987

On the morning of September 11<sup>th</sup>, while most of the world sat and watched as the two towers in New York collapsed, acclaimed avant-garde composer William Basinski sat alone in a Brooklyn apartment and worked towards transferring several aged tape loops to a more durable digital format. As Basinski began to rerecord the music contained atop the weathered loops, he watched as this very act of preservation slowly destroyed the music he had created. Joe Tangari explained this process as being one where the tapes slow rotation created, "...flakes of magnetic material that were scraped away by the reader head, wiping out portions of the music and changing the character and sound of the loops as they progressed..." ([http://pitchforkmedia.com/record-reviews/b/basinski\\_william/disintegration-loops.shtml](http://pitchforkmedia.com/record-reviews/b/basinski_william/disintegration-loops.shtml)). The end result of Basinski's experiment created a series of continuous loops that documented the slow disintegration of his original recordings; a slow process of scraping away the excessive material through continued circulation, and an ethereal sound that shifts between beauty and terror.



These loops then, not just in their particular aesthetic qualities, but also in their nearly mythic origination, point to an entirely unique understanding of the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>. In both theory and practice, Basinski's *Disintegration Loops* make audible the parts that are lost through a continuous cycle; just as the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> and the subsequent War on Terror played back well rehearsed political and philosophic discourses of casting aside an excess to help maintain a fragile balance, so too do these loops shed their own skin through repetition. But what can we make of these excesses, of both the magnetic flakes and the identities and individuals that are tossed off through a running loop? The answer here lies somewhere within the sonic texture of Basinski's pieces, in the silent moments within the loop and with the reminder that, while these pieces have fallen outside the music they still exist (entirely through their absence) within the composition.

Throughout this analysis, a large emphasis has been placed on the destructive process of removing the subject from the flesh; of stripping the person from the body and in turn opening the body to violence and destruction. These processes exist simultaneously across several levels – whether it be in legal discourse that marks individuals as 'enemy combatants' and in turn frees their bodies from the rights imbued upon a human and a subject, or in the circulation of popular 'joke' images that segregate and mark off certain populations as being susceptible to the same violence as an enemy combatant – the end result is always the same: the body is reduced to flesh and the individuals fall prey to the same unique processes of discipline and destruction. That is, each of these maneuvers at once places the body at both the center and the outside of the contemporary politics of security, commanding that the body becomes an excess outside

of security's protective gaze and also a marker that divides one person, and one population, from another.

But, the miscegenation of these two sites of power can only be extended so far. To equate the detainee at Guantanamo bay, a body left in a perpetual state of containment free from any legal or symbolic recourse and monitored at all hours of all days, with the consumer of popular culture who sees his or her identity offered up as a metaphor for terror and violence and is in turn recognized as being left outside of the net of citizens the state has vowed to protect, does a great disservice to both of these individuals. Rather, one must consider where these two figures meet and where they separate from one another, what competing modes of power separate these two, and finally what nodes of resistance are made available for each of these figures once their humanness has been extracted from their flesh. From here then, this final chapter revisits those original division made earlier, between the mechanism of sovereign power and the positive, protective maneuvers of the power of sexuality, and reconsiders the moments where they overlap as potential sites of action. That is, this chapter aims to reconsider a particular politics of community and identity that locates itself not within the subject, but rather, is centered within flesh, and which simultaneously liberates both violence and war from the state while returning it (albeit in a necessarily different form) to the people.

Bulent Diken has argued that the, "...politics of security is today in the aftermath of September 11<sup>th</sup> fast becoming the dominant form of politics, redefining what it means to be a political subject." (Diken, 2004, p.90) and this affirmation is one that anyone given access to a newspaper or the televised news would be unlikely to refute. At the same time though, this statement remains a remarkably vague positioning, and begs the

question of how, or where, one can locate meaningful political action now that the state has returned to a classic liberalist role where protection is absolutely its primary function? Furthermore, what does it mean to be a political subject under these new configurations and what rights are we, as subjects, guaranteed when the state assumes a role more akin to a mental hospital guard than a deliberative political body?

At the core of these modern state formations, whether it be the classic sovereign nation or the emerging (and much theorized) cosmopolitan state of larger social/economic trading blocks, there is always to be found a people. The state, among its other functions, is always and primarily that space in which people exist and whether they be active participants in the state's formation, or merely those who simply partake in their own daily activities, it is always important to acknowledge the role that these individual constituents play in their own states. While it is important to acknowledge this relation, because the state should be (and is) linked to a conception of its own people, it is equally important to recognize the mechanism through which a particular people becomes tied to, and inseparable from, a particular state. Furthermore, it is even more important to recognize how the state and its people become a larger abstraction that smoothes over the individual differences that exist within these notions of state and people.

In order to smooth over these differences and link the people to the state, and more importantly in order to proclaim this linkage as natural, the entire state must go through a process where there is an, "...eclipse of the internal differences through the *representation* of the whole population by a hegemonic group, race, or class." (Hardt and Negri, 2001, p. 104). The state then becomes identifiable by (and with) its particular



people when an operation of homogenization, whereby the unique and divergent citizens are all flattened and replaced by a particular figure of the people, is undertaken in the name of creating the nation<sup>32</sup>. This work of building the state through and by the people is at once an active and passive operation. The active side of this work is most obvious when the state is ruled by a despot and a singular power, where a figure such as Franco is able to literally embody the people by placing himself at the core of the state and by constantly reinforcing a, "...belief in an 'authentic' Spanish character and the binary oppositions that encouraged distinctions such as Catholic/pagan, Nationalist/Republican, soul/body, depth/surface, or essence/artificiality." (Pavlovic, 2003, p.3). Simultaneously though, Franco recognized the falsity of these constructions and, "...was always conscious that this 'authenticity' had to be continuously constructed, negotiated, and redefined..." (2003, p.3). This type of planned articulation demonstrates the active role that a government can play in constructing the phantasmic nation, but it is important here to contrast these planned movements with the same operations being manifested in today's liberal democracies. Where Franco was able to place the nation within himself, a liberal democracy must place the nation within the body of not the ruler (or at least less so) and instead locate this power in the body of the perfected and homogenized citizen. This citizen is far from an assemblage of all the people of a nation, that body would no doubt be a monstrous one, but rather is a static and flat citizen, albeit a 'free' one. The nation's body here is a passive construction built from government regulation and rhetoric, particular media representations, and the founding story of the nation itself. Therefore, it is through these movements that the entire national body, with all of its

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<sup>32</sup> Of course, this construction of an idealized people almost always falls along racial or gendered lines, as Schueller explains, "Ideas of empire and nation in the nineteenth century, as in the present, were raced, and racial distinctions often depended on gendered distinctions." (Schueller, 1998, p.175).

appendages, scars, and twisting limbs, is reduced to an idealized and particular citizen, a pure body that is freed from influence and today, even freed from the state itself. In this sense, today's liberal democratic understanding of national sovereignty locates its right to exist in the body of an idealized citizen; sovereignty is granted to the individual state because sovereignty is thought to exist in its people.

