

SUICIDE BOMBING AND SOCIAL DEATH



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Suicide bombing is foremost an act of violence that draws together the ingredients of terror and its relation to human being. It is a form of altruistic suicide that plays upon the twinned elements of madness and despair and seemingly resolves their differences in an act of rage.¹ It is an ultimate form of violence whereby the victim and the killer become one, and the survivors are left with a photograph or a potted-biography of the killer. In the case of the suicide vest, a decapitated head found perhaps on a roof nearby might be all that remains. The era of suicide bombing thus revives the old practice of the death mask and the horror of the guillotine. It forces a dramatic re-examination of sovereignty and exceptionalism in the contemporary world.

The 2001 attacks on New York's World Trade Center and other US targets ('9-11') confronted many in the West with a form of extremist violence that has existed elsewhere for some time. Suicide-bombing gained notoriety in Lebanon at the height of its civil war from the early 1980s. Where car bombs employed by different elements and their supporting countries had become a common feature of civil wars and insurgencies (e.g. Palestine in the 1940s, South Vietnam in the 1960s, and Northern Ireland

from the 1970s (Davis 2007)), the use of vehicles driven at speed to gain access to the target and for the driver to detonate its explosive load and thereby kill himself became a new dimension of guerrilla warfare seemingly inspired by the offensive martyrdom of Iranian revolutionary militias following Iraq's invasion in 1980 (Khosrokhavar 2005). In more recent times, however, the vehicle attack has involved no explosive charge at all. The Nice (2016), London Bridge (2017) and Barcelona-Cambrils (2017) attacks consisted of the vehicle alone. In London, the attackers then sprang from their van, wielding knives taped to their hands and wearing fake suicide-bomber vests. They rampaged indiscriminately until they were gunned down by police paramilitaries. As with the bomber, the attackers had thus made themselves one with their weapons, their deaths one with their acts of homicide and their desired victory something to be enjoyed someday by someone else.

These instances of vehicle-only killing do not indicate suicide-bombing to be over. Rather, they highlight how the practice has changed in response to the kinds of measures taken to combat it as well as in relation to the locations where the attacks occur. Principal among these responses has been the growth of surveillance and, with that, new forms of exceptional state power. In films like *Eye in the Sky* (Dir. Gavin Hood 2016) we see the use of macro- and micro-surveillance devices working with global military and political networks to assassinate would-be suicide bombers after fudging the statistical probability of innocent civilian casualties. In a similar vein, *Zero Dark Thirty* (Dir. Kathryn Bigelow 2012) celebrates the use of torture to hunt down the alleged mastermind of 9-11. Suicide bombing thus contributes to a broader state of exception—a categorical condition of abstract peril that fills but is never completed by factual instances (Schmitt

2005). As both films portray, these exceptions occur in exceptional places—post-colonial frontiers of the Global North where necropolitics predominate (Mbembe 2003). Since the development of vehicle-killing, be it an airliner or a ballast-filled van, the targets have been major cities of empire, the weapons have been harder to identify, and the attackers typically ‘computer addicts in search of their parents’ roots’ (Khosrokhavar 2016: 3). In other words, the killers are ordinary citizens of Global North countries with personal histories of migration and socio-economic marginalization in the host country. Records of petty crime often suggesting police harassment are usually all that can be found once the killer has been identified. In regular communication with those same necropolitical fringes where the Global North routinely practises its ‘eye-in-the-sky’ exceptionalism, these attackers might also have chosen to join new forms of the Spanish Civil War’s International Brigades such as Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS or Daesh). Where that earlier war generated romanticism—a Hemingway novel or the 1942 film *Casablanca*—these wars provoke demands that states strip their participating citizens of citizenship and refuse to allow their or their families’ repatriation. There is thus more than just a difference of ideology between a Spanish Civil War participant and a member of ISIS, more too than a willingness to sacrifice one’s life. Where the Spanish Civil War was part of a war *against* fascism, the so-called ‘War on Terror’ highlights what the ‘victory’ over fascism established (Wolin 2003): a ‘beautiful friendship’ with a police state.

