

THE POLITICS AND POETICS OF AIRPORT (IN)SECURITY RHETORIC:  
MATERIALISM, AFFECT, AND THE TRANSPORTATION  
SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

This dissertation examines the affective rhetoric of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). After the events of September 11, 2001 airport security was transitioned from a private enterprise to a federal agency. TSA screens millions of passengers daily and costs taxpayers billions of dollars annually. This dissertation argues that the affective dimensions of airport security make resisting TSA difficult in airports and that online resistance to TSA often uses violent and counterproductive discourses.

This dissertation is grounded in practices of rhetorical criticism and argues for a materialist orientation to rhetoric. Specifically, it argues that rhetorical criticism has been bifurcated between systems of representation (rhetoric is an approximation of the material world) and materialist rhetoric (rhetoric has force and consequence in the world). This project draws from critical/cultural studies and performance studies to investigate the ways material rhetorics articulate with force to bodies. Additionally, the affective dimensions of rhetoric are explored. This approach to rhetoric forms the method of criticism used to study TSA.

A variety of artifacts are mapped and critiqued in this dissertation including airport security checkpoints, images produced by TSA whole body imagers, enhanced pat downs conducted by TSA, TSA training materials, videos of TSA conducting security screenings and online comments reacting to those videos, and field notes from

travels through airport security checkpoints. Specific attention is paid for the ways these artifacts evince the impossibility of politics at airports and the fraught relationship between TSA and TSA detractors in online discussions about TSA. This study also examines the relationship among these artifacts.

Finally, this dissertation attends to the intense embodied relationship between TSA and passengers. It argues that airport (in)security includes controlling the affective dimensions of air travel. TSA performs routines of security that establish appropriate affect for passengers and when those affects fail TSA fails to secure airports. Failures by TSA encourage violent rhetoric by TSA detractors who advocate dismantling the administration.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION: AN AIRPORT**

#### **(IN)SECURITY ASSEMBLAGE**

As a critical/cultural rhetorician, especially one interested in affect and material rhetorics, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and public performances of airport security are a rich assemblage of texts. These rituals, which a decade ago were part of new practices of airport security drafted in response to the events of September 11, have now become expected parts of everyday performances of flying.

Encounters in the airport with TSA have come to mean many things to many people, especially as the veneer of national security wore off and the agency's most vocal antagonists found increasingly harsh language to characterize TSA. From the outset of this project I remained convinced that there was more to do than to track possible meanings for TSA screenings. Such a project could have taken an epistemological approach into the psyche of the American citizen turned vocal antigovernment activist. Instead I have followed a path which explores ontologies of communication, interrogating the force and movement of rhetorics of TSA. Artifacts of rhetoric move in social relationships and exert force. Beyond anything else September 11 was an event of

force and movement—planes moving into buildings with force, military mobilization of force into far off places, and the State using force to regulate the movement of our bodies around the country.

I began this project with a very simple premise: Subjects articulate to artifacts that exert force on our bodies, and we exert force on them. By artifact I refer to the many different texts available for rhetorical criticism. Many of the artifacts critiqued in this project lay outside of traditional texts. At times an artifact exerts enormous force on material bodies and dominates that relationship; at other times that relationship is reversed, but for a materialist ontology (i.e., an orientation concerned with the movement of material things) the important question is the interplay of forces. This project explores the ways artifacts of TSA airport security circulate in an airport (in)security assemblage. The phrase “airport (in)security assemblage” refers to the apparatuses to make our air national infrastructure more secure while simultaneously causing anxiety and insecurity by the very presence of TSA itself.

An airport (in)security assemblage is a vast and complex collection of artifacts that are negotiated by those who fly and by those who do not, by some who antagonize TSA, and by some who are reassured by their presence. That complexity is unavoidable given the contemporary conditions of U.S. American air travel. The artifacts that make up an (in)security assemblage consist of the spaces where TSA makes contact with our bodies using its metal detectors, x-ray machines and advanced imaging technology to peer just beneath our clothing, and where human agents touch our bodies for enhanced pat downs. Circulating through an assemblage are also video recordings of security screenings and online discussions about the videos and TSA procedures. These

communities produce vitriolic discourses expressing violent antagonistic attitudes towards TSA. It is also through this assemblage where governmental discourse about the legality of TSA is debated and images are produced by TSA's advanced imaging technology that screens our bodies and their affects.

This project tracks these disparate artifacts focusing on their circulation and the forces these artifacts exert on one another. In the chapters that follow I consider the materiality of rhetoric, the relationship of State surveillance and the subject, the articulation of videos of TSA allegedly violating civil liberties to online communities, and a chronicle of traveling through TSA checkpoints.

My purpose in studying TSA is to understand the forces that have created a culture of, and desire for, security and folded into those desires are procedures that make political visibility and organizing more difficult in airport spaces. The State, via TSA, has transformed airports into spaces where we desire our own domination and the erasure of our own identity, and through that process TSA can justifiably make political articulation all but impossible. The harm here is not that some right to free speech without consequence is being violated; instead, materially the ability for expression, with consequence, is being systematically removed from airports. Airports are becoming strategic places where political resistance and mobilized demonstration are impossible because of TSA's security procedures. The erasure of politics from airports through the force of TSA's rhetoric of security and practices of security are integral elements to each of the chapters in this study.

By way of introducing my project, this chapter unfolds in five sections. First, I discuss the history of TSA and some common critiques of the agency. Second, I review

other scholars who have engaged with TSA as a research area. Third, I map the various artifacts studied in this project to preview rhetoric I examine. Fourth, I specify definitions of important concepts from Deleuze that I make use of throughout this dissertation. Finally, I provide an overview of the remaining chapters. This chapter provides an overview of my project.

### *The Transportation Security Administration*

The attacks of September 11, 2001 on the United States turned civilian commercial airliners into weapons of mass destruction, destroying the twin towers at the World Trade Center, damaging a large portion of the Pentagon, and—if not for the heroics of those on board—could have damaged the White House or U.S. Capitol Building. One response was to shift airport security from regulated private enterprises to a federal endeavor with the goal of providing enhanced security. As the *9/11 Commission Report* states, “In November 2001, Congress passed and the President signed the Aviation and Transportation Security Act. This act created the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), which is now part of the Homeland Security Department.”<sup>1</sup> TSA, originally part of the Department of Transportation, is now part of the Department of Homeland Security. In the decade that followed, TSA grew in size to a work force of over “50,000 security officers, inspectors, directors, air marshals and managers who protect the nation’s transportation systems so you and your family can travel safely.”<sup>2</sup> TSA states that their mission is to “look for bombs at checkpoints in airports, we inspect rail cars, we patrol subways with our law enforcement partners, and we work to make all modes of transportation safe.”<sup>3</sup>



TSA as it stands today is a large organization that conducts routine searches, in one form or another, of every passenger and their belongings. From checked bags that disappear into the bowels of airports only to reemerge on tarmacs and be loaded into airplanes, to carryon luggage placed on conveyor belts and scanned at checkpoints, to human bodies as they cross the limen into the secured areas of airports, TSA guards those border crossings. The cost of operating TSA continues to rise and from 2011 to 2012 eclipsed \$7.5 billion.<sup>4</sup> TSA is a massive undertaking, screening an estimated 1.8 million passengers per day across the United States.<sup>5</sup> Each of these 1.8 million passengers are funneled through lines that direct them to and through a series of screening machines (see Figure 1).

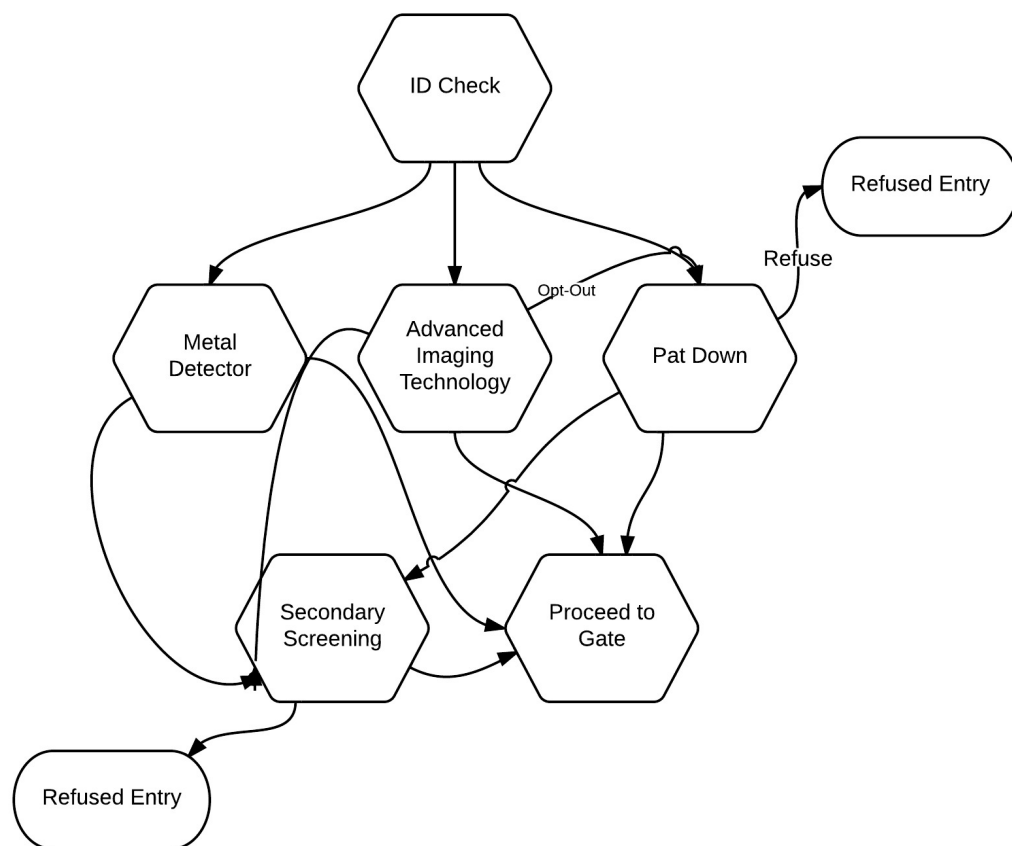


Figure 1: Airport Checkpoint Flow

Some passengers go through a magnetometer (metal detector); however, increasingly most passengers are funneled through advanced imaging machines that scan just beneath clothing and search for potentially dangerous objects (see Figure 1). Some object to the use of this technology for a variety of reasons including fears of health risks and privacy violations. TSA recognizes the right of individuals to opt-out of the use of these devices and passengers can instead receive an enhanced pat down that checks for objects that could threaten safety, by feeling the inside of waistbands and thighs, and on the outside of the buttocks, breasts, and testicles.

This Sisyphean task of perpetual (in)security has become a controversial project; ensuring that airports are secure has demanded increasingly invasive techniques. In print and electronic press TSA has become the target of angry criticisms focusing on its poor proficiency at detecting dangerous items<sup>6</sup> and its record of passenger complaints regarding botched screenings, such as the accidental exposure of the breasts of a seventeen-year-old niece of a member of Congress.<sup>7</sup> Although TSA has a history of publicized complaints and mistakes made during the passenger screening process, mistakes are relatively rare given the number of people traveling. In 2011, 0.001% of passengers complained about TSA techniques.<sup>8</sup> However, the notoriety of individual incidents overshadows the small number of total complaints. For example, Scott MacFarlane's reporting of that Texas teen and niece of Rep. Ralph Hall sparked controversy despite being an isolated event.<sup>9</sup> Such egregious errors in screenings prove to be fodder for anti-TSA narratives.

Perhaps the most prominent critic of TSA is security expert and author Bruce Schneier; his blog, op-eds, and books are a sustained and strident critique of TSA. His

concept of “security theater” has entered the public lexicon and is often used to describe TSA as a toothless failed bureaucratic initiative. Schneier’s twenty years of editorial publications and his twelve books on security and cryptology have earned him a reputation as a security expert. Schneier’s work recognizes the difficult mandate of TSA and makes suggestions to improve the administration’s procedures, and at the same time he critically analyzes what he claims are failures of TSA security.

Schneier is best known for coining the term “security theater”: “countermeasures [that] provide the feeling of security *instead of* the reality”<sup>10</sup> Schneier is interested in security as an ontological state and he dismisses affective dimensions of security as *mere* feelings. However, as I will argue in Chapter V, security as an ontological state is nearly impossible to achieve. Security is rather a status that is continually being achieved, and there is an important affective dimension to security. Schneier objects to measures that he thinks make people feel safe, but that are ultimately a waste of resources. For example, in 2008 he argued that TSA’s photo-ID rules and procedures are easily circumvented using forged documents and boarding passes.<sup>11</sup> His op-ed, appearing in *The Los Angeles Times* in July of 2008, argues “In the end, the photo ID requirement is based on the myth that we can somehow correlate identity with intent. We can’t.”<sup>12</sup> He details ways to circumvent the ID requirement and the terrorist no-fly list.

The anti-TSA advocates I discuss in Chapter IV have welcomed with open arms Schneier’s critiques of TSA. The language of “security theater” has been widely pirated and used to describe TSA as a whole, instead of using it as a concept to analyze specific elements of TSA’s layers of security. The result of such imprecise adoption is that many criticize TSA for using “security theater” without any sense of where TSA fails and

succeeds. TSA has taken note of Schneier as well. In 2012 TSA lobbied Congress to get him removed as an expert witness from a Congressional Panel on airport security, ostensibly because he is involved in a lawsuit against their use of advanced imaging technology in whole body scanners.<sup>13</sup> Schneier's status as expert and critic of TSA has created an adversarial relationship between his work and TSA.

In examining the mandate that gave birth to TSA and criticisms in the public sphere of TSA it becomes clear that lingering antagonisms over how to secure the public often produce reactive rhetorics. Certainly TSA's mission is complex, and its veil of secrecy under the auspices of Homeland Security further complicates matters, its reactive posture—which I discuss in Chapter III—makes for a problematic pattern of rhetorical engagements. Any history of TSA must be written through antagonisms between the State, i.e., the federal government, and the bodies that oppose this new regime of surveillance. Such an antagonistic model is present in emerging literature on TSA.

### *Fellow Travelers*

Rachel Hall has emerged as one of the preeminent critics of the aesthetics of post-9/11 airports. Her analysis of airport security, TSA's procedures, and attempts by TSA to monitor affect in airport checkpoints offers grounding for my study. Hall contends that TSA adopts the aesthetics of "ski resort signage" to separate the "high-flying consultant and the toddler-toting mom."<sup>14</sup> Such separations, like the black diamond slope and the bunny hill, aid the efficiency of movement in airport spaces and generate the impression of the business traveler as model citizen who is "adept at self exposure, the better to move about as if she left no tracks."<sup>15</sup> Hall's analysis reveals a preferred trend in the

design of airports for a self-monitoring, aware, and efficient traveler who reveals whatever they must to the State. Hall calls for critical attention to TSA's ability to condition a desire to reveal ourselves to the State.

Hall argues in "Unwitting Performances of Transparency Monitoring the Traveling Public, Managing Airport Affect" that TSA's attempts to implement behavior detection training—to monitor facial patterns and emotions of passengers—was fraught with problems and controversy. This training searched for a "passenger who 'pops'—affectively and, therefore (by the logic of the program), visually—for the behavior detectors."<sup>16</sup> Such a person is said to have failed "polygraph transferred to the visual register."<sup>17</sup> For Hall the danger in all of this is that it implicates a "more subtle calibration of bodily and affective norms within the public spaces of airports."<sup>18</sup> Hall points to the ways in which bodies and affects are increasingly conditioned as part of the process of airport (in)security.

One additional piece of promising scholarship comes from Magnet Shoshana and Tara Rodgers who critique the difficulty of dis/abled bodies to proceed undeterred through TSA's advanced imaging technology. They claim whole body imagers are problematic for "Othered bodies, including the intersections of transgender, disabled, fat, religious, female, and racialized bodies...these technologies single out particular communities for increased searches and harassment."<sup>19</sup> In particular, they discuss how TSA technology is unable to recognize prosthetics, wheelchairs, and bodies that do not conform to the male/female binary. TSA's software makes screening such exceptional bodies difficult.

All of these scholars examine a variety of artifacts that are part of TSA. Indeed, the diversity of artifacts I analyze in this project underscore the complexity of TSA; the calls by these scholars for more critical attention serve as clear warrants for the need to study TSA. In the next section I describe the artifacts I will be investigating. My aim is not to begin any analysis, but to provide an overview of the breadth of artifacts in this study.

### *Mapping TSA's (In)Security Assemblage*

Figure 2 illustrates the complexity of the assemblage critiqued in this project. Beginning at the left of the figure are airport security checkpoints. Throughout this process I describe the spaces of checkpoints in airports, the procedures that occur in these spaces, and various encounters in security checkpoints. One important note about airport security checkpoints is that each trip through a checkpoint is its own singularity—no matter how repetitious the experience, there are always important differences. For a detailed look at what is included in these spaces see Figure 1 and attend to the different paths from ID check to the gate. Each security checkpoint is arranged differently from airport to airport and each experience going through a checkpoint is different. Other elements of the assemblage include the images produced by advanced imaging technology (also known as whole body imagers). Additionally, some flyers video record themselves in airport security checkpoints. Two such videos are discussed in Chapter IV in relation to the online discussions they generate.

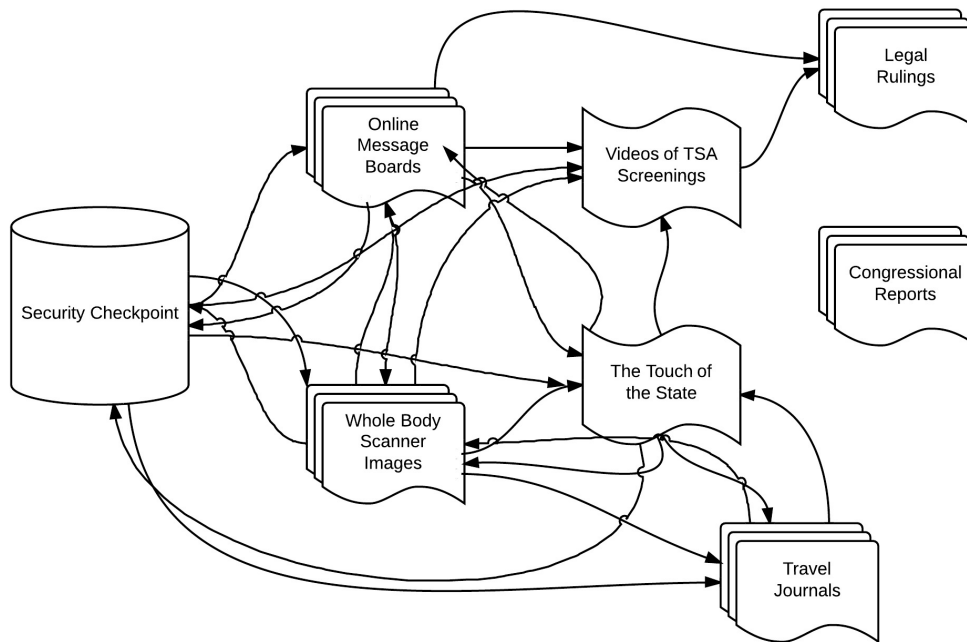


Figure 2: The Airport (In)Security Assemblage

I recorded my own encounters with TSA in my travel journals, including the State as it pats down my body. Other artifacts are Congressional reports about TSA and judicial rulings that have established the legal right to film TSA. All of these elements move in relation to one another through TSA (in)security assemblage.

Space and time across these relations are relative so movements are not necessarily linear or causally related. One can experience some artifacts but not others; for example, many people view videos or images of TSA but never personally encounter TSA. As I discuss in Chapter IV, a lack of direct encounters with TSA does not stop individuals from virulently debasing the administration. In other words, movement does not follow any prescribed path.

*Deleuze: A Flight Manual*

My dissertation is deeply indebted to the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and his writing partner Felix Guattari. Deleuze directly and indirectly informs most of my thinking on rhetoric from the perspective of a materialist ontology. As I make clear in Chapter II, the purpose of rhetorical criticism is often divided between questions of representation (rhetoric as secondary to material relations) that seek to understand what an artifact means epistemologically, and questions of materiality (the force of rhetoric) that seeks to understand how rhetoric impacts social relations. I think and write as a materialist rhetorician and in making that claim I foreground issues of ontology in my criticism. As a materialist I am examine the force of rhetoric in the world.<sup>20</sup>

Without casting my argument as a dichotomy, it is nonetheless the case that rhetoric has long been a bifurcated system. Rhetoric as representation, a product of Platonic thought, divorces rhetoric from the material world. A view of rhetoric as material, a legacy of the Sophists, works to articulate rhetoric to bodies. My own intervention in this debate is complicated. First and foremost, I am a materialist rhetorician who claims that rhetoric does things in the world. Yet, I am heavily influenced by Raymie McKerrow's project of critical rhetoric because it demands that rhetoricians address issues of power in their criticism. But, McKerrow sees rhetoric as a representational system. As a result, the *telos* of critical rhetoric is to represent marginalized voices as a means to more equitable power relations. By using critical rhetoric to give voice to marginalized communities the project aims to address inequalities in society. However, if rhetoric is conceived as representation it is always apart from power relations. In this sense rhetoric is always careening towards that which



it represents with utter futility, for it can never touch that which it was invented to represent. This leaves rhetoric unable to touch the material relations critical rhetoric was designed to change. Representation is secondary to material rhetorics in my view. Rhetoric is not just about what texts mean but also about rhetoric's material force in the world. At the confluence of performance studies, rhetoric, and critical/cultural studies, material rhetoric's power is at the level of ontology.

Throughout this dissertation materialism is set against representation for the purpose of contrasting two regimes of rhetoric against one another in the clearest possible terms. I have done so to demonstrate what is at stake when a line between materialism and representation must be drawn. In the pages that follow I foreground the ontological while insisting epistemological questions are secondary. I am casting this preference to dramatize the contingent relationship between materialism and representation, but I would be remiss if I did not recognize that they remain always in struggle.

While I am committed to materialism the role of representation in communication is undeniable. Representation is present even as I argue for a material-rhetorical approach to my dissertation. I am aware of this presence throughout my research and nonetheless have proceeded with setting materialism against representation to make clear that while the ontological and epistemological are bound up in human communication, they are most certainly not the same enterprise and doing ontological research provides a fundamental shift. In the pages that follow my materialism makes a clear argument for the importance of force over meaning in rhetorical criticism, but I do so with a tacit acknowledgement that meaning and representation remain in the background of my approach to rhetorical criticism.

My project is a study of the Transportation Security Administration that accounts for how rhetorical artifacts move with material force through an assemblage of airport (in)security. Such a task is accomplished by thinking about rhetoric in material terms with immanent concepts Deleuze and Guattari create in their affirmative philosophy. They provide a different way of thinking material-semiotic relations in spaces for bodies as they articulate to discourse. Chapter II builds a research machine that thinks rhetoric as a Deleuzian experiment.

Deleuze argues that the work of philosophy is to create concepts to formulate problems, and Deleuze's work is complex and at times difficult, yet it is full of breathtakingly original ways of thinking.<sup>21</sup> Although my aim in the next section is not to provide an exhaustive glossary, I do want to identify key concepts that figure prominently in my dissertation.