The argument here is that so long as the people are free to elect their own leaders, participate in their own politics and presumably live their own lives, then the state itself should be free to make its own choices and in turn, to act globally in order to represent the sovereignty of its people. This argument is most visible in the on-going 'nation building' activities to be found in Iraq and Afghanistan, where countries are 'liberated' from tyrannical governments that were barred from open economic, cultural and social movements, and in turn, barred from national sovereignty<sup>33</sup>. Janell Watson sums up Iraq's peculiar situation prior to the latest invasion when she explains that, "Iraq was not a properly organized state and therefore did not entirely belong to the order of international law. U.N. sanctions confirmed its substate status in the international order by ordering intervention from the properly organized states dominating the United Nations. (Watson, 2005, p.350). The unique position Iraq now faces is one of having a government imposed upon itself that is meant to represent its own national (and even more strangely popular) sovereignty, but only if this sovereignty is expressed in a willingness to reenter the very same global capitalist network that was once denied them. In this sense, it is difficult to know whether sovereignty came first with the people or the state, because those same forces that once denied the people of Iraq and Afghanistan

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<sup>33</sup> It is important to note how these particular actions reaffirm long standing, "...Orientalist essentialisms such as Islam's supposed incompatibility with Western-capitalist-democratic modernity..." (Ling, 2004, p.377) which then further solidifies the need for 'nation-building' exercises.

(Iraq in particular here, through the long standing UN sanctions that effectively handcuffed the nation's own rights) a route to national sovereignty are now attempting to reintroduce these states to this peculiar mode of freedom, and are doing so entirely in the name of the people. Sovereignty therefore is grossly misunderstood today when it is located in either of these terms, the freewill of the people or in the free actions of the state, because if we learn one thing from Iraq and Afghanistan (and vice versa, from the democratic will of the people from still sanctioned states like Iran and the Occupied Territories of Palestine), it is that under today's current politics of security, sovereignty is something granted from the outside (by allowing free access to free markets) and not something that mythically swells from inside the state. Our current understanding of both national and popular sovereignty then is greatly misaligned with actual global events, and rather, should be understood as nothing more than the, "...products of spiritual construction, that is, a construction of identity." (Hardt and Negri, 2004, p. 104).

It is with great trepidation then that one must attempt to find a sense of praxis for the subjects of today's modern sovereign state, because many (if not all) of the markers that were once used to identify the free have fallen wayside to these 'nation building' exercises and to a system that understands a free people as those granted access to the global community by a small number of powerful western states<sup>34</sup>. It is all the more obvious then that we must reconsider the very notion of praxis under these current conditions, and we must be particularly suspicious of those models of emancipation that

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<sup>34</sup> Perhaps the ultimate irony of these recent colonization exercises is the repeated claims that this work is being done in the name of 'human rights' decades after Hannah Arendt noted that, "If a tribal or other 'backward' community did not enjoy human rights, it was obviously because as a whole it had not yet reached that stage of civilization, the stage of popular and national sovereignty, but was oppressed by foreign or native despots." (Arendt, 2003, p. 32). The irony of course, is that Iraq was a nation at once oppressed by a native despot and a foreign government, particularly a foreign government which is now acting as a liberator.

are based on assuring the Other's entrance into the global consumerist-capitalist economy.

In these cases, popularly sovereignty, the very basis through which national sovereignty finds its *raison d'être* remains at times directly opposed to the actions of a sovereign state. The will of the people can be directly contradicted by its leaders here, and the nation can still maintain its sovereignty despite the fact that this sovereignty has enveloped its base. The Guantanamo Bay detainee is the exemplary figure of this paradox whereby a nation guaranteed freedom through its populace is able to revoke this base in order to preserve its very existence. Popular sovereignty can become nothing more than a sacrificial lamb at the alter of the greater good: the nation's own sovereignty. This peculiar alignment emerges throughout the history of the democratic western state, and is best understood as Agamben explains it, as a now permanent *state of exception*.

For Agamben, the state of exception is a particular juridical alignment that emerges from within the laws of the state but that simultaneously exists in a sphere outside of the law. A fundamental tenet of all Western democracies, the state of exception is recognized by most legal analysts as a an emergency action that is enacted only during times of necessity when the state is threatened by outside (or inside) forces and therefore must temporarily suspend its own laws in order to confront a lawless enemy<sup>35</sup>. The driving force behind this movement is an understanding that, during times of necessity when the state's very existence is at risk, the state is free to operate in an extra-judicial space in order to maintain its own rule of law. The paradox to this situation is obvious and challenging, in that it presents a series of legal and juridical movements that result in

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<sup>35</sup> Agamben, 2004, p. 24

the temporary suspension of most legal and juridical responsibilities, only with the promise of protecting the very laws that it demands be suspended.

