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## **Affective Economies**

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Sara Ahmed

The depths of Love are rooted and very deep in a real white nationalist's soul and spirit, no form of "hate" could even begin to compare. At least not a hate motivated by ungrounded reasoning. It is not hate that makes the average white man look upon a mixed race couple with a scowl on his face and loathing in his heart. It is not hate that makes the white housewife throw down the daily newspaper in repulsion and anger after reading of yet another child molester or rapist sentenced by corrupt courts to a couple of short years in prison or on parole. It is not hate that makes the white workingman curse about the latest boatload of aliens dumped on our shores to be given job preference over the white citizen who built this land. It is not hate that brings rage into the heart of a white Christian farmer when he reads of billions loaned or given away as "aid" to foreigners when he can't get the smallest break from an unmerciful government to save his failing farm. No, it's not hate. It is love.<sup>1</sup>

—Aryan Nations Web site

How do emotions work to align some subjects with some others and against other others? How do emotions move between bodies? In this essay, I argue that emotions play a crucial role in the "surfacing" of individual and collective bodies through the way in which emotions circulate between bodies and signs. Such an argument clearly challenges any assumption that emotions are a private matter, that they simply belong to individuals, or even that they come from within and *then* move outward toward others. It suggests that emotions are not simply "within" or "without" but that they create the very effect of the surfaces or boundaries of bodies and worlds.

For instance, in the above narrative on the Aryan Nations Web site, the role of emotions, in particular of hate and love, is crucial to the delineation of the bodies of individual subjects and the body of the nation. Here a subject (the white nationalist, the average white man, the white housewife, the white working man, the white citizen, and the white Christian farmer) is presented as endangered by imagined others whose proximity threatens not only to take something away from the subject (jobs, security, wealth), but to take the place of the subject. In other words, the presence of these others is imagined as a threat to the object of love. The narrative involves a rewriting of history, in which the labor of others

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(migrants, slaves) is concealed in a fantasy that it is the white subject who “built this land.”<sup>22</sup> The white subjects claim the place of hosts (“our shores”) at the same time as they claim the position of the victim, as the ones who are damaged by an “unmerciful government.” The narrative hence suggests that it is love for the nation that makes the white Aryans hate those whom they recognize as strangers, as the ones who are taking away the nation and the role of the Aryans in its history, as well as their future.

We might note as well that the reading of others as hateful aligns the imagined subject with rights and the imagined nation with ground. This alignment is affected by the representation of both the rights of the subject and the grounds of the nation as already under threat. *It is the emotional reading of hate that works to bind the imagined white subject and nation together.* The average white man feels “fear and loathing”; the white housewife, “repulsion and anger”; the white workingman, “curses”; the white Christian farmer, “rage.” The passion of these negative attachments to others is redefined simultaneously as a positive attachment to the imagined subjects brought together through the repetition of the signifier, “white.” It is the love of white, or those recognizable as white, that supposedly explains this shared “communal” visceral response of hate. *Together we hate, and this hate is what makes us together.*

This narrative is far from extraordinary. Indeed, what it shows us is the production of the ordinary. The ordinary is here fantastic. The ordinary white subject is a fantasy that comes into being through the mobilization of hate, as a passionate attachment tied closely to love. The emotion of hate works to animate the ordinary subject, to bring that fantasy to life, precisely by constituting the ordinary as in crisis, and the ordinary person as the real victim. The ordinary becomes that which is already under threat by imagined others whose proximity becomes a crime against person as well as place. The ordinary or normative subject is reproduced as the injured party: the one “hurt” or even damaged by the “invasion” of others. The bodies of others are hence transformed into “the hated” through a discourse of pain. They are assumed to “cause” injury to the ordinary white subject, such that their proximity is read as the origin of bad feeling: indeed, the implication here is that the white subject’s good feelings (love, care, loyalty) are being “taken” away by the abuse of such feelings by others.

So who is hated in such a narrative of injury? Clearly, hate is distributed across various figures (in this case, the mixed-racial couple, the child molester, the rapist, aliens, and foreigners). These figures come to embody the threat of loss: lost jobs, lost money, lost land. They signify the danger of impurity, or the mixing or taking of blood. They threaten to violate the pure bodies; such bodies can only be imagined as pure by the perpetual restaging of this fantasy of violation. Note the work that is being done

through this metonymic slide: mixed-race couplings and immigration become readable as (like) forms of rape or molestation: an invasion of the body of the nation, represented here as the vulnerable and damaged bodies of the white woman and child. The slide between figures constructs a relation of resemblance between the figures: what makes them alike may be their “unlikeness” from “us.” Within the narrative, hate cannot be found in one figure, but works to create the very outline of different figures or objects of hate, a creation that crucially aligns the figures together and constitutes them as a “common” threat. Importantly, then, hate does not reside in a given subject or object. Hate is economic; it circulates between signifiers in relationships of difference and displacement.

In such affective economies, emotions *do things*, and they align individuals with communities—or bodily space with social space—through the very intensity of their attachments. Rather than seeing emotions as psychological dispositions, we need to consider how they work, in concrete and particular ways, to mediate the relationship between the psychic and the social, and between the individual and the collective. In particular, I will show how emotions work by sticking figures together (adherence), a sticking that creates the very effect of a collective (coherence), with reference to the figures of the asylum seeker and the international terrorist. My economic model of emotions suggests that while emotions do not positively reside in a subject or figure, they still work to bind subjects together. Indeed, to put it more strongly, the nonresidence of emotions is what makes them “binding.”

## Economies of Hate

Everyday language certainly constructs emotions as a form of positive residence. So I might say I “have a feeling.” Or I might describe a film as “being sad.” In such ways of speaking, emotions become property; something that belongs to a subject or object, which can take the form of a characteristic or quality. I want to challenge the idea that I have an emotion, or that something or somebody makes me feel a certain way. I am interested in the way emotions *involve* subjects and objects, but without residing positively within them. Indeed, emotions may only seem like a form of residence as an effect of a certain history, a history that may operate by concealing its own traces. Clearly, such an approach borrows from psychoanalysis, which is also a theory of the subject as lacking positive residence, a lack of being most commonly articulated as “the unconscious.” In his essay on the unconscious, Freud introduces the notion of unconscious emotions, where an affective impulse is perceived but mis-

construed, and which becomes attached to another idea.<sup>3</sup> What is repressed from consciousness is not the feeling as such, but the idea to which the feeling may have been first (but provisionally) connected. Psychoanalysis allows us to see that emotionality involves movements or associations whereby “feelings” take us across different levels of signification, not all of which can be admitted in the present. This is what I would call the rippling effect of emotions; they move sideways (through “sticky” associations between signs, figures, and objects) as well as backward (repression always leaves its trace in the present—hence “what sticks” is also bound up with the “absent presence” of historicity). In the opening quotation, we can see precisely how hate “slides” sideways between figures, as well as backward, by reopening past associations that allow some bodies to be read as the cause of “our hate,” or as “being” hateful.

