

Informatic Afterlives and Database Erotics:
The Performativity of Surveillance in Economies of Fidelity

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Abstract

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Informatic Aterlives and Database Erotics explores the tension between coercive documentation and violent erasure in surveillance studies by centralizing the role of the body in the political and cultural transformations that have accompanied the rise of mass surveillance. Through an interdisciplinary exploration of queer historiography, legal history, and affect theory, I use the surveilled body as a central text through which to explain the rise of a mode of governance in

which mass surveillance is preferable not just to the state, but to many of the populations it governs. Using a queer and feminist lens, I argue that, as mass surveillance has permeated the interactions of both citizens and noncitizens with state institutions, surveillance has gained a performative function, in addition to the inquisitive role it has historically served. This performativity means that surveillance isn't just a means of acquiring information on behalf of state institutions but a mechanism of reification for the power of those institutions to ask invasive questions and collect personal data. The performativity of surveillance has produced a transformation of citizenship and governance that has cleaved wide gulfs between proper and improper ways of providing data to state institutions and private corporations, a cultural shift with which both scholars and activists must contend.

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Introduction: The Tongue and the Teeth: Performativity in the Material-Discursive Interface

After the sword was the word: neoliberalism, biopolitics, and performativity

An early attempt to narrate the contours of the material-discursive interface, which I define as the mutually-constituting interplay of discursive possibility and material actuality, can be found in the work of French philosopher Michel Foucault, whose work was extremely influential in the humanities more broadly, but was of particular import to theorists of sexuality and surveillance. In the Foucaultian conception of biopolitics, the rise of the sovereign body is associated with the emergence of democratic politics in the eighteenth century (1990[1978]: 135-137). To Foucault, biopolitics represented a more civilized conduit through which the nation-state can discharge its will, particularly compared to the "might makes right" logic of late monarchism.

In many ways, Foucault's conception of the rise of biopolitics mirrors the relationship between neoliberalism and "soft power," in which coercive militarism is supplanted by economic and cultural persuasion (Nye 2009[2004]). The idea that there was (or is, or can be) an end of geopolitics is a central tenet of Francis Fukuyama's version of Hegel's "end of history," a neoliberal teleology that posits market capitalism as the ultimate development of technologies of governance (Fukuyama 1992). According to this worldview, the conflicts of the twentieth century arose due to a surplus of politics, and the only cure for that diagnosis is antipolitics, or

apolitical politics.

Neoliberalism's antipolitics is structured around the central idea that, through market forces, soft power can render hard power obsolete. A globalized world has no need for war, say the neoliberals, because mutual economic interest means that armed conflict will never be the most rational decision. And these notions of rationality, of competence, and of technocracy conspire to hollow out the central premise of productive political conflict. Rather than promoting ideological debate over the structure of society, neoliberals privilege discourses-within-discourse that centralize the role of stakeholder groups in extracting value from the commons, while eliding the role of state violence in defining those groups along lines of race, class, and gender.

In this vein, it should come as little surprise that critiques of biopolitics fall along similar lines as critiques of neoliberalism. Achille Mbembe's work on necropolitics rejects the frame of a more civilized present, insisting that the forms of persuasion that emerged out of the neoliberal consensus are themselves expressions of a racialized colonial violence for which the narrative of civilizational progress is designed as an alibi (Mbembe 2003). If we take Foucault's claim to be that the sword of hard power and violence precedes the word of soft power and discourse, then Mbembe refuses to believe that there is a period after violence, since the violence of colonialism is ongoing through the hereditary ideological investments of institutions. Institutions that are built in colonial contexts retain those ideological commitments even as the form of colonialism shifts—as in the rise of soft power.

Similarly, critiques of Foucault's elision of race and gender elaborate on the faultiness of his focus on sovereignty at the expense of an account of identity and relationality. Dana

Luciano's (2007) formulation of chronobiopolitics focuses on the need to situate the Foucaultian biopolitical turn within a broader context of changes having to do with the legal force of embodiment under conditions of gendered and racialized state violence. This contextualization, in conjunction with an empirical commitment to the embodiment of mourning, situates biopolitics as simultaneously social-psychological and cultural-affective, while troubling the typical distinctions we draw between those categories of experience and historiography.

However, Luciano isn't the only theorist of biopolitics whose focus on the experiential scales politics down to the shape of individual embodiment. Roberto Esposito's (2008) work on the biomedical construction of the polis begins with an exploration of the relationship between bios and zoë, which he borrows from Giorgio Agamben. To both Agamben and Esposito, bios refers to the life of the lifestyle (the forms of life that enable and are enabled by collective discourses of living, either in the intimate familial home or the public sphere) while zoë refers to the life of the lifeform (or the early biological definition of life as animated matter). Drawing on the Aristotelean construction of the polis as emerging from familial intimacy, there is a geography of scale in which the body is at the center of a technology of governance in which the nuclear family and nation-state are actively involved in producing the conditions of possibility for the individual self. In Esposito's formulation, the self-making power of bios is not a more developed form of zoë; rather, it is precisely the life of the lifeform that makes the life of lifestyle possible. The Aristotelean concept of the development of the self out of the undifferentiated matter of life also usefully informs Marxian ideas of social reproduction. Similarly, the development of biological life into social life is the central argument that Foucault makes when he presents biopolitics (the politics of life) as a successor to thanatopolitics (the politics of death).

For scholars of gender and sexuality, the most productive component of this process of institutional self-making through a narrative of development is initiated by the moment of gender attribution. To return to Butler and her importance in understanding the relationship between identity and social reproduction, the utterance of "it's a boy" or "it's a girl" designates gender assignment. At the same time, the institutional power of biomedicine and law coalesces around language, reifying this linguistic exchange (1993: 143-147). In the modern hospital, this utterance takes place through data entry. The clacking of keys replaces or supplements the vocal assignment of sex, ossifying the utterance in an array of data about the new person. The infant is entered into the database and the population through this moment of ossification, in which the designation is made semi-permanent and is aligned with biometric data like height and weight. And, because sex assignment operates precisely as a kind of qualitative biometrics, it's one of the key theoretical bridges between gender, institutional power, citizenship, and surveillance—as well as a key example of the ability of language to shape political reality.

The tongue and the teeth: the material-discursive interface

Descartes formulated it as mind-body dualism. Marx referred to it as idealism and materialism, while contemporary adherents of his have invoked the base and superstructure. Christians claim it theologically as the domain of heaven and that of earth. Anthropologist Maurice Godelier called it "the mental and the material" (2012[1986]). Computer scientists theorize it as hardware and software, and in international affairs it's referred to as hard and soft power. It underscores the qualitative-quantitative split in much of twentieth-century Sociology. The material and the discursive are the states of matter of politics, as Marx implied when he

wrote that all that is solid melts into air.

Another way to think about the material and the discursive is as the tongue and the teeth. The tongue's chief function is to produce speech—it is the meat that brings the not-meat of the idealized body. The teeth, on the other hand, facilitate both nutrition and self-defense—they are the bony guardians of the flesh.

But the firmness of this dichotomy, as both Descartes' and Marx's adventures in critique have demonstrated, is overdetermined. While the teeth nurture and defend the body, they are also instrumental in generating certain sounds that are critical to many lexicons. On the other hand, the nerves and taste buds of the tongue generate the pleasure that serves as a spark to incentivize (in the short-term) the behaviors that are most strongly associated with survival (in the long term). It is also the source of the pleasurable sensations that the human organism seeks to replicate.

We can think of the material and the discursive as organizational categories put into artificial conflict, but even that doesn't properly capture the role of theories of performativity in narrating the contours of these divisions and annexations. To assume, as many material supremacists do, that discursivity itself (or representation as a watchword and methodology thereof) should serve as a proxy for a broader neoliberal politics is facially absurd. Apart from the crucial fact that the popularization of these ideas means that the annexation of discursivity into neoliberalism is itself an expression of the antimaterialist discursive supremacy which materialist supremacy is supposedly seeking to demystify and decry, the assumption that left politics has become synonymous with cultural politics is almost always based on a selective

reading of the academy from within. As Butler writes (critically), there is a debate in which some Marxists allege

that the cultural focus of left politics has abandoned the materialist project of Marxism, failing to address questions of economic equity and redistribution, and failing as well to situate culture in terms of a *systematic* understanding of social and economic modes of production; that the cultural focus of left politics has splintered the Left into identitarian sects, that we have lost a set of common ideals and goals, a sense of a common history, a common set of values, a common language and even an objective and universal mode of rationality; that the cultural focus of left politics substitutes a self-centred and trivial form of politics that focuses on transient events, practices, and objects rather than offering a more robust, serious and comprehensive vision of the systematic interrelatedness of social and economic conditions. (1997: 265, emphasis in original)

The consequences of this misrepresentation leads us into the explicitly political space in which performativity is embedded, which I call the material-discursive interface. Rather than assuming a clear space of delineation between that which is economic and that which is cultural, the interface is a space in between that produces the boundaries of both worlds. It's a space of nonlinearity and unrepresentability, where the ontological problem of data, for example, might be supplanted by a phenomenology of measurement. It's a space of indeterminate materialities,

neither earth nor air, neither hardware nor software.

Performativity, then, falls within this broader category of introducing messiness to the distinction between the material and the discursive, but it's obviously not the only example of theoretical attempts to reckon with the possibility of material meanings of fleeting utterances (or, somewhat more rarely, of material artifacts whose mattering matters less than the discursive landscape that emerges around them). From economics to theology, anthropology to philosophy, genomics to computer sciences: so many disciplines have their own ways of navigating the tongue and the teeth, the sword and the word—in short, the material-discursive interface.

The rarer case is what I describe as an informatic afterlife, wherein a material object initiates a way of speaking (either about or adjacent to the object) that outlasts the utility or, in some cases, the physical existence of the object in question. This is most readily applicable to the ephemeral, which necessarily either takes on an informatic afterlife or ceases to exist entirely, but the digital recording of fleeting experiences is a process as old as digital technologies themselves.

There is a terror at the heart of perception. The frame of our vision contains a specific set of data, but complete knowledge evades us. And the impossibility of perfect knowledge is the source of a great deal of anxiety. Like so many of our contemporary terrors, it can be difficult to name this anxiety, but it is the threat that renders subjects forever watchful. And watchfulness is at the center of the contemporary milieu of surveillance. This watchfulness enables almost-unlimited violence.

We imagine watching to be passive, but it indexes a surprising amount of activity. Watchfulness, especially in the form of *keeping* watch, is an orderliness carefully maintained.

If we imagine that reality is a sequence of sensations—images, tastes, sounds, and so on—the work of watching is that not of perceiving but of ordering perception. To order not just to rationalize but to command.

There are ways to be consumed by this desire for order, to allow the necessity of data collection—which is, after all, the desire to make reality obey—to issue its own demands. It isn't reality itself that issues this demand. It is our terror in the face of reality. It is not the blood itself that horrifies us; it is the sight and smell and taste of blood.

At the mass level, this relationship among perception, terror, and desire constitutes the very relationship between performativity and surveillance, which is organized around the rubric of the expressivistic threat. Presumably, without knowledge of the consequences of future disclosure, mass surveillance is much less threatening. Ask a cross-section of queer people about their relationship to shame, and the expressivistic threat comes into sharp relief: the power of institutions not only to collect data, but to disclose that which it has collected, becomes a powerful source of leverage against members of minoritized populations.

In other words, surveillance is threatening precisely because it assembles the context in which future threats can gain power. And as those future threats accumulate, the ability of those who are subject to that surveillance to resist the mechanisms of control that structure that accumulation is necessarily compromised. We readily recognize that as the biopolitics of social

control, where direct threats to the body come to constitute the conditions of its integration into systems of power from which individuals may or may not benefit. But before that control, there is the terror of being perceived and the voyeuristic desire of powerful institutions to gather documentation, which is incentivized in part by the state's coy promise of temporary safety in exchange for permanent unlimited access. This documentation isn't necessarily malicious from the beginning, but it stifles dissent nonetheless, contributing to the formation of the expressivistic threat.

The desire behind this perception and the terror that impels its documentation is what I call database erotics. Playing on Derrida's "mal d'archive," the interrelation between the Freudian death drive and the desire to document life, database erotics seeks to give an informatic afterlife to the sensation of needing to record or document an experience or phenomenon. This need arises not despite but precisely *because* the experience in question is unforgettable. It questions our typical understanding of the digital as a cybernetic brain (since the documentation of the event is subordinated to the memory thereof), which is most commonly associated with metaphors of computer "memory." It also contributes to ongoing debates around the role of the digital in embodiment and vice versa.

By positing these additions to the literature on performativity, I bring together already-existing threads in queer and surveillance studies about the role of the digital in coordinating and defining cultural and institutional memory.

Legibility as state property: Periodizing surveillance and fidelity

Early forms of surveillance bore little resemblance to what we now understand as a technological network of institutional functions and protocols designed to automate the process of yielding information to state inquiry. Prior to the development of early biometric technologies such as fingerprinting, identity was most often established through the performative practice of vouching for the identity of another. The practice of vouching (the name of which is derived from the Old French term *voucher*, which means "to summon," referencing the ability of courts to compel community members to identify one another) produced a citational economy in which known persons could effectively share their legibility with persons unknown to the court. But the sharing of legibility meant establishing a legal relationship between the person being vouched for and the person doing the vouching, which meant that it was rare for casual acquaintances to vouch for one another.

One instance where vouching among casual acquaintances became difficult to maintain was when institutional attachments superseded affective ones, such as in the cases of notaries and midwives. Both notaries and midwives were responsible for the production and maintenance of the earliest forms of documentation of identity, through the respective drafting of commercial and medical documents. Critically, though, is the fact that notaries and midwives served gendered and racialized functions for the reproduction of white supremacist patriarchy in the context of the nascent American state. Since notaries "acted as registrars and deputy registrars in the ecclesiastical courts, which had jurisdiction over all matters having to do with marriage, divorce and testamentary affairs," (Seth 1999: 868), there was a significant overlap between their work and the work of midwives, whose primary relationship to the nation-state involved establishing identity through the production of birth certificates.

Crucially, both of these institutional attachments were navigated through the common-law system which, in the course of the mechanization of law under colonialism, shifted the performative weight of the utterance to the domain of the document. Written language served as a simulation of the institutional weight of an in-person utterance when the distance between jurisdictions under colonialism made oral transmission of knowledge impossible. That shift is the fundamental role of the document in colonial historiography, particularly since the rise of the technology of the document took place before identity could be verified orally across long distances. Additionally, a long view of the consequences of colonial jurisprudence on the relationship between oral and written communication demonstrates that a significant portion of the colonial project involved supplanting indigenous knowledge structures based on oral transmission of information with colonial epistemologies that prioritized documentation (see Cañizares-Esguerra 2001: 60-69 and Taylor 2003). These protocols served as a means of formalizing the informal, and the performative function of the state's gaze meant incentivizing the maintenance of social bonds that lent legitimacy to individuals on the basis of their relationships to state proxies (such as midwives and notaries).

Continuing to the first period of mass surveillance, which started in the late nineteenth century and continued to the early twentieth century and which I call the period of external surveillance, formal protocols based on informal social practices such as interpersonal identification gave way to pseudoscientific processes associated with eugenics and racial hygiene such as phrenology and physiognomy. Another key example of this pseudoscientific approach to bodily representation is the brown paper bag test popularized under the campaign of state-sanctioned racial terror known as the Jim Crow era. In a sense, we can see the acquiescence of

the far right to pseudoscience as an expression of frustration with the failure of social control to yield the underlying biological differences upon which they were supposedly built, but these pseudoscientific approaches to the body also fulfill a key function of supplanting informal social mechanisms of authentication with evidence-based approaches that affirm the colonial epistemology of documentation. In this way, the colonial fixation on the document made the written word into a simulation of the spoken word, ossifying the oral and ritual aspects of law in a network of literacy that temporally expands beyond the moment of speaking. These semipermanent documents came to have permanent impacts on the array of methods available to the state for classifying bodies.

Racial and gender attribution became fixated on the surface of the body and its use as a text from which social data could be inferred. To return to the example of the brown paper bag test, the skin served as a useful social substrate for the complex process of racialization. The state makes a demand for information—in this case, for the production of an ocular sample of flesh—to which the body must accede. And, given the structure of the test, there is a coercive power behind the request for information. It is not merely a simple request along horizontal lines of power, but a demand with a state-sanctioned regime of racial terror guaranteeing acquiescence. And it is the interplay of the state's demand and the subject's acquiescence that serves as the focal point for the performativity of surveillance.

As technologies for defining the body developed and became more formalized, the assumption that the body's physical characteristics contained the substance of race was enshrined in law. As Robert E. Park wrote of the question of the assimilation of Japanese people in the

United States, "[t]he trouble is not with the Japanese mind but the Japanese skin" (1914: 611). This claim, which Park made critically, emphasized the racialization of external bodily characteristics under the conditions of U.S. racial capitalism at the beginning of the twentieth century. The focal point of bodily definition had shifted by that point from a holistic and subjective account of the body to a more specific definition of skin as the metonymic object of the body's race and nationality. This second mode of surveillance—catalyzed by immigration policy in the early twentieth century and the First Red Scare—involved the gaze of the state pushing past the boundaries of the body's externality. I call it the period of internal surveillance.

We can see the development of this dynamic in a Supreme Court case in which Japanese citizenship was ruled to be impossible due to shifts in this method of racial classification: *Ozawa v. United States* (1922). In *Ozawa*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled unanimously that Takao Ozawa was ineligible for naturalization because the standard laid out in the Naturalization Act of 1906 specified that naturalization was only available to "free white persons" and "persons of African nativity or persons of African descent." The Court was unswayed by Ozawa's argument that, because his skin was not black, he should be considered a white person. In reply, the court pivoted toward a rhetoric of bodily history, holding that the term "white" was intended to refer only to Caucasians (a term that implies the racialized body's origination in the Caucasus region, but which has itself shifted in popular meaning due to the need to continually legitimize white supremacy). If we take this ruling at face value, the Supreme Court rhetorically bypassed the body's externality entirely, in order to uphold descent as the standard of racialization. Reading *Ozawa* critically makes it clear that the rhetorical work going on was in service of protecting an already-existing social category from incursions by flaws in the legal logic of whiteness. The

logical conclusion of this critical reading is that the fluidity of racial classification existed in service of the maintenance of social hierarchy, at the expense of the rule of law.

Even if the shift from the use of external bodily phenomena (such as skin) to internal phenomena (such as ancestry) was a pretext for the jealous protection of the category of whiteness and its legal dividends, it had major impacts on the place of bodies in American institutions. This shift to the internality of bodily classification—the growth of a kind of molecular gaze (Anker and Nelkin 2004)—occurred in tandem with the expansion of gendered bodily phenomena to include sexual epiphenomena, as was the case in attempts to medicalize and criminalize homosexuality starting at the turn of the twentieth century. The pathologization of homosexuality through medicine and law was contested in the early days of the modern era of lesbian and gay activism in the 1960s. During this time period, the failures of institutions to depathologize homosexual identity and same-sex sexual practices were met with informal attempts to produce the same social effects through coming out teleologies. The power of the state to surveil and control the boundaries of homosexual identity and practice was met with a kind of refusal-through-acquiescence. The accusatory "you are homosexual" was met with the affirmative "I am, so what?" The declaratory accusation was legitimized, while the moral power of the institutional declaration was refused (even if, in many cases, the performative effects remained in place). And the proponents of coming out, who could not have foreseen the growth of the U.S. surveillance state in the years that followed, would have had to have drawn connections between racial and sexual legibility that required a level of theoretical sophistication unavailable to the nascent lesbian and gay rights movement.