### *Assemblage*

There is perhaps no more prominent concept in this project than *assemblage*. An assemblage acts as a material constitution of the research approaches I articulate together in Chapter II and put into practice in subsequent chapters. "Critical/cultural performative rhetoric" (an approach to rhetorical criticism drawn from critical/cultural studies, performance studies, and critical rhetoric) is an assemblage of variable research methods collectively enacted that enable the criticism this project produces. I have detailed some of this material rhetoric assemblage above, and I elaborate on those theoretical moves in the next chapter. However, the artifacts that constitute the material objects of study form

a second assemblage. I will define first the concept assemblage, and then define this second assemblage at work in my project.

An assemblage is a structure-in-formation, a material plane that has stabilized enough for its elements to articulate and to exist across its spatial fascia. Assemblages are diverse in both their forms and substances and their compositions are protean and in process; neither form nor substance of an assemblage is sedentary or nomadic. Deleuze and Guattari are clear: “assemblages are in constant variation, are themselves constantly subject to transformations.”<sup>22</sup> It is perhaps best to think of an assemblage as a space across which formations establish themselves, flourish and perish, produce, and struggle for resources. These formations can be many things—in this dissertation they are the many overlapping interests of critical/cultural studies, performance studies, and rhetoric and the many artifacts that are part of the Transportation Security Administration’s interface with contemporary culture.

Assemblage connects things. As Deleuze and Guattari contend, “There are no individual statements, only statement-producing machinic assemblages.”<sup>23</sup> That is to say, something like a statement gains its force not in solitude but in its connection to others elements constituted through an assemblage as well. For example, a statement of defiance towards TSA gains social traction in its encounter with TSA or with other anti-TSA activists. This view of sociality is crucial because the critical acts of my project map movements of artifacts through assemblages.

Manuel DeLanda’s construction of assemblage theory refers to working with assemblages as “*relations of exteriority*” in which one contends with the relationship of an assemblage to exterior forces that are entering and exiting an assemblage, changing its

consistency by moving through it and circulating in it.<sup>24</sup> In this way, an assemblage is never whole, but it also is not incomplete; it is instead in a constant state of flux. The concept assemblage allows a mapping of a complex territory insofar as its exterior relations enter and move about an assemblage. Assemblages have enough stability so that they can be mapped, but their relations are in motion.<sup>25</sup> An assemblage offers enough stability to apprehend a problem, track artifacts, and attend to movement and force. The radical potential for change and instability also make assemblages conditional and leaves them vulnerable to internal and external forces. This characteristic of an assemblage makes it a compelling concept for contingent practices of both rhetorical criticism and airport security. An assemblage, as an ontological concept, interacts with the elements that circulate through it; a critic working with an assemblage can engage with the force and movement of these interactions.

Airport security checkpoints, whole body imagers, the images produced by imagers, pat-downs, videos of pat-downs, online discussions of videos of airport checkpoints, and public discourse about TSA—all of these elements constitute an assemblage of airport (in)security discourse. They connect mechanically and interact in airport spaces and across public screens as bodies engage apparatuses of airport security. These elements, and the affects produced when they articulate to bodies, form an assemblage with which I work. This description is altogether too sedentary—elements have come and gone, gained intensity and lessened as this project has developed. However, an assemblage exists regardless of anybody's comings and goings in airports (because it is larger than the airport itself extending into our homes)—one's physical presence in airports is irrelevant to the actual assemblage as I discuss in Chapter IV. The

analysis performed in these chapters and the movement of these artifacts through an airport (in)security assemblage will demonstrate the significance of the concept of assemblage for materialist rhetorics.

### *Becoming*

Becoming is pivotally important in framing process—an ongoing, incomplete, and flowing semistructure. Becoming exists necessarily as a gerund. I deploy gerunds throughout this work to foreground ongoing processes. Rituals of airport security are becomings that unfold across planes on surfaces. Security is not a stable final state but an ongoing becoming-secure that must be constantly reaffirmed in process.

For Deleuze and Guattari becoming is:

a rhizome, not a classificatory or genealogical tree. Becoming is certainly not imitating, or identifying with something; neither is it regressing-progressing; neither is it corresponding, establishing corresponding relations; neither is it producing, producing a filiation or producing through filiation. Becoming is a verb with a consistency all its own; it does not reduce to, or lead back to, “appearing,” “being,” “equaling,” or “producing.”<sup>26</sup>

Becoming is a process of achieving an altogether differing state wherein a force joins a new relation with an environment surrounding it. That relation is not fixed, but its outcome is also not assured; in that flux our bodies become open to social relations that are altogether different from the routine performances our bodies perform in the everyday striations of society. When a body enters an airport security checkpoint it is exposed to stimuli, contact, and procedures that alter its limits, experience, and affects; in this way airport security is a becoming-secure.

Doing rhetorical criticism is also a becoming. Becoming-rhetorician is predicated on creating modes of critique that allow thinking and writing differently. Gregory

Flaxman argues:

“There is hope,” Kafka once wrote, “but not for us.” While this epigram seems to suggest the paradox of an even greater pessimism, we might instead understand it, in the context of Deleuze’s philosophy... there is only hope when we cease to be ourselves and become something else.<sup>27</sup>

Deleuze’s philosophy and the notion of becoming has created a series of becomings that have opened a philosophy of rhetoric that has produced a view of artifacts, spaces, and rhetorics that underpins this entire project. The rhetorician collects fragments but not for pastiche or to build a representative whole. The rhetorician explores movement and relational intensities of artifacts—a means of doing rhetorical criticism I explore in Chapter II. This approach offers a way into a particular cultural formation through the back door.<sup>28</sup> I am assembling fragments, material markers of TSA’s omnipresence throughout airport culture. I am looking for ways the force of rhetoric is materially configured in regimes of State power. Further, in my commitments to rhetoric, critical/cultural studies, and performance studies I am entering into relations with these fields, a becoming-rhetorician, enabling alternative modes of criticism.

### *Haecceity*

Haecceities refer to entities that from a distance appear to move as one but as you move closer you gain a kind of internal detail that reveals a complexity of movement and thought that is obscured when the totality is viewed as if it were a whole. For example, a swarm of bees or a flock of birds can appear to move as a single entity—they maintain proper distance from bee to bee or bird to bird, their individual shapes are fairly uniform,

and their speeds appear well regulated. However, if one is inside of a flock or swarm the movement can appear chaotic and unregulated. The speed and intensity it takes to maintain those formations becomes apparent, and the subtle reactions to external stimuli needed to keep the flock or swarm together become apparent.

Deleuze and Guattari talk about haecceities almost exclusively in terms of relations, “They are haecceities in the sense that they consist entirely of relations of movement and rest between molecules or particles, capacities to affect and be affected.”<sup>29</sup> Haecceities can be thought of as collections of matter of some type that have enough patterned consistency to cohere but are also capable of being divided or dissipated by the forces which act on it. Deleuze and Guattari refer to “matter-movement bearing singularities or haecceities.”<sup>30</sup> As a haecceity moves, our interest in it is in its relations to the forces which act within and upon it. The critic attends to its internal and external movements and the forces it affects and affect it.

Haecceity are important concepts in Chapter IV when I examine haecceities, or swarms of videos and online discussions that circulate through airport (in)security assemblages. These swarms are videos of controversial airport security screenings that have been disseminated on various websites and have articulated to discourses about the videos and viewer responses to the videos. Within the swarm are the videos, claims to what the videos mean, responses to the video, and news coverage about the videos. A video and the artifacts that articulate to it is a haecceity.

Certainly other Deleuzian concepts come up throughout this project and I define them as they surface. I have made every attempt to use these concepts with critical precision. I have found that they enable creative criticism. They are nuanced and their

articulations to rhetoric are not always seamless. Nonetheless, they are productive for my work with a materialist rhetoric.

### *Chapter Itineraries*

The remaining five chapters lay out a philosophy of materialist rhetoric, analyze TSA's use of redaction and reactive posturing, critique videos of TSA screenings, and implicate my own body as a means of entering airport checkpoints. My purpose is to track artifacts of airport security as they move about an airport (in)security assemblage, to gauge their movement, their speed, and their intensity as part of their rhetorical force for the purpose of critically understanding the ways TSA has limited the possibility of resistive politics at airports. These chapters pose an ontological problem for rhetorical criticism: how can rhetorical artifacts affect and be affected as they circulate through an assemblage? I do not offer fixed and final answers; rather I enter the fray provisionally in search of how the force of rhetoric has materially impacted this assemblage. For the reasons in discussion, this is a dissertation that addresses TSA; what is of interest about airport security beyond 9/11 is an intimate articulation of the citizenry and the State. Although other state entities may take money or time, TSA apprehends human bodies. Not surprisingly this process has provoked intense reactions. In the chapters that follow I ask questions about the role of these processes, the body-rhetoric of TSA, and its relationship to the materiality of discourse.

Chapter II presents a philosophy of rhetoric, a map of the approaches, disciplines, and concepts that articulate to one another and form the approach to rhetorical criticism I undertake in this project. I use the concept of an assemblage to refer to the work I am



doing in building my approach to rhetoric. Chapter II asks what is the nature of material-semiotic rhetoric? How might one study material rhetoric? Beginning with my own allegiance to critical rhetoric's interrogation of power, I examine the potential for Raymie McKerrow's critical rhetoric project in light of critiques of the project from material rhetoricians and from the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari. I argue that McKerrow's project is originally formulated under a regime of representation and as such must be reconsidered given this project's insistence on working at the level of ontology.

Beyond the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari, I also draw from performance studies and critical/cultural studies. I approach performance studies as a process, as praxis, and as a means of intervening in the world. Such a perspective recognizes the kinetic force of bodies to destabilize dominant social norms and to engage in acts of resisting social orders. Moreover, because rhetorics of airport security so deeply implicate the body, performance studies provides a conceptual framework for working with the body. I also take a broader look at the notion of hegemony in Chapter II, at the way culture coheres through rhetorical acts that compel bodies to obey. At the articulation of these material rhetorics, these concepts, and disciplines I have built a research assemblage that enables the analysis I perform in subsequent chapters.

Chapter III is focused on the reactive nature of TSA. In this chapter I ask: What are the material implications of the images produced by placing bodies in scanners? Further, I ask what is the cost of TSA's reactive posture towards passengers and terrorists? This chapter's central critique is that TSA's discourse reveals that TSA is reactive. TSA procedures are predicated on what it thinks terrorists might do and its privacy protections are based on outrage from passengers. The chapter consists in

critiques of two documents: the first is a TSA training manual that was redacted and released to TSA contractors, but not meant for release to the general public. Because of an error by a TSA contractor the document was released publically and as a result the redacted copy became widely available online. Due to the computer technology used to redact the manual, it only took a matter of hours before the redactions were removed and the full document was released online. This chapter compares the redacted and un-redacted document examining the frequency of the redactions for their areas of concentration by TSA and the threats present in the document. I argue that the nature of the redactions in the document suggests the reactive posture of TSA as it trains screeners to face potential terrorist threats.

The chapter also considers the images produced by TSA's whole body imagers, which see just beneath passenger's clothes. I look at the evolution of these images since TSA put these machines in widespread use. I examine TSA's redaction of the individual's identifying feature and argue that it undermines the ability for resistive political action in airport checkpoints. I claim that these redactions, which are done in the name of individual privacy, come at the cost of being seen by these state imaging apparatuses. That loss of visibility institutes a regime of docility that dulls the potential for resistive politics at the airport.

Building on the threats to subjectivity and bodily politics established in Chapter III, Chapter IV asks: If not in airports, where else has resistance to TSA become possible? This chapter questions the material impact of TSA detractors on larger efforts to resist TSA. Chapter IV explores two videos that capture pat downs being conducted by TSA in airport checkpoints. The first video is of a shirtless young boy and the second is

of a man refusing to comply with TSA's pat down procedures who is eventually refused entry to an airport's sterile area. I examine the circulation of these videos as they are disseminated across the public screen and articulate with individuals on online message boards. In particular I look at the themes that emerge and form around these videos among TSA detractors paying attention to the rhetoric they use to argue against TSA's policies.

Although this chapter directly examines some of the most strident foes of TSA, these are individuals who also may not fly and often have little power to exercise over TSA. I also examine the marginalization of their resistance, both because of the expression of their arguments and because of its position outside of airports. Though these videos have the potential to spark discussion about TSA, and even to debate TSA's techniques of surveillance, when they are read into the collective fantasies of these anti-TSA websites they lose political potency and potential rhetorical appeal. This is not to say that resistance cannot come from these rhetorics. However, as Chapter IV makes clear, as long as these enclaves of resistance stake their claims to rhetorical claims that TSA is a contemporary of the Third Reich and that resistance ought to include sexually assaulting TSA employees, I remain pessimistic about the resistive potential of these groups.

Chapter V uses performance studies as an embodied research method to explore airport security checkpoints. This chapter looks at the impossibility of politics established in Chapter III and the stalled politics in Chapter IV and asks: What is the potential for political resistance via material rhetoric through embodied research in airport checkpoints? Although I was unable to negotiate access to airports for a full ethnographic

account of airports, I was able to draw upon my own travel journals from two years of traversing airport security checkpoints. Although this chapter does not offer definitive ethnographic data, it does offer a pilot study for the potential benefits of engaging in performance as an embodied research method to study the affective dimensions of rhetoric's force on the body. I use my body as an instrument to explore the potential to resist airport security and, more importantly, to discover that in airports the striations of space and the design of security checkpoints make resistance next to impossible.

This chapter also offers an examination of the collective, ritualistic, and performative nature of airport security. Rather than implying that security is something done to passengers, I argue that passengers actively participate in their own security. Airport security becomes a performative mode that makes the culture of airport possible. Implied in this argument is that an alternative resistance performative mode is possible but has yet to come to fruition in airport checkpoints. That lack of resistance demonstrates the affective force of TSA's rhetoric.

Chapter VI serves as my conclusion and draws some broader implications about the state of rhetorical criticism from a Deleuzian perspective. I also conclude by discussing what this project does and does not do, offering limitations and opportunities for future research. In particular these lines of flight offer opportunities to add more complexity to the operation of the Transportation Security Administration. Given how enormous and complex the airport (in)security assemblage is, I conclude by way of providing more ways forward rather than closings or a sense of finality to this project.

*Openings*

The Transportation Security Administration is a vast research area. The artifacts that make up this study and the approaches I use to enter this critical problematic are equally varied. However, in all of that is a commitment to attend to space and to movement, to force and to visibility. These rhetorics exercise profound force on the bodies they come in contact with and as a result ought to be studied. This study makes it clear that TSA represents many things to many people, safety and security, a threat to liberty and the Constitution, a waste of money and time, or merely a nuisance, none or all of these things *could* be true; regardless of that epistemological quandary, TSA routinely exercises material force on the bodies it encounters and those bodies exercise force in return. It is on those terms that I take this line of flight.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> National Commission on Terrorist Attacks, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2011), 391.
- <sup>2</sup> Glen Price, “Transportation Security Administration | U.S. Department of Homeland Security,” n.d., [http://www.tsa.gov/who\\_we\\_are/workforce/index.shtm](http://www.tsa.gov/who_we_are/workforce/index.shtm).
- <sup>3</sup> Glen Price, “Transportation Security Administration | U.S. Department of Homeland Security,” n.d., [http://www.tsa.gov/who\\_we\\_are/workforce/index.shtm](http://www.tsa.gov/who_we_are/workforce/index.shtm).
- <sup>4</sup> Department of Homeland Security, “FY 2012 Budget in Brief,” January, 27, 2011, <http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/budget-bib-fy2012.pdf>
- <sup>5</sup> “TSA Year to Date Report: A Look at the Year So Far,” The TSA Blog, August 14, 2012, <http://blog.tsa.gov/2012/08/tsa-year-to-date-report-look-at-year-so.html>
- <sup>6</sup> See: Jessica Valder Velde, “Security Mistake Paralyzes TIA,” *St. Petersburg Times*, April 15, 2010. Thomas Frank, “Investigation Looks at Airport-Screener Testing; Security Workers May Have Cheated on Covert Checks,” *USA Today*, October 5, 2007. “TSA Fails to Retrieve Fake Explosives After Security Exercise at Newark Airport,” *Airline Industry Information*, December 16, 2004.
- <sup>7</sup> Gary Stoller, “Oh, the Humiliation of Flying Today; Passengers Are More Than Fed Up: Some Feel Violated” *USA Today*, January 27, 2012. Ashley Halsey, “TSA Apologizes for Breast-Milk Controversy” *The Washington Post*, March 10, 2012. “Transport Agency Regrets Screening Colostomy Bag but Denies Strip Search,” *National Post*, January 19, 2012. Rich Schapiro, “TSA Screwup Oops! We DID Mistreat Grannies at JFK,” *NY Daily News*, January 18, 2012. Scott MacFarlane, “Investigation Shows TSA Pat-down Incident Not First Complaint Against Screeners,” *WSBTV*, November 26, 2012, <http://www.wsbtv.com/news/news/local/investigation-shows-tsa-pat-down-incident-not-firs/nTGJF/>
- <sup>8</sup> Gary Stoller, “Oh, the Humiliation of Flying Today; Passengers Are More Than Fed Up: Some Feel Violated.”
- <sup>9</sup> Scott MacFarlane, “Feds Probe Airport Pat-down of Congressman's Niece,” *WSBTV*, November 20, 2012, <http://www.wsbtv.com/news/news/national/airport-pat-down-congressmans-niece-sparks-federal/nTBy9/>
- <sup>10</sup> Bruce Schneier, *Beyond Fear: Thinking Sensibly About Security in an Uncertain World*, (New York: Copernicus Books, 2003), 38-39

- <sup>11</sup> Schneier argues that someone who is on a terrorist watch list could purchase a ticket under another person's name, check into their flight, and then using their own identification materials create a fake boarding pass that would easily fool the TSA at a security checkpoint. Bruce Schneier, "The TSA's Useless Photo ID Rules," *The Los Angeles Times*, August 28, 2008, archived at <http://www.schneier.com/essay-236.html>
- <sup>12</sup> Bruce Schneier, "The TSA's Useless Photo ID Rules," *The Los Angeles Times*, August 28, 2008, archived at <http://www.schneier.com/essay-236.html>
- <sup>13</sup> Timothy B. Lee, "Gun-shy TSA Gets Critic Booted from Congressional Panel," *ArsTechnica*, March 26, 2012, <http://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2012/03/gunshy-tsa-gets-critic-booted-from-congressional-panel/>
- <sup>14</sup> Rachel Hall, "Cleared for Take-Off: Air Passenger Efficacy Training in the Post-9/11 Era," *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly* 39, no. 1 & 2 (2011): 323.
- <sup>15</sup> Rachel Hall, "Cleared for Take-Off: Air Passenger Efficacy Training in the Post-9/11 Era," 325.
- <sup>16</sup> Rachel Hall, "Unwitting Performances of Transparency Monitoring the Travelling Public, Managing Airport Affect," *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts* 16, no. 2 (2011): 101.
- <sup>17</sup> Rachel Hall, "Unwitting Performances of Transparency Monitoring the Travelling Public, Managing Airport Affect," 101.
- <sup>18</sup> Rachel Hall, "Unwitting Performances of Transparency Monitoring the Travelling Public, Managing Airport Affect," 104.
- <sup>19</sup> Shoshana Magnet and Tara Rodgers, "Stripping For the State: Whole Body Imaging Technologies and the Surveillance of Othered Bodies," *Feminist Media Studies* 12, no. 1 (2012): 14.
- <sup>20</sup> The influence of Kevin DeLuca on my thinking of force and rhetoric is monumental here. DeLuca emphasized at length an approach to rhetoric and force in graduate seminars I took during my coursework at the University of Utah. DeLuca has also made these arguments in published work. See Kevin Michael DeLuca, *Image Politics: The New Rhetoric of Environmental Activism* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Lea, 1999). Kevin Michael DeLuca, "Unmoored: The Force of Images as Events," *JAC* 28 no. 3/4 (2008): 663-673. Kevin Michael DeLuca, "Articulation Theory: A Discursive Grounding for Rhetorical Practice," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 32 no. 4 (1999): 334-348.

- <sup>21</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *What is Philosophy?*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 35-36.
- <sup>22</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 82.
- <sup>23</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 3
- <sup>24</sup> Manuel DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society*, (New York: Continuum, 2006), 10.
- <sup>25</sup> Tamsin Lorraine, *Deleuze and Guattari's Immanent Ethics: Theory, Subjectivity, and Duration*, (New York: SUNY, 2011) 36.
- <sup>26</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 239.
- <sup>27</sup> Gregory Flaxman, *Gilles Deleuze and the Fabulation of Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 19.
- <sup>28</sup> Michael Calvin McGee, "Text, Context, and the Fragmentation of Contemporary Culture," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 54 (Summer 1990): 280.
- <sup>29</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 261.
- <sup>30</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 512.



## CHAPTER II

### CRITICAL RHETORIC AND PERFORMANCE STUDIES AS RESEARCH ORIENTATIONS—MATERIAL RHETORICS OF DESIRE—RESEARCH IN/AT THE MARGINS

#### *Apologia*

In Deleuze's "Letter to a Harsh Critic," Deleuze offers two ways to read a book: "you either see it as a box with something inside and start looking for what it signifies, and then if you are even more perverse or depraved you set off after signifiers... [or] there's the other way: you see the book as a little non-signifying machine, and the only question is 'Does it work, and how does it work?' How does it work for you? If it doesn't work, if nothing comes through, you try another book."<sup>1</sup> This dissertation is a machine and not a program—and the differences are great. A program tells a machine what to do, but a machine does its work and connects to other machines. What must be done, then, in this chapter is to set up the machines that work here, to trace their potential becomings and connections, and to build an assemblage that will be used to do the criticism performed in this dissertation.

### *Introduction*

The purpose of this chapter is to develop the research orientations that undergird my project. This is not to say that all discussions of orientations, theories, or methods will be put to rest at the end of this chapter; it is to say this chapter develops a plane of criticism upon which my dissertation will be conducted. Drawing from critical rhetoric, critical/cultural studies, performance studies, and the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, I use this chapter to build a research assemblage that enables me to perform the rhetorical critiques of the texts I construct based on my encounters with the Transportation Safety Administration (TSA). This chapter is theoretical; my aim is to map a line of flight from critical-material rhetoric that challenges stable notions of the subject, that recognizes the (in)stability of the process of hegemony, that thinks the performed nature of everyday culture in extraordinary times as part of the milieu for which rhetorical critics are accountable.

This chapter is a series of arguments about the project of critical rhetoric and its articulation to other intellectual histories. My goal is not to reconcile critical rhetoric with these projects but to look at ways each alters the other resulting in a different trajectory for performing the act of criticism. It is my contention that in modifying critical rhetoric, rhetorical criticism can be made material at the level of ontology. The central research questions this chapter asks are: (1) what is the nature of material-semiotic rhetoric?<sup>2</sup> (2) What critical approaches are available to the study of material rhetoric? In this chapter I argue that a material-critical rhetoric informed by a Deluzian notion of becoming-rhetor offers a productive research assemblage for doing criticism of TSA's (in)security apparatus. This chapter proceeds in five sections: First, I unpack the concept of an

assemblage as a way of addressing the problem of research methods. Second, I animate the history of critical rhetoric, blending it in a materialist direction, so I turn to performance studies to explicate materiality. Next I read critical rhetoric through critical/cultural studies to animate them through the materialist ontology of Deleuze and Guattari. I conclude by making explicit suggestions for the ways this assemblage can be mobilized to critique TSA.