Indeed, insofar as psychoanalysis is a theory of the subject as lacking in the present, then it offers a theory of emotion as economy, *as involving relationships of difference and displacement without positive value*. That is, emotions work as a form of capital: affect does not reside positively in the sign or commodity, but is produced only as an effect of its circulation. I am using “the economic” to suggest that emotions circulate and are distributed across a social as well as psychic field. I am borrowing from the Marxian critique of the logic of capital. In *Capital*, Marx discusses how the movement of commodities and money, in the formula *M-C-M* (money to commodity to money), creates surplus value.<sup>4</sup> That is, through circulation and exchange *M* acquires more value. Or as he puts it, “The value originally advanced, therefore, not only remains intact while in circulation, but increases its magnitude, adds to itself a surplus-value or is valorised. *And this movement converts it into capital.*”<sup>5</sup> I am identifying a similar logic: the movement between signs converts into affect. Marx links value with affect through the figures of the capitalist and the miser: “This boundless drive for enrichment, this passionate chase after value, is common to the capitalist, and the miser.”<sup>6</sup> Passion drives the accumulation of capital: the capitalist is not interested in the use value of commodities, but in the “appropriation of ever more wealth.”<sup>7</sup> What I am offering is a theory of passion not as the drive to accumulate (whether it be value, power, or meaning), but as that which is accumulated over time. Affect does not reside in an object or sign, but is an affect of the circulation between objects and signs (= the accumulation of affective value over time). Some signs, that is, increase in affective value as an effect of the movement between signs: the more they circulate, the more affective they become, and the more they appear to “contain” affect. Another way to theorize this process would be to describe “feelings” via an analogy with “commodity fetishism”: feelings

appear in objects, or indeed *as* objects with a life of their own, only by the concealment of how they are shaped by histories, including histories of production (labor and labor time), as well as circulation or exchange.

Of course, such an argument about affect as an economy does not respect the important Marxian distinction between use value and exchange value and hence relies on a limited analogy. In some ways, my approach may have more in common with a psychoanalytic emphasis on difference and displacement as the form or language of the unconscious, described above. Where my approach involves a departure from psychoanalysis is precisely in my refusal to identify this economy as a psychic one (although neither is it *not* a psychic one), that is, to return these relationships of difference and displacement to the signifier of “the subject.” This “return” is not only clear in Freud’s work, but also in Lacan’s positing of “the subject” as the proper scene of absence and loss.<sup>8</sup> As Laplanche and Pontalis argue, if Lacan defines “the subject” as “the locus of the signifier,” then it is in “a theory of the subject that the locus of the signifier settles.”<sup>9</sup> This constitution of the subject as “settlement,” even if what settles is lacking in presence, means that the suspended contexts of the signifier are delimited by the contours of the subject. In contrast, my account of hate as an affective economy shows that emotions do not positively inhabit any-body as well as any-thing, meaning that “the subject” is simply one nodal point in the economy, rather than its origin and destination. This is extremely important: it suggests that the sideways and backward movement of emotions such as hate is not contained within the contours of a subject. The unconscious is hence not the unconscious of a subject, but the failure of presence—or the failure to be present—that constitutes the relationality of subjects and objects (a relationality that works through the circulation of signs). Given this, affective economies need to be seen as social and material, as well as psychic. Indeed, if the movement of affect is crucial to the very making of a difference between “in here” and “out there,” then the psychic and the social cannot be installed as proper objects. Instead, materialization, which Judith Butler describes as “the effect of boundary, fixity and surface,”<sup>10</sup> involves a process of intensification. In other words, the accumulation of affective value shapes the surfaces of bodies and worlds.

We could hence ask how the circulation of signs of affect shapes the materialization of collective bodies, for example the “body of the nation.” We have already seen how hate slides across different figures and constitutes them as a “common threat” in what we can call “hate speech.” But the slippery work of emotion cannot allow us to presume any opposition between extremist discourses and the “ordinary” work of reproducing the

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nation. We can take as an example the speeches on asylum seekers by the previous leader of the British Conservative Party, William Hague. Between April and June 2000, other speeches were in circulation that became “stuck” to the “asylum seekers” speech through this temporal proximity, but also through the repetition with a difference, of some *sticky words* and language. In the case of the asylum speeches, Hague’s narrative is somewhat predictable. Words like *flood* and *swamped* are used, which create associations between asylum and the loss of control, as well as *dirt* and *sewage*, and hence work by mobilizing fear, or the anxiety of being “overwhelmed” by the actual or potential proximity of others. These words have recently been repeated by the current British Home Secretary, David Blunkett, who used the word *swamped* to describe the effect that children of asylum seekers would have if they were taught by local schools. When criticized, he replaced the word *swamped* with *overwhelmed*. The assumption here is that *overwhelmed* resolves the implication of *swamped*, but as we can see, it still evokes the sensation of being overtaken or taken over by others. It constructs the nation as if it was a subject, one who “could not cope” with the presence of others. Here words generate effects: they create impressions of others as those who have invaded the space of the nation, threatening its existence.

Typically, Hague in the earlier speeches differentiates between those others who are welcome and those who are not by differentiating between genuine and bogus asylum seekers. Partly, this enables the national subject to imagine its own generosity in welcoming some others. The nation is hospitable, as it allows those genuine ones to stay. And yet at the same time, it constructs some others as already hateful (as bogus) in order to define the limits or the conditions of this hospitality. The construction of the bogus asylum seeker as a figure of hate also involves a narrative of uncertainty and crisis, but an uncertainty and crisis that *make that figure do more work*. How can we tell the difference between a bogus and a genuine asylum seeker? According to the logic of this discourse, it is always possible that we might not be able to tell the difference, and that they may pass into our community. Passing functions here as a technology, which relates physical movement with identity formation: to pass through a space requires passing as a particular kind of subject, one whose difference is unmarked and unremarkable.<sup>11</sup> The double possibility of passing commands the nation’s Right and will to keep looking for signs of difference and justifies violent forms of intrusion into the bodies of others.