These early attempts to materialize the performative effects of institutional depathologization from outside medical and legal institutions relied on a naïve attempt to leverage legibility for political gain. At the same time, state institutions were outmaneuvering the movement by shifting the focus on surveillance through pathologization toward surveillance through cooptation. On that shifting terrain, the declaration "I am, so what?" became a discursive site not just of personal affirmation but of classificatory populationalization. Legibility, drained of its insurgent politics, became a site not of refusal-through-acquiescence, but of simple acquiescence. Through this framework, as well as attempts by Asian-American activists to access critical resources held by state institutions, legibility is a form of state property that is provisionally lent or withheld on the basis of compliance with its edicts. And these two stories of racial and sexual surveillance demonstrate that legibility is also a powerful social force outside the confines of state institutions, producing a powerful set of affective attachments to the state.

In the late Cold War era (and continuing throughout the War on Terror), the focus on surveillance as a means of curbing external threats meant that the affective attachment to the protections of citizenship meant willingly submitting to state surveillance. The U.S. ruling class exploited the post-9/11 moment to permanently reshape not just surveillance policy but the U.S. culture of surveillance. The correct way of doing citizenship became acquiescence to the state's requests for information. In these moments, we see the development of the third period of mass surveillance, which I call economies of fidelity, a term I use to describe the scenario in which the key resources attached to citizenship, like immunity from state violence, are met with capitulation to the very conditions of state violence itself. The key logic of economies of fidelity is a preference for being harmed by one's own government, instead of someone else's. It is the

libidinal flow of legibility under economies of fidelity that permits the performativity of surveillance, in which the content of the questions asked by the state becomes less important than the reification of the state's power to ask those questions in the first place. The power of the state to coercively collect data is reified by the collection of data itself, and through the coercion made possible by the values promoted by economies of fidelity, the expansion of the scope of mass surveillance meets the narrowness of the state's gaze. Under economies of fidelity, the all-seeing state benefits from a molecular gaze.

Structure of the dissertation

In Chapter One, "The Crypt and the Archive: Queer History as Affective Biotechnology," I employ the frameworks of the material-discursive interface, as well as those of informatic afterlives and database erotics, to explore some of the implications of a queer approach to documentation and embodiment. Through readings of a number of works that address questions of memory, psychoanalysis, and historiography, I elaborate on some methodological foundations for investigation of the material-discursive interface. By working through questions of queer historiography both as an exemplar of database erotics and as a potential avenue through which to explore the possibility of informatic afterlives, I elaborate on the means of revivification that become possible through telling queer stories to reclaim queer ways of grappling with the past.

In Chapter Two, "*Boutilier v. INS* and the Pleasures of Evidence," I utilize the methodological toolset outlined in the first chapter to explore the case of Clive Michael Boutilier. Boutilier was a Canadian man who was deported from the United States in 1968 following a landmark Supreme Court case that upheld the constitutional right of the U.S. government to

exclude immigrants on the basis of "psychopathic personality," a broad diagnostic criterion that included homosexuality. By thinking through the temporality of "crossing" as a fulcrum through which surveillance is leveraged, I explore the mechanisms of migration and deportation as they relate to queer expansions of (and challenges to) normative conceptions of citizenship, normality, and threat. I also use the pathologization of homosexuality through immigration policy to discuss the medicolegal implications of the psychiatric taxonomization of queerness and debility, as well as their implications for the growth of mass surveillance. By situating this case study during the first stage of the development of economies of fidelity, in the Cold War era, it dramatizes the gaze of the state pushing past the boundaries of flesh and divining the internal characteristics of a body through surveillance.

Chapter Three, "Virtualizing Desire: Biometrics and the Stuff of Intimacy," expands upon the question of citizenship identified and elaborated in the second chapter, while expanding the timeframe from a specific focus on one Cold War-era case study to a broader discussion of a specific surveillance methodology and its associated technologies: namely, biometrics. Defining biometrics as a way of divining data from the body (or dematerializing the body itself into data), this chapter focuses more intently on the political and social implications of informatic afterlives. By integrating intimacy as a methodology into the question of the biometric, it uses informatic afterlives as a mechanism to explore the material-discursive interface's influence on the role of database erotics in the enclosure of publics, namely those that serve as outgrowths of queer forms of intimacy. This chapter, dealing mostly with the War on Terror, elaborates on the compliance to state surveillance that subjects are coerced to offer as a means of navigating the asymmetry of racialized citizenship.

Chapter One: The Crypt and the Archive: Queer History as Affective Biotechnology

"Has your memory ever been
an unfenced county? A bend
in the road? [...]
The keen
finger of a ghost clacked down my backbone
& I was lost in a district of need.
I'd known my way home once,
but now the past had its own area code."
— Terrance Hayes, "beckoned."

This chapter addresses a specific methodological tension between what we understand as queer and as feminist historiography. While both feminist and queer historiography proceed from a need to index political reality, the content of that reality is shaped by different constituencies (and different contexts in which the need itself arises). "Queer history" doesn't typically concern the subjugation of specifically queer labor and "women's history" rarely has to take up the threat of wholesale eliminationism (due to the desiring relations of heterosexuality and the material conditions of procreation). It is also worth mentioning that neither "queer history" nor "women's history" seem ready to grapple with the reality of queer women and their historical contributions and struggles¹. In addition, I point out how the categories of "queer history" and "women's history" (and, indeed, of subjugation and eliminationism) overlap, particularly through antinormative and anticanonical readings of what constitutes these histories.

One way I talk about this dialectical relationship is through the different ways

¹ Historiographies of coercive marriage and corrective rape as forms of violence specific to lesbians make it clear that the relationship between elimination and subjugation is a continuum, not a binary. Sarah Doan-Minh (2019) argues that corrective rape functions as a means of social control, shaping not just the life-chances of survivors and victims, but also the place of lesbians in society. The proximal violence of elimination does the distal work of subjugation.

intersectional interventions have inflected feminist and queer theory. While in both feminist and queer theory intersectional arrives on the scene due to a specific critique of political elisions in activist spaces, I highlight how feminist and queer theory use history (especially histories of violence) differently in their attempts to narrate the present.

By focusing on the relation between historiography and material violence, I treat the normative concept of the archive as a functionary of state power. Without framing narratives such as nationalism and colonialism, archives would have substantially less epistemic weight. Through the question of nation, I address the power of negation as it relates to the desiring body.

Using Mbembe as a cipher through which to read Derrida's work both on the *mal d'archive* and on originary violence, I attempt to trace the epistemological constraints of doing liberatory work through normative institutions. Through this question, I arrive back at the problematic of the desiring body, ultimately distinguishing between deductive and inductive methods through both the elimination/subjugation dialectic that informs so much of my methodological work, and through the historical methods that arise in response to both systemic subjugation and wholesale eliminationism.

Through this lens, I elaborate a historiography that uses materialist intersectionality to bridge extant gaps between institutional and informal bodies of knowledge (as well as materialism, idealism, and discursivity) using a specifically affective approach, which is why I argue that the process of queer history constitutes an "affective biotechnology." Through an analysis of the use of affect in queer historiography (especially the use of grief as a basis for coalition), I articulate the potential uses of a network that arises from the dialectic of loss and revival.

Chapter One: The Crypt and the Archive: Queer History as Affective Biotechnology

Introduction: Opening the crypt

The archive as a scene of desire

What can a feminist or queer approach to the archive tell us about practices of producing historical narrative? Or, conversely, what is left inaccessible to normative conceptions of the archive that can be put to use by queer and feminist approaches? To begin, I should identify what I mean by normative approaches. These approaches focus on the archive as an impartial window through which a temporally-delineated aspect of *THE* "true" reality can be indifferently accessed, rather than as a constitutive discourse through which *A* "truth" of history is actively made possible.

The stakes of such an approach can be elucidated through projects that seek to reclaim a queer past. Authors such as Carolyn Dinshaw (1999), Carla Freccero (2006), and Heather Love (2007) have elaborated research agendas that extend Sedgwick's (1990) call for a recuperative reading of queer history through texts in which queerness is cast into the realm of trauma and abjection. Recuperating queer history through non-literary texts requires a modified approach not only to reading, but to the process of text selection itself. This process of queer historiography, which Love characterizes as an attempt to "trace[] the identifications, the desires, the longings, and the love that structure the encounter with the queer past" (2007: 31), formulate not only the historiography of sexuality, but the reading of desire into all historiography. In other words, this

formulation attends not only to the question of histories of desire, but to the desire that underlies history *itself*, which I call database erotics.

In this formulation, we can see that evidence isn't the only thing that makes its way into an archive. The archive serves not only the function of indexing a temporospatially-defined sliver of existence, but of marking out the boundaries of the question (in other words, the desire) that impelled the research in the first place. The questions posed by the researcher set the bounds of the archive that is compiled in an attempt to answer those questions. Without the desire of the researcher, without that embodied process of reiterating subjectivity through the constitutive process of enacting it materially, the archive could not enter into discourse. In this way, all archives, even ones with no explicit emphasis on histories of sexuality or of the body, are left with the traces of the desire that is foregrounded by those lines of inquiry.

By placing desire at the center of formulations of historical knowledge, we can converse with the feminist genealogy that seeks to critique the Cartesian dualism that separates the mind and the body. This critique has been taken up broadly within feminist studies, queer studies, and disability studies, but it's of particular import to a cross-reading of all three, due to the power it locates in the body as a conduit through which knowledge circulates. That is to say, rather than simply knowing *about* our bodies, as in epistemological schemata such as those that privilege medical and legal bureaucracy over embodied and lived experience, we also know *through* them.

We must also attend to another face of desire in historical research, by which I mean the desire that foregrounds institutional archives. Research by feminist scholars such as Ashwini Tambe (2009), Anjali Arondekar (2009), Ann Laura Stoler (2010), Kathryn Burns (2010), Clare Hemmings (2018), and Elizabeth Freeman (2019, especially 124-157) foregrounds the role of

capitalist and colonial knowledges in the production of the archives upon which many historians depend. Their work, taken in chorus, attends to the historiographical drama of disrupting the circulations of power upon which colonial archives depend from within the academic spaces that could not have come into being without those very same archives. These negotiations narrate the contours of a counterarchive that seeks to, to borrow a concept from Dinshaw (1999), engage in the "touch" of history, drawing together dissident history with an ethics of desire. The process of developing an archive shares its desire for total knowledge of the body with biomedicine and mass surveillance.

The archive and the crypt

By locating the archive's origin in the specificity of the desiring body, as opposed to the universality of the metanarrative (or of the supposed virtue of the knowledge itself), we gain access to a host of questions about the relationships between life and the archive. While Cvetkovich (2003), Love (2007), and Gould (2009) have written at length on the affective life of archives, their work doesn't seek to engage with the question of biopolitics. While I don't think that Foucault is a compulsory node in the intellectual network that I'm provisionally and hesitantly referring to as "queer theory," it is one of the critical bridges between queer and surveillance studies, and so it seems generative to put forth the question of what is biopolitical about the archive and what is archival about biopolitics.

To answer this question, I want to skip over biopolitics entirely at first, and refer instead to two modes of analysis that follow or parallel biopolitics, before using them to return to the

question of the relationship between biopolitics and the archive. I'm doing so proleptically, in an attempt to decenter Foucault in conversations about biopolitics and center, instead, his critics. First, I want to follow Derrida's (2005) premise of the "crypt," while extending and complicating his psychoanalytic approach, to see what points of connection emerge between it and the construction of queer archives. Then, I will analyze what queer theory has done with Mbembe's (2003) concept of "necropolitics," following that thread back to the question of Foucaultian biopolitics and building an analysis of biopolitics that takes its limitations seriously—which is necessary work if we are going to understand the phenomena that the theory of biopolitics seeks to index.

In his foreword to *The Wolf Man's Magic Word: A Cryptonomy* by Abraham and Torok, Derrida sets out a psychoanalytic theory of trauma, writing of a "crypt" that can insulate the Self against the shock of loss. Derrida writes that the crypt opposes introjection by "[s]ealing the loss of the object, but also marking the refusal to mourn" (xvi). By bringing us to the crypt as a site of storage, of safekeeping, Derrida's remarks trouble the boundary between that which is alive and that which is dead, while simultaneously recalling his inquiry into what he called the *mal d'archive*, which concerns "the violence of the archive itself, *as archive, as archival violence*" (1995: 7, emphasis in original). In Derridean terms, then, if the archive is always already an archive of the body, then its relation to the crypt dictates that it must serve as the site of its own grief. The queer historian, or any historian concerned with erasures and violences, must mourn even as they document, and must turn documentation itself into mourning in order to foreground the subjectivity that impels the queer project of documentation.

Using the crypt as the central figure in our account of queer mourning both allows and

requires us to acknowledge the epistemology of the crypt, which is that of imperfect knowledge. Just as terror arrives to exploit failures of perception ("I feel what I am not seeing"), the affective power of the crypt is derived from failures of memory ("I feel what I cannot remember"). Rather than being an impersonal geopolitical agnotology (as in the case of terror), it is an intimate biopolitical amnesia. The crypt, as a site and object, shores up the conditions of mourning by encouraging grief while concealing the actual beloved object of our memory. What lies within the crypt is an enduring question, and grief is the technology that simulates² the retrieval of its contents.

If we understand the difference between an archive and a database as a distinction having to do with the interface through which the encapsulated artifacts are accessed, then mourning necessarily complicates that interface's affective function. That is to say that mourning serves as a way *into* the archive (or away from introjection), not a way out of it. This is why it's important to attend not only to the Derridean "archival violence" of being interpellated into the archive, but simultaneously the violence that takes place through processes of gatekeeping that force elisions and erasures that would attempt to refuse marginal narratives a place in history. In other words, to remember demands an account of the process of forgetting, and of the violence that contextualizes forgetting.

Another relationship between the body and the database is elaborated in Sharon Daniel's discussion of her visit to the Paris Catacombs, which she characterizes as a "massive database of

² I say that grief simulates retrieval because grief is the process of feeling like the object has been retrieved from the space of forgetting, but it cannot answer the question of what that object really was. To do so would require perfect knowledge of the contents of the crypt, which would obviate the mourning process.

the dead" (2007: 152). By focusing on the categorization of the remains in the necropolis and her feeling of immersion in the space, Daniel is bringing out two simultaneous characterizations of the space: as an archive, by positioning it as a site through which material history can be narrated; and as a database, through its status as being "once a dynamic system that has ceased to evolve" (152), marking how it turned from a database into an archive, as well as the work that databases retroactively seek to do when faced with a collection of artifacts.

In addition, the "crypt" that signifies death also signifies illegibility and abstraction, as well as the coercive power of institutional taxonomy, through the secondary definition in which Derrida refers to the "crypt" of "cryptography" or "the cryptic." The fascinating complement between Derrida's account of the "crypt" and Daniel's account of the Paris Catacombs is that, in Derrida's account, death and illegibility are correlated by two factors: one, their cohabitation in the same sign; and two, the reliance of the illegibility of melancholia (or the resistance of introjection) on a prior death which it seeks to endlessly mourn. This mourning serves as not only the onus for the creation of a cryptic archive, but is also the queer historian's primary affective interface with such an archive.

Taking the automation of the interface between artifact and historian as the key feature distinguishing archives from databases, we can ask after the role of affect in not only archives (as Cvetkovich, Love, and Gould have aptly demonstrated), but in databases. Two questions arise. First, can an archive simultaneously retain the properties of a crypt and a database? That is to say, can a rhetorical space organized around mourning have flexible enough boundaries to be a truly dynamic system? Second, how is the working of affect in archives changed by the automation of the retrieval of artifacts?

As queer theoretical reckonings with melancholia attempt to wrestle with the despair that Love (2007) elaborates as the attempt to reconcile losses that constitute queer subjectivity, we find ourselves in a crypt that marks kinship and the related political logics of belonging, as well as logics of inheritance. In asking these provisional questions, I offer the suggestion that the answers can only come by delving deeper into the concept of the archive, opening the formulation up to critical inquiry.

Violence and its outlines: The trace as historiographical incentive-impediment

We cannot discuss mourning without first addressing death. Mbembe's (2003) account of necropolitics focuses on "figures of sovereignty whose central project is not the struggle for autonomy but *the generalized instrumentalization of human existence and the material destruction of human bodies and populations*" (14, emphasis in original). This instrumentalization closely resembles what we have previously known as biopolitics, particularly insofar as it attends to the regimentation of mass murder (Mbembe 2003: 19), but Mbembe's emphasis on material violence brings us closer to the core of the matter that we ask after in discussions of the crypt and the archive. If, as Mbembe writes, "the human being truly *becomes a subject*—that is, separated from the animal—in the struggle and the work through which he or she confronts death" (14, emphasis in original), then Love's attempt to reconcile melancholic attachment to the past and pragmatic attempts to create the future leave the queer historian and her myriad attachments in a sort of present lurch, always mired in the process of becoming a true necropolitical subject. In that sense, following Mbembe, the violence of the state is fully realized

in the process of mourning-as-subjectivity, in the space of the crypt.

The need to confront death, when translated into psychoanalytic terms, is what impels Derrida's premise of "*le mal d'archive*," which Derrida defines as "the transaction between the death drive and the pleasure principle" (1995: 12). Situating a particular desire (the desire to document) between the desire to kill or die and the desire to obtain pleasure seems to confirm what Daniel suggests about the Paris Catacombs: that the realm of the living and that of knowledge do not overlap, that a body cannot be an artifact until its death, and that in fact the knowability of an object or a subject is dependent on its destruction, through what Derrida calls "*archival violence*" (1995: 7).

As authors such as Foley (2002) and Taylor (2003) have argued, in their respective contexts of folklore and performance studies, the moment in which an utterance or gesture manifests in the world is fundamentally uncapturable. We can record a performance, reducing it to bodies in motion or an ordered linguistic catalog—in other words, we can produce texts that take as their originary gloss the moment—but something ineffable is lost in this process. As Wordsworth wrote in his poem "The Tables Turned," "we murder to dissect" (1798, l. 28). Therefore, as scholars of the margins, we must work not only against institutional elisions and erasures, but against a more general complication of the documentation of moments (without reducing *or* overdetermining them).

This is where Luciano's deployment of what she terms the "countermonumental impulse," which she defines as "the demand for historical memory to work through [nonlinear linkages between past, present, and future] without relying on amnesia or subscribing to a redemptionist teleology," (2007, 171) should capture our focus. It is here that we enter into the genealogy of

queer critique that seeks to revise biopolitics-as-usual in an attempt to reforge the possibilities of queer subjectivity. Authors such as Puar (2007), Swarr (2012), and Chen (2012) have utilized Mbembe's concept of necropolitics productively in queer studies, particularly in tandem with interdisciplinary work in postcolonial theory and disability studies. However, of particular interest to inquiries into the intersections of crypts, archives, and databases is Luciano's work, which critiques Foucaultian biopolitics on the grounds that it fails to account properly for temporality or historical change (2007). Instead, Luciano establishes a theory of queer archives that is dependent not on the structure of the artifacts on their utility in constructing a narrative of the queer past (2011).

Luciano's account of the discourse surrounding "pilgrims" (2011: 123) who kiss the sphinx that adorns Oscar Wilde's tomb is particularly telling, as a means of elucidating the temporal and affective attachments of queer history. In one particularly powerful passage, she writes about certain formations of queer pilgrimage as a gesture that, like the practice of archiving itself, serves as a focal point for the practice of feeling queer history, treating stone lips as a powerful conduit for historical memory, an interface with a haunting that is kept safely dead within the queer crypt:

The pressure of lips on stone suggests a different form of contact with the past. The lipstick kisses don't trace a timeline, a narrative of descent, between Wilde and those who made them; rather, they bend time through the location of partial affinities, pressing up against a presence from the past, the present-ness of this being-otherwise. They kiss into being an expansively queer *now*, one that

is affectively distinct from the melancholy perpetuity predicted in this verse from Wilde's 'Ballad of Reading Gaol' which is etched on the back of the stone:

And alien tears will fill for him
Pity's long broken urn
For his mourners will be outcast men
And outcasts always mourn.