As far back as the Gunpowder Plot in 1605, terrorist bombing has been coextensive with violent antagonism to a prevailing politico-theological order whether that is a colonizing power or some other kind of enemy. In several civil war and insurgency settings, bombers pursued

surprise attacks with specific or very general targets. Typically, though, time-delay fuses were employed to enable a bomber's escape or an additional form of attack. In some instances (admittedly rare), warnings were issued to minimize civilian casualties. In recent times, however, bombers have become one with the bomb to ensure its success, especially when the target is heavily armed or difficult to approach. Preventative measures have increased including barriers, bomb disposal technologies, and surveillance technologies that are visual (CCTV), chemical (including sniffer-dogs), and communications-based (or spying). Commercially produced explosives like Semtex have had detectable chemical agents known as 'taggants' added by their manufacturers. The ability to park a car and leave the scene without raising suspicion, leave a package in a rubbish bin, or check-in an explosive suitcase at an airport has been curtailed in direct response to previous attacks. So, the bombers choose different targets and make themselves an integral part of the destruction. Warnings are no longer issued. As Scott Atran (2010: xiv) observes: 'Perhaps never in the history of human conflict have so few people with so few actual means and capabilities frightened so many'. The critical point, though, is that *both* sides of the conflict are bringing that situation about by racing away from each other toward the poles of the human and the machine.

As the hegemonic superpower, the US and its 'coalition of the willing' responded to 9-11 by declaring war on an abstraction—terror. It was the first formal declaration of war by a Global North state since the mid-twentieth century; albeit a declaration that involved no recall of ambassadors, because there was no embassy from which to recall them, only fear. To put a face to this profound anxiety, an 'Axis of Evil' was identified and a course of action undertaken that, in the words of Walter Davis (2006: xiii)

'is also uncannily suited to the designs of global capitalism'. The Cold War disaster of Afghanistan was revisited and revived. The failed-ally-now-roguish-state Iraq was invaded ostensibly because 'terror' had been found in the form of 'weapons of mass destruction' that, of course, only existed in our imagination. The real target—Iran—was once again besieged, while the breakup of the old Second World empires, going on apace since the end of the Cold War, was encouraged as the spread of inherently world-saving democracy, while Muslim elements in the two Second World empires—the USSR and China—were encouraged to realign and separate. The double-edges of the sword of terrorism were thus sharpened. For the terrorists who attacked the US in 2001 and have continued to attack subsequently there and elsewhere, are themselves the victims of terror from those sites of the colonial frontier and its modern developments—primarily civil wars which need no diplomacy, treaty or non-aggression pact. Like the Gauls invading Rome, the products of civil war bring to the walls of the city the horror of the empire and turn the public into startled geese. The War on Terror thus describes a state of exception whereby governments and citizens hitherto feeling safe in the post-racial, post-sexist, and post-colonial categorical imperatives of Gettysburg, Auschwitz, and My Lai suddenly do an about-face and welcome torture and other war crimes and crimes against humanity as pragmatic necessities for a world—their world, which they rule so benevolently and good humouredly that they are not even aware they are ruling it—being terrorized by deadly serious suicide bombers. In the words of a contemporary mythologization of our times, *Clash of the Titans* (Dir. Louis Leterrier, 2010): 'Release the Kraken'!

In keeping with all forms of war technology, suicide bombing thus emerges as part of an 'arms race' between

antagonists. Replacing the car-bombs that swelled in numbers from the late 1960s when bomb makers discovered the deadly amalgam of the easily-obtained crop-fertilizer ammonium nitrate and fuel oil (ANFO) (Davis 2007), the incidence of suicide bombing and suicide killing rose dramatically from the early 1990s. In Sri Lanka, the separatist Tamil Tigers developed special undergarment vests to carry the explosive charge (usually a plastic explosive such as Semtex or C4) and, reminiscent of the Japanese Special Attack Force (*Tokkōtai*) of aerial and submarine human bombs used in the later stages of World War Two, created a special suicide squad—the Black Tigers—to undertake missions against the Sri Lankan Navy and to assassinate politicians and military commanders. Suicide vests were quickly adopted by others or the explosives were hidden in seemingly harmless and ubiquitous backpacks. Women cadres became significant participants as they exploited their putative harmlessness to gain access to their targets. In some instances, the explosives were made to make the bomber appear to be pregnant.