Indeed, the possibility that we might not be able to tell the difference swiftly converts into the possibility that any of those incoming bodies may be bogus. In advance of their arrival, they are hence read as the cause of an injury to the national body. Now how does the presentation of asylum

as injury work through the proximity between figures of hate? The figure of the bogus asylum seeker may evoke the figure of the “bogeyman,” a figure who stalks the nation and haunts its capacity to secure its borders. The bogeyman could be anywhere and anyone, as a ghostlike figure in the present, who gives us nightmares about the future, as an anticipated future of injury. We see “him” again and again. Such figures of hate circulate, and indeed accumulate affective value, precisely because they do not have a fixed referent. So the figure of the bogus asylum seeker is detached from particular bodies: any incoming bodies could be bogus, such that their “endless” arrival is anticipated as the scene of “our injury.”<sup>12</sup> *The impossibility of reducing hate to a particular body allows hate to circulate in an economic sense, working to differentiate some others from other others, a differentiation that is never “over,” as it awaits for others who have not yet arrived.* Such a discourse of “waiting for the bogus” justifies the repetition of violence against the bodies of others.

Hague’s speeches also produced certain effects through temporal proximity to another speech about Tony Martin, a man sentenced to life imprisonment for murdering a sixteen-year-old boy who had attempted to burgle his house in a rural area of England. One sentence of Hague’s circulates powerfully. Hague argued (without reference to Martin or asylum seekers) that the law is “more interested in the rights of criminals than the rights of people who are burgled.” Such a sentence evokes a history that is not declared (here “what sticks” may also be what resists literalization), and, in doing so, it positions Martin as the victim and not as a criminal. The victim of the murder is now the criminal: the crime that did not happen because of the murder (the burglary) takes the place of the murder as the true crime, and as the real injustice. This reversal of the victim-criminal relationship becomes an implicit defense of the right to kill those who unlawfully enter one’s property.

The detachment of the sentence allows two cases to get stuck together: burglary and asylum, which both now become matters of the right to defense. The figure of the asylum seeker hence gets aligned with the figure of the burglar. The alignment does important work: it suggests that the asylum seeker is “stealing” something from the nation. The “characteristics” of one figure get displaced or transferred onto the other. Or we could say that it is through the association between the figures that they acquire “a life of their own,” as if they contained affective quality. The burglar became a foreigner, and the asylum seeker becomes a criminal. At the same time, the body of the murderer (who is renamed as the victim)<sup>13</sup> becomes the body of the nation, the one whose property and well-being is under threat by the forced proximity of the other. As such, the alignment of figures works as a narrative of defense: the nation/national



subject must defend itself against “invasion” by others. Such a defensive narrative is not explicitly articulated, but rather works through the “movement” between figures. The circulation does its work: it produces a differentiation between “us” and “them,” whereby “they” are constituted as the cause or the justification of “our” feeling of hate. Indeed, we can see how attachment involves a sliding between pain and hate: there is a perceived injury in which the other’s (burglar/bogus) proximity is felt as the violence of negation against both the body of the individual (here, the farmer) and the body of the nation.

We can see that the affectivity of hate is what makes it difficult to pin down, to locate in a body, object, or figure. This difficulty is what makes emotions such as hate work the way that they do; *it is not the impossibility of hate as such, but the mode of its operation, whereby it surfaces in the world made up of other bodies*. In other words, it is the failure of emotions to be located in a body, object, or figures that allows emotions to (re)produce or generate the effects that they do.

## Fear, Bodies, and Objects

I now want to relate my model of emotion as affective economy specifically to fear and the materialization of bodies. Significantly, fear is an emotion that is often characterized as being *about* its object and hence would not seem to work in the economic sense I have defined above. Indeed, fear has often been contrasted with anxiety insofar as fear *has* an object. For example, Stanley Rachman argues that anxiety can be described as the “tense anticipation of a threatening but vague event,” or a feeling of “uneasy suspense,” while fear is described as an emotional reaction “to a threat that is identifiable.”<sup>14</sup>

I want to question this model by suggesting that fear is linked to the “passing by” of the object. We can consider, for instance, that the narrative of asylum seekers “swamping” the nation works as a narrative of fear. Fear works to create a sense of being overwhelmed: rather than being contained in an object, fear is intensified by the impossibility of containment. If the others who are feared “pass by,” then the others might pass their way into the community, and could be anywhere and everywhere. Heidegger also suggests that fear is intensified when it ceases to be contained by an object that approaches. He suggests:

That which is detrimental, as something that threatens us, is not yet within striking distance, but it is coming close. . . . As it draws close, this “it can, and yet it may not” becomes aggravated. We say, “It is fearsome.” This

implies that what is detrimental as coming-close carries with it the patent possibility that it may stay away and pass us by; but instead of lessening or extinguishing our fearing, this enhances it.<sup>15</sup>

Crucially, Heidegger relates fear to that which is not yet in the present, in either the spatial or temporal sense of the here and the now. Fear responds to that which is approaching rather than already here. It is the futurity of fear, which makes it possible that the object of fear, rather than arriving, might pass us by. But the passing by of the object of fear does not mean the overcoming of fear: rather, the possibility of the loss of the object that approaches makes what is fearsome all the more fearsome. If fear has an object, then fear can be contained by the object. When the object of fear threatens to pass by, then fear can no longer be contained by an object. Fear in its very relationship to an object, in the very intensity of its directness toward that object, is intensified by the loss of its object. We could characterize this absence as about being not quite present rather than, as with anxiety, being nowhere at all. Or anxiety becomes attached to particular objects, which come to life not as the cause of anxiety but as an effect of its travels. In anxiety, one's thoughts often move quickly between different objects, a movement that works to intensify the sense of anxiety. One thinks of more and more "things" to be anxious about; the detachment from one given object allows anxiety to accumulate. In other words, anxiety tends to stick to objects. Given this, anxiety becomes an approach to objects rather than, as with fear, being produced by an object's approach. The slide between fear and anxiety is affected precisely by the "passing by" of the object.

