

At the Limits of Justice

Women of Colour on Terror

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- 63 Agnes, "Women, Marriage." Agnes points out that economic rights remain inaccessible to many women.
- 64 Shah and Kallury, "Statutory Warnings."
- 65 Sharma, "When Survivors Become Victims."
- 66 Lloyd, "Politics without Television," 72.
- 67 Haskell, *From Reverence to Rape*.
- 68 Gabriel, *Melodrama and the Nation*, 320.
- 69 Sharma, "When Survivors Become Victims."
- 70 Joseph, *Women in Journalism*, 280.
- 71 Chowdhry, *Contentious Marriages, Eloping Couples*.
- 72 Agnes, "Women, Marriage, and the Subordination of Rights."
- 73 Agnes, "Women, Marriage, and the Subordination of Rights."
- 74 Rafter, *A Shot in the Mirror*. The literature on television police dramas is vast, but see, for instance, the following: Clarke, "Holding the Blue Lamp"; Landrum, "Instrumental Texts and Stereotyping"; Sparks, *Television and the Drama of Crime*; Sunser, *Morality and Social Order*; Cavender and Bond-Maupin, "Fear and Loathing"; Christensen, Schmidt, and Henderson, "The Selling of the Police"; Gunter, *Television and the Fear of Crime*; Hall et al., *Policing the Crisis*; and Lichter and Lichter, *Prime Time Crime*.

10 Diasporas of Empire: Arab Americans and the Reverberations of War

NADINE NABER

In the classroom, the Muslim student is transformed into a terrorist. It comes straight from teachers. Every day, students ask me, "What should I tell my teachers?" Teachers say racist things in class like, "Muslim men aren't afraid to die because when they die they believe they will be given seventy-five virgins in heaven."

Hatem, Palestinian community-based scholar, Berkeley, 2000

It was hard to make interventions about what sexism [in our community] because we were always responding to attacks against our communities. To be "a good Arab activist" you have to respond to violence, to racism.

Camelia, Egyptian political activist, San Francisco, 2001

It's the most terrifying thing that a person can deal with, knowing that their loved ones are stuck in a situation that they can do little to nothing about. Half of who I am was [in Lebanon]. The greatest fear was that I could risk losing [them].

Roulah, Lebanese resident of Dearborn, 2006

These quotes are taken from ethnographic research among Arab diasporas in California and Michigan between 1999 and 2006, a period of massive US imperial expansion in the Arab region.¹ During this period, the effects of US war in the Middle East reverberated within the geographic boundaries of the United States, impacting the lives of Arab and Muslim diasporas in distinct ways. Hatem's quote reflects how the Islamophobic discourse that has justified the War on Terror permeates the lives of Muslim students in Berkeley, California. Camelia refers to how

communal engagements with the crises of war and racism can foreclose opportunities for addressing intra-communal experiences of sexism. Roulah's quote points to the ways the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 2006 connected people living in the United States to their counterparts in Lebanon. In this chapter, I explore how *US-led military violence* (bombing, support for Israeli colonization, and sanctions, for instance) constitutes the experiences of the Arab diasporas I have been working with and compounds their engagements with *US gendered-racial violence*.

Bringing feminist empire and diaspora studies together, this chapter centres upon engagements with US imperialist war from the location of the diaspora. My aim is to intervene in the ways critical scholarship tends to frame the War on Terror in terms of two distinct contexts (here, in the United States, and there, in the countries the United States is invading).² Consider, for instance, that a great deal of research and advocacy frames US-led militarism and war as taking place "over there" (in Muslim-majority countries) and locates racism, discrimination, and hate crimes as *impacts* of the War on Terror experienced "over here" (in North America).³

As we will see, the Arab Americans with whom I worked may not experience military violence in the same ways or to the same degrees as those in the countries targeted directly by the bombs or bulldozers. Yet their lives are constituted by military violence all the same. For my interlocutors, military violence (bombs, bulldozers, etc.) and gendered and racial violence in the United States magnify each other. They are moving parts of the same imperial present and take place in the same spatial-temporal context. Imperial violence extends into my interlocutors' lives in profound ways – through simultaneous engagements with military and racial violence, through fear, through a sense of belonging to communities in crisis, and by altering concepts of gender and sexuality as well as relations and solidarities within and beyond Arab communities.

Since 1999, I have been working as an ethnographer-activist with Arab immigrant communities on a range of issues, including race, gender, and sexuality, generational tensions, feminist and religious-based activism, and transnational alliances. Between 1999 and 2002, I worked primarily in the San Francisco Bay Area, and between 2004 and 2006, primarily in Dearborn, Michigan.⁴ Here, I look back and take stock of the ways the theme of imperial violence has underpinned these research projects. I focus on stories in which imperial violence became a central theme. These stories tended to come primarily from community-based

political activists, people who directly experienced the violence of war and racism, and people with loved ones living in the Arab region. I also take a look forward by considering the kinds of political concerns and commitments that open up when we look at the violence of the War on Terror through the lens of "diasporas of empire."

Diasporas of Empire

Generally, scholars have theorized imperial diasporas in terms of people who reside in the countries that formerly colonized them – Algerians in France, South Asians in England, and so on. Kobena Mercer theorizes the diaspora of empire as a "reminder and a remainder of the nation's historical past."⁵ Yet as this chapter will show, Arab diasporas cannot be understood as postcolonial diasporas wherein the diaspora has moved into the seat of the former empire. Rather, the stories of Arabs in the United States becoming a diaspora of empire point to a moment in which the empire and its subjects exist in a transnational and contemporaneous frame. The subjects of the current empire "over there" also reside "over here" within the empire itself.