The state of exception today has emerged exactly alongside a post September 11<sup>th</sup> rise in the politics of security, and it is again the detainee at Guantanamo Bay who seems to exemplify this situation as a figure whose peculiar legal situation is summed up neatly by Agamben when he explains how the State of Exception works:

The normative action of law can thus be obliterated and contradicted with impunity by a governmental violence – that while ignoring international law externally and producing a permanent state of exception internally – nevertheless still claims to be applying the law. (Agamben, 2004, p. 87)

This binary alignment set up by Agamben, between the external failure to apply international law and the internal construction of a state of exception, is an explicit trope for today's emerging politics of security. Here, in the aftermath of September 11<sup>th</sup>, security at home and terror abroad acts as the very necessity that allows the state to suspend its own laws. It is also this line of thought that helps us theorize the current occupation of Iraq, where Iraq becomes nothing more than another camp that exists outside the legal limits of the sovereign state<sup>36</sup>. In some sense then, the state of exception today follows a similar line of thinking that for centuries has justified, or even created, the state's right to wage war, as Reid explains,

War and its attendant military institutions have been traditionally interpreted as the means by which the state apparatus emerges and conserves its power both over the populations it governs and against the external threats of rival forces (Reid, 2003, p. 63)

Despite the similarities, what separates these two particular arrangements, the state at war and the state of exception, is Agamben's insistence that the state of exception always and necessarily exists in a space outside of the state itself. Throughout his work, Agamben is quick to note that the State of Exception cannot be understood in the legal terms that

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<sup>36</sup> Watson, 2005, p. 349

allow a state to wage war, but rather must be understood as something outside this right, and as something that automatically sacrifices one type of sovereignty in order to save another. What is most important about the State of Exception then is found in this very dualism which usher in a drastic shift in our understanding of both national and popular sovereignty.

Under this light, the greatest power operation of the sovereign nation is found in the state's ability to denounce the sovereignty of its people while still acting on their supposed interests. This is the precise moment where the state finds itself returning to the Foucauldian notion of sovereignty, whereby the rule of the sword replaces the rule of the body, and whereby the state is free to purge itself of any excesses that may threaten it. Of course, this last sentence represents exactly what is challenging about this reemerging sovereignty, which is the fact that these operations of death are carried out under the guise of protection

The state of exception then, points out the double-edged sword of national sovereignty; or better yet, the state of exception shows off a sword which cuts popular sovereignty from each end. Firstly, it aligns itself with archaic laws that strip the 'enemy' of the rights and freedoms that are considered necessary for free action, and secondly, it strips the 'friend' of subjecthood by treating it as an infant or mental patient and by creating a position where the individual must rely on the state to exist, and in turn, where the individual is removed from any sense of true agency. Žižek replicates this second, and more complex movement, when he argues that the drive to abolish the death penalty is,

...part of a certain biopolitics that considers crime as the result of social, psychological, ideological, and like circumstances: [whereby] the notion of the morally/legally responsible subject is an ideological fiction whose function is to cover up the network of power relations... (Žižek, 2004, p.509).

While Žižek's argument here goes against almost any and all popular leftist sentimentalities that recognize that the state should never be involved in the execution of its own civilians, it is an interjection that, today more than ever, must absolutely be considered. This particular interjection is so important because it demonstrates the ultimate fallacy in much of the oppositional thought presented against the War on Terror, which is a fallacy that had people attempting to attack more visible strikes against popular sovereignty only by allying themselves with an equally malicious attack; albeit an attack that came delicately wrapped with a set of good intentions.

In this sense then, we can say that the State of Exception represents a moment where biopower and sovereign power meet because of the insistence in maintaining two succinct nodes of power: one for the inside and one for the outside. On the outside, the state is able to maintain a rule with a bloody sword; detaining those it deems enemy combatants, denying these individuals the rights to counsel and open trial that are written in international law, and using the military apparatus as judge, jury, and executioner in battles with distant enemies. Simultaneously though, on the inside the state is freed to erode the sovereignty of its subjects by placing itself in a position of protector; limiting access to information, running routine security and background checks, limiting the rights of individual assembly and by perpetuating a climate of fear through references to the mysterious enemies of the state. These two nodes of state power manifest themselves in different forms at different times – at times explicit such as the American differentiation between the foreign (read: Islamic) members of terrorist groups and the domestic (read: far right, Christian) members of terrorists groups whereby foreign terrorists (whether or not they be a naturalized American citizens) can be prosecuted, detained, and eventually

deported with a lesser burden of proof than their domestic counterparts<sup>37</sup> and at times subtle such as the military actions (read: smart bomb as judge, jury, and executioner) on foreign civilians suspected of war crimes such as Uday and Qusay Hussein and the dismissal of war crime charges against domestic subjects like Lyndie England<sup>38</sup> because they are not considered competent (read: morally/legally responsible) enough to be accountable for their actions<sup>39</sup> – the net result is always the same thing, a crippling loss of agency for both citizens and non-citizens alike.

Here sovereign power emerges as a power dedicated to those outside of the state, in the full force of quasi-legal actions, but also as a power meant to discipline those inside the state by providing them with a flagrant warning to avoid any action that could strip them of the state's protection. In the opposite sense, biopower finds its genus within the state, guaranteeing the long and productive lives of good citizens, but it too works in its inverse where ideological posturing allows this power to move outside the state and justify killing foreign civilians by acting as liberator and protector at once.

Next, we can see these two nodes of power being offered up in popular discourse as a choice between tyrannical fundamentalism and liberal democracy. That is, we can see the state - most explicitly through the famed George W. Bush *You're either with us or against us* quote but more implicitly through the London police officer who responded after the transit bombings by saying that, "You don't have to be a suicide bomber in a liberal democracy. They've chosen to be." (From:<http://www.cbc.ca/story/world/national/2005/07/14/london-investigation050714.html>) - asking its citizens which type of

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<sup>37</sup> From: <http://www.aclu.org/NationalSecurity/NationalSecurity.cfm?ID=9152&c=111>

<sup>38</sup> Recently, Lyndie England was tried and convicted for her role in the Abu Ghraib torture, it is important to remember though that this trial came only after an earlier tribunal had found her to be sufficiently competent. The irony of this particular state power should not be taken lightly.

<sup>39</sup> From: <http://mypetjawa.mu.nu/archives/079576.php>



subjugation they would prefer. Align yourself with one type of radical thought and force a violent repealing of your rights and possibly death; or align yourself with ‘freedom’ and liberal democracy and face a violent erosion of your rights and a long life of consensual infantilization and servitude<sup>40</sup>. The choice is yours! Of course, this binary coupling is fictitious, and of course this choice is one of a multitude available to the citizen, but so long as liberal democracy is offered up as the only mode of resistance to Islamic fundamentalism then it will continue to trump and misalign any other resistances that may prove more insightful, more valuable and more tenable for the future. Furthermore, it will continue to create a binary whereby any radical thought can be dismissed by relegating it to a position where it is thought to exist *against us* and with Islamic fundamentalism.

