

“Do not run on the platforms ... if you look a bit foreign”: De/Constructing the Travelling Terrorist Assemblage

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The CCTV images of three British schoolgirls passing the airport security gates en route to Syria, which circulated widely in the UK media in early 2015, appeared uncanny to me. Not only was there something oddly familiar about the particular blend of adolescent daring and longing that their confident and hopeful stride seemed to project, but the grainy pictures also appeared to recall that earlier CCTV footage, widely distributed a decade before, of the suspected 7/7 bombers entering Luton station. In both cases, the images ‘catch’ the terrorist suspects where the security services and police fail to do so; they halt their step, pause their inevitable course towards death and destruction, if only for a fleeting moment. These images are uncanny, too, because they confront viewers with “that rather terrible thing which is there in every photograph: the return of the dead” (Barthes [1980] 1981, 9). If the schoolgirls from East London become the uncanny doubles of the bombers from the North, death returns in the images alongside “what was once familiar and then repressed” (Freud [1919] 2003, 153). The dynamics of repression, consolidation, doubling, and marking that operate in the visual economies of the ‘war on terror’ are at the centre of this essay.

Based on a reading of public and media discourse, urban infrastructures and practices, as well as filmic and theatrical representations, I trace three strategies of visualisation, performance, and spatialisation that work together to produce the iconic figure of the travelling terrorist. First, as a more thorough reading of CCTV stills of the British schoolgirls and the 7/7 bombers will reveal, what is at play in the construction of the travelling terrorist is a merging of organic and non-organic matter: the body – itself stratified across vectors of age,

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race/ethnicity, gender, and so on – fuses with the inorganic elements of the rucksack, the bomb, the *hijab*, the airport gates, the train station. Drawing on the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, as well as Jasbir Puar’s development of their concepts in *Terrorist Assemblages* (2007), I will discuss the ensemble of organic and machinic elements in the becoming-terrorist as an assemblage. Second, the “tropes of ‘passing’ and ‘covering’” will be analysed, as Rustom Bharucha proposes in *Terror and Performance* (2014), as “performative subterfuges” (2014, 71). The performative dimension of the travelling terrorist’s construction is explored further via John Hutnyk’s idea of *Pantomime Terror* (2014), which is ideally suited to describe the spectacle of “commuter paranoia” (2014, 1) that reifies the terrorist figure as an object of fear. Third, the essay closes with a discussion of the “spatialisation of race” (Pugliese 2006, n.p.) at the site/sight of the travelling terrorist’s body in order to uncover the ways in which an imagined racialised geography works to regulate urbanites’ (rights to) mobility.

In reality, these three strategies work in tandem to produce the travelling terrorist and cannot be neatly separated. But as this special issue is dedicated to the conjunctions of terrorism and tourism, some of the peculiarities of touring and travelling necessarily inflect my approach: just as each encounter with new places forms associations with the past locations we have visited, I hope that each of the stops along the three theoretical routes taken here will add up and converge with the next to produce a somewhat coherent account of the construction of the travelling terrorist.

Travelling Terrorist Assemblages

While early scholarly responses to the London bombings sought to circumscribe ‘7/7’ as “one of those events that disrupts linear visions of time and memory” (Seidler 2007, 23), an ordering narrative was soon formed to sort the events of 7 July 2005 into a linear sequence. The workings of this narrative are perhaps nowhere as evident as on the “clickable” timeline set up on the BBC website¹ in May 2011, enabling readers to virtually “[e]xplore the day’s events” (*BBC News* 2011, n.p.). The earliest clickable date is 4 am; upon pressing the respective button, the reader is informed that “Mohammad Sidique Khan, 30, Shehzad Tanweer, 22, and 18-year-old Hasib Hussain leave West Yorkshire in a rented blue Nissan Micra bound for Luton” (*ibid.*). A monochrome CCTV image of the rental car serves as visual proof of the forensic retracing of the men’s journey. In the CCTV still, with the time “03:59:33” clearly visible in the top left corner, a white circle is drawn around the car. The same priming technique is repeated across the visual representations; arrows and circles draw selective attention to the bombers’ grainy bodies, their cars, rucksacks, and equipment.

¹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-13301195>

In between the buttons marking the timeline from 4 am to 8:59 am, I am clicking through the images in the mode that Roland Barthes has described as the *studium*, the trained and cursory study of any number of photographs that serve as political or historical documentation, without an affective investment in them, at least none that goes beyond “an *average affect*” ([1980] 1981, 26). It is at the 9 am button that I stumble across a photograph that cannot be as easily assimilated in the study mode. The caption accompanying the image reads:

Hussain, who has apparently experienced problems with his bomb, buys a nine-volt battery from a WH Smith shop at King’s Cross station where he is seen rummaging around in his rucksack. He is then caught on CCTV wandering along Euston Road before heading to McDonald’s for eight minutes. (*BBC News* 2011, n.p.)