Furthermore, fear's relationship to the potential disappearance of an object is more profound than simply a relationship to the object of fear. In other words, it is not just fear that is at stake in fear. For Freud, fears themselves may function as symptoms, as mechanisms for the defense of the ego against danger. In his essay "Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety," Freud returns to the Little Hans case. Hans had a phobic relationship to horses. Freud argues that this fear is itself a symptom that has been "put in the place" of another fear, one that much more profoundly threatens the ego: the fear of castration.<sup>16</sup> Hans can "manage" his fear of horses through avoidance, in a way that he could not manage his fear of the father. We might remember that in Freud's model of unconscious emotions, the affect itself is not repressed: rather, what is repressed is the idea to which the affect was attached. So the affect of fear is sustained through the displacement between objects.

The displacement between objects works also to link those objects together. Such linkages are not created by fear, but may already be in

place within the social imaginary. In the Freudian model, the movement between objects is intrapsychic, and goes backward; it refers back to the primary fear of castration. Or, to be more specific, the sideways movement between objects (in this case, the horse and the father) is itself explained as determined by a repression of the idea to which the affect was originally attached (the threat of castration).<sup>17</sup> I would suggest that the sideways movement between objects, which works to stick objects together as signs of threat, is shaped by multiple histories. The movement between signs does not have its origin in the psyche, but is a trace of how histories remain alive in the present.

We can consider, for instance, how the language of racism sustains fear through displacement, and how this surfaces through bodies. Take the following quote from Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*:

My body was given back to me sprawled out. Distorted, recolored, clad in mourning in that white winter day. The Negro is an animal, the Negro is bad, the Negro is mean, the Negro is ugly; look, a nigger, it's cold, the nigger is shivering because he is cold, the little boy is trembling because he is afraid of the nigger, the nigger is shivering with cold, that cold that goes through your bones, the handsome little boy is trembling because he thinks that the nigger is quivering with rage, the little white boy throws himself into his mother's arms: Mama, the nigger's going to eat me up.<sup>18</sup>

Here, fear is felt as coldness; it makes bodies shiver with a cold that moves from the surface into the depths of the body, as a cold "that goes through your bones." Fear both envelops the bodies that feel it, as well as constructs those bodies as enveloped, as contained by it, as if it comes from outside and moves inward. In the encounter, fear does not bring the bodies together: it is not a shared feeling, but works to differentiate between white and black bodies. The white child misrecognizes the shivering of the black body as rage, and hence as the "grounds" for its fear. In other words, the other is only read as fearsome through a misrecognition, a reading that is returned by the black other through its response of fear, as a fear of the white subject's fear. This is not to say that the fear comes from the white body, as if it is the origin of that fear (and its author). Rather, fear opens up past histories that stick to the present (in the very rehearsal of childhood fantasies about "being eaten up" that "take on" the value of social norms as "truths" about the other) and allow the white body to be constructed as apart from the black body.

We might note here that fear *does something*; it reestablishes distance between bodies whose difference is read off the surface, as a reading that produces the surface (shivering, recoloring). But what is very clear here is that the object of fear remains the black man, who comes to feel the fear

as his own, as threatening his existence. Fear does not come from within the subject, nor does it reside in its object: we are not afraid of others because they are fearsome. Through the circulation of signs of fear, the black other “becomes” fearsome. But doesn’t this example show us that fear does get contained by an object, in this case the black man? To some extent this is right: the circulation of signs of fear does lead to containment for some, and movement for others. Here, fear gets contained in a body, which henceforth becomes an object of fear. Indeed, the white child’s apparent fear does not lead to containment but an expansion; his embrace of the world is suggested by how he reestablishes himself as being-at-home (the embrace of the mother as a “return home”). It is the black subject, the one who fears the “impact” of the white child’s fear, who is crushed by that fear, by being sealed into a body that takes up less space. In other words, fear works to restrict some bodies through the movement or expansion of others.

But this containment is an effect of a movement between signs, as well as bodies. Such movement depends on past histories of association: Negro, animal, bad, mean, ugly. In other words, it is the movement of fear between signs, which allows the object of fear to be generated in the present (the Negro is: an animal, bad, mean, ugly). The movement between signs is what allows others to be attributed with emotional value, in this case, as being fearsome, an attribution that depends on a history that “sticks,” and which does not need to be declared. The containment is provisional: insofar as the black man is the object of fear, then he may pass by. Indeed, the physicality of his “passing by” can be associated with the passing of fear between signs: it is the movement that intensifies affect. The black man becomes even more threatening if he passes by: his proximity is imagined then as the possibility of future injury. As such, the economy of fear works to contain the bodies of others, a containment whose “success” relies on its failure, as it must keep open the very grounds of fear. In this sense, fear works as an affective economy, despite how it seems directed toward an object. Fear does not reside in a particular object or sign, and it is this lack of residence that allows fear to slide across signs, and between bodies. This sliding becomes stuck only temporarily, in the very attachment of a sign to a body, whereby a sign sticks to a body by constituting it as the object of fear, a constitution taken on by the body, encircling it with a fear that becomes its own.

The sideways movement of fear (where we have a metonymic and sticky relation between signs) is also a backward movement: objects of fear become substituted for each other over time. This substitution involves the passing by of the objects from which the subject seems to flee. Fear and anxiety create the very effect of “that which I am not,” through the

very affect of turning away from an object, which nevertheless threatens as it passes by or is displaced. To this extent, fear does not involve the defense of borders that already exist; rather, fear makes those borders, by establishing objects from which the subject, in fearing, can stand apart, objects that become “the not” from which the subject appears to flee. Through fear not only is the very border between self and other affected, but the relation between the objects feared (rather than simply the relation between the subject and its objects) is shaped by histories that “stick,” by making some objects more than others seem fearsome.

## Global Economies of Fear

We can think more precisely about the processes through which fear works to secure forms of the collective. My argument is not that there is a psychic economy of fear that then becomes social and collective: rather, the individual subject comes into being through its very alignment with the collective. *It is the very failure of affect to be located in a subject or object that allows it to generate the surfaces of collective bodies.* The complexity of the spatial and bodily politics of fear has perhaps never been so apparent in the global economies of fear since September 11. Fear is, of course, named in the very naming of terrorism: terrorists are immediately identified as agents of extreme fear, that is, those who seek to make others afraid (less mobile or less free to move) as well those who seek to cause death and destruction. As the Australian prime minister, John Howard, put it, bin Laden’s “hatred” for the United States and for “a world system built on individual freedom, religious tolerance, democracy, and the international free flow of commerce” means that “he wants to spread fear, create uncertainty and promote instability, hoping that this will cause communities and countries to turn against each other.”<sup>19</sup> Howard then reads the acts of terror as attacks not only on the mobility of international capital, but also on the mobility of the bodies of Australians, on their right “to move around the world with ease and freedom and without fear.” I would like to offer an alternative reading of what moves and what sticks in fear economies, one that differentiates between forms of mobility as well as different kinds of bodily enclosure, containment, or detainment.