Noting the Tamil Tigers and their contribution to the practice of suicide bombing gives pause to the extensive literature on suicide warfare that proliferated after 9-11. For while those and other attacks were associated with radical Islam movements, the Tigers were, if anything, Hindu albeit with large numbers of Tamil Christians in their ranks. Expressing at times an egalitarian ideology opposed to caste and the subordination of women—arguably two planks of conservative Hinduism—the Tigers have been classified as ‘secular Marxists’ (Pape 2005) and as ‘nationalists’ (Khosrokhavar 2005: 9) because their acts of martyrdom have been both offensive rather than defensive, and because they were tied to a military strategy to oust an occupying government and declare a separate state. Defensive martyrdom is, of course, more common in

the region, with Tamil-language nationalists setting fire to themselves from the 1960s to protest the introduction of Hindi as India's national language, and Buddhist monks making the same public gesture in Burma and Vietnam from the same time. In that sense, too, the adoption by the Tamil Tigers of the *kuppi*—the vial of cyanide worn around the militant's neck to be used in the event of capture—was a defensive martyrdom, albeit one that directly led to the offensive practice of suicide bombing.²

Kurdish suicide bombers are interpreted in the same way as nationalists rather than simply Islamic and as military strategists rather than hateful individuals whose motives are principally vengeful and exemplary rather than strategic. These interpretations, which strive to debunk the popular 'crazy jihadist' arguments are, however, missing the point. In appearing to be non-religious, the Tamil and Kurdish suicide bombers highlight the dynamics of contemporary religiosity. In the case of the Tigers, for example, the cult of the suicide bomber was tied to the value of freedom in the conditions of a separate Tamil state, the exemplary charisma of the Tiger leader/prophet who incorporated powerful themes of birth and rebirth in Tiger membership and training, and a ritualized cult of heroes that became integral to the ideal state the militant movement celebrated once it had acquired control over parts of the country.³ Very similar practices are evident amongst the Kurds and, as Khosrokhavar (2005) argues about Iranian martyr movements, they did not simply react to and reject the strong leftist groups and ideology that had also opposed the Shah rather than incorporate leftist ideology in a new religiosity that broke with tradition precisely as it declared a new traditionalism—a fundamentalism.

All forms of suicide-militancy are thus religious including those secularist forms that prompt some commentators

to debunk the ‘mad mullah’ arguments and to look instead for an underlying strategy—a rational pragmatism that enables a politics of recognition. Employing a techno-militaristic (i.e. easily acronymed) terminology such as ‘Human-Centered Weapon System’ (Lewis 2013), these commentators such as Robert Pape (2005) and Iain Overton (2019) thus promote the pursuit and eradication of militant group leaders as the evil geniuses who marshal the martyr mentality converting its defensive despair into hateful weapons. It was in this way, for example, that the Sri Lankan president who waged the aggressive military campaign against the Tigers in 2008/9 routinely obsessed over the need to exterminate the Tiger leader. In the bloodbath that followed, the government then ensured the eradication of the Tiger leader’s family including his 10-year-old son who was shot in captivity, the razing of the parents’ house, and the demolition of the underground bunker that had briefly become a museum managed by the Sri Lankan Army. If the ethnic pogrom of 1983 displayed features of a demonic exorcism mobilized by de facto state forces such as members of the ruling party’s trade union (Kapferer 2012), the final onslaught by the state itself was staggeringly total. In a similar way, the US hunted and executed the alleged mastermind of 9-11 before observing a proper mortuary rite on board a US warship—seemingly respectful of Islam but effectively denying Osama bin Laden’s martyr status—and disposing of the body at sea. Put simply, therefore, the religiosity of suicide bombing is matched by the ‘exterminate the brutes’ religiosity of the campaigns against it. The ‘arms race’ of terror continues.

In seemingly dispensing with the ‘crazy jihadist’ or ‘mad mullah’ approach, the commentators also fail to connect suicidal militancy with the predominantly US phenomenon of the lone gunman who targets sites of

enjoyment such as open-air concerts and nightclubs; biopolitical institutions (schools, universities, medical centres, libraries, and places of worship); and ostensibly secular gatherings like the Norwegian Worker's Youth League summer camp in 2011. Where attacks on public events like the Boston Marathon, public spaces like London Bridge and the Nice promenade, and other sources of enjoyment such as *Charlie Hebdo* magazine are attributed to Islamic militancy, attacks like Columbine High School, Virginia Tech, or the 2017 Las Vegas concert are quickly 'outliered' through a forensic psychology that anchors the demons firmly inside the perpetrators' heads rendering them as variants of the arsonist and serial killer. Much debate then focuses on the means—the guns—rather than the parallels and what these parallels suggest about the contemporary world and the religiosities of homicidal suicide. When, however, Khosrokhavar (2005: 45) insightfully describes the suicide bomber as using radicalized Islam to express 'the despair of an embryonic individual who maintains his links with the sacred whilst striving to assert himself in a world that is deaf to his aspirations', he could as easily be describing Stephen Paddock (Las Vegas), Omar Mateen (Orlando), or Seung-Hui Cho (Virginia Tech) albeit without the Islam. To include the anti-Islamic terrorists such as the Norwegian Anders Breivik or the Australian Brenton Tarrant here would be especially galling for them because unlike Paddock et al. Breivik et al. imagine they have higher cause. Their passionate denial of any psycho-pathology is matched by the public demand that they be pathologized. What I suggest is that their pathology be situated. The demons are, quite simply, ranging more broadly than inside their heads.

