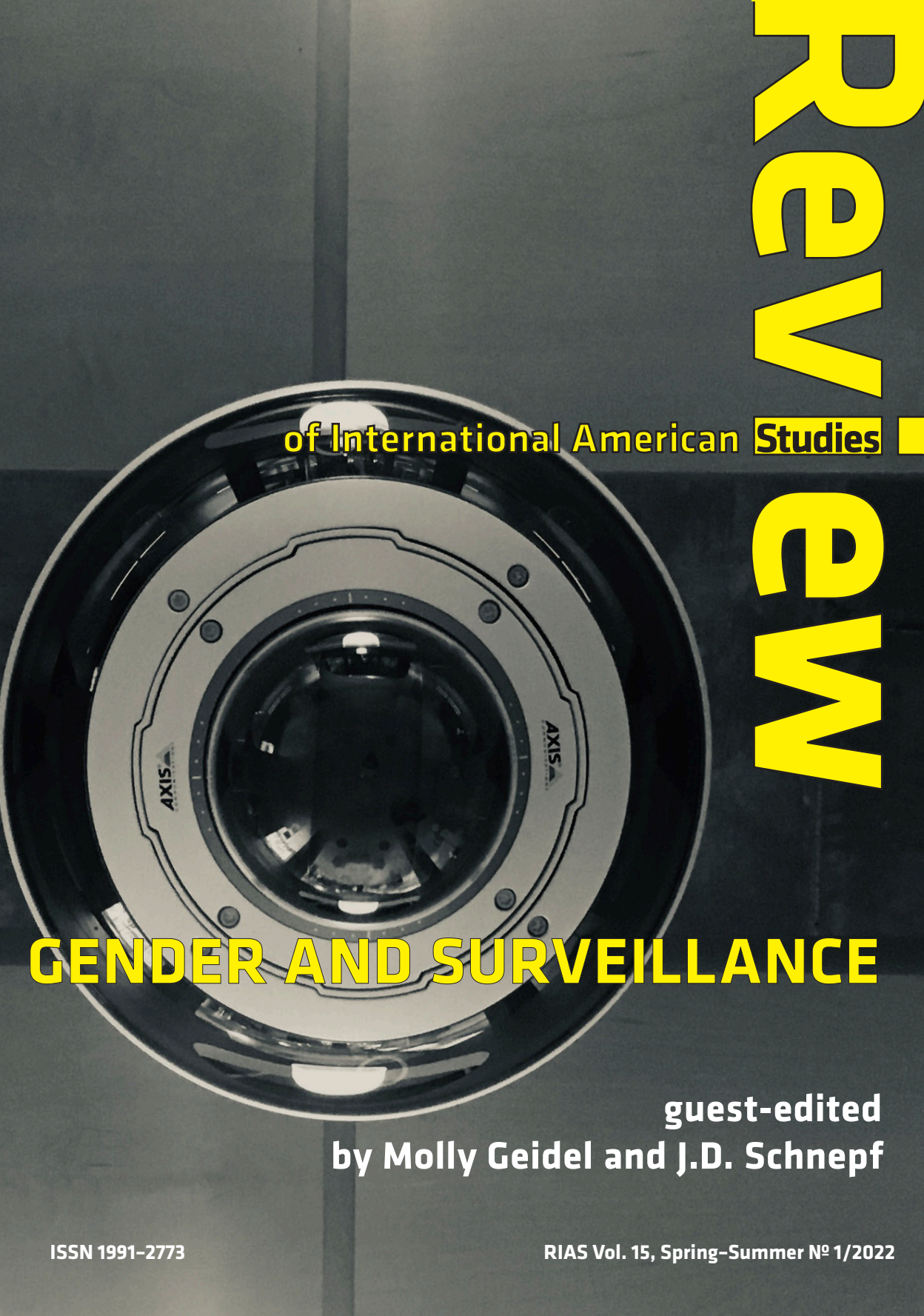

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GENDER AND SURVEILLANCE

guest-edited
by Molly Geidel and J.D. Schnepf

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GAZE. AN IN/SIGHT

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> *There is a recurrent spot where the pattern lolls like a broken neck and two bulbous eyes stare at you upside down. [...] I get positively angry with the impertinence of it and the everlastingness. Up and down and sideways they crawl, and those absurd, unblinking eyes are everywhere.*
>
> *Charlotte Perkins Stetson, "The Yellow Wallpaper"*[1]

Time passes, yet the validity of the yellow wallpaper as a quintessential metaphor of gendered surveillance seems never to wane. Over the past century, a wide range of theoretical approaches have been applied to the phenomenon in question and with each cultural (or, perhaps more precisely, technological) caesura new insights present themselves as key to the understanding of the scale and impact of the everlasting, impertinent, controlling gaze. One of the more illuminating texts to address the evolution of our understanding of surveillance is the 2017 essay "Bentham, Deleuze and Beyond: An Overview of Surveillance Theories from the Panopticon to Participation," in which Maša Galič, Tjerk Timan, and Bert-Jaap Koops attempt to answer the question, "where does surveillance theory stand now?" The text, acknowledging the enduring relevance of Foucault's account of the normalizing function of supervision under the regime of disciplinary power, takes stock of technologi-

1. See https://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/theliteratureofprescription/exhibitionAssets/digitalDocs/The-Yellow-Wall-Paper.pdf (Stetson: 649–650). Charlotte Perkins Stetson would become better known as Charlotte Perkins Gilman.

cal developments that have occurred since *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (*Surveiller et punir : Naissance de la prison*) was first published in France in 1975.

> In the past two decades, [the authors observe,] many new layers have been added to real-space surveillant assemblages, with systems such as dataveillance supplementing rather than replacing classic systems of surveillance such as CCTV. In that sense, the Panopticon remains a powerful metaphor. However, the institutions that Foucault recognised as disciplining forces have altered in shape, place, visibility and dynamics. In addition, notions of self-surveillance point to new dynamics, where watching oneself via a mediated, mobile and networked gaze still raises questions of power, discipline and control, but in potentially new ways that cannot be easily captured in classic surveillance frameworks. Thus, many contemporary theoretical approaches to surveillance revolve around de-centralised forms of surveillance, with many watching many and with various permutations of machines and humans watching machines and humans. What binds many strands together are core questions of power and control, of who watches whom in which settings for what reasons; and these questions are asked in settings of technological infrastructures and tools, where technology functions as an intermediary of power or control dynamics. (Galič, Timan, & Koops 2017: 33)

Yet, although the rhizomatic architecture of contemporary surveillance technologies can no longer be easily identified with centralized power or even with (exclusively) human agency (as, according to the authors, the former binary opposition between the inspectors and the controlled has been rendered multidimensional), the split between the advocates and critics of omnipresent control remains sharp, including within the space of academia, where panopticism became a philosophical category already in the 1970s.

> In 1975 the French philosopher Foucault coined the term "panopticism" which quickly became used to describe Bentham's utilitarian theory as a whole. Panopticism is the theorization of surveillance society derived from Bentham's project of a prison, with an all-seeing inspector. In his wake, the works of Michelle Perrot and J.A. Miller targeted Bentham's Panopticon as the epitome of disciplinary society at its worst. At the same time, in the United States, similar contentions were being made. Gertrude Himmelfarb and Charles Bahmueller adopted the view that Bentham did not consider paupers as fully-fledged human beings. However, since the 1990s the London-based Bentham Project has been developing far deeper insights into Bentham's panoptic

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thought, as Janet Semple and Michael Quinn have studied, respectively, the prison-Panopticon and the pauper-Panopticon. Their research has highlighted the strength of Bentham's proposals in various fields, including prison- and pauper-management. Their analyses of Bentham's project are more balanced, and stress the benefits of the Panopticon for inmates, and also the fairness of the system. Philip Shofield explains that "[Foucault's interpretation of the Panopticon] would have seemed very odd to Bentham, who regarded his Panopticon prison as humane, and an enormous improvement on the practices of the criminal justice system of the time." (Brunon-Ernst 2016: 2–3)

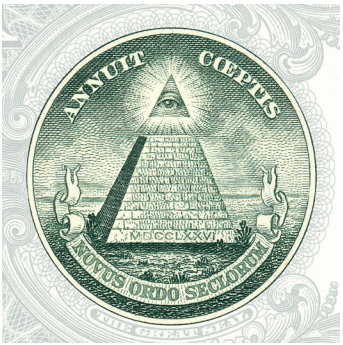
The academic debates, unsurprisingly, reflect positions observable in the social practice. On the one hand, the proponents of the proliferation of surveillance technologies that seek to manage and control crime would argue that intelligent CCTV systems protect both property (destruction/theft) and individuals (harassment/violence); streaming smartphone applications allow the general public immediate access to unprocessed footage of events once subject to TV montage and available only through official channels, thereby leaving less room to blatant manipulation; AI-based algorithms of face and movement recognition speed up immigration processing at airports and aid police in their search for wanted criminals; dataveillance serves to prevent cyberviolence and to propel attention-based economy by means of advertising tailored to individual needs.

On the other, as Ruha Benjamin observes, surveillance technology that seeks social control through carceral logics "aids and abets the process by which carcerality penetrates social life" (2). As she explains, "[i]t does so, in part, because technoscientific approaches seem to 'fix' the problem of human bias when it comes to a wide range activities" (2). On the contrary, such fixes "nevertheless sediment existing hierarchies" (3). These problems embedded in everyday forms of surveillance have already given rise to a plethora of popular culture artifacts that seek to critique surveillance society (the most popular of which include such Netflix series as *Black Mirror* or *Mr. Robot*), inspired the adoption of binding documents, regulating the human-AI relations (such as the European Commission's *White Paper on Artificial Intelligence–A European Approach to Excellence and Trust*), and generated a long list of academic publications addressing the question of the relationship between

technology, algorithmization, and ethics (such as those collected in the 42nd issue of the journal *Er(r)go. Theory–Literature–Culture* titled *Machine–Subject–Power*).

Irrespective of the position one might take, it is undeniable that the digitally networked technologies available today are a transnational, transcultural, and translocal fact, necessitating a variety of forms of self-surveillance and, oftentimes, identity fashioning, which yields fruit not only in terms of the proliferation of experimental avatars, but also, interestingly, encouraging the creative adoption of avatar-like personas in the real world. At the same time, the blending of virtual space and actual space complicates the "classical" understanding of panoptic surveillance as Galič, Timan, and Koops suggest. Indeed, as some scholars have argued, the freedom afforded by the Internet has enhanced the personal and collective liberties of once strictly marginalized social groups, encouraging activism and self-organization, owing to which, like the lyrical "I" of Lorna Crozier's poetry analyzed by Zuzanna Szatanik in her groundbreaking book *De-Shamed. Feminist Strategies of Transgression* (to which I will presently return), the e-subject today *returns the gaze* of the inspector without reservation.

However, none of the advantages of such a turn changes the fact that the Internet, and more specifically web 2.0 platforms, facilitate surveillance through economically driven, de-centered technological infrastructures that serve the ultimate purpose of desiring-production. Faceless, these corporate entities can do without *annuit cœptis*; the bills bearing the motto suffice. Rhizomatic, in-human, beyond ethics, they answer to no-one. The Internet, in its creative schizophrenia, encourages openness (often adopting the forms, of virtual coming-out, blatant exhibitionism, or narcissistic self-fashioning) but such visibility, unsurprisingly, comes at the cost of the (potential or actual) exposure to inspection. The all-seeing technology, in turn, propels the development of numerous strategies of resistance to panoptic



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control, giving rise to the anarchy of digital nomadism in a queer post-anthropocentric world, shared by both human subjects, non-anthropic agencies, and anthropotechnical hybrids, that harbor the potential to be more and more immune to gendered surveillance[2].

Yet, despite the technological leap, the de-genderization of surveillance is unlikely to happen "automatically," or soon. Desired and abhorred, wished for and fought against, whether protective or oppressive—surveillance, older than the hills, is never neutral. Since before culture could be documented in writing, humans would pray to all-seeing gods in hope that the immortals would *watch over them* and protect them against perils. Divine protection, however, has always come at a price. Irrespective of the religion, the promise of the deliverance from (variously construed) evil hinges upon the believer's readiness to dutifully observe gods-given laws. Defiance, impossible to hide from the all-seeing eye, does not only strip one of the "protected" status—it also dooms one to (inevitable) punishment. Why then would anyone choose to transgress? Why not entrust oneself to surveillance if there is nothing sinister to hide? What could be wrong about abiding by the laws? Is it not more rational to be a model citizen and raise one's family in a condominium surveyed by hundreds of CCTV cameras equipped with movement detectors that will alert security on watch 24/7 should anything "abnormal" come to pass rather than in an unprotected neighborhood? Is it not better to be in the winning camp than among the "renegades"? To be protected rather than to confront endless agonies of fear? To claim otherwise would be absurd.

Or would it? After all, such choices are obvious if and only if you can afford them because you either are in the winning camp already, or at least because you *believe* that you are in it. Then, disinclined to question the laws at the foundations of the "norm" that favors you, you may discover that the surveillance you accept as good is only good because you *believe* that its lens is leveled at the Others, who, for one reason or another, fail to meet your camp's entry requirements. After all, *annuit cœptis*: the Providence has

2. See, for instance, Piotr Gorliński-Kucik's article "On Liberatory Strategies of Digital Nomads" (Gorliński-Kucik 2021)

always-already approved the acts of those who would construe the all-seeing eye as their ally in the first place.

At first sight, what follows is a platitude: propaganda notwithstanding, we are not yet all "winners" in the socio-political struggle—and even a cursory survey of studies dedicated to the present-day dynamics of race, class, and gender will *obviously* confirm it. Thus, for all those whose chief transgression would be to attempt sneaking into the winning camp without proper credentials, surveillance, whether historically or today, poses an often impenetrable barrier; for those aspiring to it or already in it, it is a Panopticon—a measure warranting continued docility, a complex, often ambivalent, instrument of what Michel Foucault would dub *normation* (1991: 183)[3]. In such a context, despite the achievements of the technological revolution of the digital era, the connectivity between power, gender, and surveillance seems only too obvious: it is manifest not only in institutionalized "oversight" over disadvantaged genders, but, as Zuzanna Szatanik explains it in the "Introduction" to her 2011 book on feminist strategies of resistance to the discursive practices of patriarchal control, it is often tantamount to the coercive, although often disembodied, masculine gaze. Such a gaze shames women (and nonbinary people) into obedience with respect to the norm; it becomes the "perpetual penalty that traverses all points and supervises every instant in the disciplinary institutions, compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes" or, "[i]n short, it normalizes" (Foucault, 1991: 183).

Shame is a common sensation. An unpleasant contraction felt when one is caught red-handed, shame is manifest on a blushing face. It makes one feel both exorbitantly aware of being and, at the same time, desperate not to be: to disappear or hide. As such, it is an antithetic emotion, described in terms of freezing, withdrawal or paralysis, as well as burning, aggrandisement or transgression. Because of the fact that shame is felt in and on the body, and, at the same time, breaches the body's limits, it makes one feel too large or too small, both indiscernible and overexposed. A shamed person is therefore perplexingly (un)framed. Indeed, the angst inscribed in the experience of shame is that of "losing face": the fundamental "(Who) am I?" becomes inevitable. [...] Shame,

3. See also Christopher R. Mayes's article "Revisiting Foucault's 'Normative Confusions': Surveying the Debate Since the *Collège de France* Lectures" (Mayes 2015).

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at the same time, is a cultural phenomenon. Inscribed within basic discourses of the culture of the West, it becomes an instrument of power and subjection. As such, it not only merits a fullfledged study, but also calls for a remedy. As a function of the language rooted in androcentric metanarratives, it has detrimentally affected women since the time immemorial—not only at the level describable in terms of sociopolitical dynamics between (traditionally conceived) genders, but also at the level of the body: a non-discursive entity beyond language. Born in discourse, cultural shame transcends discourse; yet, even though the body will not lend itself to deconstructions, rhetorical strategies of shaming, which involve the attribution of values to the body, will. The underlying assumption of the argument presented in this book is that, like shame, the rhetorical disempowerment of shaming discourses will manifest itself in and on the shameless body: at home with one's body, the de-shamed self becomes "riftless." No longer politically disciplined or coerced, such a self may seek its own definition beyond inherited categories: Woman's self, no longer determined by the androcentric language, loses rigid fixity imposed by patriarchal categories: instead, it brings a plethora of possible alternatives into play. (Szatanik 2011: 19)

As it seems, the gendered Panopticon, a concept that initially could have been perceived as banal, emerges as a rather complex phenomenon. Surveillance, perceived in such a perspective, although one might intuitively be inclined to reduce it to the sphere of visual perceptions alone, appears to be an essential thread in the texture of the androcentric metanarrative, surfacing not only in the physical acts of vigilance particularly sensitized to non-male transgressions, but—above all—encoded in the language of everyday axiology. This language, rooted in traditional religious discourses, was more recently reinforced by the authority of the historically male-dominated academia, which suggested the association of the definition of femininity with infantilism or with such degrading concepts as "penis envy," "hysteria," or "masturbatory insanity."[4] Such semantics, reinforcing dominant hierarchies, underlie far more than the primitive lingo of male chauvinism today: in fact, they rest at the fundament of the androcentric system of values, warranting the stability of the status quo. The passage of time notwithstand-

4. This is further exemplified by early practices in therapy, in which the female patient, "yielding" herself "to psychoanalysis," is expected to "abandon herself" to the talking cure, a process conducted and controlled by a male therapist (Szatanik 2011: 23).

ing, patriarchal rhetoric continues to supply the brick and mortar necessary for the upkeep of the gendered Panopticon's functionality. Interiorized androcentric definitions, splitting humankind into the simple heteronormative binary of masculinity and femininity, keep all disadvantaged genders (including heterosexual women) on their tiptoes, coercing individuals into "beauty"/"chivalry," or forcing them into hiding/locking them in their closets, or—in a still different dimension—relegating those who have dared to age or put on weight to the margins of the acceptable "norm." Needless to say, even the apparently "democratic" forms of oversight, such as the present day participatory surveillance (community-based monitoring of individual behaviors), may serve such a purpose.

For all these reasons, de-shaming, as a process requiring the deployment of language against itself in order to deconstruct the binaries underlying the ossified system of values, is far from easy:

> we are born into and raised in a language that has always already defined our reality. And yet, literature, the testing ground for ideas, remains far from "exhausted." Poised against language, self-conscious and self-reflective, literature has the power of annulling and redefining categories not only by deconstructing fundamental oppositions upon which central metanarratives rest, but also by its capacity of exposing the reader to an experience which in itself transgresses discourse. An act of reading, as well as an act of writing, is an existential act, throwing one into the liminal space where the organising principles of the dominant discourses collapse. (Szatanik 2011: 20)

Contemporary women's literature, as Szatanik's case study demonstrates, "returns the gaze": when this happens, the inspector no longer sees the inmates with whose control he has been culturally entrusted. Locked in his *anopticon*[5], he sees nothing, unaware that he himself has transmogrified into the object of the alleged inmates' scrutiny.

Hopeful as Szatanik's findings are, the moment when the inspector/inmate binary (deconstructed in such a vision) ultimately becomes null and void may never arrive. Still, irrespective of what the future

5. The term has been coined by Umberto Eco in his book of essays *Il secondo diario minimo* (1992), translated into English by William Weaver in 1994 as *How To Travel With A Salmon and Other Essays*. See footnote 4 in Galič, Timan, & Koops (2017: 14).

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brings, Szatanik's book makes an important foray into the question of *agency* within the complexity of the largely globalized, Internet-enhanced culture at the onset of the third decade of the second millennium. Her study, emphasizing affects, allows one to infer that not only is human agency in the context of surveillance far from *passé*, but also that without a critical recontextualization taking into account the present scholarly moment, theoretical argumentation reducing Foucauldian thought solely to historical reflection on the disciplinary society and transplanting it directly onto other fields of study (such as feminist or queer studies) does little more than scratch the surface of the phenomena at stake today. In the long run, no "convenient" simplifications will do justice to the utilitarian dimension of surveillance as Jeremy Bentham envisaged it, or to the actual practice of oversight (including the various forms of the much-debated cancel culture) as we experience it in the 21st century. Especially given that, as Anne Brunon-Ernst notes,

> [t]o readers familiar with Foucault's—or Bentham's—works, examining the Bentham-Foucault relationship in this way is far from self-explanatory; quite the contrary, it is, and seeks to be provocative, especially when the works of both authors on Panopticon—Bentham's inspection-house principle of utilitarian management—are considered. [...] There are traditionally two schools of thought in Bentham studies. On the one hand, the authoritarian school contends that Bentham is the mastermind of authoritarian state control. On the other hand, the liberal school contends that Bentham thinks in terms of the rule of law, and aims at promoting civil and political rights. These two perspectives have always coexisted in academia, as is shown by Élie Halévy's 1901 statement that Bentham's thought was divided between the preservation of liberty and authoritarian social reform. (Brunon-Ernst 2016: 2)

Important as they are, studies such as Brunon-Ernst's seem to indicate that scholars today must seek a way out of a standstill. Intuitively, academia is no longer content which the somewhat unproductive suspension between the two "classical" poles of ethical reflection: "authoritarian state control" (usually construed as "evil") vs. "promotion of civil and political rights" (usually construed as "good"). Yet, seeking to transcend the traditional binary in their search for a solid methodological basis for the study

of a phenomenon whose cultural impact extends well beyond "good" and "evil," scholars realize that even in their own rhizomatic reality, the most important questions concerning surveillance remain, essentially, ethical in nature. Paradoxically, it is so, because even if an alternative, non-binary—Deleuzoguattarian, Xenofeminist, or Posthumanist—perspective is adopted, the problem of *agency* remains central to the debate. Whether AI or human-controlled, the machinery of oversight, ultimately, is the machinery of normalization, and as such it must, by definition, overlook the fundamentals of its own programming. The "norm," in other words, whoever or whatever institutes it, remains "under the radar." Normation, however, even if operating beyond "traditional" distinctions, remains the basic motive of oversight. Hampering the possibility of creative transgression—the prerequisite of change—it may well become the ultimate cultural steamroller. Eliminating individuality, transforming privacy into a voyeuristic travesty, manipulating groups, responsible to no one, the depersonalized, global surveillance has imperceptibly transformed the ethics of honesty ("I have *nothing* to hide") into the ethics of dishonesty ("I have *no way* to hide"). Born upon the ruins of intimacy, the human revolution, fought in the name of the right of an individual to defy the rule of the algorithm, is at hand.

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INTRODUCTION

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2022 has been marked by an intensification in gendered surveillance. The new contours of this surveillance regime have become starkly apparent in the United States, where politicians have recently introduced more than 300 anti-LGBTQ+ bills, many of them targeting transgender people. One of the most intrusive is a Texas bill that would criminalize parents attempting to obtain gender-affirming care for their transgender children; the bill urges educators, healthcare workers, and other welfare officers to report these parents so that they might be investigated for child abuse (Dey 2022). Meanwhile, the US Supreme Court is on the verge of overturning the legal precedent that ensures women the right to abortion, even as more and more states have sought to deny abortion at earlier and earlier stages of pregnancy. Such restrictions are enabled by new surveillance technologies and markets: the data firm SafeGraph, for example, is already selling information about the movements of people who visit Planned Parenthood (Cox 2022). As Zeynep Tufekci (2022) points out, this form of surveillance will likely intensify as abortion is further criminalized. Even if menstruating people delete their period-tracking apps, as reproductive justice activists are currently urging, other data collection algorithms are still watching: such algorithms can guess from changes in people's consumption habits that they have become pregnant, and data

corporations can in turn alert police when those individuals do not give birth. Despite these draconian domestic developments, many supporters of the US security state both bemoan the end of a US-bestowed feminist "freedom" in Afghanistan and find solace in heroic tales of Afghan women and girls liberated by surveillance technologies. For example, 2021 news stories (Rose, Hanson) credit both a British "AI expert" and an American "mother of 11" with "rescuing" the celebrated all-girl robotics team, the Afghan Dreamers, even as the Dreamers contest at least the latter story.

Understanding these multiple unfolding crises and how they are narrated, as well as the celebratory tales of surveillance that accompany some of them, requires attention to the specific, shifting ways gender is imagined and policed, as well as to how surveillance itself is often a gendered practice. This urgent work of explicitly reformulating how we understand the relationship between gender and surveillance was begun by Rachel E. Dubrofsky and Shoshana Amielle Magnet in their 2015 edited volume, *Feminist Surveillance Studies.* In the introduction to that volume, Dubrofsky and Magnet recall attending an academic roundtable on surveillance technologies and noticing a distinct absence of feminist analysis. For the authors, this experience illuminated the need for a feminist intervention in the field. Dubrofsky and Magnet note that the term *surveillance* "is used to identify a systematic and focused manner of observing" (2015: 2). They pair this definition with David Lyon's description of surveillance as "'any collection and processing of personal data, whether identifiable or not, for the purpose of influencing or managing those whose data have been garnered'" (2015: 2). Their work lays the groundwork for us to see, however, how such understandings of surveillance are incomplete without a consideration of how such processes of observation and data collection are entangled with gendered power relations.

This issue furthers the agenda proposed by Dubrofsky and Magnet's volume: that of putting critical feminist concerns at the center of surveillance studies. As US empire studies scholars, we have noticed how scholars of surveillance often reiterate without commenting on the gendered logics that structure so many

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surveillance practices, particularly drone surveillance and warfare[1]. Some critiques of drone warfare, for example, reproduce army-ranger psychologist Dave Grossman's chart imagining the greatest "resistance to killing" to be at "sexual range," without considering how grossly this chart misrepresents the statistical reality when it comes to the killing of women. To be sure, some scholars do skillfully trouble assumptions regarding "the spatialization of distant warfare" (Kaplan 2017: 167) and the affects that attend it, but for many the gendered logics of drone warfare persist unquestioned. In other ways too, scholars who study drone warfare reproduce the gendered logics that make it possible in the first place. For example in applauding rather than analyzing the assumptions of the #NotABugSplat activist art installation, scholars fail to question the idea that an enormous image of a young girl, spread over the landscape of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region of Pakistan in order to be visible to a drone operator, will automatically raise a different set of ethical questions and compel "decisions that will save innocent lives" (JR 2014). A similar gendered logic operates in the invocation by critics of drone warfare of the wedding as the consummate space of innocence where a drone attack would merit automatic outrage. For example, a drone strike on a wedding procession in rural Yemen in 2013 prompted both the anti-war organization, CODEPINK, to stage a wedding in front of the White House to protest the US deployment of drones, and photographer Tomas van Houtryve to capture aerial images of a wedding in Philadelphia for his series, "Blue Sky Days." This emphasis on the self-evident innocence of children and weddings may be effective in highlighting the brutal imprecision of drone strikes, but it also reiterates the family values that are so often weaponized by the United States to justify its wars, while making it difficult to muster similar outrage at every summary assassination of "terror suspects," many of whose names are not even known to their killers. Scholars may chuckle over the gendered rhetoric associated with the "unmanned" aircraft,

1. We would like to acknowledge Natalia Cecire (University of Sussex) for her crucial role in formulating a critical account of these gendered logics alongside us in a series of conference panels in 2018 and 2020.

but they are often reluctant to bring substantive feminist analysis into the frame.

Because of these omissions, we find it necessary to bring together the methods and theories of feminist surveillance studies with the insights of the many gender and sexuality studies scholars who have studied war and US empire, and particularly the US-led war on terrorism. Speaking at a roundtable convened at the 2021 American Studies Association conference entitled, "The Global War at 20," Jasbir Puar recalled that "in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 there was…a liberal consensus around the war on terror including liberal feminist second-wave white feminists." For Puar, this martial enthusiasm underscored the urgent need to "dismantle the orientalism of gender studies which was absolutely organized around 'unveiling' as one of the key tropes for women's oppression." In the years following 9/11, many gender and sexuality studies scholars heeded this call, demonstrating how shifting gender norms and forms of belonging and exclusion have accompanied and bolstered the war on terrorism. Lila Abu-Lughod's early warnings about yet another mission to save Muslim women and Puar's account of how Muslim/terrorist men are queered just as a certain kind of homosexuality is brought into the fold of US national respectability are persuasive and groundbreaking accounts of the early years of the war. Later work by Inderpal Grewal on the gendered figures of the "security mom" and "security feminist," Mimi Thi Nguyen on the beautification of Afghan women as an imperative of US empire, Laleh Khalili on the coupled security advisors and generals who constituted the cerebral-yet-jaunty public face of the early war on terrorism, and Erica Edwards on the incorporation of Black women such as Condoleezza Rice into the US security apparatus also convincingly puts gender at the center of the various strategies, rationalizations, and figurations of post-9/11 US empire. Our own work builds on these foundations, exploring the continuities between domestic/humanitarian drones and martial ones (Schnepf) and considering how the figure of the agential, educated Muslim girl has been mobilized for counterinsurgency (Geidel).

The pieces in this issue similarly bring surveillance studies into conversation with this work on the war on terror's gendered

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rationales and strategies, illuminating the racialized masculinities of war-on-terror architects, the female gendering of the new security state, and the utility of "lyric opacity" in disrupting humanist rhetorics that have been insufficient in their challenges to drone warfare. Emily Raymundo's contribution identifies and elaborates the figure of the "monster minority" in the age of the war on terrorism. The monster minority, embodied by torture-policy architect John Yoo, is an exemplary model minority, a grateful beneficiary of the US system who is able to accumulate power and prestige by exerting violence over other others (in this case, alleged terrorists). However, in exchange for the power and prestige he accumulates, he is made to represent the violence of the entire system; Raymundo observes that while George W. Bush's reputation has been rehabilitated despite his responsibility for large-scale killing, dispossession, and torture, Yoo remains monstrous in media and popular accounts. The figure of the monster minority, Raymundo argues, "indexes the… ways in which racialized, heterosexual masculinity is both subject to and an agent of racialized power." In her analysis of Yoo's torture memos, Raymundo characterizes the relation between the monster-minority figure and the terrorist on whose body he describes inflicting pain as a relation of differential and shifting surveillance, arguing that "the more the terrorist is made visible as a body, the *less* visible the monster minority's body becomes." At the same time, Raymundo argues, "the monster minority's body can never fully disappear, nor can his humanity ever be fully realized"—the system turns, she argues, on this near-assimilation of the monster minority, his capacity for surveillance but also his inability to evade surveillance himself.