Of course, to a certain extent, my interlocutors' stories constitute what James Clifford theorizes as a diasporic "connection (elsewhere) that made a difference (here)."⁶ Yet my interlocutors' stories also depict the historically specific and subjective conditions that emerge among diasporas residing in a nation (the United States) at war with their homelands. My interlocutors live their lives between the United States and other places, through travel, transnational relationships, and political affiliations; they live in a "home away from home" or "here and there,"⁷ criss-crossing regional and national borders⁸ or "dwelling here with solidarity and connection there."⁹

Their stories call for a theorization of diaspora as a state of consciousness that emerges out of the relationship between Arab Americans, the movement of diverse Arabs to the United States, and US imperial and racial determinations. Conventional US diaspora studies reveal diasporic immigration as tracing a route *back to the formerly* imperial metropole, whereas what I refer to as "diasporas of empire" emerge against the highly invasive and shifting relations of power that are central to *contemporary* US neocolonialism and imperial formations. This formulation requires us to expand feminist diaspora studies beyond the focus on gendered experiences of migration, displacement, and racism

(or how gender takes on new forms from the homeland to the diaspora) towards an analysis of how gender and diaspora are constituted by relations between diaspora and varying forms of empire (settler colonialism, imperial war, etc.) and the ways empire shapes diasporic connections and relations to real or imagined homelands.

Furthermore, until now, most critical scholarship on the War on Terror has used the framework of imperialism primarily for analysing the Middle East and South Asia. Research focused on the impact of the War on Terror on US-based diaspora communities relies primarily on nation-based concepts of immigrant rights, civil rights, racism, and discrimination. By conceptualizing diaspora through the lens of imperialism and empire, we can expand the kinds of questions we ask about how the War on Terror takes on local form in the United States. Primarily, this chapter articulates diaspora not only as related to an originary homeland through travel, imagination, and displacement but also as linked to the violence of war "over there." Drawing on Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan's theorization of transnationalism, I use the term "linked" to call attention to diverse, unequal, and uneven transnational relations. Here, Arab diasporic life is constituted by linked violences that are not necessarily the same (i.e., the violence Arab Americans experience in the United States and the violence people in the Arab world experience). Yet the violence of imperial war constitutes them as subjects and profoundly constitutes their lives, beckoning them into the violence of war and racism simultaneously. Here, the homeland and diaspora or "war over there" and "gendered racism over here" are interconnected, within a similar spatial-temporal location. In other words, "over there" is "over here." Gendered racism shapes the grammar of war and violence, and similarly, war produces and enables particular forms of gendered racism. As the experiences and reflections of Arab Americans shared in this chapter will demonstrate, these are not distinct phenomena.

Three moments of military violence were particularly disruptive in the lives of my interlocutors between 1999 and 2006. The stories of activists involved in a leftist Arab movement in the San Francisco Bay Area in 1999 and 2000 elucidate the first moment. The stories of Arab Americans who encountered the post-9/11 racist backlash in San Francisco and of community leaders who advocated on their behalf illustrate the second moment, from 2001 to 2003. The stories of Lebanese living in Dearborn, Michigan, whose loved ones faced the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 2006 reflect the third moment.

The Late 1990s and the Leftist Arab Movement in the San Francisco Bay Area

The first moment took place between 1999 and 2001. This was the period of the beginning of the second Palestinian *intifada* (uprising) and massive Israeli state attacks against Palestinians. It was also the height of US-led sanctions on Iraq and a period of ongoing US bombing in Iraq coupled with devastating economic crises across the region.

The events that transpired in the late 1990s in Palestine developed in continuity with the history of Israeli colonization. The period often referred to as the "peace process" (between 1993 and 1999) entailed a doubling of the Israeli settler population in occupied Palestine.¹⁰ This was an extension of policies whereby Israel gained control over 78 percent of Palestinian land.¹¹ Also during this period, new Israeli policies divided Palestinian territory into non-contiguous areas and strengthened physical separation through road closures and the establishment of checkpoints and Israeli-only bypass roads. These measures, and the expansion of Israel's border control and military occupation in the mid-1990s, challenged Palestinian political leaders as the territories lost physical and political sovereignty; at the same time, US mediators were adopting less ambitious objectives for peace. By 2000, with an increase in Israeli military violence against Palestinians, including a growing number of children killed by Israeli forces, it had become clear that negotiations would not deliver a Palestinian state.

No moment better captures the urgent tenor of this period, which mobilized activists in the San Francisco Bay Area along with social justice advocates all over the world, than an event that took place on 30 September 2000, one week before the start of the second Palestinian *intifada*. Twelve-year-old Mohammad al-Durrah and his father (filmed by Talal Abu Rahma, a Palestinian cameraman freelancing for France 2) sought cover from Israeli gunfire behind a concrete pillar. The footage, which lasts just over a minute, shows the pair holding on to each other, the boy crying and the father waving, then a burst of gunfire and dust, after which the boy is seen slumped across his father's legs. This incident confirmed my interlocutors' view of Israel's apparently limitless brutality towards Palestinians. The dominant US and Israeli narratives of this period sadly distorted the US role in the crisis. My interlocutors, activists in a leftist Arab movement in the San Francisco Bay Area, were deeply outraged and expressed dissonance not only with US actions but also with US narratives.

Around the same time, international human rights reports were documenting the rising number of deaths caused by US-led sanctions on Iraq. The Red Crescent, the Red Cross, and various UN agencies repeatedly and graphically reported that tens of thousands were dying every year from those sanctions. Meanwhile, the US government continued to defend the measures, with Madeleine Albright declaring during a *60 Minutes* TV interview in 1995 that the deaths of more than 500,000 Iraqi children as a result of US-forced sanctions were "worth it."¹²

The devastation caused by the war on Iraq and the colonization of Palestine heightened the sense of political urgency among the Arab activists with whom I worked, and the Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism that fuelled US empire in their own lives compounded their outrage and frustration. Scholarly and community-based publications documented a massive rise in hate crimes against Arabs in the United States in the five years that followed the first Gulf War.¹³ Samia and Raydah, who entered high school and college in the 1990s, discussed their encounters with anti-Arab racism of that period:

Samia: When people hear I am Arab they associate it with war. All you hear in the media is when Arabs kill people, so they assume that I am a radical or terrorist.

Raydah: I always felt that either I didn't know enough to defend myself or it didn't matter how much I knew - people already labelled me. Oh, Palestinians are terrorists, or Saddam Hussein is the worst. You feel like they see all Arabs as terrorists.

