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CHAPTER 1

GLOBAL (NON)BELONGINGS: AN INTRODUCTION

"Those against the United States at the turn of the twentieth century or the turn of the twenty-first century are always already 'savage,' 'terrifying,' 'heathen,' and 'uncivilized.'"
—Jodi Byrd¹

Nine days after September 11, 2001, as the ash still lingered in the New York City air, US President George W. Bush addressed the nation, offering the following explanation as to the motivations of the attacks: "They hate our freedoms: our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with one another."² In the days and months following, amidst the national and global outpouring of individual and collective remembrances for those lost, statements regarding terrorist hatred of the United States continued to circulate. In a special radio address delivered two months after the towers fell, First Lady Laura Bush contrasted "the blessings of American life" with the oppression of "women and children by the al Qaida terrorist network."³ As civilian casualties mounted in the then ongoing surge of US troops into Afghanistan, Laura Bush offered vivid descriptions of the Taliban's violence, including "beatings" and "pull[ing] out women's

¹ Jodi Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 148.

² "Text: President Bush Addresses the Nation." *The Washington Post*, September 20, 2001, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/bushaddress_092001.html

³ "Radio Address by Mrs. Bush: November 17, 2001," The American Presidency Project, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=24992>

fingernails for wearing nailpolish,” noting that “civilized people throughout the world are speaking out in horror.”⁴ Inviting global listeners into a shared fellowship with US citizens, she stated: “Fighting brutality against women and children is not the expression of a specific culture; it is the acceptance of our common humanity—a commitment shared by people of good will on every continent.”⁵

The emotions circulated in these responses *do* things: as the terrorist enemy is rhetorically articulated as hateful and horrifying, the US nation-state and all members of the international community who embrace the democratic values of freedom, multiculturalism, and equality become rhetorical objects of love. Sara Ahmed argues that hate serves a political function, working to secure collectives, shaping bodies, nations, and worlds.⁶ So too does love for the nation function politically, creating alliances through identification with a particular set of values to form “imagined communities,” or publics.⁷ In this process, certain subjectivities are constructed precisely through the exclusion or elision of other subjectivities; as John Armstrong notes in *Nations Before Nationalism*, “groups tend to define themselves not by reference to their own characteristics but by exclusion, that is, by comparison to ‘strangers.’”⁸ In Ahmed’s language, “thinking of identification as a form of alignment (to bring into line with oneself—the subject as ‘bringing into line’) also shows us

⁴ “Radio Address by Mrs. Bush: November 17, 2001,” The American Presidency Project, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=24992>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 42.

⁷ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983). For further discussion of love as a political emotion see Ahmed, *Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 122-143.

⁸ John A. Armstrong, *Nations Before Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 5.

how identifications involve disidentification or an active ‘giving up’ of other possible identifications.”⁹ In other words, to imagine oneself as belonging to a community, whether a local, national, or global public, is to actively align oneself against the Others seen to exist outside of this collective.

As the above examples invoke an “uncivilized” terrorist Other as the strange and haunting presence against which modern, “civilized” geopolitical belongings are articulated, they further reflect what Iris Marion Young has described as the logic of masculinist protection.¹⁰ This logic rhetorically configures the nation-state as masculine protector of vulnerable populations including its own citizens and the “womenandchildren” of the world.¹¹ Young argues that discourses of masculinist protection as they inform the post-9/11 security state rely on a logic that is not “self-consciously dominative” but rather is based on the ideal of the chivalrous and caring masculine man who “faces the world’s difficulties and dangers in order to shield women from harm.”¹² As the United States, as masculine protector, is rhetorically configured as extending its compassion to the global community (through military strength), national belongings are thus reinforced.

Rhetorics of masculinist protection are bi-directional; as national subjects are willingly subordinated into relationships of dependence and obedience in return for the

⁹ Sara Ahmed, “The Organisation of Hate,” *Law and Critique* 12, no. 3 (2001): 354.

¹⁰ Iris Marion Young, “The Logic of Masculinist Protection: Reflections on the Current Security State,” *Signs* 29, no. 1 (2003): 1–25. Young writes specifically of the post-9/11 US nation-state, but the logic of masculinist protection is also evidenced in other state formations.

¹¹ Cynthia Enloe utilizes the term “womenandchildren” to describe how women and children perform a rhetorical function in international politics as individual subjects are discursively transformed into a single, helpless, victimized entity in need of rescue and/or pity. (Cynthia Enloe, “Womenandchildren: Making Feminist Sense of the Persian Gulf Crisis,” *The Village Voice*, September 25, 1990.)

¹² Young, “Logic of Masculinist Protection,” 4.

state's protection, aggression against enemies who threaten the state is seen as an act of sacrifice for the public good. In the above statements this is evidenced in the appeals suggesting that the freedom of religion, speech, and assembly warranted under democracy must be protected from terrorist Islamist regimes who not only oppress their own women and children but also "seek to destroy *our* freedoms."¹³ Drawing parallels between the functions of religion and the nation, Benedict Anderson in his well-known treatise on nationalism argued that nations offer "a secular transformation of fatality into continuity, contingency into meaning."¹⁴ Moreover, he observed that even while nation-states as governing structures might be considered as "historical,' the nations to which they give political expression always loom out of an immemorial past, and, still more important, glide into a limitless future."¹⁵ Masculinist protection, in the above example, is therefore not only about ensuring the safety of one's fellow citizens or other vulnerable populations, but about the continued existence of the national community, democracy, and the future of humanity itself.