### *Research Assemblage*

“I know that the periphery is the only place I can be, that I would die if I let myself be drawn into the center of the fray, but just as certainly if I let go of the crowd.” Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari<sup>3</sup>

The concept assemblage is central to understanding how Gilles Deleuze figures the movement of social forces. As J. Macgregor Wise argues, assemblage “is a concept dealing with the play of contingency and structure, organization and change, however, we should also keep in mind that these pairs of terms are false alternatives.”<sup>4</sup> Wise notes that an assemblage is not a plastic mold that turns out pressed uniform parts. However, an assemblage is also not a “random collection of things,” a arbitrary pastiche of faux forms hoping to be read as a whole. Rather, “an assemblage is a whole of some sort that expresses some identity and claims a territory.”<sup>5</sup> An assemblage conceptually functions as a “a collection of heterogeneous elements. These elements could be diverse *things* brought together in particular relations.”<sup>6</sup> Assemblage is an important figure for orienting this dissertation—perhaps it might be better to say for disciplining this dissertation. On the one hand, my theoretical orientation is informed by critical rhetoric, performance studies, and critical/cultural studies. On the other hand, that orientation challenges

concepts such as hegemony, culture, desire, resistance, and power that must be carefully negotiated. Rather than privileging any one research method, this dissertation is an assemblage, a kind of thought in action. As Manuel DeLanda argues, “assemblages are not Hegelian totalities in which the parts are mutually constituted and fused into a seamless whole.”<sup>7</sup> I am not conducting a project that completes each of the theoretical and methodological questions and problems it poses. As DeLanda contends, “In an assemblage, components have a certain autonomy from the whole they compose, that is, they must be detached from it and plugged into another assemblage.”<sup>8</sup>

My method, though similar to Ian Buchanan’s, is to think against the grooves of disciplinary strata while initiating my own immanent critical plane.<sup>9</sup> For the texts and spaces I address in my dissertation I do the work of disarticulating articulations—working with antagonisms in discursive chains to track their force and movement across a given plane. It is a method of problematizing discourses of security. As Buchanan argues, “Now, obviously enough, it is the life affirming affects of destratifying techniques that are desired, not their deadly affects...”<sup>10</sup> Such a project is cartographic:

And in fact the first of Deleuze and Guattari’s concrete rules which enjoins us to discover the territoriality of an assemblage, for there is always one, they say, reads exactly like a hermeneutic program. Discovering the territoriality of an assemblage means finding its limits (step one) and determining its composition (step two), and in so doing finding how it relates to other assemblages (step three), none of which, of course, can be done in isolation from and without cognizance of the plane that renders it sensible (step four).<sup>11</sup>

Or, as Deleuze puts it in *Foucault*, “to write is to struggle and resist; to write is to become; to write is to draw a map: ‘I am a cartographer.’”<sup>12</sup>

Before proceeding, consider the differences between Deleuze’s concept of assemblage and Foucault’s concept of discursive formation.

Foucault's definition of a discursive formation is lengthy, but instructive: Whenever one can describe, between a number of statements, such a system of dispersion, whenever between objects, types of statements, concepts or thematic choices, one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations), we will say for the sake of convenience, that we are dealing with a *discursive formation*...<sup>13</sup>

Foucault's concept of discursive formation traces the relationships among obvious and obscured discursive orders and rules. This concept interrogates the intricate ways society actualizes discursively, i.e., how artifacts, statements, themes, and their regularities operate.

Foucault posits that "the rules of formation are conditions of existence (but also coexistence, maintenance, modification, and disappearance) in a given discursive division."<sup>14</sup> Within such a system Foucault sets out to locate a dominant term in a discursive formation. For example, he interrogates madness or melancholy to attempt to unpack their epistemological implications using the concept discursive formation to show how that term's *meanings* operate in a given order of discourse.<sup>15</sup> This is useful if one centers their approach to discourse on an operationalized discursive term, such as Foucault's study of sexuality. But it lacks the ability to take into account material forces of a social milieu. For example, TSA discourse articulates to bodies with force in ways that no single discursive formation can satisfactorily explain.

The limitation of discursive formation as a concept is that its ontological orientation is always already restricted by a nonmaterialist conception of discourse. Although Foucault is clearly aware of the material consequences of language, the concept of discursive formation stands outside a materialist ontology. As Thomas K. Nakayama and Robert L. Krizek argue, "Deleuze and Guattari's assemblage is useful in extending Foucault's discursive formation in this situation as 'the assemblage no longer presents an

expression distinct from content, only unformed matters, destratified forces and functions.”<sup>16</sup> That is to say, discourse realizes *discursive* and *material* effects in solution with one another at one and the same time. The materiality of discourse implicates a materialist ontology in order to account for the elements of discourse beyond the symbolic. Jonathan Crary highlights this inseparability in his book *Techniques of the Observer*. Drawing from his study of the camera obscura he addresses the need for a materialist ontology, arguing:

The camera obscura is what Gilles Deleuze would call an assemblage, something that is “simultaneously and inseparably a machinic assemblage and an assemblage of enunciation,” an object about which something is said and at the same time an object that is used. It is the site at which a discursive formation intersects with material practices. The camera obscura, then, cannot be reduced either to a technological or a discursive object: it was a complex object: it was a complex social amalgam in which its existence as a textual figure was *never* separable from its machinic uses [Emphasis on “never” added].<sup>17</sup>

Assemblages extend Foucault’s theoretical concept of discursive formations by recognizing the nonlinear, rhizomatic groupings of discourse that are “not logically organized frameworks that function in non-contradictory ways.”<sup>18</sup> Discourse binds bodies together and because of the force of the materiality of rhetoric, bodies are compelled to action and affects in ways that exercise desire and power. In the next section I overview the elements of an assemblage I make critical use of in my dissertation.

### *Critical Rhetoric and Performance: Affective/Material Rhetorics*

“Consequently, a word is not an expression of inner personality; rather, inner personality is an expressed or inwardly impelled word. And the word is an expression of social intercourse, of social interaction of material personalities, of producers.” V.N. Vološinov<sup>19</sup>

“The motto of communication theory ought to be: Dialogue with the self, dissemination with the other. This is another way of stating the ethical maxim: Treat yourself like an other and the other like a self.” John Durham Peters<sup>20</sup>

Rhetoric functions on at least two levels of intellectual inquiry: first, rhetorical theory offers a rich corpus of intellectual material from which we attempt to understand the meaning and quality of rhetoric. Second, rhetoric acts as an operative term in the performance of criticism. That is to say, our understanding of the theoretical moorings of rhetoric comes into solution with our critical impulses when we use rhetoric as a key element in the act of critique. Although we can have critique without rhetoric and theory without rhetoric, it seems difficult to imagine having rhetorical criticism without rhetorical theory. This mutual dependence represents a conflation of theory and method producing orientations that do the work of theory and criticism at one and the same time. Moreover, the inclusion of critical theory in the project of critical rhetoric has broadened the domain of rhetoric. Rhetoric becomes a machine gaining force in its connections to other bodies of theory (critical theory/critical rhetoric), to other bodies (performance studies), and to other fields of research (critical/cultural studies and performance studies). This section explicates the project of critical rhetoric, while offering some correctives. What emerges is not critical rhetoric as a singularity, but a critical rhetoric machine that illuminates a theoretical perspective I bring to texts and bodies. The purpose of this chapter is to engage critical rhetoric in several ways not yet elaborated.

Deleuze and Guattari’s work has much to offer critical rhetoric. Nakayama and Krizek argue, “we believe that the importance of their work is easily recognized in its compatibility with contemporary critical work, as well as its offering of a new approach to viewing critique.”<sup>21</sup> Articulating the materialist orientation of Deleuze and Guattari to

the practices of critical rhetoric enables us to recognize the relationship between rhetoric and machines. To engage in such a project I posit the following: McKerrow's essays on critical rhetoric are machines; the writings of Deleuze and Guattari are machines; the essays that have entered this debate are each machines—and they all consist in machines within machines. Mark Bonta and John Protevi define Deluzian machines as “any connection of organs linking together flows.”<sup>22</sup> This chapter, too, is a machine. The machine I am constructing here connects with these other machines in an assemblage that is desiring-production. Such a machine, in form, takes its cue from Jon Hoffman's paper given at the 2009 meeting of the National Communication Association. Hoffman reads Deleuze back through Lloyd Bitzer's essay on “The Rhetorical Situation.” Hoffman explains:

I do not seek to pose a “different” read of the rhetorical situation; I propose a “new” reading that was always already there from the start as potentiality. To be clear, I am not arguing that previous authors don't “get” Bitzer's essay—that there “is” something essentially to get in the first place is contrary to my conceptualization.<sup>23</sup>

Much in the same vein, it is my desire to imagine the potential lines of flight<sup>24</sup> between the respective projects of McKerrow and Deleuze and Guattari.

The explicit goal of critical rhetoric is to center the interrogation of the functions of power in social relations. Raymie McKerrow takes his understanding of power from the work of Michel Foucault. In the contemporary academy exists a number of approaches to the performance of rhetorical criticism.<sup>25</sup> A great many of these approaches are informed by questions of power (often drawing from the work of Michel Foucault) and desire (often drawing from psychoanalysis).<sup>26</sup> These critical orientations have prompted debates about the role of critical theory, postmodernism, and poststructuralism



within the rhetorical tradition.<sup>27</sup> From these debates came a machine that altered the practices and assumptions of rhetorical criticism. The publication of Raymie E. McKerrow's 1989 monograph "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis" offers two critiques of rhetorical fragments that take account of the ramifications of Foucault's conception of power and of emerging strains of postmodern thought in rhetorical criticism.<sup>28</sup> A cursory search of our field's peer-reviewed journals reveals thirty-eight essays that directly invoke McKerrow's project.<sup>29</sup>

Critical rhetoric, McKerrow argues, articulates a "perspective of rhetoric that explores, in theoretical and practical terms, the implications of a theory that is divorced from the constraints of a Platonic conception."<sup>30</sup> In its very origins, the disparagement of rhetoric as subordinate to reason became a foundational assumption that has persisted throughout rhetoric's intellectual history.<sup>31</sup> Despite the shared premise that much of rhetoric's legacy is owed to Aristotelian thought, McKerrow identifies the ways in which Plato's divide between rhetoric and dialectic is a "marginalizing" attack that has placed rhetoric "in service of truth."<sup>32</sup> However, contemporary connotations of truth and its modern counterpart of metanarratives have been met with skepticism.

Drawing on Foucault, McKerrow centers his project in his concern with the flow of power in contemporary society. Foucault argues that power is not something held by any one body. It would not be proper to say I hold power over you; instead power is exercised in the relationship of social forces and bodies, and it is productive.<sup>33</sup> That is to say, power produces certain forms of performing self and the body, as it disciplines other ways of performing self and body. Thus, a body is marked and disciplined by power relations.

McKerrow initiates a program of research based on twin critiques: The critique of domination and the critique of freedom.<sup>34</sup> The critique of domination focuses “on the discourse of power which creates and sustains social practices that control the dominated. It is more particularly a critique of ideologies, perceived as rhetorical creations.”<sup>35</sup> This critique is not, however, simply the positing of a domination thesis. Instead, it recognizes the ways “[t]hose who are dominated also participate in the social structure and are affected by—and affect—the orders of discourse by which their actions are moderated.”<sup>36</sup> McKerrow’s critique requires three critical practices: (1) ideologies must be unraveled as *topoi* for invention, (2) relations of power are never static and cannot be taken for granted, (3) the critic must be reflexive about the ways in which such a critique is not exhaustive of power relations.

As a coequal effort, McKerrow argues that the critic must also engage in a “critique of freedom.” Such a critique is manifest in the refusal of the “‘totalizing’ emphasis of traditional intellectual history.”<sup>37</sup> Thus a critical rhetorician commits to a project of permanent criticism. This is not a program “towards a freedom for something predetermined,” but instead seeks to privilege nothing and works to “undermine and expose the discourse of power.”<sup>38</sup> Ultimately, after such work “the critic is in a position to posit the possibilities of freedom.”<sup>39</sup> For McKerrow critical rhetoric functions in the realm of possibilities covered over by the exercise of power in contemporary culture.

McKerrow’s project has drawn critical responses that illuminate the difficulty of melding critical theory and rhetorical criticism. Four responses are capable of moving critical rhetoric forward and of producing a critical rhetoric that is more compatible with my own interest in performance than is McKerrow’s original text. First, it is necessary to

consider the *telos* of critical rhetoric. Second, the disunity of Foucault's writing is pivotal for any project built upon his conception of power. Third, alternative conceptions of the subject within radical iterations of critical rhetoric have produced different ways of doing criticism. And finally, materialist responses to critical rhetoric provide important critiques for my own work.

First, consider the *telos* of critical rhetoric. Kent A. Ono and John M. Sloop's "Commitment to *Telos*—A Sustained Critical Rhetoric" reconfigures *telos* in useful ways for critical rhetoric. Ono and Sloop "refer to a *telos* that represents the moment when a person's pen is put to paper purposively, when ideas become words and when will becomes action."<sup>40</sup> They offer *telos* as a powerful concept of rhetorical action which seeks to "create an end" even though such an end is not fixed for all of rhetorical action.<sup>41</sup> As such, this new *telos* becomes a set of practices, always already in question, that seeks to disturb social orders, adjust practices against those orders, and recognize a multiplicity of values.<sup>42</sup>

Further, Ono and Sloop question the bifurcation of power present in critical rhetoric's conception. This false division can be seen in the way McKerrow conceptualizes the critique of domination and the critique of freedom as separate tasks. Ono and Sloop argue that these are opposite sides of the same coin; power for Foucault circulates within relationships and as a result we cannot separate these critiques because social relations are rarely ever as simple as the binary McKerrow constructs.<sup>43</sup> Ono and Sloop argue that when these critiques are kept as separate projects the critique of freedom devolves into a narcissistic self-critique that is never ending. They claim this critique would never allow the critic to actually commit to anything because at every moment of

potential action they are held up by the need to interrogate their own relation to power. They argue that a commitment to *telos* (a duty to move toward a less oppressive set of power relations in the text one is critiquing) is to commit to the critique of domination in the moment the pen hits paper so we can halt perpetual self-criticism and perform critical rhetoric.<sup>44</sup> Their argument is well taken; in an orientation that desires praxis some practical action must be taken to avoid the paralysis of permanent criticism.

Second, McKerrow's formulation is also critiqued for only taking on the elements of Foucault's work that are supportive of McKerrow's conception of power. Barbara Biesecker chastises McKerrow and those who too easily fold Foucault into rhetoric.<sup>45</sup> She argues that rhetoricians have eagerly embraced Foucault to suggest that power relations in society are open and can be changed easily. She reminds us that Foucault's work on discipline talks about the ways an individual is subject to flows of power that rob them of free choices and that structures their sense of what their bodies can do.<sup>46</sup> It is clear that McKerrow and Biesecker are reading Foucault differently, not surprisingly since it is fair to say there are many Foucaults, and Foucault's work changed over the course of his life—moving from a more structured determinist position to a more open view of the subject as a place where the self is performed in relation to discourses that structure the body.<sup>47</sup> Further, any affirmation of Foucault must not act as if there are no restrictions in the way one can live. I argue for a reading in which social relations can always be otherwise, but this does not mean that anything could happen.

Third, critical rhetoric has a tentative relationship with subject and subjectivity. McKerrow is clear: “[t]he subject is ‘fractured’ into a multiplicity of selves.” Helene A. Shugart argues although “‘critical rhetoric’ heralded the advent of this new trend in

scholarship in the field, and since then, increasing numbers of rhetorical critics have turned a critical eye to power as it occurs rhetorically,” the results have been problematic. Shugart takes particular interest in “how critical scholarship itself functions as rhetoric that defines the characters and conditions of its subject.”<sup>48</sup> The aesthetics of critical scholarship have led to scholars troubling attempts to represent others in research—particularly where identity politics serves as the *telos* of the criticism.<sup>49</sup> For Shugart, this aesthetic results in objectification,<sup>50</sup> essentialization,<sup>51</sup> and fetishization<sup>52</sup> of those we study in our scholarship. The emphasis on representation and the subject undermines McKerrow’s view of the subject and reproduces the very power it seeks to avoid.

Without the counterweight of the critique of freedom, the critique of domination can devolve into a subjectivity-minefield of critique via identity politics. Echoing the troublesome nature of such criticism, Brian L. Ott contends in “(Re)Locating Pleasure in Media Studies: Toward an Erotics of Reading” that “[d]espite its many variations, critical theory (which animates so much of the recent scholarship in media studies) has... become stagnant, sterile, even stereotypical. Too often, ideological criticism today feels like a bad 1970s situation comedy—its outcome simple, banal, predictable. With each successive critical essay, the latest film, television show, website, or musical artist is ‘revealed’ as hegemonic, as a vehicle of White heterosexual capitalist patriarchy.”<sup>53</sup> Ott and Shugart, though offering different critical questions, share a concern for the ways in which subjectivity has come to dominate critical practices.

Bradford Vivian’s “‘Always a Third Party Who Says ‘Me’’: Rhetoric and Alterity” argues that critical and rhetorical studies must account for Deleuze and Guattari’s conception of how the subject, “exists only in its continual and aesthetic creation, in its

indefinite becoming.”<sup>54</sup> Vivian’s recognition of multiplicity within the subject—as a break with Cartesian ideals—argues that self-persuasion (argumentation with one’s self) is an empirical instance of multiple subjectivity. This move breaks with a singular conception of the subject, a break that ought be welcomed in advancing the project of critical rhetoric for its movement away from the isolation of critical rhetoric as a mode of singular subjects in singular bodies.

To study the subject as one, or subjectivity as a process of making one, the critical project seeks a unity inconsistent with McKerrow’s multiplicity or Deleuze and Guattari’s schizo. As Lawrence Grossberg argues in “The Space of Culture, The Power of Space”:

Deleuze and Guattari’s work theorises the various technologies and organisations of this becoming, of production of the real, as maps of power. These machines which can be understood as modalities of articulation, impose a particular ‘conduct’ and organisation, not only on specific multiplicities but also on particular planes (of effects). They define the ‘geometric mechanisms’ by which different individualities and subjects (which implies neither identities nor subjectivities) are produced and articulated into specific configurations.<sup>55</sup>

Grossberg reconfigures individualities and subjects, which always already are multiple, and are devoid of the philosophical weight of subjectivity. This turn implicates subjectivity and identity as an ongoing (and possibly multibody) project. Rhetoric is folded into this project by disciplining bodies into modes of being and living that construct identity and subjectivity. The subject, when limited to a body or life is a construct of the “geometric mechanisms” Grossberg describes. The possibility exists for mechanisms to construct force relations among multiple bodies or outside of Western and Cartesian conceptions of the subject.

Fourth, despite my affirmations of critical rhetoric, it cannot be pursued without a major theoretical repositioning in materialism. Ronald Walter Greene argues that a materialist conception of rhetoric cannot be based on the politics of representation.<sup>56</sup> For Greene, McKerrow's error comes from his desire to represent fixed marginalized subjects/voices.<sup>57</sup> Greene claims that as long as critical rhetoric is based in representation it cannot, as a disciplinary project, accomplish social change because when rhetoric is viewed as a representation of material reality (shadows on the wall of Plato's cave) it neglects the material force rhetoric has in the world. Greene seeks to move from rhetoric as a representational system to material sets of articulations. Rhetoric is not about what texts mean but what they do when they articulate with the nondiscursive world.<sup>58</sup> We can have a text and create versions of subjects that are compelled by the meaning of those texts, but that process is always separate from any material change in the world. As I said in Chapter I, it becomes rhetoric as asymptote—continuing on toward infinity never articulating to material relations. Rhetoric instead should be viewed as technologies of governance that get mapped onto bodies and spaces in ways that produce force in the world.<sup>59</sup> For Greene the materiality of rhetoric exists in technologies of governance because the power of rhetoric is when rhetoric gets mapped onto bodies, what he denotes as the “distributive role of rhetoric.”<sup>60</sup> We may understand these articulations as having meanings, but meaning is secondary to the act of articulation with a body. Moreover, this materialism is a process, a becoming-subject that is not fixed but is constantly being performed in our everyday lives. A move to rhetoric as articulation has the added benefit of breaking free from the binary view of power. In Kevin DeLuca's call for rhetoric and articulation he argues that articulations and their antagonisms, i.e., moments articulations

fail to connect even though it seems they *should*, express the limits of discourse and make visible the connections between rhetoric and materiality.<sup>61</sup>

Greene is not without his critics. Perhaps the most vocal opponent to material rhetorics is Dana Cloud, who argues that a material rhetoric defeats any Marxist project built on a sense of materiality. Cloud argues that scholars who are attempting to claim that discourse is influential or even constitutive of material discourse are mistaken. Cloud designates two possible Marxist iterations of materialism: that social relations and concrete sensuous activity are the source of human consciousness or that modes of production in an epoch determine social consciousness. By contrast Cloud contends that a materialist rhetoric overemphasizes the power of speech and texts to alter social consciousness and although ideology and its supporting discourses have consequences, they do not achieve the status of materiality. In the end, for Cloud, texts may justify oppression but they do not do the oppressing.<sup>62</sup>

Dana L. Cloud, Steve Macek, and James Arnt Aune argue that Greene's view of rhetoric decimates the ability of rhetorical critics to render moral judgment on misrepresentations of the material world.<sup>63</sup> Their argument rests essentially on the premise that rhetorical criticism is, in part, an act of rendering (moral) judgment. This is a practical need for a view of rhetoric as representation and thus always already a false copy of material relations. However, within Greene's materialist orientation we can set a different line of flight for rhetorical criticism: The purpose of rhetorical criticism is not moral judgment. Nor does it need to be judgment at all. Rhetorical criticism asks: what ways of living are made possible by a set of rhetorics encountered in the world? What does the articulation of discourses and bodies make possible in the world? With what



forces does rhetoric act in the world? Meaning is secondary to the materiality of discourse itself.

*Performance Studies and Rhetoric's Materiality*

One of the ways materiality can become clarified is by incorporating theories of performance and performativity into the domains of contemporary rhetorical theory. By viewing the body as a rhetor, as opposed to just the voice translated into units of reasoned discourse, we broaden the very notion of the rhetor and rhetoric. To accomplish this task I read the performed nature of everyday life as a material rhetorical articulation of the discursive and nondiscursive. Performance studies is best described provisionally as a process, praxis, accomplishment, and means of intervening in the world.<sup>64</sup> Performance studies seeks to understand the ways bodies, spaces, and identities come to be negotiated in the world. Performances are always only provisional—the outcomes are never assured and so in both theory and practice performances have the potential for radical (in)stability. This radical (in)stability is manifested in the conception of performance itself.

The study of culture is in part an engagement with practices, rituals, and dramas that act as devices in any given culture for teaching us how to act in the world. Diana Taylor calls these moments of meaning-making *scenarios*.<sup>65</sup> These are informed social interactions during which the body carries out scripted ways of living (sum of normative discourses that have been mapped onto our bodies over the course of a life) in the world, ways that produce culture itself. It is not that the scripts precede the bodies or the spaces, or vice versa; they articulate with each other at one and the same time. As a result,

everyday life is enveloped in common sense that directs actions and affects a body's capabilities.

We can think of the way a body conforms to common sense in accord with Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*.<sup>66</sup> *Habitus* is a set of structuring structures that teach us how to get along in the world.<sup>67</sup> Bourdieu connects politeness with politics as a way to show how the process of hegemony is reinforced by these structuring structures. Out of fear of retribution we act out our roles to the point where we forget that our body can act otherwise. Dwight Conquergood argues performance is not mimicking others and merely copying behavior (*mimesis*).<sup>68</sup> It is a process of making (*poesis*) culture in an act of performing common sense. Conquergood contends that another level of performance is a dramatic breaking and remaking of culture (*kinesis*).<sup>69</sup> Critical to this process are moments in which common sense fails bodies. When common sense fails to account for a situation, when common sense slips into gaps of hegemonic systems, when antagonism disrupts articulations, we act out in ways that shake up society and remake entire discursive chains of acting and behaving.