The peculiar blend of precise and gratuitous detail offered in the caption is puzzling. It is as if the caption reinstates the investigative observation that the police and security services failed to deliver at 9 am on 7 July 2005. In the narrative reconstruction of the events, we can retrospectively figure ourselves as the omniscient observers, fully informed about the whereabouts and proceedings of the suspects at every single point in time. The photograph, however, also eludes this precision. For the CCTV still chosen to illustrate the 9 am event (titled “Hussain buys battery”) does not provide any visual proof to sustain the various certainties claimed in the caption: we do not see the nine-volt battery, the ‘rummaging around’ in the rucksack, the eight-minute excursion to McDonald’s. Instead, we catch Hussain exiting what appears to be King’s Cross Station. Although it is, at this stage in the clickable timeline, a familiar technique used to tag the bombers across the different CCTV images, I find myself wondering what the function of the cropped blue arrow is, which has been inserted pointedly above Hussain’s head. Clearly, identifying him as the bomber is obsolete as he is the only person to be seen in the clipping. Perhaps, the arrow might point more to the rucksack than the man, the dark bag which is slightly camouflaged by his grey coat.

I now realise that the superfluous arrow had been missing from the preceding, non-CCTV images on the timeline (“Tanweer gets on Tube”, “Khan gets on Tube”, “Lindsay gets on Tube”), only to reappear at 9 am in order to mark Hussain. Contrasted with the finality of the other bombers’ descent into the underground to unleash a “brute-force which [...] remained subterranean and ill-illuminated” (Read 2008, 73), the arrow in this photograph seems to high-light Hussain’s agency. As with those arrows which are sometimes used to point out the video game avatar of whom the player is in control, I might invest in the fantasy that here, too, I am in charge, that I could steer Hussain away from his designated path. Then again, the arrow might stand in for the crosshairs, introducing a telescopic view on a suspect that was, in reality, elusive, enticing viewers to imagine that Hussain might be (or might have been) stopped, caught, prevented.

In any case, the arrow becomes that element which appears to “break (or punctuate) the *studium* [...], it is this element which rises from the scene [...] and pierces me” (Barthes [1980] 1981, 26). Although Barthes emphasises that the *punctum* cannot be inserted intentionally – as is clearly the case with the cropped arrow, though the intention is ambiguous – his description of the detail that pierces and “attracts me”, whose “mere presence changes my reading” (ibid., 42), is relevant here.

In spite of the “incapacity to name” (ibid., 51) what the *punctum*, or arrow, points to, it seems to mark the moment where the assemblage of the travelling terrorist is forged. His body (for it is primarily, though not exclusively, a male body that becomes eligible for this construction) – is produced in the interaction between its components – that is, its specific location at vectors of race/ethnicity, age, gender, and so on – and the physical world surrounding it. The architecture of the train station is plainly visible in the image: one can identify the sliding door with its familiar blue “keep clear” sign, the typical WH Smith station shop in the background, and the yellow-black barricade tape which points to the perpetual constructions going on at such sites. This spatial set-up fuses with the physique of the racialised young male and the essential accessory of the rucksack to produce the assemblage of the travelling terrorist. The assemblage effectuated by this visualisation can be delineated by drawing on Deleuze and Guattari’s reworking of the Freudian case study of Little Hans, who had seen a cart-drawing horse collapse in the street and developed an apparent phobia of horses:

In the same way that we avoided defining a body by its organs and functions, we will avoid defining it by Species or Genus characteristics; instead we will count its affects [...]. We know nothing about a body until we know what it can do, in other words, what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition with other affects, with the affects of another body, either to destroy that body or to be destroyed by it, either to exchange actions and passions with it or to join with it in composing a more powerful body. [...] Little Hans’s horse is not representative but affective. It is not a member of a species but an element or individual in a machinic assemblage: draft horse-omnibus-street. It is defined by a list of active and passive affects in the context of the individuated assemblage it is part of [...]. These affects circulate and are transformed within the assemblage: what a horse ‘can do’. ([1980] 1988, 257).