Major changes to the nature of nation-states have been taking place in this context of suicide-killing and state response. The invasion of Iraq combined state

power with global corporations such as Haliburton whose principal activity is servicing the oil industry and whose management was closely articulated with the presidency of George W. Bush. Where a previous US president, Eisenhower, had cautioned against the excessive influence of the military-industrial complex, its growth has contributed to the rise of what Wolin (2003) refers to as an inverted totalitarianism and what Kapferer (2005) calls the oligarchic-corporate state (or more simply the corporate state). For Jha (2006) these developments are the inevitable rupture of the nation-state as a container of capital that had itself contributed to previous ruptures as an inherent quality of capitalism itself. And this is Walter Davis's point about the resonance between capitalism and the war on terror or, indeed Hardt and Negri's point about the invention of wars on abstractions as a feature of Empire (Hardt and Negri 2005). The martyr, the *reductio ad absurdum* of such abstraction, bears witness precisely at that point of his or her *déchirement* (fragmentation).⁴ Mastering an imminent apocalypse as a Mexican stand-off between nuclear superpowers that appeared to have ended war because no one would be so crazy as to start one—a perpetual peace of a truly symmetrical war complemented indeed fed by the asymmetric civil wars of the frontier—the veneer of gentility would be preserved if good citizens remained good, their categorical imperatives nurtured by another Hitler/Holocaust book, documentary or film, or tale of deprivation of freedom and consumerism in the Second World. There was even talk of shifting the theatre of the nuclear stand-off into outer space. The suicide bomber, a figure who seemed to appear just when the Cold War seemed to be over, throws that bizarre sense of peace into disarray. The categorical imperative of pragmatism at the limits of modern technology nurtured by an exclusive club of member countries

that appeared to align with the veto-holders on the UN Security Council, was then ruptured when the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was broken by the successful testing of weapons by India, Pakistan and North Korea. In hand with the rise of the suicide bomber, therefore, we also saw the invention of the 'rogue state' as the concomitant of the 'failed state'. The 'unexampled masterpiece' of terror, 'Hiroshima' (Davis 2006, 156), thus became a new aspect of an evolving state form increasingly orientated to a sense of global catastrophe.

The 'War on Terror' thus becomes its own kind of Terror in the French Revolutionary sense. People are made to feel safe in the presence of an increasingly militarized and invigilated world as they are told to welcome the surveillance, quietly hopeful that *they've* done nothing wrong and that the deadly surveillance systems will not make a mistake, or, if they do, they make it somewhere else or to someone else who came from somewhere else such as the Brazilian tourist shot dead on the London Underground in the days after the 2007 attacks. Questions regarding the nature of these parts of the world are largely left unanswered apart from a few murmurings from the Left about growing inequality and the inherent or systemic violence of capitalism (Zizek 2002) or a few Orientalist murmurings from the Right about the inherent corruption and repressive inequalities (especially gendered) of traditional politico-theologies (read 'Islam').

Any vehicle is now potentially a weapon and any site a target. Even at the quiet regional campus of the Australian university where I work, heavy concrete and stone barriers were erected in 2018 to go with the heightened systems of surveillance and the employment of security consultants whose principal activities are the management of fear and the protection of corporate liability. Two of these gigantic tub bollards deserve special mention for

the way their tops have been informally converted by staff members into dioramas with children's plastic toys creating a farmyard in one tub (complete with a wind turbine) and a battlefield of toy soldiers and helicopter gunships in the other. In the face of climate change and the associated bushfire tragedies of 2019/2020, both dioramas form war zones demanding state response.