This choice, between fundamentalism and liberal democracy, becomes visible in the figures of the Guantanamo Bay detainee and the terrorist-fag. Acting as isomorphic caricatures by showing the inverse of the homogenized image of the people of Western democracies, these two figures represent the consequences of straying too far outside of the state. In a disciplinary effect then, the detainee and the terrorist-fag show of the limits of state tolerance, marking off those categories that cannot be included in the identity of the people – too brown, too queer, too violent, too foreign – these figures meet where they exceed the limits of what the state can accept. The hybridization of these two though is a dangerous step to take, because it is through this very hybridization that each of these figures are made docile; that is, what is radical about the fundamentalist is voided by

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<sup>40</sup> I am deploying the term *infantilization* here in the same sense that was developed in Lauren Berlant’s seminal book, “The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship”. For Berlant, the infintalization of citizens is offered up in popular culture and literature against the foil of the iconic citizen: the white, heterosexual male. For further information on this work see, Berlant, 1997.

attaching it with the docile and non-violent queer and what is radical about the queer is voided by attaching it with the unacceptable and frightening violence of the fundamentalist. In each case, what is challenging about these figures is answered simply through association, rather than forcing people to confront the violence and ideology that goes alongside the detainee, or the violence and denigration that is delivered to the queer, they are free to dismiss these issues and simply recognize these figures as at once defeated and evil, as something that one need not be concerned over. Here then, these two slippery figures are made identifiable through one another, through their outside existence, and rather than remaining unknowable and radical, they become an easily destroyable hybrid.

Through the convergence of these three simultaneous events - the meeting of biopower and sovereign power from within the state of exception, the narrow and misleading choice between fundamentalism and liberal democracy, and finally, the connection between the fundamentalist inmate at Guantanamo Bay and the queer who is represented in the terrorist-fag - a movement that strips subjectivity and free action from any and all civilians of the sovereign nation becomes visible. These movements demonstrate the very problems with this current liberal understanding of sovereignty that was described earlier by making visible the entirely mythological origins of these notions. In order to challenge these ideas then, sovereignty must at once be removed from both the homogenized identity of the people and from the acceptance of the state into global capitalism. Instead on these formations, an understanding of multiple subjectivities over popular sovereignty must be brought forward, and from here a site of meaningful action for those who are symbolically left outside of security while still existing within

the jurisdiction of popular sovereignty is made visible. Furthermore, a space where those emancipated from the disciplining mechanisms of biopower are free to act against the state's own sovereign power is opened up through these alignments.

It is at the very limits identified within the detainee and the terrorist-fag where this space of resistance is made available. If we can say that the greatest display of power for the sovereign nation is to denounce the sovereignty of its people and to simultaneously disallow and guarantee the state's protection, then we can say that the inverse, to offer yourself as outside of the state provides any and all subjects with a space to resist the state's mechanisms. But, in order to become outside of the state, it is important to abandon any identities that the state can work upon, identities like the terrorist-fag that have already been co-opted into state security discourse cannot be sites of resistance unless they are subverted into an emancipatory model, as Agamben explains, "In the final instance the State can recognize any claim to identity...What the State cannot tolerate in any way, however, is that the singularities form a community without affirming an identity, that humans co-belong without a representable condition of belonging." (Agamben, from Norris, 2000, p.53). This movement described by Agamben is best understood as the forming of community outside of the normal basis for community, that is, outside of a common notion of belonging that is meant to connect people. At its best then, this conception of community works to combat the notion of a national people that Hardt and Negri described and also works to move away from these *biological caesuras* that are meant to divide people and populations from each other. This conception then offers up an alternative to recognizing the nation through a homogenized

representation of its inhabitants and instead creates the potential of recognizing communities built on difference.

The terrorist-fag (more so than the detainee who remains at best a symbol as opposed to an active actor) can be subverted into a radical social positioning in this light, representing one of many possible collusions and hybridizations of identity that end up leaving the subject unidentifiable and outside of the state. Whereas before this hybridization was understood as detrimental to the queer community, here we can understand it as a positioning that allows those outside of the state to wage a war - to form a *war machine* – that opposes the violence of the state.

This notion of the terrorist-fag as *war machine* draws upon the works of Deleuze and Guattari, whereby the war machine is meant to be an assemblage of thought that resists and remains outside of the state mechanisms, as Reid explains, “Deleuze draws a parallel between his own conception of thought as war-machine directed against the strategisation of thought by mechanisms of power and the actual wars perpetrated by nomadic societies in prevention of the formation of a state apparatus.” (Reid, 2003, p.63). The terrorist-fag, in a unique position of exteriority, exemplifies this type of nomadic and uncontrollable thought and is placed in a position where there is a multitude of potential sites of resistance. By existing outside of the state, the terrorist-fag is radicalized without being destroyed. This, of course, entirely separates the detainee from the terrorist-fag, where the detainee is *homo-sacer*, one who is violently denied any right to action and reduced to bare life, the terrorist-fag is freed from the inside of the state and open to waging war against the state.

In this sense, the detainee and the terrorist-fag represent the two poles of the war-machine. The detainee is an obvious trope for the state's attempt to appropriate, to literally capture and dominant, radical thought which it cannot tolerate; whereas the terrorist-fag is the essence of war that the state can never appropriate and that remains perpetually opposed to state formations, or as Deleuze and Guattari explain, "In short it is at one and the same time that the State apparatus appropriates a war machine, that the war machine takes war as its object, and that war becomes subordinated to the aims of the state." (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.418). These poles then tells us exactly how a portion of the war machine can be appropriated by the War on Terror, and also how we have come to a position where liberal democracy is offered up as the only alternative to tyrannical fundamentalism.