In most of my interlocutors' stories, an understanding of how others in the United States perceived them shaped a shared sense that dominant US discourses associated them with potential "enemies of the nation." As young adults, their attempts to articulate Arabness entailed negotiating with dominant US discourses and totalizing debates about their communities. Perhaps most importantly, they realized they would need to grapple with the ways in which Arabness is conceived in the United States. Interlocutors often shared feelings of alienation over the way Arabness was viewed in US public spaces. They described having to constantly explain their positions on Palestine while they were active in political organizations across the Bay Area. Dahlia, an Iraqi refugee, recalled a neighbour seeing her family as potential gender terrorists. Several interlocutors' stories reveal the ways in which gender permeates anti-Arab racism, almost literally rendering Arab American women

unintelligible beyond dominant US discourses about them. Yara, a Lebanese interlocutor, described people's shock and curiosity when she spoke, as if they had never before heard an Arab woman speak. Another woman, Tala, told me, "I was standing at the Muslim Student Association's table on my college campus. A student approached the table and asked me if women cover their faces from the bruises they get after their husbands beat them."

Activists in the leftist Arab movement shared a collective analysis that finds parallels with Arab and Muslim feminist scholarship that has argued (a) that US corporate media representations of Arabs and Muslims as backward and uncivilized rely heavily on images of gender and sexuality, and (b) that these gendered and sexualized media images work to support and legitimize US-led imperialist ambitions in the Middle East. Dominant European and US discourses have represented Arab, Muslim, and Middle Eastern women as highly sexual, exotic victims of patriarchy and misogyny as a way of legitimizing colonial and imperial domination. These same discourses have portrayed the Arab and Muslim worlds as both exceptionally homosexual and manifestly homophobic.¹⁴

Daily exposure to racist and Islamophobic discourses, coupled with outrage over military violence and imperial expansion, helped strengthen the bonds among Arab Americans and inspired the revival of the leftist Arab movement in the San Francisco Bay Area, a movement that had been dormant since the early 1990s. The movement developed a "divest from Israel" campaign and another that called for an end to the sanctions on Iraq.¹⁵ I spoke to activists in this movement over a ten-year period, between 1999 and 2009. Nearly every activist I spoke with over the years shared the sense that the late 1990s, when they revived the leftist Arab movement, were the most momentous years of their lives. Activists remember this period as one that "institutionalized a new Arab discourse" and "moved the streets." Experiencing this period together, with all of its intensity and with little sleep, contributed to a profound sense of connection and alliance with one another.

But while the violence of war and racism mobilized my interlocutors and brought them together, it also put into play a series of silences and exclusions that had profound effects on peoples' daily lives. These silences and exclusions were a response to the barrage of news and information about the violence, bodily harm, and death in Palestine and Iraq, as well as the general sense of non-belonging in the United States and the political outrage that activists shared. My interlocutors

responded to these events, mobilized by a logic of emergency. The women I worked with found it difficult to find a language to address anything other than the brutal violence taking place in Palestine and Iraq. The result was an official movement discourse that resembled the narrow, one-dimensional focus of conventional nationalisms and that foreclosed the possibilities for addressing sexism and homophobia among activists. The adrenaline was always running high, and leftist Arab activists threw intense energy into mobilizing people and sparking resistance to the United States and Israel. The urgency of this mobilization complicated interpersonal relations in the group. As Carmelia explained, "It was as though ... once we dealt with all the immediate problems of death, starvation, bombing, political prisoners, then we can look at women's rights."

In addition, while the racial discourses that justified imperial war in Palestine and Iraq were the target of my interlocutors' activism, the need to combat Orientalism – and a particular understanding of how this could best be accomplished – came to dominate their work. Reactions to Orientalism foreclosed the possibilities of addressing internal movement hierarchies, particularly as they related to gender and sexuality. Women and men, to different extents, were similarly invested in a "common culture" that emerged in what I refer to here as the Leftist Arab Movement (LAM). This "common culture" assumed that publicly discussing Arab communities' sexism and homophobia could endanger the goals for which activists were fighting. Members shared the view that US Orientalist representations of Arabs and Muslims – specifically, images of hyper-oppressed Arab and Muslim women and Arab Muslim sexual savagery – were among the most common images Americans saw, especially in the news media and in Hollywood productions. In their analyses, Orientalist representations were a key reason why so many Americans supported US military interventions in the Middle East, and why many Americans, particularly liberals, expressed profound empathy for Arab and Muslim women – perceived to be victims of their culture and religion – but little concern about the impact of US policies on Arab and Muslim communities.¹⁶ In response to all of this, my interlocutors tended to operate under the tacit understanding that discussing sexism and compulsory heterosexuality within Arab communities might only reinforce Orientalism. Women discussed with me the ways in which the movement had mobilized an exclusively externally focused form of anti-imperialism/anti-Orientalism and had foreclosed the possibility of tackling intra-communal matters of sexism and

homophobia. At times, this resulted in the movement engendering its own forms of coercion and repression. Aisha explained:

We were operating with the mindset that we are always under attack – by feminists, soft leftists, racists ... If I was going to come out and say this person was sexist, I would be giving fuel to the fire, or legitimizing the attacks against our communities ... How can I bring up sexism when Zionists are waiting for any moment that we would falter to dismantle our work? I felt like I had to shut up and deal with the sexism.

Dahlia echoed these concerns:

If I were to come out publicly and say this person is sexist ... I can hear it now – even from other progressive activists ... "Even progressive Arab women are oppressed by progressive Arab men!" That would just legitimize further violence, colonization, and oppression against us. If we were to talk about homophobia ... people would say, "Oh my God! The leftist Arab movement is homophobic!" So there was never a place to talk about what was going on in our organizations or internally.

In Carmelia's view:

I would see myself as a traitor if I said [LAM] was sexist publicly. Our countries are under attack and anything that can be used against us will be. Some people were sexist but a lot of us were not politically mature enough to deal with it. It wasn't just when it came to sexism ... We also had a hard time discussing whether or how to critique Saddam Hussein in public. Some people felt strongly that we should not hold back and others were more hesitant. Many of us internalized this idea that we could only criticize what the US does. Our internal stuff was not for the public – untouchable. It was kind of naïve.