Patricia Stuelke's essay, "Feminist Conspiracies, Security Aunties, and Other Surveillance State Fictions," observes that while a misogynistic vision of a feminized and feminist state surveillance articulated by some on the radical left assumes the now-familiar idiom of conspiracy theory, aspects of this observation nonetheless accord with contemporary gendered imperialist practices that rely on the security work of relentless surveillance carried out by women and girls. Drawing on the fantastic worlds envisioned in recent speculative novels by Gish Jen and Jeff Vandermeer, Stuelke finds that "the feminized figurations of state surveil-

lance, alongside the state's superficial incorporation of notions of women's empowerment and agency, seem to foreclose particular visions of social transformation and political life." While Jen's novel explores how technologized, feminized, care work could pave the way for the commons, it ultimately can't find its way to "an anticapitalist antiwork imaginary" for its characters. Vandermeer's novel, meanwhile, begins by centering Inderpal Grewal's figure of the security mom then borrows from the genre of noir to undo and reimagine entrenched investments in security. Keegan Cook Finberg's contribution, "'What activism can learn from poetry': Lyric Opacity and Drone Warfare in Solmaz Sharif's *LOOK*," also looks to literature as its object of study, situating Sharif's 2016 collection in the context of US drone operations and the militarization of language. For Finberg, *LOOK* imaginatively uncouples standardized military terminology from epistemologies of militarized surveillance that produce the targetable human. This uncoupling challenges thinking that would seek to humanize the targets of drone strikes through appeals to enhanced visibility—a humanitarian turn to the visible that critics have identified as appealing to a logic of "recognition." Instead of working toward recognition, Finberg shows how Sharif uses the language of lyric as a pedagogical resource to develop ways of seeing that offer alternatives to drone vision *and* the charge to be recognizable inherent in much humanitarian anti-drone art and activism. Finberg terms these alternate ways of seeing "resistance-looking": this is looking that dwells on the many ways opacity may be produced. In *LOOK*, we find models of this poetic opacity in the dictionary definitions and euphemisms that obfuscate meaning and create abstraction, in the infrastructures of domestic surveillance that reveal a multi-generational history of US imperial violence rather than family secrets, in the targeting technologies that confuse species, and in the pockets of daily life that remain out of view.

Together these pieces exemplify how engagement with gender and sexuality studies' scholars' analyses of the war on terrorism can broaden our understandings of the relationship between surveillance and the practices of US empire. These essays also make the case that an interdisciplinary approach to literature and culture—one modeled by American Studies scholars such

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as Amy Kaplan (2002)—has much to contribute to the project of a feminist surveillance studies. While scholars including Andrea Brady (2017) and more recently Tyne Daile Sumner (2021) have addressed the politics of visual surveillance through poetic forms, too often when literary texts do receive notice from those with an interest in the study of cultures of surveillance, attention is reserved for the genres of science fiction or speculative fiction. In addition to this too-narrow generic focus, readers untrained in methodologies particular to the study of literature tend to categorize texts as either "utopian" or "dystopian" and read them extractively for lessons we might take from the fictional scenarios they put forth. We find this instrumentalist approach to literature and culture too reductive, and advocate instead for the use of methods that are attuned to the formal, generic, and cultural complexities of literary texts.

By insisting upon an interdisciplinary frame for feminist surveillance studies that includes literary studies, film studies, cultural studies, empire studies, and black feminist scholarly traditions, our issue makes two further interventions in the field. First, much of the existing work in feminist surveillance studies focuses on the state's historic and ongoing role as the alleged savior of women through carceral practices, regulating sex work and alleged sex trafficking, and policing or prosecuting family violence in already overpoliced communities. While some of our contributions do similar work, most clearly Kiara Sample's consideration of the history of police and FBI surveillance of radical black women, many of them branch away from or even interrogate this approach, as Stuelke's essay does when it points to the easy conflation of feminism and the carceral/surveillance state by misogynist leftist figures like Julian Assange. If carceral feminism (Bernstein 2010) remains a crucial analytical frame for feminist surveillance studies, the contributions here suggest that sites of gendered surveillance are not always carceral, nor, it should be said, are they always feminist.

Second, our issue seeks to acknowledge and build from the premise that feminist scholarship has for some time been interrogating the problem of surveillance's relationship to gendered life. Black feminist scholarship in particular has centrally theorized how

surveillance societies have produced regimes of hypervisibility and invisibility that function as forms of gendered and racial policing. In a chapter of *Dark Matters* entitled "Notes on Surveillance Studies," Simone Browne turns to Patricia Hill Collins's 1990 theorization of racializing surveillance in the context of the post-slavery South and the black women who labored in this world as domestic servants. Collins notes that, under segregation, black women were subject to two forms of control that operated on distinctly different scales: while segregation established control at the level of the population, "eras[ing] individuality by making black people seemingly interchangeable" (2015: 57), surveillance often worked at the level of the body, "'highlight[ing] individuality by making the individual hypervisible and on display'" (57, Collins cited in Browne). As a tool of white supremacist regimes, such surveillance abets the subordination of black women through a singling out, assessing, atomizing, examining, and exhibiting. Indeed, bell hooks notes the history of this hypervisibilization at work in nineteenth-century representations of black women for white audiences who "are not to look at her as a whole human being. They are to notice only certain parts" (1992: 62). While surveillance often targets groups and seeks to manage populations, the concept of 'hypervisibility' recognizes techniques of individuating surveillance as a form of social control that depends on and further entrenches already existing inequalities.

The pieces in the second part of this issue elucidate forms of unequally distributed visibility. In doing so, they affirm what Browne has described as "the absolute necessity of intersectionality as an interpretive framework and methodology in the study of surveillance" (2017:1). Specifically, they address how gendered and racialized forms of surveillance that produce the hypervisibility of black women work in conjunction with processes that ensure their persistent invisibilization. Moreover, as we see in the essays by Sample and Mohammed, oftentimes what goes by the name of "surveillance" entails no collection or processing of data whatsoever. In such instances, surveillance reveals itself as an alibi for intimidation. Turning to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's monitoring of a prominent communist figure as a blend of disinterested neglect and personal intimidation, the traffic in black

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women's hypervisibility and their erasure through the Kardashian project of "postfeminist entrepreneurial terror," and the proliferating sites of scrutiny encountered while moving through and living in the United States, these essays consider how surveillance produces both hypervisibility and invisibility.

In "Seeing Shadows: FBI Surveillance of Louise Thompson Patterson," Kiara Sample shows how gender and sexuality shape surveillance techniques. In the early 1940s, the FBI began compiling a file on Louise Thompson Patterson, a prominent, active figure in the International Worker's Order (IWO), and later the Treasurer of the Illinois Peoples Conference for Legislative Action. Despite Patterson's own political history of leadership and activism, Sample analyzes state documents to show how the FBI's treatment of Patterson as a person of interest shifted when the Bureau learned of her marriage to a prominent Communist Party figure. Sample argues that the FBI's surveillance strategies betray a gender bias: women were not seen as significant political agents engaged in Black communist activism in their own right. Rather, Patterson's FBI file betrays how the Bureau regarded married women in particular as valuable conduits for information instead. Patterson's file is interesting for its omissions. For instance, it contains no transcripts of her many speeches or accounts of her political beliefs. At the same time, it shows that the FBI singled Patterson out—"tracking her movement, watching her home, and interviewing her directly"—not to collect information but to suppress and control her political activities through physical intimidation.

The midcentury US security state, which rendered invisible the radicalism of women like Patterson, stands in stark contrast to neoliberal postfeminist regimes characterized by their imperative to hypervisibility. Heena Hussain's article considers this ideal of hypervisibility by tracing the rise and influence of the Kardashian family, particularly focusing on the array of health and wellness products they now market. Hussain contends that through constant self-surveillance, the Kardashian sisters have constructed a compelling vision of postfeminist beautification and health despite the dubious health benefits of the products they endorse; the sisters "bare all" to audiences in order to convince them that products like Collagen Moon Milk and Sugarbear Hair vitamins will

give consumers access to the exclusive worlds the Kardashians inhabit. Part of this self-surveillance, Hussain contends, consists of playing with signifiers of blackness (or what is commonly termed blackfishing) and even playing with forms of surveillance of blackness such as police surveillance and harassment. Building on earlier scholarly work that characterizes some of the Kardashians as not-quite-white and thus exoticized by the media because of their Armenian heritage, Hussain argues that the Kardashians have recently secured a more stable whiteness through both their entrepreneurial success and their blackfishing experiments.

Hussain articulates how social and streaming media enables self-orchestrated visibility that draws on forms associated with the surveillance of racialized female bodies. In her autoethnographic piece found in this issue's *Varia* section, Rabiatu B. Mohammed addresses racialized and gendered hypervisibility as well as its attendant insecurities by tracking it through the contiguous practices of state surveillance and securitized citizenship she experiences moving across and within US borders as a self-described "hyper-visible Black hijabi in the US/Mexico border region." Experimenting with the metaphor of the human body's protective antibody response, Mohammed recasts herself as the alien subject to expulsion from the (national) body that regards her as a national security threat. Through a blending of narrative and critical prose, Mohammed catalogues the various forms of racialized, gendered surveillance she encounters at sites managed by state agencies including airports, US embassies, and US Border Patrol interior checkpoints in New Mexico, as well as the everyday sites of the street, the store, the university campus, and the classroom.

"What are the implications of thinking about concerns related to surveillance specifically as critical feminist concerns using a feminist praxis? What new objects might this theoretical and methodological focus bring into view?" asked Dubrofsky and Magnet in 2015 (3). As the monitoring and management of physiological rhythms, gender nonconformity, and refugee movements makes plain, the renewed intensification of gendered surveillance at state, national, and international levels has made readily apparent that we find ourselves with no shortage of 'new objects' already well in view, already requiring a critical feminist

analysis. Despite a preponderance of theoretical approaches and critical methodologies finely attuned to feminist analysis across disciplines, there remains a tendency in surveillance studies scholarship to sideline such analysis—or to turn to feminist approaches only when working on topics pertaining explicitly to gender or even femininity in particular. In this issue, we hope to underscore that insofar as surveillance practices are always informed by histories of oppression and always productive of new inequalities, critical feminist concerns are always central to the study of surveillance.

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THE MONSTER MINORITY: JOHN YOO'S MULTICULTURAL INSTRUCTION AND THE "TORTURE MEMOS"

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In 1987, a Korean American student wrote an editorial in the *Harvard Crimson* that addressed the specter of "subtle racism" on campus. He mused, "You catch it in a glance, in a whispered comment behind your back [...] Such attitudes [...] make it difficult to pursue a mainstream life here" (Yoo). The editorial, "Minority Search for a Middle Ground," bemoaned the state of race relations at Harvard, portraying the experience of minority students as a choice between total assimilation into, or a total rejection of, whiteness. "What identity do we seek here?" he asked. "Do we turn within to examine our heritage, or do we look outside to fit in to the larger society? [...] Either path leads to the exclusion of the other and the disapproval of one's peers."

Though it doesn't use the exact language, the editorial recalls two figures that shape Asian America as a racial formation. On the one hand, this racial formation has historically been structured by the perception that Asian Americans are perpetual foreigners, whose physical presence in the nation can never fully transmute into being *part* of the nation.[1] The writer's account of the "subtle racism" that haunts his steps and prevents him from fully assimilating into the "mainstream" recalls the experience of being viewed as perpetually foreign. On the other hand, the writer's preoccupation with joining the mainstream also invokes

1. See Lowe for a full account of this argument.

the model minority, which figures Asian Americans as innately docile, apolitical, and hard-working—a minority group that has "earned" its ascendant position in US society.[2]

The editorial was written by soon-to-be attorney John Yoo. After graduating from Harvard College and Yale Law School, Yoo was recruited by the George W. Bush administration to serve as Deputy Assistant Attorney General. From September 2001 to March 2003, Yoo wrote the "Torture Memos," a series of internal memos that laid the legal groundwork for the use of torture and indefinite detention at the military prison in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. In the Obama era, Yoo became an emblem of the overreaches of the Bush administration; after a trove of Yoo's unredacted memos were released in 2008 and 2009, an article in *Esquire* asked bluntly, "Is John Yoo a Monster?" (Richardson 2008).

Jasbir Puar and Amit Rai argue that, in the age of the "war on terrorism,"—an age marked by state reliance on large-scale surveillance programs intended to anticipate threats to national security—the "monster" has emerged as a sexualized and racialized figure inextricably entangled with the "terrorist" (2002: 117). The monster-terrorist is a regulatory figure, whose perversity demands it be quarantined. Even as it is exiled from civilization, however, the monster-terrorist also polices and normalizes social behavior within society. In the *Esquire* article, however, the monster and the terrorist are still inextricably linked *but also diametrically opposed*, holding each other in tension across a divide of participation in, or alienation from, the neoliberal security state. Rather than map the conjunction of monster-terrorist, I instead trace the emergence of two separate figures who are nonetheless entangled: the alien terrorist and the monster minority. Yoo's torture memos fundamentally cleave the category of Asian American from the category of the alien terrorist in the age of the war on terrorism. This cleavage, however, is not only a separation or differentiation—a cleaving *apart*—but also a simultaneous binding together in permanent relation—a cleaving to, or a cleaving *together*.

Reading across Yoo's unredacted legal memos, sent between 2001 and 2003, this article traces how the monster minority

2. For this account of the model minority, see Osajima (1988).

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of the US security state emerged within the structure of post-9/11 multicultural racial formation, one triangulated and made meaningful through its relationship to the model minority, on the one hand, and the terrorist, on the other. The child of Korean immigrants, educated at Harvard and Yale and elevated to an enormously influential position at a unique moment in US history, John Yoo is simultaneously exceptional and exemplary. Toggling between his singularity and his representativeness, I map the structures through which Yoo's monstrous exceptionality became a constitutive part of the multicultural security state.

Rather than reading Yoo's racial position as incidental to his authorship of the Torture Memos and the racial schema they engendered, I argue that his trajectory from child of grateful immigrants to the elite multicultural university to the upper echelons of the security state is crucial to understanding the contemporary racial structures of the US as an advanced neoliberal security state. The entanglement between the perpetual alien and the model minority, and between the terrorist and the monster minority, underscores the false promises of multiculturalism and their material consequences. By creating the terrorist, that is, the model minority cannot become the citizen. He can only become the monster.

THE INDIVIDUAL WITHIN US INSTITUTIONS

Yoo's parents, the *Esquire* article notes, "moved to the US out of gratitude and a love of democracy" after the Korean war (Richardson 2008). Discussing the similar trajectory of Viet Dinh, a Vietnamese war refugee who went on to edit the edit the law journal at Harvard Law School and eventually author the Patriot Act, Mimi Thi Nguyen suggests that "comparisons between this refugee who loves America and the terrorist he hopes to apprehend [...] help us to theorize modern racial governmentality" (2016: 135).[3] Indeed, implicit in John Yoo's evolution from model minority to monster minority is the evolution of the model minority itself:

3. Viet Dinh's excessive passion for the nation that "saved" his parents, or at least the perception that they should express such feelings, is another common feature of Asian American racialization. See Nguyen, T*he Gift of Freedom* (2012); Nguyen, *Nothing Ever Dies* (2016).

from a specific racial formation within one institution—the elite, upwardly mobile Asian American student of the 1980s and 1990s—to a genre of constellated minority formations that together perform the essential structural work of multiculturalism at its apex, in the period between 9/11 and 2016. Yoo and Dinh's parallel trajectories point to an undertheorized cleaving in the model minority formation of early, or what Jodi Melamed calls liberal, multiculturalism and the model minority *genre* of late, or neoliberal, multiculturalism: the elite multicultural university, where "deserving" minorities are instructed in the codes of behavior and self-presentation that will make acceptable their presence in "mainstream" and elite US institutional spaces, and where, specifically, the rise of the "Asian American student" as the model minority par excellence became not only emblematic, but also *constitutive,* of the racial operations of multiculturalism broadly.[4]

While the model minority genre is modular and broadly constellated, the model minority formation of the 1980s and 1990s is specifically materially situated and actively constructed by both the white mainstream and Asian Americans themselves.[5] It is important to pay attention not only to those who bear exceptional burdens of exploitation and violence because of their racial, gendered, and sexual positions, but also to those intermediary figures who bear *some* of the consequences of racialization but also manage to escape many of those same consequences by deferring them onto others. As I have argued elsewhere, the model minority formation is masculine and heterosexual as much as it is Asian American, in that it operates by sloughing off the stigma of racialization onto gendered and sexual others less able to embody neoliberal schemas of value and worth.[6] Yoo and Dinh's masculinity and heterosexuality are not incidental to their positions as model minorities par excellence, nor is it a mere coincidence that Yoo deploys queerness as a marker that separates "other" minorities—the queer terrorist, in the memos—from his own minority position. My usage of the pronoun "he" throughout

4. See Melamed, *Represent and Destroy* (2011).
5. See Wu, *The Color of Success* (2015).
6. See Raymundo, "The End of Whiteness and the Rise of Multicultural Asian America in Chang-rae Lee's Aloft" (2017).

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the article is similarly intentional. The model minority formation, and the monster minority formation that grows out of it, indexes "the lashes men give as well as take" (Shimizu 2012: 9)—that is, the ways in which racialized, heterosexual masculinity is both subject to and an agent of racialized power. The distinctions between the model minority and the perpetual alien, and between the monster minority and the terrorist, are thus always drawn along gendered and sexual lines as well as those of citizenship, class, assimilation, and other typical markers of social exclusion.

What is at stake in these racial distinctions, dynamics, and cleavages is not merely the matter of differentiating the model-turned-monster minority from the figures of the perpetual alien and the terrorist but rather, a specific resignification of the category of "Asian American" as racially distinct from the terrorist. The inclusion of Muslim, South Asian, and Arab or "Middle Eastern looking" populations into the category of "Asian American" has a long and contested history. In short, the exact relationship and boundaries between those who were recognized as "Asian Americans"—that is, as racialized minorities who were nonetheless tolerated as part of the nation—and those who were identifiable as enemies, whether "gooks" or "terrorists," remained indeterminate yet intensely symbolic and consequential throughout the period of liberal multiculturalism.[7] Yoo's torture memos, I argue, operationalize the terms of these indeterminacies—alienation, exclusion, legal exceptionality, enemy status, model minority, and Muslim cultural and ideological belonging—to definitively cleave the "Asian American" from the alien terrorist. Importantly, the distinction Yoo makes in the memos does not unfold along predictable or recognizable racial lines—that is, "Asian Americans" are not exclusively East Asian, nor are "alien terrorists" exclusively South Asian or Muslim; many South Asians, for example, are positioned as "model minorities" because of their class status, and thus folded into the protected category of Asian American.[8]

7. See, for example, Hsu, *The Good Immigrants* (2015); Ngai, *Impossible Subjects* (2004); Maira and Shihade, "Meeting Asian/Arab American Studies" (2006); and Koshy, "The Fiction of Asian American Literature" (2006).
8. By focusing on the cleavage between "Asian American" and "Arab/Muslim American," I do not mean to suggest that the latter are themselves

At the same time, although the distinction between Asian American and alien terrorist is not *predictably* racialized, Yoo's torture memos still construct it as a racial—that is, both a bodily and biopolitical—difference.[9] Finally, this racial distinction finds its form in the figure of the monster minority, whose simultaneous invisibility and exceptionality paradoxically deploys, authenticates, and erases racial difference under the auspices of the multicultural security state.

For Puar and Rai, the perversity that animates the monstrosity of the terrorist is the perversity of "queerness as sexual deviancy," which, unable to be incorporated into the liberal, heteronormative, patriotic state, leads to the "quarantining of the terrorist-monster-fag" (2002: 126–7). In contrast, this essay argues that, if the terrorist's monstrosity becomes visible in the crossing of lines drawn by the state, then the monster minority's monstrosity becomes visible through his own overzealous drawing of those state lines while meticulously living within them. For instance, it's no surprise that Yoo's monstrosity is gratuitously heteronormative—his screensaver and phone lock screen are both photos of his wife, the *Esquire* interview notes. Yoo is so convinced of his own righteousness that he manages to compel the interviewer into repeatedly observing how "he looks me right in the eye" and "he doesn't hesitate" while making firm pronouncements on whether waterboarding is torture and whether he has any moral qualms. Yoo, the *Esquire* article eventually concludes, is perhaps only a monster because he has been forced to literalize and translate into clear legal policy a series of nebulous concepts—"severe pain," "torture," and "war"—that average citizens mistake as already having clear legal boundaries. "So what is severe pain?" muses the interviewer. "We asked John Yoo, and he drew the line for us, and now he is tainted in our eyes [...] Dismissing him as a monster

uncontested or self-evident terms. There are as many cleavages within the category of "Arab/Muslim American" as there are cleavages outside of it. For more, see Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim* (2005); Alsultany, *Arabs and Muslims in the Media* (2012).

9. For more detail on how neoliberal multiculturalism both reinvigorates older racial categories and simultaneously invents new racial differences that have yet to sediment into language, see Melamed, *Represent and Destroy* (2011); Hong, *The Ruptures of American Capital* (2006).

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just means we don't have to think about why he did what he did" (Richardson 2008).

In *Saving the Security State,* Inderpal Grewal argues that, within the advanced phase of neoliberalism inaugurated by the US-led war on terrorism, the work of securitizing and surveilling the population is split between the state itself and "exceptional citizens" who simultaneously advocate for a strong military state and ferociously invest in the entrepreneurial capacity of the neoliberal individual. Yoo's monstrosity is exactly of this "exceptional" character. Far from serving as a racial limit to the concept of citizenship and humanity broadly, Yoo's monstrosity emerges because he stands at the inflection point at which the security state and the liberal democracy the security state ostensibly protects come into open conflict. Yoo is exceptional because he, supposedly alone among many, is capable of peering into this entangled abyss and returning with legal clarity. This version of the monster resembles the lawman who breaks the law in order to pursue justice and the soldier who commits inhuman acts abroad in order to guarantee safety, freedom, and continued humanity at home; the security state is, after all, a genre of the imperial and settler colonial state.[10]

Often, the soldier, the lawman, and other exceptional figures are implicitly imagined as white. The monster minority, however, is a specifically racialized figure whose love for the security state emerges from his experiences as an outsider to it and a beneficiary of its rescue. If Puar and Rai's monster-terrorist-fag is the constitutive abject of the multicultural security state, it's also true that US imperial culture constitutes figurations of monstrosity with regularity to avoid contending with larger structural and ideological concerns.[11] Writing on the conflation of torture at Abu Ghraib and standard pornography, Anne McClintock identifies the images that comprise pornography as an example of "our normal mon-

10. On the linkage between the settler colonial and the multicultural security state via Yoo's memos, see Byrd, *Transit of Empire* (2011), pp. 226–28.
11. On the continuing vitality of Frankenstein in US political discourse post-9/11, for example, see Young, *Black Frankenstein* (2008); for more on the broader political uses of monstrosity, see Weinstock, *The Monster Theory Reader* (2020).

ster" because they serve "as a screen onto which are projected a host of gender anxieties (about violence against women, gender subversion, women's sexual agency, non-procreative sexuality, among them) that can then be condemned without exploring the deeper sources of gender violence" (2009: 62). McClintock's astute observation on the useful work of abjection allows us to deepen our account of the monster minority as "something rejected from which one does not part" who functions as a screen onto which *un*exceptional citizens can project their anxieties about the excessive violence of the multicultural security state "without exploring [its] deeper sources" (62). Returning to Yoo in particular, this insight allows us to see how his status as the monster minority means he cannot jettison the marker of racial difference, because that difference animates and justifies his presence in the elite echelons of the state. Unlike the terrorist, whose perverse difference justifies his quarantining and extermination, Yoo's "normal" difference as the monster minority becomes what McClintock's rubric would regard as "a form of camouflage […] that allows us to look away" from the supposedly illiberal violence needed to secure liberal freedom (2009: 63).[12] The model minority, the monster minority, and the terrorist then become a multicultural circuit, a triangulation of figures who depend on each other to do their structural work.

(in)visible monsters

A vast array of scholars of the war on terrorism have connected the legal limbo of the detention camp at Guantánamo, the condition of rightlessness imposed on those held there, and the racialized terror and torture carried out on their bodies to a long history of US race craft and military empire.[13] Lisa Marie Cacho, in particular, argues that the terrorist is a "composite figure" that draws on and resignifies existing discursive racial frameworks, such as "illegality" (2012: 98). Using the technologies of multiculturalism, learned in the multicultural university, the monster minority escapes the condition of illegality and alienation, but does so

12. See also Reddy, *Freedom with Violence* (2011).
13. See for example Paik, *Rightlessness* (2005).

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by entering into a bio/necropolitical arrangement in which he is *made to make die* in order to be let live. That is, the monster minority is only allowed to flourish in his exceptional space by consigning other minorities to the racialized realms of premature death. Here, the security state sharpens the stakes that once kept the model minority in the flow of the elite mainstream; the monster minority, in his position of power, must shift the racial signifiers that make his demographic a population "available for injury" onto another population, specifically "target[ed…] to be injured" (Puar 2017: 129).

Yoo's memos deploy a well-worn American imperial tactic by carefully scaffolding a legal blind-spot around the military base at Guantánamo Bay, shielding it from both domestic and international law. Yet the memos do not just construct the camp itself as 'foreign in a domestic sense'; they also construct the racial category of the terrorist as inherently alien. Yoo uses various memos to define and justify the juridical statuses of "enemy combatants," "alien unlawful combatants," and "alien enemy combatants," in each insisting that his legal construction of the term is definitive.[14] Individually, the memos appear to deploy these terms relatively coherently. Read together, however, they reveal a structural slippage between the categories, producing yet another juridical blind spot, in which "alien," "enemy," and "unlawful" collapse in on each other to produce the racial category of the terrorist.

If, as Leti Volpp and others have argued, the Oriental alien is one site against and through which the US has constituted itself as an imagined and literal community, then the collapse of "alien" and "terrorist" does not merely retread Orientalist stereotypes but refashions them (2003). As outlined earlier, US Orientalism has always nebulously attached to both the "Far East" and the "Middle East." In creating the racial category of the terrorist, however, the memos definitively cleave the two populations apart–*not* along predictable geographic or racial lines, but rather along circuits of bodily capacity and social value that both separate out deserving minorities from alien terrorists *and* further bind the two

14. As Naomi Paik argues, Yoo and his Office of Legal Counsel counterparts essentially invented this usage of the term "enemy combatant" wholesale, "as a new category of person to deprive those named as such of any rights under international law" (2016: 158).

populations together. Implicitly, the opposite of the "enemy alien combatant" is the minority, where "minority" signals either the condition of legal citizenship *and/or* inclusion into the imagined nation: neither an enemy of the state, nor an alien, nor in danger of being *made* an alien by virtue of being identified as an enemy of the state. Yoo's memos implicitly inscribe Yoo and his structural peers into the realm of the Asian American minority while deploying alienation as a racial formation to consign any bodies that can be recognized or misrecognized as Muslim, or otherwise an enemy, an alien, or a combatant, to the realm of the terrorist.

Within multiculturalism post-9/11, US Orientalism circulates through these cleavages to more efficiently define the category of the terrorist while yet "signify[ing as] nonracist or even antiracist" (Melamed 2006: 3). This refashioning of Orientalism is invisibly authenticated by Yoo's authorship. This is to say that the racist underpinnings of the "enemy combatant" designation are deniable precisely because they emanate from a racialized subject who himself is available to the same alienation at work in the memos, and yet, through his own exceptional will and choices, is not only *not* a terrorist, but a patriot willing to sacrifice his social standing for the country he loves. The individualism of the monster minority thus becomes the exception that proves the rule: being subject to the stigma of alienation only happens to those who deserve it, having not had the good sense to openly and endlessly signal their own exceptionality and distance from "those" other others.

The torture memos do not merely produce the terrorist as an exceptional legal category. They also create the terrorist body as one that the state has a "right to maim" in order to secure the liberal freedom of the minorities who the state has already rescued (Puar 2017). Yoo's memos separate "terrorists" from "minorities" in part through designating terrorists as those who can withstand "inhuman" amounts of pain and "cruel and degrading" treatment without it being "life threatening" or without causing "severe mental pain or suffering" (United States, Department of Justice, Office of Legal Counsel. "Memorandum for Alberto R. Gonzalez" 2002: 6). The monster minority structures this racial cleavage by deploying multicultural savvy to slough the debility threatened by racialized signifiers off *his* body and graft them on to the terror-

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ist body in his place. Just as in earlier iterations of multiculturalism, where the model minority was at his most useful when he *almost* disappeared from view, the monster minority is similarly necessary here as the almost-invisible racialized body that represents (and still exceptionally *exceeds*) the multicultural security state's humanity.

Title 18 of the US Criminal Code, § 2340A, prohibits torture "outside of the United States," and as Yoo highlights in the August 1, 2002 memo, defines torture as "acts specifically intended to inflict severe physical or mental pain or suffering" (3). In this bizarre and surreal memo, Yoo consults the Oxford English Dictionary to define the words "severe," "other," "disrupt," and "profound," to "conclude that certain acts may be cruel, inhuman, or degrading, but still not produce pain or suffering of the requisite intensity to fall within Section 2340A's proscription against torture" (United States, Department of Justice, Office of Legal Counsel, "Memorandum for Alberto R. Gonzalez" 2002). The memo was followed up later that day by another memo, signed by Yoo's superior Jay Bybee but written with and largely by Yoo, which reveals that Yoo's legal contortions were not abstract, but rather meant as a broad legal framework to justify specific techniques the CIA had requested to use on Abu Zubaydah, a prisoner held at the Guantánamo Bay detention camp.[15] Where Yoo defines torture and the acts that might and might not fall within Section 2340 purview, the Bybee memo—long withheld from public review and, when finally released by the Justice department, initially so heavily redacted it was completely illegible—catalogues the CIA's "proposed conduct" "in the course of conducting the interrogation" of al Qaeda member Abu Zubaydah (United States, Department of Justice, Office of Legal Counsel. "Memorandum for John Rizzo," 2002). The memo goes through the ten proposed techniques that constitute an "increased pressure phase" in Zubaydah's interrogation, arguing in each case, with the exception of waterboarding, that they fail to meet the thresholds named in Yoo's memo, either for "intent to cause" "severe" "mental" or "physical"

15. Both Yoo and Bybee have obfuscated about the exact authorship of the so-called "Bybee memo," though Yoo is largely cited as drafting the bulk of it and Bybee as merely signing it. See Mayer, *The Dark Side* (2009).

pain. In describing "the facial slap," for instance, the Bybee memo clarifies, "The goal of the facial slap is not to inflict physical pain that is severe or lasting. Instead, the purpose of the facial slap is to induce shock, surprise, and/or humiliation" (2). As for sleep deprivation, the memo notes, "You have informed us that is not [sic] uncommon for someone to be deprived of sleep for 72 hours and still perform excellently on visual-spatial motor tasks and short-term memory tests. […] You have indicated studies of lengthy sleep deprivation showed no psychosis, loosening of thoughts, flattening of emotions, delusions, or paranoid ideas" (6). Though these comments make no reference to Yoo's memo, they are clearly meant to pair with Yoo's definition of torture, as the Bybee memo documents the failure of these techniques to cause severe or mental pain or suffering, or—in the case that they might—documents the CIA's "good faith" belief that they wouldn't, having "tak[en] such steps as surveying professional literature" and "consulting with experts" (6).

The Bybee memo does not merely exculpate the CIA based on their good faith intent not to cause severe mental or physical pain. It also suggests, repeatedly, that whatever the CIA's intent, their treatment could not possibly rise to the level of "severity" outlined by Yoo, because Zubaydah has an apparently inhuman tolerance for pain and suffering. In discussing sleep deprivation—which must not, as Yoo proscribed, "profoundly disrupt the senses or personality": "You have orally informed us that you would not deprive Zubaydah of sleep for more than eleven days at a time and that you have previously kept him awake for 72 hours, from which no mental or physical harm resulted" (3). As for the "variety of stress positions used"—"not designed to produce the pain associated with contortions or twisting of the body" but rather "to produce the physical discomfort associated with muscle fatigue"—the memo adds, "You have also orally informed us that through observing Zubaydah in captivity, you have noted that he appears to be quite flexible despite his wound." While others might be caused severe pain by "kneeling on the floor while leaning back at a 45 degree angle," this comment suggests, Zubaydah himself will only feel "physical discomfort," due to his innate flexibility. In general, Bybee reveals, these proscribed inter-

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rogation techniques are deemed necessary because Zubaydah has proved extraordinarily resilient to the CIA's standard interrogation tactics, "remaining at most points 'circumspect, calm, controlled, and deliberate'" (3).