Rhetorics of masculinist protection sediment belongings by contrasting the national against non-national, racialized, and gendered Others. This contributes not only to the building of nations but also to the building of empires. In her analysis of the discursive links between manhood, race, class, and imperialism in US domestic and foreign policy at the turn

¹³ I mark this language in quotation marks to draw attention to its circulation. Having been uttered by numerous US presidents, Members of Congress, the US Justice Department, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu—just to name a few—this quote has become common parlance in the "war on terror."

¹⁴ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 11.

¹⁵ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 11–2.

of the twentieth century, Gail Bederman reveals how seemingly contradictory notions of masculinity as at once violent and refined perpetuated white privilege and US imperialism.¹⁶ Masculinity was thus a lynchpin around which racialized rhetorics of civilization and its savage Others were organized while, at the same time, “civilization” was central to the ways in which masculinity was defined. This is not only true of US foreign policy; many scholars have examined how “clash of civilizations” rhetorics have functioned as an indispensable component of the Anglo-European imaginary, funding both Western imperialism and European nation building.¹⁷ As civilization is rhetorically juxtaposed against its Others in gendered and racialized ways, identifications are forged with an imagined community precisely through the exclusions of human, geographic, and political bodies seen to exist outside of this community. Love for the nation and hatred for the enemy thus work together to secure collective national and global identities, incorporating certain subjects into the category of normative citizenship, or belonging, while dis/locating Others in “some other ‘other worlds,’ in some other place,” and in some other time.¹⁸

Project Introduction

In this dissertation I examine how rhetorics of civilization and its Others circulate to shape ideas about “modern” trans/national citizenship and geopolitical belonging through

¹⁶ Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

¹⁷ For further discussion, see for instance, Brett Bowden, *The Empire of Civilization: The Evolution of an Imperial Idea* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Dana L. Cloud, “‘To Veil the Threat of Terror’: Afghan Women and the <Clash of Civilizations> in the Imagery of the US War on Terrorism,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90, no. 3 (2004): 285–306; Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978); and Amartya Sen, “How to Judge Globalism,” *The American Prospect* 13, no. 1 (2002): 1–8.

¹⁸ Raka Shome and Radha Hegde, “Culture, Communication, and the Challenge of Globalization,” *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 19, no. 2 (2002): 175.

chains of signification and affects. Specifically, I argue for conceptualizing whiteness as a global assemblage that territorializes through *settler colonial memoryscapes* as they exclude particular bodies through the construction of what Ahmed describes as “border objects.”¹⁹ Drawing from Julia Kristeva’s work on abjection,²⁰ Ahmed describes border objects and the affects they generate as follows:

Borders need to be threatened in order to be maintained, or even to appear *as* borders, and part of the process of ‘maintenance-through-transgression’ is the appearance of border objects. Border objects are hence disgusting, while disgust engenders border objects. As a result, disgust involves a ‘time lag’ as well as being generative or futural. It does not make borders (out of nothing), but responds to their making, through a reconfirmation of their necessity. So the subject feels an object to be disgusting (a perception that relies on a history that comes before the encounter) and then expels the object and, through expelling the object, finds it to be disgusting.²¹

While the abjection of border objects maintains the subject, border objects become meaningful “not simply insofar as they oppose the ‘I’; but through their contact with other objects.”²² Border objects—or the bodies of alterity against which the “Self” is constructed—thus become meaningful through iteration and relation: as part of an assemblage.

¹⁹ Ahmed, *Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 87.

²⁰ Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. L. S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

²¹ Ahmed, *Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 87.

²² Ibid.

Developed by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, further elaborated by Manuel DeLanda and Bruno Latour, and deployed by numerous other scholars in ways that resonate with the aims of this project, assemblage theory takes a systems/networks approach toward the assembled connections through which bodies are produced and enacted.²³ Utilizing assemblage theory, I examine whiteness as a relational system of power that organizes material bodies in particular ways. The bodies of assemblage, which Deleuze and Guattari refer to as “Bodies without Organs” (BwO), include human and non-human, organizational, and geo-political bodies.²⁴ BwO are not closed, bounded entities or organisms, but rather are open systems or planes through which assemblages are territorialized. Nor are BwO individual; they are the relational bodies populated by material bodies (with organs)—gendered bodies, raced bodies, laboring bodies, emotional bodies, thinking bodies.²⁵

To address whiteness as an assemblage that makes certain bodies intelligible as global citizen-subjects through the exclusion of Other bodies (border objects)—both geopolitical and individual—I examine three sites that might be considered, in Mary Louise Pratt’s terms, as “contact zones.” Pratt describes contact zones as “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of

²³ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987); Manuel DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity* (London: Continuum, 2006); and Bruno Latour, “Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory” (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). Assemblage theory, and the authors through whom I route my engagements with it, are more fully explicated in Chapter 2.

²⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*.