Underneath the tacit agreement to mute feminist critiques within the Arab Left was a visceral fear of betraying one's home community.¹⁷

The suppression of discussions of sexism was deployed as a tactic to avoid the reification of Orientalist/racist assumptions. This was seen as a necessary component of resisting empire *from within empire* – or, as one LAM activist put it, "living among our oppressors." The tacit fear that at any moment non-activists would use any articulations of sexism against the activist collective and its goals reflects the ways in which

the violence of military war compounded with the violence of racism required my interlocutors to make heart-wrenching choices, choices that often led to the disappearance of sexism among activists. This fear was constituted by profound sense of belonging to a "diaspora of empire." Here, empire inscribes itself on the diasporic subject within the domestic (national) borders of empire, thereby generating a movement logic in which the urgency of responding to colonization and military war overdetermines and suppresses possibilities for addressing multiple power struggles taking place within the-diaspora. Such dynamics are, of course, similar to those that women of colour feminists have described as having plagued various progressive civil rights and social justice movements in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s, which required women, for example, to choose between fighting sexism *or* racism.¹⁸ The historical and spatial dynamics of transnationalism, diaspora, and empire that circumscribed my interlocutors' lives produced problems that were similar to but also distinct from that ones that faced these earlier US-based movements. While the patriarchal logic of nationalism and national liberation structured the patriarchy underlying US people-of-colour-based movements of the 1960s and 1970s, a diasporic anti-imperialist politics fuelled the patriarchy underlying the leftist Arab American movements of the early twenty-first century. Diasporic anti-imperialism dismissed patriarchy as less important than community-based engagements with both domestic US racism and the experience of enduring war from the distance of diaspora. As I have elaborated elsewhere, in this diasporic space, multiple homeland nationalisms (Iraqi, Palestinian, etc.) conjoined and were remade through US racial politics, producing complex gender structures that cannot be explained through feminist analyses of the national liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s. For this imperial diaspora, it was not only a struggle over prioritizing sexism *or* national liberation, but also a struggle over multiple competing political agendas (such as whether on not to condemn Arab dictators like Saddam Hussein, and whether to focus on ending domestic racism rather than foreign wars). All of this exacerbated the problem that anti-imperialism had been prioritized over sexism.¹⁹

Arab Americans in the San Francisco Bay Area after the 9/11 Attacks

The 9/11 attacks justified war on Afghanistan and Iraq, support for the Israeli occupation of Palestine, Israel's war on Lebanon, and the transfer

to the Philippines of US troops who had carried out human rights violations against local people under the guise of "saving innocent people from terrorism," among other variations of US imperial expansion. The repeated US-led framing of 9/11's aftermath as an endless, fluid war facilitated the Bush administration's conflation of diverse individuals, movements, and historical contexts such as Bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, any and all forms of Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation, Hizballah, Hamas, and al-Qaeda under the rubric "Islamic fundamentalists/Muslim terrorists."²⁰ These military interventions and the racial discourses that drove them expanded anti-immigrant practices beyond the "illegal criminal" to encompass the "evil terrorist enemy within." Resorting to FBI investigations and spying, INS police raids, detentions, deportations, and interrogations of community organizations and activists, immigration policies related to 9/11 have targeted immigrants who fit amorphous characterizations of a "terrorist profile." The INS has targeted non-citizens from Muslim-majority countries as well as some individuals from Muslim-majority countries who are naturalized. These tactics are part of the federal government's "wide range of domestic, legislative, administrative, and judicial measures in the name of national security and the war on terrorism."²¹ Louise Cankar notes that "these measures have included mass arrests, secret and indefinite detentions, prolonged detention of 'material witnesses,' closed hearings and use of secret evidence ... FBI home and work visits, seizures of property, removals of aliens with technical visa violations and mandatory special registration."²²

Among Arab diasporas in the San Francisco Bay Area, 9/11-related hate crimes and other forms of public harassment disproportionately targeted persons who displayed what dominant government and corporate media discourses often constructed as a "Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim" identity. One's name, appearance, or nation of origin could signify an association with the enemy of the nation. These identity markers drew many people into joining the "War on Terror" through hate crimes and various forms of violence, harassment, and intimidation in the public sphere – at school, on the bus, at work, at home, and on the streets.²³ Teachers and youth group leaders reported that boys with names like Mohammed or Osama were disproportionately harassed at school. Nayla, a Muslim American youth group leader, recalled that schoolchildren would often shout, "Look, Mohammed the terrorist is coming!" when a young boy named Mohammed entered the playground. Amira, a college student, recalled reading the words, "I hate Mohammed. All Mohammeds should die," on a wall outside the

Recreation and Sports Facilities Building at the University of California, Berkeley.

Names signifying an "Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim" identity marked particular men and boys as alien to the nation and connected them to "the terrorists." Also, imperial racism articulated "Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim" masculinity as inherently violent towards women. One cab driver discussed his passengers' reactions to him when they read that his name was Mohammed: "Once, a woman got in my car. She looked at me, then read my name, then asked me if I was Muslim. When I said 'yes' she replied, 'how many girls have you killed today?'" Here, the passenger reified the Islamophobic discourse that intrinsically links Muslim masculinity to misogynist savagery.

Women who wear a headscarf disproportionately encountered Islamophobic attacks. Lamia, a community activist, summarized what she had witnessed through her work with Arab Muslim youth in San Francisco's Tenderloin District: "After September 11, girls who wear *hijab* received lots of harassment on the bus, at school, and on the street. People would try and pull their *hijab* off." Salma, an Iraqi youth, elucidated Lamia's point:

At school, kids take off their shirts and put them on their heads and say, "We look like Osama's daughter now. We look like you now." Some kids would come up to us and say, "Why don't you take it off? Are you still representing Osama?"

In this narrative, young Arab Muslim girls are constructed as if patriarchal kinship ties are the sole determinants of their identity. Reduced to "daughters of Osama," they are transformed into the "property," "the harmonious extension"²⁴ of the nation's enemy within, or into symbols connected to the "real actors" or "terrorists" who do not, however, stand on their own (and lack agency). The "daughter of a terrorist" metaphor also amounts to a condemnation of Muslim women for veiling.²⁵ Here, the "veil" serves as a boundary marker between "us" and "them"; thus, as long as women remain "veiled," they remain intrinsically connected to "potential terrorists."