(2011: 123, emphasis in original)

In this passage, the dynamic that Luciano describes is what I term "reviving the crypt," which is key to the ways in which queer history can be understood as biotechnological and affective. This combines Sedgwick's idea of a recuperative reading with an attention to Luciano's chronobiopolitics, drawing together not only the loss in question (of a subject, of a body, of a political possibility), but the territory upon which the loss occurs (that is to say, of time itself). Through a productive encounter with these constitutive losses, we are able to open up the historical crypt and produce new ways of being in time.

We must understand not only that history lives in the present through its endless tendrils that haunt the present day but that history lives simultaneously through failed attempts to ossify and fossilize it. As work by scholars such as Cvetkovich (2003), Gould (2009), and Hemmings (2011) demonstrates, historical narrative is a powerful conduit for the collective (and collecting) work of affect. Situating the loss of those circuits at the level of desire presents a powerful new way of connecting dissident bodies.

Iterative flickering: Glitches and ghosts in economies of fidelity

The repeating body

As badly as proponents of neoliberalism want us to imagine that we are independent and untethered, that we have no obligation to one another, and that we do not owe our existence to history, that is not the case. We are, each of us, both materially and discursively, balanced between tradition and circumstance, between time and space, between terror and nostalgia. We live in the incongruence of these binaries, in the mesh of their falseness. Like a pad of paper, where each successive page bears the imprint of the writing on the pages above it (and thereby reveals that this supposedly two-dimensional plane extends past its apparent bounds), each of us carries the trace of history on our bodies.

This is not the question of the palimpsest. The palimpsest relates an old self to a new one while retaining the same base material. The parchment has not changed, merely the glyphs set on top of it. The idea of the pad involves turning a new page—an often-invoked metaphor in vernacular historiography—but seeing the shadows of the old on the sheer blankness of the new. In addition, these shadows are the result of an imprint, which means that, in the course of drawing new glyphs on the page, the tip of our pen might get caught in a rut—also a vernacular historiographical metaphor, though in a much more proximal and autobiographical way—and veer off in a direction against our intention. A lowercase *g* becomes a lowercase *q* because the space on the page above it on the pad, which has been torn off and discarded or possibly just folded over out of sight but which still haunts the now-topmost page, contained a *q*.

The problems posed by the imprint are problems of citation by imitation, where an attempt to be a prior thing invokes it, performatively summoning it to the present. Rather than a *g* and a *q*, perhaps an uppercase *S* is drawn over top of what used to be a slash mark, turning it into the numeral 2. This is a newer problem, the problem of recombination. Both are orthographic metaphors that raise questions about inheritance and citation, but simultaneously of alternative acquisition and refusal. Ultimately, in the realms of the natural and the social, what we encounter is the problematic of the economy of fidelity, which is the term I use to describe differential valuation along the axis of authenticity³. Under the conditions of economies of fidelity, something is more valuable the more proximity to "reality" it has. Likewise, falseness—which often maps closely to the extent of discursive mediation—is devalued or considered compromised in some way. The critical reason for this is that language is considered to be volitional, and discourse then falls into a register of competing interests, a debate over whose account of reality is less compromised by their investment in material outcomes.

In the context of authenticity, then, what is "history"? We have a vernacular mode of narrating it. Many of us have heard from an intimate partner or family member, "Why are you bringing that up? It's ancient history." This dismissive, anti-empathic approach to the conditions

³ Consider, as an example, the concept of "engagement" on social media. In terms of this specific marketing structure, engagement can either be organic or inorganic, with organic engagement more highly prized due to two factors: its rarity and its ability to deflect cynicism. Inorganic engagement—in which corporations, politicians, or other stakeholders pay to put content in public—bears a close resemblance to marketing-as-usual, and is easily dismissed by most tech-savvy audiences (not to mention being hidden by software designed to block ads from view). On the other hand, organic engagement—in which a post made by a corporate or political social media account "goes viral," being shared willingly by many audience members—has a veneer of authenticity that allows it to penetrate the cynicism of the browsing public (while also having the major benefit of having a much smaller budget footprint).

under which history is narrated is, unfortunately, the norm for discourses that concern themselves with the flow of time. Along with narratives of passive healing, the impertinence of the past—"ancient history," "water under the bridge," "letting sleeping dogs lie"—belies a Liberal disengagement with the question of how we arrived at the present. In sum, this form of historiographical Liberalism treats the present as if it is not a *problem*, while also treating the past as immaterial because it cannot be confirmed.

We can narrate this question through the lens of privilege, asking which members of society are *able to* imagine that the present is an unmitigated good, that we have made so much progress, that there are not miles left to go. Consider, for example, the Liberalism of Steven Pinker, whose 2011 book *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined* performatively goes beyond the prescriptive utopian argument and positions utopianism as a descriptive norm. In other words, Pinker, in keeping with the post-Fukuyama technocrats, argues that history as a process of accounting for violence has been obviated by evolutionary politics. We no longer need to account for violence because we have solved that problem. In arguing that the world that we inhabit is one in which violence is no longer the norm, Pinker and his adherents are making a negative claim at the very motivation of radical history itself. By undermining the descriptive claim to the existence of violence, they are undermining the prescriptive methods that are used by radical historians to promote a more just world. And by using specious methods to do so, as Pinker himself has done so often, they are using a well-established propaganda apparatus to keep violent relations invisible. The fundamental politics of this denial is one of erasure in service of the maintenance of hierarchy. It is history against memory.

The question, then, is what this process has to do with the body. Beyond the obvious relationship between violence and incarnation—which is boiled down to a theological gloss in Christology—there is also the regulatory work that violence does in confronting the transgression of norms. The taxonomization of the body is central to the demographic distribution of that violence. The question of the body is always a question about the end of the body—what to do with it, where its edges fit with other bodies or don't—but it is rarely a question of where the body comes from.

The idea of bodily originalism is often bogged down by the question of biological essentialism⁴, and it's appropriate that the question of the replication of bodily matter should deal with the question of the distinction between nature and culture. However, the behavioral questions raised in the context of debates surrounding so-called "nature" and so-called "nurture" are myriad and troubling. These questions are themselves an inheritance—of histories at the intersection of eugenics and criminology, of related attempts to define pathology in bodily terms and of their requisite attempts to imbue immanent specificities with transcendent universal essences—but they also replicate the bodily citation of the concept of normality, which queer gestures toward memorialization seek to counter.

In such a context, how can the body itself be said to exist as a discrete fact? Salamon

⁴ Here it's worth remembering both Butler's (1993) argument that the (material) body cannot be said to meaningfully precede the (discursive) citizen. I also think it's worthwhile to consider the relationship between Butler's argument here and Esposito's (2004) argument that bios and zoë produce one another. Both take a developmental narrative—Butler dealing with gender development and Esposito dealing with community development—and use an account of the institutional power of language to upend the hierarchies that the developmental narrative takes for granted. To Butler, sex as a medicolegal category is a reification of gender, and, to Esposito, zoë is a reification of bios.

handles this question deftly when she writes that "one can acknowledge the ways in which this felt sense [of the body] is a product of, and also subject to, cultural interpretations without disavowing or dismissing the persistent importance of this sense (2010: 2-3). In Salamon's formulation (which is informed by Butler's [1993]), the desire to defer to material concerns of the body is unilateral, which is to say, there is no concomitant desire within materialism to defer to the discursive, linguistic, or semiotic.

The one-sidedness of this deferral produces an invisibility of discourse which, ironically, produces much more powerful discursive effects than a unilateral materialism would find itself implicated in. This is the material-discursive interface in the register of terror and nostalgia, with the present an ambulatory void that staggers between the instinct to give into the horrific totality of subjectivation under late capitalism. The persistence of this narrative of abjection has done its damage to the practice of narration, but I should clarify that I'm not interested in the idea of recuperating nostalgia, either. The past must stand on its own, rather than being unevenly incorporated into a prosthetic present.

But theorists such as Butler and Salamon argue that the discursive encapsulates the material, even as the material grounds the discursive. That is to say, any attempt to access a prelinguistic Real (in Lacanian terms) falls subject to the processes of semanticization that we see throughout culture more generally. Therefore, deference to the material is actually deference to *discourses surrounding* the material, just as deference to the reality of the body is actually deference to the representation of repetitions thereof.

The question that arises here is one of the temporality of repetition. How do we locate the time in which repetition takes place, and, when we repeat, are we reaching backwards to

"touch" (in Dinshaw's formulation) the past, or are we imitating (in a Butlerian sense) the images that exist of ideal forms of the body? This is an open question, but what seems clear is that the material body is actually an object constructed *in media res*, an image that flickers into an iterative form of being out of recombinant histories and competing bodily ideologies. The rest of this section will concern that iterative flickering. Put differently: if incarnation is a discursive technology, what happens when that technology fails?

The prior body

The temporality of the body coming into discourse, *in media res*, of being neither entirely subject to nor entirely immune from historical contingencies, demands a prior subject (and, with it, a prior body). This prior subject is the ghost of the Real that haunts the possibility of existence in a contemporary setting. It is the force of history that surveils in its haunting. And, ultimately, it is the compulsion that incentivizes normalizing violence.

I want to return here to the idea of the "economy of fidelity." In this concept, I mean to elaborate a hierarchical valuation of the success or failure of an attempt at imitation. We can see such a specific crossing of difference as such. Instead, it's quite possible that the crossing is not contemporary but historical, enabling a touch from the past to the present. The question that arises is, what is the value of historicizing this valuation of authenticity or credibility?

This touch enables a productive moment, it generates an opportunity for transhistorical empathy that can be used compassionately, in Dinshaw's formulation, to navigate affective terrain that was previously unnavigable. This is where we see the intersection of the economy of

fidelity with the body as a phenomenological aperture.

The present body

The body as a phenomenological aperture means accounting for the body as it is mobilized toward the ends of a politics that insists on the centrality of experience. In other words, if the fundamental currency of social thought is or must be experience, then the body's primary function as an object of relation has to be generating experience. Here I use the language of generation, rather than that of collection or consolidation, because of the inherently transformative nature of subjectivity. However, subjectivity requires a prior transformation, that of subjectivation, which is inherently constrained by geopolitics. Since the conditions under which the self is produced through subjectivation are specific to histories of social reproduction under empire, we can frame this as an imperial subjectivity that shapes the context of citizenship in countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada.

Seeing this contradiction as a problem of narrating selfhood under empire, rather than individuating it as an inherent issue of human concern, means implicating economic ideology in the messiness of interpersonal interaction, which, of course, always meets with significant resistance. The task of approaching the living body's presentness without denial or mystification is always subject to the deferral with which I opened this discussion, which is why the body—and its concomitant experiences—are binarized in the process of wringing knowledge out of them. The production of unquestionable future good at the expense of present suffering, while simultaneously undermining any claim to grievances from within harmed groups, would

constitute one such mechanism of binarization.

Ultimately, the measure of binarization is one of representationality, which is the fundamental crux of any claim to the speculative mode of terror or the amnesia of nostalgia, which is and should be the space in which queer history seeks to intervene.

Conclusion: Affective biotechnology against mnemonic capitulation

We inhabit a peculiar political moment, one that is marked as much by an evasive notion of the public as much as the elusive economic growth that seems to be just out of reach. As such, the so-called "sharing economy" has come to be seen as a kind of fiscal savior, the light at the end of the global-recession-that-we-no-longer-call-a-global-recession. The sharing economy—which ostensibly democratizes its subjects through technological affordances even as it demonstrably accelerates their alienation through processes of austerity—has produced a new ideology of consumption, a new curve to the possibility of production, and a new framework for narrating bodies through capital. And through the sharing economy, economies of fidelity have overtaken other economic forms, producing a context in which selfhood is a product to be conditionally leased to people who enjoy the protections of, at best, a provisional citizenship. The demands of surveillance capitalism undermine both subjectivity and citizenship, first by being based on invasions of privacy and then by insisting on predictability among the subjects it surveils (Zuboff 2019). These mechanisms of economic surveillance inform and constrain human behavior by weaponizing authentication itself against those who wander into its digital vision.

"Does this seem like me?" a friend recalled asking himself recently, when talking about

how he avoided making certain purchases in order to prevent algorithmic freezes on his bank account, an annoyance about which he often complains. In the case of this example, my friend was put in a position of having to see himself from the outside, the way the bank's algorithm would. Substituting this algorithm's judgment for his own, he determined that there were certain retail outlets and restaurants that would be more likely to flag this algorithm based on their distance from an ideal-type of himself that came to stand in for his real decisions and preferences. And it is the fact that he ultimately decided to seem more like himself, according to this algorithm, that highlights the performative function of surveillance. His knowledge of the fact that his financial data was being scraped and processed—that a machine was discussing his behavior with itself, turning him into the object of a kind of algorithmic gossip—produced the outcome of complicity, without even having to issue a threat. Under conditions of mass surveillance, be it by the state or by private entities, the threat of a threat is enough. Merely being noticed by an algorithm disrupts the smooth surface of the database of the polis, resulting in inconvenient phone calls to banks and, in more extreme cases, criminal punishment. In many cases, economies of fidelity (the institutional architecture that upholds the sharing economy, as well as surveillance capitalism at large), produce the authenticity that they seek to index.

The question that I want to ask in response to these conditions of constrained self-making is: to what extent can the mechanisms that empower the economy of fidelity be repurposed against itself? To borrow Sandoval's idea of "differential consciousness" (2000), we can ask after the possible gains to be made by using tools derived from oppressive systems. This question, when applied to technology, bears a close resemblance to one of the fundamental tensions in media studies, the tension between representation and production.

This is the basic topography that I'm trying to navigate in thinking through the relationship between computation and compromise (or, in its most extreme form, capitulation) when attempting to perform memory outside the rubrics made available by the forms of memory facilitated by the archive and the database. Both forms of memory do critical work in relation to state institutions, with the archive upholding state epistemology and the database upholding the financial order of the technologization of memory. And it is this work of upholding that I call mnemonic capitulation, a compromise that the theory of informatic afterlives must foreground.

In this analysis, I want to mark out the movement from compromising with media systems to capitulating to them specifically as a moment of loss, especially a loss of leverage against the powerful institutions that benefit from economies of fidelity. What does it mean to navigate that compromised autonomy without allowing it to performatively manifest the community-wide threat that systemic surveillance animates when it is allowed to operate unchecked (by institutional structure or democratic insurgency)? What does it mean to take advantage of the advantages that a piece of technology affords while remaining critical of the insidious ideological work its phenomenology constitutes?

Here, Gould's metaphor of "political horizons" (2009) becomes helpful. Operating as a kind of harm-reduction strategy for teleology, the idea of a political horizon centers affect in conversations about social movement work. As such, it's perfectly suited to discuss a context in which technology is figured as both an economic and political savior of the nation-state, even as affective approaches to stark computation often have difficulty gaining epistemological ground with practitioners. But nonetheless, Gould's premise can serve as a helpful corrective to capitulation to economies of fidelity, as well as to the increasingly dangerous myth of the

inherently democratizing power of technology (which often manifests in rhetorical structures such as the "marketplace of ideas").

Recognizing that politics is always about the structure of shared fantasy, we can approach the question of this compromise (or cultural triage) without pretending the work means more than it does. This is how differential consciousness (Sandoval 2000) moves past the epistemic limitations of Liberalism, the ideological porosity of which produces very little space between compromise and capitulation. This, I think, is where we arrive at the core question of how to use technologies that were not designed for our political purposes without teaching ourselves to love the machine itself.

Here, I want to return to the more general question of capitulation, both in the case of "does this seem like me?" and the sharing economy more generally. While we navigate the use of technology as a tool through which to enact personal or societal change, we should also remember that technologies are also comprised of protocols and mechanisms through which we direct human action. Thinking in these terms, what might Sandoval's idea of differential consciousness mean when applied to the question of the credibility of online content? In response to that question, I suggest that the figure of the sharer is designed to negotiate the epistemic terrain of our contemporary media market, leveraging the internet, and specifically social media, against hegemonic understandings of who should get to shape narrative and offer critique.

I want to let those questions ring for a few moments, and then in conclusion, I want to suggest that the problems we have surrounding the production of memory in the academy—that is to say, the neoliberalizing function of academic structures that treat data in much the same way

that datamining does—are not methodological but ethical. And the only real way to restore the ethical promise of the version of the academy about which we fantasize is to move outside of the realm of the professionally expedient and into the realm of the affectively responsible. In other words, the academy's role in these processes and in documentation is not to lead or constrain or otherwise direct documentation and authentication, but to elaborate theories that allow us to account for these forms of self-making without fetishizing or fossilizing them. Our account of economies of fidelity should be an opportunity to think compassionately about the conditions under which digital autobiography is practiced.

Coda: Eulogy for Infinitude: The Present as Interface

The story of temporality is, to some extent, the story of impossible ratios. We experience a vanishingly brief blink of time at the center of two finite infinitudes, which are accessible only through the thing we call "the present."

There is, of course, no singular present for us to draw from in accounting for these pasts and futures, as feminist interventions in phenomenology and epistemology have pointed out. At the same time, the singular present serves only as a eulogy for the infinite, a story we tell ourselves about the completeness of the crack in the door through which we cautiously peer.

This is, in a nutshell, the premise of the "end of history," which Paolo Virno has taken as his object in *Déjà Vu and the End of History*, where he argues that "we need to grasp the non-psychological, supra-personal, public significance of the concepts with which we analyse the formation—as well as the deterioration—of memory" (2015: 4). There are two moves present

here. One is the depersonalization of history, which would seemingly be at odds with what was once radical but has become an orthodox neoliberal approach to historiography, that the personal is political. While I have my own reservations about Virno's refusal here, it is representative of a longstanding tension between Marxism and what is sometimes pejoratively described as "identity politics." The premise of a politics of identity, like the premise of the present, should not be essentialized or flattened. Identity politics threatens its explicit antagonists—antagonists defined along vectors of identity, such as white supremacy, patriarchy, heterosexism, and so on—even as it makes itself appropriable to defenders of capital and empire. As such, it is a valuable but dangerous technology, a double-edged sword that must be wielded cautiously.

The second move is the negation of history. Through a focus on memory through its deterioration, Virno elaborates on the deconstructive impulse in left historiography. Remember here Derrida's concept of an "originary violence" in *Of Grammatology* (1976), in which the constraints of language set the stage for social control. This violence amounts to structuralism's version of original sin. By articulating a theory of history through its absences, penumbras, and silences, Virno is contributing to a long tradition in feminist and queer historiography, albeit through an intervening anti-imperialist methodology.

While feminist and queer approaches to history tend toward a kind of historiographical localism, a "smaller is better" ethic of microhistory that enables a nationalist failure of object permanence, macrohistories are easily dismissed by neoliberal subjects as failing to reflect their personal reality of political history.

This may appear to be a problem of two extremes, one which requires an intermediate solution, but that will neither dissolve the structures that constitute everyday life nor elevate the

quotidian or biopolitical to the regime of the geopolitical. The present, as a phenomenology, is the condition for the possibility of historicity. As William Haver writes in his classic study of the relationship between queer accounts of HIV/AIDS and what he cautiously terms "A-bomb literature,"

"If any theme could be said to pervade [it], it would be that of the radical contingency, invading and destroying the very possibility of temporality, of the pikadon, or 'flash/boom'—the fulguration of what can never again be a perspectival landscape in which the truth of ontology is revealed to be absolute, unbearable, unspeakable, unimaginable, unthinkable, unrepresentable horror." (1994: 3)

Haver's insistence on the contingency—the unknowability—of the future from within the fractured and fracturing moment of crisis is instructive. When Haver writes of "what can never again be a perspectival landscape," he emphasizes the impossibility of a second impression of the traumatic event. The "flash/boom" fills not just the literal horizon, but also its figuration. It destroys not just space, but possibility. It incapacitates not just bodies, but imagination.