²⁵ Although I do not utilize the terminology of BwO in my discussion of bodies throughout this dissertation, it is this encompassing and relational sense of the body to which I refer when I utilize the term “bodies.”

the world today.”²⁶ The sites I examine include: (1) public memory places in the US Southwest where Native American culture is consumed primarily by a white tourist audience; (2) pro-Israel rhetorics in the US, especially those enacted by the conservative Christian lobbying group Christians United for Israel (CUFI), and the ways they collapse Palestinians into a homogenous Arab terrorist enemy, and (3) the embodied and mediated actions of FEMEN, a feminist organization with participating members in several countries in the European Union and, specifically, the French chapter’s protests against Islam and the veiling of Muslim women. As assemblage directs our attention to spatio-temporal logics and material relationships, I organize my discussion of these cases around three topoi: time, places, and bodies. Bringing these sites together allows me to map relationships between border objects as certain bodies in each of these cases are designated as belonging against those deemed threatening or external to the (white) subject, the nation, and/or the global community.

While the case studies identified above on the surface may not seem directly related either to one another or to the rhetorical responses to 9/11 with which I opened, my aim in this project is to render visible the rhetorical trajectories that connect and move between these various case studies. The opening examples usefully set the stage for the themes taken up by this project given 9/11’s significance as a charged event in contemporary global rhetorical landscapes and politics. Scholars of communication, international relations, and gender studies, among others, have offered productive analyses of the fears mapped onto Arab bodies following 9/11. Of particular interest have been the ways “Muslim women’s oppression,” as symbolized most prominently by the veiled woman in a hijab or burqa,

²⁶ Mary Louise Pratt, “Arts of the Contact Zone,” *Profession* (1991): 34.

function discursively to justify imperial endeavors.²⁷ The figure of the veiled woman not only emerges as a gendered, sexualized, and racialized location, so, too, does the Muslim terrorist from whom she “must be rescued” emerge as a “generative figur[e],” one who Jasbir Puar argues is “always already sexually pathological.”²⁸ Analyzing this contemporary constellation through her theorization of “terrorist assemblages,” Puar marks the “queer,” racialized, and improperly masculine Arab Other who is seen to embody a threat to western civilization as a contemporary figure in an assemblage of “terrorist corporealities” that support national imperial projects.²⁹

As they generate new corporealities, contemporary rhetorics of race, terror and security rely on and reconfigure longstanding discourses of Orientalism that juxtapose “East” against “West, and “us” against “them.”³⁰ Dana Cloud describes “the idea of an

²⁷ See, for example, Lila Abu-Lughod, “The Active Social Life of ‘Muslim Women’s Rights’: A Plea for Ethnography, not Polemic, with Cases from Egypt and Palestine,” *Journal of Middle East Women’s Studies* 6, no. 1 (2010): 1–45; Kevin J. Ayotte and Mary E. Husain, “Securing Afghan Women: Neocolonialism, Epistemic Violence, and the Rhetoric of the Veil,” *NWSA Journal* 17, no. 3 (2005): 112–33; Cloud, “To Veil the Threat of Terror”; Ann Russo, “The Feminist Foundation’s Campaign to Stop Gender Apartheid,” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 8, no. 4 (2006): 557–80; Laura J. Shepherd, “Veiled References: Constructions of Gender in the Bush Administration Discourse on the Attacks on Afghanistan Post-9/11,” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 8, no. 1 (2006): 19–41; and Young, “Logic of Masculinist Protection.”

²⁸ Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 173.

²⁹ Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, xxiii. Puar argues that in the US “war on terror,” race and sexuality are linked with discourses of militarism and national security, producing the US queer homonormative subject as a “good citizen” against Muslim “terrorist” bodies that are both racialized and marked as sexually perverse through Orientalist discourses.

³⁰ See, for example, Cloud, “To Veil the Threat of Terror”; Inderpal Grewal, “Transnational America: Race, Gender and Citizenship after 9/11,” *Social Identities* 9, no. 4 (2003): 546–7; Meghana Nayak, “Orientalism and ‘Saving’ US State Identity after 9/11,” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 8, no. 1 (2006): 42–61; Kimberly A. Powell, “Framing Islam: An Analysis of US Media Coverage of Terrorism Since 9/11,” *Communication Studies* 62, no. 1 (2011): 90–112; and Medhi Semati, “Islamophobia, Culture and Race in the Age of Empire,” *Cultural Studies* 24, no. 2 (2010): 256–75. For a further discussion of Orientalism, see Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978).

immutable clash between allegedly superior and inferior civilizations” as a necessary component “of the rhetoric of US imperialism since at least the end of the 19th century.”³¹ This project pushes this connection further, attending to how global rhetorics that mark particular bodies as “savage” Others to whiteness and western modernity reproduce, and rely on, settler colonial histories and imperial expansions of US and Anglo-European democracy.³² Informed by the rhetorical study of publics and public memory, scholarship in critical race/whiteness studies, and transnational and Indigenous feminisms, I analyze each of my case studies as a gendered and racialized assemblage in which “modern” national and global citizen-subjects—as those deemed worthy of rights, protection, land, and life—are constructed against the Other(s) seen to exist outside of the shared temporality and places of normative democratic citizenship.³³ In bringing these seemingly disparate cases together to examine them as elements of a larger assemblage, I further draw attention to their symbolic and material connectivities, examining racialized, gendered, national, and imperial logics as they move between these sites to shore up the frontiers of whiteness. In doing so, I also examine, more broadly, how assemblage might be utilized as a methodological heuristic for

³¹ Cloud, “To Veil the Threat of Terror,” 286. See also David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire* (Raleigh-Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993).

³² In making this argument I draw upon Jodi Byrd’s discussion of how “Indianness” serves as a transit for empire. (See Jodi A. Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011].)