The photograph of Hussain at the train station stands out against the other images on the timeline because it captures the terrorist body as an element in a ‘machinic assemblage’: body-rucksack-station. The image does not show what the terrorist essentially ‘is’, but insinuates what this assemblage ‘can do’. By isolating, if only for an instant, the individual from the multitude, the picture offers a visual interruption in the well-known course of events in order to enable view-

ers to ‘count’ the affects and potentialities of this body, to gauge how these might enter into circulation with other bodies, destroying them. The travelling terrorist never ‘is’, but is constantly becoming in this unpredictable exchange of affects, intensities, forces. Nevertheless, the CCTV footage purports to capture all the semiotic markers that make the becoming-terrorist assemblage legible and thus gains an almost instructive quality. The arrow can now be deciphered as: ‘this is what a travelling terrorist looks like’. This claim for the functional dimension of the photograph can, of course, only be made if one concedes Jacques Rancière’s point that the *punctum* cannot be as neatly differentiated from the *studium* as Barthes suggests, for it is often only by drawing on spectators’ historical knowledge that the affective power of the photograph can be effective ([2008] 2011, 112).² Likewise, the image of Hussain could not ‘pierce’ the viewer if it were separated from its cultural and historical context. We already know what this body ‘can do’.

In *Terrorist Assemblages*, Jasbir Puar takes up Deleuze and Guattari’s emphasis on the body’s affective potentialities. Based on their terminology, she proposes to “rethink race, sexuality, and gender as concatenations, unstable assemblages of revolving and devolving energies, rather than intersectional coordinates” (2007, 195). Focusing on the interplay of racialisation and sexualisation in the construction of terrorist look-alike figures, Puar discusses the processes whereby the turban worn by Sikhs has been “accruing the marks of a terrorist masculinity” in the United States after 9/11 (ibid., 175). According to her, turban-wearing Sikhs function as “substitute embodiments for an elusive Osama bin Laden” and thereby become “sanctioned hate crime target[s]” (ibid., 180). I am particularly interested in the way Puar assesses the place of the turbaned man in the production of the “bodies of our war times”:

The curious undermining of the distinction between organic and non-organic entities [...] resonates with other bodies of our war times: the (female) suicide bomber, the burqa’ed figure (female? male passing for female?), the monstrous terrorist-fag, the activist crushed by a bulldozer in Palestine [...]. The becomings of these bodies, many blurring the distinctions between machinic and organic, have disruptive and eruptive capacities. (Ibid., 196)

² Rancière notes the contradiction in Barthes’s distinction between the *studium* and the *punctum* when he discusses Alexander Gardner’s photograph of death-row candidate Lewis Payne in his cell (1865). While Barthes claims of this image that “the *punctum* is: *He is going to die*” ([1980] 1981, 96), Rancière remarks that “nothing in the photo tells us that the young man is going to die. [...] To make the effect of the photo and the affect of death coincide, Barthes has had to create a short-circuit between historical knowledge of the subject represented and the material texture of the photograph” ([2008] 2011, 112).

Clearly, the racialised male body carrying a rucksack on public transport can be added to this list. In carrying the bomb that will (at least potentially) destroy himself and the people around him, the travelling terrorist becomes a machinic force.³ Yet his disruptive capacities remain closely connected to the organic – he always carries the bomb close to his body, the bomb moves where he moves, and will only explode through and with him. As Achille Mbembe writes about the “trapping of the body” of the “suicide bomber”: “The body does not simply conceal a weapon. The body is transformed into a weapon, not in a metaphorical sense but in the truly ballistic sense” (2003, 36). Hence, the organic and inorganic elements of the travelling terrorist assemblage are not separable. Perhaps, the blue arrow in the CCTV image points neither to the man nor the rucksack, but the point where the two converge.

It is this fusion of organic and non-organic entities which recurs in the images of the Syria-bound British schoolgirls, explaining part of their uncanny (re)appearance as travelling terrorist doubles. In the CCTV footage showing the young girls passing the security gates at Gatwick Airport,⁴ the teenage bodies are enfolded by the flowing fabrics of their *bijabs* or scarves, which, in combination with the spatial surroundings of the transit place of the airport, come to signify a terrorist mentality. Is it a coincidence that they are captured mid-step, their garments softly flowing, looking confidently ahead just like models on a catwalk? One regime of representation so dominant in the West clashes with another: the young girls are skinny, beautiful, confident, and it is their very eligibility for those other *models* of femininity that provides the backdrop for the narrative of their deplorable fate as ‘ISIS brides’. If the merging of machinic and organic forces is central to the becomings of the ‘bodies of our war times’, then the affective potential – and at the same time, the fallacy – of the image of Hussain at King’s Cross Station consists in the fact that it both captures and disassembles the assemblage, making its constituent elements legible as separate, divisible entities: body; rucksack; station. This visualisation strategy is thus prone to invite the conclusion that “to break the becoming-[terrorist] all that is needed is to extract a segment from it, to abstract one of its moments, [...] to arrest the circulation of its affects” (Deleuze and Guattari [1980] 1988, 260).