Performance articulates productively with rhetoric. Conquergood argues that performance is a borderland between rhetoric and ethnography. Rhetoric can use ethnographic methods of data gathering, including participant observation, to gather fragments of text/context and use them as suitable data for critical rhetoric. Stephen Olbrys Gencarella and Phaedra C. Pezzulo argue rhetoric and performance studies share three overlapping interests.<sup>70</sup> First, both are concerned with aesthetics. Performance as art, and rhetoric as artistry—both have the potential to take up the ways aesthetics can be tied to affects, ways that produce material force in the world, and ways that upset, or reinforce

prevailing social norms.<sup>71</sup> Second, both are interested in challenging the notion of the subject.<sup>72</sup> That is to say, some contemporary rhetorical theory has begun to question the extent to which we treat the subject (speaker and audience) as an unproblematic concept. A useful example of this challenge is Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* in which she argues that gender is a performance as opposed to a pre-given stable identity.<sup>73</sup> Gender is something bodies do, a body connects with rhetorics of masculinity, femininity, ambiguity, and sexuality as opposed to having gender placed on bodies at birth.

Third, both critical rhetoric and performance share a commitment to praxis; the work of critical rhetoric and performance studies is concerned with ways of interrupting the dynamic of power relations that produce exploitative and oppressive modes of living. Through research, teaching, and modes of living rhetorical critics take on the commitment to interrupt unequal power relations and seek alternative modes by which power can be (dis)organized in human life. It is worth noting that power for Deleuze and Guattari has a two meanings. Power, as *puissance*, "has been defined by Deleuze as a 'capacity for existence,' 'a capacity to affect or to be affected.'"<sup>74</sup> *Pouvoir* refers to "an instituted and reproducible relation of force."<sup>75</sup> Both institutionalized power (*pouvoir*) and affective power (*puissance*) have material consequences for a body.

At the convergence of rhetoric and performance are three moves that allow a critical rhetorician to work both against and through hegemonic systems while performing *in situ* field research. First, critical rhetoricians take critical commitments to a field site to inhabit margins, limens, inclusions, and exclusions of voices and action that complicate a specific problematic.<sup>76</sup> Second, these critics leave themselves vulnerable to being touched or moved, vulnerable to the rhetorics they experience in the field, and they

use their bodies to gather affective and aesthetic encounters during the performance of *in situ* research. They also exist in the field as a body willing to intervene, act, and be acted upon in the spirit of the causes they have taken up.<sup>77</sup> Last, they leave with notes, memories, and experiences to produce a text suitable for criticism.<sup>78</sup>

This approach to rhetorical field methods helps bridge a problematic rift between textual archives (suitable for rhetorical criticism) and repertoires of performance appropriate for work in performance studies. As Diana Taylor argues, “The rift [between the archive and the repertoire], I submit, does not lie between the written and spoken word, but between the *archive* of supposedly enduring materials (i.e., texts, documents, buildings, bones) and the so-called ephemeral *repertoire* of embodied practice/knowledge (i.e., spoken language, dance, sports, ritual).”<sup>79</sup> It is here that we see a locus for the work of critical rhetoric—at the intersection where the archive and the repertoire meet, here is where critical work can be done to recognize the force discourses have in the world. This is crucial for a material approach to rhetoric and a research project that seeks to unpack the manifold ways the State machine disseminates order-words that bodies perform. For, as Deleuze and Guattari contend, communication is a series of orders. One of their first postulates of linguistics is that communication is not about the transmission of content or the building of relationships; communication is about the transmission of order-words. Order-words are, according to Hawes, “the elementary unit of language” for Deleuze and “oriented to practical thinking and experimentation, not representation.” Hawes claims that the primary function of language “is producing pragmatic effects by making available and distributing subject positions to...bodies.”<sup>80</sup> This is the frame in which I think about rhetoric’s force. It is about instructing bodies to perform in spaces. It is, at

best, secondarily about transmitting content.<sup>81</sup> Our bodies negotiate ways of behaving in spaces—this is the process of hegemony—this process is done in solution with the material world, bodies, and language at one and the same time.

Hegemony is the process of negotiating social relations and class structures in culture.<sup>82</sup> Rather than viewing hegemony as domination or leadership, Antonio Gramsci uses the term to understand the way individuals negotiate and consent to their own oppression.<sup>83</sup> Hegemonic structures help facilitate the making and remaking of social and economic strata in ways that construct the relative fixed-ness of social relations. As Lawrence Grossberg contends, this is the process by which the future appears inevitable and as such limits social unrest.<sup>84</sup> It is the belief that social relations are stable that aids in making class structure appear natural and normal. Raymond Williams notes that one's relations to the process of hegemony are negotiated in everyday life.<sup>85</sup> Likewise, Michel de Certeau describes the strategies of the dominant as controlling the practices and construction of spaces in the everyday to maintain a proper order.<sup>86</sup> Thus, hegemony is the appearance of a stable set of social relations that opens enough space for movement but keeps class structures largely solidified and stratified. However, hegemony leaks. It has gaps and it cannot cover all of culture seamlessly at every moment. Negotiation becomes possible in these gaps.

Hegemony is the process by which power flows through social relations working to ensure *appropriate* outcomes in our everyday performances. My definition of power is derived from the works of Michel Foucault. I want to draw upon two primary elements of Foucault's conception of power. First, for Foucault, power is not something that is held but is constituted in relationships.<sup>87</sup> No person holds power over another person; instead,

discourses get mapped onto a body when it comes into relation with governing apparatuses.<sup>88</sup> Power is fluid; relationships can be altered, up-ended, or given over to. Second, for Foucault power is productive. When one is in a set of power relations, social relations, affects, and experiences are produced by flows of power. When power moves through social relations it is not an inert process, but instead actively works to discipline bodies to a given set of power relations.

Deleuze's and Foucault's conceptualization of power shares certain features, but bears crucial distinctions in their actualizations in the material world. In the next few paragraphs I turn from Foucault's conception of power exercised through relations to a Deleuzian conception of desire to help foreground desire as a pivotal concept for dealing with contemporary power relations. I want to make clear, then, two distinctions between the way power operates for both Foucault and Deleuze before addressing the clear differences in the way each addresses power as a social fact in society.

Deleuze's *Foucault* is a reading of Foucault that emphasizes where their work is mutually affirming. Deleuze translates Foucault's definition of power into his own philosophical terminology arguing that power is not a form, and more precisely not a state-form.<sup>89</sup> Moreover, power is never singular, "power: force has no other object or subject than force."<sup>90</sup> This refusal of the singular nature of power is crucial because Deleuze credits Foucault with offering "the most decisive step yet taken in the theory-practice of multiplicities."<sup>91</sup> We arrive at a conceptualization of power as a multiplicity of forces that operate in relation to, and in negotiation with, bodies as they move through everyday life. Power is not a simple hierarchical force of the state-form.

The fact that power does not operate as a tool mobilized by state-forms radically alters its usefulness as a concept for dealing with unequal power relations in critical scholarship. Deleuze offers the following critical injunction:

Therefore we should not ask “What is power and where does it come from?”, but “How is it practiced?” An exercise of power shows up as an affect, since force defines itself by its very power to affect other forces (to which it is related) and to be affected by other forces... The power to be affected is like a *matter* of force, and the power to affect is like a *function* of force.”<sup>92</sup>

For Foucault power is not a thing to be located but is a material practice that is exercised by bodies in relation to one another. It flows among and between social relations.

However even here we can see Deleuze’s materialism begin to intervene to emphasize a linking of the discursive and nondiscursive in ways that go further than Foucault’s work.

Notice Deleuze’s emphasis on “like a *matter* of force.” Read here contextually it appears at first to be metaphorical, but here is where Deleuze and Foucault part ways; Deleuze has reached the limit where his terminology and ontological framework are serviceable for explicating Foucault and power because for Deleuze if desire and power are “like a *matter* of force” they would lack the materiality required by his ontology. For Deleuze, unlike Foucault, power and desire are part of the material world. It is Deleuze’s work on desire and force that helps unpack materiality as the crucial distinction between

Foucault’s and Deleuze’s concepts power.

Desire becomes the pivotal concept for Deleuze to explain functions that Foucault would normally describe as power. As Claire Colebrook argues, Deleuze and Guattari prefer desire because they view it as “*creating* relations through which power might operate.”<sup>93</sup> Colebrook does argue, however, that Deleuze and Guattari belong “within a tradition of the philosophy of power.”<sup>94</sup> Their reconfiguration, following a lead similar to

Foucault, is that power is not a force *over* something, but is rather a force to *do* something. Power is exercised in various social contexts and has certain material effects on bodies.<sup>95</sup> Power is, for Deleuze, “a quantity of social relation, and it is produced by a complex abstract machine. Power derives from desire, and turns to ‘repress’ desire.”<sup>96</sup> The function of desire and power as constituted in social relations takes shape in the function of abstract machines and points to power’s materiality. Power functions in the *material* conjoining of at least two machines and in that connection the struggle often turns the function of power back on one of the machines to repress desire, and power thereby comes to dominate that given social relation.

The movement of power across any assemblage of social relations has the capacity to both liberate and to control desire. Much of human history can be seen as a case study of the repression of desire as opposed to its liberation. Here, Deleuze and Guattari turn from power to desire, but figured into the release and repression of desire is the philosophical tradition of power Colebrook places them within. Thus, in *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze and Guattari declare: “*There is only desire and the social, and nothing else.*”<sup>97</sup> We have the given social field made up of desiring-machines connected materially, discursively, and martially-discursively. That field is pulsating with currents of desire flowing through its connections. Flows of desire are being negotiated constantly and renegotiated at every point of connection in that social field. Even in places where social oppression appears as a social fact, it comes from a negotiation of desire. Deleuze and Guattari offer a lengthy, but necessary, illustration:

Even the most repressive and the most deadly forms of social reproduction are produced by desire within the organization that is the consequence of such production under various conditions that we must analyze. That is why the fundamental problem of political philosophy is still precisely the one that Spinoza



saw so clearly, and that Wilhelm Reich rediscovered: “Why do men fight for their servitude as stubbornly as though it were their salvation?” How can people possibly reach the point of shouting: “More taxes! Less bread!”? As Reich remarks, the astonishing thing is not that some people steal or that others occasionally go out on strike, but rather that all those who are starving do not steal as a regular practice, and all those who are exploited are not continually out on strike: after centuries of exploitation, why do people still tolerate being humiliated and enslaved, to such a point, indeed, that they actually want humiliation and slavery not only for others but for themselves? Reich is at his profoundest as a thinker when he refuses to accept ignorance or illusion on the part of the masses as an explanation of fascism, and demands an explanation that will take their desires into account, an explanation formulated in terms of desire: no, the masses were not innocent dupes; at a certain point, under a certain set of conditions, they wanted fascism, and it is this perversion of the desire of the masses that needs to be accounted for.<sup>98</sup>

This desire for one’s own oppression is a repression of the desire for freedom from oppression that is so powerful that it works in solution with discursive and material machines to overcode bodies in such a way that we accept social relations as social facts. This function of desire is not only the primary operation of desire as Deleuze and Guattari see it, but is perhaps the best insight we have to seeing their materialist ontology which differentiates their approach to power from Foucault’s.

This configuration of desire displays the material function of discourse. Grossberg is clear that claiming to study discourse is a profound claim because it takes on the mantle of materiality.<sup>99</sup> Hegemony too is a material practice. Hegemony accomplishes its work rhetorically. The same can be said for power; the work of power is done in part by articulating rhetoric with bodies to produce a field of power relations that limits critical imagination of what is possible. This return to power’s materiality allows a return to an embedded concern for power in critical rhetoric but in a way that is responsive to the critiques materialists have of McKerrow’s work. This emphasis on performed critical imagination makes performance studies necessary for the study of rhetoric. Having taken

up a great many challenges to critical rhetoric, and yet finding a line of flight within the project that can let loose flows of desire within the critical politics of desire that support this project, it is necessary to return to critical rhetoric as a way of recasting the project as a becoming-rhetoric informed by a Deleuzeian materialist ontology.

*Mind the Gap: A Line of Flight Back to Deleuze*

“Every reaction against Platonism is a restoration of immanence in its full extension and in its purity, which forbids the return of any transcendence...In truth, only the philosophies of pure immanence escape Platonism—from the Stoics to Spinoza or Nietzsche.”<sup>100</sup>

Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*

What remains is to articulate my version of critical rhetoric to a Deleuzian line of flight while attending to the critiques of materialism, performance, and subjectivity considered above. To start, I want to offer a warning against the danger of any assemblage—that is one’s tendency to become enamored with the power of his or her own machine. Foucault recognized this in his preface to *Anti-Oedipus*. There was strong affinity between Deleuze and Foucault; Deleuze wrote a book on Foucault, and he spoke of his affinity for Foucault in *Negotiations*.<sup>101</sup> Foucault considers *Anti-Oedipus* as an “introduction to the non-fascist life.” In his “Preface” he sets out principles to live such a life, one that emerges from Deleuze and Guattari. “Free political action from all unitary and totalizing paranoia.”<sup>102</sup> The critic must move away from singular conceptions of power and subjectivity. The critic ought to avoid hierarchical thinking and recognize the abundance of power in the multiplicity of thought and potentialities.<sup>103</sup> “Do not think that one has to be sad in order to be militant even if the thing one is fighting is abominable.”<sup>104</sup> Desiring-production, the freeing of desire from guilt and sadness is the

revolutionary act. “Do not become enamored of power.” The forces of power and the axioms of capital function always already around us, and in forcing oneself into a position of power they become fascist. These practices connect to much of Deleuze and Guattari’s work and are immensely helpful in asking: What does critical rhetoric do.<sup>105</sup> It is from the question “What does critical rhetoric do?” that I turn to the task of articulating McKerrow to Deleuze and Guattari.

The most profound connections between critical rhetoric and Deleuze and Guattari are their respective rejections of Platonism. Since McKerrow’s first utterance in “Critical Rhetoric” regarding Plato’s attack on rhetoric, McKerrow contends rhetoric was forced into the service of truth. As such, I contend that this function is aligned with what Deleuze and Guattari call the transcendent paralogism in psychoanalysis.<sup>106</sup> The fixation on lack in psychoanalysis is supposedly remedied on the psychoanalyst’s couch. In their revolutionary and powerful attack on psychoanalysis, contending that the story of Oedipus is at its core a myth not an analytic practice, Deleuze and Guattari reject any conception of lack and argue instead for abundance.<sup>107</sup> The problem of the patient is not what they are lacking, it is in fact that they are awash in abundance. Similarly, as McKerrow positions rhetoric, Plato’s claim of rhetoric’s lack is altogether wrong; rhetoric is abundant. Take for example Michael Calvin McGee’s declaration “rhetoric has dissolved!”—dissolved, dispersed, immanent in the machines that surround us, consume us, are us, and that we are. In this sense we can begin to rearticulate the practices and principles of critical rhetoric by connecting them to various machines of Deleuze and Guattari.<sup>108</sup> The result of such articulations is not a *better* critical rhetoric, it may not even be critical rhetoric any more.<sup>109</sup> But this approach does allow a reading of critical rhetoric

that generates concepts to deal with the problems it addresses, and it allows me to build an assemblage that provides specific theoretical insight to explore the (in)security apparatus that envelops TSA. What results is rhetoric figured as desiring-production whose only *telos* is to flow and pool, which radically rejects subjectivity and identity politics, and which connects to multiplicity and possibilities in every aspect of its conception.

Here we can tap into critical rhetoric's "critical spirit." What McKerrow terms a critical spirit is perhaps best stated as desire. Desire exists as energy and flow. Deleuze and Guattari write, "Desire—such is the operation that consists in always stamping the mark of the primordial Urstaat on the new state of things, rendering it immanent to the new system insofar as possible, making it interior to this system."<sup>110</sup> Rhetoric is desiring-production free from Freud and Plato, a productive element that allows new connections and rhetorics to be.<sup>111</sup> Rhetoric occurs at the connection of at least two machines, an assemblage. "Assemblages are passionate, they are compositions of desire. Desire has nothing to do with a natural or spontaneous determination; there is no desire but assembling, assembled desire."<sup>112</sup> Rhetoric, as dissolved in an assemblage, can be fascist or it can be immanent and revolutionary.<sup>113</sup> Rhetoric and desire are articulated forces.

Critical rhetorics are desiring-machines. Deleuze and Guattari argue, "the elements or parts of the desiring-machines are recognized by their mutual independence, such that nothing in the one depends or should depend on something in the other. They must not be opposed determinations of a same entity, nor the differentiations of a single being...but different or really-distinct things."<sup>114</sup> When critical rhetoric is determined by its opposition to a structure of power it becomes determined and made subject to the

power even when it works against it. Instead, critical rhetoric's desiring-machines operate in between, against, and through power but not in dialectical oppositions to power as McKerrow originally figured the project. Thus, one does not seek the redress of marginalization by seeking civil rights for one group; history has proven there is always another class to be subjugated. A true revolutionary rhetoric would seek constant critique of all power including its own and do so as a coequal effort to addressing inequalities in power relations. Rhetoric is productive. As such, constant critique is not a negative act that produces lack—a clear sense one gets from Ono and Sloops's sharp critique of McKerrow. Even critical rhetoric's endless self-critique is productive and can enter the critic and artifacts in new and abundant relations. Critical rhetoric must be recognized as material and consequential practices. In following such a line of flight I argue for a becoming-rhetoric that provides a productive material break with the sad militancy that currently mires much of the critical rhetoric project.

*Becoming-Rhetorician—“to think and write differently”*

Rhetoricians collect fragments not for pastiche nor to build a representative whole, but to explore the intensities of an assemblage that allow experimentation with the material world. It offers us a way into a particular cultural formation through the back door.<sup>115</sup> Michael Calvin McGee argues the job of the rhetorician is to assemble texts suitable for criticism.<sup>116</sup> McGee argues against the notion of whole texts that can account for a piece of rhetoric's entirety. He argues that the burden of invention shifts to the critic who assembles fragments from culture to make a text viable for critique.<sup>117</sup> We can say that part of the job of the becoming-rhetorician is to create a text to critique, or said

another way, critical rhetoricians intervene in culture by pulling together rhetorical fragments that make up the *doxastic* knowledge they seek to create.<sup>118</sup> In this way, critical rhetoricians are just that, producers of rhetoric from the fragments of culture that surround them. Mcgee's declaration, "rhetoric has dissolved!" is not debilitating but freeing because we can trace rhetoric's lines of flights through culture without fretting over the authenticity of a whole text.<sup>119</sup>

Critics become text-assembling machines of desiring-criticism, unleashing alternative flows of desire in the material world. Insofar as rhetoric has dissolved, instead of trying to reassemble it, we can follow the flow of its dissolution through an assemblage into the material world to record and critique the forces of rhetoric in action. As I have argued previously,

rhetoric is dissolved, molecularly bonded in the machines of capital and working within the power center making the radical appear rational. In such a position, there is at least the opportunity for speaking truth to power, especially when power is working to curtail such critiques and image events in advance of itself.<sup>120</sup>

In essence, the rhetorical critic's job amounts to a becoming-cartographer, to map rhetoric through an assemblage. By embedding oneself in an assemblage and attending to the material becomings of discourse through a social field; *that* is the work of a becoming-rhetorician. For this project, it advises embedding myself in the airport (in)security assemblage to register a multiplicity of artifacts, mapping their movements of force. The internal and external relations of such movements enables methods for appreciating how TSA forecloses political activism at airport security checkpoints and is productive of a vitriolic and paranoid rhetoric outside of the airport which reacts to TSA.

In this dissertation I am a becoming-rhetorician I am assembling fragments, material signs of TSA's cultural omnipresence. I am looking for the ways hegemony

functions rhetorically and materially. I trace the connections among TSA, the State-form, passengers, employees, technology, bodies, discourses, and resistances—not to tell the story but to map the material assemblage of the omnipresent TSA-discourse machine over the last decade. The mass of connections present in TSA’s machines suggests I pursue it as an assemblage to enable me to map these articulations. Drawing upon the materialist iteration of rhetorical criticism I have just built, I look for the forces of rhetoric in TSA’s airport (in)security assemblage in the chapters that lie ahead.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 8.
- <sup>2</sup> The concept material-semiotic rhetoric is derived from Deleuze and Guattari who write, “An assemblage, in its multiplicity, necessarily acts on semiotic flows, material flows, and social flows simultaneously (independently of any recapitulation that may be made of it in a scientific or theoretical corpus).” Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 22-23. They draw together early in *A Thousand Plateaus* the relationship between the semiotic and the material. These relationships are not approximate or metaphorical for Deleuze and Guattari. Later in *A Thousand Plateaus* they are clear, “Furthermore, if we consider the plane of consistency we note that the most disparate of things and signs move upon it: a semiotic fragment rubs shoulders with a chemical interaction, an electron crashes into a language, a black hole captures a genetic message, a crystallization produces a passion, the wasp and the orchid cross a letter... There is no ‘like’ here, we are not saying ‘like an electron,’ ‘like an interaction,’ etc.” See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 69.
- <sup>3</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 29.
- <sup>4</sup> J. Macgregor Wise, “Assemblage.” In Charles J. Stivale, *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s Press - MQUP, 2005), 77.
- <sup>5</sup> J. Macgregor Wise, “Assemblage,” 78.
- <sup>6</sup> J. Macgregor Wise, “Assemblage,” 78.
- <sup>7</sup> Manuel DeLanda, “Deleuzian Social Ontology and Assemblage Theory.” In Martin Fuglsang and Bent Meier Sørensen, *Deleuze and the Social* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 253
- <sup>8</sup> Manuel DeLanda, “Deleuzian Social Ontology and Assemblage Theory,” 253.
- <sup>9</sup> Buchanan describes his method in *Deleuzism as*: “Destratification, as Deleuze and Guattari call this process of freeing oneself from the sickening burden of strata, is both easy and dangerous. What you have to do is invent techniques for a kind of self-destruction...it is also a form of critique analogous to deconstruction in its sheer power to transform through inhabitation. ‘This is how it should be done: Lodge yourself on a stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers, find an advantageous place on it, find potential movements of deterritorialization, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flow conjunctions here and



- there, try out continuums of intensities segment by segment, have a small plot of new land at all times.” See Ian Buchanan, *Deleuzism: A Metacommentary*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000) 8.
- <sup>10</sup> Ian Buchanan, *Deleuzism: A Metacommentary*, 126.
- <sup>11</sup> Ian Buchanan, *Deleuzism: A Metacommentary*, 125.
- <sup>12</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault* (Continuum International Publishing Group, 2006), 44.
- <sup>13</sup> Michel Foucault, *Archeology of Knowledge* (New York: PantheonBooks, 1972), 38.
- <sup>14</sup> Foucault, *Archeology of Knowledge*, 38
- <sup>15</sup> Foucault, *Archeology of Knowledge*, 35
- <sup>16</sup> Thomas K. Nakayama and Robert L. Krizek, “Whiteness A Strategic Rhetoric,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 81 no. 3, (1995): 296-297.
- <sup>17</sup> Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the 19th Century* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 30-31. I would like to thank Christian Hubert for drawing my attention to this text via christianhubert.com
- <sup>18</sup> Thomas K. Nakayama and Robert L. Krizek, “Whiteness A Strategic Rhetoric,” 297.
- <sup>19</sup> V.N. Vološinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1973), 153.
- <sup>20</sup> John Durham Peters, *Speaking into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication* (University Of Chicago Press, 2001), 57.
- <sup>21</sup> Thomas K. Nakayama and Robert L. Krizek, “Whiteness A Strategic Rhetoric,” 294.
- <sup>22</sup> Mark Bonta and John Protevi, *Deleuze and Geophilosophy: A Guide and Glossary* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 107.
- <sup>23</sup> Jon Hoffman, “Entering the Rhetorical Situation: On the Place of Time in Rhetorical Studies.” Presentation, annual convention of the National Communication Association, Chicago, IL, November 13, 2009. Hoffman’s reading of the Rhetorical situation is very similar to the approach I take in this essay, Hoffman deserves recognition for his careful attention to the ways a rhetorical critic might approach a text with Deleuze and Guattari in hand.
- <sup>24</sup> Lines of flight are defined as “the threshold between assemblages, the path of deterritorialization.” Lines of flight are the movement between rigid or striated

- paths that free one from sedimentary ways of thinking and acting. See Mark Bonta and John Protevi, *Deleuze and Geophilosophy: A Guide and Glossary*, 106.
- <sup>25</sup> Barbara Warnick, "Leff in Context: What is the Critic's Role?," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 78 (1992): 232.
- <sup>26</sup> Barbara Biesecker, "Michel Foucault and the Question of Rhetoric," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 25, no. 4 (1992): 351-352. For examples of psychoanalysis and rhetoric see: Joachim Dyck, "Rhetoric and Psychoanalysis," *RSQ: Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (1989): 95-104., Loyd S. Pettigrew, "Psychoanalytic Theory: A Neglected Rhetorical Dimension," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 10, no. 1 (1977): 46-59., Joshua Gunn, "Refitting Fantasy: Psychoanalysis, Subjectivity, and Talking to the Dead," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90, no. 1 (2004): 1-23., and Joshua Gunn, "Size Matters: Polytoning Rhetoric's Perverse Apocalypse," *RSQ: Rhetoric and Society Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (2008): 82-108. For a debate on the question of psychoanalysis and rhetoric see: Christian Lundberg, "The Royal Road Not Taken: Joshua Gunn's "Refitting Fantasy: Psychoanalysis, Subjectivity and Talking to the Dead" and Lacan's Symbolic Order," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90, no. 4 (2004): 495-500., and Joshua Gunn, "On Dead Subjects: A Rejoinder to Lundberg on (a) Psychoanalytic Rhetoric," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90, no. 4 (2004): 501-513.
- <sup>27</sup> For two such examples see Raymie E. McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric in a Postmodern World," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 77 (1991): 75-78. and Robert Harriman's rejoinder to McKerrow's original essay in *QJS's* forum on critical rhetoric: Robert Hariman, "Critical Rhetoric and Postmodern Theory," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 77 (1991): 67-70.
- <sup>28</sup> Raymie E. McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis," *Communication Monographs* 56 (June 1989): 91.
- <sup>29</sup> A search of the "Communication and Mass Media Complete" database on Ebscohost generated 38 peer-reviewed essays since Mckerrow's original publication.
- <sup>30</sup> Raymie E. McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis," 91.
- <sup>31</sup> Raymie E. McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis," 91.
- <sup>32</sup> Raymie E. McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis," 91.
- <sup>33</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage, 1990), 93.
- <sup>34</sup> Raymie E. McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis."