In the diaspora, military violence produced disciplinary effects on the level of the emotive and the psyche. Racial violence induced among my interlocutors a state of consciousness I refer to as "internment of the psyche" or a sense of internal incarceration. This manifested itself in the fear that at any moment one could be harassed, beaten up,

picked up, locked up, or "disappeared."²⁶ Several community leaders recalled how women would debate whether they should remove their scarves. As Amal, another university student put it, "I knew I had to prepare for at least some kind of backlash because I was visually identifiable. My mother, who doesn't cover, specifically told me, 'Don't go outside for a month or two. Wait till things die down.' I was like, 'I shouldn't hide. I shouldn't be scared or restrain my lifestyle because of ignorance.'" In this sense, considerations of whether to remove a headscarf and when to go out in public generated an "internment of the psyche" – that is, an awareness that one must become habitually concerned about hegemonic misinterpretations and mistranslations and that one might be under scrutiny – by strangers, hidden cameras, wiretaps, and other surveillance mechanisms of the security state, as well as by invisible arbiters of behaviour. All of this rendered them vulnerable to the "truths" the state had contrived, even if they were engaging in lawful activity.

The internment of the psyche operates much like Foucault's "panopticon,"²⁷ the disciplinary mechanism of generalized surveillance that injects power's effects into the psyche. As a form of discipline, it "induces within individuals a state of consciousness that assures the automatic functioning of power."²⁸ In covert and unspoken ways, this internment links sociopolitical institutions to the individual psyche, "making it possible to bring the effects of power to the most minute and distant elements" of daily life.²⁹ Several interlocutors reflected on this sense of collective fear, a fear of being monitored by the state or simply mistrusted. They told of how they changed their names, avoided signing forms or petitions, and considered whether to shave their beards or avoid wearing the *hijab*. And this sense of being spied on was intensified even *within* Arab American communities – something that played out in particularly gendered ways. Because of this intense politicization of the personal, quotidian, and intimate, many of my interlocutors felt a heavy burden to "represent" themselves and their communities in particular symbolic ways, not only when interacting with non-Arabs, but also among themselves. From beards to veils to names, nothing was "just" a personal practice anymore; everything was now deeply meaningful within and beyond community boundaries.

Engagement with the military and racial violence of the War on Terror brought political activists into new alliances. The War on Terror's reverberations in the San Francisco Bay Area altered relations both within and among the various South Asian, Arab, and Muslim

communities, inspiring new coalitions and polarizations.³⁰ These reverberations also brought about new conceptualizations of military violence. Consider the experiences of Arab activists who participated in a rally held in Snowpark in Oakland, California, in 2002. A broad, people-of-colour-based coalition crafted slogans and speeches linking US imperialism abroad to internally focused US colonization and racism. After this rally, the organization United Communities against War and Racism (UCAWAR) was formed to mobilize grassroots communities of colour against war and racism simultaneously. During this period, several Arab feminists were working with women of colour organizations such as the Women of Color Resource Center and INCTEI: Women of Color against Violence. These organizations framed the "War on Terror" in terms of its global *and* local impacts. INCTEI developed an anti-militarism campaign that cast military violence in transnational terms, focusing on how the War on Terror was affecting women both in countries the United States was invading and in the United States itself. One of their fliers read in part: "Invading armies have never liberated women. Only we can liberate ourselves... The police and militaries have been attacking our communities for centuries. Resist the war of terror in our communities!" This excerpt was part of a broader campaign that INCTEI had developed that conceptualized US imperialism in terms of interconnected components, which included the wars on Afghanistan and Iraq, the gendered and racist discourse that had justified those wars, and the racist violence against communities of colour in the United States.

Southern Lebanese Diasporas in Michigan, July 2006

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon began on 12 July 2006 when Hizballah militia attacked an Israeli army convoy and captured two soldiers. Hizballah said it had captured these soldiers in order to bargain for the release of three Lebanese detained in Israel without due process and to reduce Israeli pressure on Gaza.³¹ Israel responded with a naval blockade, a ground invasion of southern Lebanon, and massive airstrikes targeting civilians and Lebanon's civil infrastructure. The invasion killed 1,200 Lebanese, wounded 4,000, and displaced one million more; it also destroyed tens of thousands of homes as well as hospitals, schools, factories, roads, airports, power stations, fuel depots, warehouses, and most of the country's bridges.³² Lara Deeb explains that as the invasion continued, "Israel's initially stated goal of securing the release of the two captured soldiers ... faded from Israeli discourse and

gave way to two additional stated goals: the disarmament or at least 'degrading' of Hizballah's militia, as well as its removal from south Lebanon."³³ Throughout the invasion, Hizballah launched rockets into northern Israel, killing forty-three Israeli civilians and wounding dozens more.³⁴ International human rights organizations criticized both Israel and Hizballah for attacking civilians and criticized Israel's indiscriminate attacks against civil infrastructure and villages and its use of cluster bombs and white phosphorus shells. The Bush administration backed Israel, resorting to rhetoric that justified the invasion, and failed to support international calls for a ceasefire.³⁵

In interviews, members of the Lebanese diaspora from the predominantly Shi'i Muslim south of Lebanon living in Dearborn, Michigan, reflected on how they experienced the invasion. "The military approach was beyond normal rules of war," Mohammed told me. "The main target was civilians. Anyone could be a target. If the bombardment got heavy around them, there were no safe areas to go. This is why there was so much anxiety and fear." Hussein reflected on how most Lebanese families in Dearborn had family living in Lebanon: "The same family has one leg here and one leg there literally."