The racial category of the alien terrorist, as opposed to the monster minority, emerges in the comment about Zubaydah's flexibility "despite his wound." The flexibility of a body connotes its passivity and pliability, bodily traits that signify as Oriental as much as they signify as feminine and queer. Neither Zubaydah nor Yoo, however, occupy the position of the submissive, feminized Oriental, and this is partly what makes them *both* monsters while still differentiating between their racial positions. Zubaydah, by refusing to take up the position of the grateful subject of the liberal security state—that is, by remaining perversely unresponsive *despite his wound*—embodies monstrosity by deploying his bodily flexibility to evade the reach of the state. In contrast, while Yoo might monstrously exceed the stigma of his bodily flexibility by hyper-performing heteronormativity, he deploys this monstrosity *in the service of* the state. Yoo thus converts bodily flexibility, a racialized trait that usually invites social stigma and punishment, into structural flexibility that benefits both himself and the state. The good flexibility of the monster minority, in other words, recedes into the background, while the bad flexibility of the terrorist comes into focus, even as both, by necessity, remain in operation.

Anne McClintock has argued that the hypervisibility of the prisoner held at Guantánamo *as* a tortured body is staged "as precisely, rationally, exactly equivalent as [the prisoners'] invisibility as human beings" (2009: 65). The tortures elaborated in the torture memos as legally sanctioned, which often fall under the category of "touchless" torture predicated on sensory and sleep deprivation rather than on directly causing pain, reduce the terrorist to an "unpeopled" body that is rightfully the property of the liberal security state (McClintock 2009: 65). In Yoo's memos, we see this process in motion, and are also privy to the ways in which the hypervisibilities and invisibilities of the terrorist body are triangulated to coordinate precisely with the monster minority's inverse capacities. That is, the more the terrorist is made visible

as a body, the *less* visible the monster minority's body becomes; in turn, as the humanity of the terrorist is obscured, the humanity of the monster minority is emphasized. Of course, the monster minority's body can never fully disappear, nor can his humanity ever be fully realized, for it is exactly his monstrous minority status that allows the system to function.

STILL A MONSTER: THE END OF MULTICULTURALISM

In the decade after George W. Bush's administration, the liberal consensus was that Bush and his administration had gone too far in its pursuit of the war on terrorism, although this rarely translated into a de-escalation of actual state violence. Shortly after taking office, Barack Obama issued Executive Order 13491, which officially revoked all "executive directives, regulations, and orders" issued to or by the CIA from September 1, 2001, to January 20, 2009 that "were not consistent" with the "lawful" and "humane" treatment of "individuals in US custody" (United States, Executive Office of the President). Despite campaign promises, however, Obama failed to close the Guantánamo Bay military prison in his eight years in office. Even as the security state they created continued to operate, previously disgraced Bush administration officials, including George W. Bush himself, were afforded an opportunity to rehabilitate their image in the public eye after Donald Trump's election in 2016. In contrast to Trump, George W. Bush has been recast in the liberal imagination as one of "the last Republicans"; in retrospect, the discourse goes, he may have been excessive, but at least he was sensible (Tanenhaus 2018). John Yoo, however, according to *Esquire* magazine, is "still a monster" (Pierce 2012). As recently as 2019, protestors continued to regularly interrupt his public appearances and to pressure the UC Berkeley law school to fire him from his tenured teaching position.[16] While Yoo's personal responsibility for the memos is obvious, his unique status as symbol and scapegoat of the Bush administration's torture apparatus reveals, again, the utility of the monster minority. As "our" monster, he carries out the will of the security state

16. See Jaschik, "Protest During Poli-Sci Meeting" (2019) and "Protesting Guantanamo and Demanding Accountability for Torturers at UC Berkeley Law School" (2019).

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but can also be condemned and disavowed in order to deflect questions about the "systematic culture of imperial violence that existed long before" Yoo's tenure as Deputy Assistant Attorney General (McClintock 2009: 63).

Uncovering the functional entanglement between the terrorist, the monster minority, and the model minority allows us to track the continuities between the elite institutional spaces—the elite university and the Attorney General's office, for instance—that often elude scholarly attention, either because of their givenness—of course most people in high government offices went to elite schools!—or because of the inaccessibility inherent to such elitism. Often, minorities who have made it to the upper echelons of American society are seen as *only* exceptional; that is, their trajectories are assumed to only tell us something about an individual, and nothing about the structure that enabled them to access such a position.[17] The passages through which exceptional, elite minority figures make their way to power—and what they do with that power once they have "made it"—are as important to understanding the racial workings of multiculturalism as a whole as are the routes through which other individuals and groups are perpetually excluded and exploited. Yoo's position as the monster minority of the George W. Bush administration is certainly attributable to his own specific beliefs and capacities, but it also reveals the myriad structural effects of the model minority formation as it expanded and intensified in the "age of permanent war" (Singh 2012: 276).

It is, in other words, as important to track social power's effects through the monsters that enforce and inflict its violences—our normal monsters, our monster minorities—as it is to track those effects through the queer, perverse, and alien monsters who are rendered subject to those violences. Jodi Melamed has delineated the period after September 11, 2001, as a new phase in multiculturalism,

17. This is particularly true of critical racial theory; queer theory, in contrast, has been more rigorous about tracking the ways in which seemingly "exceptional" gay or queer figures actually reveal the ways in which queerness can get folded into the nation, via homonationalism. See Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages* (2007); Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality?* (2004); Reddy, *Freedom with Violence* (2011).

which "sutures official antiracism to state policy in a manner that prevents the calling into question of global capitalism" (2006: 16). If George W. Bush's administration instantiated this phase, Barack Obama's marked the zenith of neoliberal multiculturalism's power to "legitimate as it obfuscates" the racial workings of the US state (Melamed, 2006: 14). Yet from the perspective of "Trump's America," it is clear that even as multiculturalism was at its seeming height, it was also already waning, and new racial orders were emergent, in which both "official antiracisms" and global capitalism are no longer categorically unquestioned social goods. As this article reveals, the promises of multiculturalism—to retain the accumulative capacities of cultural differentiation while triumphing over the material inequities that structure such differences—were always false, yet they nonetheless had structural consequences that continue to shape the present. If the cleavage between the Asian American model minority and the Asian alien helped to constitute liberal multiculturalism, and if the cleavage between the monster minority and the terrorist alien did the same for both multiculturalism's apex and its eventual demise, what structural relations will come to define the racial regime *after* multiculturalism? How will the "minority," the monster, and the alien be made useful to a state in which white supremacy and multicultural antiracism are in open conflict?

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FEMINIST CONSPIRACIES, SECURITY AUNTIES, AND OTHER SURVEILLANCE STATE FICTIONS

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Early in Laura Poitras's documentary film *Risk* (2017), the viewer witnesses a terrible scene in which Julian Assange, founder of WikiLeaks, spars with his lawyer over the accusations of sexual assault levelled at him by women in Sweden, charges that leave him vulnerable to extradition to the United States. The lawyer tactfully recommends that he unequivocally denounce men who rape, but declare himself not to be one of them. Assange prevaricates, suggesting that while he might say such a thing in public, the truth is different: he is being targeted by a "feminist conspiracy" consisting of a "police woman running a tag team" with a "radical feminist" lesbian nightclub owner in league with "the social democratic party" under the "general influence from the government," a web of collusion that amounts to what one of his supporters calls "a malicious prosecution" by the Swedish state working at the behest of US empire. *Risk* is a film that styles itself as a study in such, per Poitras's narration of her production journal, "contradictions": it is a painful portrait of the 2010s leftist scene of anti-surveillance activism. The film tracks prominent activists persecuted by the surveillance states whose violence they seek to expose, even as it chronicles how anti-surveillance state organizing is haunted by those same activists' sexism and alleged sexual violence. In *Risk,* the threat of the US surveillance state and its proxies is everywhere:

Poitras's narration returns continually to the FBI's search and seizure of her documentary equipment; one plot thread follows the military trial and imprisonment of Chelsea Manning for leaking documents and footage exposing the slaughter of Iraqi and Afghan civilians by US drone strikes; Assange clumsily disguises himself as he seeks asylum in the Ecuadorian embassy in order to avoid extradition; Jacob Appelbaum, the Tor founder and hacker similarly accused of sexual assault, confronts the corporate bigwigs who shut down and surveilled internet traffic in collaboration with Egyptian President Mubarak during Arab Spring. But Assange's paranoid commentary—his vision of a female "police officer" colluding with a "radical feminist" lesbian nightclub owner in league with the Swedish government in a "feminist conspiracy" against him—lays bare how the violent persistent presence of surveillance can and does take a particularly gendered form even (perhaps especially) in the radical leftist imagination. State surveillance is imagined as both feminized and feminist: it is the gaze of a state weaponized by and on behalf of women, the gaze of a state that weaponizes feminist critiques of sexual violence against male radicals, the gaze of a state whose intimacy with women—those empowered and employed by the state, those who organize women's queer communal spaces within capitalism—enables it to target those, perhaps especially men, who seek to expose the violent reach of US state power.

That certain voices on the left might characterize the surveillance state this way is perhaps unsurprising. Assange's conspiratorial obstinacy intersects with the US's deployment of the rhetoric of women's empowerment and a feminized gaze: its repeated racist use since the nation's inception of, per Gayatri Spivak, "saving brown women from brown men" as a justification for invasion and occupation (1983: 92); its ability to capitalize on white women's "domestic vision" and undomestic pursuits—both often wielded in service of their efforts at personal emancipation and financial independence within patriarchal racial settler colonial capitalism—as both cover and rationale for military violence (Wexler 2000; Kaplan 2005). Scholars of the most recent iterations of US imperial power have demonstrated the continuation

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and evolution of these gendered dynamics. As Inderpal Grewal has argued, during the War on Terror, the US neoliberal security state employed "security feminists," whose expertise in "security" drew from their supposed power and status as women (2017: 124), while supplementing its Patriot Act-sanctioned domestic spying by outsourcing surveillance to "security moms," who "construct[ed] the family as threatened and surveillance technologies as tools for the empowerment of the mother" (127).[1] Meanwhile, as Michelle Murphy and Molly Geidel explain, as the War on Terror progressed, the US military, private contractors, and development organizations have increasingly, in the name of feminism, subcontracted the labor of security to Afghan, Pakistani, and Iraqi girls, imagining that their performances of resilient femininity might keep militancy in their communities in check.

The possible end of the War of Terror—signified by the withdrawal of US military troops from Afghanistan in August 2021 and the Taliban's swift seizure of power—has revived the conflation of the US surveillance state with feminism in the US popular imagination, even as the US military has openly admitted to killing civilians, including children, with recent drone strikes, and even as reporting has demonstrated how Afghan women experienced the devastation of US military force exercised throughout War on Terror as anything but a vehicle for empowerment (Gopal 2021). "This is not 'women's rights' when you are killing us, killing our brothers, killing our fathers," Anand Gopal quotes Khalida, a woman who lives in a village in the Helmand Province, "The Americans did not bring us any rights. They just came, fought, killed, and left." The violent hypocrisy of the imperialist feminism of the US surveillance state is clear. Moreover, as J.D. Schnepf has outlined, some privileged US women's enjoyment of domestic surveillance technology absolutely abets the US imperial state's exercise of drone warfare abroad (2017: 272). And yet, Assange's reflexive (and self-interested) reading of his accusers as private extensions and pawns of the surveillance state, is also inadequate, not least because it cannot imagine a vision of the social in which women

1. On the War on Terror's weaponization of feminism and multiculturalism, see also Melamed (2011) and Edwards (2021).

do not have to choose between being free from rape and being on the side of anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism.

This article investigates how two recent literary representations of the feminized US surveillance state, its "security feminists," and its "security moms" (Grewal 2017), further elaborate the contemporary contours of this familiar impasse, in which the feminized figurations of state surveillance, alongside the state's superficial incorporation of notions of women's empowerment and agency, seem to foreclose particular visions of social transformation and political life. It first examines Gish Jen's 2020 novel *The Resisters,* considering how its characterization of the US surveillance state as a snoopy suspicious Aunt shores up enduring liberal American fantasies about the value of productive work and institutionally-sanctioned responses to state violence. Unfolding as if written in response to critics' anxieties that automated "luxury surveillance" (Gilliard and Golombia 2021) might "undermine feminist efforts to revalue and elevate the status of care in capitalist labour markets" (Sandowski et al. 2021: 11), Jen's novel depicts state surveillance and countersurveillance as "Aunty Work" that threatens the reinvigoration of the commons, but ultimately imagines forms of resistance that foreclose an anticapitalist antiwork imaginary.[2] Jeff Vandermeer's novel *Hummingbird Salamander* (2021), in contrast, undoes and remakes the privatized figure of the "security mom." Suspicious of democratic visions of the social—"Democracy is not enough because it is never really Democracy," writes the anarchist eco-activist whose environmentalist vision drives the plot of the novel (Vandemeer 2021: 244)—the novel experiments with unraveling its protagonist's social ties and investments in security (as a profit-making enterprise, as a 'generic' state of being) in pursuit of a queer antisocial vision that might confront environmental and institutional collapse.

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Gish Jen's novel *The Resisters* literalizes the idea of the 'nanny state.' In a future world, plagued by climate disaster and warmed-over Cold War rivalries, the United States has recodified segregation

2. I borrow the phrase "Aunty Work" from the Critical Aunty Studies symposium program; it is the heading under which Mannur's essay appears.

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by dividing the population among the Netted and the Surplus. The Netted, mostly white ("angelfair," in the book's vernacular) are schooled into lives of 24/7 productivity; the Surplus, largely people of color, as well as those automated out of a job or apt to be suspicious of autocracy, are paid a universal basic income by the state and expected to earn "Living Points" through constant consumption. This biopolitical division is maintained by a robust feminized state surveillance infrastructure—AutoNet, or Aunt Nettie, as she is referred to by the novel's protagonists, or sometimes, less fondly, *1984* reference intact, "Big Mother" (Jen 2020: 135). For the Netted, their constant production and work maintaining Aunt Nettie—"Do you get Aunt Nettie and can you work with Aunt Nettie. Can you make nice to Aunt Nettie. Can you troubleshoot Aunt Nettie?" (Jen 2020: 138)—is the tradeoff for their relative security and freedom from straightforwardly punitive surveillance. While some Netted speculate that elections have become automated to the degree that Aunt Nettie is basically voting for herself, most still believe their anxious drive to produce is a personal choice: their freedom lies in their ability to choose to turn on or off Aunt Nettie's virtual assistants, who contact parents immediately when their children express a wish for something so that they might purchase it (Jen 2020: 134). For the Surplus, in contrast, Aunt Nettie's surveillance is unrelenting: she "track[s] changes in […] [Surplus people's] heart rate and breathing" in order to "read emotions" (Jen 2020: 135); distinguishes people "by [their] gait and [their] mannerisms" (135); chips the Surplus at birth and sends "DroneMinders" to track their movements; provides free "mall-truck food" treated with pacifying chemicals; and requires them to live in "AutoHouses" and "AutoHouseboats." These Smart Houses speak the mantra of personal responsibility—"you have a choice. You always have a choice […] Your choice is on the record" (Jen 2020: 5)—while policing Surplus people's behavior. Ignoring the so-called suggestions of the house surveillance costs residents precious "Living Points." While the Surplus cannot work, if they do not consume enough, if they do not maintain sufficient "Living Points," they can be "Cast Off," released on the water to fend for themselves with nothing.

The Resisters thus makes available a central question: what are the implications of imagining the intertwined caretaking and violent practices of the surveillance state as "Aunty work"? As Anita Mannur argues about the figure of the "Aunty" in South Asian culture, the Aunty is a queer or "queer-adjacent" figure who "broker[s] non-normative intimacies," who enables new "networks of intimacy beyond the familial, the heteronormative, the couple, the nation," especially in the wake of the failed promise of heteronormativity. "She is always there and never not there," Mannur writes, "she is both loved and reviled. She offers her opinion whether solicited or not. She judges, she watches; but she is also in your corner—at least, you hope most of the time that she is." As K'eguro Macharia explains, the Aunty is also a consummate reader: "Aunties observe changes of mood and body, movement and stillness. They know how to read [...] the smallest signs of the atmospheres we carry [...] Aunties read the atmosphere. Aunties change the atmosphere. Aunties create the atmosphere. Aunties are the atmosphere." These double-edged aspects of "aunty-ness"—the solicitous surveillance, unobtrusive ubiquity, intimate knowledge that can seed cruelty as well as essential kindness—perhaps makes her an apt figuration of the contemporary US surveillance state. The Surplus narrator Grant, a Black ex-ESL teacher automated out of his job, deemed "Unretrainable," recalls, when his baseball prodigy daughter Gwen was a baby, taking Aunt Nettie's robotic counsel to heart, finding "solace" in her "consoling voice" and "surprisingly useful advice,"—"Of course you feel that way, Grant, how could you not? You're only human" (Jen 2020: 6)—when his wife, Asian American civil rights lawyer and martyr-heroine Eleanor, was too busy working (for free, given their family's Surplus status) to offer him parenting suggestions. As time goes on, however, Grant and Eleanor resort to "deflectors, [a] white noisemaker, and [a] voice scrambler" to keep out Aunt Nettie's nosy intrusions (Jen 2020: 32). They are not quite successful, as Eleanor's relentless pursuit of legal action against the state eventually leads to her arrest and brain modification. The state fits her with a Bionet that both downloads her thoughts and uploads Aunt Nettie's, a stepping stone on the way to MindMeld, the linking of everyone's minds to Aunt Nettie's

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network (Jen 2020: 238), a nefarious version of the Aunty power of "broker[ing] non-normative intimacy" (Mannur).

Yet as apt a trope as the Aunty might seem for figuring the entanglements, present and future, of the US surveillance state and surveillance capitalism, and particularly their ornamental co-optation and weaponization of queer, feminist, and anti-racist politics, ultimately the novel's theorization of surveillance state violence as "Aunty Work" produces an inability to articulate an anti-work anticapitalist imaginary. The dystopian world of the novel is loosely recognizable as an outgrowth of our own: it grew, the novel's narrator reflects, out of the technological magic of "thermostats that sent to Aunt Nettie first data, then videos […] Then came DroneDeliverers and FridgeStockers, KidTrackers and RoboSitters, ElderHelpers and YardBots, all of which reported to Aunt Nettie as dutifully as any spy network—recording our steps, our pictures, our relationships" (Jen 2020: 6). The situation of the Netted and the Surplus is thus framed as the inevitable extension of the present: consumers accept without question how advances in automating domestic labor "enroll people in new markets and techniques of surveillance" (Sadowski et al. 2021: 11); rich people consensually adopt domestic surveillance technologies—Smart Houses, Amazon Ring cameras, cellphone location trackers, FitBits—even as such data is used more and more to monitor and criminalize the poor (Gilliard and Golumbia 2021). However, the novel's vision of the dystopian future is also, bizarrely, kinder and gentler than the present, as the brutal surveillance the underclass endures is uncoupled from the body-breaking never-ending work they are compelled to undertake now. Terrorized as they are by the smothering gaze of the state and ongoing climate disaster, they are also provided, by that same smothering state, the basic infrastructure for Surplus life: food (though laced with rebellion-numbing drugs) is free; everyone gets paid (a "Basic Income"); everyone is housed (though often near polluted land giving off body-disabling emanations). Because the privileged Netted are more benignly surveilled but compelled to anxiously pursue never-ending productivity, they feel errantly jealous of these aspects of Surplus life—"People said that the Netted looked at our lives with envy," Grant narrates, "To be state-supported! To draw

a Basic Income for doing nothing!" (Jen 2020: 38). While Gwen scoffs at this disdainfully, Grant notes their "air of exhaustion": "They walked as if they had enormous boulders to roll up a hill and no RockBots to help" (Jen 2020: 38).

It's through this division between Netted and Surplus that the novel structures its central liberal fantasy, which separates out state violence, particular the violence of state surveillance, from the violence of capitalist exploitation. The novel is not subtle on this point: when Eleanor, offers Gwen a history of the present, she explains that while capitalism "had some serious drawbacks," "it worked better than anything else people tried" at solving what she identifies as humanity's central concern throughout history: "how we could produce enough to feed people, to house people, to clothe people" (Jen 2020: 94). Exploitation is, in her account, not central to capitalism's workings, but an ancillary and an unfortunate byproduct; things only really went wrong when corporations were recognized as people and forgot their responsibility to the public good. Such errors could have been controlled for and corrected, she suggests, through reformist solutions—the adoption of job-sharing programs, 4-day work weeks, redefining "real work" to include reproductive and emotional labor (caring for children and the elderly) and "cleaning up the environment"—had Aunt Nettie not risen to power (Jen 2020: 94). When her daughter poses the counterfactual, "But could we really have used Automation and AI to rethink capitalism?," invoking the novel's warmed over Cold War conflict with ChinRussia's even more powerful surveillance state, her dad assures her that "You don't have to have unfettered access to everything about everyone to get good data," that it would be possible to remediate capitalism and compete with ChinRussia without adopting a surveillance state (Jen 2020: 95).

The corollary to the novel's targeting of the surveillance state's Aunty work as a symptom of capitalism-gone-wrong is that work is good. Hyper-productivity in service of perpetuating the control of the surveillance state is a problem—the division between the Surplus and the Netted presses on what Berlant identifies as work's "contradictory status" in the present as both "perpetual and impossible" (2016: 409)—but *The Resisters* imagines work

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in general, even and maybe especially in capitalism, as a source of purpose and pleasurable productivity, rather than intrinsically a form of exploitation. Life without work, for the Surplus, consists of tedious violence: "Surplus dealt with the boredom of our lot by beating one another up," our narrator explains, "—such beating having become so accepted a part of Surplus life that girls especially clucked over pretend injuries the way they had once played house, as if simply rehearsing for adult life" (Jen 2020: 12). Indeed, one main source of Gwen's best frenemy Ondi's trauma in the novel is her father's recourse to cruel play in the absence of productive work: a "big-deal radiologist" made redundant by Aunt Nettie, he drunkenly plays basketball with his friends on their AutoHouseBoat, forcing his daughter to "to dive in and retrieve" from the icy water the balls that slip overboard (Jen 2020: 48–9). Our protagonists, in contrast, are productive by choice: they knit, they grow their own food, they pursue lawsuits against the government for the condition of Surplus land and food, they build devices to test pollution levels and hack their microchips. Most importantly for the plot, they organize an amateur youth baseball league, in order to give Gwen an opportunity to develop her prodigious pitching talent, her "utterly useless aptitude" that her father imagines as imaginatively productive nonetheless, in that it defies human comprehension as well as that of Aunt Nettie, in that it proves the infinite capacity of humans over machines (Jen 2020: 10).

Baseball in the novel is the playful exception that proves the rule. It is at once the vehicle for making an "undercommons" (Moten and Harney 2013)—parents and kids assent to Grant hacking their microchips in order to gather for games; they assemble, in defiance of Aunt Nettie's prohibition on assembly, carting equipment to ever-changing fields, the location communicated through secret signs and signals; they arrive by water, swimming or paddling in kayaks or paddleboats, so as not to attract attention from Aunt Nettie's drones (Jen 2020: 25–26)—and the occasion for experiments in democracy and restorative justice untethered from the state form. After Ondi plays in one of the underground baseball games unhacked, purposefully leading Aunt Nettie's drones to surveille the underground baseball league, the league

holds a meeting; there Ondi confesses her culpability to the group (a betrayal entangled with her horrific experience being briefly Cast Off by Aunt Nettie as a child). The reception to her revelation is mixed—some yell "You've fucked us all," while others acknowledge, "You're not the first one to seek to appease her captors" (Jen 2020: 81)—but the community unanimously decides not to disband the league in the name of security, but rather to keep playing, shouting, "To hell with Aunt Nettie! Let's play ball!" (Jen 2020: 83). In this way, baseball might seem to offer a potential infrastructure for, as Berlant writes, "terms in which trust would become more robust," ones that "involve a massive recasting of the relation of economy to modes of intimacy, which is to say to obligations and practices of worlding and care, and in such a way that debunks the productivist ideology that collapses the citizen with the worker" (2016: 409).

Yet baseball is an inadequate infrastructure to hang this hope on. This is not, as might seem most obvious, because of the novel's faithful rendering of baseball as a form of popular culture, popular in Stuart Hall's sense, a site of "struggle for and against a culture of the powerful" (1998: 453): even in the early days of the underground league, Aunt Nettie moves to claim baseball as her own, co-opting Gwen to train at Net University and eventually, drafting her and her fellow underground baseball teammates to serve on the Olympics team, so that they might compete in a nationalist face-off with ChinRussia, a battle of surveillance states reminiscent of Cold War-era United States and Soviet Union or China sports match-ups.[3] It is, rather, because baseball is ultimately cast as the occasion through which the novel stages a rival form of "Aunty work" to that performed by Aunt Nettie. The team, in the wake of Eleanor's successful lawsuit that ended the "enfeebling emanations" from the "Surplus Fields" (Jen 2020: 150), names itself "Aunt Nellie's Resisters" (Jen 2020: 214); later in the novel, after Eleanor's arrest and torture by brain net implantation—Eleanor calls this episode, "Aunt Nettie versus Aunt Nellie" (Jen 2020: 256)—Eleanor emerges as a "cult legend" among the baseball players, fans, and general public; they hold signs at the Olympic tryouts

3. On sports and US Cold War anti-communist diplomacy, see Blaschke (2016).

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reading "FUCK AUNT NETTIE, FREE AUNT NELLIE" (Jen 2020: 268–69). Eleanor's death at the hands of Aunt Nettie's agents during the final game in the Olympics series between AutoAmerica and ChinRussia sparks riots among the Surplus, as Grant narrates in the aftermath of her state-sanctioned murder:

> And slowly, then not so slowly, the work began moving forward again. Countrywide, the riots went on and on. Day after day, week after week, people rioted. *Workless, not worthless*, they shouted while we marshalled our evidence and prepared to file our suit. Aunt Nellie vs. AutoAmerica, this was. The Mall Truck case (Jen 2020: 299).

Here the potential for a baseball undercommons (and the unwaged labor of a baseball aunty) to inspire that "recasting" of the relation between work and value is both made visible and also foreclosed, as the novel asserts the necessity of "the work […]moving forward again." The work that the novel and its characters value, that they imagine as the stuff of dignity and valor, is the work of confronting Aunt Nettie through the proper channels—"I don't. Like riots," Eleanor says just before she dies" (Jen 2020: 295)—the work of marshalling data, filing lawsuits, and imagining that the state, capital, and their shared algorithm, if confronted, can be made to police and reform themselves. In this way, the novel co-opts for capital queer Aunty labor—her "dark sousveillance," to borrow Simone Browne's term, her "brokering of nonnormative intimacies" that disorganize and reorganize the commons (Mannur)—as much as the surveillance state it villainizes, elaborating a vision of social change that, as Kathi Weeks argues about some feminisms's "productivist tendencies" and "sometimes explicit, sometimes tacit pro-work suppositions and commitments" (2011: 5), "fails to contest the basic terms of the work society's social contract" (2011: 69). For Weeks, universal basic income, one of the bedrocks of Aunt Nettie's biopolitics, is a radical feminist demand that activists could make to contest the material conditions of the present, one that might permit people to "gain some measure of distance and separation from the wage relation, and that distance might in turn create the possibility of a life no longer so thoroughly and relentlessly dependent upon work for its qualities" (2011: 144). *The Resisters*, in folding UBI into the Aunty work of the surveil-

lance state, forecloses any queer radical feminist imaginary in an attempt to recast American liberal pantsuit feminism, and its investments in reforming capitalism and celebrating the dignity of work, as the most radical of horizons.

The Resisters thus offers up foils for the figure of the "security mom" in the form of the security and anti-security aunt, the latter of whose power to evade and confront the Aunty surveillance state ends up reifying the dignity of work in racial capitalism and arguing for capitalism's reform rather than its abolition. Jeff Vandermeer's 2021 novel *Hummingbird Salamander,* in contrast, offers up a different queer rewriting of the "security mom." In Vandermeer's novel, Jane Smith is a self-described "middle-aged mother" with "centrist politics" and a "suburban life" (2021: 160) who "lived in a generic version of reality" (26) amidst a dying world: world catastrophic events—refugee crises, extreme weather events, life-endangering pollution, a pandemic, the collapse of states, "the decay of things" (327)—haunt the margins of the novel. But by her own account, Jane plays the role of "a reasonable person, a normal person," referring to her shoes, for example, as "decoys, just worn to preserve some ritual about what women should wear" (2021: 9). This sense that her identity as a suburban mom is a self-conscious performance of generic womanhood is heightened by Jane's work as a security analyst in a private firm, where her job is "a kind of scam, but also like detective work—figuring out how companies worked instead of how they said they worked. Found the security gaps. Sold the fear of security gaps. There would always be security gaps" (2021: 24). The fiction of security, she knows, is both a sham and a reliable source of profit and employment: "the truth we never uttered," she reflects at a conference, is "that the Republic could become a husk and our borders a quagmire of death and discomfort […] but this only strengthened our job security" (2021: 70). Such security through surveillance technology is, she comes to realize, dependent upon finding consolation in consumerism and a purely extractive relationship to the planet: before the events of the novel, she confesses, she "loved drones": "I loved how I could order something and it would be there immediately. I would toss the plastic in the recycling bin and never questioned the magic of how I had received yet another gift" (58).

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The occasion for the novel is the moment when the watcher becomes the watched: Jane receives a mysterious message from Silvina Vilcapampa, the disinherited heir to an international Argentinian conglomerate, "an animal rights activist who fought against wildlife trafficking," was tried (though acquitted) for eco-terrorism, and founded an organization devoted to the "Liberation of the Earth at any cost" (2021: 48). The novel stages Jane's receipt of this message through the literary animation of a film noir voice-over: "Assume I'm dead by the time you read this. Assume you're being told all of this by a flicker, a wisp, a thing you can't quite get out of your head […]" (2021: 3). This cinematic second person interpellates the reader as well as Jane into what Theodore Martin describes as film noir's characteristic staging of "disorientation": "being in too deep, in over your head, immersed in a predicament that is both out of your hands and beyond your grasp" (2017: 59). At the same time, Jane's retrospective narration from the position of a "flicker" of the dead speaking marks the novel's affiliation with what Martin deems contemporary noir's central conceit: "revival" (2017: 83). For Martin, the noir voiceover "from beyond the grave" is a meta-device, "an inscription of the temporal problems that come with bringing a genre back to life" (2017: 83, 87). But Vandermeer's novel appropriates noir's simultaneous facets of "disorientation" and "revival" for different ends. Jane's inexorable transformation into a noir detective, her convoluted quest to uncover Silvina's secrets, unravels her relation to the figure of the "security mom," a disorienting, defamiliarizing process that allows the novel to reimagine security altogether, tying it to a vision of preservation and regeneration of the planet amidst and beyond climate apocalypse.