- <sup>35</sup> Raymie E. McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis," 92.
- <sup>36</sup> Raymie E. McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis," 93.
- <sup>37</sup> Raymie E. McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis," 96.
- <sup>38</sup> Raymie E. McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis," 98.
- <sup>39</sup> Raymie E. McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis," 100.
- <sup>40</sup> Kent A. Ono and John M. Sloop, "Commiment to *Telos*—A Sustained Critical Rhetoric," *Communication Monographs* 59 (1992): 48.
- <sup>41</sup> In example, we can consider a multiple, shifting, and changing sense of *telos* instead of a static conception in service to truth or some other fixed goal. Rhetoric becomes contradictory, but productive. Kent A. Ono, and John M. Sloop, "Commitment to *Telos*: A Sustained Critical Rhetoric," *Communication Monographs* 59 no. 1 (1992): 52.
- <sup>42</sup> Kent A. Ono and John M. Sloop, "Commiment to *Telos*—A Sustained Critical Rhetoric," 58.
- <sup>43</sup> Kent A. Ono, and John M. Sloop, "Commitment to *Telos*: A Sustained Critical Rhetoric," 48-60.
- <sup>44</sup> Kent A. Ono, and John M. Sloop, "Commitment to *Telos*: A Sustained Critical Rhetoric."
- <sup>45</sup> Barbara Biesecker, "Michel Foucault and the Question of Rhetoric," 351-364.
- <sup>46</sup> Barbara Biesecker, "Michel Foucault and the Question of Rhetoric."
- <sup>47</sup> Biesecker's (re)presentation of an earlier and more rigid Foucault it is worth noting, we must take into account Foucault's career evolution and recognize a kind of pessimism in his early work. See Barbara Biesecker, "Michel Foucault and the Question of Rhetoric."
- <sup>48</sup> Helene A. Shugart, "An Appropriating Aesthetic: Reproducing Power in the Discourse of Critical Scholarship," *Communication Theory* 13, no. 3 (2003): 275.
- <sup>49</sup> Helene A. Shugart, "An Appropriating Aesthetic: Reproducing Power in the Discourse of Critical Scholarship," 278.
- <sup>50</sup> Helene A. Shugart, "An Appropriating Aesthetic: Reproducing Power in the Discourse of Critical Scholarship," 285.

- <sup>51</sup> Helene A. Shugart, "An Appropriating Aesthetic: Reproducing Power in the Discourse of Critical Scholarship," 290.
- <sup>52</sup> Helene A. Shugart, "An Appropriating Aesthetic: Reproducing Power in the Discourse of Critical Scholarship," 295.
- <sup>53</sup> Brian L. Ott, "(Re)Locating Pleasure in Media Studies: Towards an Erotics of Reading," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 1, no. 2 (2004): 195.
- <sup>54</sup> Bradford Vivian, "The Threshold of Self." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 33 (2000): 304.
- <sup>55</sup> Lawrence Grossberg, "The Space of Culture, The Power of Space." In *The Post Colonial Question: Common Skies Divided Horizons*, (London: Routledge, 1996), 180.
- <sup>56</sup> Ronald Walter Greene, "Another Materialist Rhetoric," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 15 no. 1 (1998): 21-41.
- <sup>57</sup> Kent A. Ono, and John M. Sloop, "Commitment to *Telos*—A Sustained Critical Rhetoric."
- <sup>58</sup> Ronald Walter Greene, "Another Materialist Rhetoric."
- <sup>59</sup> Ronald Walter Greene, "Another Materialist Rhetoric."
- <sup>60</sup> Ronald Walter Greene, "Another Materialist Rhetoric." 32
- <sup>61</sup> Kevin DeLuca, "Articulation Theory: A Discursive Grounding for Rhetorical Practice," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 32 no. 4 (1999): 336.
- <sup>62</sup> Dana L Cloud, "The materiality of discourse as oxymoron: A challenge to critical rhetoric," *Western Journal of Communication* 58 (1994): 141-163.
- <sup>63</sup> Dana L. Cloud, Steve Macek and James Arnt Aune. "'The Limbo of Ethical Simulacra': A Reply to Ron Greene." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 39, no. 1 (2006): 72-84.
- <sup>64</sup> Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Duke University Press Books, 2003), 15.
- <sup>65</sup> Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, 28
- <sup>66</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 52.

- <sup>67</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*.
- <sup>68</sup> Dwight Conquergood, "Ethnography, Rhetoric, and Performance," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 78, (1992), 84.
- <sup>69</sup> Dwight Conquergood, "Ethnography, Rhetoric, and Performance."
- <sup>70</sup> Stephen Olbrys Gencarella and Phaedra C. Pezzullo, *Readings on Rhetoric and Performance* (State College, PA: Strata Publishing, 2010).
- <sup>71</sup> Stephen Olbrys Gencarella and Phaedra C. Pezzullo, *Readings on Rhetoric and Performance* (Strata Publishing, 2010), 2.
- <sup>72</sup> Stephen Olbrys Gencarella and Phaedra C. Pezzullo, *Readings on Rhetoric and Performance*.
- <sup>73</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 2006).
- <sup>74</sup> Brian Massumi, "Translators Forward," xvii. In Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari *A Thousand Plateaus*.
- <sup>75</sup> Brian Massumi, "Translators Forward," xvii.
- <sup>76</sup> Michael K. Middleton, Samantha Senda-Cook, and Danielle Endres, "Articulating Rhetorical Field Methods: Challenges and Tensions," *Western Journal of Communication* 75 no. 4 (2011): 400.
- <sup>77</sup> George F. McHendry Jr., Michael K. Middleton, Samantha Senda-Cook, Danielle Endres, and Megan O'Byrne, "Transecting Rhetorical Field Methods: Doing Rhetorical Criticism on a Plane of Immanence" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Western States Communication Association, Albuquerque, New Mexico, February, 2012).
- <sup>78</sup> Michael K. Middleton, Samantha Senda-Cook, and Danielle Endres, "Articulating Rhetorical Field Methods: Challenges and Tensions," 400.
- <sup>79</sup> Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, 19.
- <sup>80</sup> Leonard C. Hawes *A New Philosophy of Social Conflict*, Unpublished Manuscript, 32
- <sup>81</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Continuum International Publishing Group, 2004), 85.

- <sup>82</sup> Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford University Press, 1977), 109.
- <sup>83</sup> Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (Oxford University Press, USA, 1985) 144-145.
- <sup>84</sup> Lawrence Grossberg, *Cultural Studies in the Future Tense* (Duke University Press, 2010), 39.
- <sup>85</sup> Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 15.
- <sup>86</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (University of California Press, 2002).
- <sup>87</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power*, Robert Hurley, James D. Faubion, and Paul Rabinow (eds.). (New Press, 2001), xx.
- <sup>88</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power*, Robert Hurley, James D. Faubion, and Paul Rabinow (eds.). (New Press, 2001). And Ronald Walter Greene, "Another Materialist Rhetoric," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 15 no. 1 (1998), 21-40.
- <sup>89</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, 70.
- <sup>90</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, 70.
- <sup>91</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, 14.
- <sup>92</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, 71-72.
- <sup>93</sup> Claire Colebrook, "Power" in Adrian Parr ed., *The Deleuze Dictionary* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 215.
- <sup>94</sup> Claire Colebrook, "Power," 215.
- <sup>95</sup> Claire Colebrook, "Power," 215.
- <sup>96</sup> Phillip Goodchild, *Deleuze and Guattari: An Introduction to the Politics of Desire* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1996), 73.
- <sup>97</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (New York: Penguin, 1977), 38.
- <sup>98</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 38.
- <sup>99</sup> Lawrence Grossberg, *Cultural Studies in the Future Tense*, 207.

- <sup>100</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical* (New York: Verso, 1998), 137.
- <sup>101</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 4.
- <sup>102</sup> Michel Foucault "Preface." In Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (New York: Penguin, 1977), xiii.
- <sup>103</sup> Michel Foucault "Preface," xiii.
- <sup>104</sup> Michel Foucault "Preface," xiii.
- <sup>105</sup> Michel Foucault "Preface," xiv.
- <sup>106</sup> Deleuze and Félix Guattari *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 74.
- <sup>107</sup> Deleuze and Félix Guattari *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 51-74.
- <sup>108</sup> Michael Calvin McGee, "Text, Context, and the Fragmentation of Contemporary Culture," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 54 (Summer 1990): 274.
- <sup>109</sup> If the machine we make is no longer critical rhetoric, but instead a different conception of the philosophy and communication we should be just as jubilant as if we resuscitated critical rhetoric.
- <sup>110</sup> Deleuze and Félix Guattari *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 221-222.
- <sup>111</sup> Adrian Parr, *The Deleuze Dictionary* 65.
- <sup>112</sup> Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 399.
- <sup>113</sup> Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 119.
- <sup>114</sup> Deleuze and Félix Guattari *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 323.
- <sup>115</sup> Michael Calvin McGee, "Text, Context, and the Fragmentation of Contemporary Culture," 280.
- <sup>116</sup> Michael Calvin McGee, "Text, Context, and the Fragmentation of Contemporary Culture," 279.
- <sup>117</sup> Michael Calvin McGee, "Text, Context, and the Fragmentation of Contemporary Culture," 279.
- <sup>118</sup> Michael Calvin McGee, "Text, Context, and the Fragmentation of Contemporary Culture," 280.

- <sup>119</sup> Michael Calvin McGee, “Text, Context, and the Fragmentation of Contemporary Culture,” 274.
- <sup>120</sup> George F. McHendry, Jr., “Whale Wars and the Axiomatization of Image Events on the Public Screen,” *Environmental Communication: A Journal of Nature and Culture* 6 no. 2 (2012): 152.



## CHAPTER III

### RE(D)ACTIVE FORCES: MANUALS AND IMAGES: ON BEING SEEN BY THE STATE

#### *Part I: The Archive*

The critical archival work of this dissertation is presented in Chapters III and IV. Diana Taylor, in *The Archive and The Repertoire*, defines archival memory as “documents, maps, literary texts, letters, archeological remains, bones, videos, films, CDs, all those items supposedly resistant to change.”<sup>1</sup> These are the more conventional texts critical rhetoricians address. Chapter III works with print and visual texts; Chapter IV works with web videos—the archival artifacts of the twenty-first century.

For Taylor:

The repertoire, on the other hand, enacts embodied memory, performances, gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing—in short, all those acts usually thought of as ephemeral, nonreproducible knowledge. Repertoire, etymologically ‘a treasure trove, an inventory,’ also allows for individual agency, referring also to ‘the finder, the discoverer,’ and meaning ‘to find out.’<sup>2</sup>

Chapter V works with the repertoire, in particular the repertoires of and in controlled spaces, the enacted performances of securitizing as recorded in two years of journaling, i.e., reflections and field notes.

Although writing creates a schism between archive and repertoire, Taylor argues that the repertoire performs for the archive. The two dance and work together as they are taken up together, “Even though the archive and the repertoire exist in a constant state of interaction, the tendency has been to banish the repertoire to the past.”<sup>3</sup> Both are valuable sources of cultural knowledge and given my desire to trace an assemblage of material TSA discourses, I work with and between both as Taylor does:

The archive and the repertoire have always been important sources of information, both exceeding the limitations of the other, in literate and semi-literate societies. They usually work in tandem and they work alongside other systems of transmission—the digital and the visual to name two.”<sup>4</sup>

I begin the archival sections of this dissertation by identifying textual elements and tracing their lines of flight.

### *Introduction*

This chapter is a critical reading of a set of related TSA documents and images; I ask two questions of them: What are the material implications of the images produced by placing bodies in scanners? And what is the cost of TSA’s reactive posture towards passengers as potential terrorists? The pervasiveness of (in)security that gave rise to TSA is so imbricated in its operations that (in)security has inaugurated a regime of State security discourse authored by TSA. The discourse of and around airport (in)security highlight the simultaneously secretive and invasive nature of TSA. This chapter is a critical reading of an improperly redacted and publically released TSA document, “Screening Management Standard Operating Procedures,” dated May 28, 2008. A heavily redacted version of this document was released, but the redacted material was easily recovered using computer software. Five TSA employees were disciplined and a

public controversy erupted over the competency of the agency.<sup>5</sup> This document affords a rare opportunity to look into the way TSA conceives of its security procedures; it serves as an important archival TSA text.

Paired with this analysis is a critical reading of images released by TSA that have been produced by its whole body imagers. This analysis looks at both the photo-realistic images and the current use of more cartoon-like images as a way of tracking TSA's responsiveness to criticisms over the original life-like quality of body images. The thread that ties these two sets of archival texts together, and the controversies surrounding them, is their use of redaction to attempt to increase public transparency while simultaneously feeding a paranoid discourse of (in)security. Redacted manuals and images provide an appearance of public oversight while simultaneously refusing to engage the public directly and on open ground. The discourse of secrecy pervades even basic attempts at responding to controversy and public outcry. I will use the concept of re(d)active force in this chapter to map the simultaneous desire for secrecy and demands for transparency. For me, re(d)active force has a double meaning; it is a play on Nietzsche's reactive forces in that TSA takes a reactionary posture to the lack of security and an abundance of insecurity post 9/11, and it recognizes TSA's reactive posture to calls for transparency and to calls to release some information in the name of transparency while still redacting sensitive information—and failing.

*Active and Reactive Forces: Towards Re(d)active Forces*

Central to how Deleuze comes to understand desire and power is his reading of Friedrich Nietzsche. It is through Nietzsche that force, power, and desire assemble as

machines that help explain bodies, discourse, and actions of a materialist ontology. It is my contention that the entire security apparatus of TSA operates as a reactive force and that most noticeably, the public release of documents amounts to what I am calling a re(d)active force—a reaction to calls for transparency and a willful refusal of those calls by holding back some information while releasing some selectively. The release of information by TSA comes because they are pinned on both sides; the fear that they lack security keeps them from actually being transparent while the redacted information seems to embolden their critics and those who wish to break TSA security protocols.

The question of what is an active force is monumental, and Deleuze in *Nietzsche & Philosophy* reads Nietzsche's original description of "reaching out for power" as, "appropriating, possessing, subjugating, dominating—these are the characteristics of an active force. To appropriate means to impose forms, to create forms by exploiting circumstances."<sup>6</sup> At the micropolitical level TSA seems to be using active forces on bodies at will, appropriating power, possessing space, subjugating bodies and positions, and dominating the entire landscape of airport spaces. Yet, those are not autonomous spaces; they have boundaries set in place that prevent them from being realized as spaces of and for active forces. Todd May claims that "An active force goes to the limit of what it can do, it is creative... Active forces are creative, because they seek to exercise themselves to make whatever can be made of themselves."<sup>7</sup> Reactive forces lose this creative force and turn against themselves; they begin to defeat their own originary purpose. When a force becomes reactive it has no aim but to resist and oppose rather than insist and impose. For TSA, twin-corrupting forces curtail its potential active force: reactive forces of public outcry about privacy and active forces of terrorism

that are more creative than the security measures of TSA. As a result TSA acts reactively instead of actively, especially at the molar level.

Reactive forces rob active forces of their creative potential by transforming their creativity and resisting their potential to exceed their limit. Deleuze surveys the potential types of reactive forces:

Reactive forces are not the same and they change in nuance depending on the extent to which they develop their affinity for the will to do nothingness. One reactive force both obeys and resists, another separates active force from what it can do; a third contaminates active force, carries it along to the limit of becoming-reactive, into the will to nothingness; a fourth type of reactive force was originally active but became reactive and turned against itself—these are the different nuances, affects, and types...<sup>8</sup>

We must not hastily read reactive forces as always already negative forces, but they are predicated on encountering active forces. When TSA's active forces are corrupted in the fourth nuance and become reactive and turned against themselves they resist their own active nature and work against their own mandates, undoing the creative potential with which they could secure the nation's air infrastructure.

The corruption of TSA's active force plays out in a number of ways; the two most salient ways come from the evolution of terrorist methods and from public outcry over TSA's screening methods. Such a reactive posture lead to the institution of whole body imagers. In a discursive assemblage about TSA, demands for transparency have led TSA to publically release several documents in an effort to show privacy protections for individual citizens. The need to show these protections and at the same time to protect individual privacy placed TSA in a precariously reactive position in relation to public resistance and caused them to be reactive to pressure from citizens, courts, and Congress. Seeking a third way, TSA released a training manual and images produced by whole

body imagers with sensitive information redacted (for the manual, secure information was redacted; for the images, private and identifiable parts of passengers' bodies were redacted). The release of this information in an attempt to mollify the public is emblematic of TSA's active force being corrupted and turned back against itself. That their reactive posture took the form of redaction in an attempt to maintain security while increasing transparency. The remainder of this chapter will examine the use of re(d)active forces by TSA in a publically released and poorly redacted training manual, and in their attempts to redact the realistic nature of the images produced by whole body imagers.

### *Airports as Political Spaces*

One of the first claims to be established in understanding airport spaces is that they are profoundly political spaces. Mark B. Salter laments in his introduction to *Politics at the Airport* that there is a lack of cohesive "airport studies" in any discipline; instead, studies of airports have emerged from a fragmented array of academic practices. Moreover, Salter argues that careful, extended fieldwork in airports is lacking, as is the consideration of airports as critical places for scholarship.<sup>9</sup> Salter's book brings together a collection of scholars examining airport spaces. This chapter relies on that collection; I position my study in a critical gap that has developed since its publication in 2008. Salter's edited collection makes two suppositions about airports, i.e., they are political spaces, and they are aesthetic spaces. Of most interest may be the doubled questions of how and why aesthetics and politics coalesce in space and time in airports.

Salter conceptualizes airports as spaces of strict regulation and political possibility, but there is a sense of strict control and political impossibility that pervades such

regulated spaces. On the other hand, an assemblage of so many bodies, forces, and desires demands that there is always excess that escapes control in an airport assemblage. This tension produces airports as spaces of political (im)possibility. The tension arises from previous studies of airports that emphasize the technology of surveillance and that view airports as “technical, managerial, bureaucratic, and regulatory” institutions.<sup>10</sup> Lacking for Salter, and for me, is critical intervention into these spaces; as he notes, “The governmentality of the airport goes unquestioned.”<sup>11</sup> Such a question needs to be asked because airports are not total institutions of government control; they are rather “liminal institutions that exist at the edges of States.”<sup>12</sup> We can thus distinguish a two-fold nature of airports as places of panoptic control as well as places of community—aesthetic places that may make politics sensible.

Colin J. Bennett’s “Unsafe at Any Altitude,” examines prescreening security measures such as no-fly lists. Bennett echoes the limits of governmentality by emphasizing that such prescreening efforts fail to secure the sky and are limited in both their effectiveness and in their prefiguring of a body as a criminal prior to committing an act of terror. Thus, they prefigure and discriminate against some bodies over others. The use of CCTV to monitor the micromovements of passengers in airport spaces is also part of airport surveillance. Klausser, Ruegg, and November argue that how authorities follow bodies in this space is missing from critical scholarship. They argue that the use of CCTV operates to apprehend threats while remaining invisible to those who *belong* in these spaces. In leaving undisturbed the bodies that matter, CCTV is an efficacious tool for dealing with bodies out of place (to invoke Mary Douglas’ definition of dirt as “Matter out of place”).<sup>13</sup>

One last example of this governmentality is Benjamin J. Muller's look at the use of biometrics and identification according to nationality to classify passengers based on levels of belonging in airport space.<sup>14</sup> Among travelers, nation of origin produces different experiences, status, and helps confer privilege to those who conform on the State's procedures and to put those who do not under duress. An important thread that runs through these studies is their reliance on forms of watching, such as prescreening, CCTV, and biometrics, to help determine which bodies (treated in most accounts as whole subjects) belong in which secure spaces. Missing, however, is a critical examination of the intersection through which all bodies must pass to access the mobile flows of travel that airports enable, i.e., the screening checkpoints themselves. Although a few of the contributors to Salter's collection make passing reference to these sites, its absence is telling and made all the more urgent by the political and aesthetic ramifications of adding whole body imagers (WBI) to these spaces.