³³ While there has been contestation in the field of rhetoric over what should constitute the study of citizenship, here and throughout my focus is not on the legal and political structures that designate formal citizenship statuses but rather on citizenship as a mode of public engagement through which national subjects are discursively and relationally constructed. Of the numerous definitions of “citizen” and “citizenship” that have been proffered, my approach most closely aligns with the conceptualization of the citizen as “a symbolic and collective identity.” (J. David Cisneros, “Rhetorics of Citizenship: Pitfalls and Possibilities,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 100, no. 3 [2014]: 376.)

critical rhetorical inquiry, re/shaping how, as rhetorical scholars, we select and analyze our con/texts, and to what ends.

Employing assemblage as a methodological heuristic, I analyze each of my cases as a flashpoint or articulation within larger memoryscapes of colonialism and racial belonging. Through the juxtaposition of these sites, I therefore approach their rhetoricity as “conditioned on the character of the relational systems within which they function.”³⁴ In addition, my utilization of assemblage as a methodological heuristic aligns with ongoing efforts in rhetorical studies to rethink rhetoric’s relationship to bodies, material objects, and places,³⁵ and to (re)conceptualize rhetoric as experiential and affective.³⁶ As scholars working in this area have argued, ideologies are not only manifested through language and symbols—rhetorical scholars’ longstanding foci—but also through material and spatial enactments and arrangements. Emerging from efforts to rethink rhetoric as it materially unfolds in specific

³⁴ Saskia Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), 8.

³⁵ See, for example, Carole Blair, “Contemporary US Memorial Sites”; Carole Blair, “Reflections on Criticism and Bodies: Parables from Public Places,” *Western Journal of Communication* 65, no. 3 (2001): 271–94; Kevin M. DeLuca, “Unruly Arguments: The Body Rhetoric of Earth First!, Act Up, and Queer Nation,” *Argumentation and Advocacy* 36, no. 1 (1999), 9–22; Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair, and Brian L. Ott (eds.) *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010); Darrel Enck-Wanzer, “Trashing the System: Social Movement, Intersectional Rhetoric, and Collective Agency in the Young Lords Organization’s Garbage Offensive,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 92, no. 2 (2006): 174–201; Danielle Endres and Samantha Senda-Cook, “Location Matters: The Rhetoric of Place in Protest,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 97, no. 3 (2011): 257–82; and Richard Marback, “Unclenching the Fist: Embodying Rhetoric and Giving Objects their Due,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (2009).

³⁶ See, for example, Catherine Chaput, “Rhetorical Circulation in Late Capitalism: Neoliberalism and the Overdetermination of Affective Energy,” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 43, no. 1 (2010): 1–26; Gregory Clark, “Rhetorical Experience and the National Jazz Museum in Harlem,” in Dickinson, Blair, and Ott (eds.), *Places of Public Memory*, 113–35; Greg Dickinson, Brian L. Ott, and Eric Aoki, “Spaces of Remembering and Forgetting: The Reverent Eye/I at the Plains Indian Museum,” *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 3, no. 1 (2006): 27–47; and Jenny Edbauer Rice, “The New ‘New’: Making a Case for Critical Affect Studies,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 94, no. 2 (2008): 200–12.

places has thus also been a shift from analyzing rhetorical products to engaging with embodied rhetorical processes as they unfold in situated acts and practices. Assemblage assists in this project by drawing attention to the links between the various cases examined, each of which functions within larger symbolic and material landscapes. To attend to “live” rhetorical processes as they unfold within particular places and communities (both actual and virtual), I follow the recent turn in rhetorical scholarship toward the incorporation of field methods.³⁷ However, whereas many rhetorical scholars have utilized field methods to examine specific events such as protests or political organizing, or specific places such as museums and memorials, my use of assemblage as a methodological heuristic extends “the field” of rhetorical field methods beyond a single site or location. Combining participant observation in physical places with an analysis of media texts circulated online and the conversations around these texts and interviews with persons affiliated with my various sites, I approach rhetorical effects and affects as not emerging or collecting around a central authority but rather as moving through a topography.³⁸

As I examine rhetorical movements within and among the sites I have assembled to address whiteness as a global assemblage that territorializes through settler colonial memoryscapes and their exclusions, I am guided by several focusing questions that have

³⁷ Michael K. Middleton, Danielle Endres, and Samantha Senda-Cook, “Articulating Rhetorical Field Methods: Challenges and Tensions,” *Western Journal of Communication* 75, no. 4 (2011): 388; see also Roger C. Aden, Min Wha Han, Stephanie Norander, Michael E. Pfahl, Timothy P. Pollack, Jr., and Stephanie L. Young, “Re-Collection: A Proposal for Refining the Study of Collective Memory and its Places,” *Communication Theory* 19, no. 3 (2009): 311–36; and Aaron Hess, “Critical-Rhetorical Ethnography: Rethinking the Place and Process of Rhetoric,” *Communication Studies* 62, no. 2 (2011): 127–52.

³⁸ My conceptualization of assemblage as a methodological heuristic is also influenced by, and aligns with Sara Ahmed’s conceptualization of the field of emotions. Arguing that emotions are inherently political, Ahmed’s work draws attention to the relationships between affect, race, nations, and Otherness as they shape individual as well as political bodies. (see Ahmed, *Cultural Politics of Emotion*).

emerged from my analytic engagements with both the individual sites and the relationships between them. What are the rhetorical landscapes through which a civilized “us” is assembled against an uncivilized “them” in each of these sites? How do hate and love affix to certain gendered and racialized bodies to form a trans/national democratic public based on exclusion even as it claims inclusivity? And how do rhetorics of freedom and democracy bolstered by discourses of multiculturalism and gender equality participate in this assemblage to define what differences make a difference?