Haver's response is not to mourn, and using Hiroko Takenishi and Ota Yoko's accounts of the bombings of Hiroshima alongside David Wojnarowicz's work documenting the early days of HIV/AIDS, to disrupt the psychological narrative of healing. According to Haver, "the failure to mourn in Ota, the impossibility of mourning in Takenishi, and the refusal of the work of mourning in Wojnarowicz implicitly expose a complete, accomplished—"successful"—historicization to be in fact a form of disavowal" (7, emphasis in original). Instead, Haver argues,

...it is the refusal of victimization that gives the lie to that logic of

integration which is the ideological ground of liberal humanism and, indeed, humanitarianism. For liberal humanism projects an Imaginary totality—the human community—within which the abject is reintegrated only on condition that that abjection is accepted or in fact affirmed. You are accepted into the community of the 'we' only insofar as you confirm your abject otherness, only insofar as you accept your essentially passive objectivity. Which is no integration at all, of course. (8, emphasis in original)

Therefore, refusing the telos of mourning, denying the efficacy of abjection, means delaying forever in the now of mourning, never casting the dead into their rightful abject historicity. It means surviving without ever having survived. It means making a life in the house of the dead. In other words, for the Other, the abject, the immiserated, the price of catharsis is too much to bear. Words will always fail us, or there will never be enough of them. And so the fact of mourning sits inside us like a stone.

Which is, of course, how we arrive back at the present, and find Virno waiting for us. There is a deep frustration, even an ugliness there now, as is fitting. When we apply the rubric of Liberal conceptions of progress, the present often appears to demur under the sign of stagnation. And yet, despite all our dallying, it is the only "there" to which we may return.

Virno's objection seems to be to the idea of a neoliberal/faux-democratic notion of the interpretability of history, with questions of demographic identity serving a secondary function to the primary site of inquiry, which is subjective identity. The difference between these two is a question of scale, of negotiating the distinction between the "me" and the "us," which is also the

distinction between experience and history. So, if we are to believe that we have arrived at the end of history, that the forbidden future has finally materialized, then the question is: to what end? And, regardless of the end in question, what has been lost along the way?

The relation between past and present being one of mourning lends a sentimental character to historiography, one that exposes the deep affective bonds between the timing of biopolitics and the biopolitics of time. Dana Luciano explores this question in *Arranging Grief: Sacred Time and the Body in Nineteenth-Century America* (2008), where she elaborates a theory of chronobiopolitics—or the integration of time and the body in producing our relationship to the past, asserting that the work of producing and reproducing the body takes place through the substance of time. Chronobiopolitics explores the temporal mechanisms that, along with the constraints of biopolitics, produce mourning as a practice of everyday life. Luciano's concept of chronobiopolitics is one example of the mournfulness of the present, in which the incompleteness and incoherency of the project of mourning produces its own kind of finitude.

This finitude does nothing to deplete the urgency of this project, though. As Ugo Perone writes in *The Possible Present*, "[t]he threshold ultimately is the present, which one can never possess but in which one always is as the condition in which the finitude of existence unfolds and plays itself out" (2011: xii). If the present is a continual process of crossing, a journey with an impossible destination, then the very finitude of the future itself becomes a substrate through which the present is perceived. As Perone goes on to say,

[L]ike the threshold, the present discriminates between past and future, and like the threshold, the present is a fleeting zone, difficult to be determined even if capable of determining. There

seems to be a perfect analogy with what has been said at the spatial level. Yet this is not so, and not only because, as one can see immediately, the opposition between past and future does not correspond perfectly to the one between inside and outside. (21)

By distinguishing between temporality and landscape, Perone makes it clear that he is not introducing some kind of facile physicalist explanation for the material phenomena that constitute experience. It's clear that there is something more complex than mere metonymy in the interrelation between the time of the present and the space of the threshold. However, Perone also speaks to the question of indeterminacy:

The threshold cannot be inhabited. In fact, it never belongs to anyone, nor is it anyone's; rather, it is only for someone. The threshold is the not-mine that nevertheless is for me. It is the place and time of the crossing; the path that is proposed to me, the memory of what has been crossed, the waiting for a pass. It is not, however, the place and time of dwelling. (17)

And here we arrive again at the deficit of words, at their failure. Language is one technology for keeping time, especially through the valence of narration, but incarnation is also a way to keep time. The zone of indeterminacy that we call the present isn't just a way to render the past as static and knowable while cordoning off the danger of the future. It is also one mechanism through which the body becomes a stable social object.

This is the present tense of identification, the positive "I am" through which meaning accrues to self-narrating flesh. But the present is not merely a zone of indeterminacy. It is also a

practice of making meaning. And, as such, it is, following Virno, a technology and, following Luciano, a biotechnology.

The subject of trauma, the speaker of Haver's implicit "I have no more words for this horror," is itself always mourning, always narrating grief, always keeping time with loss. And as such, the subject of trauma is idealized, fetishized, made complicit with the mechanisms that make that identification attractive to capital and empire.

This intersection of affect, protocol, and power is where the threshold becomes an interface. The production of a stable self, a user, who can access that which is hidden behind the console is one side-effect of the work of history. And, ultimately, the self is that which is produced in the margin of these works.

This process of marginal self-making is central to the processes that authenticate and evaluate the self, and it is this aspect of the performativity of surveillance—in which systems of surveillance seek not just to gather knowledge but to influence outcomes—that is of utmost importance to understanding how immigration policy during the Cold War era influenced and was influenced by sexual politics. I explore these mechanisms, as well as their relationship with the state, archival documentation, and memory, in my discussion of Clive Michael Boutilier.

Chapter Two: *Boutilier v. INS* and the Pleasures of Evidence

"There is the sound which annihilates and the sound which reconnoiters, probing here, eliciting there—if meaning has to do with desire, lusting after meaning until, by some miracle of apprehension at the limit of the world, it seems to drop like a plummet into the domain of sense. Between these extremities of the acoustical image—which is all we know of sound, including the one unheard in the forest—there is the sound which signifies nothing, and the sound which, out of nothingness, begins to look like a language as it limns the edge of meaning."

— Herbert Blau, "The Audition of Dream and Events."

"To get the sound take everything that is not the sound drop it
Down a well, listen.
Then drop the sound. Listen to the difference
Shatter."

— Anne Carson, "Epitaph: Evil."

In this chapter, I extend the methodological critique of chapter one to my first case study, which focuses on the 1967 Supreme Court case involving the deportation of Clive Michael Boutilier on the basis of his excludability as a homosexual. The dominant historical account of *Boutilier* is that an underestimation of the hostility of the political climate to queer people led to a major setback in the legal battle for queer recognition under the normative confines of liberal citizenship. Rather than seeing *Boutilier* as merely a "growing pain" in the fight for legal recognition of same-sex relationships and those who enter into them, it is critical to understand that this case dealt with the intertwining of subjectivation and citizenship as they relate to medicalized bodies moving through the private spaces of intimacy and the public spaces of citizenship. I argue instead that Boutilier indexes not just the politics of recognition before powerful institutions, but also of queer epistemology—which centrally details subjects' recognizability to themselves and their communities.

By focusing on the tension between public and private spaces of subjectivation, I

elaborate a running thread in the history of sexuality that relates to the distinction between sexual identity and sexual behavior. Working through this distinction, especially as the question of identity relates to a materialist intersectional history of sexuality, I interrogate the specific forms of knowledge and expertise that informed legal debates surrounding the criminalization and decriminalization of sodomy in the United States. Through this context it becomes apparent that there is a fundamental conflict between recognition and surveillance.

On the one hand, representation (both culturally and legally) has historically been crucial to the growth of minority politics and the emergence of specific publics that serve the needs of minoritized populations. On the other, appealing to institutions that are fundamentally invested in hierarchies that do not serve the needs of minoritized populations has a mixed track record. This track record is mixed both because that strategy is easily sabotaged by cultural conservatives working within those institutions, and because the strategy itself divides minoritized communities against each other. This division takes place largely because the appeal to institutional power is seen as an expression of expediency politics, where certain subsets of the population whose political needs are judged to have higher proximity to majority politics are prioritized over others. We can see this as the "wait your turn" of Liberalism, where trans rights and racial justice are put on the back burner in favor of an anti-intersectional and anti-materialist approach to political recognition. In many ways, this critique is of the most powerful members of LGBTQ communities climbing the ladder of recognizability in the eyes of state institutions, then pulling it up beneath them—a pattern that we see in many progress narratives. This is also one simple reason why the epistemic drift from recognition to surveillance is so often made permanent: when emergency measures benefit powerful people, they refuse to let go of them

once the crisis has passed.

The question of recognizability is even more troubling when viewed through the lens of surveillance. Critiques of the cisheteronormativity of surveillance have centered on the tension between invisibility and hypervisibility, where, for example, trans women's gender identities either go unacknowledged through a logic of passing, or become the sole focus of the institutional gaze. Using this framework, the recognition of trans identity is constrained by the institutional desire to subject trans people to either hypervisibility through criminalization or outright dismissal through enforced invisibility. We see a similar dynamic take place with homosexual identity, though involving different mechanisms of surveillance and different types of violence, such as those to which Clive Michael Boutilier was subjected.

Through this critique of the liberal epistemology of rights and recognition, as well as the material basis of the legal systems which themselves also function as ideological constructions, we can see that the question of proving the existence of pathologized sex acts is itself politically charged. The process of defining sexual phenomena is not an innocent act of legal investigation or classification, but the active maintenance of cultural anxiety. Thinking through sexual stigma as a component of legal infrastructure, especially as it relates to immigration policy and enforcement, we can see that the premise of legal privacy is a constitutive element of the juridicalization of intimacy.

Introduction: The Impossibility and Hyperpossibility of Data

Using any image editing software's zoom feature on a raster image file, we can see the discontinuity of data. What was formerly a cohesive tableau—one where each pixel is sublated into a whole—dissolves into an array of colored blocks, like a taboo image being censored on television. The same is true of digital *and analog* film, except that, with film, it is the rapid delivery of many frames per second that gives the illusion of fluid movement across time (as opposed to space, as in the raster image file). However, as becomes obvious when these forms are queered⁵ through technology (e.g., zooming in on a raster image or slowing down a video), it is not only the representational technology that falls apart, but also the representational *regime*. That is to say, a particular instance of a certain representational logic (i.e., a digital-representational logic) becomes not only invalid, but also proof of the impossibility of that mode of representation itself.

We can see all data as sharing that fundamental discontinuity. It simulates, hints at, gestures toward its object, but fails as a representational regime due to the fundamental inability of a limited system (i.e., one in which all elements must be quantified) to fully explicate the unlimited world in which we live.⁶ It would require an unlimited amount of data to fully gather the known universe, due to the relationship between virtual data and actual reality.

⁵ I use the verb "to queer" in the sense of exposing social structurality through intentional transgression of mechanisms of social control. To put it more plainly, it refers in this text to the idea of breaking rules in the service of revealing them.

⁶ Here it is useful to refer to DeLanda's observation that "machine perception is now possible only when the class of objects a machine must identify is artificially reduced to form a simple universe" (1991: 202). For more on this impossibility, see DeLanda 2002, where the author explicates the virtuality of science as a methodology and data as a product.

This is particularly true of biodata, with its ties to biology⁷ and the attendant regimes of data collection that I have previously discussed. If we are to take seriously McLuhan's (1964) contention that "the medium is the message," then the human body's social and political impact must be considered in terms of its context, in addition to (and, simultaneously, as opposed to) its content. With that said, we must also pay attention to the ways in which structural conceptions of the human body implicate it with a certain imaginary "content." This bodily imaginary inculcates the human body in the larger discourse of an information economy (or, put more radically, an information society), directing the eye of public discourse toward the contested domain of somatic interiority and externality.

In *The Global Genome: Biotechnology, Politics, and Culture*, Eugene Thacker argument that "genetic reductionism [functions 'as a critique' by] suggest[ing] that genetics relies on and is dependent on the metaphors that historically have been appropriated from a technical field" and that, "[i]n its worst-case scenarios, this view of genetics comes with the consequences of eliding the differences between information (as disembodied, as quantitative) and the organism (as embodied, as qualitative)" (2006: 99). This distinction foregrounds this question of interiority and externality, which critically concerns the non-performative dimensions of the distinction

⁷ At this point, it is important to remember Agamben's observation that "[t]he Greeks had no single term to express what we mean by the term 'life,' " instead using *zoē* to denote the "simple fact of living common to all living beings" and *bios* to "indicate[] the form or way of living proper to an individual or group" (1998: 1). It is therefore ironic that "biology," a field once defined mostly by taxonomy but which now encompasses a much more process-oriented modality of scientific investigation (i.e., into the ways in which life is possible, as opposed to the morphological distinctions between different organisms), should carry the air of politically unproblematic empirical authority.

between sexual identity and sexual behavior⁸. This is crucial to understanding the relationship between genetic determinism and the criminalization of homosexuality.

When Thacker goes on to write that "it becomes especially problematic when ways of understanding biological life as informatic are naturalized and their conditions of emergence effaced" (99), he is emphasizing the contextual (i.e., external-while-being-historical) conditions under which the human body is endowed with particular inscriptions (be they the scientific-reductive belief that the body *is* data, or sociopolitical inscriptions as to the meanings of particular bodies). This process relates to the specific conditions under which the state surveils bodies with the goal of mechanizing key functions of recognition and citizenship, but it's also about the critical question of ascribing value to bodies.

Certain bodies gain different valences through the politicization of characteristics which are seen as exceptional, suspect, or deviant—though there is usually some degree of traffic between different interpretations of these characteristics. When this particularization occurs with respect to an individual, this is referred to most often as interpellation, minoritization, or othering. When it occurs with respect to a group of individuals, it gains a host of new complexities, and is referred to as populationalization.

Populationalization is complex not just because of the historical possibility of resistance

⁸ When I say that there are non-performative dimensions of this distinction, I mean that performativity falls flat as an explanatory device when people engage in sexual activity that doesn't comport with their stated sexual identity. An example of this is when the surveillant properties of "coming out" fail to materialize and people have homosexual sex while identifying as heterosexual, disrupting both coercive coming-out and compulsory heterosexuality.

from the subjects who are interpellated⁹ under such a stringent discursive framework, but also because of the inherent incompatibility of human complexity and reductive limitation. Just as the universe in which we live cannot fit into the limiting confines of quantification, the enormity of the project of collecting all possible data on humans (particularly our self-aware ability to psychologically process our experiences) precludes the possibility of a complete quantification of "the human"—however that's defined.

It is precisely the act of defining the boundaries around particular populations that comes to bear most often in the interaction between medicoscientific accounts of the human body and the (chrono)biopolitical¹⁰ configurations that are partially based on those accounts. But a subtler impact of medicalization is that it generates not just boundaries but images—flattened representations of people and populations that necessarily reduce the multidimensionality of human experience to questions of quantity. And, increasingly, that which is being quantified is threat.

Genomic sciences, and the human sciences more broadly, function as a broad epistemological schema in which the procedural aspects of the question come to influence social interpretations of the means of investigation. In other words, the fact that genomic investigations into human questions becomes more important than the actual answers obtained as a result of those investigations. The processual nature of this epistemological change matters because it

⁹ Interpellation is the response of a properly socialized subject to the call which identifies it as such within the context of an ideology which seeks to control the subject in question. For a more thorough introduction to the concept of interpellation, see Althusser 2001[1971].

¹⁰ Chronobiopolitics, as defined by Luciano (2007), is "a Foucauldian analysis animated by a nuanced understanding of the temporalities of the body" (273n39).

serves as a discursive straw man, in which the question of the validity or falseness of the answers obtained via genomic investigation overtakes the importance of the social impact of the possibility of the questions raised.

This is the schema of all positivist science, particularly that guided by the hands of capital or the state: at the same time that the document produced within the context of these schemata must capitulate to the epistemological underpinnings of the methodologies, it must also serve the interests of the structures which support it financially while simultaneously propping it up epistemologically. That is to say, science is not its own master. Researchers face the direct agendas of their funding bodies, but more important is the fact that scientific research cannot be insulated from the broader cultural context, which carries with it assumptions about human bodies that are difficult to acknowledge, let alone shed.

What often goes unremarked-upon is the tendency of scientific mediations of the body to temporalize the bodies that they seek to represent. That is to say, these representations, misrepresentations, or quasi-representations situate the body not only in relation to the generic and universal "human" body, but situates that relationality within a temporality which marks the body as an instrument of timekeeping. Technoscience's impulse to rationalize that which is natural—through patenting (and therefore commercializing) natural phenomena, or merely explicating it—deputizes each site of analysis into the project of modernity through the methodological reinstatement of positivism within each inquiry. Through this process, data becomes not only possible, or even inevitable or preferable, as a product of human effort, but

hyperpossible.¹¹

Ungrasping the Informatic Body: Possibility, Desire, and the Contested Materiality of the Medicalized Body

Science and technology studies must consider first and foremost the affective attachments that subjects form to technoscientifically mediated assemblages¹². For example, before we can consider the political or economic challenges of technological change, we must first approach its implementation vis-à-vis the quotidian routines of the individuals who utilize these technologies. To use an admittedly pedantic example, eyeglasses would serve as a more practical site of sociological inquiry than the Hubble space telescope because, despite there being less of a popular willingness to identify the former as "technology," its impact on and integration into the lives of many human subjects is undeniable.

This bottom-up approach to the study of technology is complicated by the role of technomedical discourses on subjects' understandings of their own bodies. The shifts in

¹¹ Simplistically speaking, by "hyperpossibility," I refer here to the impossibility of impossibility. That is to say, within contemporary technoscience, the gathering of data is *always already possible*.

¹² I use the concept of the assemblage to refer to the interactions between multiple social actors that are constituted and shaped by their functions. As one example, rather than seeing institutional functionaries as containing a prior rationality that they bring to the work of maintaining institutional power, thinking of them as participants in an assemblage allows us to recognize their rationality without treating it like a prior fact that doesn't need to be situated in the positions they occupy. For more on assemblage theory, see De Landa 2006.

perception that occur in response to technoscientific discourses and understandings constitute a major force in shaping social interactions, and the shift toward the geneticization of the human body is one such shift.

While the discipline of genetics and its attendant technologies is based on research by Leewuenhoek (1632-1723), Mendel (1822-1884), and other early microbiologists, its recent technologization is based on advancements that have largely taken place during the second half of the twentieth century, through advancements by James Watson, Francis Crick (with unattributed work by Rosalind Franklin) in 1953 (the discovery of the double helix structure of DNA); Stanley Cohen, Annie Chang, Herbert Boyer, and Robert Helling in 1973 (the first experiments in genetic engineering); Frederick Sanger and Alan Coulson in 1975; and Allan Maxam and Walter Gilbert in 1976 (major breakthroughs in genetic sequencing). Through the traces left by these researchers, we see the opportunity to shape a narrative of advancement, as well as one of intensification. The speed of data-processing in the genomic context means that the desire for data grows ever hungrier. And it is through this advancement and intensification that the science becomes possible, but this doesn't mean that the scientific imperative is the only implication of these new technologies.

We can understand geneticization both as a scientific and historical process, as a set of both epistemological circumstances (i.e., in which geneticization is possible) and ideological assemblages (i.e., in which geneticization is preferable). The question that arises is what historical contingency would not only get out of the way of an epistemological program that includes the formation of geneticized knowledges, but would actively promote such a program's

legitimacy (even above and beyond the legitimacy of existing technomedical ways of knowing)? How does a genetic way of knowing become the central way to understand the internality of the body, just as psychiatry became the central way of understanding behavior in the twentieth century? It seems clear to me that two distinct processes are functioning within the context of geneticization: one, technological advancement created a new realm of possibilities surrounding the study of the human body; and two, existing epistemological schematics were recentralized (particularly that of the body as a legible text) in the production of this new technomedical assemblage.