Silvina's message leads Jane to a storage locker, where she finds a taxidermied hummingbird and another mysterious note that reads "Hummingbird, salamander." As she begins to investigate, Jane realizes that she has been the target of Silvina's surveillance for a year, and that her pursuit of the details of Silvina's life, death, and the meaning of the bird has provoked more surveillance still; her husband shows her a "flattened patch of earth" in the woods beside their house, littered with cigarette butts, evidence that there is "someone watching us" (2021: 102–3). "What would you

learn about me while I wasn't home?," she wonders: "I struggled to visualize what he had been doing. What information was being pushed toward? Why was it important to have eyes on my house in this age of electronic surveillance? Visual verification? Of what? (2021: 107)." The gaze Jane runs over her own house, as she attempts "to see it like an intruder might," reveals again her acute sense of her "generic" life:

> A generic, usual house for an upper-middle-class family. A comfortable swing my daughter had used when she was younger, hanging off a far branch of the oak [...] Ah, Silvina, it was everything and it was nothing. How the swing and the old tire in the yard became reduced to the stilted, broken shapes of skeletal animals as the dark leaked in. How the lights of the house made mockery of the curtains, so silhouettes came clear, like a shadow puppet play. (2021: 107)

The effect of becoming the object of surveillance, for Jane, is to further defamiliarize her domestic life, to make visible the contours of the construct of her familial role, a construct she eventually abandons in pursuit of Silvina's mystery.

Jane's work of defamiliarization is, consistently, the novel's too. In scenes like this one, and in its commitment to Jane's detective work as an engine of the plot (indeed, in its commitment to having a plot), the novel pushes back against what Brandon Taylor identifies as the "recent spate of novels about white women's existential malaise in the face of social ills," that seem to suggest that "the pinnacle of moral rigor in the novel form is an overwhelmed white woman in a major urban center sighing and having a thought about the warming planet or the existence of refugees" ("Sally Rooney" 2021). As Taylor describes, such novels invest in an "ethic [...]of reproduction" in service of the idea "that it is morally and aesthetically sufficient to merely recreate the alienating torpor of having one's life organized ruthlessly and brutally by capitalism" ("bobos" 2021). These novels function by constantly observing the "inert tableaux of contemporary life": "A character sits at a desk doing some mundane, specific task. Then the character is in a kitchen doing some other mundane, specific task. They turn their heads this way and that and catch others engaged in mundane, specific tasks that alert the reader to the mores of the moment" ("bobos" 2021). Jane's acts of domestic self-surveillance—her attempts

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to understand what information can be gleaned from observing members of her "generic" family "engaged in mundane specific tasks"—call up and reject what Taylor names "this idea that the most harrowing thing one can do is simply recreate the effect of the brutal force shaping one's life" ("bobos"). Jane is not content to be an "overwhelmed" observer of her own complicity; she chooses, instead, "to think like a detective, to be a detective. Trusted my first thought inhabiting that: everything I'm seeing has been staged" (Vandermeer 2021: 112).

In her obsessive hunt for Silvina's final vision for saving the dying world, Jane peels back layers of institutional and individual malfeasance, including the wild-life trafficking practices of Silvinia's father's multinational corporation and Silvina's own complicity therein: she herself "steal[s] wildlife contraband and resell[s] it to fund her own secret project" (230) after her family disinherits her, actions that lead to Jane's brother's death. Her quest places Jane in the path of violent gun-wielding goons run by Silvina's father; she goes on the run, abandoning her family, suffused still by her desire to find the truth so that she might "spread Silvina's gospel, to overturn the comfort of the everyday with the knowledge of what would come tomorrow" (255). In this single-minded pursuit of Silvina's mystery, in her decision to choose the role of detective over the role of "security mom" and the role of liberal-left overwhelmed white woman paralyzed by her own complicity, Jane emerges as a different kind of generic figure, a variation on what Lee Edelman names the "sinthhomosexual," the queer figure who performs "the act of repudiating the social, of stepping […]beyond compulsory compassion, beyond the future and the snare of images keeping us always in its thrall" (2004: 101). Jane is not a fully realized version of the figure Edelman theorizes: she cannot completely reject the premise of reproductive futurism, her attachment to the idea that solving the mystery might save the world "for her daughter," though she sometimes identifies this supposition as a pretense: "Somehow, in the midst of this, I sorted myself out. Lied to myself that I had to find a purpose for my daughter, for whatever in Silvina had been good" (Vandermeer 2021: 329). But Jane's arc in the novel is nonetheless an experiment in imagining a paranoid form of "repudiating the social"—particularly

the "social" for white women as contemporary fiction and culture have come to imagine it, in which they are either reproductive figures of public and private surveillance and security or paralyzed complicit figures—as an alternate ethical response to a dying world of climate collapse, failing states, and enduring capital accumulation. In the end, Jane finds Silvina's life work—it is not, as some of her pursuers imagined, a biological weapon designed to blow up capitalist infrastructure. Rather, it is "an ecosystem," "an ark," an "artificially-created" habitat that "would be there if the world destroyed itself, to help," offering the possibility for renewal (2021: 347). It is, Jane imagines, "a fail-safe" (2021: 347). At the end of the novel, she imagines herself—as the retrospective narrator of the novel, as the protector and executor of Silvina's final vision for the earth's intertwined endurance and revival—as a fail-safe as well; she becomes a different kind of security figure, untethered from motherhood, nation, and capital in favor of the faint possibility of a world transformed.

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"WHAT ACTIVISM CAN LEARN FROM POETRY": LYRIC OPACITY AND DRONE WARFARE IN SOLMAZ SHARIF'S *LOOK*

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INTRODUCTION

In her 2016 poetry collection *LOOK,* Solmaz Sharif redefines the military term "Battlefield Illumination," which usually indicates merely the lighting of a battle field (Department of Defense 2007: 54), as "on fire/ a body running" (9). On the next page "Pinpoint Target," the military term meaning a target less than 50 meters in diameter (Department of Defense 2007: 416), is rendered instead as "one lit desk lamp/ and a nightgown walking past the window" (10). Both of Sharif's lyric redefinitions deny the scientific language of war, but while the first one cuts through vague euphemism to expose a body, the second eerily keeps a body in shadows, attending primarily to a feminized domestic scene.

Together, these two opening poems illustrate the central tension that animates Sharif's collection and that serves as the impetus of this essay: whether concealing humanness or emphasizing humanness is a more effective strategy for anti-drone activism that seeks to disrupt the conventional epistemologies of militarized surveillance. Most anti-drone activism attempts to expose the humanness of drone targets, presupposing that drone vision's inability to portray targets as human is the central problem of drone warfare. However, the strategy of becoming less visibly human—cloaking, camouflaging, masking, hiding, becoming covert, even becoming animal—might be, if not more effective, at least more

attuned to the dehumanization of those who drones surveille and target. As Rebecca Adelman recently put it succinctly, "a turn toward unrecognizability is predicated on a skepticism about the ethical potentialities of drones, their operators, and the states that send them to war. Such skepticism is both warranted and necessary, and may indeed provide the foundation for a new form of resistance to this type of militarization" (2020: 107). Adelman is critical of humanitarian art projects like *#NotaBugSplat*, a giant portrait of a child casualty installed in the landscape in Pakistan by a collective of French, American, and Pakistani artists, human rights nonprofits, and an advertising agency. The idea is that the portrait of the child's face is visible to satellites and drone cameras, and therefore humanizes the targets of drone warfare (JR 2014). The project implies that if the operators of drones could see their targets as human, not merely as small dots on a screen—bugs about to become "bug splats"—as they appear in the dehumanizing scale of drone vision, they might hesitate to act. There are a few problems with this implication, which epitomizes the logic of a type of anti-drone activism. First, it ignores the fact that drone operators do testify to the humanness of their targets and they often use highly sophisticated technology to see them clearly (Bryant 2017). Second, this logic ("if only the drone operators could see") centers individual drone pilots and drone technology, ignoring structural forces of imperial violence; and third, it simultaneously appeals to humanness, a category sedimented with race and gender hierarchies.

This suspicion of "recognition"—a term derived from a Hegelian context—as a remedy to violence is not Adelman's alone. Critiques of recognition in this sense have been suggested by critics and philosophers including Simone Browne, Judith Butler, and Jennifer Rhee.[1] As Rhee puts it, "the purported recognizability of the human

1. Judith Butler explores revisions and criticisms of Hegelian "recognition" and offers a strategy outside existing norms of recognition and within a reciprocal exchange of vulnerability and life (*Frames of War* 2016: 4–5; *Precarious Life* 2006: 43–5). Simone Browne's term "dark sousveillance," meaning "the tactics employed to render one's self out of sight, and strategies used in the flight to freedom from slavery as necessarily ones of undersight [...] an imaginative place from which to mobilize a critique of racializing surveillance, a critique that takes form in antisurveillance, countersurveil-

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(recognizable to whom? whose humanity is taken as a given, without requiring proof?), is one of the dehumanizing logics that undergirds overseas drone strikes conducted by the US military and the CIA" (2018: 5). In turning away from the dehumanizing logics of recognition and toward the ethical potential of concealment, this essay builds on Édouard Glissant's decolonizing philosophy of relation and more recent theories of gender and surveillance, such as Rachel Hall and Jasbir Puar's notion of "animal opacity," to argue that poetry is one place in which we might find an answer to what seems like a binary problem of seeing versus unseeing humanity in technologically mediated aerial warfare.

In *LOOK*, Solmaz Sharif invokes lyric history and feminist theory to engage in the critique of recognition and potentials of concealment through a series of experiments about what activism can learn from experimental form. Because poetry's critical history is shaped by theories of overhearing and imprisonment, contemporary poets working in both lyric and experimental traditions have a wealth of tactics at their disposal to critique and resist current damaging surveillance regimes.[2] Sharif, an Iranian-American poet who cites June Jordan's Poetry for the People, an arts and activism program that worked to bridge the gap between UC Berkeley and the surrounding community, as central to her education, sees her work as directly engaged in political action. In an essay about her techniques of borrowing military language, redaction, and erasure, Sharif writes:

> I am interested in what activism can learn from poetry.…I believe failure in activism is often a deficiency of lyricism—an inability to collapse time and distance, a refusal to surprise or "make it new," a willingness to cal-

lance, and other freedom practices," offers a specific form of resistance (2015: 21). For Jennifer Rhee, the history of the category of the human is one of "exclusion and oppression" and thus any recognition of humanness based on relation or similarity to the Western subject is in fact dehumanizing (2018: 3, 164, 173).

2. See *Poetry and Bondage*, which charts how lyric has been theorized as chained, fettered, and bound and see *Lyric Eye* for the ways in which poetry might be a particularly important site for studying surveillance (Brady, *Poetry and Bondage* 2021; Sumner 2022). More broadly, David Rosen and Aaron Santesso see writers of literature as working out and generating surveillance theory (2014: 10).

> cify into rigid and limiting expectations, a closure to self-transformation, an unconsidered *we* or *you*, to name just a few. I believe social quests for freedom have much to learn from freedom enacted on the page. And that this conversation should happen on the level of reading and not, as it often is, solely on the level of intention. (2013, italics in original)

Taking Sharif at her word here, I explore how the poems in *LOOK* can teach us how to be better freedom fighters, in particular how to resist military surveillance technologies and the philosophies that sanction them. I find that in *LOOK,* Sharif develops a feminist form of opaque resistance-looking. This resistance-looking shares features with Simone Browne's "dark sousveillance," a term she uses to account for, among other things, "a reading praxis for examining surveillance that allows for a questioning of how certain surveillance technologies installed during slavery to monitor and track blackness as property […] anticipate the contemporary surveillance of racialized subjects, and it also provides a way to frame how the contemporary surveillance of the racial body might be contended with" (2015: 22–4). At the same time, Sharif's resistance-looking is distinct from dark sousveillance in its commitment to historical lyric form and relationality. Resistance-looking offers the shadowy recesses of poetic form as a device for seeing and resisting the dehumanizing violence of drone warfare. By tracking resistance-looking, my essay will explore poetic opacity as a response to the humanitarian turn to recognition in anti-drone art and activism. First, I will briefly sketch what a consideration of surveillance practices can bring to lyric theory and what the history and theory of the lyric brings to our understanding of drone vision in particular. I then explore the poetic techniques of Sharif's collection to argue that, when set within the history of lyric theory, *LOOK* offers a path of resistance to militarized power.

OPACITY AND THE LEXICON

As poetics scholars have previously suggested and recently detailed, the form of lyric poetry relies on surveillance, or at least voyeurism. In particular, the definition of twentieth-century lyric depends on a construction of expressive privacy that assumes a lone speaker who is somehow also available for reading audiences to overhear or see; the metaphors for readers as lurkers abound

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in theories of the lyric.[3] Critics have created numerous surveillance metaphors that would enable the mind to speak to itself, and for the reader to hear the mind's innerworkings. Perhaps most influentially, John Stuart Mill, who originated the saying that lyric is not heard but "overheard," created a carceral model for the lyric scene to make sense. In 1833, he wrote that the lyric is "the lament of a prisoner in a solitary cell, ourselves listening, unseen, in the next" (1981: 350). As Jackson and Prins argue, this odd but convenient model stuck, and the prison metaphor became an idealized lyric form, further codified into twentieth-century lyric form. The model becomes less odd when, in the twenty-first century, there are increasingly more public forms that take us for mere spectators. With the rise of both sanctioned and clandestine surveillance at home and abroad, a large part of public discourse is now defined by being witness to "solitary" or "unseen" acts. We do often hear the private lament of the prisoner. Between drone images, YouTube videos, captured footage of police brutality, even surveillance footage from prisons made public, we are constantly experiencing mediation that immobilizes us, and often individuates us, but makes us participate in (or at least privy to) civic events.

Sharif's techniques of borrowed text, fractured voices, constraint-based systems of creation, and ekphrastic catalogue place her collection within a tradition that critiques notions of a coherent lyric subject privately lamenting. The documents that *LOOK* catalogs, erases, interprets, borrows, and reuses include American media and popular culture about war in the Middle East such as Wikipedia articles and YouTube videos of soldiers coming home, but also documents produced or altered by the US state: military transcripts, letters under erasure, and lists of operations. This experimental structure has led some critics to call *LOOK* an example of "Documentary Poetics" (Leong 2020: 55–56; Dowdy 2020). However, unlike most

3. See Jackson 2005 (7–9), Warner 2002, and White 2014 (31–37) for the powerful history of the lyric speaker overheard and how it has shaped both poetry and criticism. Focusing on the 1920–60s, Tyne Sumner takes up these theories to argue that "it is the very intimacy of the lyric gesture that best positions it to critique surveillance" because it is situated between autobiography and politics (2022: 7).

examples of the genre, the book also traffics in lyric forms of expression, offering up a feeling hroughout. Sharif's collection is sensitive to lyric method as a writerly and readerly practice—and *LOOK* exploits the tension between see-er and seen inherent in lyric form to work through philosophies of this relation that are important to surveillance, and to drone technologies in particular. As Andrea Brady writes, "*Look* makes use of military diction in order to challenge the technologies of perception and tyranny which are epitomised by drones. It carves out spaces for poetic reflection and memory in both the position of the object and subject of the militarised gaze, making trauma visible without turning it into spectacle" (2017: 125). Beyond making trauma visible, Sharif offers a path of resistance to drone technology, and her first step in performing this feat is illuminating the multiple valences of opacity.

Although the collection plays with many constraints and forms throughout, the central procedure is the use of the United States Department of Defense's *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (2007). As illustrated in the examples that started my essay, terms from this dictionary are redefined throughout, and they are printed in all capital letters to set them apart from the rest of the text. Sharif includes a note explaining that "despite her best efforts," only a fraction of the terms from the dictionary are employed in the collection, and that she used a specific edition of the Department of Defense (DOD) dictionary from 2007. The edition is important because as terms are removed, the dictionary indexes how military language becomes less obscure over time. As Sharif explains about the removal of the term "drone" after 2015: "It is likely 'drone' was removed from the dictionary since understanding of the term has fully entered English vernacular; in other words, the military definition is no longer a supplement to the English language, but the English language itself" (2016: 95).

This means that the dictionary terms that Sharif includes in *LOOK* may a) be unfamiliar to non-military readers, b) have a separate military definition, which once known, estranges otherwise common words or situations for non-military readers, or c) have come into standard usage since 2007 and are now clearly understood by the general public. These three options are

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important to dwell on for a moment, and I will discuss 'b' first, as it is the most common.

Using dictionaries to create poetry is not an unusual avant-garde technique. As Craig Dworkin suggests about works that use dictionaries for formal experimentation, "such literature isolates or foregrounds aspects of a reference work in order to lay bare ideologies inherent in even the most ostensibly objective and documentary collections" (2020: 10). However, in choosing words that are not in common usage and using them commonly, Sharif's poems use the lexicon as a technology for obscurity, rather than illumination. Even the title poem, "LOOK," would seem relatively straightforward if you did not know the DOD definition of 'look' refers to an active mine. In other words, Sharif asks us to read with the DOD dictionary, not as a device for clarity but as a source of murkiness. A poem like "LAY," which consists of a list of common prepositions for the term, is straightforward, if ominous, before you know that the DOD defines 'lay' as to "direct or adjust the aim of a weapon" (2007: 309). Using the dictionary in this case does not expose the ideologies in the dictionary, but rather it displays the obfuscation of everyday language. It shows how militarized logic infuses the lexicon of everyday life, and it asserts that the way to contend with its structural violence might not be through increased transparency but through extra layers of opacity.

There are many moments in the collection where non-military readers encounter the opacity of military logic as shocking and out of place ('a' in the list above). For example, in the line that combines predatory sexuality and violence, "Ladies, bring your KILL BOX," opacity is weaponized slightly differently (Sharif 2016: 17). In an interview, Sharif has explained that her work is in part an attempt to "infiltrate and disrupt territories and languages and narratives that think themselves outside of this violence" (Akbar 2016). By sexualizing the language of war or turning it into innuendo—the line cited in the interview is "Guaranteed to make your SPREADER BAR SWELL"—Sharif ensures that we are not dulled to the effects of euphemistic language. This illustration of violence in unexpected places, even infused with libido, is particularly poignant for a war that has been deemed abstract, both by the fact that it is waged on 'terror,' rather than specific countries, and that it is fought with

'indifference,' the same bureaucratized tactics that Randy Martin argues the US used to fight the war on crime, drugs and "various 'at risk' populations" (9). It is also particularly notable that Sharif takes this intimate tactic with the lexicon of drone technology, which has been a vehicle to further abstract, or even authorize killing as scientific, clean, and removed from the everyday of lives that are valued by the state. As Lisa Parks explains, "overvaluation or fetishization of the drone as 'unmanned' or 'autonomous' has the effect of sanctioning statecraft that takes the form of unilateralism or authorizing wars that are waged extrajudicially" (2017: 135).

Indeed, emphasizing the inhumanness of the technology seems to be what elicits the response of anti-drone activists to dwell on the humanness of the targets. The result is that operators are figured as unaware play-station players, technology as clean and inhuman, and recognition becomes a messiah for a state violence that is enmeshed in democracy, capital, and notions of humanity itself. The examples above put the wars on human genitals, refusing the fetishization of "unmanned" violence, yet also obscure recognition in the process. When, in the opening poem of the collection, Sharif writes, "Let me LOOK at you. / Let me LOOK at you in a light that takes years to get here" (2016: 5). 'Look' is capitalized here, indicating its military definition, which is also printed at the start of the collection: "in mine warfare, a period during which a mine circuit is receptive of an influence" (2016: 1). The poem implies that readers are implicated, seen rather than 'unseen' as in the lyric model, yet also that there is no such thing as direct transparency—sleek, technological methods of war are themselves punishing, making us receptive only for destruction.

"LOOK" focuses on drone technology and the recent war on terrorism with knowledge of the full scope of racial and imperial violence. Through braiding together different stories—insults from a jingoistic Republican protester, a courtroom scene, love-making in a domestic bedroom, the saga of an exiled family—the poem tells a longer history of civilian killing and destruction by the US in response to Middle Eastern conflict:

Whereas years after they LOOK down from their jets
and declare my mother's Abadan block PROBABLY
DESTROYED, we walked by the villas, the faces

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of buildings torn off into dioramas, and recoded it
on a handheld camcorder;

Whereas it could take as long as 16 seconds between
trigger pulled in Las Vegas and the Hellfire missile
landing in Mazar-e-Sharif, after which they will ask
Did we hit a child? No. A dog. they will answer themselves;

(Sharif 2016: 3)

The first stanza above refers to the siege of the Iranian city of Abadan by Iraq, an early event of the Iran-Iraq war (1980). At this time, the US was supportive of Iraq, then Ba'athist Iraq, led by Saddam Hussein. The jets of 1980 then become the hellfire missile launched from a Predator unmanned aircraft in an early battle in the War on Terror in 2001. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld would call this 2001 battle in Mazar Sharif Afghanistan "transforming" due to the technological innovation used in warfare. A few stanzas later, drones use contemporary infrared sensors to find targets:

Whereas the lover made my heat rise, rise so that if heat
sensors were trained on me, they
could read my THERMAL SHADOW through the roof and through
the wardrobe;

(Sharif 2016: 3)

The technologies of jet, drone, and thermal imaging mark generations through a longer story of racialized violence. The militarized mediation may change, but the logic of war operates in each scene: as Judith Butler puts it, "dividing populations into those who are grievable and those who are not" (2016). In the poem, Iranians and Afghani lives are akin to the loss of buildings and dogs, US immigrants from Iran—the speaker's home in California sets the contemporary scene for later poems—are always targeted and surveilled, deemed in need of illumination. As a later poem laments, "I say Hello NSA when I place a call/ somewhere a file details my sexual habits" (Sharif 2016: 93).

"LOOK"'s inclusion of the history of targeting and killing indicates that it is not drone technology that creates anonymity, or video-gamification that kills by dehumanizing its subjects. Rather, the poem attends to this racial violence as structural and therefore

precedes any particular technology. Further, the poem proclaims that illuminating individual humanness cannot provide relief from violence; as the speaker muses on a judge pronouncing a sentence, "Whereas I thought if he would LOOK at my *exquisite* face or my father's, he would reconsider" (Sharif 2016: 4, italics in original). In what seems almost a parody of an art project like *#NotaBug-Splat*, no matter how exquisite the face, the poem reveals that it will only exist for 16 seconds in this paradigm. The recognition of the face, of the precarity of the life, will not save it. Like Butler, Sharif shows us that instead, "grievability precedes and makes possible the apprehension of the living being as living." Later in the collection, Sharif's uncle is memorialized, grieved, despite the interdiction; in *LOOK*, Sharif writes, "let it matter what we call a thing":

> Whereas *ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life?* It is even a THERMAL SHADOW, it appears so little, and then vanishes from the screen;
>
> (2016: 4, italics in original)

Whether the life in question is a dog or a child, both are merely thermal shadow, "it appears so little, and then vanishes from the screen." This conflation suggests a momentary democratizing possibility as all mammalian bodies are similarly perceived. But as J.D. Schnepf reminds us, and the poem makes clear, the "vision of species fluidity" provided by drone technology "is a product of militarized surveillance" and follows its logic (2016: 299). Although infrared technology renders all bodies similarly, without regard to race, gender, or even species, the technology operates along familiar hierarchies of power, targeting only particular racial and ethnic groups (Parks 2017: 145). The dog here is an example of another form of ungrievable life.

Here it is legal language that deems these lives ungrievable; the anaphora of "whereas" in the poem recalls a formal document like a bill. Paired with a verse in the King James Bible in the stanza above, Sharif illustrates the depth of the structure of violence in Western democratic notions of subjecthood. Likewise, readers will notice that this poem employs specialized terms of war that are in standard usage today (option 'c' in my list above). "Thermal shadow" was in the 2007 DOD dictionary when Sharif was writing,

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but it is not in the 2021 DOD dictionary. Non-military readers know this term now and its capitalization is a historical artifact like the "ye" in King James: legible, even foundational to American structures. This section illustrated how the reading and writing techniques of *LOOK* favor many valences of opacity. The next section explores how this social quest for freedom on the page is a suggestion for activism on the streets.

OPACITY AND THE "WE"

Solmaz Sharif's poem "FORCE VISIBILITY" exposes the drama of what is available to see and what is unseen, yet it does not reduce the relation of the two to a dichotomy. The title of the poem is a term from the DOD dictionary meaning the "current and accurate status" of "forces; their current mission; future missions; location; mission priority; and readiness status." Here 'force' and 'forces' refer to military personnel and their weapons. In other words, according to the DOD, a current and accurate status, the "readiness status," is tied to what is visible. The definition of 'force visibility' continues: "Force visibility provides information on the location, operational tempo, assets, and sustainment requirements of a force as part of an overall capability for a combatant commander" (2007: 213). 'Force visibility' means seeing if people and technology are ready to perform killing.

The poem takes place in a car on the way to see a French New Wave film and the speaker is arguing with her beloved. She is trying to resolve the quarrel and she is wearing pigtails that "no one could see," presumably because they are under a hijab or another hair covering (Sharif 2016: 21–23). The scene is a militarized city with police on horses that also bleeds into a classroom and a dinner party. The formal method is "CONTINUOUS STRIP IMAGERY," a term from the DOD meaning that a camera is capturing an unbroken image, even as it is flying along over the terrain (2007: 119). Everywhere is seen, the car is an amphitheater, the traffic is between theaters, in both the common and military meanings of 'theater.' Like "FORCE VISIBILITY," the assumption is that the visual capacity is itself an agent of war. Indeed, the poem defines fascism as the regime of the visible:

[…]
What is fascism?
A student asked me

and can you believe
I couldn't remember
the definition?

The sonnet,
I said.
I could've said this:

our sanctioned twoness.
My COVERT pigtails
[…]

This is fascism.
Dinner party
by dinner party,

waltz by waltz
weddings ringed
by admirers, by old

couples who will rise
to touch each other
publicly.

This is a world of accepted—even welcomed—public intimacy. Familiar form is fascism; both the formalism of the sonnet and of the parties, the familiar signification of the waltz or the wedding ring. True to Sharif's conviction about politics of form recounted at the beginning of my essay, political failure, or even fascism is the unquestioned replication of familiar forms. But the poem points to several areas that remain unseen: the inside of the "sheriff's retrofitted bus," which we are told "Full or empty/ was impossible to see," and also the speaker's pigtails. The power here is in the hidden. Whether the bus is full or empty tells us the level of threat it proposes. Without knowing, we have to assume that the bus could take more prisoners. The speaker's pigtails exhibit unexposed girlishness, their first mention includes that "no one could see," then later they are "COVERT pigtails," a symbol for "our sanctioned twoness." Fascism is twoness, the visibility of otherness as power, and here that "sanctioned twoness" also recalls the standard lyric model.

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The notion that a central modality of power is seeing but remaining unseen has been well-theorized, especially in relation to biopolitics.[4] Feminist theorists in particular have suggested that the gendered gaze of the state is selectively cast, and that places rendered externally invisible can be powerful sites of knowledge-making. Examples of this are as far flung as theories of the "hidden abode" as a possible place of defiance, to Puar and Hall's observation that constructions of terrorists at this historical juncture are coded feminine (Fraser 2014; Puar 2007: xxiii; Hall 2015: 129–39). In "FORCE VISIBILITY," both fascism and femininity are symbolized by the hidden pigtails. But "COVERT" is not in the 2007 DOD Dictionary, despite its capitalization that leads readers to think it might be; an altered obfuscation happens within the poem. "FORCE VISIBILITY" illustrates that matters of femininity and the domestic sphere are hidden, but it also points out that, like the panopticon-esque sheriff's bus, these shadowy areas are imbued with power. On this point, Sharif has cited Audre Lorde's theory of "dark feminine power" as an important influence on her poetry. She comments on what Lorde explains in "Poetry is not a Luxury" as "the woman's place of power within each of us is neither white nor surface; it is dark, it is ancient, and it is deep" (2007: 37):

> I think all of these questions—what is femininity, what is darkness—and I'm so up in the air about them myself that I don't really know what to say, other than that I feel, as a person and especially as a woman, that I am under constant threat and attack, and it's not just me that's happening to. Somehow, I want the work to show that every time you're washing the dishes, every shower, every grocery trip—that's all informed by this violence, whether we're seeing it or not. (Clemmons 2016)

In "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power" and "Poetry is not a Luxury," Lorde creates a poetics of light and dark as a source of knowledge and power. What Lorde refers to as "the quality of light" is what allows the creation of poetry, but darkness is where women's knowledge and feelings are held. For Lorde, a false dichotomy between the spiritual and the political in the West banishes this type of dark knowledge, which Lorde refers to as "erotic" (Lorde, "Poetry Is Not a Luxury" 2007: 36, 37; Lorde, "The Uses of the Erotic"

4. I am thinking of Foucault's work on the subject and the many revisions and expansions in its wake.

2007: 56–57). In Sharif's quotation above she makes sure to mark unseen violence in the same breath as darkness and femininity. The poetry can 'show' what cannot otherwise be seen, and it does so through an exploration of femininity and darkness.

This feminine darkness is akin to Hall's 'animal opacity' that refuses visibility by the state. For Hall, who is inspired by Jasbir Puar's theorization of performance and biopolitics, "animal opacity" is linked to the form of an "undisciplined woman" which challenges the voluntary transparency within the domestic security cultures of terrorism prevention (Hall 2015: 129–39). Yet Sharif's technology with a capacity to reveal without illuminating also situates it within a paradigm of what Édouard Glissant refers to simply as "opacity," a model of relation that is separate from what might be a colonizing gaze of recognition. Glissant claims a "right for opacity" as that which exceeds categories of identifiable difference: "I thus am able to conceive of the opacity of the other for me, without reproach for my opacity for him. To feel in solidarity with him, or to build with him or to like what he does, it is not necessary for me to grasp him. It is not necessary to try to become the other (to become other) nor to 'make' him in my image" (1997: 193). For Glissant, we can be in community without entirely understanding each other, since to do so would require a single rubric of understanding. Further, he argues that the projects of becoming and making entirely visible are Western abstractions that result in colonial violence. One might argue that these abstractions and predilections toward transmutation are intensified by anti-drone rhetoric that depends on illumination and recognition, for example simplifying global systems of violence to the sentimentality of images of innocent child drone victims.

"FORCE VISIBILITY" is a poem with an unidentified lyric subject–an "I"–who hopes nevertheless to be a more public "we." Furthermore, the lyric subject notices her audience (traffic, police on horses, the sheriff's bus) beside her. It is a poem about two-ness, that stalwart of the lyric "I" and "you," that is written in tercets, insisting on a third party exceeding what is sanctioned and visible. Sharif's poetry reaches for a "we" and an "us" that is concealed beyond familiar form, the "sanctioned twoness" of the poetry that contains it. It shows us what does not work about lyric

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and recognition logics, what will exceed twoness, namely that opacity can use and also disrupt these models of recognition.

CONCLUSION

In pointing out what does not work about usual surveillance technologies and lyric technologies, "FORCE VISIBILITY" offers something else. The poem names the method of state surveillance, but it also acknowledges that covert counter-surveillance uses similar forms. Throughout "FORCE VISIBILITY"—and this is a major technique of *LOOK*—fascism is impossible to separate entirely from its resistance. Sharif's misuse of military terms resists by exposing what surfaces are visible and what is unavailable to us. *LOOK* conjectures that "resistance looking"—the technology itself is a tool of both exposure and opacity—sparks possibilities, suggesting a path to avoid a "sanctioned twoness" of lyric form that has previously been cordoned off from public forms.