In answering these questions, this project extends current approaches to studying rhetoric and intercultural communication in global, trans/national, and (post)colonial contexts.

Scholarly Significance

Above, I have begun to frame my theoretical and methodological entrance points into interrogating the gendered and racialized assemblages through which contemporary Anglo-European “civilization” is contrasted against its constitutive Others. Assemblages, however, are “open wholes”; as Jane Bennett describes, they “pulse with energies, only some of which are actualized at any given time and place.”³⁹ In thinking of the assemblage of sites drawn together here, it is clear that the issues this project addresses exceed this specific constellation. However, featuring these three disparate cases and interrogating them through the lens of assemblage is warranted on several counts.

To begin with, while many scholars have directed their attention toward the gendered, racialized structures of US and Anglo-European empire mobilized by the post-9/11 “war on terror,” one limitation of such work is that it often overlooks or fails to make

³⁹ Jane Bennett, “The Agency of Assemblages,” *Public Culture* 17, no. 3 (2005): 461.

explicit the ways these “new” frontiers of violence are linked with the settler colonial pasts and presents of democratic expansion. Attending to how racialized Arab bodies (both individual and political) are rhetorically constructed as “threats” to global security is a necessary and important task given that the war on terror has justified US exceptionalism and imperialism by dehumanizing and, in the words of Judith Butler, “derealizing” the Arab Other.⁴⁰ However, as Andrea Smith argues, when critiques of the contemporary security state perpetuate a narrative of newness—viewing the actions taken following 9/11 as a decline in US democracy, or as a fundamental shift in the structures of governance—they fail to interrogate “how the state has *always* operated through sovereign power exacted through racial and colonial violence.”⁴¹ Instead, “the argument that we are currently under a resurgence of sovereignty itself normalizes the history of US sovereign power exacted against the bodies of indigenous peoples and peoples of color.”⁴² Critiques of the post-9/11 security state are thus problematic in that they frequently “take the US Constitution as their origin story, presuming the U.S. nation-state even as they critique it,” and, in so doing, perpetuate “the liberal myth that the United States is founded on democratic principles rather than being built on the pillars of capitalism, colonialism, and white supremacy.”⁴³ To counter this tendency, the sites of inquiry I have selected illuminate historical and contemporary settler and neo-colonial dynamics as inherent within Anglo-European democratic projects rather than as deviations from them. The significance of such an

⁴⁰ See Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (New York: Verso, 2004).

⁴¹ Andrea Smith, “American Studies without America: Native Feminisms and the Nation-State,” *American Quarterly* 60, no. 2 (2008): 310.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Smith, “American Studies without America,” 310–11.

approach for rhetorical studies and, in particular, scholarship on publics and the public sphere is that by normativizing democracy we frequently neglect to fully problematize the ways global inequalities are perpetuated not in spite of but precisely through rhetorics of democracy, equality, and inclusion.

Attending to enduring colonial structures is also important for expanding our theoretical approaches toward analyzing racial formation as a rhetorical process inseparable from structures of empire. While “the generally accepted theorizations of racialization in the United States have, in the pursuit of equal rights and enfranchisements, tended to be sited along the axis of inclusion/exclusion,” the problem with theorizing race in this manner, as Chickasaw scholar Jodi Byrd notes, is that the affective investment “in the dialectics of race,” allows race to “supersede colonialism as the site of originary violence.”⁴⁴ When structures of race and racism are thus disconnected from colonial histories, grievances are addressed to the state in ways that frequently fail to problematize the nation-state’s reliance on colonial control over Other bodies and lands. As I will demonstrate in my analysis of memory places in the US Southwest, white visitors’ engagements with Native Americans as a racial group able to be (re)incorporated into the multicultural United States (as long as they perform as “authentic” cultural representatives) ignore how colonialism continues to constrain and limit Native American mobility. Attending to the settler colonial structures that have enabled, and continue to enable, the expansion of (western) democracy is also significant for understanding the symbolic landscapes and material geographies of whiteness and “civilization” in the contemporary political moment.

⁴⁴ Byrd, *Transit of Empire*, xxiii, 12.

A second compelling warrant for selecting these specific sites of inquiry is to examine the changing signifiers through which “civilization” and progress are enacted, embodied, and staged. According to Cloud, post-9/11 rhetorics are informed by the “clash of civilizations” between Islamic and Western societies, a discursive configuration which has remained firmly embedded in US and Anglo-European imperial imaginaries even as its specific articulations have changed. Mehdi Semati argues that the brown Arab body, once the signifier of exoticism, has instead come to embody the terrorist threat to democracy.⁴⁵ This is seen in the rhetoric of both CUFI and FEMEN, each of which for markedly different political aims emphasize Islam’s threat to democracy. It is intriguing, then, to note that the touristic consumption of Native American culture in the Southwest relies on discourses of exoticism closely tied to Orientalism, as well as on multicultural rhetorics of democratic inclusion. Following Byrd’s call for examining how “the empire of the ‘now’ is temporally tied to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries,” I therefore interrogate the shifting configuration of the Muslim Other in contemporary popular and political imaginaries as it relates to “the Indian” as “the original enemy combatant” of the democratic project.⁴⁶ Doing so enables an examination of how contemporary discourses of security and the perceived threats of dispossession and invasion on which they rely enact a “patriarchal white sovereignty [that] manages its anxiety over dispossession and threat through a pathological relationship to indigenous sovereignty.”⁴⁷ As rhetorics of masculinist protection perpetuate narratives in which civilization and progress, democracy and its subjects, and the

⁴⁵ Semati, “Islamophobia, Culture and Race.”