Technology creates human possibility through the harnessing of "natural" phenomena into usable processes and discourses. The distinction between material and discursive production is, in this case, primarily a means of demonstrating that technoscientific possibility is created at the expense of other possibilities (and other means of making possibility). This is a zero-sum equation that only exists in that form due to exigencies of capitalism such as competition and efficiency. The capitalist need to turn the applied sciences into marketable products means shifting from research to production as soon as a workable solution to a given question is found, abandoning ongoing attempts at understanding in favor of a logic of extraction.

This is a material-discursive cycle of knowing and doing, and technoscientific possibility is at its core also a cyclical process in which possibility is formed out of the juridicalization of a regime of public ritual involving the desiring and granting of permission. Therefore, our understanding of technology must imbricate the co-constitution of the desiring and the granting of permission as central to the program of technoscience itself. In embracing the ambiguities of

this cyclical knowing-and-doing, the hegemonic ideal of technology-as-productive is complicated within the context of technology's (queer?) desire for social authorization (a process which can be roughly summed up within the framework of Foucault's theory of maximization, which comes as a corollary to his theories surrounding biopower [2009]). In short, the same economic exigencies that shape our understanding of the natural world under capitalism—the need to understand, extract, and exploit—also applies to human beings. Maximization is a logic of rendering the human as a resource to be exploited.

The body has long been viewed as a mysterious and unknown entity that must be processed in some way (as if being run through a file conversion program on a computer) into a legible sociopolitical object. While it is made ideologically possible through the neoliberal logic of Foucaultian maximization, this shift from ethereality/mysteriousness to materiality/knowability is usually practically made possible by a combination of medicoscientific logic and technomedicine itself. As Cohen (2009) writes, "[b]y defining the world's structure through a principle of order and judgment that both derives from and gives shape to human social relations, modern science upholds the world as knowable in human terms..." (53), and he goes on to note Derrida's (1992) argument that "for the rule of law to contain (rein in) violence and thereby pacify social relations, it must also contain (hold) a violence that enables it to reign" (Cohen 2010: 53). Applying Derrida's view of force reflexively to medicoscientific discourse itself, it becomes clear that Shiva's (1988) argument about the reductionism of scientific thought serving as both means for and rationalization of forceful exclusion is rooted in a realm of political and historical possibility that does not begin and end with technoscientific discourse itself, but with the broader context into which this discourse must gain legitimacy. It is the capitalist state and its

institutions that entice the work of technoscience into the realm of governance, following Shiva, so the body must then become the molecular unit of state power. By extension, since computational technology is deeply indebted to the state structures of capitalism, the databases that supplant state archives in the name of efficiency serve as simulations of those archives (just as documentation serves as a simulation of oral communication).

Seeing the contemporary endpoint of technology's role in constructing the human body as an epistemological (and therefore political) project, rather than as universal (and thereby apolitical, as a contextless universality evacuates the need for politics) allows us to seek out and demonstrate the erasures present in the unitary technologized subject. "The" human body can be no better represented by any singular ideal than "a" human body can. The logical question that arises from this problem, then, is why this unitary subject has been able to occupy a privileged position as central to major medicoscientific imaginaries. Just as power plays a significant role in determining the contours of material possibility, it is also laid bare in the workings of ideological and epistemological possibility.

For example, the idea of what is now known as "biomedia" (which Thacker [2006] defines as the "mobility [of DNA] across the in vivo ['in a living organism'], in vitro ['in a controlled environment'], and in silico ['in a computerized simulation'] contexts enabl[ing] exchanges across media" [10]) involves not only the creation of possibility for certain reworkings of the human body, but also necessarily calls the very materiality of the human body into question. If the body is a media object to be transmitted across interfaces—if it is an image to be stored in a database, in other words—then is it still a body? Or has it been transformed in

some way through the transmission itself, or through the ideological work that was necessary for this technology of transmission to become possible, legible, and preferable?

This contestation of the materiality of human bodies occurs not only in the context of the possibility of the transmission of biodata across nonlinear or even aspatial boundaries (i.e., Internet databases), but also through our increasing reliance on social and communication platforms that engage an alienated version of human personalities while viewing the bodies that are involved as supplemental or inessential. Through these dual deployments of informatic capacity, it is clear that human bodies exist on an unstable continuum between that which is unproblematically material and that which is entirely informatic. Like most continua, there seems to be a degree of liminality in this construction, as the two endpoints appear as spectral and impossible from any vantage point along the continuum.

Two major rhetorical movements constitute the role of automation in the turn toward biomedica: first is the formal role of automation in the technologies of genetic imaging and engineering, and second is the fact that molecularization is itself an implicit regrounding of biology in what De Landa has called the "organismic metaphor" (2006: 8), in which a mechanized and operationalized "body" (human or societal) that is constructed as composed of discrete units that each give the complete assemblage their individual traits.

The second case, in which the units constitute the assemblage totally, is of great concern with respect to genetics and genomics. Consider the implications of studies of gene functions (e.g., studies to pinpoint the genes that code for particular, usually pathologized, traits, such as alcoholism): under the rubric of the organismic metaphor, in order for the human body to have

particular traits, these traits must be accounted for in the body's genetic material, which is constructed as being both descriptive and prescriptive (cyclically, due to the constant "writing" and "reading," respectively, of genetic replication and expression). Thus, in the context of a geneticized sociality, the human body's identifications and behaviors can be roughly summarized through a representation of the aforementioned genetic material. This is the process through which the genetic material that purports to describe human bodies (and actively inscribes them with other meanings) is held up as synecdochal with the bodies themselves. Through this rhetorical movement, human bodies "dissolve" into biodata, as digitized versions of their genetic data are conflated with these bodies themselves (and the political subjects that inhabit them). The process of turning bodies into biodata is itself the crux of the argument that automated geneticization is a participant in the dematerialization of human bodies, and the subsequent turn toward a political subject unencumbered by embodiment itself.

The dematerialization of human bodies (their dissolution into mere biodata, or the seamless dissolving-into of bodies as members of populations) is dependent in many ways on the simple truism that technoscience is interested most in that which it desires: data. The logic follows that technoscience must process material objects of inquiry (i.e., human bodies) into legible data in order to formulate workable theories surrounding their functions. What is most striking about the history of genetics technologies is the coconstitution of genetic engineering and DNA sequencing. According to Thacker's (2006) timeline, the first experiments in genetic engineering were completed in 1973, while the Sanger method for DNA sequencing (which utilizes restriction enzymes and electrophoresis) wasn't developed until 1977 (335). However, the more important point is the fact that DNA sequencing (seen as an objective and

nondestructive mode of inquiry) is itself a form of genetic engineering. That is to say, the process of making a human body legible to technoscience is itself a productive exercise of discursive power. Without the frames which in part determine human/technological interaction, this power is evacuated and, in the process of this power no-longer-becoming (as power is always a temporalized process—either sequential, such as in progressive political imagery; or cyclical), the bodies of human subjects retain social meanings only so long as these discourses are maintained.

It is this precise continuity that impels the discussion of temporality within the context of science and technology studies. Take, for example, the subfield of biology known as biomechanics. In biomechanical discourse, the body is seen as a quasi-industrial assemblage, fully represented by (and therefore reducible to) its parts, just as a machine can be broken down and analyzed based on the physical workings of its contingent mechanics. According to Manuel De Landa (2006), assemblages are formed out of "heterogeneous entities," the heterogeneity of which forms the basis for the claim to historical contingency implicit within assemblage theory proper (3). With that in mind, it's important to always remember that assemblage theory is both a theory of network structure (an external view of institutional compulsion) and a theory of affect (an internal view of institutional compulsion), and that the two strains of thought within the theory are indissoluble. That is to say, a corollary to the claims to the interrelatedness of the aforementioned "heterogeneous entities" and to the historical contingency of all assemblages is that any assemblage that contains a sentient being is complicated by the intangible (or, to borrow a newly-reenergized concept from Salamon [2010] and Thacker [2006], dematerialized) affective work that takes place within the (socially constructed or material) boundaries of the subject

itself. It's ironic that it is only through this dematerialization of the body that the temporalization of the bodies of humans becomes apparent.

Take, for example, the instantaneity of the process of DNA sampling. It only takes a moment to extract enough bodily tissue from which to construct a representation that is usually taken in synecdoche with the human body itself. We can ask what understandings of the human body legitimize the idea that a particular representation of biodata (a "genome map"¹³) is itself a material or even causal representation of the individual from whom the sample is taken. Understanding biodata as material is possible insofar as the human body is said to be reproducible through cloning technologies, so long as there exists a viable DNA sample or an archival trace of the biodata that is extracted from that sample. But biodata can also serve a causal purpose insofar as the genetic markers that have been identified in connection to particular diseases are constructed as predictive of the subject's future lifecourse—such as in the case of gender performativity. The tension between these two modes is central to the role of biodata in the material-discursive interface.

The major assumption that underlies the practices of DNA sampling is that of the continuity of biodata (that is, a certain type of faith in the citationality of the biomechanics of genetics), which is itself related to broader assumptions about the stability of the bodies of human subjects. In the case of transgender identity, Salamon (2010) writes that "[l]anguage is figured as that which is able to deliver a stable and coherent identity to transpeople, but also that which obscures it" (82). By connecting the stability of an identificatory understanding of a

¹³ For an analysis of the metaphor of the genome map, see Zwart 2009.

human body to the language used in connection with the person who is said to be represented by that body, Salamon is calling upon not only the signifiatory fervor of biomedicine (which always seeks to connect the body to behavior and self-understanding), but also the discourses used by social scientists and activists in attempting to construct a transgender subject who is capable of maintaining stability both in their body and in their identity, a prerequisite for both the sustained analysis of the social sciences and the popular understandings that foregrounds most activist and advocacy work on trans issues. What this means for queerness (and its intersections with transgender) is that the instantaneity of DNA sampling presupposing sustained bodily integrity is itself a site of biological essentialism, one of the founding opponents of what is now known as queer theory. This is not to say that queer activists should disavow geneticized analyses, simply that an old problematic is reappearing in a new form. However, since geneticization and other forms of medicalized representation of the body are still such powerful discursive forces, the social changes that are offered from a critical analysis of the relationship between the clinical gaze and humans' understandings of their bodies remain to be seen.

The Performativity of Surveillance and Citizenship

As I have argued, geneticized interpretations of bodily phenomena have a great deal of sway in determining the relationship between representations of the body's external and internal workings. Consider, for example the oft-mobilized dichotomy of the genotype and the phenotype. In the context of genetic rationality, the genotype gives an account of the internal

workings of the body, while the phenotype, like typical methods of somatic surveillance, is capable only of indexing the body's surface.

Where phenotypic and psychiatric forms of rationality converge is in the question of behavior. As Blanch Freedman argued before the U.S. Supreme Court during oral arguments for *Boutilier v. INS*,

The major problem that underlies the respondent's construction of the statute is that the actual language of Section 212(a)(4) [of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952] is medical terminology and in design and purpose relates to the exclusions of aliens afflicted with a condition that medically can be diagnosed a psychopathic personality whereas homosexuality [...] relates to conduct, to behavior.

There is no homosexual condition per se, thereof homosexual acts.

Of course, a person who engages in homosexual practices may be a psychopathic personality but psychopathology cannot be inferred automatically from homosexual practices.

Freedman's assertion here is that the INS, when deciding that Clive Michael Boutilier's admissions to sex with men made him excludable under the psychopathic personality clause in Section 212(a)(4) of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, conflated the kinds of medical diagnoses that constitute "psychopathic personality" with sexual acts that are related to, but not coterminous with, that designation. Barring a formal diagnosis or criminal conviction (neither of

which were present in Boutilier's case), Freedman argued that the law's standard was so vague that it would be impossible to enforce consistently, making it a violation of Boutilier's constitutional right to due process.

Freedman's argument here gets at one of the fundamental problems with the criminalization of homosexuality in the twentieth century: namely, that homosexuality existed simultaneously in criminal, medical, and intimate realms. While these spheres of social life always overlap with one another, the use of the criminal status of homosexuality as a proxy for homosexual's medical status (which is what is happening when an admission of a homosexual act is used as proof of excludable "psychopathic personality"), the cross-pollination of institutional aims creates gaps in what is known and what can be knowable about a subject. This dynamic is particularly difficult to navigate when the knowledge gained about an individual has to be made legally or medically actionable (when it can be punished or treated), simply because the stakes of the classification of bodies is higher in that context.

What I suggest is that the demands made by INS agents for information about the content of Boutilier's sexual history didn't just set out to determine whether he was or was not a homosexual. It is unknowable (due to obvious legal exigencies) whether he identified as such, and can't be part of the archival history surrounding his deportation. Instead, the question of his homosexuality or not was *created* by the questioning, and thereby entered into his informatic afterlife, due to his presence in queer legal history. When the INS agents asked him if he had been sexually active with men before or after his entry, they were not merely asking whether he intended to commit crimes within the geographical confines of the United States; instead, they

were juridicalizing behavior that was, prior to him crossing the border and becoming an immigrant, nonessential to his national identity and therefore irrelevant to the classification systems of U.S. Immigration policy. The performative moment, for Boutilier, was that it was this questioning that made him a homosexual, and it was the homosexuality bestowed upon him by that questioning that made him ineligible for citizenship.

The question of sociological markedness—in which bodies and behaviors are treated as either "politically salient" or "taken-for-granted" (Brekhus 1998: 34)—is both a question of the specific mechanisms of discrimination, as well as being one of the facticity of claims to identity. Just as "correct" socialization leads most members of majority to groups to see that majority membership as innate and natural, it also permits them to not see that membership at all. For example, many white people see themselves as lacking a racial identity at all, rather than claiming their whiteness as a constitutive precondition of their social belonging. As Scott writes in her work on nothingness, "[p]aradoxically, nothing is always productive of something: other symbolic objects come into being through the apprehension of phantoms, imaginaries, replacements and alternatives" (2018: 3).

As an extension of the sociology of everyday life¹⁴, which concerns the myriad ways that ordinary social conditions can provide answers to extraordinary social events, the study of sociological unmarkedness makes it clear that one of the most powerful tools for maintaining hierarchy is refusing to name it. The focus on unmarkedness in contemporary iterations of the sociology of everyday life is an inverted form of performativity, suggesting that the maintenance

¹⁴ For both a historical starting point and a highly-prescient critique of the sociology of everyday life, see Lefebvre 2014.

of social and legal hierarchy takes place not just through utterance but silence. The power of language to constrain and deliver institutional results operates through regimes of what answers cannot be provided and what questions cannot be asked, as well as what positive identity claims are necessary under differing historical and institutional conditions. Crucially, the performative power of state institutions is also enacted through the questions that are asked when determining eligibility for protections afforded by (as well as protections from the violence of) state institutions.

So, when Boutilier was asked if he had ever had sex with men prior to his entry into the United States, as well as whether he continued to have sex with men after his entry, it was not just a timeline of criminal deviance being established. It was also a fundamental form of state power demanding that he claim an identity category that could only serve as a cudgel in the hands of the state. His identity was not being validated by the state in the ways that contemporary politics of representation and recognition would assert. Instead, his privacy was being violated by a legal institution that made its business the determination of Boutilier's compliance with external criteria of identity, thereby reducing questions of identity and behavior to the summation of data. And it is through this summation of data that the medicalization and geneticization of homosexuality converge in the mid-twentieth-century regime of mass surveillance.

Psychiatry and criminalization served as pivotal points of contention in the twentieth-century politics of homosexuality, particularly as they related to the question of the origin of sexual deviance. The geneticization of homosexuality isn't simply a matter of desiring and

collating data surrounding intimate acts for the purposes of determining a biological origin for sexual deviance. It is also, fundamentally, an extension of the groundwork of medicalization laid by the entry of homosexuality into the domain of the psychiatric (as well as the surveillance of sexual deviance through criminalization). It should come as no surprise, then, that genetic explanations for homosexuality begin to gain prominence during the decline of a psychiatric explanatory framework for the structure of sexual desire and difference. The revision of homosexuality as "sexual orientation disturbance" in the Third Edition of the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III) in 1973—a compromise toward its eventual removal from the DSM-III-R in 1987—was a reflection of a "crisis of legitimacy" brought about by the changing terrain of medicalization (Mayes and Horowitz 2005).

As psychiatry was implicated more and more in internal medicine—because, after all, what is more internal than psychiatry?—the standards for explanation changed how medical questions surrounding the origin and expression of homosexuality were asked, as well as how they related to juridical questions relating to sexual deviance. In many ways, this manifested as an increased need for explanatory frameworks for homosexuality to root their explanations not just in the Freudian question of *why* people are homosexuals (which offers an agential fulcrum of internal origination while naturalizing its mechanism of external exhibition), but also in the genetic question of *how* they come to have homosexual desire (which naturalizes its point of internal origination while offering an agential fulcrum before its external exhibition). The typical Freudian explanation claims that disruptions in the sexual development of children, usually caused by inappropriate maternal attachment, produce homosexual adults, while the genetic

explanation suggests that homosexual desire is congenital and therefore the point of agential intervention to prevent the production of homosexual adults takes place not at the point of parental attachment but of behavioral prohibition. In other words, both Freudian and genetic explanations for homosexuality contain a logic of surveillance—of parents, in the Freudian case, or of children, in the genetic case—due to their fundamental inheritance of the idea of homosexuality as a social and legal problem to be solved.

By the end of the Cold War, the Freudian stranglehold on explanations of sexual phenomena had been broken by a combination of the medicalization of psychiatry and the express politicization¹⁵ of sexuality through feminist and early lesbian and gay movements in the 1960s and 70s. It was out of that moment—as well as the moment of mass surveillance in which Boutilier was investigated—that gay gene discourses emerged. And while gay gene discourses are not the explicit topic of discussion here, it seems only appropriate to offer an explanatory account of their origins.

The circumstances surrounding Boutilier's investigation, questioning, and eventual removal from the United States reflect the fundamental epistemic bind of representation within exclusionary institutions, as well as the trap of surveillance itself. A politics that prioritizes the assertion of the legibility of queer identities to institutional gazes would fall directly into the trap laid by the surveillance state, since most of what is required of individuals living under those conditions is to acquiesce to the state's demands for information (intimate or otherwise) that can

¹⁵ I say "express politicization" here to clarify that sexuality was always political. The rise of both the feminist movement and the gay and lesbian movement served not to make sexuality political for the first time, but to disrupt the regime of silence that served as one of the chief forces for the maintenance of the prior politicization of sexuality.

be used to classify, to discriminate, and to facilitate state violence. The non-neutrality of the gaze of the state—as well as the non-neutrality of all other state discourses—results in material harm to those who are deemed unworthy or undesirable.

"... an alien who at the time of his entry into the United States was a homosexual...":

Sexual Marginalia and the Forces of Science and Law in *Boutilier v. INS* (1967)

To "zoom out" from the individual classification of queer bodies for a moment, the role of technoscientific juridicalization in populationalization¹⁶ must not be considered solely as an inscriptive process. It must also be investigated as an outgrowth of a cultural desire for an explanatory framework in which to place supposedly marginal or ambiguous human bodies. In other words, there is no "why?" for normativity the way there is for queerness, and the fact that aberrant sexuality is treated as a social problem begins with the way that normativity fails to rise to the level of a social fact. Social theories of markedness explore the ways that queerness gains facticity while cisgender and heterosexual identities are treated instead as asserting nothing, and therefore medical and legal questions raised around queerness are always asked in the context of stigmatization or exceptionality.

¹⁶ I define populationalization as the politicized process of turning from individual experiences toward a unified and comprehensive whole. It is similar to Hegel's *aufheben* (or sublation), which describes the process of a bounded entity being simultaneously preserved and destroyed through its integration into an array, as it even then transcends the array into which it disappears-without-disappearing. Populationalization applies *aufheben* to the human body, acknowledging the contradictory impulses to exist within and without the sameness of this descriptive array.