By seizing these appendages of radical thought, the current state alignment has organized all radicalism against the War on Terror into a space where war, and not the state, is the target of this thought. As long as the state directs any anti-state action towards the war, it is freed from any attacks against its own existence. War, and this War on Terror in particular, are entirely directed by the state and thus far have worked beautifully in masking the state behind the war. Despite this pessimistic position though, the terrorist-fag still represents an ideal trope for resistance to not just the War on Terror, but to the very state formations that perpetuate this war.

I understand the terrorist-fag as trope here because, and this should be obvious, I cannot support any radical thought and action that uses violence and murder as its primary mean of communication<sup>41</sup>. Beyond the violence though, the issue here is one

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<sup>41</sup> While I am speaking mainly in metaphor here, it is still important to note the more literal avenues of resistance available to this figure. I am thinking of Raz Yusef's work on interracial (and particular male-

raised by Agamben when he notes the state's particular ability to *recognize any claim to identity* and in turn appropriate that identity into itself. This issue is so pressing because the terrorist must be recognized for the exact essentialist identity for which it stands. That is, the terrorist commits violence in the name of an essential identity against enemies that are understood as equally essential, or as Benjamin explains, "The terrorist attack is always against an identity and in the name of another identity." (Benjamin, 2002, p.3). It is obvious then that there is no middle ground in this violence, only two poles, and of course it is obvious that counter-terrorist discourse (even the War on Terror itself) employs the same essentialist thought when it seeks out and attempts to kill every possible enemy. Pragmatically, neither of these positions offer a future free from violence, but more importantly, neither of these positions offer an ethically sound direction. They are nothing more than two sides of the same sword. Instead of these essentialist positions then, the terror embedded within the terrorist-fag should be understood as a potential site of resistance only in the terms offered up by a British reporter who in the aftermath of the London transit bombings (and before the monumental bloodshed of these attacks was known) declared that, "These attacks are designed more to terrorize than to inflict maximum casualties." (BBC, Breaking News, July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2005).

Let us seriously consider this statement then, *the notion of a series of attacks that are not meant to kill, but only to terrorize*; and furthermore, let us offer this up as a mantra for the terrorist-fag, and for the war-machine that can be bred from these representations. Existing outside the state, in a hybridized form with a vocal and declared

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to-male) sex within Israeli cinema, where he makes explicit the notion that, "...anal sex becomes for some Palestinian men a practice of resistance to Israeli domination." (Yousef, 2002, p.536).

enemy of the state, the terrorist-fag can (and should be) subverted into a new crossbreed that reclaims its frightening emergence. In this sense, the argument that was presented in the second chapter – that the figure of the fag was superimposed atop the figure of the terrorist in order to sap the terrorist of its frightening qualities – can be reversed here, and the terrorist fag can itself be literally reversed into the fag-terrorist. This figure can then exist outside of all state identities and outside of all state thought. The fag-terrorist can employ what is radical about both these figures and build atop them, presenting a face which resists homogenization and appropriation and rather, points to the nodes of cross-referencing, of hybridization, and of appropriation that are available to all citizens of the state<sup>42</sup>. These movements stem from a longstanding push within feminist, post-colonial and queer theory to avoid the identity categories that force people into specific positions and rather focus on a multiplicity of identities, desires, and references that can destabilize the power relations built from these stagnant categories. Scott explains this theoretical movement by explaining that, “Polymorphous desire and the fluid, non-fixed identities they entail do not allow for the power hierarchies many wish to erect and maintain.” (Scott, 1997, p.67). Resistance emerges from within these identities by incorporating certain ideas and powers which characterize the hegemonic sphere and subverting them back to a minority. Bhabha explains these operations, particularly within a post-colonial contest, by explaining that hybridization is an operation whereby, “...colonial representations and individuation that reverses the effects of the colonialist disavowal [is undertaken] so that the other ‘denied’ knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and

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<sup>42</sup> It is important to note that this type of hybridization is still an ethically challenging position because it relies on certain dominant positions (heterosexuality in particular) to make literal the hybridized identity. For more information of the challenges of underlying heterosexism within theories of hybridization see Yosef, 2002, p.555.

estrangle the basis of its authority.” (Bhabha, 1994, p.114) The terror that is referenced here is built along these same lines, as a terror that is embedded in the polymorphous desire and shifting identities of subjects free from categorization and hence freed to challenge dominant discourses through a radical reversal. Terror, in this sense builds upon the same frightening and radical qualities that Derrida applies to the monster figure. To return to an earlier quote that was offered in chapter 2, we can see Derrida’s monster in an entirely different light:

...But as soon as one perceives a monster in a monster, one begins to domesticate it, one begins, because of the ‘as such’ – it is a monster *as* monster – to compare it to the norms, to analyse it, consequently to master whatever could be terrifying in the figure of the monster. (Derrida, from Rai, 2004, p.553)

Whereas before this reference was understood as emblematic of the mechanisms which discipline and render docile a monstrous figure, now we can understand this position from a stance where the monster figure can be actively engaged with and used as a potential site of resistance rather than a site of passive appropriation. That is, we can understand the monster and its frightening qualities as a site of resistance for every citizen and we can understand this site as a position that cannot be brought into state discourse. What separates this understanding from the original one is the inclusion of agency that can be applied to the monster figure; to choose to be outside of norms and to choose to be outside of the state can be an active decision, and the monster figure can always be reinvented in order to maintain its frightening qualities.

To terrorize without killing can be a new slogan for these new monsters then. Keep the terror, keep that which is frightening and that which challenges all of the state’s formations, but remove the death, because death is a state power and not a mode of resistance. Become a monster, become abnormal, become a body of terror, become an



outside, become an excess and become unknowable; all of these actions separate the person and the body from the state powers which hopes to appropriate them, freeing them from the slow erosion of subjecthood and agency that is a hallmark of the state. To terrorize then, to stand up and present yourself as outside of the state, and outside of the state's thought is one mode of resistance for all people, for citizens and non-citizens alike, and it is one way to reclaim the subjecthood that has been violently stripped by biopower and sovereign power simultaneously.