In the first instance, we can examine how the mobility of the bodies of subjects in the West, while presented as threatened, is also defended, along with the implicit defense of the mobility of capital in the global economy (whereby capital is constructed as “clean money” and defined against the “dirty money” of terrorism, which must be frozen or blocked). The most immediate instruction made to subjects and citizens in America, Aus-

tralia, and Britain was “to go about your daily business,” “to travel,” “to spend or consume,” and so on, as a way of refusing to be a victim of terror. Indeed, in the United States, citizens were, in effect, asked not to fear, and the nation was represented as not being afraid, as a way of showing the failure of the terrorist attacks to destroy the nation. As George W. Bush put it, “It is natural to wonder if America’s future is one of fear. Some speak of an age of terror. I know there are struggles ahead and dangers to face. But this country will define our times, not be defined by them. As long as the United States is determined and strong, this will not be an age of terror.”<sup>20</sup> The nation is constructed as having prevailed through refusing to transform its vulnerability and wounds into fear, a response that would be read, in terms of this narrative, as “determination by terror” rather than self-determination. Bush, then, in an act of self-determination, turns the act of terror into an act of war, which would seek to eliminate the source of fear and transform the world into a place where the mobility of some capital and some bodies becomes the sign of freedom and civilization. This suggests that the affect of terror was not containment, but provided the very grounds for remobilization.

This is not to say, however, that individuals and groups have not experienced fear in response to the events; the affects of fear are clear in, for example, the huge reduction in air travel. However, we need to think about this containment carefully without assuming that fear simply brings people together, or that containment is the only effect of such fear. As I have already noted, following Heidegger, the object of fear may pass by, and this structural possibility is part of the lived experience of fear. While the events did happen and did constitute an object (however much it passed by, a passing by that was already at stake in the living out of the present, given the mediatization of the event *as event*), that fear slid quickly into anxiety, in which what was at stake was not the approach of an object but an approach to an object. The approach to the event—in which it is repeated and transformed into a fetish object—involved forms of alignment, whereby individuals aligned themselves with the nation as being under attack. This, of course, repeats the process of alignment whereby the nation aligned itself with individuals as having been or being attacked.

Now, what is crucial here is not just that this alignment might restrict the mobility of individuals who now feel themselves, in a way that is personal, to be terrorist targets. Rather, given the mediating work of this alignment, experiences of fear became lived as patriotic declarations of love, which allowed home itself to be mobilized as a defense against terror. If subjects stayed at home, then homes became transformed into the symbolic space of the nation through the widespread use of American flags.

This is not to say that the meaning of the flags is necessary to its circulation—as if such flags could only signify national love. Rather, we can consider how the flag is a sticky sign, whereby its stickiness allows it to stick to other “flag signs,” which gives the impression of coherence (the nation as “sticking together”). The flag as a sign that has historically signified territorial conquest as well as love for the nation (patriotism) has effects in terms of the display of “withness” (whereby one is “with others” and “against other others”). George Packer, in an article in the *New York Times Magazine*, expressed this well: “As flags bloomed like flowers, I found they tapped emotion as quickly as pictures of the missing. To me, these flags didn’t represent flabby complacency, but alertness, grief, resolve, even love. They evoked fellow feeling with Americans, for we had been attacked together.”<sup>21</sup> The turning away from the object of fear hence may involve a turning toward home as a “fellow feeling.” That “turning toward” involves the repetition or reiteration of signs of “fellowship.” That turning could even be understood as compulsory: not to display a flag could be read as a sign of a lack of fellowship, or even as the origin of terror (to paraphrase George W. Bush, if you do not show you are “with us,” you would be seen as “against us”).<sup>22</sup>

Fear mediated by love as identification with the nation, which comes to adhere as an effect of signs of love, does not necessarily shrink bodies. The turning away from the object of fear here involves a turning toward home. Fear mediated by this form of love (love as identification) does not necessarily shrink bodies, but may even allow them to occupy more space through the identification with the collective body, which stands in for the individual body and moves on its behalf. In other words, the apparent containment of some bodies in the United States functions as a form of mobilization: staying at home allows the mobilization of bodies through the symbolic identification with the nation at war. In George W. Bush’s State of the Union Address in 2002 the effect of this identification is clear: “It was as if our entire country looked into a mirror and saw our better selves.”<sup>23</sup> Hence, the United States is defined as “caught” by its own reflection in the mirror, a “catching out” that borders on collective narcissism: self-love becomes a national love that legitimates the response to terror as the protection of loved others who are “with me,” whereby “withness” is premised on signs of “likeness” and whereby likeness becomes an imperative or a condition of survival.

So if the event of terror—of seeking to cause fear—leads to a defense of the mobility of capital and the mobilization of some bodies (through both the defense of the home as nation and the identification with the nation), then who is contained through terror? Whose vulnerability is at stake? As has been well documented, the events of September 11 have been

used to justify the detention of any bodies suspected of being terrorists. Not only was there immediate detention of suspects in the United States and European countries, but governments in the West have responded to the terror by enacting legislation that increases the governmental rights to detain anybody suspected of being a terrorist. The British Amendment to the Terrorism Act 2000 states that the Secretary of State may issue a certificate if he believes that the person's presence in the United Kingdom is a risk to national security or he suspects the person is an international terrorist. Here risk assessment becomes a matter of belief, and suspicion itself becomes the grounds for detention. The extension of the powers of detention is not merely symbolic, nor does it merely relate to the detention of terrorists: given the structural possibility that any body could be a terrorist, what we have reinstated and extended is the power of detention, as such.

However, the structural possibility that anyone could be a terrorist does not translate into everybody being affected by the extension of the powers of detention in the same way. It is well documented that people have been detained because of very weak links between them and terrorist networks, often involving simple links through names, or workplace, or residence. Aristide R. Zolberg considers this process a form of racial profiling, quoting details reported in the *New Yorker*: "Of the 1,147 people detained in the United States between September 11th and November 2001, some were identified on the basis of circumstantial links with the attack, but many 'were picked up based on tips, or were people of Middle Eastern or South Asian descent who had been stopped for traffic violations or for acting suspiciously.'"<sup>24</sup> As Muneer Ahmad describes, after September 11, there was "an unrelenting, multi-valent assault on the bodies, psyches and rights of Arab, Muslim and South Asian immigrants."<sup>25</sup> Indeed, Leti Volpp suggests that the responses to September 11 facilitated "a new identity category that groups together people who appear 'Middle Eastern, Arab or Muslim.'"<sup>26</sup> The recognition of such groups of people as "could be terrorists" depends on stereotypes already in place, at the same time as it generates a distinct category of "the fearsome" in the present. We can recall precisely the repetition of stereotypes about the black man in the encounter described by Frantz Fanon: this repetition works by generating the other as the object of fear, a fear that is then taken on as its own.