With that said, the stake of queerness in representational politics must be clarified. If the "coming out" telos' role in creating queer politics is that it reinstantiates (and therefore reinscribes the possibility of) queer existence, then its existence on a mass scale (through the interpellative "come out, come out, wherever you are" of the 1970s) constitutes not only a shift in interpersonal dynamics, but a shift in the very makeup of a nationalized population. This populationalization has shifted queer politics as queer constituencies first became a medicolegal object (through the medicalization and criminalization of queer desires and presentations), then a radical subset of the American New Left (through interactions with feminist and civil rights activism), before finally taking a seat in the post-radical social order as an economic and lobbying arm of a largely normative policy machine which seeks out integrative solutions to problems that face queer people.¹⁷

However, for most of the twentieth century, queerness was the object of a social regime of performative silence that enacted the marginalization of queer people through the withholding of mass acknowledgment. The "coming out" teleologies of the midcentury, then, depended not only on the existence of other queer people—the citationality of populationalization¹⁸—but the existence of something outside the individualized temporalities of attribution and iteration that

¹⁷ For more on the deradicalization of queer politics, which I define as the shift from "queer politics" to "lesbian and gay rights" (the erasure of bisexual, trans*, and other queer individuals from the latter of which is descriptive, not unintentional), see Duggan 2003, where the author describes the contours of a lesbian and gay movement that seeks out political viability above all other goals; and Chasin 2000, which is a more explicitly economic approach to the role that marketing has played in the turn from identity politics toward integration and normativity.

¹⁸ Judith Butler has written at length on the role of external inscription and validation on individual and group identity.

impel much of Butler's notion of performativity.¹⁹ This is not to say that there exists a subject "gender" or "sexuality" that itself can be considered agential or even material, but there certainly exists an imaginary surrounding this concept, and which influences human behavior nonetheless.

Despite the ongoing debates over the materiality of these concepts, it's clear that identitarian categories rely on the citational aspect of either the process of imitating or the moment of recognizing oneself as part of a group, depending on whether the account is Butlerian or symbolic interactionist. The Butlerian account, in which identity is performed and acknowledged dialectically, clearly complicates social-historicist conceptions of categories as being temporally and geographically bound (i.e., historically or contextually contingent), as does the symbolic interactionist approach. The question that arises is one of the lingering issues in social theory, the question of the body as a text.

The body's materiality is usually held as oppositional to the idea of a textual or informatic²⁰ body but, as Thacker (2006) points out through his analysis of the concept of biomedica, this distinction falls apart as geneticization queers the material/textual dichotomy. That is to say, DNA exists both as an informatic schema (the linguistically-mediated "code" which is said to be represented by the biochemistry at play) and a value-neutral biochemical component of

¹⁹ See West and Zimmerman 1987, where gender is described not as a moment of recognition, but as a constant and cyclical process of maintenance.

²⁰ In this case, an "informatic body" is any body which can be construed as an information-bearing vessel.

the human body. The impact of the genetic imaginary²¹ (or, as may be more accurate, the plural genetic imaginaries) can be seen throughout science, culture, and politics, as it initiates particular processes of imagining the human body while simultaneously closing others off. That is to say, since these imaginaries necessarily function as a means of controlling the terms of debate vis-à-vis human populationalization, we can inquire as to the epistemological *and spatialized* effects (and affects)²² of the thing to which we refer when we discuss "genetic imaginaries" or "geneticization." An important component of the spatialized human body is the question of the surveillance, management, and control of the bodies of immigrants between nations.

Conclusion: Informatic Afterlives and Database Erotics

Immigration policy in the United States has always functioned as a means of surveilling the population defined by U.S. citizenship, both within and without. Immigration policy doesn't just set the parameters of who is a potential U.S. citizen, it also serves as a means of control for those who are already inculcated in that construction (through birth or naturalization), through the public pageantry of juridical processes.²³ In the predominant optics of immigration policy, the nation produces "proper" subjects of juridical approval, which are allowed to become part of

²¹ I use this phrase in the sense in which Stacey (2010) employs the term, referring to the ways in which popular notions of the human body are operationalized through a form of genetic determinism which locates all possible bodily meaning in genetic information. For more on the way that culture "processes" the genome, see Stegmann 2009.

²² Due to various constraints on the present research, the role of affect on the acceptance or rejection of positivist scientific schemata will not be a central concern. However, this is certainly an area ripe with possibility for future study.

²³ For a more in-depth view on the ritual elements of legal processes, see Bennett 2008.

the population in question. As Somerville (2005a, 2005b) notes, sexuality has always been a major component of the process of politicizing citizenship, from early laws which were intended to disqualify populations which were defined as predisposed to prostitution or polygamy (which was always a racialized and gendered judgment) to contemporary restrictions on migration with respect to filiality (e.g., family sponsorship laws) and HIV status.²⁴ The irony of the most overt display of sexual regulation at U.S. borders during the twentieth century is the fact that it was carried out through a medicolegal euphemism. The "psychopathic personality" disqualification for naturalization, as written into the 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act (also known as the McCarran-Walter Act, but referred to here as the INA), was used as judicial rationale for denying Boutilier's petition on the basis of the "legislative history" of the INA. This legislative history included an explicit exclusion of homosexuals until it was removed due to a legislative preference for a broader exclusion which encompassed all mental illness.

The fact that the parameters for exclusion of homosexuals should occur within such an explicitly medicalized context should come as no surprise to those familiar with the history of medicolegal juridicalization of sexuality in the United States during the twentieth century. Debates over the inclusion of homosexuality in the DSM, the criminalization of sodomy, and the treatment of HIV-positive individuals were all animated by a common ambivalence on the part of U.S. culture toward homosexuals and homosexuality. The constant shifts between medicalization and criminalization (as well as the grey area between the two liminal poles) illustrated that (homo)sexuality was a "problem" to be "managed." In addition, the constant orientation toward

²⁴ Restrictions on migration with respect to HIV status ended in the United States in January of 2010, but the long-term fate of the "HIV travel ban" is uncertain.

death²⁵ within medical and legal contexts (via sickness and the treatment of homosexuality as a problem to be solved through violent means) allows for a process of queer methodological retrieval²⁶ of data. These data are undeniably bounded by and inferred through the body, but which has historically been called forth only through the ritual of medicoscientific methodology and/or legal inquiry. This retrieval—be it historiographical, affective, or both—fundamentally concerns the informatic afterlife, wherein the documentary aims of the surveillance state inadvertently produce the conditions under which discursive survival occurs alongside material violence. In the case of the informatic afterlife, the body is reduced (violently) to data, which then survives the body itself. In this way, the use of mass surveillance toward the aims of eliminationist violence is a state-sponsored process that, paradoxically, contains the seed of its own failure.

I distinguish here between eliminationism and genocide. While genocide is a form of eliminationism, the eliminationist sees minoritized bodies as the social problem to be solved, whereas the genocidaire locates the problem at the level of minority populations. We can see eliminationism as material violence, and genocide as a more total violence that implicates both the destruction of bodies and the destruction of discourses.

To that end, genocide serves as an inversion of populationalization, destroying the conditions of possibility for minority participation in the polis, whereas the eliminationist seeks a

²⁵ For more on the orientation of sexuality toward death, see Puar 2007. For more on necropolitics more broadly, see Mbembe 2003.

²⁶ I use the terminology of "retrieval" as an inflection of Sedgwick's (1997) concept of "reparative reading" that both acknowledges and critiques historicist archivalism vis-à-vis sexuality and gender presentation.

more direct and body-focused form of violence (as opposed to the totalizing forms of both material and discursive violence that mark genocide). It's worth remembering Benjamin's warning in his sixth thesis, "not even the dead will be safe from the enemy, if he is victorious" (2007[1968]: 255). What Benjamin means here is that the destruction of bodies is not enough to destroy a people; instead, the genocidal imaginary seeks a more totalizing destruction. For the dead to be safe means entrusting them to a crypt, a place of safekeeping and memory that preserves even as it obscures. To lose that history constitutes a second death²⁷, one of the total erasure of memory.

It is the genocidaire's attraction to that second death that animates the paradox of the informatic afterlife. The goal of eliminationism is to reject attempts by those the state views as deviant to comply partially with the aims of their exclusion. Eliminationism produces a binary option: total compliance (and rejection of difference) or material violence. But the legal and medical mechanisms that have been developed to produce that compliance are enacted through liberal institutions that, above all, document subjectivity and therefore produce the paradox of the informatic afterlife. And it is the informatic afterlife that provides the aperture through which database erotics, defined here as embodied resistance through organized memory, can be enacted.

Clive Michael Boutilier²⁸ was a Canadian national who entered the United States on June 22, 1955. The Supreme Court decision specifically marks this as his first entry, while noting that he visited family in Canada, and that "[h]is last entry was in 1959." That same year, he was

²⁷ For a novelistic interpretation of this multilayered concept of partial and total death, see Brockmeier's *The Brief History of the Dead* (2006).

²⁸ Unless otherwise cited, quotations in this section are from the text of the decision from *Boutilier v. INS*.

arrested in New York on a sodomy charge, "which was later reduced to simple assault and thereafter dismissed on default of the complainant."²⁹ This information was revealed to the court through an affidavit submitted to the Naturalization Examiner. In 1964, at the behest of the government officials, Boutilier submitted another affidavit which gave the rest of his personal history of homosexual sex, beginning at the age of 14 in Canada and including an arrest in a public park in Nova Scotia at the age of 16.

With respect to Clive Michael Boutilier's deportation proceedings and his subsequent petition to the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, a few things are clear, apart from the obvious legal questions: one, that the legal mechanisms that would serve as a means for Boutilier's exclusion functioned both as a precursor to (or animator of?) as well as a means of preclusion for the role of narrative in queer politics; two, that the mainstream image of immigration shares a temporality with the medicoscientific genetic and psychiatric imaginary which places medical imaging and personal narrative as the central means of representing somatic information; and three, that these temporal politics inculcate the body in more normative

²⁹ It is not uncommon for sodomy charges, being difficult to prove in court, to be dropped to charges without sexual implications. In cases in which the sex act in question was consensual, it's unusual for charges to be filed, for two reasons: one, if the sex act occurred within the context of a relationship, that relationship would necessarily dissuade a potential complainant from pressing charges; and two, if the sex act occurred outside the context of a relationship, it was not uncommon for the charges to be dropped due to a desire on the part of a potential complainant to avoid the ridicule associated with involvement in a public trial involving a sex crime. For more on the application of sodomy crimes in both *de facto* and *de jure* discrimination against sexual minorities, see Stein 2005 and Hunter 2004.

state-sponsored attempts at compiling bioarchival³⁰ data from human subjects.

The role of exclusion in defining the possibility (and limits) of inclusion is a well-worn topic of queer theory,³¹ but what is more relevant here is how particular sociopolitical formations impact and are impacted by medicoscientific discourse. The idea that homosexuality constitutes a medical question is itself a medicalized extension of the idea that deviance is understood to be a question that demands a response from normativity. This construction of body-as-question is itself dependent on the linguisticity of the body itself, an underlying assumption that prefaces most metaphors of the "genomic code," as well as narrative metaphors of the body-as-text. What is certain, though, is that the act of diagnosing "psychopathic personality" is an inscription that plays into the medicolegal conception of reading the textual body.

This reading proffers a temporality that is roughly the same in the case of genomic populationalization and popular conceptions of migration. In both cases, the body's narrative is compressed into a single moment that is said to synecdochally comprise the whole. In migration, this is the moment of border-crossing, and in genomic populationalization, it's the moment of genetic attribution (in which the linguistic code of DNA lends itself to the linguistic attribution of populationalization). These parallel temporalities presume a stable narrative linking the body's past (the causality of that moment), its present (the materiality of that moment), and its future (the potential of that moment). These three temporalities come into relief as a single body which

³⁰ I use the term "bioarchivalism" to refer both to the idea that the body is a vessel for data (a distinct formation from knowledge, as data is information gained through specific methodologies), as well as the operationalization of that data (e.g., its implementation in political programs of surveillance and social control).

³¹ For more, see Berlant and Freeman 1992, Duggan 2003, and Muñoz 1999 for a cursory exploration of these themes.

promises a singular narrative around which all others must revolve. In this queering of the division between medicine and nation, the "genome map" which Zwart (2009) describes elicits illness-as-territory and nationality-as-(political)-population.³²

The distinction between political and biological definitions of the population comes into sharp relief when one inquires as to the use of these definitions toward institutional means. On the one hand, biological populationalization functions as a means of highlighting and quantifying difference through institutional processes of geneticization and medicalization, whereas political populationalization serves as a metric for treatment of individuals by (supposedly) neutral bureaucratic entities. What they share is their investment in the idea that the body is a vessel to be mined for information, and that the information that can come from the body can be operationalized as a form of power. Where that power runs into its own limit is in the inability of liberal institutions to erase the archival fingerprints of their own tampering with the mechanisms for the performative production of subjectivity. And it is the productivity of subjectivity that enables the juridical state to chase after its one truest desire: evidence.

³² This refers to population in the biological, as opposed to political, sense. Nationality as a form of political populationalization is undeniable, but it is how political and biological populations blur together that is of interest in this case.

Chapter Three: Virtualizing Desire: Biometrics and the Stuff of Intimacy

"Do you ever wonder about those brains in jars? I always wonder if there are still pieces of individuals inside. Scattered fragments of partial dreams or lost memories locked deep within that dead tissue... or whether the entire archive is immediately erased the moment that the body fails."

— Don Hertzfeldt, *Everything Will Be OK*.

"I imagine that many of our leaders and scholars, like earlier estranged tribes who sought in heaven what they could not find on earth, have given up on peace on earth and now seek peace of mind through the worship of new techno-deities. They look up to the surveillance satellite, deep into the entrails of electronic micro-circuitry, and from behind Stealth protection to find the omniscient machines and incontrovertible signs that can help us see and, if state reason necessitates, evade or destroy the other. And should one pause too long to reflect skeptically on this reification of technical reason, one is consigned to the ranks of the dissident other, as infidels who refuse to believe that there can be a single power or sovereign truth that can dispel or control the insecurities, indeterminacies, and ambiguities that make up international relations."

— James der Derian, "The (S)pace of International Relations: Simulation, Surveillance, and Speed."

"Sex was just another form of decryption."

—Frances Turner, "The Stranger," *London Spy*.

In this chapter, I extend my analysis of the interplay between temporality, subjectivation, and verification to consider the role of intimacy in how biometric technologies reflect new understandings of the material-discursive interface. By starting from a reflection on the ethical ramifications of speaking for another as opposed to speaking for oneself, I situate this work in feminist methodologies of social movements and vulnerable populations, considering the epistemic problems posed by the changing terrain of knowledge production in the twenty-first century.

Then, I raise the question of how desire relates to biodata in the specific instances of biometrics and immigration enforcement, linking the imagined desire of immigrants (for

security, belonging, and the recognition of rights) to the formal prerogatives of state institutions. In so doing, I also elaborate a theory of the relationship between sexuality, liability, and labor that implicates shifting technologies in the withholding of valuable resources.

Finally, I analyze the role of race in the implication of biodata in immigration proceedings, asking what affective mechanisms and procedural problems are at work in the manifestation of noncitizenship as a form of epistemic threat. In the context of an ongoing War on Terror—a war with its causal and methodological roots in the Cold War—how does documentation manifest as safety, and to whom is that safety entrusted?

I conclude by analyzing what I call the bodily mesh, which is the web of temporal and institutional attachments into which minoritized bodies are thrust when emergency surveillance measures are made permanent. It is critical to understand the position of vulnerable people in relation to a permanent state of emergency, from both the standpoint of governance and that of ethics.

Introduction:

On pursuit: Ethics, methodology, and metaphor

When writing through intersecting theoretical moments, the goal is to find an approach that acknowledges the multiplicity and complication of such an interstitial space without flattening this complication. Just as Avery Gordon (following Patricia Williams) asks us to move beyond the idea that "life is complicated" to ask what actual existing factors complicate it (Gordon 2008: 3; see also Williams 1992), we too must work past the simplistic invocation of complexity as a

means of evading theoretical responsibility. For theorists working in the global North, this also means claiming our own culpability in matters of capitalism and colonialism, even as we work to challenge those forces.

Therefore, this work takes a difficult turn in the moments when we are stuck between our tendency toward the invocation of "well, this is a complicated matter" and the formulation of the convenient polemic—which is politically distinct from the scientific method's desire for parsimony. Institutional norms demand that academics pursue complexity at all costs, that we desire the account that produces the most intriguing moments of narrative tension, even as that narrative competes with the material reality on the ground. In other words, while the production of complex narratives adheres to our institutionally-mediated desire for theory that properly expresses our intellectual capabilities, there is an ethical question to be asked about the instrumentalization of lived experience toward intellectual production.

The ethics of representing lived experience has long been a topic of debate among feminists, both within and outside the academy. For academics, the question of representing others' aspirations, their trauma, and their grief has to be situated within the dance of humility and self-aggrandizement that fuels so much of our professional negotiation of institutions of higher education, especially for those of us who come to those institutions as outsiders. Within this framework, the question of methodology is one of credibility and, by extension, institutional (be)longing. As Emma Pérez writes in *The Decolonial Imaginary*, "[a] historian must remain within the boundaries, the borders, the confines of the debate as it has been conceptualized if she/he is to be a legitimate heir to the field" (Pérez 1999: xiii). Understanding that the invocation of the multiplicity of power is deeply embedded in the neoliberal depoliticization of the academy—

whether that multiplicity is rendered through shrugging appropriations of intersectionality or obstinate post-Foucaultian insistence on capillary power as politics under conditions of lower pressure—we have to wonder whether a commitment to more complex and less transparent theories serves the political interests that supposedly undergird our theoretical attachments.

It is worth pointing out that the problem here is not one of accessibility. While there is a robust ongoing debate surrounding the question of accessibility of theory, the more acute problem is one of the flattening of the moral terrain that takes place in service of complexity and nuance. It can be understood as a kind of reverse "god trick" (to borrow Haraway's [1988] useful concept), wherein the academic who fetishizes complexity claims to know nothing, and to therefore be faced with an array of morally equivalent possibilities. This is where neoliberalism—particularly in the guise of capillary power—begins to approach nihilism. If complexity and nuance exist as expressions of the neoliberal will to maximize our understanding of social phenomena, they also exist institutionally as indefinite deferral of ethical action on the basis of that knowledge³³.

The epistemological quandary of capillary power as a depoliticizing or conservatizing force in the academy is situated within the imbrication of state power and the ethics of data collection, which is what I mean when I say that pursuit is the pedagogy of state violence. The desire to complete the state's knowledge of a subject must ossify and kill that subject. The completeness of knowledge is dependent on the impossibility of further change, which can only be accomplished through documentation, death, and documentation-of-death. That this

³³ For an epistemic critique of nuance in the social sciences, see Healy's appropriately titled "Fuck Nuance" (2017).

arrangement intensifies the danger presented by the state's expressivistic threat heightens the stakes of knowledge production.

The desire to know, to consume, and to represent subjects through the production of certain types of informatic modeling is common to both imperial propaganda and academic elitism. With this in mind, the national erotics of big data comes to constitute a central node in the logic of control through the elision of markers of possibility. In other words, the framing of what Gould calls the "political horizon" (2009) is constrained not only by state power—that is to say, by narratives of citizenship—but simultaneously by what I term citizen epistemology, or the mechanism through which belonging is negotiated as a form of intimate knowledge. Therefore, when state actors or academics *pursue* a subject—be it a legally deviant subject in the case of state actors or an epistemically accountable subject in the case of academics—that pursuit is marked out teleologically. The desire of the researcher and the desire of the cop both culminate in a bodily object that can be confined, be it in prison or in a text. And such a confinement is not only material or narrative: it is also ideological. The constraint is not only on the body but on the possibilities of what can be achieved through that body. It is not just the body that is pursued, coerced, under duress, but subjectivity itself.