In the preceding paragraphs I have been alluding to a tension built throughout *Politics at the Airport* between on the one hand airports as spaces dominated by control and surveillance, and on the other hand as spaces that make some sort of politics possible.<sup>15</sup> I wish to increase this tension with regard to whole body imaging technology. To do so takes security checkpoints seriously as aesthetic points of government surveillance that limit political subjectivity and action. Take for example a screening station at Salt Lake City International Airport. The security checkpoint is an apparatus of metal detectors, temporary walls, barricades, and x-ray machines that fill a floor to ceiling space in the middle of the terminal. The space feels rigid, yet temporary. One can only enter this space through predetermined routes and one can only exit these spaces by



means of performing predetermined actions—the routine of the security screening. This creates what Deleuze and Guattari call striated spaces. They argue, “One of the fundamental tasks of the State is to striate the space over which it reigns.”<sup>16</sup> Striated space can be thought of as a route, the easier path that the State encourages bodies to take by discourse, performance, and force. Striated space is fundamental in limiting any thoughts that life could be otherwise. These fill the “need for fixed paths in well-defined directions, which restrict speed, regulate circulation, relativize movement, and measure in detail the relative movements of subjects [bodies] and objects [luggage].”<sup>17</sup> It is the demand by the State to move in certain predetermined ways that limits the possibility of resistive politics at security checkpoints.

### *Failure to Re(d)act*

In December of 2009 the Transportation Security Administration released a redacted version of its “Screening Management Standard Operating Procedures Manual” to government contractors. From there, a contractor also made the manual available online through a shared website for government contractors. Once posted there, the manual was downloaded and disseminated freely online. The manual itself was heavily redacted using Adobe Reader PDF technology. However, the redaction technology was improperly executed and shortly thereafter the document was posted online with the redactions removed and it was circulated across the World Wide Web.<sup>18</sup> The document is comprised of 93 pages of text, checklists, and images, organized into seven sections and three appendices. The document is stamped as “sensitive security information.”

From these two documents, one re(d)acted and one not, it is possible to pull at the discursive strings TSA tries to hide from public view and to specify discourses of (in)security. Three types of information were redacted from the “Screening Management Standard Operating Procedures Manual”: Information pertaining to the identity and nationality of individuals facing increased TSA attention; information on procedures for calibrating machines or equipment; and procedures for dealing with local and federal law enforcement officials who are authorized to carry weapons beyond screening checkpoints. These three areas all indicate TSA concerns, and their redaction indicates reactive responses to airport security threats.

The shortest, but perhaps most fascinating redacted section concerns the identity and nationality of individuals who face increased TSA scrutiny when traveling into, or within, the United States. Under section “**2A-2. TRAVEL DOCUMENT CHECKING PROCEDURES**” TSA agents are advised of the standard procedure for checking identification documents, checking flight documents, checking the passenger’s age, and ensuring the IDs show no signs of tampering. However, even if there is no sign of tampering, “ iv. If the individual’s photo ID is a passport issued by the Government of Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Libya, Syria, Sudan, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Somalia, Iraq, Yemen, or Algeria refer the individual for selectee screening unless the individual has been exempted from selectee screening by the FSD [Federal Security Director] or aircraft operator.”<sup>19</sup> Some of these countries are places of interest in the United States global war on terror; for example, Afghanistan and Iraq are explicit fronts of direct conflict and Yemen, Algeria, and Somalia represent countries that offer enabling environments for teachings that produce violent extremism. However, Cuba and North Korea remain

largely outside of the War on Terror but within more lasting ideological foreign policy concerns.

The re(d)active nature of this section is communicated through the text in a three-step process. First, the government cannot maintain an active posture solely by identifying countries as threats in a large-scale process, and then, second, disseminating those potential threats to TSA. Third, this posture forces TSA to wait for individuals with passports from these countries to come through standard means of travel. This entire assemblage is based on those wishing to cause harm to the nation's air infrastructure doing so through normal and routine channels of travel. However, as the distinction between active and reactive forces makes clear, the active force exerted by terrorists probe for weak points, not strengths. Thus, even had sections remained re(d)acted it does not offer an active solution either to the frayed diplomatic relations that stress U.S. security with nations like Cuba or North Korea, nor does it move the United States into an active force in the Middle East and North Africa where radical extremism is actively growing.

Obviously, these re(d)active efforts do not occur in isolation; there are other security policies in place. However, looking at the "Screening Management Standard Operating Procedures Manual" as a discursive-material machine, the desire to keep section "**2A-2. TRAVEL DOCUMENT CHECKING PROCEDURES**" re(d)acted represents a textual desire to keep secret the identities of the nations that require additional screening. That desire is an instantiation of the degree to which we predicate airport security on reacting to present threats as opposed to actively stemming the cause

of radical extremism. Moreover, the more extensive redactions of machinery calibration and law enforcement identification procedures reiterate the government's reactive posture.

The second set of re(d)acted information in the "Screening Management Standard Operating Procedures Manual" pertains to the proper calibration and testing standards for calibrating and daily testing of metal detectors, x-ray scanners, and explosive trace detection machines. For each device the manual has redacted the calibration procedures used when initially installing, recalibrating, or setting up a device at a security checkpoint. The calibration procedures are fascinating because they provide a specific window into the types of tests the security equipment must pass to be considered proficient at securing sterile areas of an airport. For example, the manual specifies that for a walk through metal detector (WTMD) to pass calibration it must alarm on all ninety-six tests performed, "All 96 passes through the WTMD must result in an alarm. If the WTMD does not alarm on any pass, stop the test and do not use the WTMD for any passenger screening."<sup>20</sup> Likewise, another redacted section specifies that during daily testing, "All 20 passes through the WTMD must result in an alarm. If the WTMD does not alarm on any pass, stop the test and do not use the WTMD for any passenger screening."<sup>21</sup> In addition to the standards for calibration and daily testing the redacted pieces of the document also specify how the tests are to be conducted. For example, for daily tests a test weapon is positioned on the testers body in various positions as they walk though to test for an alarm—"Ankle Position (Fig. A)--Inner left leg with barrel pointing down and object touching ankle bone."<sup>22</sup> The manual specifies the position and type of test for the walk through metal detector's calibration and test procedures.

Redacted portions of the manual also specify the calibration and daily test procedures for x-ray machines that scan baggage. For example, the manual specifies that “Whenever a standard x-ray system is unable to detect 24-gauge wire at Step 5 on the Test Step Wedge, discontinue use.”<sup>23</sup> This section specifies the specific size of wire that represents the potential limit viewable by x-ray scanners. It is a valuable piece of information for those looking to compromise airport security. Other redacted pieces are less clear; for example, a section regarding explosive trace detection devices specifies that “If the ETD device alarms, the TSO must change his or her gloves, purge the ETD device per the manufacturer’s procedures, wipe down the table with alcohol or approved substitutes, and if the item was placed in a divest container, wipe the divest container (if still available) with alcohol or approved substitutes.”<sup>24</sup> This procedure is followed even when the device does not alarm.

Although it remains clear that each of these redacted pieces of information could pose a threat when released to the public, they also underscore the re(d)active nature of airport security. Reactive forces emphasize a robbing of active creativity. TSA’s relegation of airport security to set procedures and the protection of those procedures via redaction emphasizes their becoming-reactive. Although it is worth noting that reactive forces can achieve desired effects—these procedures can achieve protected airports—they remain permanently at risk to the threats of creative active forces that threaten them. Indeed, the most compelling set of redactions comes from the third category of the manual, the redacted procedures for dealing with local and federal law enforcement officers penetrating sterile areas of airports.

Nearly fourteen pages of the ninety-three page document are redacted in almost their entirety dealing with clarifying the identity of law enforcement officials from many levels of government. This includes visuals of identification badges offering details of proper identification and steps for what officers are allowed beyond screening checkpoints, under what circumstances they can proceed beyond checkpoints, and when they can bring their firearms into sterile areas. The heavy redaction in this area (Section **“4. SPECIALIZED AND ALTERNATIVE SCREENING PROCEDURES**) suggests that TSA recognizes law enforcement officers entering secure areas as a possible vulnerability in their airport security apparatus. This tension is especially important because airports are zones of law enforcement cooperation mixing local law enforcement authority with homeland security and federal law enforcement activities (for example the manual makes explicit reference to prisoner transfers or travel by the employees of the Central Intelligence Agency). These redactions all point to the difficulty of training and coordinating multiple reactive security forces simultaneously.

Much of the redacted manual pertains to identifying what paper work is needed and when. For example, an armed escort “must present a valid Federal badge, credential, a second Government-issued photo ID, and a Notice of LEO [Law Enforcement Officer] Flying Armed document (if flying).”<sup>25</sup> Another provision enumerates search procedures for pilots involved in a federal program to arm flight deck officers (Federal Flight Deck Officers or FFDO), “An FFDO in possession of an FFDO firearm must be permitted to pass beyond the screening checkpoint without inspection of his or her person and accessible property upon presentation of bona fide credentials and aircraft operator photo ID.”<sup>26</sup> The manual also redacts the circumstances under which a TSA officer can enter a

secured area, explaining, “The following credentialed TSA employees on official business at an airport with a valid TSA credential (and badge, if issued) are exempt from screening while performing official duties at that airport after presenting the credential (and badge) for review by a TSO.”<sup>27</sup> In sum, the volume and frequency of LEO and TSA identification requirements point to a textual desire in the document to avoid any leak of the procedures by which individuals in a position of authority gain access to sterile areas of an airport. It seems clear that this is identified as a point of vulnerability in the airport screening apparatus.

What does this outdated poorly redacted manual tell us about TSA and airport security? The manual released to contractors shows the information TSA is willing to let emerge and the information that it considers too important to become public. Nonetheless, TSA’s inability to properly secure or correctly redact the manual enabled its public leak, entering the information in the manual and the story of the leak as an example of TSA incompetence to enter into the discursive field. As such, the manual becomes crucial to my critical analysis of an assemblage of airport security discourse. The types of information in the manual, especially the information redacted, underscores the re(d)active nature of airport security. Although TSA’s public track record of success post 9/11—no known successful attempts on our air national infrastructure have occurred—their posture remains reactive. They lack creative force and remain in a position only to respond to perceived threats based on past actions. Airport security is relegated to responding to threat assessments and old tactics that hinge on the hope of learning of new creative threats ahead of time or hoping that those who wish to cause harm to the air national infrastructure do not become active or creative themselves. This reactive posture

extends even deeper into the airport security apparatus, as I argue in the next section; TSA's re(d)active stance is reinforced by their use of whole body imaging technology.

*Imaging the Body: Citizens as Active Threats, Oversight*

*as Reactive Requirements*

A utopian spirit has transfixed the gaze of many industrialized societies during the period of modernity; the process of modernization has long been a source of Western exceptionalism (and narratives about the triumph of industry). As modernity wanes, the ability of technology to destroy bodies and souls creates a dystopian unease and calls into question technology's ability to *improve* our quality of life. In cultural studies we find a tension at work between technology and its uses. Whole body imagers are technological devices that scan the human body and produce images that allow State agents to see underneath the clothing of persons. Heralded as a means of making the skies safe and at the same time criticized as a violation of the right to privacy, these machines are extremely controversial.

In their chronicle of the machines' use, *Slate Magazine* explains that two years ago the machines were in operation at only one airport in the United States. Yet, in the months since, the program has expanded to nearly twenty airports and is no longer voluntary; TSA requires a person to opt out of the screening for "a more invasive physical pat-down during secondary screening."<sup>28</sup> These devices are intended to replace walk through metal detectors as the preferred screening method.<sup>29</sup> Given the invasiveness of the imaging, its status as a primary State security apparatus and the way this imaging



procedure comingles issues of identity, subjectivity, and State power, the technique warrants further analysis.

These technologies offer a troubled look at the politics of redaction and at the possibility of resistance in the face of a State that can, literally, see almost all. On the one hand, these machines possess the possibility of producing photorealistic negative images that can recreate a near nude negative image. On the other hand, TSA has employed the use of ever evolving software to redact the negative realism of those images in reaction to public outcry. All the while, the capability of the technology remains unchanged. The actual operation of the machines has the same capability to produce the original negative yet realistic images; the prohibition of such production occurs at the level of software not hardware. Whole body imagers represent another example of re(d)active forces acting to both control populations and anticipate political resistance by making the unseen seen, and the seen unseen.

### *Surveillance of the Body*

Theories of surveillance and discipline play an important role in determining the implications whole body imagers have for bodies (even before those bodies enter the scanner). First, they are surveillance devices; they watch the body and in part train the body to watch itself. I argue here that whole body imagers are panoptic technology; anyone who wishes to pass through this node, gate, or checkpoint must have a disciplined self-awareness that their body may be displayed for the agents of government to gaze upon. Such campaigns of disciplining bodies are sustained through news coverage of the devices and by TSA's information campaigns about the imagers. Insofar as airports

operate as spaces where any body can be subject to search and seizure at almost any time, where means of surveillance are ever-present (some visible and some invisible), and because the logic of the airport projects an aesthetic of being surveilled, Foucault's explication of Bentham's panopticon insists at this point.

The panopticon, a structural arrangement of cells around a central observation tower that conceals the observer prevents the subject from knowing when they are being watched. This architecture gives the impression that one is always being watched; it is an efficacious form of surveillance because in it one learns to discipline his or her own behaviors regardless of the presence of an observer.<sup>30</sup> Foucault concludes, "Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a State of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power."<sup>31</sup> However, the implications of the panoptic system of control go far beyond society. As Foucault continues, "The Panopticon, on the other hand, must be understood as a general model of functioning; a way of defining power relations in terms of the everyday life of men [sic]"<sup>32</sup> We learn to watch and control our own behavior so that the government does not take on the burden of having to discipline every breach. Architectural institutions mediate such lessons. "Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons?"<sup>33</sup> For Foucault the function of the Panopticon, in its many social forms, creates a disciplined society that learns to submit to State power, to discipline itself, and when bodies violate this rule the State acts to discipline and to punish.

Foucault writes in "Governmentality," "To govern a State will mean, therefore, to apply economy, to set up an economy at the level of the entire State, which means

exercising towards its inhabitants, and the wealth and behavior of each and all, a form of surveillance and control as attentive as that of the head of a family over his [sic] household and his [sic] goods.”<sup>34</sup> Such a power is present in the way TSA (a power of the State) serves as guard to the gates of economy provided by the national airline industry. TSA itself is a governmental police force. Foucault sees police as critical enforcers of State power. He argues in “*Omnes et Singulatim*,” “As a form of rational intervention wielding political power over men, the role of the police is to supply them with a little extra life—and, by so doing, supply the State with a little extra strength.”<sup>35</sup> We arrive at the airport to confront a technology of surveillance, armed with cameras, police, and whole body imagers that help make visible the State. These technologies watch bodies, but they cannot watch them all. The bodies of the State always escape total State control. The very presence of security and whole body imagers encourages a disciplinary society that prevents disruptions and resistance before one ever arrives at the airport.

I have been articulating Foucault’s Panopticon to these airport imaging systems; a striking example of this line of thought can be found in John Tagg’s “*Evidence, Truth and Order: a Means of Surveillance*.” Tagg argues, “Photography as such has no identity. Its status as a technology varies with the power relations which invest it.”<sup>36</sup> This means the technology of whole body imagers relates very little to the ways such technologies are put to use by the State. The State’s use of photography has an amazing homogeneity in terms of aesthetic style, “turned full face and subjected to an unrelenting gaze; illuminated, focused, measured, numbered and named; forced to yield to the minutest of scrutiny of gestures and features.”<sup>37</sup> Photography is a means by which power is exercised, a technology not of power but through which power can flow. This is a key distinction

since for Foucault, “Power is not a substance...Power is only a certain type of relation between individuals.”<sup>38</sup> Or, as Tagg explains, “For Foucault, power produces knowledge. Power and knowledge directly imply one another. The exercise of power itself creates and causes to emerge new objects of knowledge and accumulates new bodies of information.”<sup>39</sup> Power is exercised by the State in the relations of individuals via architecture and technology. The State does not hold power but makes use of it in the ways its apparatuses relate to individuals.

Such a conception of power leaves open the door for resistance even in spaces of the strictest discipline. If power is never held, it can certainly be exercised differently. In the very discourse of prohibition the uncertainty of power makes possible having knowledge that is different from official epistemologies.<sup>40</sup> Foucault argues in “The Subject and Power,” that the subject does not exist as an *a priori* condition, but is constituted through discourse.<sup>41</sup> The State must produce “subjected and practiced bodies, ‘docile bodies.’”<sup>42</sup> In the very production of docile bodies, however, the State makes itself vulnerable by making forms of knowledge possible that would not be conceived of without disciplinary discourse. Resistance is possible precisely because power, for Foucault, is productive and in the formation of power relations there remains the possibility for the scenario to be performed otherwise.

### *Discipline: Imaging a Docile Body*

As I explained in the preceding section, Foucault is concerned with the transition into a disciplined society that produces docile bodies. Such a description explains many of the social cohesions that allow the State to exercise power. If we refer back to the

Panopticon, it functions not because everyone *is* being watched, but because they *could* be. As such we learn to police ourselves; the burden on the State to enforce rules and boundaries is reduced to producing enough examples that function as *topoi* to prevent their bodies from transgressing. With a docile populace that watches itself, the State alleviates the need to watch everyone at all times—they simply must create an illusory aesthetic field that subjects every body to the logic of potential surveillance. This is why security cameras can act as powerful deterrents, irrespective of their actual functioning. The secured space of airports extends to our homes where we pack, to our actions while traveling to the airport, and finally into the airport itself. Here I address aspects of security checkpoints; routine security procedures at airport checkpoints have made common an embodied docility—our cooperation is not only assured but occurs without critical reflection about our actions. Second, the images produced by whole body imagers create a perfected docile body, visible from within and without, holding no secrets and caught within the State apparatus (lens) in a way that renders resistance unlikely.

Technologies that produce images have been fundamental in the course of human history. From their reproducibility and their role in leisure, to their role in watching and surveillance of bodies that move through space, the (re)production of images has become routine. Yet, there is always something a bit unnerving about the photograph. They lack what Walter Benjamin would call aura, or as Roland Barthes says, “The photograph itself is in no way animated...but it animates me: this is what creates every adventure.”<sup>43</sup> Thus, in the fleeting moment of reception as the gaze of the viewer passes over the image, there is a search for a spark, a *punctum* to break the banality of an image’s unremarkability. This break from the banal brings the image to life and compels something more than

there was before in the image. The photograph can move us; it can exercise force in relation.

Lurking deeper in Barthes' *Camera Lucida* is a more sinister side to the photograph. For this *punctum* is a kind of wound that operates in excess of the image. As Barthes says, "a kind of subtle *beyond*—as if the image launched desire beyond what it permits us to see: not only toward 'the rest' of the nakedness, not only toward the fantasy of *praxis*, but toward the absolute excellence of being, body and soul together."<sup>44</sup> As such when a photograph creates adventure, *punctum*, "the photographer has found the *right moment*, the *kairos* of desire."<sup>45</sup> Barthes desires for the fidelity of the image are erased by the boundless potentiality of digital and manipulated images—we may see this as a loss of a permuted image; nonetheless, there is something compelling about the ways in which images occupy a singularity of space and time—everything stops, desire erupts, and the potential to wound or be wounded is laid bare.

Recall here Susan Sontag's allusions that some "primitive [sic] people" fear that the photograph may steal part of their essential being.<sup>46</sup> Although the invocation of primitive carries a colonial legacy, we may wish to take up such fears in a serious way as we, too, are *primitives* in Sontag's sense—whatever that word means,<sup>47</sup> but instead to look at contemporary technologies of the image to see what they may take from our bodies. In his desire for an image of his mother, Barthes is ultimately left crestfallen; "I never recognize her except in fragments, which is to say that I missed her *being*, and that therefore I missed her altogether."<sup>48</sup> The photograph cannot produce the whole of a subject, though if we take Gilles Deleuze's reading of Spinoza seriously, a single body cannot even produce a single subject, it can only produce a fragment that connects deeply

to longing, gaze, and desire.<sup>49</sup> Photographs are productions of desire itself—they are discourses which produce certain types of bodies in certain spaces. The desire and production that interests me here is the desire that comes coupled with technologies that produce images as part of State surveillance.

The images produced at airport checkpoints are negative images of erasure, technologies that produce docile bodies. As opposed to full positive and easily identifiable images, these images use the aesthetics of negative lighting, blackness, and obscured visibility to make the subject unidentifiable. Figure 3 and Figure 4 are photos obtained from the Transportation Safety Administration released as part of a PR campaign to assure the public of the safety the new machines offer and to help show that the images do not reveal a nude body, nor do they reveal identity.<sup>50</sup>

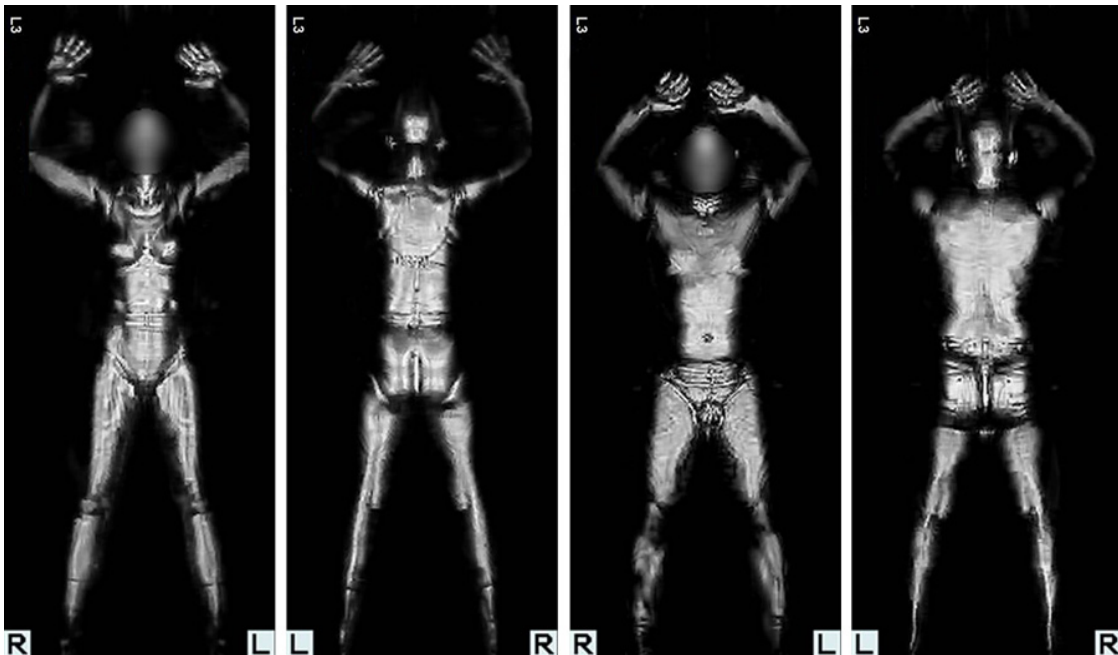


Figure 3: Millimeter Wave Scan<sup>51</sup>

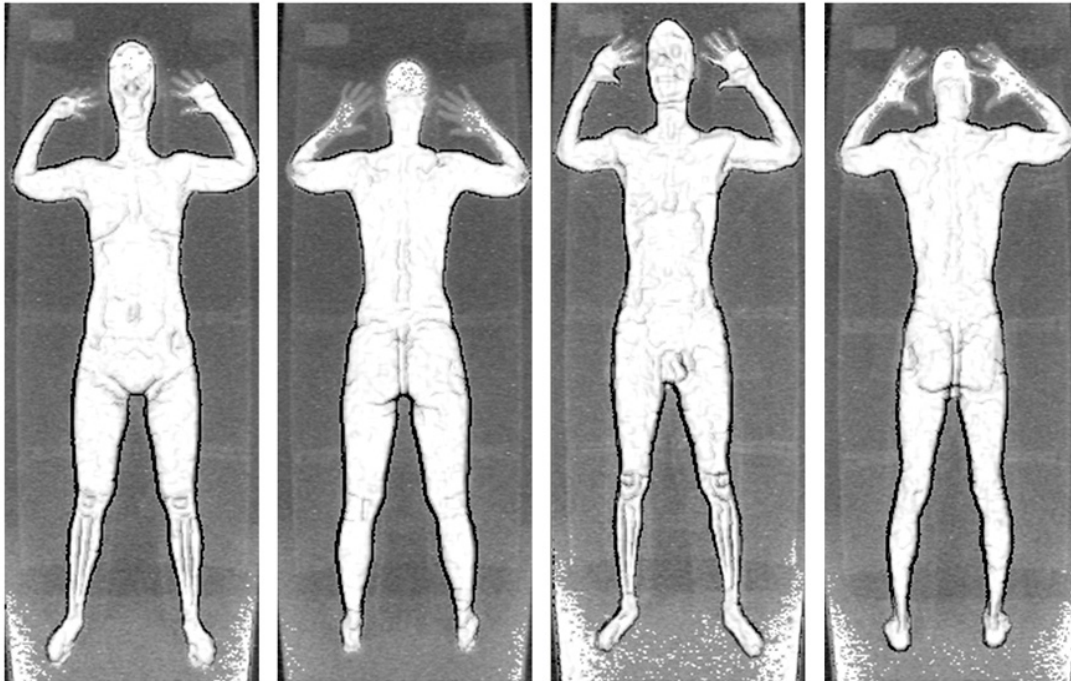


Figure 4: Backscatter Scan<sup>52</sup>

On the contrary, TSA argues that these images produce an unrecognizable image used solely for security. The images erase any possibility of subjectivity, i.e., individuation, subjects in a body, or a process of coalescing bodies; a docile body emerges from the machine that erases difference of any kind.<sup>53</sup> However, the lingering paranoia of our potential identity in the machine lingers driving controversy, surrounding the machines' use. Although TSA's imagers are adepts at rendering bodies docile, TSA seems rhetorically less savvy at persuading the public they fully accomplish such a task.