⁴⁶ Byrd, *The Transit of Empire*, 5, xiii.

⁴⁷ Byrd, *Transit of Empire*, xvii; see also Aileen Moreton-Robinson, “How White Possession Moves: After the Word,” In Tess Lea, Emma Kowal, and Gillian Cowlishaw (eds.), *Moving Anthropology: Critical Indigenous Studies* (Brisbane, Australia: Charles Darwin University Press, 2006), 219–32.

world's vulnerable women and children are under threat by the racialized and gendered terrorist Other, the contemporary framing of Native Americans as a non-threatening cultural group subsumed within the multicultural US nation-state—rather than as separate and sovereign nations within—further naturalizes and makes exceptional the US nation-state and its imperial endeavors.

Tracing rhetorics of civilization and its Others as they move through these sites to demarcate certain bodies as (not)belonging in the places of modernity, I argue for an understanding of whiteness as an assemblage that, even as it incorporates certain bodies, is reliant upon those it excludes.⁴⁸ As I will further unpack in subsequent chapters, focusing specifically on how rhetorics of time perpetuate and uphold whiteness is useful as it draws attention to how the “constitutive outside” of whiteness may not be blackness or brownness but rather that which is rendered non-modern.⁴⁹

My turn to assemblage is warranted by several exigencies in the fields of rhetoric and communication. First, as a heuristic, assemblage offers a means by which to engage the multiple scales of the local, national, and global through which ideas about difference are re/produced. Scholars of rhetoric and public memory have most frequently assumed the nation-state as the scale at which ideology and/or cultural difference become salient.⁵⁰ In

⁴⁸ For more on spatio-temporal assemblages see Sassen, *Territory. Authority, Rights*, 378–98.

⁴⁹ Here, I draw from Judith Butler's interpretation of Jacques Derrida. Derrida's notion of the “constitutive outside” is utilized throughout Butler's work. See Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978). For Butler's use of the concept see, for example, Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

⁵⁰ For further discussion, see, for example, Wendy S. Hesford and Eileen E. Schell, “Introduction: Configurations of Transnationality: Locating Feminist Rhetorics,” *College English*, 70, no. 5 (2008): 463; and Kendall R. Phillips and G. Mitchell Reyes, “Introduction: Surveying Global Memoryscapes: The Shifting Terrain of Public Memory Studies,” in Kendall R. Phillips and G. Mitchell Reyes (eds.), *Global Memoryscapes: Contesting Remembrance in a Transnational Age* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2011).

intercultural communication as well, a number of scholars have called attention to the still somewhat pervasive tendencies to approach cultural difference as organized and bounded by geographical terrains.⁵¹ More recent scholarship, however, directs attention both to localized, everyday, vernacular processes,⁵² and to global flows and formations that exceed the boundaries of the nation state.⁵³ By encouraging “the deconstruction of totalities such as ‘the global,’ [or ‘the nation’] into contingent realities where society is, even if temporarily,

⁵¹ See, for example, Alberto González and Tarla R. Peterson, “Enlarging Conceptual Boundaries: A Critique of Research in Intercultural Communication,” in Sheryl P. Bowen and Nancy Wyatt (eds.), *Transforming Visions: Feminist Critiques in Communication Studies* (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 1993), 249–78; S. Lily Mendoza, Rona T. Halualani, and Jolanta A. Drzewiecka, “Moving the Discourse on Identities in Intercultural Communication: Structure, Culture, and Resignifications,” *Communication Quarterly* 50 (2003): 312–27; Dreama G. Moon, “Concepts of ‘Culture’: Implications for Intercultural Communication Research,” *Communication Quarterly* 44 (1996): 70–84; Kent A. Ono, “Problematizing ‘Nation’ in Intercultural Communication Research,” in Dolores V. Tanno and Alberto González (eds.), *Communication and Identity across Cultures* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1998), 243–76.

⁵² See, for example, Gerard A. Hauser, *Vernacular Voices: The Rhetoric of Publics and Public Spheres* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999); Gerard A. Hauser and Erin Daina McClellan, “Vernacular Rhetoric and Social Movements: Performances of Resistance in the Rhetoric of the Everyday,” in Sharon McKenzie Stevens and Patricia M. Malesh (Eds.), *Active Voices: Composing a Rhetoric for Social Movements* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009), 23–46; Aaron Hess, “In Digital Remembrance: Vernacular Memory and the Rhetorical Construction of Web Memorials,” *Media, Culture, & Society* 29, no. 5 (2007): 812–30; Tamar Katriel and Thomas Farrell, “Scrapbooks as Cultural Texts: An American Art of Memory,” *Text and Performance Quarterly* 11, no. 1 (1991): 1–17; Kent A. Ono and John M. Sloop, “The Critique of Vernacular Discourse,” *Communication Monographs* 62, no. 1 (1995): 19–46; and Marie-Louise Paulesc, “Living Relationships with the Past: Remembering Communism in Romania” (PhD diss., Arizona State University, 2014).