The racial discourses that reinforced US support for the invasion compounded my interlocutors' sense of outrage and their desire for connections with one another. The Lebanese with whom I worked all realized that dominant US government and media images were portraying Lebanese, Arabs, and Muslims as terrorists and devaluing their casualties in the invasion. People told me how they flipped back and forth between contradictory images on Arabic and American TV stations. Arabic Satellite TV showed horrifying images of death and destruction in Lebanon as a consequence of Israel's disproportionate use of force. Meanwhile, the US corporate media tended to portray the Israelis as defending themselves against Lebanese terrorists and to suggest that the sufferings of the Israelis and Lebanese were more or less equivalent. Many interlocutors accused the news media of supporting terrorism when they gave space to community leaders who criticized the Israeli army's actions. Several community leaders said that the media and pro-Israeli pressure groups "did not leave the community to freely express its views." Mohammed, director of a leading Arab American civil rights organization in Michigan, explained:

There was tremendous pressure to intimidate the community to suppress their views. This wave of labeling and general condemnation took the community's reaction out of context and made it look like support for

Hizballah. People were crying, saying, "It's my family, it's my father, my sister my mother, my cousin, my nieces, my nephews." But they projected it as terrorism. There was a well-orchestrated effort to make you feel like you were committing a crime for calling for ceasefire. The minute you become critical, you're anti-Semitic, and pro-terrorist. They didn't want us to speak about the war.

Most interlocutors said that the invasion had brought Lebanese together in Dearborn and had strengthened community bonds. Roulah told me that familial relations became stronger: "They [family] understand exactly what you are going through, because that person who may be over there [in Lebanon] is just as important to them as they are to you." Suleiman likewise noted: "We spent days and nights together. It made us closer to each other. The war showed us how much we love each other – how much we care – how much we get scared for each other."

People turned to one another to cope with the death and destruction wrought by the military invasion. Sara's extended family in Dearborn includes five hundred people. During the war, she spent her time with relatives there as they waited for news about their loved ones in Lebanon: "We turned to each other here. You couldn't be there to save your grandmother, to save your grandfather, aunt or uncle. Having each other kind of helped keep us stay afloat until it ended."

Sara's quote illustrates that transnational social fields and connections were intensified during the invasion of Lebanon. Because Sara was in Dearborn during that time, she could not physically help her loved ones in Lebanon. She turned to her counterparts "over here" (in the United States) to cope with the news about family "over there" (in Lebanon), whom she could not physically protect, save, or secure. Turning to one another for comfort, security, and care helped them deal with the massive death, destruction, and loss taking place in Lebanon. One interlocutor, remembering the political protests that were held in Dearborn during the invasion, told me:

I recall daily, all you would have to do is to stand and stop on a sidewalk on Warren Avenue and in seconds, in minutes, in hours you see the two sides are full and packed. That is what was happening. My God, this participation, it had everyone. Even senior citizens who barely walked, who barely can stand, made a point to show up. They made a point to come and cry out. To come and show their anger, their call to end this madness.

I tell you, the heat index was so high or sometimes it rained, and people didn't care. Everyone responded. Everyone came.

In Dearborn during the war, the Bint Jubel Cultural Center served as a meeting place for Lebanese and their allies. There, people came together to hold memorial services for persons killed in Lebanon, to raise relief funds, and to carry out media and letter-writing campaigns. The centre's director asked me, "Which story do you want me to pick? Everybody had relatives in Lebanon." Eyad, a prominent newspaper editor in the community, told me that "anyone you grab on the street will tell you a story that happened to one of their family." Some stories were more tragic than others. Local newspapers reported that one woman in the community had six hundred family members directly targeted by the Israeli bombardment. One man lost twelve family members; another lost more than forty. Ali is a musician and a recent immigrant who came to the United States in his early twenties. His immediate family and most of his closest friends live in Lebanon:

The friends who taught music to me growing up were now dead. After this, every friend I had before, every person in my family, is two times more that friend and two times more my family. Every enemy that I had before is two times more my enemy. When you're killing our children, the Christians and the Muslims, and the Sunnis and the Shias, they're going to build stronger bonds.

Roulah's statement that "everyone who wasn't your family became your family" reveals how intensified concepts of belonging took form on Dearborn's streets. Zain told me: "If one family lost someone, everyone lost that person. Family came together and community came together as a family." Every community leader I spoke to shared the view that the massive destruction was serving as a catalyst, bringing people together and producing a collective experience in which "you would make a call and everybody would show up."

Configured as "family," Lebanese transmigrants idealized connection and support as responsibilities they owed to one another. As one interlocutor put it, "We became one another's backbones." In the face of war, the concept of "family" offered such a powerful sense of comfort that my interlocutors rarely referenced the power imbalances and exclusions that underlie the very same (heteropatriarchal) family structure to which they turned. Zain, referring to Dearborn, told me that

"you looked at every person and knew exactly what they were feeling because you were feeling the same thing. People I don't even know. Everyone found a kinship in their frustration, anger and sadness."

All of the massive funerals, mourning ceremonies, and house visits in Dearborn reinforced the dynamic in which the concept of "heteropatriarchal family" linked Lebanese diasporas together. Typically, southern Lebanese families organized memorial services to mark the passing of an individual family member. In the summer of 2006, several memorials were held that marked the passing of more than one individual. Nasser recalled:

When my mother died, I had a memorial for her. At least 3,000 people attended. I announced it in the local newspapers and said, "Sunday at the Islamic Center." Three or four other families contacted me and said, "We lost our loved ones too. Can you include us?" That's how we comforted each other.

Firyal's aunt and grandmother were casualties of this war. She recalled:

It was an amazing outpouring of people caring and wanting to be there and cry with us, to make sure we ate, drank, and were feeling okay. Over 3,000 people went through this house. We put an obituary in a local paper for my aunts and my grandmothers and people we didn't know sent flowers, breakfast, lunch, dinners. It took three hours to shake every hand. In Dearborn, the two main halls where Arab weddings are held cancelled all the weddings, engagements, baby showers, bridal showers. They opened their doors to mourners.

Memorials that previously would have involved one extended family expanded to include multiple families or even the (long-distance) nation as an imagined family. Responsibilities typically associated with extended kin were now shared among Lebanese who had faced similar losses and tragedies.

Relocating Violence, War, and Resistance

In these stories, we have seen how the violent realities of military war constituted the lives of Arab Americans at different moments and in different geographic locations. In the late 1990s in the San Francisco Bay Area, leftist Arab activists grappled with multiple forms of violence—the

realities of military-based bodily harm, death, and killing and the linked realities of gendered racism and intra-communal sexism.