Importantly, the word *terrorist* sticks to some bodies as it reopens past histories of naming, just as it slides into other words in the accounts of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq (such as *fundamentalism*, *Islam*, *Arab*, *repressive*, *primitive*). Indeed, the slide of metonymy can function as an implicit argument about the causal relations between terms (such as *Islam* and *ter-*



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*rorism*) within the making of truths and worlds, but in such a way that it does not require an explicit statement. The work done by metonymy means that it can remake links—it can stick words like *terrorist* and *Islam* together—even when arguments are made that seem to unmake those links. Utterances like “this is not a war against Islam” coexist with descriptions such as “Islamic terrorists,” which work to restick the words together and constitute their coincidence as more than simply temporal. The sliding between signs also involves “sticking” signs to bodies: the bodies who “could be terrorists” are the ones who might “look Muslim.”

Given that the event became an object that allowed certain forms of violence and detention of others in the name of defense, we need to ask: what role does security play in the affective politics of fear? Importantly, security is bound up with “the not”—what is “not me” or “not us,” as Michael Dillon has suggested.<sup>27</sup> Security is not simply about securing a border that already exists, nor is fear simply a fear of what we are not. As I argued in the previous section, anxiety and fear create the very effect of borders, and the very effect of that which “we are not,” partly through how we turn away from the other, whom we imagine as the cause of our fear. Borders are constructed and indeed policed in the very feeling that they have already been transgressed: the other has to get too close, in order to be recognized as an object of fear, and in order for the object to be displaced. The transgression of the border is required in order for it to be secured as a border in the first place. This is why the politics of fear as well as hate is narrated as a border anxiety: fear speaks the language of “floods” and “swamps,” of being invaded by inappropriate others, against whom the nation must defend itself. We can reflect then on the ontology of insecurity within the constitution of the political: it must be presumed that things are not secure, in and of themselves, in order to justify the imperative to make things secure.

More specifically, it is through announcing a crisis in security that new forms of security, border policing, and surveillance become justified. We only have to think about how narratives of crisis are used within politics to justify a “return” to values and traditions that are perceived to be under threat. It is not simply that these crises exist, and that fears and anxieties come into being as a necessary effect of that existence. Rather, it is the very production of the crisis that is crucial. To declare a crisis is not “to make something out of nothing”: such declarations often work with real events, facts, or figures (as we can see, for example, in how the rise in divorce rates is used to announce a crisis in marriage and the family). But the declaration of crisis *reads* that fact/figure/event and transforms it into a fetish object that then acquires a life of its own, in other words, that can become the grounds for declarations of war against that which is read as

the source of the threat. Through designating something as already under threat in the present, that very thing becomes installed as “the truth,” which we must fight for in the future, a fight that is retrospectively understood to be a matter of life and death.

Indeed, it is fear of death—of the death of oneself, one’s loved ones, one’s community, and one’s people—that is generated by such narratives to preserve or maintain *that which is*. So I might fear for myself, for us, or on behalf of others. Since September 11, the deaths have become symbolic of that which is under threat not only by terrorists (those who take life), but by all that the possibility of terrorism stands for, a possibility linked by some commentators to internal forms of weakness, such as secularization, multiculturalism, and the decline of social and familial ties. For example, Jerry Falwell in the United States argued, “I really believe that the pagans, and the abortionists, and the feminists, and the gays, and lesbians who are actively trying to make an alternative life style . . . all of them who have tried to secularize America, I point the finger in their face and say ‘you helped this happen.’”<sup>28</sup> In the United Kingdom, the British National Party’s response to September 11 was to posit Islamicization within the United Kingdom rather than the Taliban in Afghanistan as the threat to the moral future of the nation itself: “They can turn Britain into an Islamic Republic by 2025.”<sup>29</sup>

This attribution of the crime of terror to the weakening of religion and community posed by the presence of various others has been, of course, condemned within mainstream politics, although noticeably with less of a “disgust reaction” than how some critics of U.S. foreign policy have been received. However, at the same time, a broader set of assumptions around what would be required to defend the nation and the world (strengthening the will of the community in the face of others) both displaces and reworks the narrative logic. Instead of an internal weakness being posited as responsible for this event, we have an internal strength being posited as responsible for recovery, survival, and moving beyond fear. As George W. Bush put it, “These acts of mass murder were intended to frighten our nation into chaos and retreat. But they have failed; our country is strong.”<sup>30</sup> The response to terror becomes a way to strengthen the bonds of the nation and the global community of free nations: the wound of terror requires “sticking together” (adherence as coherence) and using the values that made America and democracy “strong.”

Indeed, the emphasis on security in George W. Bush’s State of the Union Address in 2002 includes the transformation of democratic citizenship into policing: “And as government works to secure our homeland, America will continue to depend on the eyes and ears of alert citizens.” Citizenship here is translated into a form of Neighborhood Watch; the cit-

izen must “look out for suspicious others.”<sup>31</sup> Citizenship works as a way to police the boundaries of neighborhoods. The role of citizens as police is translated as an imperative to love, in which love becomes the foundation of community, as well as the guarantor of our future: “Our country also needs citizens working to rebuild our communities. We need mentors to love children.”<sup>32</sup> The definition of values that will allow America to prevail in the face of terror—values that have been named as freedom, love, and compassion—involves the defense of particular institutional and social forms against the danger posed by others. Such values function to define not only ideals that supposedly govern war aims and objectives but democratic norms of behavior and conduct, of what it means to be civil, a civil society, and a legitimate government. To be brought into international civil society—that is, to be not named as a “rogue state” or as part of “the axis of evil”—others must “mimic” these rules of conduct and forms of governance.<sup>33</sup> Henceforth, the emphasis on values, truths, and norms that will allow survival slides easily into the defense of particular social forms or institutions.