⁵³ For discussion see, for instance, Wendy S. Hesford and Eileen E. Schell, “Introduction: Configurations of Transnationality: Locating Feminist Rhetorics,” *College English* 70, no. 5 (2008): 461–70; Kendall R. Phillips and G. Mitchell Reyes (eds.), *Global Memoryscapes: Contesting Remembrance in a Transnational Age* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2011), 1–26; Raka Shome, “Internationalizing Critical Race Communication Studies: Transnationality, Space, and Affect,” in Thomas K. Nakayama and Rona T. Halualani, *The Handbook of Critical Intercultural Communication* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2013), 149–70; Kathryn Sorrells, “Re-Imagining Intercultural Communication in the Context of Globalization,” in Nakayama and Halualani, *Handbook of Critical Intercultural Communication*, 171–89; and Bo Wang, “Comparative Rhetoric, Postcolonial Studies, and Transnational Feminisms: A Geopolitical Approach,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 43, no. 3 (2013): 226–42.

stabilized in networks, institutions and routines,”⁵⁴ assemblage theory offers a heuristic for navigating the relationship between macro structures of power and micro acts of communication, and for rethinking culture itself as an assemblage embedded within, and re/producing, existing structures of power.⁵⁵

Second, assemblage may assist rhetoric and communication scholars in better addressing the complexities of difference in the contemporary moment as raced and gendered identities are rendered significant in ways both old and new. As noted above, the dominant paradigms for thinking about race along the axes of inclusion and exclusion limit rhetorical and intercultural inquiry. This is especially notable in the scholarship that has been produced under the moniker of “intercultural,” “contrastive,” or “comparative” rhetoric,” which, while offering insights into “the importance of unique linguistic practices, self-definition, or the power of negative persuasion,” also reaffirms categorical identities by collapsing race and/or culture with a geographically bounded nation-state.⁵⁶ Even in critical rhetorical scholarship, which tends to approach race as a rhetorical production inextricable from structures of power and other axes of identity, Marouf Hasian, Jr. and Fernando Delgado still observed a tendency “to simply invert discursive binaries”⁵⁷ rather than to

⁵⁴ Michele Acuto and Simon Curtis, “Assemblage Thinking and International Relations,” in Michele Acuto and Simon Curtis (eds.), *Reassembling International Theory: Assemblage Thinking and International Relations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 10.

⁵⁵ Rona Halualani and Thomas Nakayama note this as one of the goals of critical intercultural communication scholarship. (Rona T. Halualani and Thomas K. Nakayama, “Critical Intercultural Communication Studies: At a Crossroads,” in Nakayama and Halualani, *Handbook of Critical Intercultural Communication*, 1–16).

⁵⁶ Marouf Hasian, Jr. and Fernando Delgado, “The Trials and Tribulations of Racialized Critical Rhetorical Theory: Understanding the Rhetorical Ambiguities of Proposition 187,” *Communication Theory* 8, no. 3 (1998): 248; see also Mark Lawrence McPhail, *The Rhetoric of Racism* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America), 1994.

⁵⁷ Hasian, Jr. and Delgado, “Trials and Tribulations,” 245–6.

“actively recognize and seek to transcend the illusory black and white divisions of race, gender, and the language of negative difference.”⁵⁸ When race is reduced to identity and/or difference, it thus becomes “a free-floating signifier acontextually applied to and seen as a marker of oppositionality.”⁵⁹ Thomas West therefore challenges rhetorical scholars to consider how “the ideas in which we often ‘trade’... are still largely based on racial thinking” and on exploitative, reductive, and “monologically determined ... ideologies of difference.”⁶⁰ As Shome argues, such an approach is inadequate for the study of difference as it unfolds in contemporary global processes.

According to Shome, with its insistent focus on “self” and “other,” the framework of identity “takes us only so far when set against the material realities of our transnational times. In these realities, complex planes of exclusion and inclusion are being engendered in ways that far exceed and complicate the dialectic of self and difference.”⁶¹ In other words, thinking about race in terms of identity may limit our interrogations into the political workings of power by taking the spaces and sites of difference for granted and, in so doing, eliding “larger questions about the spatial relations through which difference and otherness are produced.”⁶² Shome therefore addresses the need for communication scholars “to recognize how our approaches to power may benefit from a contextual and spatial focus

⁵⁸ Mark Lawrence McPhail, “Complicity: The Theory of Negative Difference,” *Howard Journal of Communications* 3, no. 1-2 (1991): 12, as cited in Hasian, Jr. and Delgado, “Trials and Tribulations,” 246.

⁵⁹ Raka Shome, “Space Matters: The Power and Practice of Space,” *Communication Theory* 13, no. 1 (2003): 42.

⁶⁰ Thomas R. West, *Signs of Struggle: The Rhetorical Politics of Cultural Difference* (Albany: State University of New York, 2002), 46.

⁶¹ Shome, “Space Matters,” 40.

⁶² Shome, “Space Matters,” 43.

where contexts are understood not as static backgrounds but as dynamic relations of force.”⁶³ In mobilizing assemblage to this end, I follow Puar and other scholars who have engaged Deleuze and Guattari’s theorization to examine the vectors along which difference travels.