Their stories show how different forms of life and death are relational and interconnected—the urgency of Palestine and Iraq, dominant US racial logics that work to quell critiques of Israel, and the silencing of feminist critiques within the diaspora. This does not mean that activists attributed the same urgency to every issue, but rather that military violence, racial violence, and heteropatriarchy interacted with and intensified one another. The violence of war and racism in Palestine and Iraq produced a logic of emergency that led the leftist Arab movement to operate on a continuum with war on one end and sexism and homophobia in the diaspora on the other. Women activists in particular struggled with this formulation.

In the San Francisco Bay Area in the aftermath of 9/11, intensified US military invasions, anti-immigrant policies, and gendered racism augmented one another. We saw the internalization of the War on Terror in terms of the internment of the psyche, a form of internal incarceration. Then in 2006, a wave of panic and worry washed over Dearborn, Michigan, as Lebanese diasporas waited to learn whether their loved ones in Lebanon were alive or dead. We saw their outrage heightened by their engagements with gendered racist discourses that supported the invasion. We also saw how these experiences strengthened intra-communal relations and intensified relationships within the diaspora. Of course, concepts of family and kinship, when extended and fortified beyond the extended family, rely heteronormative kinship ideals and come with their own sets of exclusions. Yet interlocutors focused primarily on how the invasion inspired a sense of rights and responsibilities among the Lebanese diaspora, which people tended to conceptualize through an affective language of comfort and security.

These stories tell us something about Arab diasporas; they also tell us something about the US empire itself—namely, that the empire and the logics through which it works are transnational (in the context of the War on Terror). But at the same time, this point is familiar. US empire studies and anti-imperialist and transnational feminisms have already established that the empire is transnational.³⁶ Yet even these frameworks have tended to focus on how US-led imperialism (abroad) impacts US-based structures of power (racism, classism, heteropatriarchy). There remains a strong tendency to spatially and geographically separate US-led empire abroad from the realities of US-led racism within the United States and to define US imperialism primarily in terms of

invasions overseas (Panama, Nicaragua, and so on), with US-based racism as an effect, impact, or result of imperialism.

Consider, for instance, these arguments: that white supremacist racial ideologies (against African Americans,³⁷ for instance) *reinforce* US imperialist interventions in the global South,³⁷ that US imperialist interventions shape domestic US structures of race and racism; and that US imperialism impacts Third World women and US women of colour differently. There has been less research on how US imperialist interventions extend directly into US state structures and everyday lives (e.g., on how the global war on drugs and the US-based criminalization of people of colour are part of the same war).³⁸ In addition, while US ethnic studies have developed a framework for examining "inter-national colonization" or "the colonized within," it tends to focus on people targeted by histories of US settler colonialism within the geographic boundaries of the United States – such as Native Americans, Hawaiians, and Puerto Ricans. Within the framework of empire studies, Arabs, Muslims, and South Asians are primarily considered targets of imperial wars "abroad."

The framework diasporas of empire requires us to consider the War on Terror not in terms of *the* war and its "backlash" or *the* war and its "impacts" or "effects," but in terms of multiple violences with interconnected consequences that extend transnationally in similar spatio-temporal contexts. Taking the lead from my interlocutors and framing Arab diasporas as diasporas of empire opens up new possibilities for anti-imperialist feminist theory and activism to commit to ending both military violence "abroad" and the multiple, interconnected reverberations of empire within (heteropatriarchy and settler colonialism, gendered and sexualized racism, the criminalization of communities of colour, and so on). Many of the activists I work with understand these connections intimately, often experiencing their consequences in their daily lives because of how they dress as well as through their efforts not just to survive crises but to create conditions in which *all* members of their communities can thrive. Overall, interpreting Arab American experiences through the framework of diaspora of empire shows the transnational, deeply intimate violence of empire – but doing so also allows us to turn the moments in which transnational histories rub up against one another into moments of cross-border alliance and movement building. Moreover, the stories Arab American activists tell shed light on the transnational underpinnings of empire and on how imperial war "over there" reverberates "over here." Bringing this analysis together with what transnational anti-imperialist feminists have

been arguing for decades, it is now clearer than ever that the War on Terror has entailed a restructuring of US domestic *and* foreign policy, which in turn has entailed an expansion of the conjoined heteropatriarchal, racist, and classist structures of the prison-industrial complex (PIC) *and* the military-industrial complex (MIC), both of these driven by the economic neoliberalism of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries and both disproportionately impacting women of colour, poor women, queers and transgender people, sex workers, immigrant women, women with disabilities, and other marginalized women in the United States and in the countries it is invading.³⁹ Researching and teaching beyond one-directional feminist analyses that focus on *either* the devastation resulting from US imperialism and war in the MENA region *or* racial-classist-heteropatriarchal violence in the United States means taking seriously how US "domestic" politics and US "foreign" politics exist within a similar historical and political frame. The points where the US "domestic" and "foreign" conjoin – and are made and remade through each other – are crucial axes for alliance building and accountability across disciplines and borders. Yet while framing the domestic and foreign structures of US imperialism as relational and mutually constitutive, I want to avoid assuming shared experiences, or that people drawn into US imperialism (and its racial and heteropatriarchal foundations) from varying locations share *equal* struggles. Rather, we might ask how the histories of people from different political locations within the United States and the MENA region (and beyond) rub up against one another when they are drawn into similar imperialist structures in different ways and to different degrees. For instance, how are we to approach alliance building and power asymmetries when it comes to Arab women living in the United States and Arab women living in countries targeted by US-led war? Or between the US military recruitment of working-class US women of colour (who will face high risks of sexual assault) through false promises about employment and education *and* US-led bombing, killing, and sexual assault of women in the Arab region and their communities? Future research might also address the flow of implications and feelings of identification and dis-identification in the opposite direction, so to speak. We might consider what the people living in Lebanon during the Israeli invasion made of the outpouring of support from Arab Americans in Dearborn and the ways that diasporic (dis)identifications with empire resonate across borders, so that the flow is never simply one way or another, but back and forth.