There is plenty of evidence of such attempts at breaking the becoming-terrorist in reports about the climate of suspicion on public transport, which abounded in British newspapers after the London bombings. At the time, it

³ In this context, Nigel Thrift refers to ‘suicide bombers’ as “do-it-yourself cyborgs. In some senses, the bodies of suicide bombers take on the characteristics of machine, becoming the expendable delivery mechanism: subject becomes object, so to speak, and the self is left behind in the final compulsion of the moment” (2007, 279).

⁴ <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/23/schools-reaction-syria-bound-schoolgirls-amira-abase-shamina-begum-kadiza-sultana>

seemed as if the question of whether or not it is socially acceptable to move away from a rucksack-carrying Asian man on the Tube became a legitimate subject of national debate. As Jenny McCartney wrote in the *Telegraph* a month after the events: “I can sort of understand why – in the immediate aftermath of those grim, grainy images of the four July 7 suicide bombers buying their tickets at Luton station – some people felt nervy about travelling on the Tube next to a young Asian man with a rucksack” (2005, n.p.). The journalist goes on to recount some anecdotes, collected “at dinner parties and in offices”, where people admitted to moving away from could-be ‘suicide bombers’ (ibid.). McCartney describes how, in consequence, she equipped her husband “of Indian descent” with what is “known in magazines as a ‘man-bag’”, because “anyone with a man-bag obviously has too strong an investment in the style details of this world to wish to catapult himself into the next”, as she muses (ibid.). She further cites the strategies of other ‘Asian-looking’ men, who had taken to carrying bottles of wine, immersing themselves in Sudoku puzzles or the *Economist* newspaper when taking the Tube. While understandable, this replacement of the problematic accessory – the rucksack – with innocuous items that are meant to indicate the travellers’ immersion in Western culture and lifestyles does nothing to contest the production of the fear-inducing terrorist assemblage.

Pantomime, Passing, and Being Passed

If anything, the need for racialised men to equip themselves with the appropriate props for travelling the metropolis points to the workings of what John Hutnyk calls *Pantomime Terror*. Hutnyk evokes pantomime as a metaphor to describe the spectacular performance of state terror in the ‘war on terror’, and our own audience participation within this system. Drawing on Siegfried Kracauer, he defines pantomime as “a publicly recognised distraction”, an escapist spectacle which takes people out of their everyday world (2014, 9). His application of the concept to the present sociopolitical situation is as provocative as it is productive:

[P]antomime has become a trope of the media war that fetes despots one minute only to tear them down the next. Demonised figures abound and for a time [...] dominate our screens – and always without reference to the ways we *know* these are political distractions. ‘*He’s behind you!*’ is the old audience participation call. Ignored. (Ibid., 10)

In a later passage, Hutnyk specifies that the “villain that is ‘*behind you*’ in today’s real life panto is the sleeper cell living and working amongst us, travelling on the tube, plotting next door, preparing to wreak havoc and destruction” (ibid., 37-38). Could the travelling terrorist be a new stock character in the contemporary panto performance? Certainly, the notion of pantomime terror usefully captures

the absurdity of the processes of demonisation that force ‘Asian-looking’ men to carry innocuous props onto the Tube in order to disidentify as terrorists – quite literally, in some cases, as that of one commuter who “pushed out his corporate ID card so that it [was] clearly visible over his jacket, hanging like the open page of a passport” (Coughlan 2005, n.p.).