Virtualizing desire and desiring virtualization: Biometrics as a measure of reality

Emailing bodies, dissecting bodies

In 2011, satirical newspaper *The Onion* published an infographic parodying the then-current debate about comprehensive immigration reform. Hidden among the snark—the only

vocabulary that journalists trained on old media have to pander to new media consumers—is a disarmingly clear example of what media theorist Eugene Thacker foreshadows with his idea of biomedica: the article cites "[e]-mailing relatives in the States and adding themselves as attachments" ("How Illegal Immigrants Cross the Border") as an example of a technique that "illegal immigrants"³⁴ use to cross the United States' southern border.

Thacker defines biomedica as "DNA's mobility across the in vivo, in vitro, and in silico contexts enabl[ing] exchanges across media" (2005: 10), though I take this bodily rhetoric in combination with genetic and psychiatric reductivism to contend that the body itself is imbricated in national iconography of mobility through such an exchange. In fact, later in the same text, Thacker remarks that, in such an exchange, "the body becomes its own technical resource, through practices of biomolecular recontextualization" (267). While Thacker was not discussing the place of the biochemical body within the interstices of discourses of nationalism, the process of passage certainly haunts the very premise of biomedica.

Thacker's invocation of "mobility" draws forth the logic of passage—just as "exchange" sparks a commercial narrative—through which the body, as a "technical resource," is subjected to an expanded external biotechnological capacity that is similarly productive in thinking through the deployment of the biotechnologically-mediated body toward the body as mediatized by

³⁴ The term "illegal" is contested because of its use by the far right, but I retain the term when it's used by primary sources. Additionally, as Mae M. Ngai points out, many proposed alternatives to the term "illegal" (such as "undocumented") are also troublesome when used by historians, as documentation is only coterminous with legality under historical conditions in which the state requires documentation from residents, which is a decidedly contemporary phenomenon. To that end, and in order to retain the rhetorical nuance of the original arguments being made, I use the author's terms when citing works dealing with immigration policy and rhetoric. For Ngai's argument, see Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), xix-xx.

caricature in the name of nationalism. Just as the body has to be reduced to data to be made legible to biotechnological discourses, the body must be reduced to narrative to be made legible to the mythopoetic register of national discourses. This reduction is literalized elsewhere in the article, which jokes that immigrants engage in the process of "[g]etting selves medically disassembled to appear as a carton of donated organs and then reanimated by mad scientist in Brownsville, TX" ("How Illegal Immigrants Cross the Border"), which explicitly attenuates rhetorics of border-crossing and organ trafficking, while simultaneously straddling the border between biomedicine and bioinformaticization by expanding the mutability of the bioinformatic body past its prior reduction to biodata. In other words, within the frame of the joke, the body is not only mutable once it's been reduced to data, but is also made mutable by "mad scien[ce]" on the organismic and geopolitical levels.

As a moment of expressive sarcasm, the joke probably falls flat—in a fit of semantic satiation I'll admit that I've spent too much time staring at the joke in question to know at this point whether it functions as intended, and I admit that my presentation of the joke in this context undoubtedly punctures it (though I will also readily admit that I don't care)—but the technological promise and xenophobic fear it indexes are undeniably powerful. Bringing together narratives of chronobiopolitics, fear, and affect, this moment in satirical media full-throatedly bellows what other representations merely whisper. In a political context like immigration policy, where the far-right smuggles its racial politics through the penumbras of euphemism, implication, and suggestion, this can be a powerful gesture.

Youthful technology: Social (bio)media and the circulation of the new moral panic

One of the implications of emailing relatives across a border relies on the trope of immigration as a process of national revivification, specifically through the production of the narrative of youth immigrants. This narrative, as relayed through the qualification of threat (as in the "anchor baby" debates³⁵) or a rhetoric of hope (as in debates surrounding the DREAM Act³⁶), produces an ideal immigrant subject as an immigrant who is young, but not too young.

It should come as no surprise, then, that the ideal immigrant constructed through reproduction and labor is situated just at the cusp of adulthood—in other words, at the precise moment when these immigrants are capable of contributing the maximum possible amount of embodied time to U.S. capitalism with the smallest proportion of resource investment (which ordinarily happens at the most accelerated rate during childhood, partially explaining the "anchor baby" moral panic).

Just as biodata operates as a fulcrum for the dematerialization and rematerialization of bodies, so does capital. This rightist objectification of the bodies of immigrant youth vis-à-vis labor also operates as a quantification of those bodies as it pertains to the financialization of that

³⁵ The discourse of "anchor babies" is a moral panic that alleges that pregnant immigrants intend to travel across borders with the intention of giving birth and "anchoring" themselves to countries with birthright citizenship through their children. It serves the purpose of criminalizing reproduction for pregnant immigrants. For feminist analyses of this discourse, see Cisneros 2013 and Foster 2017.

³⁶ The DREAM Act and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) both contain specific eligibility criteria based on age. This criterion is rooted in the idea that children who are brought to the United States by their parents or other caregivers haven't expressed agency in that decision, and therefore shouldn't be punished. But, as Nicholls and Fiorito (2015) argue, people in this age cohort—under the age of 31 at the time that DACA went into effect in 2012—have different relationships to the labor market than older or younger people. For a more critical look at the DREAM Act and DACA from the standpoint of immigrant youth, see Aguirre and Simmers 2012.

labor. As bodies can disappear into databases, they can also disappear into the time of labor, becoming dematerialized through the financialization of the surplus value they produce in the time and place of labor. This dematerialization-into-labor is obviously of interest to theorists outside the context of immigration policy, but this dynamic is at its most acute when the bodies under discussion are always already instrumentalized as laboring bodies or objects of labor.

As Elizabeth Freeman's work on the production of temporal narratives surrounding labor and sexuality (2010) discusses, this focus on productivity simultaneously heterosexualizes and objectifies the bodies of workers. As capital binds bodies into the workforce, technological solutions for the production of the laboring body become increasingly opaque. Consider, for example, the shift in narratives surrounding technology's role in "liberating" blue-collar workers from the scene of the workplace to the role of technology in further tethering white-collar workers to that space of work despite the actual places where they perform their labor, be it an office or the home.

For example, consider the supposed promise of the gig economy, in which permanent employment is replaced by temporary "gigs" mediated largely through smartphone apps: that the dematerialization of the workplace will eventually allow for near-total flexibility of work. What this effectively means is the end of the idea of being "off the clock." Employers having access to white-collar workers via email has effectively abolished leisure, while at the same time blue-collar workers are forced to engage in multiple short-term jobs (none of which afford downtime) in order to have even the smallest chance of making ends meet. In other words, this attitude toward work—one of maximization, efficiency, and, ultimately, of unlimited access of capital to workers' bodies—has proliferated through multiple class positions. The way that blue-collar

work has always been imagined is now how all work is imagined, with obvious consequences for people who occupy less-privileged labor positions. Here, we should recall Marx's famous invocations of the undead in *Capital*, in which he writes that

Capital is dead labour, that, vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks. The time during which the labourer works, is the time during which the capitalist consumes the labour-power he has purchased of him.

If the labourer consumes his disposable time for himself, he robs the capitalist.

(Marx 1990: 342)

We can see in this instance that Marx is simultaneously signifying the moral decay of the economic functionalism he diagnoses and the violence it enables, but what if we read the question of youth into this discussion?

No recent cultural form has made this shifting (and eternally-youthful) avatar of capital's tendrillous tendencies obvious to a greater extent than the rise of social media. Historically, one of the key conduits through which capitalism has revived itself has been through the production of technologies that produce affective structures through which youth has become tied to the particular relation of performance and consumption that we see in the context of social media. This shifts from the performance of consumption—as in historical theories of conspicuous consumption—to the consumption of performance—as in social (bio)media.

By "social (bio)media," I refer to a reading of social media as an archive and discursive field which incentivizes certain ways of prioritizing life-course decisions, especially as they relate to intimate matters. That is to say, the same context which produces the body emailed

across national boundaries also produces the body contorted and displayed as an artifact of the kind of marketability that subtends neoliberal biopolitical governmentality. The parasocial bonds made between audiences and the social media celebrities on which they fixate are an example of this turn toward marketability in social media, as is the expressivistic threat of long-term unemployment for people who embarrass themselves online. In many ways, the strict control of young people's bodily facts and representations through social media is an outgrowth of the particular position of these "millennials" and "post-millennials" vis-à-vis the labor market. Therefore, there are two imagined audiences for social media artifacts: actual peers and prospective bosses.

In this way, we can see an ongoing instrumentalization of young people's relationships to computing technology on the part of capital. With that in mind, debates surrounding racialized patterns of technological adoption are not merely about social recreation for young people of color, but simultaneously about labor and class mobility. Returning to Thacker's definition of biomedica, we can see that that form of mobility—across the in vivo, in vitro, and in silico contexts—also doesn't take place without reference to the question of economic class. The question of the irreducibility of the body is, therefore, impossible to delink from that of the quantification of labor. We can also see the extent to which the metaphor of informatic mobility enables a conflation of a computer interface and a national border. Through this conflation, we can see the processes through which youth stands in for quantities of hope and qualities of danger. The extent to which, generationally speaking, young people's productivity is a crucial national resource is also the extent to which their *re*productivity is a site of ambivalence.

Apart from the danger that constitutes the continually shifting amorphous moral panic that

subtends all immigration debates in the United States, there is also a more specific danger relating youth and communication technology that centers around the transmission of images for sexual purposes. A process dubbed "sexting," a portmanteau of "sex" and "texting," this social protocol leverages the comfort that supposedly defines young people's interactions with technology against the prior circulation of concerns surrounding the accelerated sexual permissiveness of youth culture. This permissiveness is a recurring theme in U.S. history, from the Salem Witch Trials to midcentury panics surrounding car culture, in which the rise of racialized suburbanization created the necessity for mass ownership of cars among affluent white teenagers, which became a central site for the control of their sexuality through public debates around sex in automobiles (Sanger 1995). Fundamentally, these questions of youth enable the production of a narrative through which the competing and complementary subject-positions of heterosexualization and dematerialization-into-labor result in forms of affective quantification. This quantification ultimately asserts that young people are easier to subject to certain forms of sexualized surveillance, as well as asserting that these mechanisms through which intimate surveillance controls labor have larger stakes than with older populations because of the larger total quantity of labor-power on the line with younger populations.

Because of the relationship between sexting panics and labor markets—primarily through the intermediary of "employability" as a metric for judging the foolishness of certain forms of sexual expression—the social problem of sexting fundamentally implicates the role of expressivistic threats in economies of fidelity. The representations of the body that are produced through sexting are agential expressions of sexual desire, both desire of oneself and desire of another. And representations of the body that are deemed to be inappropriate, due to the inability

of sexters to control the dissemination of images after their initial transmission, means that public humiliation crosses the material-discursive interface into economic hardship through the ways that sexters are shamed out of employment. It is the specter of unemployment that straddles the material-discursive interface and animates anxieties about public sexuality, which is one way that the reserve army of labor motivates intimate surveillance. And these forms of sexual surveillance disproportionately harm women, LGBTQ people, people of color, and noncitizens—an intersecting constellation of populations that are simultaneously constructed as being independent (when common resources are inequitably distributed) and infantilized (when they are not). Attachments, erotic or otherwise, can always be made into liabilities under regimes of intimate surveillance, and it is this liability that serves as a manifestation of the negative material of intimacy—the mattering of subjectivation through sexual surveillance.

In the context of the joke in *The Onion*, the narrative of youth also serves as a fulcrum through which the narratives of enhanced liveliness and obedient attachment can be instrumentalized to produce an ideal immigrant subject. According to this fantasy, these immigrants labor productively, and for an extended period of time, but more importantly these immigrants labor *for others*. They are young but attached, and this assumption of attachment is subverted toward the—again, competing and complementary—aims of family, nation, and capital. This productivity animates ideas about ideal immigrants, as well as ideas about ideal attachments, producing the positive material of intimacy, the stuff of the "American dream."

Technological evasion: Viral logics in the new right's rhetoric of caution

Xenophobia reaches past the volatility of the moral panic, creeping toward the insolubility of national character. As a matter of fact, xenophobia can be said to be constituted by a constellation of intersecting moral panics over the shadow migration casts in the doorway of nationalist ideology. In the context of racial anxieties over the demographic constitution of populations as well as the related sexual isolationism of xenophobic antinatalism, it is clear that the moral panics that constitute xenophobia are free-floating affects seeking a cultural substrate. Fear is not a means to an end, but the end itself, with a national Other often eagerly provided by a white supremacist hegemon as the most convenient carrier for those anxieties.

One of the most enduring of these fears is xenophobic terror at the supposed pathology of immigrants' bodies. While we can see the pathologization through the production of moral-nationalist fantasies surrounding criminality and the immigrant body, it's also worth thinking through the use of disease as a conduit through which these moral-nationalist logics can circulate. As Howard Markel and Alexandra Minna Stern argue, immigration policy has produced "durable biological metaphors that explain[], usually in catastrophic terms, the potential risks of unrestricted immigration to the nation's social health" (Markel and Minna Stern 2002: 758).

The deployment of a metaphor of contagion in the context of a specifically informatic threat to the material and ideological foundation of national sovereignty inevitably summons the specter of the computer virus. As a bridge between the molecular and digital ages, the metaphor of the computer virus comes to constitute a key component of our understanding of the interface between the material and the discursive. When taken into account in this way, it becomes clear that this is not only a matter of the user interface—in this case, the email that carries the

informatic immigrant body across the border and, presumably, into the loving arms of the family member into whose inbox they've immigrated—but simultaneously an issue of the border, and potentially an avenue through which to understand the co-constitution of the two as spaces of crossing.

Therefore, if the transmission of data constitutes a form of crossing over a border—if the interface is also a checkpoint—then the database itself is a territory with its own logic. As the body of law operates as a linguistic protocol for interpreting and codifying behavior in the context of the state, the corpus of algorithmic protocol interprets and codifies data in the context of the server. Therefore, the communicative regime of email serves a specific authenticatory purpose in the juridicalization of information.

This mechanism of authentication, which is one of the most prominent uses of biometric technologies, is an extension of the public face of economies of fidelity. While private economies of fidelity see authenticity as a commodity to be leveraged into marketability and profit (as discussed in Chapter One), the public economy of fidelity hides necessary resources behind technologized and quantified forms of *authentication*, which requires testing a body in the present against an indexed version of that body's past in order to make legible claims to identity. And it is precisely this question of data as fuel for the public negotiation of verifiability that draws computing and immigration policy together under regimes of somatic surveillance.

To return to the problematic of the computer virus and related questions of information security (sometimes rendered as InfoSec), we can also read the now-clichéd "Nigerian Letter"

email scam³⁷ and what it reveals about the border as an interface, and the relation between both of those and questions of national purity. These emails, regardless of their actual origin, invoke the imperial trope of the fallen monarch in service of the production of an accusation about the role of governmental corruption in the creation of the economic conditions that led to that fall. Dating back at least to the early 90s—though historian Robert Whitaker claims that the technique can be traced to the late nineteenth century (Whitaker 2013)—the "Nigerian Letter" email scam is a landmark in the history of technologically-disseminated imperial propaganda because of the ways that it cleaved the platform of email to the imperial project—and, by extension, to capital. If, indeed, we are doing geopolitics just by logging into our email accounts—and if we are doing national security by enabling our spam filters—then perhaps the idea of the internet as an informatically militarized zone has always been our reality, even if we don't see it that way.

Feeling through code: Affect and (the) attachment

This extension of the question of attachment into the realm of labor is rooted in a long tradition in feminist theory, but this idea is less well-documented as it pertains to questions of

³⁷ The "Nigerian letter" is a form of advance-fee email scam in which prospective victims receive emails claiming that a large sum of money will be made available to them if they pay a small processing fee to initiate the transfer. These scams began as handwritten letters sent through physical mail in the 1980s, then appeared as faxes before eventually becoming a mainstay of the spam economy in the 1990s. While the majority of these cases involved the perpetrator claiming to be Nigerian royalty, there is no evidence that the scam actually originated in Nigeria. However, the mystification of cross-border financial transfers is one of the reasons the scam has been so successful, since perpetrators can reference the labyrinthine nature of international finance to justify the strange behavior exhibited by scam artists. For a detailed analysis of this scam and its history, see Holt and Graves 2007.

technology. The circulation of affect through migrant labor and technology offers a productive avenue through which to rethink the productive dimensions of national intimacy.

In her reading of Lao She's short story "Lian" (which she translates as "Attachment"), Rey Chow identifies and critiques what she refers to as "the Marxist tradition of a deep distrust of the objects that saturate the commercial cultural environment of the industrialized modern world" (Chow 2001: 289). Through Walter Benjamin's comparatively sympathetic account of the cultural life of things as compared to the "thing-phobia" that underlies Roland Barthes' semiotics³⁸, Chow attempts to resuscitate the object as a scene of affect.

Here, I want to consider the terms through which the production of objects as affective artifacts becomes, in Chow's formulation, the linchpin of their recreation in the realm of the social. When Benjamin writes of the collector's zeal as it pertains to the material stuff of the collection, he notes that "to a true collector the acquisition of an old book is its rebirth. This is the childlike element which in a collector mingles with the element of old age" (Benjamin, "Unpacking My Library": 111-112). By articulating the collection of material objects as a notion akin to the lifecycle, Benjamin is participating in a long Marxist tradition of invoking death as a component of the creation of capital. As McNally notes in *Monsters of the Market: Zombies, Vampires and Global Capitalism*, Marx's invocations of vampires and ghosts "cast capitalism as both a modern horror-story and a mystery tale, each inexplicable outside the language of monstrosity" (McNally 2012: 13). But if capital is dead-but-still-changing (which makes it monstrous in opposition to the stasis of death), so are artifacts, and so are data. The pastness of

³⁸ For more on the phenomenology of the thing, see Bogost 2012. For Barthes' account of "thingness," see Barthes 1977.

the object itself is critical not only to our understanding of its origins but also to its basic ontology: to Benjamin, being is inherently durative.

When Benjamin writes, then, about the fact that "the most distinguished trait of a collection will always be its transmissibility" (Benjamin, "Unpacking My Library": 125), we return to the scene of *The Onion's* image of the email and its affective and bodily attachments. The transmission of bodily data is foundational to the notion of biomedica, which Thacker actually *defines* as a form of transmission itself. In thinking through the affective consequences of an idea such as biomedica, we must naturally be drawn to the question of heredity and through that question to the deployment of familial intimacy.

It is crucial to consider the question of transmissibility as a feature of intimate relations, particularly under conditions of mass surveillance. Just as genetic and financial inheritance are forms of intimate transmission, so too is the surveilling gaze of biometric verification, since it supplants a prior oral commitment to the identity of a person by those to whom you are known (through the epistemology of intimacy). But, instead of being vouched for by an utterance by a friend or family member, biometric authentication depersonalizes that interaction through the intermediary of data. What used to be a personal "I know this person, and they are who they say they are," becomes "this individual's presentation of their body comports with prior presentations of what has been previously authenticated as their body." Technologies of biometric surveillance necessitate a shift from the body's oral transmissibility toward its virtuality and dematerialization unto data. This virtualization of the body aids in the withholding of access to resources and protections which are only at issue because of assumptions about which bodies are suspicious in the first place.

Just as the *Onion* article allows us to think through the transmission of the body across borders and therefore across databases and interfaces, it simultaneously raises questions of the legibility of those bodies once they cross over into a new context. This is why we have to think of biometric identity verification as a process of interpretation—and apply to it the typical philological standards to which we would understand any other process of societal reading. What this specifically means in the context of the *Onion* article is that we are here encountering a bodily object that does not have to be killed in order to be documented, and in fact the very liveliness of that bodily object is dependent on these processes of documentation, of legibility, and of reading. If we reimagine being (and, by extension, subjectivation) as durative—as an ongoing negotiation of the accumulation of epiphenomena that orbit around the self—then the national biometric desire for a dead prior body against which to compare the present laboring-desiring immigrant body completely falls apart.