We might note here that these social forms become identified as “better” by being defined as open: liberal democracy (and with it a weak model of racial and religious tolerance as well as an apparent liberal support for “feminism”) become defined as what is “good” about the United States, in opposition to the closed and fundamentalist politics of the Islamic other. Hence “respect for women” and “religious tolerance” become defined as two of the values that make America and the free world strong. Such an argument allows the war to be narrated as “saving women from religious fundamentalism”: this is a familiar narrative, and one that has a long imperial history. As many feminist critics have argued, such a narrative overlooks not only the heterogeneity of other cultures—and the existence of women’s resistance, and feminist networks in Islamic worlds, including in Afghanistan—but also the maintenance of gendered as well as other forms of oppression in the United States and the so-called free world.<sup>34</sup> We need to think about the political effects of this hierarchy between open and closed cultures and show how the constitution of open cultures involves the projection of what is closed onto others, and hence the concealment of what is closed and contained “at home.”

Furthermore, the fear of degeneration as a mechanism for preserving social forms becomes associated more with some bodies than others. The threat of such others to social forms (which are the materialization of norms) is represented as the threat of turning away from the values that will guarantee survival. These various others come to embody the failure of the norm to take form; it is the proximity of such other bodies that

“causes” the fear that the forms of civilization (the family, the community, the nation, and international civil society) have degenerated. Those who speak out against the “truth” of this world become aligned then with the terrorists as seeking to cause the “ruin” of the world. What is important, then, is that the narratives that seek to preserve the present through working on anxieties of death as the necessary consequence of the demise of social forms also seek to locate that anxiety in some bodies, which then take on fetish qualities as objects of fear. Such bodies engender even more fear, as they cannot be held in place as objects, and threaten to pass by. That is, we may fail to see those forms that have failed to be; it is always possible that we might not be able to tell the difference. The present hence becomes preserved by defending the community against the imagined others, who may take form in ways that cannot be anticipated, a “not-yet-ness” that means the work of defense is never over. Such a defense is generated by anxiety and fear for the future, and justifies the elimination or exclusion of that which fails to materialize in the form of the norm as a struggle for survival. Insofar as we do not know what forms other others may take, those who fail to materialize in the forms that are lived as norms, the policies of continual surveillance of emergent forms is sustained as an ongoing project of survival.

It is here that we can deepen our reflections on the role of the figure of the international terrorist within the economies of fear. Crucially, the narrative that justifies the expansion of the powers to detain others within the nation and the potential expansion of the war itself to other nations relies on the structural possibility that the terrorist “could be” anyone and anywhere. The narrative of the “could be” terrorist, in which the terrorist is the one who “hides in the shadows,”<sup>35</sup> has a double edge. On the one hand, the figure of the terrorist is detached from particular bodies, as a shadowy figure, “an unspecifiable may-come-to-pass.”<sup>36</sup> But it is this could-be-ness, this detachment, which also allows the restriction on the mobility of those bodies who are read as associated with terrorism: Islam, Arab, Asian, East. Fear sticks to these bodies (and to the bodies of “rogue states”) that “could be” terrorist, where the “could be” opens up the power to detain. Although such fear sticks, it also slides across such bodies; it is the structural possibility that the terrorist may pass us by that justifies the expansion of these forms of intelligence, surveillance, and the rights of detention. Fear works here to expand the mobility of some bodies and contain others precisely insofar as it does not reside positively in any one body. As Samuel Weber puts it, “When *terrorism* is defined as *international* it becomes difficult to locate, situate, personify and identify,”<sup>37</sup> and it is this difficulty that justifies the expansion of the powers of the state.

It is important to recognize that the figure of the international terror-

ist has been mobilized in close proximity to the figure of the asylum seeker. The slide between these two figures does an enormous amount of work: it assumes that those who seek asylum, who flee from terror and persecution, may be bogus insofar as they could be the very agents of terror and persecution. They, like terrorists, are identified as potential burglars: as unlawful intruders into the nation. In Australia, for example, the refusal to allow the boat *Tampa* into its waters (with its cargo of 433 asylum seekers, many of whom were from Afghanistan) was retrospectively justified on the grounds that those on board *could be* linked to Osama bin Laden. The sticking together of the figure of the asylum seeker and the international terrorist, which already evokes other figures (the burglar, the bogeyman), constructs those who are “without home” as sources of “our fear” and as reasons for new forms of border policing, whereby the future is always a threat posed by others who may pass by and pass their way into the community. The slide of metonymy works to generate or make likeness: the asylum seeker is “like” the terrorist, an agent of fear, who may destroy “our home.” The slide between figures involves the containment of others, who henceforth become the objects of fear.

The containment of the bodies of others affected by this economy of fear is most chillingly and violently revealed in the literal deaths of those seeking asylum in containers, deaths that remain unmourned by the very nations who embody the hope of a future for those seeking asylum. This is a chilling reminder of what is at stake in the affective economies of fear.

## Notes

My thanks to the *Social Text* collective for providing me with such helpful and engaged feedback on an earlier draft of this essay.

1. Aryan Nations, [www.uiowa.edu/~policult/politick/smithson/an.htm](http://www.uiowa.edu/~policult/politick/smithson/an.htm) (accessed 4 January 2001).

2. Thanks to David Eng for this point.

3. Sigmund Freud, “The Unconscious,” in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth, 1964), 15:110.

4. Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Ben Fowkes (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin, 1976), 1:248.

5. *Ibid.*, 252; emphasis mine.

6. *Ibid.*, 254.

7. *Ibid.*

8. For an exploration of this argument, see Sara Ahmed, *Differences That Matter: Feminist Theory and Postmodernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 97–98.

9. Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bernard Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, trans. David Nicholson-Smith (London: Karnac, 1992), 65.
10. Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 9.
11. There is a long history of work on racial passing that I cannot discuss here. For a summary, see Sara Ahmed, "Passing through Hybridity," *Theory, Culture, and Society* 16 (1999): 87–106.
12. For the British National Party, this model of "any body could be bogus" gets translated into "all" are, or "all" might as well be, bogus: "We will abolish the positive discrimination schemes that have made white Britons second-class citizens. We will also clamp down on the flood of asylum seekers, all of whom are either bogus or can find refuge much nearer their home countries." See the British National Party Web site, [www.bnp.org.uk/policies.html#immigration](http://www.bnp.org.uk/policies.html#immigration) (accessed 30 July 2003).
13. Aidan McGurran and Jenny Johnston, "The Homecoming: It's Too Painful: Martin's Sad Return to Farm," *Daily Mirror*, 9 August 2003, 4–5. Tony Martin was released in August 2003 and "his story" was very visible in the popular press in the United Kingdom. Tabloids concentrated very much on Martin as an "ordinary farmer" whose home was ruined. The headline on the front page of the *Mirror* sums it up: "He killed to protect his house . . . but now the memories are too much." The tragedy of the story is not the death of "a teenage burglar" but Martin's loss of home: "This isn't a home any more. It's a shell." Given the sticky attachment between "burglar" and "bogus asylum seeker" and between "home" and "homeland," the tragedy of the story becomes linked to the tragedy that asylum seekers represent in their very presence in the United Kingdom for "ordinary subjects" such as "farmers." In other words, the moral of the story becomes: If we let them in, they will turn the nation into a shell and take the land on which "we have worked."
14. Stanley Rachman, *Anxiety* (Howe, U.K.: Psychology Press, 1998), 2–3. See also William F. Fischer, *Theories of Anxiety* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970).
15. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (London: SCM Press, 1962), 180.
16. See Sigmund Freud, "Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey, vol. 20 (London: Hogarth, 1964).
17. Certainly Freud's argument about "unconscious emotions" does rely on a model of origins, or the "true connection" between an idea and a feeling; see "The Unconscious," 110.
18. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (London: Pluto, 1986), 114.
19. John Howard, address to the Australian Defence Association, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs, 25 October 2001, [www.dfat.gov.au/icat/pm\\_251001\\_speech.html](http://www.dfat.gov.au/icat/pm_251001_speech.html) (accessed 23 July 2002).
20. George W. Bush, address to a joint session of Congress and the American people, [www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html) (accessed 20 September 2001).
21. See George Packer, "Recapturing the Flag," *New York Times Magazine*, 30 September 2001, 15–16. The relationship between grief and love is crucial to this narrative: the community is brought together by how it incorporates the

losses. Judith Butler suggested that public responses to the losses of September 11 work to create a distinction between grievable and ungrivable lives (“Violence, Mourning, Politics,” *Feminist Theory* launch, Keynote Address, University College London, London, March 2002). Losses may be publicly mourned if the life that is lost can be recognized as “like me,” whereby likeness is determined as proximity to social norms. David Eng also examines the erasure of non-normative losses in public discourses of mourning: “The rhetoric of loss of ‘fathers and mothers,’ ‘sons and daughters,’ and ‘brothers and sisters’ attempts to trace a smooth alignment between the nation-state and the nuclear family, the symbolics of blood relations and nationalist domesticity” (“The Value of Silence,” *Theatre Journal* 54 [2002]: 90). For an examination of love and grief in relation to the politics of the nation, see “In the Name of Love” and “Queer Feelings” in my *Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, forthcoming).

22. For Arabs, Muslims, and South Asians in the United States, displaying the flag might then be read not only as a form of identification with the nation but as an attempt to “cover” any signs of difference, which might be associated with the origin of terror. Muneer Ahmad examines the “swap” between the flag and the veil in “Homeland Insecurities: Racial Violence the Day after September 11,” *Social Text*, no. 72 (2002): 110.

23. George W. Bush, State of the Union address 2002, [www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html) (accessed 23 July 2002).

24. Aristide R. Zolberg, “Guarding the Gates,” in *Understanding September 11*, ed. Craig Calhoun, Paul Price, and Ashley Timmer (New York: New Press, 2002), 296.

25. Ahmad, “Homeland Insecurities,” 99.

26. Letti Volpp, “The Citizen and the Terrorist,” *UCLA Law Review* 49 (2002): 1575.

27. Michael Dillon, *The Politics of Security* (London: Routledge, 1996), 34. See also Anthony Burke, *In Fear of Security* (Annandale, New South Wales: Pluto).

28. Jerry Falwell made this comment on Pat Robertson’s 700 Club on 13 September 2001. He apologized the next day for suggesting that anyone but the terrorists were responsible for the attacks but repeated the message that “the problem” was secularization, caused by the presence of illegitimate others within the nation.

29. British National Party Web site, [www.bnp.org.uk](http://www.bnp.org.uk) (accessed 30 July 2002). Quoted in BNP leaflet “The Truth About Islam,” which may be viewed at [www.fairuk.org/Anti-Islam%20Supplement.pdf](http://www.fairuk.org/Anti-Islam%20Supplement.pdf), released November 2001.

30. George W. Bush, Statement by the president in his address to the nation, [www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html) (11 September 2001).

31. For an analysis of how Neighborhood Watch involves techniques of knowledge, which work to recognize “strangers” as “bodies out of place,” see Sara Ahmed, *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality* (London: Routledge, 2000).

32. George W. Bush, State of the Union address 2002, [www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html) (accessed 23 July 2002).

33. We can consider George W. Bush’s powerful utterance “you are either with us or against us” as a demand for mimicry. In this narrative, those who are

not “with us” are automatically constructed as against us, whereby “againstness” is aligned with a form of terror or terrorism. That is, anyone who is not “with us” is a terrorist, is a friend of terrorists, or might as well be. To “be with,” one must both give one’s allegiance to the community, but one also must become lovable to that community—which means recognizable as a form of civil life. We would hence argue that the utterance “you are either with us or against us” may work not as a constative or even as a performative, but as an imperative. To be “with us” is an imperative to “be like us”: if others are not to be identified as terrorists or rogue states (an identification that involves the threat of violence, as well as actual violence) they must mimic the forms of civility and supposedly democratic governance that constitute the foundations of this community. We might note here that the root of the word *assimilate* is the Latin for *likeness*. This new international community may be one that is loving, in which the imperative of love is to “make alike”: likeness is not the ground of this community, but an effect. If community binds others together through the demand that others become like us, then the narrative of love converts swiftly into hatred for “unlike others.”

34. For important feminist critiques of the gendered discourses in the justification of the war on terrorism, see Zilla Eisenstein, “Feminisms in the Aftermath of September 11,” *Social Text*, no. 72 (2002): 79–99; and Sunera Thobani, “War and the Politics of Truth-Making,” *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 16.3 (2003), 399–414.

35. George W. Bush, comments made by the president in a meeting with his national security team on 12 September, [www.whitehouse.gov/response/faq-what.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/response/faq-what.html) (accessed 23 July 2002).

36. Brian Massumi, “Everywhere You Want to Be,” in *The Politics of Everyday Fear*, ed. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 11.

37. Samuel Weber, “War, Terrorism, and Spectacle” (Paper presented at Lancaster University, December 2001).