Numerous incidents surrounding the conjunctions of terrorism and travel in this ‘war on terror’ warrant description as pantomime. One could recall, for instance, the journey of the ‘Tipton Three’, who allegedly went to Pakistan for a wedding and ended up in Guantánamo Bay, and who are the subject of Michael Winterbottom and Mat Whitecross’s award-winning docudrama *The Road to Guantánamo* (2006). Many of the dramatised re-enactments in the film show the three young men travelling: first, they are seen leaving the UK for Pakistan, then they cross the border to Afghanistan in order to – as they say in the interviews and re-enacted sequences – “help the Afghani [sic] people”, “see what Afghanistan is really like”, and “for the food as well” (Winterbottom and Whitecross 2006, chapter 1). In Afghanistan, they move via Kandahar to Kabul and, upon trying to get back to Pakistan, become stuck in Kunduz province, where they are captured by Northern Alliance soldiers and sent to Sheberghan Prison in the North. From there, US Forces deport them to Guantánamo Bay, and, after a two-year ordeal, send them back to the UK. The reversal of their voluntary and adventurous travels in rickety buses or trucks in the shackled position of detainees being shoved into containers and onto planes clearly has a tragic rather than a comic dimension. But after the men’s eventual release from Guantánamo detention camp and the filmic celebration of their “rebirth” into British society (Haschemi Yekani 2012, 74-75), their travels ultimately took on a pantomime quality, as two of the ‘Tipton Three’, alongside the actors who portray them in the film, were briefly detained and questioned at Luton Airport upon their return from the Berlin Film Festival in 2006 (ibid.). Police justified stopping the travellers under the Terrorism Act as a routine procedure. Yet the incident discloses the pantomime script that keeps repeating itself, and it illuminates the forced travels of deportation as the dark underside of jet-setting tourism. As part of a larger biopolitical project, the movement of ‘high risk’ travellers needs to be drastically restricted in order to secure the mobility and flexibility of “economically advantaged professional and business elites” in a globalised neoliberal system (Rygiel 2006, 155-156).

Although I find the pantomime metaphor intriguing, I take issue with Hutnyk’s concept insofar as he proposes the idea of pantomime as a tactics of distraction. “And in front of this distraction”, as the passage cited above continues, “we are expected, and too often indeed choose, to remain verbosely silent. Head down, shuffling in step, chanting a mantra” (2014, 10). I would argue that there is more than political distraction at work in the performance of pantomime terror, or more specifically, the panto act of terrorist travel. Commuters are not the

passive recipients of a spectacle they are free to applaud (or not), but they are actively involved in the grotesque construction of the travelling terrorist. It is through their affective responses to this figure in public space – on public transport, in particular – that the racialised male (and sometimes also female) body is produced as a fearsome object, as the villain in today’s real-life panto. Here, it is useful to consider Rustom Bharucha’s account of ‘passing’ as a Muslim. After relating his own experiences of being misidentified as a Muslim by immigration officers, presumably because of his beard, Bharucha emphasises that “the pretence may not be entirely voluntary. [...] I may not necessarily want to pass as a ‘Muslim’ (or, by implication, as a ‘terrorist’), but that is how I will be read within the larger codes and technologies of identification” (2014, 79). Revising the conventional understanding of ‘passing’ in terms of intentionality and agency, he declares that “the situation is different when *one is passed, irreversibly, against one’s will*” (ibid.). The ambiguously racialised men travelling on the Tube do not actively don the garb of the travelling terrorist, but decisive in the moment of becoming-terrorist is their being passed, against their will. The “logic of predetermined passing” entails, for Bharucha, that “one [...] has no other option but to accept one’s ‘passed identity’ as some kind of alter ego, a palimpsest that will forever shadow one’s future encounters” (ibid.).

This logic of predetermined passing is illustrated in a play by Atiha Sen Gupta, which premiered at Hampstead Theatre, London, in 2009. *What Fatima Did...* centres on a multicultural group of teenagers who start fighting over classmate Fatima’s decision to start wearing the *hijab*. In one scene, Fatima’s twin brother Mohammed distances his experience as a young Muslim in post-7/7 Britain explicitly from the form of racism that his mother’s generation of Pakistani immigrants had experienced:

Times have changed! [...] They don’t even hate Asians anymore, they hate us ... specifically us [...]. [T]he amount of fucking times I’ve got on the train and people have moved away from me ... [...] They’re thinking that at least if they’re in the further part of the carriage, then when my bomb goes off, they’ll lose a leg or an arm – but not their lives. [...] When you see a white person with a backpack on, everyone thinks backpacker. ... But when you see an Asian with a backpack on, you’re only left with terrorist. [...] And you wanna know the worst thing? They give me that pathetic fucking I’m-ever-so-polite English half-smile like this (*MOHAMMED demonstrates this smile.*) before they move away from me. (Sen Gupta 2009, 88-89)

Mohammed’s mimicry of the ‘polite’ English travellers shows his ability to imitate the dominant group while his testimony to feeling ostracised contrasts the gesture: he will never be cast for the part of the English commuter in the Tube pantomime but is perpetually condemned to play the villain. His cynical distinction between white travellers’ passing as backpackers and those who are inevi-

tably read as terrorists highlights the punitive visual regime of being passed, against one's will. As Mohammed's speech makes clear, the white British commuter is not the passive onlooker in a spectacle of pantomime terror, but it is through their active reading of and responses to the racialised body that the travelling terrorist is produced. In other words, established ways of looking at the racially/ethnically marked body in public space inevitably pass the Other as terrorist, provide him or her with a 'passed' identity from which they cannot easily disengage, despite various strategies of disidentification. The assemblage, once effectuated, cannot be easily broken.