To return to the portion of Sharif's essay that I quoted toward the beginning of this essay, Sharif stated she is "interested in what activism can learn from poetry" and one of the biggest failures in activism, also a "deficiency of lyricism" is "an unconsidered *we* or *you*." In "FORCE VISIBILITY," the "we" is the lovers, and elsewhere in *LOOK* the "we" is generations of targets or "ungrievable lives" ("we have learned to sing a child calm in a bomb shelter" is the penultimate line of the poem "Drone," which ends the collection). Who is this "we" that escapes the "I" and the "you" of lyric? How to consider it sufficiently but allow it the right to opacity?

It is worth pointing out that both poems that I have discussed in depth in this essay—"LOOK" and "FORCE VISIBILITY"— contain the poet's signature: "Mazar-e-Sharif" of the city in Afghanistan and the "sheriff's retrofitted bus," respectively. Indeed, beyond the oblique figure of the poetic "I" is the hidden sanction of lyric techniques by the poet herself. Here lies a trope so central to poetry that it is part of the Bard's boast that "every word doth almost tell my name."[5] This logic is a continuation of *LOOK*'s punning methods throughout. The words 'Sharif' (Arabic for an honorific meaning

5 I am inspired by Craig Dworkin's work here; he writes about a signature in Harryette Mullen's *Muse & Drudge*, which she describes as "I borrowed Shakespeare's device of writing his name into his sonnets" (2020: 174).

noble) and 'sheriff' (English from old English meaning a high officer) seem to have no etymological connection but they both manifest clearly in the poet's family name. The poet plays noble police as she is hidden from view, possessing the power to obscure without being seen herself. And in these two poems, the poet is destroyed by bombs and also thrives at the behest of the state. In our readerly quest for her, our consideration of the "we" or the "you," we must respect her opacity. Indeed, in Sharif's concealment, we are concealed, not by the penetrating technologies of war that render us mammalian blobs of heat on a screen, nor the scanners trained on us, but rather by the knowledge that violence and death occur in the realm of the unseen as well as the seen. We must turn our attention to the intricate violent systems of the state, the reasoning of their deployment, the leveling of their horrors, the depth of their structural disenfranchisement of total populations, because recognition of the humanity of its targets—though part of the process—is not enough.

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SEEING SHADOWS: THE FBI SURVEILLANCE OF LOUISE THOMPSON PATTERSON

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On February 1, 1941, a group of self-identified communists held a secret gathering in New York City. After the meeting had started, a forceful knock at the door alerted the group to the presence of the police. Every group member scrambled to vacate the room. They understood having communist beliefs, let alone meeting to discuss communist ideologies, could lead to intense police persecution. In the chaos of fleeing, Louise Thompson Patterson left something behind. The police investigation of the meeting space led to the discovery of "a small handbag filled with various material relative to the Communist Party, among which was a list of names, apparently the personal property of Louise Thompson….It [was] not known what the following list [represented]; there [were] many names of individuals on it who [were] prominent in the country and who [had] visited other countries during the past few years" (United States, 17 Feb. 1941: 5). This forgotten list was the catalyst for 924 pages of surveillance documentation that came together in the shape of Louise Thompson Patterson's FBI file.

The history of surveillance of Black people by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is one of suppression and containment under the guise of protecting the values and systems of the United States of America. This deployment of surveillance was established in the early years of the FBI. In 1917, for example, the most prominent vigilante group at the time joined with the Bureau to support

their wartime efforts of seeking out "disloyal" citizens (Churchill and Vander Wall 1990: 18). People who publicly critiqued social hierarchies or rejected American patriotic values were deemed a threat to the nation and regarded as valid targets of surveillance. The Bureau's efforts at anti-radical repression continued through the Red Scare of the 1940s and 50s. According to Robert A. Hill, "The Survey of Racial Conditions in the United States," informally referred to as RACON, investigated the rising tide of "black agitation" stemming from World War II and concluded with a call for the extensive surveillance of all areas of the black community (1995: 4). This racialized surveillance continued for decades, eventually leading to the development of the Communist Infiltration program (COMINFIL) which transformed into the Counterintelligence Program (COINTELPRO) in 1956. Under the guise of protecting society against communism, Black organizations, activists, and authors were subject to wiretapping, bugging, mail tampering, disinformation, infiltrators and agent provocateurs, pseudo-gangs, bad-jacketing, fabrication of evidence, and false arrests which were effective, to a certain degree, in containing movement organizing (Churchill and Vander Wall 1990: 36).[1] Through informants and social intimidation, then, the FBI indirectly regulated the spaces in which dissident citizens organized (Boykoff 2007: 729).

The experience and impact of finding oneself under surveillance was not monolithic. For the FBI, the visibility and perceived threat of the intended target shaped the strategy of surveillance. In *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness* (2015), Simone Browne locates blackness as a central organizing feature of surveillance in the US. Applying the frame of Browne's racializing surveillance, the FBI can be understood as a deputized apparatus of the white gaze intended to violently reinforce the human hierarchies established during the Transatlantic Slave trade as part of the national order of the United States. Approaching surveillance as a means to uphold social hierarchies underscores that

1. For example, the surveillance of Black authors of the Harlem Renaissance was one such manipulative form of surveillance. For more see, Maxwell's *F.B. Eyes: How J. Edgar Hoover's Ghostreaders Framed African American Literature* (2015), especially p. 62.

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the identity of the surveillance target informs one's experience as a subject of surveillance. Black women under FBI surveillance were subjected to different surveillance strategies than their male counterparts. Even more specifically, the surveillance of the wives of prominent Black male leaders differed in strategy and motivation from other targets of the Bureau's surveillance.[2] Using the FBI file of Louise Thompson Patterson, I argue that the FBI perpetuated an archaic understanding of gender roles in their approach to counterintelligence methods. Patterson was a notable labor organizer, communist, and activist for Black women in her own right, however the FBI placed culpability for Patterson's political ideology and activism onto her husband while she was seen as a helpmate and extension of her spouse.[3] Rather than focus on Patterson, the FBI focused on gaining intelligence about Patterson's husband and people in her network. Based on special agent reports, the level of detail, and the language used, I identify three types of surveillance strategies that signified shifts in the FBI's surveillance motives and overall view of Patterson as a key figure in communist organizations. Moreover, examining the type of information contained in the FBI file, I outline the incomplete narrative of Patterson's life crafted by the FBI. Agents repeatedly portrayed Patterson as the wife of an influential Black communist who was also involved with communists. However, by attributing her political activity to her husband and ultimately undermining her politics and agency as a Black communist woman, FBI agents were not able to fully realize Patterson's radical politics.

INCEPTION OF LOUISE THOMPSON PATTERSON'S FBI FILE

Patterson was deemed an appropriate target of surveillance because of her high-ranking position in the International

2. Patterson's surveillance experience differs from other unmarried Black Communist women such as Claudia Jones. For more on Jones, see Boyce Davies's *Left of Karl Marx: The Political Life of Black Communist Claudia Jones* (2008), especially "Piece Work/Peace Work: Self-construction versus State repression," pp. 191–238.

3. This article focuses specifically on Patterson's FBI file. For a broader account of Patterson, see Gilyard's *Louise Thompson Patterson: A Life of Struggle for Justice* (2017).

Worker's Order. On the first page of Patterson's FBI file, she is pinpointed as the Vice President of the International Workers Order, and agents made a point of identifying her as a "negress," or more specifically, "a well-educated negress" (United States, 17 Feb. 1941: 5). Patterson was an immediate threat to the social order because of the economic power of the International Workers Order, one of the wealthiest communist groups in the country with a financial reserve of about two million dollars (5). Even more, Patterson's perceived threat level was compounded by her being a "well-educated," well-connected, Black woman with national organizing capabilities who had recently returned from a year-long stay in Russia (5). Patterson's perceived threat was heightened when she delivered a list of 201 new members of the International Workers Order to the Communist Party headquarters in Chicago on June 12, 1941 (United States, 24 Sept. 1941: 10). Four months after the raid on the communist meeting I mentioned at the opening of this article, Patterson was perceived as an influential official of a powerful communist organization and as an individual who perpetuated communist beliefs of her own volition.

Although the Bureau initially regarded Patterson as a "national threat" because of her position as an influential, Black communist woman, her individual competence would ultimately be overshadowed by her marriage to William Patterson. When her file started on February 1, 1941 the FBI knew her only as Louise Thompson. On September 24, 1941, in a report detailing the investigation of Louise Thompson Patterson's marriage, she is identified as "Mrs. William L. Patterson with aliases Mrs. Louise Patterson, Mrs. Louise Thurman, Louise Thompson, [and] Louise Tolls" (United States, 24 Sept. 1941: 10). Patterson had just married William Patterson on December 3, 1940—two months before her FBI file started—and when her marriage to William Patterson was confirmed by agents who talked to informants and reviewed his marriage affidavit, she was conflated with her husband's image through the use of his name (United States, 24 Sept. 1941: 11). Because William Patterson had a surveillance file before the start of Louise Patterson's file he is described as "well-known as a communist in [the] area" (United States, 24 Sept. 1941: 12). From this point forward, Patterson no longer exists as her own entity within her

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FBI file. Her communist activity is placed in the context of her connections to her husband and to communist organizations. Her "potential threat" is exacerbated because of her access to influential people in her network, yet Patterson's individual agency and personal complexity is simultaneously rendered invisible because the FBI's focus shifted away from Patterson as an individual and toward the network she brings into view.

The beginning of Louise Thompson Patterson's FBI surveillance sets the tone for her file moving forward. Throughout the rest of her file, agents go back and forth between trying to surveille Patterson and concurrently paying attention to interactions within her network. Because of this split in attention, her surveillance is executed with minimal detail which ultimately weakens the FBI's understanding of how Louise Patterson operated on all fronts as a Black communist woman and organizer. The FBI's surveillance is not focused on Patterson as an individual Communist figure but as a supporting figure within communist organizations.

SURVEILLANCE STRATEGIES

Throughout the Federal Bureau of Investigation file on Louise Thompson Patterson, one sees how the Bureau uses different strategies of surveillance to gain intelligence on Patterson's background and current communist activity. The surveillance techniques in the file are normalized, as the different strategies used to gain information are not explicitly stated. Additionally, due to the restrictions of the Freedom of Information Act, the names of many sources and contacts connected to the Pattersons are blacked out. The level of surveillance—the proximity of informants to the targeted subject, the extent of the invasion of privacy, and the amount of detailed new information gained from surveillance—must be inferred from the type of information contained in the file as well as the information that is left out. The deliberate holes within the file simultaneously hide information and offer insights on the surveillance tactics of Special Agents. After careful close reading and analysis of Louise Thompson Patterson's file, I have identified three main surveillance strategies used by the Bureau to gain knowledge on her whereabouts, activity, and network of people: passive, undercover, and physical

surveillance. These strategies of surveillance shift as Special Agents' perceptions of Louise Thompson Patterson change.

The Bureau's use of passive surveillance places Louise Thompson Patterson as a subsidiary agent in her networks, which reflects their perception that she had a minimal role in communist organizations. I define passive surveillance as an oblique form of observation that derives intelligence from using preexisting monitoring structures put in place to focus on another person in a subject's network. It is a transference of surveillance from a target to a person within the target's network, which is only made possible when two people occupy the same space or interact across a medium that is under surveillance. This type of surveillance was by no means unusual. Through the culling of membership or attendance lists for instance, the FBI frequently deployed passive surveillance measures against known or suspected communists. While surveillance of this nature certainly found large numbers of potential conspiracists, the weak nature of these associations meant most people's links to political activity were tenuous at best.

The Bureau used the passive surveillance strategy most frequently at the start of Patterson's file when the Special Agents were still trying to figure out her identity and gauge her importance within different organizations. At the beginning of Patterson's file, most of the informants' reports associate her with another organization or find her participating in a large communist event. For instance, an informant in attendance at the Illinois Peoples Conference for Legislative Action on May 24, 1941, recounts the formation of a committee to meet with the Abraham Lincoln Hotel on the issue of racial discrimination among hotel management, and "Louise Thompson" was appointed a member of the committee. Additionally, the informant documents the election of different officers; included was "Louise Thompson," from the International Workers Order, elected as Treasurer (United States, 24 Sept. 1941: 13). The Communist Party activity file also contains a report that a confidential informant was present at the June 9, 1941, Midwest District Convention of the International Workers Order: "He stated that the first speaker was Louise Thompson and that the first five speakers urged cooperation and unity in fighting ideals and purposes and in aiding to defeat the 'imperialist forces'

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which were responsible for the war" (United States, 24 Sept. 1941: 15). After a further review of the reports of the confidential informant, Special Agents found a variety of pamphlets, flyers, and miscellaneous papers mentioning Louise Thompson; through these they were able to connect her to the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners, The League for Women Shoppers, and a group that visited Soviet Russia in 1939 (United States, 24 Sept. 1941: 16). All of this initial intelligence on Patterson was acquired through the passive surveillance structures already in place to survey the communist party and other "suspicious" organizations; it was not the result of a specific focus on Patterson.

The passive style of writing used by the Bureau to reference the informant's records on Patterson further position her at the margins of their surveillance operation. For instance, the informant report on Patterson's involvement at the Illinois Peoples Conference for Legislative Action refers to her almost as an afterthought. The main focus of the report is the previously mentioned meeting with the Abraham Lincoln hotel and the proceedings of that meeting. Snippets of Patterson's activity receive mention—specifically, her role in the organization is addressed along with a one-sentence summary of her speech at a session in the conference. At this stage in the beginning of Patterson's file, phrases such as "The report mentions…," "A further review was made of the files…," "…reviewed for possible additional information concerning Subject," and the use of the word "reflected" as opposed to "reported," all signify that Patterson's involvement was not a priority (United States, 24 Sept. 1941). Once her file was started, agents reviewed previous communist and communist sympathizer files for intelligence on Patterson; that information became foundational knowledge to develop Patterson as a surveillance target. As Patterson became a point of interest for Special Agents, they exploited her association with known communists to map a network of connections between different organizations.

The Bureau turned to undercover surveillance, a more invasive and active form of surveillance, to access personal information about Patterson and to initiate conversations with her. Bureau agents frequently posed as non-threatening persons or friends of Patterson to get her, or people close to her, to give agents

information that would otherwise be hidden from them. As a form of covert surveillance, undercover surveillance was one of the more intrusive tactics—agents would use deceit to access a space or acquire personal information. One can recognize the deployment of this surveillance strategy in Patterson's file based on the level of detail and type of information contained in a report, as well as the relationships between the people who had access to certain spaces in which the agents reported. Within the FBI files there is no indication that Patterson, or anyone else, was aware of undercover surveillance taking place within their social circle.

Posing as a friend or a non-threatening person over the phone was the easiest way agents uncovered information about Patterson. At the beginning of her file, when agents were trying to connect "Louise Thompson" to William Patterson through marriage, special agents "interviewed Patterson under pretext and he, in addition to supplying the birth data concerning himself, verified he married a Mrs. Louise Thurman, a widow" (United States, 24 Sept. 1941: 11). Later in the file it is revealed that William Patterson was interviewed under a false pretext. Agents told William Patterson that since "the Bureau of Vital Statistics had changed its location, it was necessary to review the various marriage records on file and to bring them up to date. Agent in the course of this interview described himself as [redacted]" (United States, 24 Sept. 1941: 12). William Patterson went on to explain Patterson's marriage history and the history behind her usage of the names Louise Thurman, Louise Tolls, and Louise Thompson (12). This fake call to her husband was just the first time a person close to Patterson was deceived into giving information; over the next twenty years of Patterson's surveillance, people within her network would be telephoned repeatedly and interviewed under false pretenses. FBI agents called her places of employment and her home, used fake names, acted as potential clients, and, on one occasion, even posed as her friend. The purpose of most of these telephone calls was to verify her employment at different organizations or to verify previous intelligence received from other forms of surveillance.

Undercover physical surveillance was more prominent than fraudulent phone calls as there were many informants within Patterson's network who came into contact with her on a daily basis.

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In April 1942, "Louise Thompson…stated that she had recently talked to a girl named [redacted] Morale Division of the Office of Civilian Defense. [Redacted] requested Thompson to secure a person for her who would be able to work with all kinds of language groups. Thompson told the informants that she had been unable to furnish anyone immediately, but tried to locate someone from the IWO" (United States 17 Aug. 1962: 27). Based on the use of the words "stated" and "told" in the report, it can be inferred that informants spoke directly to Patterson. Furthermore, the nature of the information, concerning IWO operations, indicates that informants worked closely with Patterson, perhaps even in the IWO office. Although, informants constantly came into contact with Patterson, and possibly operated within her personal space, there is little detail concerning her personal life outside of working with communist organizations.

Lastly, FBI agents conducted physical surveillance, a form of overt observation used to physically keep tabs on Patterson's movement and activity. Physical surveillance entails the presence of conspicuous FBI agents within the same space as the targeted person of surveillance—tracking her movement, watching her home, and interviewing her directly. The visible nature of this type of surveillance means it also constitutes a method of intimidation. FBI agents made direct contact with Patterson and were visible in the places that were supposed to be secure for her, which sent the message that they had the power to access her personal information and heighten her sense of insecurity.

The physical presence of FBI agents in Patterson's personal spaces was, in other words, a method of control. On November 30, 1953, for example, two special agents showed up at Patterson's apartment in New York City. They

> advised that she was specifically contacted in connection with an official investigation specifically regarding a meeting allegedly held in 1935 at the time the National Negro Congress was organized. Mrs. Patterson was asked if she was not one of the original members of the National Negro Congress, to which she replied that she supposed she was, adding, 'I do not care to discuss the matter with you'. She also declined to cooperate to the extent of answering any questions concerning the meeting held in 1935. (United States 7 Dec 1953: 23–4)

This was the first and only time the FBI agents made direct contact with Patterson, however they continued to make their presence known in her life (United States 30 Apr. 1958: 31). FBI agents would routinely watch Patterson's house, not just to affirm her residential address, but also to document her comings and goings. FBI agents even trailed Patterson and her husband throughout New York (31).

The FBI's overt monitoring of Patterson's activity was a method of intimidation to attempt to assert the Bureau's power to regulate its subject. When special agents showed up at Patterson's house to interview her about information they already knew, this sent Patterson the message that she was being watched. Sitting outside of her home, being present at her work, and following her through New York were tactics the Bureau relied on to create a sense of pervasive surveillance. The strategy behind agents being overt instead of covert is that if Patterson knew she was being watched, her illicit behavior might change. Therefore, physical surveillance was used as a tool to influence Patterson's decision making and perceived suspicious activity. In other words, this form of surveillance was not to gain intelligence, but rather to suppress communist activity. The use of surveillance as a tool of suppression means that Patterson was perceived as a person whose activity is pertinent to the operations of the Communist Party.

The surveillance strategies and motivations behind these forms of surveillance align with the FBI's understanding of Patterson's role in communist activity. At the beginning of her file, regardless of the positions she held in communist affiliated organizations she was viewed as an insignificant member, constantly overlooked by surveillance operatives. Her marriage to William Patterson increased her visibility to Bureau agents which led them to seek out information to justify her elevated level of surveillance. As the special agents learned more about her involvement in different organizations, communist affiliated or not, Patterson was understood as a connection between organizations and as a person who possessed a wealth of knowledge pertaining to the operations of the groups. The shift from surveillance as a method to gain intelligence to surveillance as a tool of suppression aligns with the view of Patterson as a key player in communist activity.

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The development of her surveillance tells the story of the FBI's approach to a prominent Black communist woman. Patterson was propelled into the circle of focus through her connections–including her marriage to William Patterson. However, she was always seen as being a part of something greater than herself– namely an influential network of communist organizations. Her surveillance was justified because of her role within organizations and not because of her work as an individual who was a "threat to national security" based on her perceived status.

THE FBI'S CRAFTED NARRATIVE

When Patterson's file first began, the FBI justified the continuance of her surveillance by connecting her to William Patterson and communist organizations. Her perceived threat was heightened when it was determined that she worked for the International Workers Order (IWO), "one of the wealthiest communist setups in the country" (United States, 17 Feb. 1941: 5). After this discovery, one of the first things agents did was ascertain her marriage to William L. Patterson, "National Vice-President of the [International Labor Defense], long well-known as a communist in [the] area, Executive of the board of the Communist Party, and long official of the National Negro Congress" (United States, 24 Sept. 1941: 12). Next, FBI agents reviewed their previous files for any prior knowledge in which they uncovered Patterson's involvement in communist affiliated organizations. Agents then looked into her birth records, academic records, arrest records, bank records, and even talked to old college acquaintances to get a sense of who she was. Forty-seven pages into her FBI file, in order to justify a request for technical surveillance of Patterson, Special Agents established her involvement with approximately thirteen communist and labor organizations. At the end of the first section of her file, Special Agents had constructed Patterson's image as a well-educated, Black communist woman heavily involved in communist organizations and connected to Black prominent figures in the Communist Party.

Later in the file, when they submitted a request for technical surveillance of Louise Patterson they included a short profile on her husband, William L. Patterson. They labeled him as a leader of the Communist Party in the Chicago area and as someone

particularly interested in the communist infiltration of the "Negro Situation" (United States, 26 June 1943: 40). Right after reinforcing her marriage to an influential communist leader, the file uses the name "Mrs. William L. Patterson" to refer to Louise Thompson Patterson followed by the description that she is "regarded as one of the leading figures in Communist activity in the Chicago area," a description also used to describe William Patterson (United States, 17 Dec. 1945: 43). Despite the fact that wives in this period were often referred to by their husbands' name, the file's conflation William Patterson with Louise Thompson Patterson through the use of his name contributes to its narrative that William Patterson was the more important communist operative.

Furthermore, Patterson's FBI file maintained she had an important contributing role in the operations of the International Workers Order, yet they never grounded her actions within ideology. An FBI investigation into the IWO bank account found that Patterson, along with two other anonymous people, were authorized to sign checks on behalf of the account (United States, 21 Aug. 1953: 8). Patterson's authorization meant she had partial control over the finances in the IWO which positioned her at a high level of influence. Later in the same section of her file, agents describe her as an "executive secretary [who] was the directing force in the Du Sable lodge No. 751, IWO, Chicago, which had the largest IWO membership in the US and was composed mostly of Negroes" (United States, 23 Dec. 1946: 26). The report went on to delineate her connections with the Communist Party, the International Workers Order, the United Auto Workers Union, and the Committee on Race Relations of the Chicago Mayor's office. The report hints at Patterson's radical ideologies by citing that her work intersected with the Communist Party, anti-lynching organizations, and labor unions. However, why were her political beliefs and ideologies never fleshed out? Why were her speeches never transcribed and included in her file? Within the file, Patterson was never allowed to be more than her actions and contributions to organizations; agents did not give Patterson the space to grow as a significant figure in her own right. She remained confined to the image of what they perceived her to be.

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In contrast to the Bureau's limited view, Louise Thompson Patterson was well-known in many Black activist and communist circles as having a global analysis of racism, capitalism, and sexism. As scholar Erik S. McDuffie has outlined, Patterson's early organizing efforts were numerous and well-regarded. After she returned from her travels in the Soviet Union, Patterson joined the National Committee to Defend Political Prisoners and became the lead organizer for the "Free Scottsboro March," a very successful event as the first major protest for racial equality in Washington D.C. (McDuffie 2011: 75). In 1934, Patterson's arrest in Birmingham, Alabama while organizing for the IWO made headlines (77). The year after, in 1935, in front of a special investigative committee on the Harlem Riots, Patterson testified on the root causes of the riots as "the community's frustration with poverty and racism" (77). In February of 1936, Patterson was elected as the national secretary of the IWO's second largest division, the English section, which made her the highest-ranking Black woman in the IWO (105). Patterson became the director of Du Sable 751 Lodge on the South Side of Chicago in 1940. Under her leadership the lodge became a thriving center for Black political and cultural work, specifically, featuring the art and work of Black women intellectuals in support of left-wing causes (140). Although Patterson was connected to high profile Black leaders such as W.E.B. DuBois, Mary McLeod Bethune, and Ishmael Flory—a Chicago communist leader—Patterson's political impact and visibility as a Black communist woman was because of her own organizing work and the reputation she cultivated before her marriage to William Patterson. The disconnect between Patterson's prominence in communist communities and her shallow portrayal in the FBI file illuminates the FBI's failure to see Patterson's integral place in communist operations because of a limiting, gendered lens that compromised its intelligence gathering.

FBI agents did, however, allow room to discredit the efficacy of Patterson's work for the community of Chicago. A report from William Patterson's FBI file included in Patterson's file documented a complaint from a South Side Section member detailing how William Patterson and Louise Thompson Patterson were not running the center efficiently. It stated that:

> Louise had attempted to run the activities of the South Side Section and that when anyone became critical of her activities in that regard, she would immediately go to her husband, a paid [Communist Party] employee [...]. During that time Louise was frequently intoxicated and obnoxious and many South Side CP members became disgusted with the leadership of the section. (United States, 21 July 1951: 42–3)

Including this complaint in her file undermined the perception of her as a powerful leader in the organization and positioned her under her husband in the organization's hierarchy. Additionally, a report from a member of the Negro Allied Veterans of America,

> advised that Louise Thompson Patterson might have been a Communist, but he would not consider her a Communist in the same sense that he considered William L. Patterson (her husband) a Communist. Mrs. Patterson was not as aggressive as William in propounding Communist ideology, but she, more or less, went along with her husband's thinking. According to [redacted], Louise was so interested in the fruits of Capitalism that he did not see how she could have a strong feeling for Communism (United States, 7 Aug. 1951: 7).

Once again, Patterson's ideology and actions are attributed to her husband. Additionally, it is reasonable to speculate that the informant's account is exaggerated as most informants were paid to supply information and some even held personal grudges against the people or organizations they were informing against (Lynn 2021). Agents recognized the gravity of the work Patterson was doing and the importance of her role in the organization, yet they did not see her as a leader with her own commitment to radical ideologies.

As a Black communist woman in the predominantly white Communist Party, Patterson openly critiqued the party's social dynamics which often left Black women on the margins (McDuffie 2011: 119). Louise Thompson and Beulah Richardson wrote "A Call to Negro Women" in the summer of 1951, the founding manifesto for the organization known as Sojourners for Truth and Justice (STJ)—an all-Black women's radical group. The manifesto condemned "Jim Crow, lynching, the rape of black women, police brutality, black poverty, political persecution of black radicals, and the imprisonment of Rosa Lee Ingram" (McDuffie 2011: 175). STJ "combined black nationalist and Popular Front organizational strategies with Com-

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munist positions on race, class, and gender to advocate for Black women globally (McDuffie 2011: 173). On October 1, 1951, as part of the STJ's inaugural convention in Washington D.C., Patterson led a group of 60 Sojourners into the Civil Rights section of the Department of Justice to speak to the Attorney General and demand the government end racial injustice (McDuffie 2011: 160). Patterson was a leader in her own right, and she publicly proclaimed and acted on her Black feminist ideologies. Her eminence within STJ raises the question: why was her very public and effectual work not reported in her FBI file? Her politics and position as a leader in radical black, communist organizations would have been enough justification for her continued surveillance without her being married to William Patterson. The FBI's focus on men as a potent "threat to national security," limited their understanding of Black liberation and led agents to turn a blind eye to the important work of Black women.

Because the FBI continued to place importance on Patterson's connections instead of her ideology, they continued to misinterpret her ideological growth as an expansion of her network. As a founding member of the Sojourners for Truth and Justice, "the first and only group during the entire Old Left period explicitly organized 'to fight for full freedom of the Negro people and the dignity of Negro womanhood'" (McDuffie 2011: 161), Patterson had an understanding of how race, class, and gender intersected to contribute to Black liberation. The group had a radical ideology that "posited black women across the diaspora as the vanguard of global radical change" (161). However, the documentation about Patterson's involvement with STJ that is present in her FBI file focuses on the communist aspect of the group. Agents describe STJ "as a Communist front, and Mrs. Louise Patterson, one of the members of the initiating committee, as either a CP member or sympathetic toward the CP" (United States, 19 Oct. 1951: 9). Even more, Bureau agents attributed the initiation of the STJ to the Civil Rights Congress (CRC) headed by William Patterson (Lynn 2021). Taking the step to be a founding member of a Black left feminist organization, Patterson evidences a sense of leadership and an astute analysis of Black liberation independent of her husband. Patterson continued to prove her independence, leadership, and radical politics through her actions and involvement with Sojourners for Truth and Justice, yet the FBI

continued to place her within the boundaries of their fixed narrative of Patterson as a communist and as an extension of her husband.

In the eyes of the FBI, Louise Thompson Patterson was the wife of William L. Patterson, a Black communist, a woman, and an active operative within a network of communist organizations. She was a probable drunk, a friend of Paul Robeson and Claudia Jones, and she was a leader, not in her own right, but because of the influence from prominent communists in her network. The FBI came to understand Patterson within the framework of their traditional views on marriage and gender. In the FBI's assessment, the Patterson's marriage made for a transference of ideas from William Patterson to Louise Patterson that increased her surveillance visibility, heightened her potential threat to national security, and simultaneously overshadowed her own intersectional ideologies of race, gender, and class.

It would be an overstatement to label Patterson as a primary target of FBI surveillance. Instead, Louise Thompson Patterson's surveillance was one part of the FBI's strategy to achieve their end goal of repressing communist activity. Patterson was a window through which the Bureau could see into the operations of the IWO and other communist organizations. Special agents did not understand the true agenda of Black communists, specifically Black communist women like Patterson who worked with a complex understanding of race, class, and gender. Agents grasped for information regarding communist organizations and blindly established institutional connections based off the information available to them. Similar to a window, agents saw Patterson, but they looked right through her. Based on Patterson's file, the Bureau did not completely comprehend the depth of Patterson's analysis of oppression along the lines of race, gender, and class. Because of the Bureau's narrow agenda focused on communist repression, and their sexist views on the capabilities of women, the full potential of Patterson's "threat" to the stability of a racial capitalist system as a result of her intersectional ideologies of liberation was not realized. When looking at the FBI file compiled on Patterson one would never know she was an effective political activist at the forefront of shaping Black left feminist thought.

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THE SURVEILLANCE OF BLACKNESS IN THE KARDASHIANS' WELLNESS EMPIRE

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In 2021, *Keeping up with the Kardashians* (KUWTK) aired its twentieth and final season. During its fourteen-year run, the show brought unparalleled commercial success to its stars, a group of five sisters managed by their mother. A family that began with no exceptional talents now boasts one of the "youngest self-made billionaire[s] of all time" (Forbes 2019); the original social media influencers; two cosmetic companies – Kylie Cosmetics and KKW; a shapewear line – SKIMS; multiple endorsements and sponsors; thirteen spin-off shows; and the highest-paid model in the world for five years in a row. The Kardashians exert their power and influence through their show and social media.[1] In recent years, the family has focused on health and wellbeing, endorsing products for weight loss and health, from "literally unreal" (Fig.1) appetite suppressant lollipops to collagen coffee that will "help you look and feel younger and grab a hold of that coveted glow" (Dubin 2019) so you too can look and feel like a Kardashian. With hard work, confidence, and these specific products, Kardashian glamor and fame is framed as achievable for all.