Under the logic of Foucault, one cannot escape a return to the docile body. I begin with Figure 3, produced with millimeter wave technology that produces less radiation and a clearer image than alternative whole body imagers—TSA claims this is the preferred technology (by TSA and the public).<sup>54</sup> Two figures appear: a woman and a man taken as



part of a training exercise at Salt Lake City International Airport. This is a technology that literally effaces a body by rendering it as a photographic negative, a faceless, docile body, bare, negatively naked, apolitical, and asubjective. The images are cast as negatives and so although these are not positive images of actual full color nude bodies they effect an effacement of subjectivity by casting the image as a dark negative of the photographic positive image. The image as negative distorts a body in a play of darkness and shadows that further obscures its presence. A body could be *anybody*. The machine of the regime renders an image of pure body, but the body becomes a representation of that which is clean and safe—it is effaced of all of the singular features that articulate actual bodies to singular identity, i.e., a face, an agenda, politics, and motives. Bodies are potentially dangerous things. The literary convention *deus ex machina* (God from the machine) refers to the sudden conclusion of a difficult plot by the contrived appearance at the last moment of an unanticipated source of power. How apt an explanation for these machines; they eliminate (i.e., negate) the dangers of bodies at the last minute before the entrance to the airport's “sterile area” by rendering them as soulless, blurred images of a sterile body.

As my eye traverses these images, I am looking for Barthes' *punctum* but it is nowhere to be found. These images can only spark the adventure Barthes seeks if they contain a bomb, a weapon, a device hidden in one's underwear. Instead, my eyes scan aimlessly—imagining the monotony of looking at faceless bodies all day as functionary of the State's security apparatus. Recall Barthes' remembrance of trying to find some trace of his mother in a photograph, “I never recognize her except in fragments, which is to say that I missed her *being*, and that therefore I missed her altogether.”<sup>55</sup> I return to these photographs again and again and can find no trace of a person, no inclination of

what lies in excess of the body that was in this machine. I move from the face to the bodies themselves, the outline of a bra, breasts contained within a cultural convention, the slight trace of underwear on the woman's buttocks appears. I turn to the man, his genitals are apparent in the image as I follow the outline of his underwear. I catch fragments here, size and shape, to be sure, but a subject always escapes my identification.

A body, hands in the air, held to my gaze, devoid of identity, is all that I am left with. In this space, bodies “are confronted with the same frontality and measured against ideal space: a clear space, a healthy space, a space of unobstructed lines of sight, open to vision and supervision; a desirable space in which bodies will be changed into disease-free, orderly, docile and disciplined subjects; a space, in Foucault's sense, of a new strategy of power-knowledge.”<sup>56</sup> TSA reacts against terrorism, but concomitant with that reaction is a reduction of “the people” to faceless bodies. This renders the possibility of political visibility in airports extremely difficult; practicing political activity or civil disobedience becomes increasingly difficult. The machine produces a blanket sense of security, a hear no evil, *see* no evil, speak no evil edict that may make for a compelling and novel approach to security policy, but it prefigures all citizens as one and the same—faceless bodies that must succumb to the will of the State and police their bodies to manufacture a sterile, apolitical aesthetic space in airports.

Figure 4 is much the same as Figure 3, though its details are more obscured; so is its humanness. Quoting Spinoza, Deleuze declares, “We do not know what the body can do...”<sup>57</sup> That raw potential in bodies is apprehended here and is suspended in space and time, fixed in a way that denies any alterity. In these spaces there is a refusal of the politics of difference. These bodies simply *are*. Even in such a space, Foucault would

seem to argue for some utopian spirit; after all, power is not held, it is a bodily relation. In this moment of such effacement there would seem to be some opportunity for resistance; we could think here of not flying, of traveling otherwise, or of not traveling. However, this space is so striated, the rules so rigid and internalized that even my own critical spirit is diminished. Deleuze and Guattari argue that, “From the moment lack is reintroduced into desire, all of desiring-production is crushed, reduced to being no more than the production of fantasy; but the sign does not produce fantasies, it is a production of the real and a position of desire within reality.”<sup>58</sup> The whole body imager is a striated space that manufactures images of lack; they establish nodes of State control that reign in and diminish desire at every moment. The repression of desire is the actualized harm done by these machines in TSA checkpoints.

#### *Re(d)active Force via Cartoon Images*

This re(d)active force is carried to a penultimate *kairos*—a blending of desire and timing to show and not show transparency, to silence and dismiss critics at one and the same time—by TSA’s installation of new software that uses the same technology but completely effaces the individual. The photorealistic body was replaced in July 2011 with an outline of an almost cartoonish body. An agent selects the perceived sex of the passenger (only male or female) and the software displays any suspicious items that may be on that person’s body as they emerge from the scanner (Figure 5). If no suspicious items are found, a bright green screen is shown indicating that the passenger is “ok” to proceed (Figure 6).

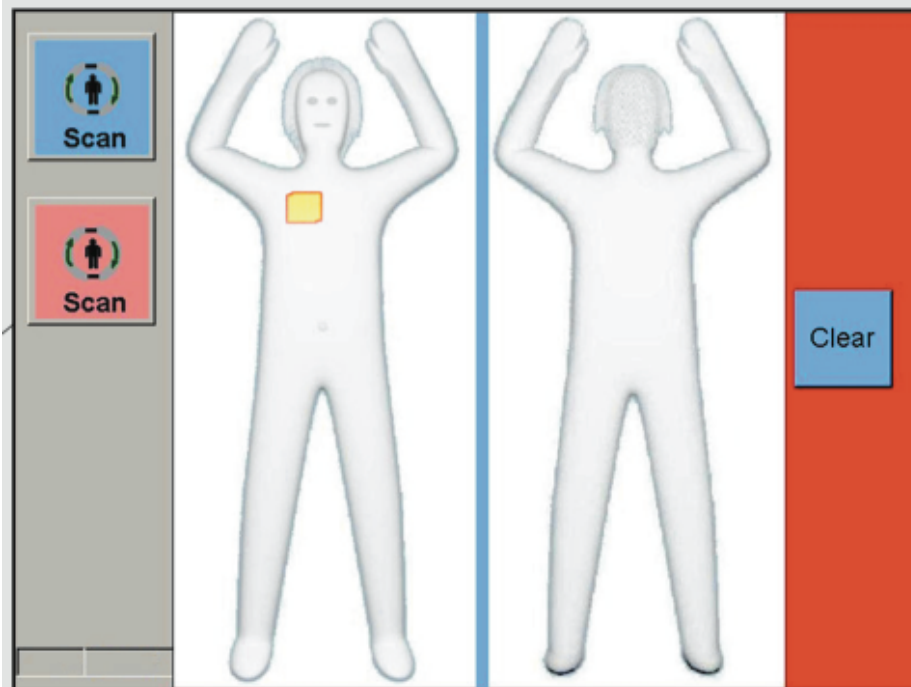


Figure 5: Advanced Threat Detection with Threat<sup>59</sup>

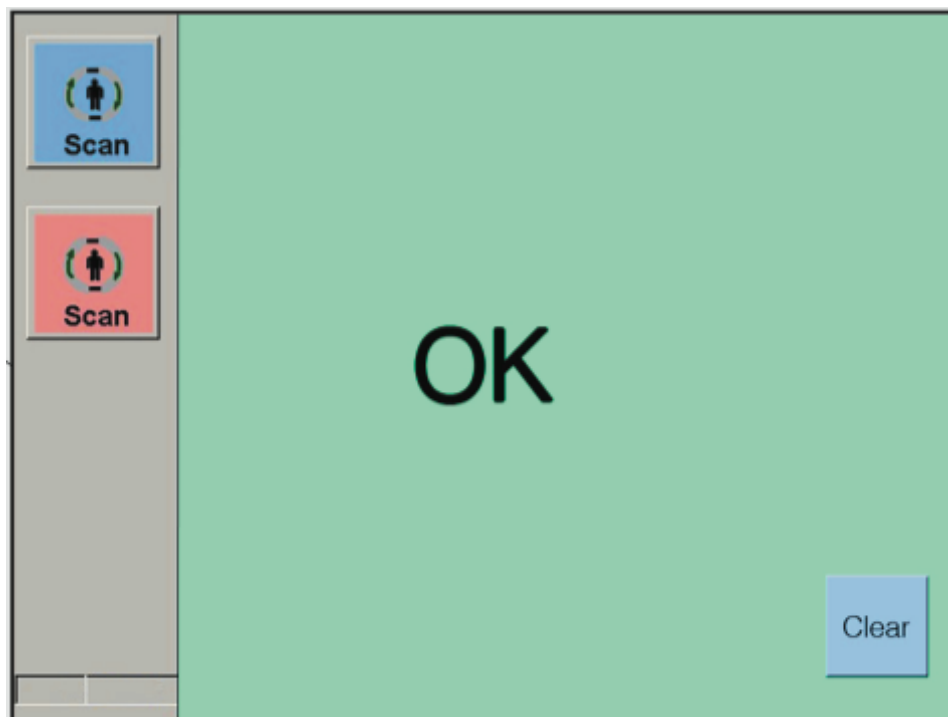


Figure 6: Advanced Threat Detection with No Threat<sup>60</sup>

TSA argues that this software advancement eliminates “the image of an actual passenger, and by replacing it with a generic outline passengers are able to view the same outline that TSA officer sees.”<sup>61</sup> Additionally, a TSA agent no longer views the photos outside of the view of the public. The goal of this program is to “further enhance passenger privacy.”<sup>62</sup> However, the adoption of this new software only deepens the paradox in two respects of TSA’s use of re(d)active force in compelling bodies to action in airport security check points.

First, nothing about the technical capability of whole body imagers changes with the adoption of this new software. The machines are capable of producing the original images and they are capable of producing them with or without the faces blurred; it is simply a matter of software and skill that has changed what the State is producing. This distinction is important because the State’s re(d)active posture does not change its security capability; what changes is its actual performance of security procedures. The State made no changes to the power it possess or its legal authority to produce whole body images; instead it re(d)acted what the public sees of its power as a strategy to preserve its capability at security check points.

Second, airport (in)security demands the effacement of subjects and politics from airport spaces. A simple premise for airport security is that these “sterile” spaces are spaces without faces, subjects, and impersonal identities upon which political scripts can be performed. The distance between bodies and politics deepens with the degree to which the State denies the identity of those who pass through airport checkpoints.

### *Redacting Resistance*

For Foucault, resistance is produced in the moments of the State's imposition of power in relation to the bodies it disciplines and punishes. The power of WBI's seem to leave very little hope for such resistance in airport spaces because of their ability to place subjects under erasure. After all, airports are constituted by many more spaces and many more diverse moments than just the fifteen seconds of being scanned. Their utopian impulses, and my own, have been lost in the docility and homogeneity of the images of people produced by these machines. I read the force Foucault explicates in "Governmentality," without the hopefulness of his later work. This reading is primarily about the images produced once the body enters this apparatus of capture—once the State's gaze is fixed and the body laid bare as a negative image. However, several resistive discourses to the use of whole body imagers have emerged. In this section I look at discourses that are resistive to these machines and briefly examine available responses by the State.

The use of these machines has been challenged along two central lines: religious objections, and concerns over using these machines on children. Both have produced an antiimaging discourse. First, some in the Islamic community argue that the use of these scanners violates Islamic law. The Fiqh Council of North America, a group of Islamic scholars, has issued a fatwa (religious opinion or interpretation) that the machines are a "violation of clear Islamic teachings that men or women should not be seen naked by other men and women. Islam highly emphasizes haya (modesty) and considers it part of faith. The Quran has commanded the believers, both men and women, to cover their private parts."<sup>63</sup> *USA Today* explains that The Council on American-Islamic Relations

also endorsed the opinion.<sup>64</sup> The close link in the American public imagination between terrorism and Islam highlights tensions over security and suspicion.<sup>65</sup> For example, after news of the fatwa came to light, the conservative *News Real Blog* wonders whether the fatwa is about “Modesty Or Terrorist Cover-Up?”<sup>66</sup> In the article Rhonda Robinson asks, “What good is setting up these scanners if CAIR, which has ties to Hamas, gives Muslim terrorists a free pass, while your old gym teacher will step behind the screen thinking her cooperation is helping to keep America safe?”<sup>67</sup>

This sentiment taps into a discourse about Muslim bodies and their connection to terrorism that disciplines and profiles those bodies in airport spaces. The act of resisting imaged effacement by the State has sparked a backlash against members of this community. One such example of the global fear of such resistance occurred in the United Kingdom when “A Muslim woman was barred from boarding a flight after she refused to undergo a full body scan for religious reasons.”<sup>68</sup> Though the United States provides alternative search methods, in the U.K. the search is mandatory; as a result of her resistance a woman and her companion passenger were refused entry. The Human Rights Commission in the U.K. protested the decision citing, “lack of safeguards to ensure that the scanners are used without discrimination.” However, even such recognition of different bodies came with backlash. Undhimmi, a blog which claims to watch “The enablers of Islamisation,” castigated the Commission’s concerns and accused them of preparing to “Facilitate Jihad.”<sup>69</sup> At best, resistance is difficult for Muslim bodies. They face a double bind—resist and be suspected of having connections to Radical Islam, or submit and allow the apparatus of the State to profane Islam. However, the talk of enabling Jihad and the emphasis on terrorism are at odds with similar concerns expressed

by the Catholic leadership at the Vatican; the Catholic Church is an important second site of resistance.

*The Guardian* (London) reports Pope Benedict XVI, while recognizing the concerns of States to guard against terrorism, states “It is essential never to lose sight of respect for the primacy of the person.”<sup>70</sup> The Pope’s concern was unexpected and doubly complex. He argues “the primary asset to be safeguarded and treasured is the person, in his or her integrity” recognizing the need to protect bodies from attack but also to treasure the mystery of the body.<sup>71</sup> The Pope’s statement is much less direct than the fatwa issued by the Fiqh Council, but it also faces less de facto resistance. Though the Catholic Church has had vocal critics of late, *The Guardian* writes, “But those involved in airport security will no doubt point out that, when he himself travels — on Alitalia — the pope and his entourage are simply waved through security controls.”<sup>72</sup> Here we move from double-bind to double standard, the concern over modesty by Catholics is acceptable, but from the Muslim community it signifies threat and potential terrorism.

A third form of resistance to the use of whole body imagers comes from within socially conservative circles in the United States. They object to the use of these devices on children. The primary concern is whether these scanners produce images that can be considered pornographic. Concern over this issue has erupted in both the UK and in the United States. *The Guardian* decries that machines may violate “laws which ban the creation of indecent images of children.” In the face of such issues the UK is only using the scanners on those over the age of eighteen until the legal matter is settled. In the US however, presumption lies with the government; children will be scanned. Utah Congressman Jason Chaffetz has led opposition to the scanners in Congress, even



introducing legislation to ban their use as a primary screening measure. His logic though, doubles back to the same double-bind faced by the larger Muslim community. Out of concern for decency and the images produced, Chaffetz argues that “Nobody needs to see my wife and kids naked to secure an airplane.”<sup>73</sup> Yet, he does believe they should be used on anyone who may be suspect. Speaking of Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab he argues, “If ever there was a candidate to go through the imaging machine, it was this guy, this suspect.”<sup>74</sup>

Moving to a sense that only some people should be scanned, the debate over the use of these machines on children persists. In response to this question the TSA’s blog explains, “Anybody can opt out of WBI screening. Adults, children, Klingons, etc... If you opt out of WBI screening, you will receive a pat down search in lieu of the WBI screening.”<sup>75</sup> Thus, anybody can opt out of using this State apparatus and in its stead they can opt for a physical search by a TSA agent. In the pat down, the apparatus of capture used by the State is contact between bodies. As such, there may be opportunities for resistance and the exercise of power in these small moments of diverting the resources of the State to your body. To touch and be touched, even in a sterile glass enclosure used for such search there can be moments of desire and resistance.

### *Conclusions and Implications*

One of the overt goals of this project is to consider the ways one can become politically visible and viable in airport spaces. Since the establishment of TSA, it has faced vocal opposition from many who view their presence as invasiveness and as a threat to their constitutional right to privacy. That challenge has forced TSA to defend

publicly their mandate to protect the nation's air infrastructure while simultaneously protecting sensitive information from public view. This has placed the agency in a defensive posture, justifying its tactics to its critics while also maintaining the same quality and level of security screening. This is no easy task since both the force behind its response to its critics and its security protocols and rituals in airports are re(d)active.

Any active creative force TSA could mobilize against critics or threats has been turned against the agency as it responds to critics and waits for threats to arrive at airports. I have called this strategy re(d)active force because of the presence of the redaction of images, subjects, and sensitive material to accomplish their (in)security mandate, while attempting at the same time to deflect criticism from TSA's most vocal detractors. In the name of security and transparency TSA has held back information and the identities of many of the people they come in contact with. And yet, despite all these efforts, the agency still faces criticism for its use of whole body imagers and insists airports are still at risk of terrorist activity.

The implications of the use of re(d)active force are twofold. First, as a rhetorical posture TSA has been caught in a paradoxical rhetorical situation. As Deleuze argues, "a fourth type of reactive force was originally active but became reactive and turned against itself."<sup>76</sup> Although TSA's fixation on privacy is likely not distressing from an individual right to privacy perspective, we can recognize that it comes at the cost of the governmentality of airport spaces. As TSA expends energy to answer critics, expends energy changing procedures, and considering rights and privacy of passengers (even when it is necessary and proper to do so), their rhetorical posture shifts from active to reactive. The negative images I examine illustrate the subtle shift in the photographs from

a more active regime of vision to a more reactive one. Even with that diversion of energy it is nonetheless a regime that operates to stifle the possibility of politics in airports. The danger of removing political potential from airports is that collective action to redress grievances and to disrupt cultural acceptance of surveillance becomes impossible. The State's machines in airports presuppose collective subjectivities; the creative and active force of bodies and places in space becomes stifled.

Second, the inability to properly redact the "Screening Management Standard Operating Procedures" Manual points to the difficulty with appropriating new technologies and sharing information in the digital domain. The manual was accidentally uploaded to a website by a government contractor. From there, it was downloaded, disseminated, unredacted, and shared on the world wide web in a matter of hours. My analysis of the manual points specifically to areas of concern in the redacted/unredacted manual that concerns TSA. Specifically, the volume of redacted material pertaining to Law Enforcement Officers suggests places of (in)security beyond the public façade of TSA's regime. As I have argued above, these places of (in)security are readable as textual desires in the manual—though this is certainly not the only reading of the text. Arguably, the manual represents a productive place to see re(d)active force in action because it was a text never meant for public or critical consumption and yet when read critically and rhetorically it offers a means for accessing the places where TSA's own security apparatus stutters in closing the gaps securing sterile areas of airports.

This chapter has drawn heavily from Deleuze's *Nietzsche* to build a theory of re(d)active force capable of examining the textual redactions of TSA's reactive responses to pressure from critics and threats to their security apparatus. In examining redacted and

unredacted versions of the “Screening Management Standard Operating Procedures” Manual I argued that TSA exhibits a reactive posture towards security threats as evidenced by the re(d)acted text. That analysis is paired with a reading of the use of re(d)active force on subjects and images as TSA uses whole body imagers in airports. I argue that the function of these images, and the work they do to erase the subject in the photo, both respond to critics reactively and remove the possibility for politics in the airport. Nonetheless, despite the attempts by TSA to respond to their critics the machines remain capable of seeing the subject exposed in a negative image and thus maintaining the powers that motivated the original critiques. The use of re(d)active force by TSA is unable to adequately address the critiques of TSA detractors or potential threats of those who wish to do harm to the nation’s air infrastructure because TSA’s creative force is turned against itself, lacking the creativity needed to seek out and capture those who wish to do harm to airports and airplanes.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 19.
- <sup>2</sup> Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, 20.
- <sup>3</sup> Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, 21.
- <sup>4</sup> Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, 21.
- <sup>5</sup> Alex Kingsbury, "TSA to Conduct Full Review After Leak of Sensitive Information," *US News & World Report*, December 7, 2008, <http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2009/12/07/tsa-to-conduct-full-review-after-leak-of-sensitive-information> (accessed March 24, 2013).
- <sup>6</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche & Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), 42.
- <sup>7</sup> Todd May, *Gilles Deleuze: An Introduction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 66.
- <sup>8</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche*, 67
- <sup>9</sup> Mark B. Salter, *Politics at the Airport* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), x.
- <sup>10</sup> Mark B. Salter, *Politics at the Airport*, 22.
- <sup>11</sup> Mark B. Salter, *Politics at the Airport*, 22.
- <sup>12</sup> Mark B. Salter, *Politics at the Airport*, 23.
- <sup>13</sup> Francisco R. Klauser, Jean Ruegg, and Valerie November, "Airport Surveillance Between Public and Private Interests: CCTV at Geneva International Airport." In Mark B. Salter, *Politics at the Airport* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 122.
- <sup>14</sup> Benjamin J. Muller, "Travelers, Borders, Danger: Locating the Political at the Biometric Border." In Mark B. Salter, *Politics at the Airport* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 137.