Another recent British play similarly captures the logic of being passed as a terrorist in the post-7/7 context. In Vinay Patel's monologue *True Brits* (2014), first performed as part of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in association with HighTide Festival, the speaker Rahul, a descendant of Indian immigrants to the UK, addresses a speech to the audience which resembles Mohammed's account. In a scene set in September 2005, he describes: "The old lady on this train is looking at me, staring at me, she's been doing it since New Eltham, I can feel her eyes on the sweat of my neck. I turn to catch her out, and she flicks her head back [...] like she's subtle, but she ain't" (Patel 2014, 30). Reminiscent of the strategies which were collected by journalists in the weeks after the attacks, Rahul in the play is given a "see-through backpack" by his mother (ibid., 27); still, he is constantly targeted by "random searches" under the Terrorism Act (ibid., 31). These performance segments resonate with Sara Ahmed's discussion of black feminist Audre Lorde's recollection of a childhood encounter with a white woman who shied away from her on the New York subway. As Ahmed elucidates, "bodies are disorganised and re-organised as they face others who are already recognised as 'the hated'. [...] How we feel about others is what aligns us with a collective" (2004, 54). In scenarios such as that considered by Ahmed or the ones dramatised in the two plays, it is important to note how "fear does something; it re-establishes distance between bodies whose difference is read off the surface, as a reading which produces the surface" (ibid., 63). Just as Puar states that it is fear that "materializes the turban" (2007, 187), the fearful and anxious orientation of the white commuters towards the Othered body materialises the travelling terrorist assemblage.

The tactics of passing the Other as terrorist adhere to the same logic of preemptive warfare as the military campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. What the passing of the terrorist seeks to prevent is precisely their *passing* undetected. As Gargi Bhattacharyya comments on a narrative that gained traction after the London bombings: "physical markers act as a misleading decoy. The evil terrorist has learned to manipulate western culture and to mimic its bodily staging" (2008, 73). There is, then, yet another dimension to the arrows used in the CCTV footage. They mark out that which would otherwise threaten to pass unnoticed, priming viewers' attention to the fact that, behind the mimicry of West-

ern clothes and bodily habitus, the enemy Other is lurking. The heightened security measures surrounding borders, entry and transit points feed into the pervasive anxiety surrounding the terrorist's undetected passing of thresholds – in this regard, it is no coincidence that the most frequently reproduced CCTV images showed the British schoolgirls passing the security gates. Ahmed emphasises that “*it is the structural possibility that the terrorist may pass us by that justifies the expansion of [...] forms of intelligence, surveillance and the rights of detention*” (2004, 79). At the urban scale, the supervisory gaze of CCTV cameras and the security apparatus is refracted through the stare of the commuter, on constant alert ‘that the terrorist may pass us by’.

In consequence, audience participation in the spectacle of pantomime terror produces not only the fearsome object, but also the fearful subject. By means of warnings to passengers to keep their belongings with them at all times, to report any suspicious behaviour or unattended luggage – in short, by what Cindi Katz terms “banal terrorism”, the “everyday, routinized, barely noticed reminders of terror” (2007, 350) – Western subjects are continuously interpellated into a culture of fear and suspicion. They are even supposed to actively rehearse their part in the pantomime, as a leaflet handed out at busy Underground stations in London in late 2014 indicates. The flyer issued by the Association of Chief Police Officers instructs commuters to “make a plan now and stay safe” in the incident of what is cautiously coded as a “firearms and weapons attack” (quoted in Hartley-Parkinson 2014, n.p.). The problem with injunctions to be mindful of one's safety when travelling on public transport is that they work to maintain citizens' anxiety as a generalised “mode of attachment to objects”, as Ahmed puts it, “until it overwhelms other possible affective relations to the world” (2004, 66). In addition, the “high rotation security announcements” (Hutnyk 2014, 38) suggest that mindful citizens only need to rely on their senses: ‘If you *see* anything suspicious; “If you *hear* gunfire or a weapons attack [...]” (quoted in Hartley-Parkinson 2014, n.p.; emphasis added). Some may also recall a poster by the City of London Police which addressed commuters in numerous Underground stations in 2014: “We love rush hour. It gives us 300,000 extra pairs of eyes”. In line with these iterations, the priming techniques that find application in the photographic representations on the BBC timeline similarly encourage viewers to train their gaze, to fixate their eyes on the constituent components of travelling terrorist assemblages; ‘this is what a terrorist looks like’. Evident in these campaigns is the fantasy of installing an all-seeing panoptic gaze by effectively “enlarging the police ‘family’ (i.e. all those who carry out policing or quasi-policing functions)” (Burnett 2004, 14).