In what follows I examine the medicinal wellness products peddled by the Kardashians, focusing first on the extreme forms of surveillance built into both the marketing of these products and the assessment of their results. I argue that the family's

1. Even though Kris, Kylie, and Kendall have the surname Jenner, I follow the lead of the show in referring to the family and its collective public persona as "the Kardashians" throughout this article.

interaction with the camera and the aesthetics of their social media cross-promotions combine to present a sense of open honesty, promising the replication of their success and beauty for their audiences. In the second half of the essay, I discuss the engagements with blackness accompanying the Kardashians' claims they will capacitate and beautify white feminine subjects, engagements now commonly termed "blackfishing." Through reading the Kardashians' blackfishing, I show how they have created an intense regime of self-surveillance, even dabbling self-consciously in the carceral state's techniques for surveilling blackness, to construct themselves as both uncommonly, exotically sexual ("baring all") and respectable enough to sell various remedies with dubious health value. By reading these two aspects of the Kardashians' beauty/fashion/media empire, I explore how their racial positioning, and even their experiments with techniques for the surveillance of blackness, allows them to maintain a collective exotic sexualized image while also securing the respectability they need to sell pseudomedical products.

In attempting to understand the place and popularity of these remedies in conjunction with blackfishing, I make use of Kyla Wazana Tompkins' (2017) idea of white sovereign entrepreneurial terror. Tompkins coined this term to expose and understand the hierarchical separation between black and white bodies in the late 19th-century United States, a separation made clear by pamphlets advertising "SSS Tonic" that positioned the fraudulent medicine they marketed to white sufferers next to caricatured visions of ongoing black incapacity. The Kardashians, I argue here, adopt a similar formula, promising beauty and capacity to their white subjects through both fraudulent medicines and an exploitative engagement with blackness. Unlike the patent remedies Tompkins describes, which encourage intoxicated disinhibition, the Kardashians promote self-control and self-management; organization of the self through exercise, mindfulness, and family; and bodily beautification through diet and other wellness products, following what Rosalind Gill describes as the postfeminist logic by which the "the female body […] is constructed as a window to the individual's interior life" (Gill, 2007: ??). The Kardashians construct the attainment of beauty as "redemptive" (Nguyen

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2011: 362), capable of facilitating both the inclusion of outsiders and class mobility. The Kardashians' specific performances of femininity, which they display through their social media, are meant to convince their target audience of middle- and working-class women that by replicating the Kardashians' performances and consuming their products, they will not only be able to enter exclusive spaces, but also gain a part of the success the family has achieved. However, as I show in the second half of the essay, replicating the Kardashians' performances also entails dabbling in blackness in a way that invites surveillance. This playful incitement to racialized surveillance has cemented the Kardashians' whiteness, while also intensifying the surveillance culture that has disastrous consequences for black people.

"WOULD YOU STOP TAKING PICTURES OF YOURSELF? YOUR SISTER'S GOING TO JAIL."

Mimi Thi Nguyen (2011) describes how the widespread "dedication to beauty" (359) in US culture not only brings women together, but also constitutes a "part of imperial statecraft" (361). Beauty is a tool used to manipulate subjects of US empire, particularly women, into conforming to Western beauty standards and controlling other women through the lens of these standards. This promise of beauty contains within it the promise that a certain type of feminine womanhood is empowering, and that imitation of US beauty standards constitutes power and agency over one's identity. In Rosalind Gill's (2007) discussion of postfeminism, she similarly argues that the sexualization of culture is constructed for women through "discipline, self-surveillance" (151) and constant monitoring. The most "striking aspect" of postfeminist media culture, Gill argues, is the "obsessive preoccupation with the body" (141) and the maintenance required to achieve the body society accepts. But the compulsion to create and maintain such a body is disguised by the neoliberal rhetoric of individual choice and empowerment, which transforms "the work of being watched" (Gill 2019: 159) into a freely chosen form of self-improvement; through multiple modes of surveillance working concurrently, an "entrepreneurial ethic dominates" (159) as capitalist patriarchy extracts value and labor from the body. In the media, white and white-passing

women are viewed as active laborers, producing and maintaining their bodies. I present the Kardashians as examples of active entrepreneurs profiting from their bodies, exploiting gendered surveillance regimes by allegedly "baring all," and inviting media into all aspects of their lives.

The Kardashians perpetuate their ethic of constant body maintenance through the endorsement of their questionable products. The matriarchal family partially attributes their "enviable" figures to the multiple health and wellness products they sell on social media, making extravagant claims around the success of the products. Akin to the use of "spectacular [...] testimonials" (Tompkins 2017: 66) from the white consumers who were the "primary customer base" (67) for 19th century patent medicines, the sisters use their own testimonials through both the visual image and the written caption beneath to persuade their fans to buy and use "wellness" products whose benefits are untested and which sometimes have harmful health effects, using their "natural" yet spectacular bodies, to which consumers have constant access because of their perpetual, multimodal self-surveillance, as evidence of the products' medicinal benefits. Through their constant posting across multiple platforms of social media, the Kardashians invite viewers to live alongside them; the replication of their habits and consumption is peddled as key to mimicking their success, beauty and "body confidence."

The Kardashians' invention of postfeminist entrepreneurial terror began with their forays into reality television. Kim Kardashian entered the limelight of US celebrity culture in 2002 upon the release of her sex tape, which she followed up with a star turn in Paris Hilton's reality show. Reality TV has always been about surveillance: Mark Andrejevic describes the growth of the "surveillant imaginary" (2015: ix) taking hold in contemporary culture and how surveillance "provides a certain guarantee of authenticity" (Andrejevic 2002: 265). The Kardashians innovated the basic form of reality-show surveillance, combining the leak of Kim's private sex tape with the more everyday surveillance of a lifestyle reality show in order to allow Kim's body to "acquire and display their cultural capital" (Winch 2015: 232) as she moved from the position of victim of unwanted surveillance to deliberate purveyor

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of self-surveillance. Through the initial taboo of exposed female sexuality and intimacy, Kim Kardashian capitalized on her body in the same way as Hilton, who also had a leaked sex tape. Hilton established herself within the world of reality tv as a wealthy white socialite inviting audiences into an unseen world. Kim was able to mimic Hilton's success, adding an angle of Americanized exoticism. Her Armenian ancestry gave her a palatable foreignness, making her into a fresh object for audiences to scrutinize. Maria Pramaggiore and Diane Negra (2014) describe the show as "nothing short of a phenomenon" (76) as "Kris Jenner carves careers for her daughters [...] all under the auspices of the Kardashian family brand" (78). The cohesive family unit became a powerhouse dominating multiple platforms through the lens of the postfeminist celebrity via surveillance.

Keeping Up with the Kardashians pioneered new forms of postfeminist surveillance culture. Little is kept private early on as the elder Kardashian trio discloses nearly everything, from the sisters' constant sex talk to Kourtney being filmed giving birth twice. In 2007, Khloe was sentenced to two nights in jail for a DUI. The cameras broadcast the family's journey there, and on the drive, Kris exclaims to Kim "Would you stop taking pictures of yourself? Your sister's going to jail," (KUWTK) while simultaneously disregarding and thus giving tacit approval to the other camera that continues to film the incident. Khloe's mugshot has also been framed and seen around their homes later in the show. The sisters are unashamed of their bodies; they are open for discussion and viewing amongst the sisters, and the audience is witness to this. In the fourth season finale, footage of Kourtney in labor with her first son Mason Dash Disick aired to 4.8 million viewers. In an interview with Australia's *Today Extra* (2016), Kourtney revealed that the footage was filmed by her then-boyfriend Scott Disick as a "home movie," but her experience of labor "was amazing" and she "really wanted to share it with people because it was my child." During Mason's birth the camera pans to the multiple family members in the room, capturing their engagement with the camera as well as the moment where Kourtney reaches between her legs, holds Mason by his underarms, and finishes pulling him out. Throughout the footage there is a steady stream of noise from machines

and medical practitioners, with an audible exclamation heard off-screen as Kourtney helps to deliver her own baby. Her self-midwifing is framed as a moment of female power and strength, made even more empowering by her enthusiastic desire for the surveillance of such an intimate process. The sisters' sexual frankness was present from the beginning of the show, presenting the "female body as a power source" (Pramaggiore and Negra 2014: 88). The neoliberal choice to capitalize on oneself combines with the feminist display Kourtney supplies; the family broaches taboo topics and incites candid conversations that further draw attention to the surveillance of intimate and private moments.

In 2019, Kourtney Kardashian established Poosh, a lifestyle and wellbeing website and e-commerce destination. The articles posted on the website concentrate on "solutions to the dilemmas of [the] contemporary" and changes women can make to upgrade their "selfhood" (Poosh). Her brand reflects her persona on KUWTK as the most health-conscious in the family. She and her three children abstain from using a microwave, as well as from eating sugar, dairy, and gluten, and their food is served on earthenware or wooden dishes. This conflation of virtuous consumer choice and beauty resonates with Nguyen's (2011: 370) explanation of "self-esteem", which informs the transformative ability of beauty in "feeling good" but also "doing good." Kourtney voices this message to her followers through her numerous posts on Poosh detailing how to "live your best life" while still being "sexy or cool" (Poosh); this is achievable, she insists, as well as being good for the environment. Just as Kylie and the other Kardashians regularly posted across platforms to advertise KUWTK, Poosh advertises its holistic lifestyle with each platform serving a different purpose and demographic. Twitter is utilized to present a savvy company engaging with its consumers. Snapchat has curated eye-pleasing stories, with each tap providing a new image linked to a Poosh article or product. Instagram is a never-ending narrative, where each image is something to be desired, replicated and reproduced. Also available is immediate access into selling the products through a "link in bio," "shop" button, and shopping tab function.

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One product often featured on Poosh is the Pink Moon Milk Collagen Latte, created in collaboration with Vital Proteins. When promoting this product on Poosh's and her personal Instagram, Kourtney emphasizes the drink's heavily feminine aesthetic, with its pastel-hued labels, ethereal name, and soft pink color before and after it is brewed. In the online shop linked to Kourtney's website, the drink is promoted alongside specific glasses and similar products that will help consumers to best "enjoy" and "feel the effects" of the drink. The drink is part of a larger lifestyle change Poosh encourages women to participate in, to achieve beauty and euphoria. Poosh then reposts the images of regular women with the product as testimonials and encouragement to further mimicry. Much like the patent remedies Tompkins (2017) analyses, Kourtney turns to ingredients connected with herbal medicine but whose medical benefits are often unproven. For the collagen drink, the website states the product has not been tested by the FDA and is not a cure for ailments. Gill mentions the "development of beauty pharmacology" (2019: 157) which paired with Poosh's holistic natural angle only furthers the "postfeminist surveillant beauty culture."

Three other dietary and health related products stand out amongst the many endorsed by the Kardashians, all of which connect their alleged nutritional value with body reshaping through "modified consumption habits" (Gill 2007: 156). Two products the Kardashians endorse are from the same brand, Flat Tummy Co. Flat Tummy's Meal Replacement Shakes claim to help consumers on their weight loss journeys while their Appetite Suppressant Lollipops claim to suppress hunger. However, the company credits the ingredients with only a handful of credible studies to support their claims. The Kardashians also endorse SugarBearHair, a blue gummy-bear shaped hair vitamin accompanied by only a vague description of what a consumer can expect to achieve by taking it. The product description claims it contains all the "nutrients needed to meet your hair goals"(SugarBearHair), although it does have a disclaimer akin to that attached to the collagen drink. Several nutritionists have warned that SugarBearHair contains lead, with lab tests indicating high levels, and if more than the recommended twice daily dosage was ingested, the levels of lead will have exceeded California's maximum

allowable dose levels.[2] However, the appeal of the SugarBearHair is the "delicious"[3] taste, and the blue shape reminiscent of gummy-bear sweets is "instagrammable." Invoking nostalgia and the connotations of innocence and childhood, SugarBearHair presents itself as non-harmful. However, on the Kardashians' Instagrams, the sisters present an alternative look at the gummy bear as one that bridges the journey from youth to adulthood as they strike sultry poses with the bears. (Fig.1) The lollipop also connotes youth but when posing with it, it carries sexual tones, targeting both girls who wish to emulate their idols and young adult women who see the tongue-in-cheek innuendo.

Fig.1 Kim's Appetite Suppressant Lollipop endorsement post on Instagram

These products are accessories to the Kardashians' faces and bodies, accentuating their beauty and sexual power. In their advertisements online, the Kardashians propagate terror through beauty by continuously promoting diet culture and supplements

2. As the Kardashians live in California, I use the state's dosage level.
3. Many reviews on the SugarBearHair Amazon Listing claim the bears taste delicious, and the product has a flavor rating of 4.3 out of 5. Kylie and Kim's Instagram endorsed images are also found on this listing.

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to vulnerable audiences whilst undergoing surgeries or digital photographic manipulation to contort their features and bodies into desirable shapes. Beauty is seen as a right, "made particularly visible on the body" (Nguyen 2011: 368) and this visibility leads to "scanning and surveilling the self in ever more minute fashion." (Gill 2019: 157) Furthermore, the ability to modify oneself through apps only increases the visibility of the female body and face as "a site of crisis and commodification" (157). Khloe's infamous face-tuning Instagram post incited outcry at her self-modification to a point of almost unrecognizability as she altered her face so drastically fans were questioning if she had undergone surgery. Social media allows a space for users to play with their own image, altering and modifying themselves to achieve the unachievable, even as far as masquerading as another race.

THE KARDASHIANS' OVEREIGN ENTREPRENEURIAL TERROR AND THE SURVEILLANCE OF BLACKNESS

Above we've seen how postfeminist sovereign entrepreneurial terror cultivates investments in beauty, teaching consumer audiences to surveil themselves through consumption of unsafe and untested products. Below I explore the racial logic of these investments, tracking how the Kardashians adopt the aesthetics of blackness to invite surveillance and to teach other women to invite surveillance. The effect of this is to normalize a culture of surveillance that disproportionately impacts black women whether or not they are reading and participating in Poosh. The Kardashians' juxtaposition of "black debility and white health" (Tompkins 2017: 75) is but a part of white sovereign entrepreneurial terror, in which the freedoms allowed to white bodies are "deployed as a kind of terrorizing vulgarity" (75) against non-white but particularly black bodies. The culture of blackface performance, which persisted well into the mid-twentieth century, meant that white performers adopted a caricatured version of blackness, donning aspects of the black body while violently preventing black people from representing themselves. In the twenty-first-century white bodies such as the Kardashians' performing blackness are still more acceptable than black bodies. Kim's curvaceous body is made

acceptable by her white ancestry; her privilege makes it possible for her to be simultaneously exotically desirable and respectable.

The Kardashian family are entrepreneurial terrorists through their use of "historically recurrent […] aesthetic[s]" (Tompkins 2017: 55), benefitting from and marking a new phase in the separation between black and white bodies. The family's form of terror takes shape in anti-blackness and white supremacy, as they portray black women without the history or *enfleshment* (Weheliye 2014) that they carry. Their motherhood, bodies, and caricatural behavior are rooted in embodying the black female body while also remaining white and separate from black agendas or issues. They are constantly accused of cultural appropriation for performing acts such as darkening their skin with self-tanner or copying and renaming hairstyles with cultural significance. The Kardashians relationship to race is complicated and ever-changing. Despite having Armenian ancestry, their "relationship to whiteness and racialization" (Dubrofsky and Wood 2015: 102) situates them in between women of color and white women fetishizing and appropriating black women.[4] Kim's rise to fame along with her entire family's success depended on two things: the many forms of surveillance she experienced and invited; and the sexualization and modification of her figure with a heightened focus on her rear, which has been the source of great controversy, conversation, and publicity for the family. Kim's trademark poses, which make clear reference to Hottentot Venus, have been described as the exoticization of black features implemented onto white bodies to make them acceptable (Jackson 2019: 39–41). While Saartjie Baartman and other black women were historically kept as freak show attractions for their bodies, Kim gained fame and fortune.[5] Kylie Jenner's transformation, when she used lip fillers, tanning, and alleged surgeries to reshape her face, has also been the source of numerous articles, as it developed

4. The eldest three Kardashians are Armenian on their father's side (Robert Kardashian was a third-generation Armenian-American), and white on their mother's side. The younger sisters' parents, Kris and Caitlyn Jenner, are both of European descent. This divide separates and further complicates the transformations some members of the family have undergone.

5. Hottentot Venus was an appellation given to a few South African Khoikhoi women who were displayed as freak show attractions in Europe. Saartjie Baartman is the most well-known of the exhibited women.

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on screen for audiences to witness the changes. Her body shape has also come under fire as she displayed a drastic change in her figure now complementary to Kim's which is often credited to her Armenian heritage.

Performances of blackface, Michael Rogin (1996: 12) states, "turned Europeans into Americans"; Rogin explains that "no one was white before he/she came to America." Whiteness in the United States, rather, was solidified "vis-à-vis Blackness and settler colonialism" (Tompkins 2017: 53). Rogin explains that to elevate into whiteness a separation and distinction had to be drawn between races, placing black people at the bottom. The complex dynamics of blackface utilized originally in the form of minstrelsy, allowed "one subjugated group, the white working class" (Rogin 1996: 47) to distinguish themselves from their class and heritage by emphasizing their difference from blackness. By performing blackness and then removing it, it was as if they were unveiling their true whiteness. While blackface now only occasionally resurfaces in insensitive Halloween costumes, tanning has ushered in its next counterpart–blackfishing. Journalist Wanna Thompson coined the term in a 2018 twitter thread, calling out blackfishing as a new form of cultural appropriation and the latest example of how blackness is framed as desirable while black women are not (Collinge 2021). There have since been many critical uses of the term across social media, particularly in before and after posts, showing or exposing celebrities and other social media users participating in blackfishing. Where blackface entails a white person painting themselves black and drawing caricature features upon their faces, blackfishing is more complex, involving deeply tanning the skin, wearing hairstyles created and worn by black women, or having surgeries to enlarge certain body parts to recreate the black female body in the eyes of the US. Blackfishing also resembles practices in the 19th century US when black people and objects were used as decoration and entertainment. (Neyra 2020) By superimposing the black body onto their own white bodies, the Kardashians, amongst others, use blackfishing as adornments maintaining their space in entertainment through black exploitation. Hyper-sexualized and objectified, the black female body is then reduced to stereotypes to be overlaid onto white bodies. Blackfishing thus creates

a dichotomy of black women who look and fulfil the aesthetic of the black American woman and then those women who fail by not having the correct attributes. Blackfishing also creates a new aesthetic as white women who blackfish retain specific European features that conform to a Western standard of beauty.

Some earlier scholarly writing on the Kardashians posits that due to her Armenian heritage, Kim Kardashian has been objectified in tabloid magazines as an "ethnic woman," a palatable ideal "off-white curvaceous body" (Pramaggiore and Negra 2014: 86). I argue that while this may once have been true, the dynamic has shifted: the Kardashians have transformed themselves over time, transitioning from ethnic or not-quite-white to being viewed through the same lenses as white women. Dubrofsky and Wood (2015) compare how white women were described as "working for the gaze" (99) while more ethnic women were described as innately erotic. To make this argument, they suggest that Miley Cyrus and Kim Kardashian are viewed as racially distinct, with Kim representing an ethnic woman. However, more recently the Kardashians have created a narrative aligning them more with whiteness than their Armenian heritage. They consistently draw attention to the work they attribute their success to, a narrative which has intensified in recent years as the family's appearance was called into questions surrounding allegations of plastic surgeries.[6] Like early 20th-century immigrants, the Kardashians have secured whiteness through engagements with caricatures and white tropes of blackness.

While the Kardashians utilize both self-surveillance and blackness to secure their identities as white women, surveillance works very differently for actual black people. Few black celebrities remain in the spotlight within their homes and private lives

6. The Kardashians largely refute these claims, citing personal trainers and diets as well as their own marketed products as reasons for their physical appearance. As proof, the surveillance increases with shared recipes and videos of their fitness regimes online. Their platforms share intimate details, enticing audiences to watch them and comment online. This creates cyclical surveillance, as audiences watch the kardashians and then self-surveille on social media, through comments or imitation—such as using the same products or eating the same food and posting it for their own followers to see.

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the way the Kardashians do, as surveillance "reifies the social construct of race" (Browne 2012: 72) and is used to control and condemn people of color. Black people have historically been subject to unwanted surveillance; Simone Browne (2015), describes early forms of biometric surveillance enslaved people had to endure and traces those structures of surveillance through to present-day policing. Racial surveillance enforces "discriminatory and violent treatment" (8) and is a tool of "social control" (16) used to define and reify stereotypes with lethal consequences. Where the Kardashians have achieved celebrity status through surveillance, black women are forced to be surveilled: Browne discusses, as just one example, contemporary airport personnel's "invasive pat downs [and] hair searches" (28) of black women.

Black hair, too, remains a source of contention for black women and girls, with many regulations within schools and workplaces regulating the hairstyles they are allowed to adopt. However, those same hairstyles are worn with white privilege in Kardashian workspaces. Translated onto white bodies these hairstyles become acceptable, despite having real consequences for black women, such as hostility in the workplace, job terminations, or withheld education as students are sent home. During a Vogue photoshoot in 2019 meant to invoke the 1970s, Kendall's hair was teased out to voluminous curls some saw as akin to an afro. The images were met with outrage online, at her appropriation of the hairstyle and the lack of real representation from black models by Vogue. Kim has also been accused of culturally appropriating hairstyles, such as when she wore Fulani braids to an award show or when she wore cornrows and called them "Bo Derek" braids, in reference to the white actress who wore them in the 1970s, erasing the long history and significance of cornrows as an African hairstyle.[7] But the controversies have not stopped Kim from wearing her hair in appropriated hairstyles and have not stopped the praise from tabloids on her "daring" hair choices.

There are many more instances where the sisters perform blackfishing, the images sandwiched between their posts as white

7. "Depictions of women with cornrows have been found in Stone Age paintings in the Tassili Plateau of the Sahara, and have been dated as far back as 3000 B.C." (Page 2001)

women. Their celebrity status and the lack of repercussions for their blackfishing is available for all to see, as they engage in these practices largely online and through multiple surveillance mechanisms. Another example is a well-known photo shoot of Kim, in which she balances a champagne glass on her rear while looking back at the camera. Lauren Jackson (2019: 37) points out that this shoot is identical to the 1976 shoot that "made Goude famous." However, while Goude's art focused on the black body, this same shoot was replicated with Kim who wasn't "even really brown" (37) at the time. The longer she has continued to perform blackness, the whiter Kim has become. From deepening her tan to wearing black hairstyles under whitewashed names, to even using her half-black children in shoots, putting them under surveillance with her to validate her blackness, Kim has consistently used blackfishing techniques that have only pushed her more into the space of white womanhood. Her start and the family's rise were dependent, Jackson points out, on "Kim's distance from whiteness, however relative" (39). Jackson traces how Kim and her sisters have trained the focus of the public onto their bodies, constructing their racial indeterminacy and play as alluring, and how this public gaze has then allowed them to "accumulate capital elsewhere" (2019: 38), through their business endeavors and endorsements. However, if Kim started out not-quite-white, she developed her whiteness over time, altering her face shape through contouring to make it fit the Western standard of beauty, and changing the narrative to focus on the work put in by the family to achieve their body types as though it was not a natural phenomenon dependent on genetics. The Kardashians continue to play with race to keep a steady unwavering gaze trained upon them, so as not to lose the limelight. They seem to have reduced this racial play a bit recently, perhaps having reached the stature and wealth they had so desired, but also potentially because many of them have mixed-race children with black fathers who can operate as their ties to blackness and as proof that the sisters "have biologically reproduced white domesticity," capitalizing on "multiracial white supremacy" (Neyra 2020).

Part of the terror the sisters engage in, then, is through the appropriation of stereotypical physical features and aesthetics,

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which terrorize actual black women, who are not able to abandon their blackness and who are thus harmed by the stereotypes with which the sisters play. Superimposing racial features that they pick and choose has updated the terror of blackface into the realm of blackfishing, alongside the disregard of systemic oppression black bodies face. Khloe and Kylie, often "considered the plain Janes" (Jackson 2019: 39) of the family, have relied heavily on hood culture to draw attention to themselves, transforming into the "black girl[s] of [their] dreams" (40) through both digital image alteration and physical workouts and surgery.[8] As rich white women they played a narrative of being black girls from the "hood" using aesthetics, as Jackson argues, "better known to girls from places a woman like [Khloe] would never go" (40). By staking a claim on these aesthetics and appropriations, they invested in becoming white women by acting black. Each response from infuriated internet users only fueled more conversation around the women and cemented their whiteness, much like blackface performance validated whiteness in the past. However, blackfishing generally seems to have a different, if related goal, namely to remain ethnically ambiguous and enjoy the achievement of the hybrid ethnic-white beauty standard that women of color may attempt to hold themselves to. Where real women of color may fall short of this fabricated standard, white women flourish under their fabrications, praised for conforming to Western beauty standards while still appearing as ethnic.

The aesthetic the Kardashians exploit is one belonging to black women, but they are no longer the only ones doing so. Other white women on social media, particularly Instagram, have been accused of blackfishing. Instagrammer Emma Hallberg was accused of blackfishing by followers when a message she sent to someone affirming she was white was spread on multiple social media platforms. Dubbed the "Kardashian effect" (Virk and McGregor 2018), there has been an apparent rise in cosmetic surgery to imitate the Kardashians' bodies and a rise in both celebrities and non-famous white women who now participate

8. Khloe's paternity was questioned, as audiences claimed she resembled OJ Simpson more than Robert Kardashian, while Kylie's insecurity around her small lips led to lip fillers and potentially more surgeries at a young age.

in these exoticizing beauty practices associated with blackness. The existence of blackfishing perpetuates Eurocentric standards of beauty upon black women, as there now exists a supposed black woman to idealize. One critic of Hallberg stated that her fame stemmed from her performances of blackness and that it kept real black people from the spotlight (Rasool 2018).

Blackfishing relies on intense regimes of surveillance, but also reinforces the idea that blackness is something that can be put on for fun and then taken off for work or to be professional. But inviting surveillance is far more dangerous for black women, and on a larger scale for black communities. Surveillance promotes and spreads narratives of harmful stereotypes or pushes an agenda using black images. Responding to the increase of racist violence against Asian Americans connected with Covid-19 scapegoating, social media framed black Americans as instigators when only a small percentage of cases were black on Asian crime. The majority was white American violence, but the surveillance of blackness was weaponized to alter the conversation. In this same way, images of blackness can be altered and reused to promote narratives that further damage black communities. Despite the progress made in the US, through the civil rights movement and feminism, white sovereign entrepreneurial terror pervades the country. Whether the entrepreneurial terrorist is Donald Trump or the Kardashian family, their continued popularity and influence, despite controversies, signals the ongoing racial imbalance in the United States. The symbiotic relationship Tompkins scrutinized between miraculous white healing and enforced black debility and unfreedom has merely transitioned in the present: white healing extends into white access to beauty and power, and performative blackness invades spaces where a separation is no longer clear between those who are black and those who are blackfishing.

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ANTI(HIJAB)BODIES: AN AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHY

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I had never felt as watched as I did in the compound of the US embassy when I went for my visa interview in Accra, Ghana. The experience reminds me of Jeremy Bentham's panoptical design which, as Simone Browne explains, is an unrelenting, ever-present, and all-seeing Eye, that constantly stares, guards, and monitors those deemed social misfits and invalids (2015: 33–5). This experience also reminds me of Karma R. Chávez's "textual stare," in rendering non-white, non-male, non-heterosexual, and differently abled bodies highly visible by putting them perpetually on the spot for scrutiny. There were cameras (or Eyes) all over the place, including outside of the walls. We, the interviewees, were not allowed to enter with our cell phones, nor were we allowed to carry any kind of bag. We were allowed only clear bags for our documents, and we had to be as clear as our bags.

These measures were an attempt to keep the act of watching one-sided. The United States should be the watcher, not watched or recorded through devices such as the cellphone, a situation that Browne describes as "McVeillance" (2015: 20). All interviewees had to go through this regardless of who they were in terms of identity, origin, or social status. What was different for me as a *hijabi* was being asked to remove my hijab for the visa photograph. I was devastated but chose to comply because I had too much to lose otherwise. Though I had been compelled to remove my hijab before as a young girl to access institutionalized education before high school, this was different for me: I was a full-grown woman who thought she had agency over her body, at least. At that moment,

I wasn't just stripped of my *mayaafe*, I was stripped of my dignity as well! And this was just the beginning. On my journey from Ghana to the United States and in my time living in the United States, I am constantly reminded of my foreignness and unwanted status; I am constantly policed by the US antibodies.

Ronak K. Kapadia explains that "[g]overnments repeatedly scapegoat 'outsiders'—whether undocumented Central American migrants, trans and gender-nonconforming people, sex workers, the homeless, the seroconverted, Muslim refugees, and so on" (2019: 19). Using the metaphor of the biological organism fighting foreign invasion with its antibodies, I analyze some of the problems associated with the scapegoating of 'outsiders,' especially visible Others, in the US context. In biological organisms, protecting the body against foreign invasion through the strengthening of the body's defense mechanisms is what antibodies do. However, this becomes a problem when antibodies can no longer distinguish between what is harmful or beneficial to the body. Antibodies, which are supposed to fight against harmful foreign bodies, become harmful to the body when they eliminate every case of non-normativity deemed a threat, which exposes the destructive nature of the self/Other binary.

My intention for this paper is to assess the portability of the analogy between antibodies and US citizens who police racialized foreigners not only in the sites associated with US security or surveillance like the airports and other ports of immigration, but also in sites of everyday interactions/transactions like the streets, stores, and classroom. I use auto-ethnography (as in Anzaldúa's *autohistoria-teoría*) in mapping out my own experiences with surveillance in sites beyond the ports. This everyday surveillance can occur when "good citizens" of the US call the police on or take the law into their own hands against groups targeted for surveillance and scapegoating by the US empire (think of Craig Hicks, George Zimmerman, Teresa Klein, Amy Cooper). Such surveillance antibodies are ordinary citizens who are passionate, uncompromising, and proactive nationalists that would leave no stone unturned in their quest to keep the US great.

The problem of racism cannot be overlooked in this conversation, as targeted surveillance does not emerge from a vacuum

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in the US empire. As Michael Omi and Howard Winant explain, "[r]ace is a concept that signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies" (123). More specifically, and better suited for my purposes, Philomena Essed defines racism "[…] in terms of cognitions, actions, and procedures that contribute to the development and perpetuation of a system in which Whites dominate Blacks" (181). However, my being deemed a threat by the US antibodies transcends my appearance or phenotype: it results from what my appearance *signifies* in the US. It results from racism: structural, systemic, and everyday racism faced by people of color in the US. As Essed elaborates:

> 'Race' is called an *ideological construction*, and not just a social construction, because the idea of 'race' has never existed outside of a framework of group interest. […] racism is a *structure* because racial and ethnic dominance exists in and is reproduced by the system through the formulation and application of rules, law, and regulations and through access to and the allocation of resources. […] racism is a *process* because structures and ideologies do not exist outside the everyday practices through which they are created and confirmed. (2002: 185, italics in original)

Essed's term of choice, "Everyday Racism," encompasses ideological construction, structure, and process, which she explains as "involv[ing] only systematic, recurrent, familiar practices. The fact that it concerns repetitive practices indicates that everyday racism consists of practices that can be generalized" (2002: 177). Further, Black feminist scholars, including Kimberlé Crenshaw and Sharon Smith, have dwelled on the term "intersectionalilty" to explain the multiple oppressive sites faced by Black women. Smith explains this term as "[…] encompass[ing] in a single word the simultaneous experience of the multiple oppressions faced by Black women" (2013–4: 3).