These new configurations and new bodies present themselves in direct opposition to the sovereign's body here. To return again to Franco's near dead body here, we can see the very limits of his corporeality and, just as it was in Spain in 1975, we see that, "Franco was dying slowly, the country was changing rapidly, and his living could no longer contain excess any longer." (Pavlovic, 2003, p.73). The limits of the sovereign's body are overwhelmed in the face of these oppositions, and power is located again in the blood of the fallen sovereign. This time though, the blood that reinforces power is not the spilled blood of a sovereign, but the sharing of blood by his subjects. Shared blood, a marker of power that constructs one of the nexuses of biopower, the family, is reconceived here<sup>43</sup>. Instead of thinking of blood in the sense of similarity and homogenization, the blood in the fag-terrorist is mixed and different; it is fluid between fluid. The figure of the sovereign collapses under these pressures, when all of the nations blood is not filtered through his own body his power is vacated. Simultaneously, when

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<sup>43</sup> It would be naïve to not consider the current debate surrounding same-sex marriage here and, more importantly, to further consider the conservative drawbacks of this particular rights discourse. Gay marriage, while obviously being a right worth fighting over, is still a particularly conservative and heteronormative ideal that places the family at the center of the nation, and that excludes any alternate form of home and family from being created. In this sense, the blood that is being shared in a family (straight or queer) should be recognized as a limiting and privileged position that subordinates other blood and bodily fluids that should be included in our contemporary rights discourse.

shared blood is not understood as a nexus of power for the family, but instead is understood as the splattered blood from an *attack*, new alignments and new citizenships are opened up. Here, power is truly freed from any exercises of top down domination and also freed from the positive power of disciplinary technologies, instead power is fluid and slippery, moving alongside resistance from one site to the next.

The parallels between security and terror, between the monster, the terrorist-fag and the fag-terrorist, between the war machine and the state, and between the old suicide bomber and the new one all become potential lines of flight here. Where security saps citizens of their rights and even of themselves, terror opens up a space to reclaim these missing pieces of the body. Where the terrorist-fag references the fears and disciplining mechanism which render it docile, the fag-terrorist builds on the fears and resistance which makes it radical. Where the state offers only narrow paths of resistance (paths which are in themselves simply another node of state power), the war machine offers unending nodes of resistance, of becoming, and of free action. Finally, where old suicide bombers destroy themselves in order to destroy others, new suicide bombers destroy their fixed identities in order to attach themselves and morph with others<sup>44</sup>.

To destroy oneself, to detach oneself from the fixed positions of identity and from their already-appropriated positions...to become a suicide bomber...to make new connections, new subjectivities, new bodies and new flesh by morphing with those around you becomes the ultimate position of the war machine. A new machine is assembled here: a machine that opposes those state actions that make all of us, all of the

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<sup>44</sup> Jasbir Puar references this same work of self-destruction by understanding the suicide bomber as a queer assemblage with the ultimate potential of uprooting the entire structure of the War on Terror, explaining that, "This dissolution of self into other/s and other/s into self not only effaces the absolute mark of self and other/s in the war on terror, it produces a systemic challenge to the entire order of Manichaeian rationality that organizes the rubric of good versus evil." (Puar, 2005, p.130)

state's people, complicit with murder and violence across the globe, a machine that finds comrades and colleagues in a multitude of bodies across a specter of race, class, religion, gender, sex, sexual orientation and nationality, and a machine that provides the means to oppose those state powers (biopower and sovereign power alike) that chip away at ourselves and our bodies over time. The body here is no longer a site of subjugation, a conglomerate of flesh that can be stripped from the qualities imbued and granted to humans, and is instead a point of departure, a point from which to connect with other people and other subjectivities and a point which can be abandoned and destroyed countless times over only to be rebuilt and reconnected with new alliances and new thought. It's true what that British police officer said in the aftermath of the London transit bombings - *you don't have to be a suicide bomber in a liberal democracy* – but maybe, just maybe, you should be one.

## **Conclusion**

**Dreams/Desires**

**Reading Corpses and Writing on Bodies**

*Opening up to the fantastical wonders of futurity is the most powerful of political and critical strategies, whether it be through assemblage or to something as yet unknown, perhaps even forever unknowable*

- Jasbir Puar, *Queer Times, Queer Assemblages*

*(Touch me. I will disappear*

*Listen beside speaking.*

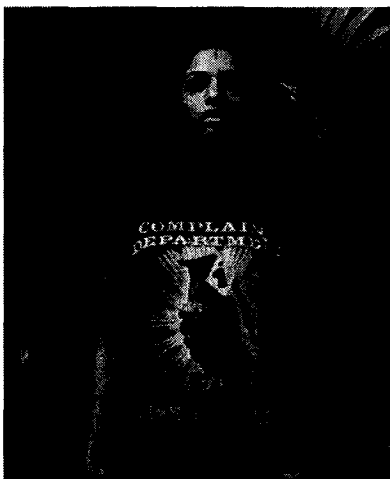
*If I say that I no longer read, I'm lying*

*I'm lighting a flame next to a thing in danger of catching fire.)*

- Gail Scott, *Je Nathaniel*

Throughout this research, I have worked to avoid any sense of causality between all of the nodal points and connections I have made. My goal was never to establish a history and line of argumentation of the body – extrapolating from one event to the next and writing a narrative that connects them all – but rather, was to address these moments as a complex web and a series of conjunctures. This work, one that owes as much to my own theoretical and epistemological background as it does to any other perception of these realities, has left me with several blind spots that must be addressed.

These blind spots simultaneously exist within my own work and extend beyond it, reaching out to much larger questions that need to be confronted. Specifically, I am thinking about the notions of praxis and politics that I have deployed in figures such as the fag-terrorist, the terrorist-fag, and the detainee. As the most basic of figures then, I'm thinking about two particular women here, both musicians, both deemed 'radical' by music critics for the politics they are meant to represent, both emblemized by acronyms – M.I.A and NATO – and both muted symbols of a politics I would like to confront.