Simultaneously we can see that there is a certain homophony in our dual deployments of the question of the attachment. Here we refer not only to the attachment as the literal object that becomes associated with the textual message that is then transmitted across a digital interface, but simultaneously to the attachment that subtends the fundamental affective structure that undergirds the entire process of transmission. And here we refer to transmission in the way that we would refer to crossing in other cases, because it is not just the physical body that crosses a physical threshold, but an informatic body and an informatic threshold.

Racing biometrics, citing intimacy: Affective technologies of racial presence

The desiring immigrant and the fickle state

In thinking through the affective topography of the role biometrics has played in U.S. immigration policy, it's important to remember that this discourse concerns the confluence of two fundamental (and competing) certainties of political culture in the United States: namely, those of American Exceptionalism and democratic coherence. American Exceptionalism, as a core discourse in U.S. political culture, presupposes that the subject-position of the immigrant is rooted in an affective economy in which worthiness is key. Democratic coherence, as a prerequisite for American Exceptionalism, holds that it is through the political process that U.S. citizens join together in the narrative of exceptionalism.

As Siobhan Somerville asks in her essay "Notes toward a Queer History of Naturalization"

To what extent, for instance, does the construction of a desiring immigrant obscure the ways that the state itself, through immigration and naturalization policy, sets the terms of this imagined love, actively distinguishing between which immigrants' desire will be returned and which will be left unrequited? To what extent does the presumed lovability of the United States distract us from, among other things, the states own construction of certain immigrants and citizens as "lovable," and others as inappropriate objects for the nation's love? And what would it mean to understand the historical production of "undesirables" as a process of "queering" certain immigrants' imagined desire? (2005: 661)

Somerville's idea of the desiring immigrant raises the question of what stake the state has in

monitoring and manipulating the public circulation of affect. If citizenship is a particular technology for coordinating love and acceptance, then expressions of intimacy that are routed through public channels—affective networks that Lauren Berlant calls "the intimate public sphere" (1997)—are the perfect avenue for neoliberal logics of proliferation through communicative assent and performative coercion. The intimacy of the intimate public sphere is what assures the smooth movement of an affectively homogenous public, as the project of democratic coherence relies on the coercion of shared national narrative. And the desire for a public form of love that can be repudiated and humiliated is central to the asymmetry of affective citizenship. The demand for acquiescence—which takes the form of the contribution of data—is at the root of the formation of alterity. If citizens willingly contribute whatever they are asked, then the contribution of data becomes a marker of aspirational citizenship, even if—as in the case of DACA, as I will discuss later in this chapter—that promise is not fulfilled.

In this way, the figure of the immigrant is key to asserting who the "we" of the imagined citizenry loves and how this "we" loves its constitutive "them." This production of alterity shapes the psychic landscape of citizenship in ways that collapse categories of meaning and belonging to constitute the slowness of alterity. When marginalized people have resources to offer the state, the transaction is made immediate by force of law, but when the need is reversed, red tape reigns. This is an alterity immersed in an asymmetrical bureaucratic regime marked by exhaustion and fatigue, the debility of which engages rhetorics of futility that shape so much of queer engagements with affect theory, as well as the broader scope of cultural theory after Jameson. This is the post-Left gesture of replying to Lenin's "what is to be done?" with what *cannot* be done. This rhythm of exhaustion reproduces and reinforces questions not only of the affective

structure of racialized rhetorics of nationhood and belonging, but of the very question of the materiality of race itself.

Race and the pleasures of the extant

One of the key relations between biometrics, immigration, and race is the historical affinity between what we now refer to as biometrics—but which was once referred to as anthropometry and its associated fields—and the broader racial hygiene movement in North America. Indeed Francis Galton, who is considered by many to be the forefather of forensic fingerprinting, is also the person credited with coining the term "eugenics" itself. However there is also a deeper association between racial hygiene and bodily surveillance.

By articulating biometrics as an extension of the eugenic project, I hope to explore two distinct phenomena related to the history of racing technology in North America. First, that these technologies do not exist in the racially-neutral state—the histories of these technologies are deeply embedded in and indebted to histories of eliminationist racism in North America. And second, that these technologies do more than simply limit or control the movement of racialized bodies across state-sanctioned boundaries. Furthermore, it seems clear the project of racialized state-building is simultaneously produced by and productive of technologies that reify racial difference. In this way biometric technologies contribute to the production of race itself, both as a societal phenomenon and as a taxonomic boundary.

In this way we have to understand the structure of the biometric database in the context of immigration policy is itself one of the key means through which race is materialized in recent

immigration discourse, particularly as it pertains to liberal forgetting surrounding questions of race, belonging, and geography. This is the same process of forgetting that produces the paradox of the informatic afterlife, wherein liberal institutions document alterity oppositionally (and thereby open the door for counter mnemonic database erotics to animate a politics of recognition through a memorial crypt).

Just as we see in juridical history of the control and deployment of certain forms of non-normative sexuality, there is a consumption of the Other that takes place through processes of coercive self-representation in the context of state power. In other words, the state makes demands of certain subjects to present themselves, and this process utilizes bodily objectification (through dematerialization-into-data) as a requirement that precedes eventual subjectivation (through citizenship). This is what I mean by the pleasures of the extant, the national erotic that holds out citizenship as an incentive and ultimatum for the production of the ideal citizen body. This process for utilizing medicalized biodata for the purposes of delineating citizenship has existed throughout U.S. history, from the marking of coats with chalk at Ellis Island in order to divide prospective immigrants into categories of exclusion based on the external exhibition of troubling symptoms (Bateman-House and Fairchild 2008) to the U.S. government's HIV travel ban, which was formally in place from 1993 to 2010. Indeed, the utilization of medicalized biodata for the exclusion of immigrants also extends to the removal of Clive Michael Boutilier (see Chapter Two).

Therefore, that the same juridical power that produces what Somerville refers to as "unrequited love" also makes a coercive demand for the production of the bodily sample or for the presentation of the bodily corpus—simultaneously framed as an ultimatum and as a voluntary

expression of national love—is indicative of a state power that is capable of attenuating the affective performance demanded of immigrants (in an ideal sense) to the material constraints placed on people of color in the context of white supremacist state power (in a pragmatic sense). In this way the reality of the biometric database is itself an avenue through which to think through the conditions under which consciousness is created for people of color both by and against state power.

The present-as-membrane and the bodily mesh

To address the complex position of consciousness in relation to state institutions, I want to return to the questions of temporality and materiality, in order to extend my analysis of the role of the state in producing the material-discursive interface. Thinking of the moments of indexing, quantification, and taxonomization as moments in which the present is fixed as a temporal marker for the prior and subsequent referencing thereof, the present as loss—or as an object that is always already slipping away—can inform our ontological attachment to the objects that comprise a biometric database. In other words, biometric verification exists not as ontological verification but as a form of referential verification that presumes the prior validity (or recognition, in an institutional sense) of the sample against which the test is taking place.

Therefore we can make a claim that a biometric database constructed during a time in which immigration policies are unusually restrictive enact a similar crystallization of this temporal shift in which large-scale investments in law enforcement infrastructure obligate a kind of future-proofing against potential reform efforts or attempts to enact amnesty policies. This is

to say that once the proposed biometric data base founded in the context of immigration reform is instituted there will be no going back. The reasons for this are myriad but largely seem to fit with the framework of what we sometimes refer to as a paradigm shift.

Such a paradigm shift in terms of biometric approaches to immigration enforcement necessitate and enable these productive technologies of racialization even as they continue to enact the liberal forgetting of race that has been staged through U.S. immigration policy since 1965. The technologization of this process, then, fixes policy in a particular moment, refusing future reform efforts through the crystallization of a temporality of final efficiency. Therefore, the structure of the objections that we will see in the post-biometric era will present themselves not as problems of civil or human rights but as procedural questions surrounding the maintenance and upkeep of the databases themselves.

While it would stand to reason that such an approach would facilitate productive engagement with questions of technology, citizenship, and empire, we also have to understand how these imperial logics refuse even the most basic accountability measures (such as judicial review) in the context of a politics of "staying the course." Understanding that the political moment of the War on Terror is one in which rhetorics designed to incite mass panic accrete into a standardized or crystallized status of perpetual anxiety, the potential for rolling back biometric policies in the context of immigration are substantially more difficult for infrastructural and epistemological reasons, barring massive changes in political ecology. This is not to give into narratives of the incommensurability of neoliberalism and late capitalism, but to acknowledge the snowball effect that we've seen in relation to the decline of civil liberties—particularly for racial minorities and noncitizens—in the context of the War on Terror.

A perfect example of the dangers of legibility and surveillance in immigration policy is the story of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). Originally proposed as the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act in 2001, the bill was never passed, due to a combination of unreliable support from progressives and ordinary legislative deadlock. Instead, in 2012, Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano developed a compromise called DACA, which enabled some undocumented people to remain in the United States under certain conditions. Critically, DACA, unlike the DREAM Act, provides no permanent path to citizenship, though it does have similar restrictions on eligibility—namely age, time of entry, educational status, and lack of criminal record or national security risk. During the five years that DACA existed in its original state (2012-2017), nearly seven hundred thousand undocumented people applied for deferred action and employment authorization under DACA (USCIS 2018), granting them freedom from the threat of deportation for two years at a time (provided they maintain eligibility). In 2017, however, Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Elaine Duke rescinded the DACA memorandum and announced what she called a "wind down" of the program. This decision meant that no new DACA applications would be processed, and those currently eligible for deferred action and employment authorization under the program could enjoy its protections for, at most, an additional two years.

While the questions raised by the Trump Administration's attempts to end DACA likely won't be settled by federal courts for years, it is clear that what has come to pass is the nightmare scenario of programs like DACA: the data-collection protocols and self-registration that were previously held up as paths first to citizenship and then, eventually, to the compromise of deferred action and employment authorization have become a means of mining the U.S.

government for deportation lists. As Facebook founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg (himself something of an expert on the dangers posed by the unethical collection of data) wrote on his public Facebook profile in 2017, "It is particularly cruel to offer young people the American dream, encourage them to come out of the shadows and trust our government, and then punish them for it" (Shear and Davis 2017). The logics of self-registration, legibility, and verifiability are perfectly clear in Zuckerberg's statement. In fact, there is a striking parallel between repeated framing of self-registration under DACA as "coming out of the shadows" and the interpellative "come out, come out, wherever you are" of early lesbian and gay organizing, which is a fact that leaders of the Undocuqueer movement (which focuses on the intersection of gender, sexuality, and citizenship status) have seized on (Cisneros and Gutierrez 2018). To come out, either as queer or as undocumented, requires a great deal of faith that those admissions won't come to be weaponized against the people for whom legibility was meant to be afforded as a protection.

The idea of protection opens up a fundamental question of safety. Who is protected by immigration restrictions, and what costs are worth enacting that protection? In the case of racialized immigration restrictions, it should be obvious that immigrants are held up as simultaneous threats to health and safety (through medicalization and criminalization), but the manner of violation of health and safety is indirect. The threats to health and safety are through a failure of documentation. In the context of immigration policy (which increasingly straddles the line between administrative and criminal law; see Hernández 2015), illegibility or invisibility to the state's means of seeing—surveillance—constitute threats to the orderliness of hierarchies of race and citizenship. And without the control that the state must always perform through the submission of subjects to its ability to see, measure, and explain, the explanatory mechanism of

citizenship falls into chaos. For this reason, undocumented people are constructed not just as a threat to security, but to an epistemological anxiety based on the weakness of the performativity of surveillance.

It is clear from the end of DACA that the moment into which the bodies of people of color and noncitizens are being incrementally crystalized is a moment of perpetual racial anxiety caused by the propagandistic mechanisms that enabled the War on Terror in the first place, using the selfsame liberal institutions that have basic obligations to members of those populations. It should come as no surprise then that the War on Terror has been attenuated by a technological push for expanded surveillance of minoritized populations, as well as increasing focus on technologies that echo the logics of chattel slavery (such as biometric tracking and subdermal microchipping, the latter of which Zell Miller famously proposed as a solution to unauthorized border-crossing). In this vein we can see that the body that is being located in biometric immigration discourses is a body that is nationally other as well as a body that is caught in an assemblage of technological and temporal mechanisms that I refer to as the bodily mesh.

The bodily mesh can be defined broadly as the web of crystalized temporalities into which minoritized bodies are thrust by attempts to permanently encode policies built around psychologies of exception into more permanent institutional enclosures. In that sense, the bodily mesh is simultaneously a temporality and a non-temporality, a pure space of exception through which an anxious white supremacist imperial power can wreak its havoc with impunity through the dual artifices of the rhetoric of moral necessity that we associate with fascist accounts of the territory and the enchanting aura of scientific credibility, both of which serve as a mechanism through which to obviate rights-based objections to racist surveillance. The bodily mesh is the

trap in which ideal immigrants are caught, and it is the formalization of freedom for some and perpetual surveillance for others.

Coda: The Facticity of the Body and the Performativity of Surveillance

Operating under the rubrics of either biopolitics or necropolitics, the human body is both a source and target of a great deal of state power. It is the subject, literally, of self-making, both in the sense of citizenship and populationalization, and it is the object of threat and violence. It is through these mechanisms of threat and violence that surveillance gains its status as the threat of a threat. In this way, we can think of surveillance's powers of social control as the gravity pulling down on the sword of Damocles.

This leaves open the question of what mechanism animates the threat of a threat that surveillance poses to vulnerable people and the populations they comprise. After all, say the apologists, if you have done nothing wrong, how can you have anything to fear? And while this logic might make a kind of perverse sense to those who see state power only as a source of protection of their personal interests, without ever being a source of fear and anxiety from the failures of that protection. But this is a fundamentally conservative approach to the question of the role of the state, defining conservatism as a commitment to hierarchy at the expense of due process.

What would equality under surveillance actually look like? Would it mean that all are bound to the same extent, with no privacy protections to speak of and no manner of respite from the constant threat of threat? Or does equality under surveillance imply the cleavage of state power from the power to see, to measure, and to explain? But, if those powers were to be

disconnected from one another, where would that leave the productivity of embodiment?

The body is both a social object and an ontological target, a shifting ground for a churning wriggle of processes through which meaning has to be created and imposed to maintain order. And, in that light, it is the fundamental disorderliness of queer and antiracist politics that makes surveillance such an important site of contestation for a number of struggles. The performative power of the threat of a threat produces a social terrain that is markedly more difficult for left activism and advocacy from the margins.

The categorization of the unmarked suggests not only that those who fall outside the heavily-surveilled boundaries of acceptability are treated as requiring verification and scrutiny, but also that those who fall within those boundaries require none. The surveillance state fundamentally projects illegibility (or partial legibility or qualified legibility) onto marginalized people and populations to protect the interests of the powerful from the injury of scrutiny. In that sense, the facticity of the body is an inverted hierarchy, with naturalized categories containing null data. Contrapositively, the bodies of those who are pathologized, medicalized, and criminalized contain an excess of data, and it is this excess that drives both the state's insatiable desire for surveillance and the overflow of that desire, the informatic afterlife.

The informatic afterlife is the waterfall at the end of the river of data. It is the logical outgrowth of the desire to control through seeing, once the object of that sight has ceased to survive that scrutiny. It is a kind of autopsy, a presentation of remains, like when a cat leaves a mouse on the doorstep: *look here at this thing I killed, this body that became a thing in the killing, that I am presenting as an expression of my love.* And it is this moment of declaration—

the innocent confession of the violent animal of the state—that animates database erotics, the use of data collected by surveillance against the social control that that surveillance attempts to perform. Database erotics are the crack in the performativity of surveillance through which a sliver of light is able to slip.

Database erotics articulate and embody the mnemonic desire that turns the violence of surveillance into a means of survival. The relationship between articulation and embodiment of this desire is, strictly speaking, a performative gesture, one that turns the claim to desire into a driving force for action, at both an individual and populational level. And, in so doing, database erotics lay the groundwork for an ever-broadening archive of memory outside the confines of the institutions that enact the state's surveilling impulses. If the informatic afterlife is an autopsy—the continuing extraction of explanation from death—then database erotics constitute a kind of populational séance, reanimating and making lively again that which has been deanimated through the surveillance state's desire for explanation and cure.

Taken together, database erotics and informatic afterlives comprise the biopolitical and necropolitical dimensions of the performativity of surveillance. The informatic afterlife is the outgrowth of the state's need to pin down and deanimate those who fall outside the boundaries of normativity, whereas database erotics, antithetically, call back—sometimes coercively—that which has been destroyed, killed, or dematerialized unto data.

To speak of a way forward, I'm tempted to resign myself to the naturalization of surveillance that has dominated discourse surrounding state power in the post-9/11 era, but I find myself unable to. Of course, the fact that state surveillance and the violence that is directed by

that surveillance almost always finds marginalized targets, which implies a specific political orientation to the competing processes of informatic afterlives and database erotics. However, I want to leave room for alternative readings. I don't want to simplify the informatic afterlife as simply an arrogant and unaccountable state overplaying its hand—though that is certainly one of the underlying dynamics. However, the internal failure of dematerialization-into-data that is implied by the need of state institutions to document their violence isn't a wholly natural process. It requires consistent and concerted efforts on the part of participants in tactical memory to overcome the assumption of unaccountability that has produced the majority of post-9/11 surveillance politics. And those efforts, from a complex coalition of political actors opposing increasingly opaque and hostile institutions, comprise nothing less than the maintenance of democracy itself.

Systems of mass surveillance are a trump card that the state holds against social activism. Tracking the movements and communications of activists has been a standard strategy of the state for the entirety of U.S. history, dating back to the Revolutionary War, but intensified and technologized during the First Red Scare and the ensuing Cold War. State surveillance disincentivizes movement work by attaching high costs to the quotidian labor of building a better world. It leverages stigma to demoralize those working in movements by limiting their abilities to fulfill their basic needs through employment. In many cases, it moves beyond the expressivistic threat of disclosure, resulting in direct bodily violence by forcing encounters with law enforcement. But it need not be this way.

The work of the state is the work of violence, and state institutions are the instruments of

that violence. Those of us who are invested in a better world must get serious about using multivalent strategies to limit the state's ability to enact violence against those who do the work. And these strategies simply cannot be limited to the civil libertarian model of protecting the category of citizen from state encroachment. Instead, the work has to begin not with whom the state can legitimately target, but with an outright refusal of the right of the state to build and maintain its surveillance apparatuses in the first place. This means mass education about privacy (to the limited extent that it is a useful framework), alongside the work of rebuilding large-scale mass movements that are less susceptible to surveillance, harassment, and coercion on an individual level.

It also means imagining a state whose institutional violence is restricted or, preferably, prohibited by a commitment to the common good and an ethic of care toward those who reside within its jurisdictions. And this, unfortunately, is the Gordian knot of the performativity of surveillance (and of radical politics more broadly): reshaping state institutions means reshaping culture, and cultural transformation happens in large part through transformation in institutional domains. But, until we discover the political approach that cuts through that tangle, we will have to continue to do the work of resistance against the forces of mass surveillance as they arise and multiply, while at the same time supporting those whom are targeted for harassment and coercion. The work of building an institutional ethic of care begins, in that sense of communal support, with mutual aid.

Mutual aid performs a number of key functions in response to mass surveillance. First, and most importantly, it blunts the coercive effects of the state's expressivistic threat by reducing

the power of employers to muzzle employees who engage in social movement work, schools to punish students for activism, and state institutions to otherwise punish people for the work of social transformation. Then, by reducing the efficacy of economic vectors of coercion, it transforms that negative incentive into a positive one, turning reasons not to engage in the work of social transformation into reasons to involve oneself in that work. By taking care of our own, we model the kind of social relations that the institutions that perform surveillance, in their ultimate indifference (if not active antipathy) to human life, have failed to uphold. And, in that sense, we produce a piecemeal version of the kind of world we want, one where those of us who labor toward a better world can be resources for one another instead of liabilities.

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