Before I critically examine the link between surveillance and racism within my lived experience, here is a little background about my hijab. I am Ghanaian and Muslim and my community is called Zongo. Muslims in Ghana are not Arabs: we are predominantly from the northern part of Ghana, we co-exist with Muslims from other West African countries, and Hausa is our contact language. Our usage of the Arabic term "hijab" signifies "veil" in English.

We use it to connote either the Muslim woman's head covering or her dress as a whole. The Hausa term for the hijab is *mayaafe*, loosely translated: "what is used in covering (the body)," which has come to mean a piece of cloth designed to cover both the head and the upper part of the body. Depending on a woman's marital status, there are different ways of wearing mayaafe in terms of the size of the cloth or the degree of coverage. In addition, there are women who choose to wear the 'complete hijab' irrespective of their marital status.

On the left is my sister, Samira, wearing the bigger mayaafe in a complete hijab, and on the right is my cousin, Kubura, carrying her mayaafe as an accessory. Both are dressed as married women.

The 'complete hijab' means complete covering from head to toe and some even go further to cover the face; this is called *burqa/niqab*. Wearing of a burqa/niqab in the Zongo community is relatively new. In the case of the incomplete hijab, women choose to wear just mayaafe without much attention to the rest of their dress, or simply carry the mayaafe along as an accessory to symbolize their status as married women, or sometimes, divorcees. Here, I use *hijab* to mean the act of covering, *hijabis* as women who cover, and *mayaafe* as the piece of cloth meant to cover the head and upper body. Because of the visual rhetoric–I use this phrase to signify the strong multilayered communicative

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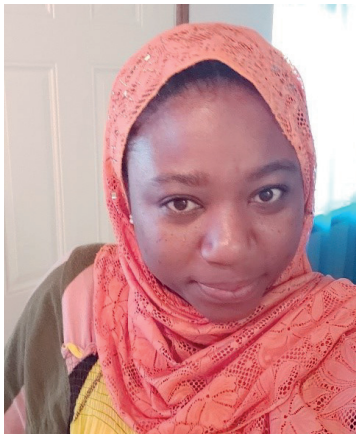
potential of dress—surrounding the hijab in Zongo, hijabis are deliberate about what they wear in order not to miscommunicate. I remember that as unmarried girls back in the day, we were very careful to not wear any bigger than necessary mayaafe in order to avoid being mistaken for married women. To this end, I have been conditioned by Zongo to regard dress as a powerful communicative and rhetorical tool.



These are what an unmarried Zongo girl would wear as a complete hijab, left, and an incomplete hijab, right, both with a small Mayaafe.

It is a misconception that all Muslims are Arabs and that all Arabs are Muslims; both identities are separate, though they sometimes overlap. Islam is a religion open to every human being regardless of identity or origin. My ancestors were Muslims long before the introduction of Christianity and British and French rule in West-Africa, because Arab Muslims had arrived there first for trade and to spread Islam. This is not to say that I have only known Islam all my life. Unlike countries like Nigeria, Niger, Burkina Faso, Gambia, and Senegal, where Muslims are the majority, in Ghana Muslims are in the minority. This means that I have encountered many different cultures and Christianity outside of my community. Because the Muslim community in Ghana, Zongo, is a minority community, I have been regarded with similar suspicion in Ghana because of my hijab (due to British colonial rule that others non-normativity) as in the US; hence the experience in the US is not particularly new to me, just more intense. The major

difference between my experience back home and my experience in the US is that I am only a Muslim hijabi in Ghana but a hyper-visible Black hijabi in the US/Mexico border region. This location is particularly relevant because, unlike the East or West Coasts, where there is a visual presence of African and African-American hijabis, I live in the US/Mexico border region where I am a rare occurrence: surveillance of foreign bodies here is centered on the Mexican body. For this reason, my experience in this region is a little unique: given my hypervisibility, I become the perfect target.

AIRPORTS/PORTS OF ENTRY

Of particular importance in discussing US airport security in relation to the antibody analogy is the problem of selective surveillance, where certain bodies are rendered hyper-visible for surveillance (Browne 2015; Selod 2018). Since 9/11, Muslim bodies have been rendered hyper-visible by surveillance programs in the US; the notion that Muslims are a potential threat to the nation leads to perpetual suspicion (Selod 2018: 50). To identify Muslims, security apparatuses often attend to dress that includes the hijab (Selod 2018; Singh 2019). As explained by Balbir Singh, TSA officers' training includes posters with pictures of head coverings for Muslims and Sikhs and information concerning how to respectfully search them as part of the US airport protocol (2019: 669–71). In *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*, Browne shares disturbing stories of people of color who have been harassed by airport security at various spots across the US and Canada just because they are not White: Black women get their afros searched, and Muslims get yanked off the plane because of their names. Foreigners get stuck, or even imprisoned for fraud, in their home countries. All of this goes to show the extent to which racialized foreignness has been made synonymous with a threat that has to be flushed out. The ports utilize antibodies in the form of TSA officers working in service of the US "forever war" on terror which was reactivated after 9/11 (Kapadia 2019: 5).

One chapter in Saher Selod's *Forever Suspect: Racialized Surveillance of Muslim Americans in the War on Terror* (2018) reads very much like Browne's chapter on surveillance in airports and on planes. Both of these works expose how targeted groups are criminalized,

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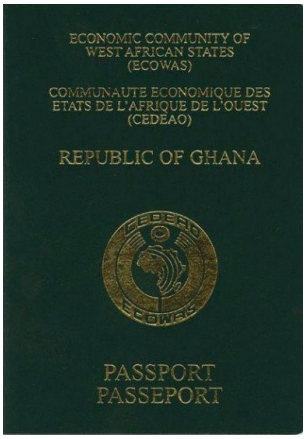
harassed, humiliated, and terrorized in airports. In her chapter, Selod proves her argument that Muslim men and women (hijabis and non-hijabis) have completely different experiences. Whilst the men are pre-profiled through such structures as Selectee Lists, hijabis are profiled on the spot because of their dress. Here too, Selod catalogs some of the demeaning experiences her participants endured at airports—such as being asked to remove their hijab in public. She terms such requests on the part of the security officers "performing security" (2018: 65). She explains this term as an attitude of intentional spectacle by the TSA officers in an effort to make a grand show of security at the expense of their subjects of harassment. Selod concludes this chapter by highlighting how the state "protects" some citizens by harassing others.



Ghana Passport

A sample of the I 20 document

US student's visa sample

I, myself, have been through several of the airports mentioned in both books, and many more that were not. I have been through the anxiety and the sleepless nights and the post-traumatic stress of it all, therefore, I was "interpellated" (Althusser 2006; Butler 2006) in reading about them. I know what it is like to feel alienated and have my body and hair patted down and groped. I have felt the invasion of and disregard for my privacy as I go through checkpoint after checkpoint whilst checking and re-checking my travel documents as they are extensions of who I am, my prostheses and objects of validation and authentication in the eyes of the custom officers. In my foreignness, I have encountered the US antibodies, firsthand.

From the outside, my experience in those spaces looks pretty much like everyone else's because everybody has to go through the same security checks. However, what is different for me as a Black hijabi is the anxiety: Will I get through without incident? I hope I don't lose my document along the way! I hope my documents check out! I hope the antibodies don't 'perform security' on me! I hope I wouldn't be made a scapegoat of by the TSA at the checkpoints in order to put the minds of the good citizens at rest. These are some of the thoughts that keep me awake for days before traveling.

STREETS AND STORES

My friends and I after grocery shopping (we're all smiling!).

From my experiences as a foreigner in the US, I have realized that the US border and the logic of antibodies stretch far beyond the airports and checkpoints. This hyper-surveillance is compounded with the fact that I am a Black woman with hijab in the borderlands region. At the same time, surveillance contributes to the flattening of identity as postcolonial scholars including Raka Shome and Gloria Anzaldúa have theorized. Additionally, because of my hijab and complexion, I tend to be an enigma to people on my US university's campus.

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My experience in the streets and in stores have been that of "Look, a strange looking person." This experience reminds me of an instance that Browne relates early in her book, "Fanon's often-cited 'Look, a Negro!' passage in *Black Skin, White Masks* on the experience of epidermalization, where the white gaze fixes him as an object among objects and, he says, 'the white gaze, the only valid one, is already dissecting me'" (2015: 7). Because I live in Las Cruces, I have had to endure stares from people while walking on the street, shopping in stores, or running in the field. I wouldn't mind the stares but these are coupled with an awareness of the potential danger I am in, just for looking like me. There are stories of Black people being attacked and killed, just for being Black (Tamir Rice, Breonna Taylor), Muslim women being attacked and killed, just for wearing the hijab (Yusor and Razan Abu-Salha), and foreign "aliens" being attacked and killed just for not being citizens (Adolfo Cerros Hernández, his wife Sara Esther Regalado, and the 20 others that died in the El Paso shooting of August 3rd, 2019). I belong in all three categories! For these reasons, it is a matter of urgency to discuss the lethal conditions faced by racialized foreigners deemed threats by the antibodies of the US.

The US antibodies are not confined to the airport/ports of entry. Selod also demonstrates how surveillance undergirded by patriotism spreads from the airport security agents to the ordinary citizens on the street. Here, surveillance can include acts that are intended to cause harassment, harm, or even death to the hijabis since they are the most visible Muslims. Selod outlines how some citizens' attitudes changed dramatically after 9/11; and also how violence against Muslims heightened, spurred on by Islamophobic rhetorics. Apart from the "textual stares" I have had to endure, I have been honked at, sworn at, or almost hit on the streets, while walking to campus. I have always tried to avoid walking alone or at night for fear of being attacked. The most traumatic for me was being stopped by the police. I was stopped once and I couldn't help panicking! I wasn't stopped for being Black or hijabi, but at a random checkpoint. The officer was very friendly and treated me with respect, but with all the stories of being killed for being Black? Black people have historically been a targeted group for killing

or maiming or "slow death" when it is more convenient for US biopolitics (Puar 2017).

CAMPUS AND CLASSROOMS

Being on campus has not shielded me from the surveillance antibodies. I expected that being a university, my school would be diverse enough to make people like me less visible but I was wrong. I have been stared at subtly but incessantly, which makes me feel monitored, scrutinized by antibodies who I thought I had left behind at the airport. In my first class in the US, peers came up to me, seemingly friendly, to ask where I was from. They then proceeded to tell me how beautifully I dressed and how good my English was: I have spoken English all my life! I was constantly asked if I was from Africa or the Middle East and if I was a Muslim by those who got close enough. I have had fellow students ask where I was reading from when I made a contribution in class, and been told by peers how smart and eloquent I was after class. None of these comments came across to me as compliments—they came across as surprise that I had exhibited traits that defied my watchers' biases. This scrutiny is not limited to the classes I take; it follows me to the ones I teach.

The issue of power dynamics in the Composition course I run has been one of great interest to me. In the classes that I teach, I have noticed a resistance from students merely because I look and sound different from their expectations. As a Ghanaian woman who wears the hijab, I discovered that I need to do more work in terms of delivery to enable my students to see beyond my different culture and listen beyond what I sound like, to what I actually have to offer. I have had students who expressed wonder at how clear my English was, and asked if I was British. I have had students who have questioned my approach to teaching Composition and emphasized how different it was from their high school experience: they went as far as to say that I didn't know how to teach English. In their minds, as a person unlike anybody they've met before, I must be wrong to do things differently no matter how effective my methods are.

To address the problem of resistance and scrutiny mentioned above, I turn to scholars of feminist pedagogy such as Laura

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R. Micciche. Micciche argues that resistance in the classroom entails various intersecting issues that include gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and disability. She addresses these issues from both the student's and the teacher's perspectives in the classroom, and beyond. In her writing, Micciche shares how other feminist scholars have addressed issues including how to empower the female student in the classroom; how to better educate all students on difference and foreignness; and how to help students see beyond their teacher's different body to learn from her. This was particularly instrumental to me in my quest to divert the antibodies' attention away from policing me and toward the course I am facilitating.

Equipped with this knowledge, I make the reality of difference as explicit as possible in my classroom. I start this from the very first meeting with students in order to create an environment where discussion of difference is encouraged. I also incorporate the issue of culture and diversity in designing my syllabus and lessons, all in the effort to make my classes as difference centered as possible. Though I struggled in my very first class with strong resistance from students, I have since learned from the mistake of overlooking the topic of difference and making the consideration of identity, culture, and diversity in technical communication and design the core of my lessons. By so doing, I have been able to create communities out of my classrooms that last long after the course is over. I still have students who retain and maintain the strong network that I establish in each classroom, who also contact me from time to time for advice, or just to chat. I feel so proud that students are comfortable enough to confide in me, even with personal matters, during and long after each semester.

CONCLUSION

To cope with the ever-looming danger, I become even more self-conscious of both my appearance and behavior in public. In other words, I perform self-surveillance in order to evade the antibodies. Mind you, when it comes to belonging to either the Muslim or the Black community in Las Cruces, I belong to both and none. This is because the majority of the black women in Las Cruces are not hijabis, and the majority of the hijabis are Arabs, which

is a major difference in the experience of full members of either community. When it comes to coping in the streets and stores, I fall back to the use of visual rhetorics, as mentioned above. I achieve this by simply dressing up: I make sure to dress formally on my way to class or to shop in order to at least communicate respect and respectability—this works for me most of the time. In addition to dressing up, I make sure to avoid any sudden movements that could flare up the already tense environment that sometimes happen to surround me, and make it a point to smile more, keep calm, and volunteer help. Even when using the self-checkout machines at the store, I am hyper-aware of the security cameras surrounding and shooting gazes at me. More than the cameras, I'm hyper-aware of the Eyes of the antibodies ready to use me as a scapegoat for the minutest mistake. I am not the only one with these strategies. According to Selod, whilst some women participants avoid harassment by removing the hijab altogether, others choose to resist through the modification of their dresses, or by becoming more visible through social participation and engagement.

As Anne Cheng puts it in *The Melancholy of Race*, "There are still deep-seated, intangible, psychical complications for people living within a ruling episteme that privileges that which they can never be" (2001: 7). Being different is one thing—living in a world that brands you as inadequate or a threat because you are different is another. This is made worse when the dominant system tags you with stereotypes. The dominant system dictates your behavioral system and you become obsessed with trying to navigate it, you internalize it. Your world, your entire existence could revolve around this stereotype. Because you cannot be adequate enough for the imposed standard, you develop an inferiority complex. According to Cheng, "The 'stereotype threat' that haunts African American students and inevitably accompanies and hinders their performances" is a psychological implication of structural racism (2001: 6). Of course, this sort of inferiority complex leads to depression, the sort that transcends you, the sort that, according to Cheng, is "pathological," is "melancholia" (2001: 8). As Cheng writes, "Melancholia thus denotes a condition of endless self-im-

poverishment [which] does not simply denote a *condition* of grief but is, rather, a *legislation* of grief" (2001: 8, emphasis in original).

In effect, my body, being Black, hijabi and foreign in the US, has been framed by the US security and surveillance apparatus to be received as a triple threat to national security and should therefore be eliminated by the US antibodies for the safety of the citizens. In order to stay alive, I must devise means of evading the antibodies by internalizing the same stereotypes used to frame me, so as to perform self-surveillance. By so doing, I have mastered a few coping mechanisms, as mentioned above, in an attempt to prove to the unrelenting Eyes that monitor me that I'm no threat–I'm just trying to live. However much I try though, I can only keep trying to stay alive. I will never be able to prove or change anything because the problem is beyond the now, it's tightly woven into the fabric of the US empire itself, it is systemic.

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"ALL-ELECTRIC" NARRATIVES: TIME-SAVING APPLIANCES AND DOMESTICITY IN AMERICAN LITERATURE, 1945–2020

by Rachele Dini
(A Book Review)

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In "Wakeful Dreams," the first chapter of *What Art Is* (2013), American philosopher and art critic Arthur Danto argues that Andy Warhol's art is about ordinariness. Warhol viewed the ordinary world "as aesthetically beautiful" and admired the things that his Abstract Expressionist colleagues ignored. "Andy," writes Danto, "loved the surfaces of daily life, the nutritiousness and predictability of canned goods, the poetics of the commonplace" (43). The various cartons that he fabricated for his legendary show at the Stable Gallery in 1964—Brillo, Kellogg's, Del Monte, Heinz, and so on—represented less a criticism of industrial society, in its seriality and sameness, and more an endorsement, the endorsement, and this is Danto's point, "one might expect from someone born into poverty and who might therefore be in love with the warmth of a kitchen in which all the new products were used" (43). Others, in postwar America, became attuned to domesticity and its promise of plenty, and Warhol's cartons, like the wallpaper of William Morris, attempt to redeem the ugliness (and scarcity) of ordinary life rather than celebrate it. But the vision of plenty does not stop at canned foods; it extends to include the products stored in the new electrical appliances that filled

the American home and contributed to the aura of domestic warmth coveted by Danto's Warhol. After reading Rachele Dini's *"All-Electric" Narratives: Time-Saving Appliances and Domesticity in American Literature, 1945–2020*, one might take another look at Warhol's *Icebox* (oil on canvas, 1961): the neatly ordered rows of foods project the promise of a reassuring abundance, but the name "icebox" sounds a nostalgic note. As we learn from Dini, the word "refrigerator" was already in use in 1934, as shown by one of several illustrations included in the volume, an advertisement in the *Saturday Evening Post* announcing "a New Style Sensation in Electric refrigerators." But William Carlos Williams preferred the name "icebox" in his 1934 poem "This Is Just To Say" (1934), where it "appears a calculated move intended to convey the speed of change at a time of intense modernization. It self-consciously gestures to the convulsive effects of industrial modernity on language and the poet's own struggle to keep pace with them" (58). Warhol's use of the archaic name for "refrigerator" in 1961 joins him to his literary predecessor in the pursuit of an actively reparative backward gaze that exceeds any reduction of the text (or image) to either a denunciation or a celebration of industrial capitalism.

Dini turns her attention to the phenomenon of electrification and the meaning of time-saving electrical appliances in American life and politics. She focuses on objects like refrigerators, toasters, vacuum cleaners, irons, and so on to shed light on "the racialized, gendered, and classist narratives long used to promote the 'all-electric' home and its gadgets" (2). Throughout, she concentrates on literature's dealings with those narratives. Her topic is American literature's engagement with electrical appliances from the post-war period to our day. As for the aims of the volume, it treats time-saving appliances and domestic electrification more broadly as a synecdoche of the domestic and international construction of post-war America, examining the literary responses to this politics. The author is interested in how electricity "intersects with the literary response to the last century's shifting understandings of home, gender, race, and class" (7). Her analysis intends to unveil the limits of technology and its potential "to exploit, oppress, and perpetuate nationalistic and imperialistic ideals" (3).

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Dini swims in an out of an admirably vast array of texts by post-war and contemporary writers—from Jack Kerouac and William Burroughs to John Cheever and William Yates, from Marge Piercy and Marylin French to the Black American fiction of Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin, Toni Morrison, and American Caribbean writer Paule Marshall, among others, from Kurt Vonnegut and Don De Lillo to science fiction and the postmillennial fiction of Joan Didion, David Wojnarowicz, A. M. Homes, Charles H. Johnson, Catherynne M. Valente, and Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore. Her discussions demonstrate literature's powerful role in affirming a particular vision of American identity at home and abroad. In this regard, Dini makes explicit that domestic appliances are like so many fossils of a mythic and unitary image of America. Her objects of inquiry, therefore, constitute fertile ground for the analysis of US representation and cultural politics, a fact illustrated by the book's opening anecdote about Donald Trump's berating of the "worthless" new dishwashers and his appeal, at a campaign rally in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in January 2020, to his supporters to "remember the dishwasher" (1). In the rhetoric of the forty-fifth President of the United States, the domestic object buttresses what Dini calls "this fascistic promise of a return to a previous imperial splendor" (2).

The best moments, however, are those when the author's research helps us to enter a text from a different direction. For example, when we can brood on Dini's reading of William Carlos Williams's icebox in "This Is Just To Say" and fast-forward to the mood of Warhol's own refrigerator. Or when we are made to re-open Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* to notice the rusty hinge of an icebox—an icebox, not a refrigerator—that "conjures an image of an old, perhaps second-hand, device far removed from the gleaming electrically powered items that featured in 1930s ads and films—and far removed from the sheen of the white woman's kitchen in which Claudia's mother works" (149). The archaic name of the appliance points to a reparative possibility, away from the mesh of class and race conflicts, that is otherwise foreclosed in Morrison's text. Or when Dini assists us in re-opening another classic, Paule Marshall's "To Da-duh, in Memoriam" (1983), where the author recalls visiting her native

Barbados in 1937, when she was eight, and telling her grandmother all about the "refrigerators, radios, gas stoves, elevators, trolley cars, wringer washing machines. .. toasters, [and] electric lights" in the United States" (145). The divide between the child and Daduh, signaled by the appliance, calls to mind Marshall's manifesto "From the Poets in the Kitchen" (1983), where "the warm safety of the kitchen" (Marshall 24) promises to repair the inner divide or double loyalty experienced by many women of color and eloquently articulated by writers like Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, the editors of the pioneering anthology *This Bridge Called my Back* (first edition 1982, second edition 1983).

Assisted by Dini's research, we can enter the texts of Jack Kerouac from a different direction. Kerouac and the Beats were "to reappropriate Walt Whitman's vision of electricity as a metaphor for collectivism, fraternity, and embodied democracy" (70). But when Dini closely examines Kerouac's fascination with the refrigerator *face-en-face* with the commercial advertisements of the period, her reading "throws into relief the indebtedness of Kerouac's aesthetic to the very same media landscape he claimed to oppose" (78). Some of these unexpected connections might invite further inquiry into the "time-saving" quality of these electrical appliances: what kind of idea of time and temporality might these time-saving objects conjure? What kind of intervention on time and representation might they wish to make?

Most of the times, American writing seems to present the appliances of the all-electric American home as distillations of racial and ethnic inequality, of gender inequality, or of the failed promises of postwar consumer capitalism. A white enamel stove "taunts" the speaker of Langston Hughes's poem "Deferred" (29); while time-saving appliances remain inscrutable for many first-generation immigrants, as shown in Maxine Hong Kingston's *A Woman Warrior* (30). In Marge Piercy's texts, and in other feminist writers like Kate Millet, time-saving appliances are "embodiments of congealed labor" and an allegory for gender equality as when, in Piercy's *Going Down Fast*, the use of the archaic word "icebox" suggests "a symbiotic relationship" between language and the archaic expectation expressed by one of the male characters requesting his lover that

she make him a sandwich from "'[a]nything out of the icebox'" (Piercy qtd. in Dini 129).

At times, Dini's discussion opts for well-trodden meanings of the writerly class divide, as certain American names emerge to lead opposing camps: on one side, Tillie Olsen, for whom the iron and board become emblems of the limited opportunities for working-class women, and, on the opposite camp, Gertrude Stein, who is reported to have vented her enthusiasm for the Sunbeam Mix Master (1939–1945) in the anecdote about her partner Toklas "murmuring [Mix Master] in her dreams" (qtd. in Dini 21). The volume, however, is a welcome addition to the field of Literary Objects Study. The lavish illustrations, mostly commercial ads, may present the "good life" as a universal right, but the reader finds out that literary representations of electrical appliances tell a different story. The author draws on the resources of cultural studies, the cross-pollination of Marxist approaches and queer phenomenology, Actor-Network Theory and New Materialism, design history, and feminist social history to remedy the broader neglect of the domestic sphere by literary criticism.

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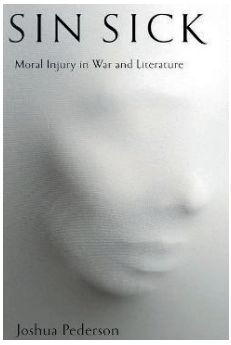
SIN SICK: MORAL INJURY IN WAR AND LITERATURE

by Joshua Pederson
(A Book Review)



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Perpetrator trauma is a difficult concept. Recognizing the specific pain of those who commit atrocities in war is frequently perceived as dangerous precisely because in doing so, one can lose sight of the perpetrator's accountability or fail to center the experiences of those subjected to martial violence.

Joshua Pederson's *Sin Sick: Moral Injury in War and Literature* (2021) suggests the adoption of *moral injury*—a psychological concept that describes the affliction of those who break their moral code when committing despicable acts—as an interpretive framework to better understand texts that have been historically defined as trauma narratives by literary critics. Crucially, Pederson's book appears after twenty years of American involvement in wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Given this context, it seeks to provide an innovative way through which veteran narratives of the US-led war on terrorism can be productively read without resorting to the divisive idea of perpetrator trauma, which too often seems to excuse veterans as victims of the war, thereby implicitly legitimizing imperialist discourses. However, Pederson does not aim to simply offer a solution to the shortcomings of trauma theory in this particular instance. Rather, he envisions moral injury as a way to deal with a "blind

spot" in trauma theory, namely the study of the depiction of moral anguish resulting from perceived wrongdoing.

Pederson argues that moral injury can be characterized in terms of *excess*, a term he borrows from George Bataille's *The Accursed Share* (1949) and *Literature and Evil* (1957). For Pederson, the various symptoms of moral injury are a manifestation of what Bataille thought of as the excess of energy received by the human body, which is expressed through these destructive symptoms. In other words, the negative characterization of one's crime as irredeemably evil, the tendency to equate an instance of wrongdoing with a fundamentally malevolent self, the extreme isolation, and the view of the whole world as essentially immoral and populated by other immoral beings are all instances of a catastrophic use of excessive energy. Pederson argues that moral injury has powerful effects on texts, much like trauma is understood as being able to shape the works that purportedly depict it. He contends that the excessive nature of moral injury produces literary texts which contain "an overflow of speech" (55) produced by characters in an attempt to reconstruct and make sense of their experiences. Moreover, the representation of morally injured characters has consequences on literary style in three important respects: works containing examples of moral injury feature frequent use of hyperbolic language, representations of nature (or the world surrounding the characters) as sublime, and depictions of isolation (which the author calls "signs of solitude").

To develop his account of moral injury, Pederson acknowledges Jonathan Shay's psychological use of the term as a kind of "moral and philosophical injury" related specifically to PTSD in an article on the *Journal of Traumatic Stress* from 1991 and expands its definition according to recent studies. In his article, Shay described moral injury as a "betrayal of nómos" (564), or an instance in which soldiers witness or commit an act of violence that does not align with their core ethical beliefs to obey an order issued by someone holding institutionalized power. The author's cognitivist approach draws from a remarkable number of recent studies on moral injury, chiefly those led by Brett Litz and William Nash. Following Litz et al., he integrates these two types of moral injury—witnessing the misbehavior of a superior and commissioned violence—with

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two other "types" of morally injurious events: the independent perpetration of a crime and the failure to stop a misdeed.

The relative novelty of the term and the fact that clinical research plays a large part in Pederson's argument make the first chapter the foundation upon which the author builds his argument. Pederson is obviously well-versed in both trauma theory and recent moral injury research in the field of psychology, and accordingly this chapter serves as a brief introduction to clinical research on the subject matter and breaks down the aforementioned studies while situating moral injury with respect to PTSD and feelings of guilt and shame. To do so, the author convincingly shows how moral injury is akin to guilt and shame "stuck in overdrive" and how, although the two conditions may coexist, it differs from PTSD in both symptoms and causes. As Pederson explains it, the emergence of the condition is influenced by the distance between the subject's actions and their moral sensibility and is therefore very personal, but the study also mentions that there are particular situations that typically trigger moral injury. As a well-read scholar of "traditional" trauma theory, Pederson envisions what he deems an embryonic theory of moral injury in literature in ways that resemble the methods of early trauma theorists. However, as a critic of said trauma theory—he is distrustful of Cathy Caruth's doctrine of unclaimed experience because it is based on outdated psychoanalytical studies—he gives greater attention to scientific developments in clinical psychology.

After establishing the theoretical and scientific foundations of his claim, Pederson turns to a diverse selection of literary texts, including Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, Camus's *The Fall*, and a series of works by American veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to illustrate four different types of morally injured characters: the perpetrator of a crime, the witness of a misdeed (who fails to stop it), the perpetrator of a commissioned act of violence, and the witness of a crime committed by a superior. The author's reading of Dostoevsky and Camus's works reveals the (textual) presence of moral injury symptoms, and crucially, in the case of *The Fall*, the possible entanglement of trauma and moral injury. Pederson notes how *The Fall* has become an emblematic example of trauma literature. Shoshana Felman's

reading of the novel, for example, focused on silence and omission and typifies trauma theory analysis by the "first-wave" of trauma theorists. While he does not discredit such readings, he notes that Camus's Clamence shows signs of moral injury; not only can the novel be read as a consideration of the consequences of failing (or being unwilling) to stop a suicide, but also as a larger meditation on a generation's failure to stop the Second World War, thus suggesting the possible existence of *collective* moral injury.

These chapters adhere to a "genealogical" approach to moral injury that Pederson borrows from prominent trauma scholars such as Roger Luckhurst and Michael Rothberg in an attempt to show moral injury's dynamics throughout time in different literary traditions as well as its specificity to recent historical events. To this end, the growing attention that contemporary textual manifestations of moral injury have received in the United States is explained in relation to the war on terrorism and other recent policies of the US Army.

The war on terrorism seems to be both the catalyst for as well as the most urgent object of Pederson's discussion. The American involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan has both effectively rekindled interest in the term "moral injury" and produced an impressive number of literary works that deal with the psychological consequences of combat. However, Pederson notes that some scholars, including Sam Sacks and Adrian Lewis, have criticized the increasingly solipsistic and narrow approach of recent American war narratives produced by veterans for their focus on the viewpoint of American soldiers and their presentation of these soldiers as victims of trauma. It is here that Pederson's book makes a significant step in the right direction, since it provides readers and critics with a much-needed alternative to the idea of perpetrator trauma. He argues that these critiques could be dismissed if only moral injury were to be taken into account, precisely because the very term entails an acknowledgement of the soldiers' wrongdoing and asks readers to deal with the wrongness of their actions without condoning them. Crucially, Pederson points out that if this pain is understood in the context of the discussions about moral injury instead of those related to trauma, questions of responsibility are all but overlooked in these works—rather, they

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are embedded in the representation of moral anguish experienced by American soldiers.

It is also here, however, that the book shows some of its weaknesses. Pederson emphasizes the fact that moral injury calls attention to the violence committed by soldiers, but the attention that is dedicated to their pain and healing—a byproduct of the origin of the term as a psychological category—means that moral injury could easily be prone to some of the same pitfalls Roy Scranton has identified with the myth of the *trauma hero*, in which the suffering of the victims of violence is silenced to reveal the pain and anguish of American soldiers. Another, related issue concerns *the way* moral injury supposedly brings about questions of moral responsibility. Instead of focusing on the responsibility of the perpetrators (and their superiors), Pederson welcomes the authors' accusations of apathy levelled against American civilians and notes how they are framed as complicit with the wrongs described in these texts. He goes as far as saying that civilian ignorance might exacerbate moral injury in veterans and that we ought to shift our attention from the responsibility of veterans as storytellers to the responsibility of civilian readers. Although this reflection could be a valuable way of initiating a discussion of current problems in the American democratic process and foreign policy, in this case it also serves as yet another way of mitigating the responsibility of those who perpetrate violence and moves us further away from the pain of those who suffer for it.

The merits of the book, however, greatly outweigh these concerns. Although at times Pederson seems to look too favorably upon veteran fiction that focuses on the US veteran's experience of war, he introduces critics and readers alike to a fresh way to understand the psychological pain of perpetrators and hopefully inaugurates a new branch of study that can complement trauma theory.