Other manifestations of terror are the high enrolments in criminology programmes around the Australian country, the rise of the readily-available for media comment 'terrorism expert' usually found in a specialist 'centre' or 'think tank', and scholarly emphases on policy, risk and 'precarity' to accompany 'real-world applications' of research that is 'impactful'. In a recent television advertising campaign, these real-world applications are depicted as brightly coloured smoke coming out of the back of the smiling head of a student. The campaign was entitled 'Deakin University Arms Students with what it takes to "Be Ready"'. Highlighting the times as full of 'rapid change and global uncertainty', the executive director of marketing explained that 'universities need to do more than ever to prepare students for the real world'. (retrieved from <https://lbbonline.com/news/deakin-university-arms-students-with-what-it-takes-to-be-ready/> 24 July 2019). In more recent campaigns, the university declares that the future 'belongs to the ready' and thus continues to promote a sense of threat and futurism reminiscent of Europe a century ago, but at the same time preparing the world for the extremism created by the global pandemic.

Where Zizek (2008: 153) sees Hitchcock's *The Birds* in the image of the crashing 9-11 aircraft, one could be forgiven for seeing Tim Burton's *Mars Attacks* in these exploding heads. More seriously, though, the ads depict a university overdetermined by its fears, which it shares with an anxious public. It isn't declaring the

self-combusting student to be a suicide bomber any more than it is advocating vaping. It is, however, suggesting that the student will be 'impactful' and will rise above the 'precariat', his or her head 'exploding with ideas', as if to say, 'I am dynamite'. The terror of suicide bombing thus feeds a larger anxiety identified by Dardot and Laval (2019) as the permanent state of crisis informing neoliberalism since the global financial crisis of 2008. This is the profound anxiety regarding employment and financial security in a post-manufacturing society and fragmenting nation-state, amplified in the thunder of a global pandemic. The suicide bomber prefigures and participates, therefore, in a larger apocalyptic eschatology participating in the 'liquid surveillance' (to use Zygmunt Bauman's term) of the wages of fear. By this I mean the diasporic proliferation and privatization of multiple panopticons that replace the more centralized surveillance institutions of the modern state (Bauman and Lyon 2013). Digital and matrix technology, 'Big Data' (Zuboff 2019) and the neo-liberal checks on the excesses of *laissez faire* through continuous audit-ranking (Dardot and Laval 2013) are all components of this liquid surveillance that is almost continually generating corporate solutions to corporate problems (Dardot and Laval 2019). Identified several years ago as the society of control (Deleuze 1992) and the society of the apparatus (Agamben 2009), the proliferation of panopticons engages in the larger spectacle of global warfare demanding unprecedented curtailment of information-freedom that simultaneously presents itself as an unrestricted spectacle.⁵ This is the same context as that of the computer-addicted jihadists described by Khosrokhavar (2016). It is the world of the Arab Spring, of the anti-government protests in Hong Kong, the Extinction Rebellion movement, and more recently the mass demonstrations inspired by singular albeit synecdochic

acts of racial and gendered violence, as well as ‘witch hunt’ impeachment campaigns against political leaders. It is a world heavily dependent on satellite communications and a profound sense of victimhood. The suicide bomber occupies the extreme of this extreme.

Conclusion

Bauman coined the term ‘liquid surveillance’ as a complement to the transformations in modernity inadequately rendered, he felt, by the term ‘postmodern’ (Bauman 2000; Bauman and Lyon 2013). These included the extension of the market into every sinew of life associated with the transformation in the centralized institutional form of the surveillance state. Entailing more than mere ‘outsourcing’, the rise of multiple panopticons and the shift from production to consumption, discipline to control, the traditional role of the state apparatus focused more on different modalities of violence and boundary management. It amounts to the narrowing intensification of centralized state power to policing and exclusionary border protection. Along with the growing array and scale of panopticons was also the development of ‘ban-opticons’ (Bauman and Lyon 2013: 60–6). Ranging from private security firms managing gated communities and ID card workspaces to state-run borders including internal borders such as the wall built by the state of Israel to deal with its growing suicide bomber threat, ban-opticons are also the migrant detention centres and navy blockades that restrict human movement in an era of unprecedented mobility. At London’s Gatwick Airport and I daresay elsewhere in the UK, the slow-moving queue of arriving passengers awaiting electronic scanning and, for now at least, face-to-face interrogation, is greeted by the sign ‘Welcome to the

UK Border' not 'Welcome to the UK'. For the border has become its own ban-opticon run by, also for now, a public department renamed as 'Border Force' to embrace the previously separate realms of customs and immigration. In hand with these corporate-state developments are the television entertainment programmes whereby the public becomes part of the surveillance apparatus by watching how the 'Border Force' goes about its work, usually with arriving passengers who were unaware of their right, again for now, to decline to be recorded. 'Reality TV' programmes of all kinds are thus part of the surveillance exercise. Indeed, there is even a programme where people can watch people watching television. Like the mythical oozlum bird that flies in ever-decreasing circles, the society of liquid surveillance risks an ultimate 'closure'. The suicide bomber is one of its possibilities.