NOTES

- 1 US imperialism in the Middle East has entitled neoliberal economic expansion and domination. See Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt*; Elyachar, *Mountains of Dispossession*. See also Incite!, *The Revolution*; and Abdo, "Imperialism, the State, and NGOs," regarding support for the NGO-ization or professionalization of revolutionary social movements; support of puppet governments through the threat of military or economic domination (e.g., Jordan and Egypt); wars on countries that do not comply with imperial interests; the economic and military backing of Israeli-settler colonialism and expansion; and the circulation of media and government discourses on terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism.
- 2 There are indeed exceptions to this trend, such as Razack, *Casting Out*; Moallem, "Whose Fundamentalism?"; and Maitra, *Missing*.
- 3 See Human Rights Watch, "We Are Not the Enemy."
- 4 See the following, all by Naber, for more details on each of these studies: "So Our History"; "The Rules of Forced Engagement"; "Transnational Families"; and *Arab America*.
- 5 See Mercer, *Welcome to the Jungle*.
- 6 See Clifford, *Routes*, 269.
- 7 See Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*.
- 8 See Shohat, *Area Studies*, 206.
- 9 See Clifford, *Routes*, 255.
- 10 See Farsoun and Arruri, *Palestine and the Palestinians*, 292.
- 11 See Johnson and Kuttah, "Where Have All the Women."
- 12 See Clark, "Fire and Ice"; Gordon, *Invisible War*.
- 13 See ADC, 1991 Report; Wingfield and Karaman, "Arab Stereotypes"; Sabagh, *Sex, Lies, and Stereotypes*; Hatem, "How the Gulf War."
- 14 See Puar, *Terrivist Assemblages*; Al-Sayyad, "You're What?"; Razack, *Casting Out*; Massad, *Desiring Arabs*; Hayes, "Queer Resistance."
- 15 See Naber, *Arab America*.
- 16 See Jarmakan, *Imagining Arab Womanhood*; Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women"; Razack, "Geopolitics."
- 17 Several scholars of US immigrant communities and communities of colour document similar scenarios in which racism produces the flip side of discrimination's distancing role. Gutierrez, *Walls and Mirrors*; Moghissi, "Away from Home."
- 18 Robnett, *How Long?*
- 19 See Naber, *Arab America*.
- 20 The differences between Hizballah and al-Qaeda alone affirm this point. Hizballah is "a political party" and "a powerful actor in Lebanese politics" as well as "a provider of important social services." See Deeb, *An Enchanted Modern*. According to Deeb, Hizballah's militia arose to battle Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon in 1982 and 2000 and to advocate for Lebanon's disenfranchised Shi'i Muslim community. Al-Qaeda is an international alliance of militant Islamist organizations, a fringe group, and a diffuse movement comprising individual non-state actors or small cells operating independently.
- 21 See Cainkar, "Islamic Revival," 1.
- 22 See Cainkar, "Islamic Revival," 1.
- 23 See Naber, "The Rules."
- 24 Shohat and Stamm, *Unthinking Eurocentrism*.
- 25 See Ella Shohat and Robert Stamm for an analysis of colonialist discourses on "veiling." In their critique of colonialist Hollywood films, they write that "The orient is ... sexualized through the recurrent figure of the veiled woman, whose mysterious inaccessibility, mirroring that of the orient itself, requires Western unveiling to be understood." *Unthinking Eurocentrism*, 149.
- 26 See Naber, "The Rules."
- 27 See Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 209.
- 28 See Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 209.
- 29 See Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*.
- 30 See Naber, "So Our History."
- 31 See Khalidi, "Foreword." See also Deeb, *An Enchanted Modern*, for an overview of Hizballah.
- 32 Sayed and Tzannatos, "The Economic and Human Costs."
- 33 Deeb, "Hizballah."
- 34 Amnesty International reports, using numbers from the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that 101 civilians were either moderately or seriously injured, with many more "lightly" injured; MIDE 02/025/2006, 8. AI also states that only twelve Israeli soldiers were killed during the war, all as they entered southern Lebanon.
- 35 Amidst numerous calls for a ceasefire and condemnations of the violence from political and religious organizations, such as the European Union and the Catholic Church, the official US position was that "Israel had a right to defend itself." Although the UN was dismayed by the violence from its onset, the UN Security Council did not call for a full cessation of hostilities until 11 August, when it issued Resolution 1701, mostly because the United

States continually blocked any votes on a ceasefire Zunes, "Washington's Proxy War," 108-12.

36 Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire*; Harvey, *The New Imperialism*.

37 See Love, *Race over Empire*.

38 I have drawn upon the following studies as examples of ethnic studies scholarship that theorizes US imperialism "abroad" and "domestic": US racism as extensions of each other: Kim, *Ends of Empire*; Diaz and Kuanui, *Native Pacific Cultural Studies*; Diaz and Kuanui: "Native Pacific Cultural Studies."

39 See Mohanty, Pratt, and Riley, "Introduction"; Razack, "Geopolitics, Culture Clash"; Bacchetta et al., "Transnational Feminist Practices"; and Shohat, "Introduction."

11 Sovereignty, War on Terror, and Violence against Women

MEYDA YEĞENOĞLU

Violence against women is a global phenomenon. It cuts across the boundaries of social and economic class positions. The most pervasive violation of human rights that we know of today is violence against women: it is on our streets and in our homes, schools, prisons, workplaces, and institutions. Under-reporting makes it difficult to estimate its prevalence, but the available statistics show that at least one of our every three women around the world has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime and that the abuser is usually someone known to her. In a survey of about 24,000 women in ten countries, the World Health Organization found that between 10 and 69 per cent of women reported having been physically assaulted at some point in their lives. In the United States, the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence reports the following: one in every four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime; every year, an estimated 1.3 million women are victims of physical assault by an intimate partner; according to police, almost one-third of female homicide victims are killed by an intimate partner; in 70 to 80 per cent of intimate partner homicides, no matter which partner was killed, the man physically abused the woman before the murder; 7.8 million women have been raped by an intimate partner at some point in their lives; and each year there are nearly 16,800 homicides and 2.2 million injuries resulting from intimate partner violence. And most cases of domestic violence are never reported to the police.

Although it has been emphasized time and again that people all over the world should fear and prepared for the next terrorist attack at any moment, on US soil there have been 0 attacks since 9/11. In 2011, the Worldwide Incidents Tracking System reported that France