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ABSTRACTS
AND NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

KEEGAN COOK FINBERG
University of Maryland, Baltimore County, USA

"What activism can learn from poetry": Lyric Opacity and Drone Warfare in Solmaz Sharif's LOOK

The essay explores whether concealing humanness or emphasizing humanness is a more effective strategy for anti-drone activism that seeks to disrupt the conventional epistemologies of militarized surveillance. Building on Édouard Glissant's decolonizing philosophy of relation and more recent theories of gender and surveillance such as Rachel Hall's notion of "animal opacity," the essay argues that poetry is one place we might find an answer to what seems like a binary problem of seeing versus unseeing humanity in technologically mediated aerial warfare. I illustrate that the 2016 poetry collection *LOOK* by Solmaz Sharif intervenes to suggest activism that steers readers away from the logics of recognition and toward the ethical potential of concealment. *LOOK* garners formal elements from lyric and experimental poetry traditions to employ a strategy of resistance-looking based in multiple valences of opacity.

Keywords: Solmaz Sharif, drones, poetry, opacity, lyric, surveillance, recognition

Keegan Cook Finberg is an assistant professor of modern and contemporary American Literature in the English Department at University of Maryland, Baltimore County, where she is also affiliate faculty in the departments of Gender, Women's, + Sexuality Studies, and Language Literacy and Culture. She studies poetry, experimental literature, intermedial arts, feminism, and critical theory. She is currently writing a book about how post-1960s poetry responds to the US government's facilitation of capitalism. Her scholarly essays can be found in C*ontemporary Women's Writing, Textual Practice, and Canada and Beyond*. She has published public criticism in the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Jacket 2*, *The Rumpus*, and elsewhere.

HEENA HUSSAIN
University of Manchester, United Kingdom

The Surveillance of Blackness in the Kardashians' Wellness Empire

Keeping up with the Kardashians depicts the lives of the Kardashian clan through reality television. The unparalleled success of five sisters managed by their mother has only continued to increase over time along with their participatory self-surveillance through their formidable use of social media. In recent years, a focus on health and wellbeing has led the sisters to endorse products for weight loss and health, using their bodies as spaces of commodification and advertisement online. The family's interaction with the camera, and the aesthetics of their social media cross-promotions combine to present an open "honest" front promoting the replication of their success and beauty for their audiences. The sisters engage with blackness in a way that bolsters their claims of capacitating and beautifying white feminine subjects, engagements now commonly termed "blackfishing." This article analyzes how the Kardashians have created an intense regime of self-surveillance, even dabbling self-consciously in the carceral state's techniques for surveilling blackness, to construct themselves as both uncommonly, exotically sexual ('baring all') and respectable enough (white or white passing) to sell various remedies with dubious health value.

Keywords: reality television, surveillance, social media, The Kardashians, health and wellness

Heena Hussain is a doctoral student at the University of Manchester. Her thesis is currently titled, "Liberal Imperialism in Post-9/11 Hollywood Fantasy Films." She completed her Bachelor (Hons) at Manchester Metropolitan University in English Literature and Creative Writing, and her Master's in English Literature and American Studies at the University of Manchester.

RABIATU B. MOHAMMED
New Mexico State University, USA

Anti(Hijab)Bodies: An Auto-Ethnography

Using the metaphor of the biological organism fighting foreign invasion with its antibodies, I analyze some of the problems associated with the "scapegoating" of foreigners in sites of surveillance. In this essay, I assess the portability of this metaphor, not only in the sites associated with US security and surveillance like the airport and other ports of immigration, but also in sites of everyday interactions/transactions like the streets, stores, and classroom. My analysis and assessments are based on an auto-ethnographic study of my experiences with the sites of everyday surveillance. From my experiences as a foreigner in the US, I have realized that

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the fact that I am a Black woman with hijab in the US/Mexico borderlands region has compounded my hypervisibility which in turn results in the hyper-surveillance of my body. In order to cope with the problem of surveillance, I catalog how I perform self-surveillance in order to evade surveillance antibodies.

Keywords: US security, surveillance, US-Mexico border, hypervisibility

Rabiatu B. Mohammed is a graduate student at New Mexico State University in the PhD Rhetoric and Professional Communication program in the English department. Her research interests include Surveillance of Foreign Aliens in the US, Social Justice and Activism in Technical Communication, and Movements of Rhetorical Bodies across Spaces (geographical, ideological, digital, and intellectual). She is also interested in the neo-colonial study of her home community in Ghana.

EMILY RAYMUNDO
Independent Scholar, Andover, MA, USA

The Monster Minority: John Yoo's Multicultural Instruction and the "Torture Memos"

In the aftermath of 9/11, the United States declared a war on terrorism that would come to rely on legal memoranda to justify the surveillance, detention, and torture of "terrorists" held at the Guantánamo Bay Military Prison. Analyzing the language of these 2002 "Torture Memos," this article contends that the memos discursively produced not only the racial formation of the terrorist but also the emergent figure of the "monster minority," embodied by then-Deputy Assistant Attorney General, John Yoo. Defined in this essay as a patriotic, individualistic, and exceptional racialized subject who works on behalf of counterterrorism, the monster minority plays a central role in the legal construction of the terrorist precisely because of his exemplary status within US society. While Asian American studies explains the formation of the model minority that accounts for Yoo as a beneficiary of elite multicultural education, and post-9/11 studies of US imperialism elucidate the formation of the terrorist-as-monster, this essay puts these fields in conversation to establish how Yoo's particular brand of Asian American masculinity consolidates both the racialized enemy and the racialized agent of the US security state.

Keywords: Model minority, Asian American Studies, torture memos, John Yoo, war on terrorism

Emily Raymundo is a writer, editor, and teacher. Her writing has appeared in the *Journal of Asian American Studies*, *Public Books*, and the anthologies *Fashion and Beauty in the Time of Asia* (NYU

Press, 2019) and *Q&A: Voices from Queer Asian North America* (Temple UP, 2021).

KIARA SAMPLE
University of California, Berkeley, USA

Seeing Shadows: The FBI Surveillance of Louise Thompson Patterson

This article explores the ways gender and race influenced the FBI's surveillance of Black women activists. Previous scholarship has covered the role of surveillance in repressing revolutionary movements and neutralizing radical organizations. Historically, within many social movements, Black women have been marginalized, silenced, or reduced to only their gender because of patriarchal leadership. As a result, the persistence of sexism within these Black movements has affected Black women's visibility within movement organizations. This piece asks, how does gendered marginalization impact their surveillance by and visibility to the FBI? It seeks to understand the influence of race and gender on the FBI's surveillance of Louise Thompson Patterson. By examining the language and narrative components of her FBI file, the article provides an analysis across gender and across time to theorize the dynamics of surveillance, race, and gender. Based on a close analysis of Patterson's FBI file, I argue that the tension between hypervisibility and invisibility deriving from gendered stereotypes resulted in the Bureau's vague understanding of her personal life and political ideology.

Keywords: Black women's history, FBI surveillance, Black communism, Black women's activism

Kiara Sample is a Master's student in the African American Studies and African Diaspora Studies department at University of California at Berkeley. She received her BA from Washington University in St. Louis in African and African-American Studies and Psychology. As a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow, she conducted research on gender's influence on the FBI's surveillance of Black women activists in the 20th century. Her research interests include Black Feminism(s); Black women's history; Surveillance; and 20th-century Black social movements.

PATRICIA STUELKE
Dartmouth College, USA

Feminist Conspiracies, Security Aunties, and Other Surveillance State Fictions

This article investigates two recent fictional representations of the feminized US surveillance state and its "security feminists" (Grewal), with an eye towards limning what visions of social transformation and political life such representations make possible.

It first examines Gish Jen's 2020 novel *The Resisters,* considering how the novel's characterization of the US surveillance state as a snoopy suspicious Aunt maintains American liberal fantasies about the value of productive work and institutionally-sanctioned responses to state violence, even as the novel attempts to find grounds for reinvigorating a democratic commons. Jeff Vandermeer's 2021 novel *Hummingbird Salamander*, in contrast, is suspicious of democratic visions of the social. Instead, the novel unravels the privatized figure of the "security mom" (Grewal) in order to experiment with how a queer antisocial orientation might confront environmental and institutional collapse and reimagine the idea of "security" itself.

Keywords: US surveillance state, feminism, Aunty work, antisocial theory, the commons

Patricia Stuelke is an associate professor in the Department of English and Creative Writing at Dartmouth College. She is the author of *The Ruse of Repair*: *US Neoliberal Empire and the Turn from Critique* (Duke UP, 2021). Her work has also appeared in journals such as *American Literary History, American Literature, American Quarterly, differences,* and *Genre*.

ABOUT THE GUEST-EDITORS OF THIS ISSUE

Molly Geidel is a senior lecturer in 20th century US cultural history at the University of Manchester. She is the author of *Peace Corps Fantasies: How Development Shaped the Global Sixties* (2015). More recently, her work has appeared in *Photography and Culture*, *American Quarterly*, *Feminist Studies*, *Journal of Popular Music Studies*, *American Literary History*, and the *European Journal of American Studies*. She is working on two books, one on documentary film and development in the Americas, and the other on the counterinsurgent girl.

J.D. Schnepf is an assistant professor of American Studies at University of Groningen. She is working on a book about domestic cultures of US imperialism, gender, and digital media. Her writing has appeared in *Contemporary Literature*, *Feminist Media Studies*, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, *Media + Environment*, *Modern Fiction Studies*, *Public Books*, *Surveillance & Society*, and other venues.

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MATTERS OF LIFE: HUMAN SCAPES AND SCOPES

IASA 10th World Congress 2022 and Post-Congress Workshop Call for Contributions

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International American Studies Association is delighted to announce the Call for Contributions for the 10th World Congress of IASA titled *Matters of Life: Human Scapes and Scopes*. After two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, we will finally be able to enjoy one another's presence between 22nd and 24th November 2022. The organization of the IASA World Congress has been entrusted to our excellent Colleagues from the Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, School of Humanities & Social Sciences in Dwarka, India. The Congress, generously organized and hosted both on the University premises and on line, will be followed by a three-day workshop addressing *Matters of Life: Human Shades and Scapes*, held at the Heritage Resort in Udaipur, India.

CALL FOR PAPERS

> *Whatever is my right as a man is also the right of another; and it becomes my duty to guarantee as well as to possess.*
> Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man*

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a drastic loss of human life worldwide. It presents an unprecedented challenge to the human existence and survival on the global level in the post-World War-II history. The economic and social disruption caused by the pandemic has been devastating,

wherein countless people lost their jobs, often falling into extreme poverty, and over six million people died. The impact of the pandemic has been so abrasive that the essence of life has undergone a huge transformation. We are currently living in a post-COVID era where human beings are under the constant threat of the virus. The nature of human life has witnessed a redefinition with a renewed focus on the fundamental truths of life such as survival, livelihood, human dignity and basic human rights. The prevalence of the pandemic has given rise to the need to be more vigilant and concerned towards human dignity and human life.

Perhaps even more importantly, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed yet another face of privilege. As the pandemic statistics demonstrate, not all lives matter equally: some social groups have proven to be more vulnerable than others. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, 60 countries (as of May 2020) have adhered to social protection measures for persons with disabilities and out of them 18 specifically target children with disabilities. For an all-round recovery and greater resilience, investments in the development of cash transfer, in-kind support and other such services are needed in lower-middle-income countries to adequately cover all children with disabilities and their families in need of support. Apart from this, it has been particularly detrimental to members of other social groups like people living in poverty situations, older persons and indigenous people. Moreover, the health and economic impacts of the virus are being borne disproportionately by poor people. For instance, homeless people, due to their inability to reside in safely sheltered places, are highly exposed to the danger of the virus. People without access to running water, refugees, migrants, or displaced persons also stand to suffer invariably both from the pandemic and its aftermath – whether due to restricted movement, lesser employment opportunities or increased xenophobia.

One of the ways through which inclusivity has been practiced by America internationally is through certain Inter-American Relations and Bipartisanship pacts. For example,

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in 2017, with support from the Ford Foundation, Global Americans convened a working group on Inter-American Relations and Bipartisanship, consisting of policymakers, business leaders, civil society leaders and scholars with the aim of discussing bipartisan and cross-regional ways that the US administration could build and improve upon the achievements of the past two decades of inter-American relations. Moreover, in recent years, nations from outside the hemisphere, particularly China and Russia, have also increased their economic and political presence in the hemisphere despite different interest areas as a sign of unity despite diversity.

One of the most well-known movements which fought for human rights and dignity in recent times is the Black Lives Matter movement. "Black Lives Matter" started as a social media slogan in 2013 in response to state and vigilante violence against the Blacks and has become the battle-cry of Black youth activists. It acted as a testimony to the prevention of human rights and dignity. The movement of Black Lives Matter has transformed the way in which Americans fight for freedom. Its focus has been on fighting for a fundamental restructuring of society wherein Black lives are free from systematic dehumanization. The broader cultural impact of Black Lives Matter as a movement favors the concept of inclusion of Black lives in particular and all kinds of marginalized lives in general.

An inclusive society rejects differences of race, gender, identity, class, generation, caste hierarchies, national identity, and sexual orientations. It is a society wherein all members, irrespective of their backgrounds, are considered equal for participating in civic, social, economic and political activities leading to cultural pluralism. In this context, it is imperative to understand that there is a need to support the idea of inclusion and diversity through the international exchange of ideas and information from all nations and various disciplines on hemispherical, national, and transnational levels.

When it comes to America's contribution to inclusionary practices, mass movements have a rich history woven into the America's fabric, a place that is constantly in the process of redefining itself. The "Telegram gate Protests," the "March of our Lives," the "Black Lives Matter Movement," "Stonewall Riots," "Women Suffrage Parade," "Women's March in 2017," and the "Boston Tea Party" are some of the highlighted global instances of the radical waves in response to the increasing authoritarianism and marginalization and a call for change. All such movements implore us to create a dialogue when it comes to the importance of all lives irrespective of differences at several levels. By creating dialogues, a spontaneous action takes place where the fight for inclusion becomes a collective one. To a great extent, the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of inclusivity. For two years, due to the massive destruction at the humanitarian, psychological, social, mental levels, there is a serious need to be inclusive towards people despite their respective differences. The former US Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg once expressed, "Fight for the things you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you."

Apart from the various radical protests that have taken place in America as a response to increasing authoritarianism, the unfortunate occurrence of 9/11 attack in US unveiled a global storm of human rights violations. As a result, human lives were wiped out and destinies witnessed major shifts. In this context, it is imperative to analyze the effects of such gruesome attacks on human life and dignity which go through immense ruptures and crises at various levels. Such ruptures have occurred due to the prevalence of the COVID-19 pandemic as well. Be it the loss of lives due to virus and hunger, homelessness, unemployment, and deterioration of mental health at the global levels, all these issues have got highlighted and need deeper examination and response.

Therefore, this interdisciplinary CFP intends to address the above-mentioned need by studying a variety of aspects

pertaining to inclusion and marginalization, particularly through the lens of the pandemic, both in historical and contemporary contexts. In order to bring in inclusion, the origins of domination and subjugation have to be analyzed in the light of understanding the paradigms of changes and their responses towards the issues of human rights and human dignity. This CFP aims to invite a wide range of academicians, scholars, and artists who are eager to contribute their scholarly thoughts on the myriad ways in which the subject of the importance of lives can be analyzed and expressed.

IASA invites papers looking at different theoretical and critical perspectives (Translation Studies, Literary Criticism, Critical Theory, Cultural Studies, Discourse Analysis, Feminist and Gender Studies, Queer Theory, Philosophy, Sociology, Postcolonial Studies and Social Sciences) and also papers which indulge deeply in critique or resistance, potentials of conflict management and other dimensions of inclusion and marginalization to justify how and why all lives matter.

In the interest of exploring the above issues papers on topics that revolve around (but are not limited to) the following areas are invited:

- Role of Literature and Art in Equality, Diversity, Inclusivity
- Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Displaced People
- Globalization and Human Rights
- LGBTQIA+ Issues
- Women's Studies
- Ethnic Assertions in a Globalized World
- Environmental Activism and Protest
- Politics of Dissent and Activism
- Peace and Conflict Studies
- Disability Studies
- Marginalization due to the COVID-19 Pandemic
- Economics of Globalization

NOTE: The Congress will be held in a hybrid mode.

EMORY ELLIOTT AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING PAPER PRESENTED AT IASA WORLD CONGRESS

As in the past, the Award will be granted to the Author of an outstanding paper submitted to the IASA conference. It will carry a special citation and an honorarium to help partially meet the expenses of travel to the IASA event in question. The Award recipient will present her/his paper at a special session of the Congress. The award-winning paper and up to two other highly commended papers from the competition will be published in *The Review of International American Studies*. For details concerning eligibility and bylaws, please consult the Emory Elliott Award website (https://iasa-world.org/?page_id=127).

IMPORTANT DATES AND CONTACT INFORMATION

- Submission of abstracts: By 30th June, 2022
- Intimation of acceptance: By 30th July, 2022
- Email for submissions and enquiries: iasa.indiaconference22@gmail.com
- Congress websites: https://iasa-world.org/?page_id=391 and http://www.ipu.ac.in/
- NOTE: Registration link and other important details will be shared in the abstract acceptance mail and on the conference website shortly.

REGISTRATION FEES

The categories of fees have are banded A & B by country, using the World Bank Classification. The reference link for the same is: https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519-world-bank-country-andlending-groups.

*Band A: High-income economies ($12,536 or more)

Band B: Low-income economies ($1,035 or less)
Lower-middle-income economies ($1,036 to $4,045
Upper-middle-income economies ($4,046 to $12,535)

***Concessionary Members: i.e. participants who are:

- Unwaged

- Contingent/non-affiliated (income below living wage in country of employment)
- Retired*

A: REGISTRATION FEE (IN-SITE MODE)

Category	Band	Registration Fee (Indian Nationals) on or before 20th August, 2022	Registration Fee (Indian Nationals) after 20th August, 2022	Registration Fee (Foreign Nationals) on or before 20th August, 2022	Registration Fee (Foreign Nationals) after 20th August, 2022
Faculty / Full-time Professionals	Band A	NA	NA	€ 100	€ 125
	Band B	Rs. 5,000/-	Rs. 5,500/-	€ 60	€75
Researchers / Students	Band A	NA	NA	€ 60	€75
	Band B	Rs.3,500/-	Rs. 4,000/-	€ 40	€60
Concessionary Members***	Band A	NA	NA	€ 15	€ 20
	Band B	Rs. 1,000/-	Rs. 1,500/-	€10	€15

B: REGISTRATION FEE (ON-LINE MODE)

Category	Band	Registration Fee (Indian Nationals) on or before 20th August, 2022	Registration Fee (Indian Nationals) after 20th August, 2022	Registration Fee (Foreign Nationals) on or before 20th August, 2022	Registration Fee (Foreign Nationals) after 20th August, 2022
Faculty / Full-time Professionals	Band A	NA	NA	€ 30	€ 40
	Band B	Rs.1,500/-	Rs.2,000/-	€ 20	€25
Researchers / Students	Band A	NA	NA	€ 20	€25
	Band B	Rs. 1,200/-	Rs. 1,500/-	€ 15	€20
Concessionary Members***	Band A & B	Rs. 500/-	Rs. 1,000/-	€ 5	€ 10

*We kindly and respectfully ask retired members to consider, in accordance with their level of income, whether to opt for this concessionary rate.

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FEE WOULD INCLUDE

1. IASA annual membership fee
2. Conference kit
3. 3 morning teas + 2 lunches + 2 evening high teas

4. Conference Dinner on Day 2
5. Travel to and from Radisson Hotel for International delegates/participants
6. Printed Certificate of Participation/Presentation
7. Evening Cultural Programmes on Day 1 and Day 2
8. Selected papers will be published in Scopus listed IASA journal, *Review of International American Studies* (*RIAS*) & *Indraprasth–An International Journal of Culture and Communication Studies*.

THE PATRON OF THE EVENT

It is with great pride and pleasure that we wish to announce that the Patron of the 10th IASA World Congress in 2022 is Prof. (Dr) Mahesh Verma, Honorable Vice Chancellor of the Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University.

LOCAL ORGANISING COMMITTEE:

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POST-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP

An important follow-up event to the 10th World Congress of the International American Studies Association is the post-conference workshop, organized between 25th and 27th of November 2022 in Udaipur, Rajasthan, at the scenic Heritage Resort, located at Lake Bagela right behind the Sahasrabahu Temple dating back to the 10th century CE, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

MATTERS OF LIFE: THE SHADES AND SCAPES

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

> *Improvisation and spontaneity remain at the core of theatre, painting and sculpting. Every time one looks at a great work of art, one has something substantial to imbibe. Art communicates overtly and covertly to enrich human sensibility and sensitivity. Art, in its various forms, gets defined by its quality of irreducibility to verbal description. Understanding art in its broadest and spontaneous sense, as a universal human endowment makes imperative a journey that takes one beyond its theoretical understanding and into the realm of praxis where theatre turns into a lived performance, painting turns into an immersive experience and sculpting becomes a play with forms. The proposed workshop is an artistic step in that direction.*

ABOUT THE WORKSHOP

The workshop on 'Theatre, Painting and Sculpting' aims to deliberate and closely investigate the interrelation of theatre, painting and sculpting to further understand the various strands and shades of human life as well as matters related to it at aesthetic and philosophical levels. The School of Humanities & Social Sciences, Guru Gobind Singh IP University has been organising Performing and Visual Arts workshops for about a decade in order to introduce the participants to the nuances of performing arts like theatre, visual arts, sculpting and painting. Udaipur–the workshop venue – has a rich cultural history and tradition of various forms of art, especially painting and sculpting. The workshop will include dedicated sessions by master craftsmen and renowned Indian painters and sculptors. In addition to this, there would be a session by the local artisans on the world-renowned Rajasthani Block-Art style cloth printing. The venue for the workshop has been carefully selected by the organisers to give the participants one-of-a-kind experience being surrounded by world heritage sites on the outskirts of the city of lakes, Udaipur, Rajasthan, India.

WORKSHOP VENUE

Heritage Resort, located at Lake Bagela, sits right behind the Sahastrabahu Temple, the partially ruined Hindu temple complex, dating back to the 10th century CE, The Sahastrabahu Temple, adorned with intricate stone carvings. is also an ASI protected site.

WORKSHOP REGISTRATION FEE

Category	International Participants	Indian Participants
Single Occupancy	€ 240	Rs. 15000/-
Double Occupancy	€ 200	Rs. 12000/-

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NOTE: The Workshop registration is on a first-come first-served basis and has only 30 slots. It is open for both international and national delegates.

WORKSHOP REGISTRATION FEE INCLUDES

- 3 days accommodation at resort
- Workshop kit
- 3 meals per day for 3 days
- Entry to all workshop sessions
- Guided heritage walk to the heritage site
- Printed certificate of participation

WORKSHOP ITINERARY

Day 1 (25th November, 2022)

10:00: Morning Tea and Breakfast

11:00: Pre-lunch session will be hosted by Dr. Hemant Dwivedi, a painter. He has been awarded by National Lalit Kala Academy, Indian Academy of Fine Arts, AIFACS, Kalavart Ujjai and other important art institutions. His works are displayed in various private & public collections in India and abroad including Lalit Kala Academy, Jaipur. He specializes in creative portraits, creative landscapes with experiencing 'instantiation' in creativity, and is interested in graphic design, drama and writing.

14:00: Lunch

16:00: Post-lunch session will be hosted by Prof. Shail Choyal, a 1975–76 British Council Scholarship Fellow of Printmaking at the Slade College of Art, London. He is renowned for a distinctive miniature style, through which he has carved a niche for himself in the contemporary art scene in India and internationally. He infuses his works in the narrative idiom, juxtaposing the allegorical with the real.

21:00: Dinner

Day 2 (26th November, 2022)

10:00: Morning Tea and Breakfast

11:00: The first session of the second day will be hosted by Shri. Abbas Batliwala, a Modern & Contemporary artist from the city, whose works are related to daily life especially Indian rural culture where the tones merge the rural and the urban. He resorts to a caricatured figuration that readily engages the viewer. The sense of wonder is highlighted in his work, featuring big, oversized eyes that resemble seashells (kauri), drawn and painted in his peculiar style. The action appears to be melodramatic, in which his characters generally seem entangled.

14:00: Lunch

16:00: The second visual arts session for the day will be conducted by Dr. Shahid Parvez. He has received many awards including the Student and Artist Award, Rajasthan Lalit Kala Akademi Jaipur; AIFACS Award, New Delhi; Wales/Rajasthan Scholarship Award, British Council, New Delhi; Binnale Award, RLKA, Jaipur; The Royal West of England Academy Award Bristol, UK. His distinct style captures the vision of a child, the paintings hold an innocence of infancy and youth bestowed by a lack of worldly experience.

21:00: Dinner

Day 3 (27th November, 2022)

10:00: Morning Tea and Breakfast

11:00: The final day will begin with a session by Bhupesh Kavadia, a renowned sculptor who found his calling in three-dimensions. His acute sense of space and an affinity for emotions and ideas made tangible in sculptures, manifests truly in the few acres of arid land, undulating and unapproachable, made into a field of his artistic experiments filled with marble and granite brought to life. The money he made out of his sculptures was invested into establishing a gallery in Udaipur which did not have any gallery till then.

14:00: Lunch

16:00: The last day of the workshop—and of the IASA World Congress—will conclude with a visit to Akola village, located 70 km outside Udaipur, having a unique block-printing process called DAABU. The purpose of the visit is for the delegates to experience this diminishing practice of traditional Rajasthani 'block-art' style of printing cloth. The local artisans use natural dyes derived from pomegranate peels, indigo, rust, turmeric, etc. The session will be headed by Lokesh Cheepa, a maestro who has won a national award for the art.

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IASA STANDS WITH UKRAINE

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As a world-wide community of compassionate humans, the International American Studies Association unequivocally condemns the Russian Federation's barbaric invasion of sovereign Ukraine. Calling upon the Governments of all peace-loving nations to work together towards the immediate cessation of hostilities, we simultaneously encourage all IASA members to donate a fraction of their incomes to the organizations saving lives in the fighting Ukraine or helping the Ukrainian refugees throughout Eastern Europe and world wide. Preferring action to empty verbiage, we therefore ask all of the compassionate human beings to consult the list below. Based on the US news guideline on "How to Help Ukraine," the list collects organizations and institutions that will appreciate every penny we can spare. IASA stands for peace, and therefore IASA stands with Ukraine. Join IASA.

Ukrainian Red Cross
(https://redcross.org.ua/en/)

Founded in 1918, the Ukrainian Red Cross has provided relief and educational services to Ukrainians in times of natural disaster, armed conflict and catastrophe. Now, the organization's emergency response teams are providing humanitarian aid to injured and evacuated people.

Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders)
(https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/)

Doctors Without Borders (MSF) is an independent, global, impartial organization that seeks to provide medical aid where it is most needed around the world. Since the invasion began, MSF – which already had a presence in the country – has been focused on providing medical supplies and training to Ukrainian hospitals. MSF teams on the ground assess the needs of local health systems, and the organization is sending experienced medical staff into the country to support local responders.

World Central Kitchen
(https://wck.org/relief/activation-chefs-for-ukraine)

Founded by renowned chef José Andrés, World Central Kitchen provides meals in response to humanitarian, climate and community crises. The food network has set up mobile kitchens at border crossings around Ukraine to meet the needs of refugees. According to its website, WCK is also financially supporting local restaurants in eight cities inside Ukraine.

Fight For Right
(https://eng.ffr.org.ua/support-in-crisis/eng)

Led by human rights activist Yuliia Sachuk, Fight for Right is a Ukrainian NGO focused on defending the human rights of Ukrainians living with disabilities. The organization is working to safely evacuate individuals with disabilities, and to provide them with financial support. The group is also supplying food and medicine to people unable to leave the country. Funds collected through the organization's GoFundMe go toward its relief efforts on the ground.

The Kiev Independent
(https://kyivindependent.com/)

Launched just three months ago, *The Kiev Independent* has become one of the primary English-language media outlets in Ukraine as its staffers work diligently to cover the war on the ground. The outlet's staff launched a GoFundMe to support their efforts, in addition to a separate GoFundMe

to support lesser-known Ukrainian media outlets trying to regroup and set up shop outside the country.

Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights
(https://urgentactionfund.org/)

The Urgent Action Fund provides grants to women's rights movements, as well as nonbinary and transgender human rights activists around the world, and is fundraising to support activists affected by the war in Ukraine.

Black Women for Black Lives
(https://blackwomenforblacklives.org/)

Founded by three Black women – Korrine Sky, Tokunbo Koiki and Patricia Daley – this organization is raising money to help Black people, especially students, who are facing discrimination while trying to flee Ukraine. It was started after Sky, a Zimbabwean medical student, documented the discrimination she encountered during her attempt to leave Ukraine. Releasing updates regularly on their Twitter accounts, the founders distribute funds to cover transportation, accommodation and food costs for individuals and families. They set up a Telegram support channel and are providing guidance to Black individuals trying to leave Ukraine. They're also seeking volunteers to help with their efforts.

Razom for Ukraine
(https://razomforukraine.org/razom-emergency-response/)

Razom, meaning "together" in Ukrainian, was founded in 2014 in New York by Ukrainians in the United States who wanted to support the country's Maidan Revolution. Founded as a way of responding to any humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, the organization is now providing medical supplies to people on the ground.

Voices of Children Foundation
(https://voices.org.ua/en/)

Founded in 2015 as Ukraine was engaged in fighting with Russian-backed separatists, the Voices of Children Foundation focuses on ensuring psychological support to children trauma-

tized by war. The organization provides art therapy, traveling psychologists and evacuation assistance. They also have set up a storytelling project to share the stories of Ukrainian children growing up in a war zone.

Sunflowers for Peace
(https://www.sunflowerofpeace.com/)

Sunflowers for Peace is an organization founded in Boston in 2014 by Ukrainian-born realtor Katya Malakhova. The organization has been raising funds for people inside Ukraine and collecting medical supplies to be shipped to the country. According to the group's website, it works with ambassadors and partner organizations in Ukraine, such as Razom, to distribute supplies.

Save the Children
(https://www.savethechildren.org/us/about-us)

Started in 1919 to meet the needs of children impacted by World War I in Europe, Save the Children focuses on daily needs of children in crisis zones around the world. The organization has launched a children's emergency fund to provide emergency food, supplies and housing to Ukrainian children.

The Polish Migration Forum (https://www.forummigracyjne.org/en/)

This NGO promotes the rights of migrants entering Poland, and is providing a free emergency hotline for Ukrainians coming into Poland who need psychological assistance.

The Association for Legal Intervention
(https://interwencjaprawna.pl/en/about/what-we-do/)

The Association for Legal Intervention is a civil society organization that focuses on the needs of migrants in Poland. It is providing pro bono legal aid to Ukrainian refugees.

Black is Polish
(https://www.instagram.com/blackispolish/)

Founded by four Black women in Poland, Black is Polish started as an educational Instagram platform to counter

racism in Poland. It is crowdsourcing to provide housing and support for Black refugees coming from Ukraine to Poland.

The Hungarian Helsinki Committee
(https://helsinki.hu/en/about/)

A human rights organization based in Hungary, The Hungarian Helsinki Committee is providing free-of-charge legal assistance and representation for refugees entering Hungary

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