Racialised Urban Geographies

The detrimental effects of the ocular regime of the ‘war on terror’ are perhaps nowhere more manifest than in the case of racial profiling. Hutnyk links the resurgence of the technique directly to the “passive anxiety” that is engendered in the pantomime spectators, “which also entails an absent-minded acclimatisation to racism and Islamophobia” (2014, 182). As a result, he writes, “racial profiling [...] now passes unremarked, or rarely remarked, and [is] hardly challenged in the mainstream press or the apparatus of administrative power” (ibid.). Globally, the practices surrounding the racial profiling of travellers have led to a disproportionate targeting of “those ‘perceived to be Muslim’ [...] at both national and international transit points” and to the “experience of harassment known as ‘travelling while Brown’” (Sharma 2006, 135). In London, among the most devastating consequences of the practice – in combination with shoot-to-kill policy – was the fatal shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes, a Brazilian man who was falsely identified as a ‘suicide bomber’, at Stockwell Tube station in 2005. In the weeks after the incident, a photo of a service information board, supposedly taken at Notting Hill station, circulated widely on the internet. The pictured “notice to all passengers” reads: “Please do not run on the platforms or concourses. Especially if you are carrying a rucksack, wearing a big coat or look a bit foreign. This notice is for your own safety. Thank you” (quoted in Pugliese 2006, n.p.). The image was quickly identified as a spoof, a photoshopped version of a similar photograph that had appeared on the BBC website after a fire at Paddington. Yet the fact that we can safely assume it is a fake (which academics who discuss the notice repeatedly fail to realise) does not necessarily render reflections on it fruitless. Joseph Pugliese, for instance, who seems to take the notice seriously, insightfully explains how it exposes the racial schemas that organise urban life:

Within the civic spaces of the London metropolis, a regime of racialised visibility inscribes its transient subjects as either obviously ‘foreign’ or self-evidently ‘native’. What is operative here is the spacing of race, its literal and metaphorical spatialisation in terms of an ontology of the visible [...]. On another level, the spatialisation of race works in marking the very spaces, sites and locations that a subject may traverse in the course of their everyday lives. (Ibid.)

The ‘regime of racialised visibility’ regulates access and mobility in the metropolis. For the sake of protecting the ‘native’ subject, certain places become unavailable to the racialised subject, or at least difficult to traverse, or spaces that she can only pass with the help of certain props. Mohammed’s speech in *What Fatima Did...* charts this spacing of race by testifying to his experience of being ostracised on public transport. The commuters’ responses to Mohammed, just as the reactions cited in media reports after the London bombings, work to

inscribe a spatial politics of race that does not accord equal rights to mobility. The polite coding of the racial schema in the service information notice ('a bit foreign') also finds its analogy in Mohammed's outrage about the 'pathetic fucking I'm-ever-so-polite English half-smile' of the white commuters. What these mannerisms conceal is how the gestures of staring at or moving away from travelling terrorist suspects performatively instate a mapping of urban space according to what Stephen Graham terms "stark, essentialized geographies of entitlement and threat" (2006, 260). The putative separation between 'our' safe and 'their' dangerous spaces that Graham outlines with a view to the broader 'war on terror' context is reproduced at the national, urban, and neighbourhood scale: "this separation works to inscribe definitions of those citizens who are deemed to warrant value and the full protection of citizenship, and those deemed threatening as real or potential sources of 'terrorism'" (ibid.). Continuously positioned as threatening, those who are being passed as travelling terrorists not only find their access to the 'full protection of citizenship' newly constrained, but they are also forced to resituate and reorientate themselves in a racialised urban geography which operates "in terms of an infrastructural whiteness that inflects, inscribes and structures [...] the very epistemological and ontological infrastructures of a society" (Pugliese 2006, n.p.).