Narrowing in further, in utilizing assemblage to map the relationships among differently located rhetorics of whiteness and its Others, I build on Thomas Nakayama’s and Robert Krizek’s argument for viewing whiteness as an assemblage. As they note, whiteness is folded into the social fabric of the United States in a multitude of ways; assemblage theory’s “spatial view of power relations that upends traditional, linear histories,” is thus useful for mapping the various points through which whiteness is territorialized.⁶⁴ Moreover, they argue that the spatial politics assemblage draws attention to can function not only as theory, but also as critique.⁶⁵ As they note, however, their study was “limited to the discourses of the late twentieth century in the US; maps of whiteness in other nations at other times may reveal maps constituted within differing lines of power”⁶⁶; my study therefore extends their conceptualization into different geopolitical contexts. In recent years, other scholars have also applied assemblage to rhetorical theory;⁶⁷ however, many discussions of assemblage

⁶³ Shome, “Space Matters,” 54.

⁶⁴ Thomas K. Nakayama and Robert L. Krizek, “Whiteness: A Strategic Rhetoric,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 81 (1995): 294.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Nakayama and Krizek, “Whiteness,” 303.

⁶⁷ Byron Hawk, “Vitalism, Animality, and the Material Grounds of Rhetoric,” in Jeremy Packer and Stephen B. Crofts Wiley (eds.), *Communication Matters: Materialist Approaches to Media, Mobility and Networks* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 196–207; Aaron Hess, “The Selfie Assemblage,” *International Journal of Communication* 9 (2015): 1629–46; Zornista Keremidchieva, “The Congressional Debates on the 19th Amendment: Jurisdictional Rhetoric and the Assemblage of the US Body Politic,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 99, no. 1 (2013): 51–73; Ingrid Volkmer, *The Global Public Sphere: Public Communication in the Age of Reflective Interdependence* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2014); Paul Walker, “A Rhythmic

have failed to explicitly engage with the ways bodies are gendered and racialized within trans/national and political economic global formations.⁶⁸ I argue that doing so can contribute to the process of rethinking rhetorical approaches in ways that matter for contemporary inquiry.

Chapter Preview

Chapter 2, “Mapping the Concepts: Theories and Methods,” discusses assemblage theory in detail, examining how it intersects with and intervenes in the other lines of theory that guide this project: public sphere theory, public memory, critical-race theory, and transnational feminisms. Here, I also offer a more comprehensive description of my methodology and the trajectory of “becomings” that generated the assemblage of interests taken up in this project. Chapter 3, “Assembling Time: Memory and the Preservation of the Present in the US Southwest,” presents my case study of public memory places in the US Southwest. I examine how shifting configurations of memory cast Native Americans as idealized and feminized objects of the past (and thus not as subjects of the present) while reinforcing narratives of (masculine) progress and discourses of democratic multiculturalism. No longer an imminent threat to US settler colonial and imperial hegemonies, Native Americans are instead revered as noble relics of a different time, enabling the mapping of “savage” terrorist threats to global democracy onto other bodies. Engaging my second site of inquiry, Christians United for Israel (CUFI), Chapter 4, “Assembling Places: Pro-Israel Rhetorics and the Preservation of the Future,” presents an analysis of how settler colonial

Refrain: Britain’s Mass-Observation as Rhetorical Assemblage,” *Rhetoric Review*, 35, no. 3 (2016): 212–25.

⁶⁸ For an exception, see Jennifer Wingard, *Branded Bodies, Rhetoric, and the Neoliberal Nation-State* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013).

memoriscapes and the rhetorics of race and place around which they assemble, coalesce with post-9/11 global security discourses to construct the United States and Israel as the sites of democratic futurity while Palestinians are collapsed into a homogenous Arab terrorist threat. Lacking intelligibility as citizen-subjects, Palestinians become “ungrievable” bodies⁶⁹—necessary casualties to maintain the future of the (settler colonial) nation-state, democracy, and “the West.” Chapter 5, “Assembling Bodies: FEMEN’s Feminism and the Preservation of the Past,” turns to my third site of inquiry, European activist organization FEMEN. I examine how their challenges to statist and religious oppression of women function to reinscribe hegemonic rhetorics of liberal feminism, citizenship, democracy, and western modernity. FEMEN’s performative protests against France’s “Islamization” in particular, and their focus on Muslim women’s oppression cannot be disentangled from France’s colonial history or from contemporary global discourses of security and counter/terrorism. Drawing these case studies together, Chapter 6, “Cascading Becomings: Implications and Conclusions,” details the theoretical and methodological contributions this project offers for rhetorical and critical intercultural communication scholarship. Placing my sites in relation to one another, I conceptualize whiteness as a shifting rhetorical frontier that constructs the borders of contemporary geo-political belongings through racialized and gendered geographies, even while actively disavowing racism and (hetero)sexism through the performative embrace of multiculturalist democracy. I argue that as an assemblage, whiteness mobilizes the topoi of time, place, and bodies as it moves through global landscapes, territorializing lands and bodies as it touches down in different locations. In

⁶⁹ For a further discussion of the structures of grievability in relation to war and terror, see Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable* (London: Verso, 2010).

closing, I outline the implications of assemblage as a heuristic for communication studies, including its disruption of identity-based frameworks for inquiry, rethinking relationships between temporal and spatial becomings, and conceptualizing rhetorical events and effects/affects.