I noted at the beginning of this chapter how the film *Eye in the Sky* addresses the proliferation of surveillance as a direct outcome of suicide bombing. It depicts a high technology military operation involving the governments of the UK, the USA and Kenya employing micro (flying beetle) and more conventional satellite-operated drones to locate a Muslim extremist safe house and there discover two suicide bombers preparing for an attack with explosives being added to special vests they will wear, probably to a shopping mall, and a video camera being set up to record their last words to broadcast later on social media. Drone cameras reveal an innocent young girl sitting in front of the house compound selling bread that her mother has made at their home nearby. Liquid surveillance thus clatters into a typical scenario of the Global South where innocent civilians are held captive by occupying extremists as a human shield. At one point we see the girl playing with a hula-hoop in her own house compound; her father then being castigated by a visiting

militant for allowing his daughter to behave in such a flagrantly un-Islamic way. Their own house compound is thus deterritorialized by Islamic fundamentalism. Meanwhile, the two US drone pilots (male and female whom we know have just met) enjoy the sight of the girl playing as it is telecast by the cameras of their aircraft which they are flying from a base in the USA. It is another invasion of privacy, but it is harmless because it is joyful and necessary because of terrorism. The contradiction is heightened by the knowledge that the English army general presiding over the operation from London went to work that day tasked with replacing the toy doll he had bought for his daughter's birthday with the brand/model the girl's mother knows she really wants. Busy with the global terrorist threat he delegates the task to a female subordinate who, of course, knows what it is all about. An identity of innocence—child's play—is thus established between the girl in the village and the daughter of the general. The ultimate eye-in-the-sky—the film's audience—feels safe in the conviction of what it is fighting for. The terrorists on the other hand have no motive other than the twisted Muslim male obsession with curtailing women's and children's freedom. Like the evil routinely displayed in Anglo-American horror fiction, the terrorists' greatest sin is their supposed hatred for kinship while the good citizens' greatest sin is neglect. And just as evil is always vanquished by a 'Holy Family' consisting of a (male or female) warrior mother temporarily commanding the exception, the destruction of the terrorists is achieved. Of course, though, the little village girl—innocence—is killed. The general really did get the wrong doll, but we can fix that through the eye-in-the-sky. To twist the memorable line of another deeply ideological film of our times of corporate-state warfare (*A Few Good Men*), *Eye in the Sky* reveals how we *can* 'handle the truth' of a permanent

state of exception seemingly forced upon us by religious extremism and suicide bombing without giving pause to our common ground.

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Notes

1. The phrase 'madness and despair' twists a phrase from the final section of Joseph Conrad's novel *The Secret Agent* (first published in 1907). The novel is based on the true story of a bombing by a French anarchist of the Greenwich Observatory in 1894. Conrad (1967: 9) called the event 'a blood-stained inanity of so fatuous a kind' because it killed the bomber without damaging the Observatory and provoked the bomber's sister to commit suicide; an act subsequently reported as one of 'madness or despair'.
2. This form of martyrdom is also more common elsewhere as hunger-striking (Feldman 1991; Bargu 2014) and the deliberate surrender to state violence such as the early Christian refusal to sacrifice leading to the Christo-mimetic internalization of sacrifice (Khosrokhavar 2005: 6). As Khosrokhavar and others note, the term 'martyr' originally describes one who bears witness.
3. In *Structures of Tamil Eelam: A Handbook* published in Switzerland in 2019 (Gemini 2019), surviving Tigers describe the institutions of the de facto state with a view to preserving them for the future. Closely aligned with secular grassroots development discourse, the book contains no references to either the military structure of the Tigers or to the ritualism the Tigers created.

4. This is my translation of the French term following Jonathan Strauss's translator's note regarding its use for the German *zerrissenheit* by Kojève and Bataille (Bataille 1990: 14n5). Strauss uses the term 'dismemberment' but notes how *déchirement* also has the meanings of shredding or tearing.
5. A further feature of this within the academy is the intensification of surveillance over research through increasingly dogmatic and Roman geese-like research ethics committees charged with ensuring that no intrusive human research is conducted. And because some students commence their studies before the age of 18, all university staff must acquire a 'Working with Children' permit—essentially a police check of their criminal records about which management is then informed.

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