Again, what is important to underscore is that, while the spatial politics of race may be based on 'an ontology of the visible', as Pugliese calls it, the carving out of safe spaces and no-go areas for both privileged and minority subjects is enacted and policed via an affective relation. In this context, Ahmed speaks of "the spatial politics of fear: [...] *fear works to restrict some bodies through the movement or expansion of others*" (2004, 69). It is the fearful and anxious orientation of the white traveller towards the ambiguously racialised Other that establishes a spatial relationship between bodies, securing both "the 'apartness' of white bodies" and the spatial/corporeal borders erected towards those who make "*the skin crawl*" (ibid., 54, 63). The stare itself can become a tactile, affective relation, as evident from Rahul's speech, quoted above: 'I can feel her eyes on the sweat of my neck'. In its attempts to remain apart, integer, impermeable, the white subject becomes, in fact, itself embroiled in the travelling terrorist assemblage which it is at pains to keep a secure distance from. The stare, the polite smile, the move into the next carriage can be seen as "performative subterfuges" (Bharucha 2014, 71) that seek to eschew (while they in fact establish) an exchange of affects and intensities between the 'native' and the 'foreign' traveller. As Deleuze and Guattari write,

the material or machinic aspect of an assemblage relates [...] to a precise state of intermingling of bodies in a society, including all the attractions and repulsions, sympathies and antipathies, alterations, amalgamations, penetrations, and expansions that affect bodies of all kinds in their relations to one another. ([1980] 1988, 90)

Within the territoriality of the assemblage, then, subjects (often futilely) stake out their proximity to and distance from each other, based on the techniques of observation and profiling that counter-terrorism discourse has instilled in the wider 'police family'. The negotiation of spatial and corporeal boundaries in urban space is precisely what constitutes the 'state of intermingling of bodies' that implicates all passengers in the travelling terrorist assemblage. Seen in this light, it becomes clear once again that removing problematic segments from the assemblage does nothing to break it, but that it is a question of the stratification of urban and social space and the mutual affective orientation of the subjects traversing it. In consequence, the punitive regime of surveillance and visualisation in the 'war on terror' can only be contested if we shift our attention, as Puar proposes, from visibility to affect, if we realise that some bodies are made to 'seem like' and 'feel like' terrorists more than they appear to 'look like' them (2007, 187).

By resituating both the (could-be) bomber and the 'native' commuter within the travelling terrorist assemblage, one could arrive at a formulation of a concept of "congregational" or "*distributive* agency", as Jane Bennett calls it (2010, 20-21). Seen in this manner, the terrorist act appears not as a singular, exceptional, deviant occurrence that can be declared the outcome of "individual pathology and outside influence" (Featherstone, Holohan, and Poole 2010, 177; for a critique of this narrative). Rather, conceptualising the bomber, the bomb, the security apparatus, the anxious commuter, the affects of fear and aversion, and the transit space with its racialised geographies as part of one assemblage permits us to reframe the question of 'home-grown' terrorism in terms of a distributive agency that implicates the intermingling of all bodies and objects: "While the smallest or simplest body or bit may indeed express a vital impetus [...], an actant never really acts alone. Its efficacy or agency always depends on the collaboration, cooperation, or interactive interference of many bodies and forces" (Bennett 2010, 21). Finally, then, the arrow in the picture of Hussain may both pierce and attract the viewer because of its alluring capacity to mark out the 'simplest body' as an individual agent, to allocate criminal and moral responsibility unequivocally. Against a political and ethical understanding that positions the passive spectator outside of this frame, as the entitled and protected citizen who declares that the war abroad is pursued 'not in my name', the reflections offered in this article would seem to call for an ethics based on the understanding that "all bodies are kin in the sense of inextricably enmeshed in a dense network of relations" (ibid., 13), or, as Judith Butler has phrased it, "a 'common' corporeal vulnerability" ([2004] 2006, 42).

I would like to end on another image from the BBC timeline, which shows the four bombers on the platform of Luton station, again marking their bodies (and rucksacks) with colourful arrows, assigning a specific colour to each bomber. The colourful marking of bodies that would otherwise be lost in a dark,

blurry mass of commuters visually reinscribes the technique of racial profiling; it literally re-colours the travellers' skin colour, piercing the "myth of a liberal, colour-blind society" (Pugliese 2006, n.p.). In pondering the question if, and how, we can opt out of the pantomime before the curtain call, disrupt the loop of fear and suspicion, I am attracted to the blurry bodies between and beyond the arrows in the image. What passes undetected in the unoutlined parts of the photograph makes me think of Peggy Phelan's seminal study *Unmarked* (1993), and the way in which she locates a subject in "what cannot be reproduced within the ideology of the visible" (1993, 1). Phelan's rebuff to demands to simply increase the visibility of un(der)-represented subjects invites us to consider the political value that lies in remaining unmarked, unremarked, unremarkable, the deliberate failure to remark 'suspicious' behaviour, items of luggage, racialised travellers – not at the cost of neglecting each other's presence, of course, or such that we would fail to identify acute threats and dangers. But it may be worth considering performative strategies, modes of travelling and being in the city that resist the dominant marking of those bodies as suspicious that are always already recognised as 'the hated'.

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