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<sup>45</sup> From <http://www.justconcerts.com/concertinfo/concerts/mia/050510/mia2.jpg> Last Accessed December 29th 2005

The best place to start is with M.I.A, the Sri-Lankan born British refugee cum critics' darling and budding pop star, whose music is trumped only by her romantic background. The recent GQ music issue summed up the press' neat desire to wrap hybridization into M.I.A in both music and character when it claimed, "In 2005, you can't get much cooler than the art-school educated daughter of a Sri Lankan revolutionary whose debut album combines Jamaican dancehall, Indian bhangra and Brazilian baile funk." (GQ, August 2005). The markers that are challenging in M.I.A - her implicit support of terrorism, her hybridized British-Sri Lankan identity that is neither British nor Sri Lankan, and her cross-cultural musical influences - become markers of 'cool' here. These radical challenges to long standing traditions (both musical and cultural) are packaged up and swallowed as the next big thing in the press.



At the same time, there is M.I.A's counterpart, NATO, whose emergence into the musical landscape has been met with suspicion and contempt by the press and the public at large. Where M.I.A's background and unique materialization into the music world is marked by a certain sense of authenticity, NATO, the newest product of Russian

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<sup>46</sup> From [http://www.netlexfrance.com/weblogs/images/2005/nato-denissinyakov\\_21845.jpg](http://www.netlexfrance.com/weblogs/images/2005/nato-denissinyakov_21845.jpg) Last Accessed December 29th 2005

producer Ivan Shapovalov – the man who brought the world T.A.T.U – has been recognized as an attempt to fraudulently profit on these same markers. NATO is a character essentially created by Shapovalov, an anonymous woman who is supposed to be from Chechnya, dressed in the black hijab synonymous with the regions ‘Black Widow’ suicide bombers, and whose debut concert was scheduled for September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2004. Shapovalov’s attempts to profit off of these radical markers are of course easily discernable, but at the same time, he points to the effective neutralizing character of his tactics, that is, he points to the fact that one of the easiest ways to remove radicalism from today’s current political landscape is to commercialize it. This theme emerge as a trope when he explains that, “I would just like people to realize that when the music plays, guns keep silence (sic).” (The Blowup Magazine, Spring/Summer 2005, p.14). For Shapovalov this is absolutely true, his quick commodification of these symbols is exactly what neutralizes them - what keeps the guns silent - what saps these figures of any potential energy then is not a defeat on a battlefield, it is a defeat on a cultural landscape<sup>47</sup>.

Way back in 1981, Stuart Hall noted that, “This year’s radical symbol or slogan will be neutralized into next year’s fashion; the year after, it will be the object of profound cultural nostalgia.” (Hall, 1981). It is in this very sense then that one must look at a *product* such as NATO with a very suspicious eye, as an obvious and offensive attempt to profit off of that which is meant to frighten us and as a clear attempt to

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<sup>47</sup> This same theme emerged as a joke on *The Daily Show with John Stuart* in the aftermath of the London Transit bombings. When John asked his reporter about England’s *problem* with extremist Muslim youth, the reporter responded that, “Well, Jon, they need to do what saved our youth. Radicalism must be commercialized. Take all that anger and disenfranchisement and channel it through the marketing departments of soft-drink and/or videogame companies.” (See [http://blogs.knoxnews.com/knx/pickle/archives/2005/08/daily\\_delights.shtml](http://blogs.knoxnews.com/knx/pickle/archives/2005/08/daily_delights.shtml) for the transcript).



homogenize that which represents difference. It is obvious that radicalism can be quickly bought up and sold to consumers, and almost any radical position is subordinated to a market that is constantly grabbing new ideas and identities and scratching them out into new positions and new slogans.

This commercialization of radicalism is something which must be addressed, especially in the light of the romantic figure of the terrorist-fag. When these markers are tied together, or even when they are left apart and open, it is important to question how they exist within a marketplace that is capable of such quick domestication, that is, it is important to consider their existence in relation to a longer history of the nation, of resistance, and of the body. Today, when an individual bent on radical change discovers the potential of working with the *Reebok Human Rights Foundation*© or *MTV University Activism*© to affect this change, one cannot help but wonder what this type of sponsorship does to these ideas, and further more, one must consider where true change will actually come from, and what it may actually look like. The question then is where these markers, queer or terror, exist?

Jasbir Puar gives us a blunt answer to these issues, explaining that, “It is not, then, that we must engage in the practice of excavating the queer terrorist or queering the terrorist; rather, queerness is always already installed in the project of naming the terrorist; the terrorist does not appear as such without the concurrent entrance of perversion, deviance, deformity.” (Puar, 2005, p. 127). This connection then is different from the process of creating a queer reading of the terrorist, and rather is one of recognizing the always present interplay between the queer and the terrorist. This interplay, one that is offered up time and time again in this research – the queer terrorist

versus the manly, heterosexual soldier, the queer terrorist as a symbol of a simultaneously perverted and oppressive oriental culture, the queer and the terrorist as simultaneous threats to national culture and safety – exist not because it was written here, but rather because it lies firmly in the middle of a long discursive history that links these two ideas. The connections here, between the queer and the terrorist, and between the refugee and the detainee, are all made within a nationalist discourse. It is the sovereign nation that creates these figures, and it is the sovereign nation that joins them together. Queer/Terror and Detainee/Refugee – these figures emerge in resistance not because they avoid the type of commercialization that was addressed earlier, but because of their unique history of exteriority that binds them together, tying their flesh in knots and spitting them outside.

These binding notions hit not just at the heart of this research, but also straight into the body of queer studies itself. Eng, Haberstam and Munoz explain these challenges by reminding us that the term queer was first deployed within the public as, "...a term that challenged the normalizing mechanisms of state power to name its sexual subjects: male or female, married or single, heterosexual or homosexual, natural or perverse." (Eng, Haberstam and Munoz, 2005, p.1). This challenge, both academic and pragmatic, stands in opposition to national and state formations that seek to dominate the population, and therefore only works to further reinforce the exteriority of the *subjects* of queer studies. So, while it is obvious that the binding tie between the queer and the terrorist is located in these dichotomies (particularly the natural/perverse dualism) that are formulated through state power, it is important to acknowledge that this challenging stance is one that must constantly be renegotiated in the light of changing

social/legal/political circumstances, again Eng, Haberstam and Munoz elucidate this point, explaining that today:

The contemporary mainstreaming of gay and lesbian identity – as a mass-mediated consumer lifestyle and embattled legal category – demands a renewed queer studies ever vigilant to the fact that sexuality is intersectional, not extraneous to other modes of difference, and calibrated to a firm understanding of queer as a political metaphor without a fixed referent. (2005, p.1).

This demand, one that is as much an issue of consumerism as it is of academic honesty, is emblemized in a figure such as NATO and more importantly, is one that I must address in reference to my own construction of figures in this research.

To return initially to Shapovalov's NATO, we can see that his attempt to capitalize on each of these markers, queer and terror, renegotiates their present positions as well as their historic connections. When he sells a faux lesbian teenage duo and an equally fraudulent suicide bomber as pop commodities, he would, at first glance, appear to be negating the powerful resistance of the figures. The end result though is something different - yes, Shapovalov successfully markets and drains these figures, changing the nation's excess into its idols - but this transformation is always false and is always little more than a variation of liberal tolerance. Their exteriority is the marketing pull, and while one could naively see this as a movement of inclusion, it is rather a similar tactic of divisiveness – it separates good queers from bad queers and good bombers from bad bombers – and while we have the glistening wet teenage lesbian duo we still have the bull dyke, and while we have pop idol suicide bombers we still have real, terrifying suicide bombers. These types of commodification and tolerance pushes further outside these frightening figures, making their exteriority smoother, more recognizable and making

their space less striated<sup>48</sup>. What is learned from Shapovalov then is not the trick to negating these radical figures, but is rather something more akin to *Will and Grace* syndrome – where queers are marked without any trace of sexual desire and where terrorists are marked without any violence – and where these platitudes of *inclusion* and *tolerance* do little more than reinforce the exteriority and difference of real, living queers and terrorists.

The question then is how this exteriority, one that exists outside of the state apparatus and one that I have identified as being between biopower and sovereign power, can exist. Is it a fiction written atop these bodies, much like the inverse of the fiction Shapovalov gives us in T.A.T.U. and NATO, or is there a real component to this outside? Giorgio Agamben points to the refugee as a figure that heralds in a new future when he writes that, “At least until the process of the dissolution of the nation-state and its sovereignty has come to an end, the refugee is the sole category in which it is possible today to perceive the forms and limits of a political community to come.” (Agamben, 1994) and this work locates this same resistance in these hybridized identities of the queer and the terrorist. The basic notions are the same here: these are both figures of (un)belonging, of difference, of exteriority and of extraterritoriality. These figures are *essentially* homeless and decentered, spinning alone and impossible to capture. For these figures to exist outside of the state and to remain in these positions though, it is important that they be impossible to capture by simple marketing ploys. This exteriority can only work, can only exist, if it is tied to the national discourses that have brought these figures

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<sup>48</sup> I am using these two terms, smooth and striated, in direct reference to Deleuze and Guattari’s work. By pushing these figures further outside through this process of tolerance, the multiple connections available to these figures – the queer and the terrorist – and their potential assemblages into a machine existing outside of the state are more evident. This type of tolerance and commercialization only furthers the anti-state and anti-nationalist stance of their potential war machine. See Deleuze and Guattari, 1987 for further reading.

together throughout their histories and if it is recognized as being something more substantial than a simple exercise of reading their particular situations.

This then is the final issue that is left for me to address in this research, one that I began addressing in the third chapter and one that I have tried to confront through figures such as NATO and M.I.A. in this chapter. To be specific, the challenge here lies in conceptualizing this exteriority without resorting to a simple and romantic character construction, and even more importantly, the challenge here is to avoid writing resistance onto these bodies. The notion of writing on top of bodies has been central to this research, beginning all the way back with a figure of the most explicit kind, Courbet's *L'Origine du Monde*, and moving to a point where I was no longer reading the ghostly corpses of graphic images and working through their particular content, but was rather constructing figures from these already consumed bodies. There is a great tension between these two activities, between reading images and writing up figures, and this tension arises most when one is trying to imagine a future for these images.

Early on in the introduction, I proposed a basic question that guided much of my inquiry into this research, simply I asked, why had sex and sexuality become an appropriate marker for how we understand our current 'enemy'? It is only now that I am trying to imagine a future from within this research that I realize that an answer to this original question was not exactly what I was looking for. The reason this question was not exactly correct is simple: sex and sexuality have always been markers of the nation, and these markers are made more visible under the configurations of the War on Terror. Beginning with a question like that started me along a path where I would be offering a reading of the War on Terror with these issues at mind, when the reality of what I

produced was very different from this type of reading. My ability to read sex and sexuality from within the War on Terror was only possible because sex was, and had always been, central to the mechanisms of this war. The difference then is an ontological one; originally I set out to critique the nature of this war from a particular standpoint, and in the end, I discovered that my critique and my standpoint were already deeply embedded within the structure of the War on Terror.

While I certainly did read images and offer up and name figures from within the War on Terror, it is only because the War on Terror is itself a conflict marked with a very explicit sexuality, that is, the War on Terror already a specifically heterosexual and specifically heteronormative war. Within this war, there are narratives of the nation and of citizenship, stories of bodies and desires, fables of purity, and myths built on top of skin and flesh. All of these are symbols that do more than simply draw sex and sexuality into this conflict, and rather these are symbols that display the deep-rooted connection between sexuality and war. These are not construction written on flesh or angled readings of bodies because these ideas are already built into the flesh, are already deep within the bones, and are already embedded within this conflict. And while there may be an element of fiction that builds and connects these stories, the end results are not fictional; people are spun off, lives are lost, desires are regulated and bodies are destroyed.

The body remains central to this war and to all wars, in its most elementary of forms these conflicts call for the specific destruction of flesh and the specific construction of corpses, more than this though, warfare and its particular attention to the body exists alongside its own reverberations; reverberations that call for the mere disciplining of desires and of bodies that are deemed unacceptable. These calls for discipline come in

many forms – *too brown, too queer, too violent, too foreign* – but each point to these same *normalizing mechanisms of state power to name its subjects* and to a similar normalizing power to discipline these subjects. These reverberations though, similar to any exercise in power, are never free from resistance, and just as they evolve from within the scope of the War on Terror, so too does this resistance evolve. Just as the War on Terror marks bodies simultaneously for disciplining and destruction, so too does it cast bodies outside of its range and create potential alliances, potential actions, potential war machines and potential assemblages.

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