- <sup>15</sup> Benjamin J. Muller, "Travelers, Borders, Danger: Locating the Political at the Biometric Border," 129.
- <sup>16</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guatarri, *A Thousand Plateaus* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 385.
- <sup>17</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guatarri, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 386.
- <sup>18</sup> Jason Ryan, "Private Contractor Posted Secret TSA Screening Manual Online" *ABC News*, December 9, 2009, <http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/private-contractor-posted-secret-tsa-screening-manual-online/story?id=9291018#.UETIRqk8i5c> (accessed March 24, 2013).
- <sup>19</sup> Transportation Security Administration, "Screening Management Standard Operating Procedures Manual," May 28, 2008, App. 2/2.
- <sup>20</sup> Transportation Security Administration, "Screening Management Standard Operating Procedures Manual," 3-1-3-6.
- <sup>21</sup> Transportation Security Administration, "Screening Management Standard Operating Procedures Manual," 3-3.
- <sup>22</sup> Transportation Security Administration, "Screening Management Standard Operating Procedures Manual," 3-3.
- <sup>23</sup> Transportation Security Administration, "Screening Management Standard Operating Procedures Manual," 3-4.
- <sup>24</sup> Transportation Security Administration, "Screening Management Standard Operating Procedures Manual," 3-4-3-5.
- <sup>25</sup> Transportation Security Administration, "Screening Management Standard Operating Procedures Manual," 4-6.
- <sup>26</sup> Transportation Security Administration, "Screening Management Standard Operating Procedures Manual," 4-6.
- <sup>27</sup> Transportation Security Administration, "Screening Management Standard Operating Procedures Manual," 4-11.
- <sup>28</sup> William Saletan, "Deeper Digital Penetration," *Slate.com*, April 8, 2009, <http://www.slate.com/id/2215687/> (accessed: May 5, 2010).
- <sup>29</sup> William Saletan, "Deeper Digital Penetration."

- <sup>30</sup> Michel Foucault, "Panopticism." In Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall, *A Visual Culture Reader* (London: Sage, 2004), 63.
- <sup>31</sup> Michel Foucault, "Panopticism," 65.
- <sup>32</sup> Michel Foucault, "Panopticism," 67.
- <sup>33</sup> Michel Foucault, "Panopticism," 70.
- <sup>34</sup> Michel Foucault and James D. Faubion (ED), *Power* (New York: The New Press, 2000), 207.
- <sup>35</sup> Michel Foucault and James D. Faubion (ED), *Power* 319.
- <sup>36</sup> John Tagg, "Evidence, Truth, and Order: a Means of Surveillance." In Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall, *A Visual Culture Reader* (London: Sage, 2004), 246.
- <sup>37</sup> John Tagg, "Evidence, Truth, and Order: a Means of Surveillance," 246.
- <sup>38</sup> Michel Foucault and James D. Faubion (ED), *Power*, 324.
- <sup>39</sup> John Tagg, "Evidence, Truth, and Order: a Means of Surveillance, 262.
- <sup>40</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality An Introduction Volume 1* (New York: Random House, 1990), 5.
- <sup>41</sup> Michel Foucault and James D. Faubion (ED), *Power*, 326-327.
- <sup>42</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Random House, 1995), 135-139.
- <sup>43</sup> Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida* (Vancouver: D&M Publishers, 1981), 20.
- <sup>44</sup> Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 59.
- <sup>45</sup> Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 59.
- <sup>46</sup> Susan Sontag, "The Image-World." In Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall, *A Visual Culture Reader* (London: Sage, 2004), 83.
- <sup>47</sup> See Marianna Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive: Savage Lives, Modern Intellectuals* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).
- <sup>48</sup> Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 66.

- <sup>49</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* (San Francisco: City Light Books, 1988), 17.
- <sup>50</sup> “Millimeter Wave Whole Body Imager Photos,” *Transportation Safety Administration*, <http://blog.tsa.gov/2009/05/millimeter-wave-whole-body-imager.html> (accessed: May 5, 2010).
- <sup>51</sup> “Millimeter Wave Whole Body Imager Photos,” *Transportation Security Administration*, <http://blog.tsa.gov/2009/05/millimeter-wave-whole-body-imager.html> (accessed: May 5, 2010).
- <sup>52</sup> “Millimeter Wave Whole Body Imager Photos,” *Transportation Security Administration*.
- <sup>53</sup> I invoke here a turn to Jacques Derrida’s writing under erasure. However, I am following the lead of Mary S. Strine who picks up on the notion of “voices under erasure.” See Mary S. Strine, “Deconstructing Identity in/and Difference: Voices ‘Under Erasure,’” *Western Journal of Communication* 61 no. 4 (1997): 448-459.
- <sup>54</sup> “Millimeter Wave Whole Body Imager Photos,” *Transportation Safety Administration*, <http://blog.tsa.gov/2009/05/millimeter-wave-whole-body-imager.html> (accessed: May 5, 2010).
- <sup>55</sup> Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 66.
- <sup>56</sup> John Tagg, “Evidence, Truth, and Order: a Means of Surveillance, 246-247.
- <sup>57</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, 17.
- <sup>58</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guatarri, *Anti-Oedipus* (New York: Penguin, 1977), 111.
- <sup>59</sup> “Millimeter Wave Detection,” *Transportation Security Administration* [http://www.tsa.gov/sites/default/files/assets/pdf/mmw\\_info.pdf](http://www.tsa.gov/sites/default/files/assets/pdf/mmw_info.pdf) (accessed: June 28, 2013).
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## CHAPTER IV

### THE VIRAL VIDEO AS HAECCEITY FROM METAPHOR TO MATERIAL SWARM

Airport security checkpoints are potential sites of radical performance and agitation, especially when cell phone recordings of encounters gone wrong are disseminated online. For example, one video shows a Salt Lake City man stripping down to a Speedo bathing suit prior to going through a security checkpoint.<sup>1</sup> The man also has “Screw Big Sis” written on his back, referencing Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano. The video shows the man being confronted by TSA agents as they call for a supervisor who asks him to put a shirt on. The video is shot from a bin on the x-ray conveyor belt; it captures a view of the man’s bare stomach. When the man claims he has no legal obligation to wear a shirt the supervisor backs off and asks him to proceed. On a voice over the man explains his attempts to talk with TSA employees after his screening, but he is unsuccessful, with the exception of one agent who “jokingly” tells him “Big Sis is watching you.” This video typifies a rash of attempts to instigate confrontations with TSA in airports.

Another web video that sparked outrage purported to show a TSA agent strip-searching a seven-year-old boy. TSA’s conduct with children has been a point of contention both out of fear of teaching children to accept the touch of strangers and out of

concerns over taking images of children's bodies.<sup>2</sup> Missing from much of the hysteria surrounding the video of the boy being "strip searched"<sup>3</sup> or receiving a "prison style strip search"<sup>4</sup> is the official response from TSA that "The boy's father removed his son's shirt in an effort to expedite the screening" and a reminder that "you will not be asked to and you should not remove clothing (other than shoes, coats and jackets) at a TSA checkpoint."<sup>5</sup> Stories of TSA mangling proper search protocol are not unusual, nor are videos of TSA security checkpoints. Hundreds of videos produced by travelers of their encounters with TSA are available online and the most egregious of them gain national attention. This chapter is a critical assessment of two web videos of encounters with TSA at airport screening checkpoints. I focus on the movement of those videos across the World Wide Web and the discursive force they gain as they articulate to certain groups that use them in turn to articulate arguments against TSA. Building on the threats to subjectivity and bodily politics established in Chapter III, Chapter IV asks: If not in airports, where else has resistance to TSA become possible? Further, this chapter questions the material impact of TSA detractors on larger resistance efforts. I argue that although these groups find in these videos evidence of the harm TSA causes, the vitriolic and reactive content of their posts marginalizes them in a larger debate about the role of TSA security procedures.

To support this argument I analyze two web-videos of TSA supposedly botching the screening of passengers (including TSA's response to these videos). TSA's active web presence was quick to dispute popular interpretations of these videos. These two videos pose a potential public relations nightmare for TSA by providing moving images that support the belief of some that TSA is an invasive government agency. I contend that

these videos and the discourse that travels with them form haecceities and swarm the internet, helping to build anti-TSA sentiment.

In this chapter, I argue that web-videos of TSA checkpoints and the discourse that articulates to the videos swarm across the World Wide Web and in that process antagonize the relationship between TSA and its detractors. This chapter will proceed in three sections. First, I argue that web videos do not go viral but instead form haecceities that swarm the World Wide Web. Second, I analyze videos of TSA “botching” security screenings and the movements of those videos across the internet in conjunction with TSA responses. Finally, I will discuss critical implications and conclusions based on my analysis.

### *Viral Videos as Haecceities*

YouTube functions as an archive for multimedia research. As a performative space, YouTube’s offerings change frequently and its access is open. Nick Salvato argues in *TDR*, YouTube complicates, but does not erase, conventional distinctions between amateur and professional because the differences between content producers and content consumers are blurring. This blurring is sped-on by its openness for users.<sup>6</sup> Lucas Hilderbrand explains, “Much of YouTube’s success has been attributed to its user-friendliness. Users do not need to log-on in order to view clips, and videos start streaming as soon as the webpage loads, so there is no need to worry about software compatibility, downloading files, or even clicking the ‘play’ button.”<sup>7</sup> These attributes have made YouTube the default video sharing site for millions of web users.

As a cultural archive, YouTube is enormous. Kristen English, Kaye D. Sweetser, and Monica Ancu aggregate compelling statistics regarding YouTube's popularity. They claim in 2008 alone U.S. American users watched 14 billion YouTube videos.<sup>8</sup> Ten hours of video are uploaded to the site every minute and an average user watches four hours of video per month on the site. Sixty percent of all videos watched on the web are watched on YouTube.<sup>9</sup> Aside from its overall market share, YouTube also outpaces its nearest competitor; Ryan Skinnel explains that the site hosts "ten times more videos than their next largest competitor."<sup>10</sup> YouTube operates as an enormous cultural repository, hosting more web videos than any of its other competitors and has become a dominant cultural force in framing the consumption of internet video.

The arrival of YouTube as a cultural force speaks to its presence beyond a space for banal videos of cats playing pianos (though it offers plenty of that, too). YouTube has become a place of cultural, political, and economic exchange, a place of ordinary and extraordinary cultural transactions that have altered the dynamics of video dissemination, particularly for those who participate in the website's social discussion opportunities. Skinnel observes, "It is unlikely that *YouTube* is either a beacon of cultural salvation or a sign of the apocalypse but rather is complexly embedded in mainstream U.S. culture in ways that cannot be accounted for by either extreme view."<sup>11</sup> YouTube's archival presence is marked by the site's introduction of what Hilderbrand calls "a new model of media access and amateur historiography that, while the images are imperfect and the links are impermanent, nonetheless realizes much of the internet's potential to circulate rare, ephemeral, and elusive texts."<sup>12</sup> This mediation of everyday life has added a

permanence to moments that were otherwise once lost to time or to the files of archives to which few had access.

YouTube created a cultural shift in the recording of live moments. Hilderbrand continues, “YouTube has contributed to the culture of the clip. The specific moments a viewer wants to see can now be searched and accessed without the hassles of watching live broadcasts, making recordings, or waiting through exposition and commercial breaks. In the process, it fosters a new temporality of immediate gratification for audiences.”<sup>13</sup> Within clip culture, traditional content producers (television networks, filmmakers, professional videographers) are of declining importance and YouTube makes possible the generation of easily accessible creative content. Given this ease of content creation it is important to understand how videos are disseminated on the World Wide Web.

The primary metaphor used to describe web video (or web content) that is widely disseminated across the World Wide Web is epidemiological—it is said to go viral. This viral metaphor suggests that these videos spread like a virus from person to person, infecting a huge population in a relatively short period of time. Hilderbrand explains, “Rather than being promoted by multi-million dollar branding campaigns by major networks or tech firms, YouTube became popular by word of mouth—which in the Internet era means forwarded email links, blogs...” and social networking sites.<sup>14</sup> Videos that spread via this interaction are referred to as viral videos. The viral video nomenclature invokes contagion; videos contaminate the web, spreading from person to person, infecting our inboxes and social media feeds; we spread the videos to those with whom we come in contact. But the viral metaphor is suspect from a Deleuzian perspective.

Dylan Wolfe, drawing on Deleuze and Guattari, builds a critique of the viral metaphor. In a material process viruses rely on self-reproduction to spread from host to host. However, Wolfe argues:

Self-reproduction is a poor description of a process wherein a video is sent forward willingly by the “host” audience. Moreover, unlike a programmed computer virus or a live biological virus, there is no self-governance to the spreading of a viral video. Put simply, audience members are not at the whim of an autonomous infection, but, conversely, make individual choices regarding dissemination.<sup>15</sup>

Viral videos have little in common with actual viruses other than that they spread rapidly across populations of people. Web videos depend on the active engagement of the host to disseminate a video.

Wolfe offers an alternative to the viral video metaphor that is equally problematic. He argues that the virus metaphor implies that these videos have some quality which “forces itself upon the unconscious mind, causing the individual viewer to unwittingly spread the message to others in their social networks.”<sup>16</sup> In opposition to this unwitting “mechanistic determinism,” Wolfe proposes the concept of the rhizome to understand the movement of web videos across a territorial assemblage. For Wolfe, and for Deleuze an assemblage is a territory populated by discourses. A rhizome is “an open system created through the creative potential of interconnection” that facilitates the spread of these videos.<sup>17</sup> Wolfe proposes to analyze this rhizome by exploring *metaphorical* lines between a text’s technological form and its experience by viewers.<sup>18</sup> However, his reduction of Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of rhizome to metaphor fails as a materialist philosophy. Wolfe’s use of the rhizome as a “non-mechanistic” metaphor belies the materialist nature of Deleuze and Guattari’s work, especially as it relates to discourse and articulation.



Wolfe rightly critiques the determinism that drives a viral metaphor. In contesting the notion that the video contains force that compels someone to share it, he draws on the work of Kevin DeLuca to argue that “Texts do not alter their audience without some form of audience engagement—even if it occurs in the form of a distracted glance.”<sup>19</sup> Wolfe argues that a text does not determine user interaction without a choice of a user to interact with the video. Wolfe errs in seeking to adopt an alternative metaphoric mode of thinking when he turns to rhizomes.

Although rhizome serves Wolfe well, his wish for a nonmechanistic relationship between text and user is problematic. His iteration of the rhizome is kept in the realm of the symbolic and leaves aside material relations. Wolfe is left talking about rhizomes as second order symbols, things that videos emulate, not the actual rhizomatic forces with which videos move across public screens. First, metaphor locates analysis outside of material experience. Wolfe envisions what videos do as they approximate meanings that then create social change. Notice that in this view videos stop short of exerting social force and contributing to social change. Deleuze and Guattari explore the creative potential of radical alternatives; potential is not a metaphor for difference but is instead virtual force reconfiguring actual social arrangements. Second, lines of analysis are not metaphorical; discourses compel them. This is not a return to media effects; it is instead a recognition that one of the tasks of a rhetorical critic is to recognize that texts and publics articulate in ways that convoke our attention. It is a mistake to privilege either text or viewer by getting side-tracked at the level of meaning.

A web video moves across the World Wide Web in a swarm of discourse as a material collection of a web video *and* its multiple disseminations *and* commentary

provided by people as they disseminate the video *and* comments about the video in multiple online forums. Deleuze refers to this swarm as haecceity. As defined by Mark Bonta and John Protevi, haecceities can be thought as “set[s] of relations” which have “dimensions of multiplicity” that enable us to “write about the uniqueness of things or events without resorting to the traditional Aristotelian genus/species/individual scheme.”<sup>20</sup> In other words, haecceity enables exploration of material relations among phenomena that emphasizes their complexity and malleability without forcing upon them a static classification system. Haecceity, a swarm, or thisness, allows a critic to examine the ways videos *and* users *and* discourses travel together.

Haecceities are defined by their relations to the matter they consist in, “They are haecceities in the sense that they consist entirely in relations of movement and rest between molecules or particles, capacities to affect and be affected.”<sup>21</sup> Haecceities are collections of matter with some coherent consistency, but haecceities can also be dissipated by the forces which act on them; they are, “matter-movement bearing singularities.”<sup>22</sup> Or, stated another way, a video disseminated across a public screen is set in relation to news stories about the video and discussions about the video. Those stories and discussions alter the force and matter of the video. They move as a swarm carrying “capacities to affect and be affected.” However, such force is not monolithic; it changes as the video further disseminates. Thus, I use haecceity in this chapter to track the movement of these artifacts in relation to each other for how they affect anti-TSA rhetoric in online discussion of TSA.

Multiplicity within a haecceity is key because once disseminated, videos are not isolated entities. Videos are bound together; each swarm is [a video + acts of sharing a

video + online discussions of a video + news reports about a video + the context in which the video occurred + the material practices with which the video deals]. For example, a video of Senator Rand Paul being held after refusing to use either TSA's whole body imagers or to undergo an enhanced pat down spread rapidly around the web. That video also made national news. It often came coupled with personal expressions of solidarity against TSA and stories of harassment by TSA from TSA detractors. These elements make up a haecceity that swarms across the World Wide Web. The purpose of shifting from viral metaphor to the concept of haecceity is to allow analysis from a materialist perspective that emphasizes, at one and the same time, the interconnected nature of the videos, their discursive elements, expressions of embodied experience, and anti-TSA discourse articulated to them.

### *Public Screens as Sites of Watching*

One of the main contentions in this chapter is that videos move across public screens and articulate to TSA detractors. The public screen (an electronic iteration of the public sphere) itself is a frame for understanding the dissemination of texts across a mediascape. The public screen offers increasingly diverse ways of interacting with information; our articulations with artifacts have material force in the world beyond what a text means epistemologically.

TSA's responses to YouTube videos attempt to establish official meanings for the events captured on video. The State's enunciation of a rational discourse of what happened (re)articulates the videos to the discourse of (in)security. However, the

articulation of vernacular discourses to videos defies such State reason. There is potential for resistance here in material acts that resist State reason.<sup>23</sup>

In these videos, and the responses they provoke, there is a politics at work on the public screens that mediate and disseminate the videos and commentaries about them. My emphasis here is on a dissemination model of communication, as opposed to a transmission model of communication. As DeLuca argues in *Image Politics*, “The taken-for-granted transmission is only a possibility within the horizon of dissemination...instead of reading with the assumption of transmission it is more important to read within the field of dissemination.”<sup>24</sup> DeLuca argues texts are not experienced “as finished products but as arbitrary contingent constructions—unfinished, unstable, overflowing, without integrity.”<sup>25</sup> This constitution of texts means that they contain an abundance of signifying chains that move throughout cultural assemblages articulating to preexisting cultural formations. For example, a new video of TSA not only articulates with preexisting attitudes about TSA but with a host of social, political, and economic institutions as well. This process disrupts political attempts to fix the meaning of a text, which is always already an abundant becoming.

The public screen (television, internet, computer screens, cell phones) is a correction to some of the failings of the public sphere. DeLuca and Peeples claim, “television and the Internet in concert have fundamentally transformed the media matrix that constitutes our social milieu, producing new forms of social organization and new modes of perception.”<sup>26</sup> Their work accounts for a shift to argumentation dominated by televisual texts in the digital age. I have argued elsewhere, “While the public screen offers a plethora of outlets through which social movements can appear, it also fragments

those outlets and dilutes the potency of mediated visibility.... This logic means that when [media access] is obtained the axioms of capital work their way into the message that is disseminated.”<sup>27</sup> That is to say, as a message moves across the public screen its articulations to social formations alter the materiality of the message itself. The actual movement of a message makes possible creative articulations that enable alternative meanings beyond anything the text has, could, or did mean before. As I will show later, these videos of TSA screenings can come to mean anything from small breaks in TSA procedure to evidence of Nazi fascism in America; this destabilizes epistemological readings of artifacts as those readings produce multiple meanings moving with force throughout a territorial assemblage.

Examining the movement of these videos through an assemblage of airport (in)security, I map videos, comments, commentary about the videos, and news coverage about the videos for their internal relations to more critically apprehend the material force of the relationships among these artifacts. The two videos in the next section feature recordings of airport security procedures and have been disseminated online.

### *Watching TSA on YouTube*

Given the movement from performative acts to disseminated video to online controversy, each articulation of video and discourse constitutes a place to analyze an assemblage of TSA (in)security. In this section I follow two anti-TSA videos uploaded to YouTube, attending to the ways the two videos are framed, analyzing comments about them, and—whenever possible—the ways TSA frames the content of their responses to the videos. Many websites that shared these videos expressed antifederal government

attitudes. I have located websites that posted the video using Google's search engine as well as websites that referred the most users to the two videos on YouTube. I have clustered comments on these websites into dominant themes, at times numbering as few as four and at other times as many as tens of thousands of comments. In instances where I have sampled comments instead of reading every comment I have specified my sampling decisions. I have also left the comments unadorned by [sic] marks to avoid intruding upon the commenters' remarks.

### *Strip Searching Children*

The first video I critique involved a child who was screened without his shirt on. TSA contact with children is especially contentious. Although fears over whole body imagers yielding pornographic images of children have been prevalent, so has the lingering fear of pat downs of children, constituting child molestation. This has made TSA procedures regarding children especially problematic. TSA employees have also been heavily criticized. In a May 30, 2012 report Congresswoman Marsha Blackburn's "Not on My Watch": 50 Failures of TSA's Transportation Security Officers" describes the criminal history of TSA officers. Among other crimes, child pornography and sex crimes (including child molestation) account for 14 of the 50 crimes, the second most prevalent crime after theft.<sup>28</sup>

The agency's detractors often assert that pat downs of minors constitute molestation. For example, responding to a story of a six-year-old whose parents filed assault charges against TSA for patting down their daughter, *The American Daily Herald*, an online libertarian magazine asserts, "one of the Transportation Security

Administration's (TSA) pedophiles molested [the] six-year-old...as though she were a porn star rather than a little girl boarding a plane." The Herald argues "the TSA *defended* [emphasis theirs] its pedophilia" and "the TSA admits that pedophilia is its official policy."<sup>29</sup> Even more contentious are the claims of child abuse prevention expert Ken Wooden. Wooden argues that TSA's policy of telling children that pat downs are like a game is similar to a technique pedophiles use; children may become more comfortable with strangers touching sensitive areas of their body.<sup>30</sup> There is clear conflation of the term pedophile, which denotes sexual abuse of a minor, and the procedures used by TSA. Each of these issues points to anxiety over the contact between TSA and children.

Given that proper TSA screening procedures for children have been a source of controversy, it is no surprise that one of the most widely disseminated TSA screening videos involves a minor. On November 19, 2010 Luke M. Tait was waiting in a security line at Salt Lake City international Airport when he saw a dispute involving TSA screeners, a father, and his child just past the metal detector in front of him. Tait recorded the incident on his cell phone and uploaded it to YouTube. The video has over 2.8 million views and over 20,000 people have commented on it; to put that in perspective the most watched video on YouTube has over 700 million views. YouTube's own analytics indicate that 157,724 people watched the video on Facebook.com, another 447,088 watched the video on their mobile device, and the largest referrer of traffic was the conservative news aggregator website *Drudge Report*, which referred 561,475 people to the video. The top audiences for the video, in descending frequency, were "Male, 45-54 years," "Male, 35-44 years," and "Male, 55-64 years."<sup>31</sup>

Tait's thirty-eight-second video is shot from behind the action with several other passengers standing between the camera and the metal detector. The child's father stands between the camera and the child, obscuring much of what occurs during the screening. Tait gave the video the provocative title "Young Boy Strip Searched by TSA," rhetorically framing TSA as the active agent in the video. The title of the video was amended by Tait when he posted about the incident on the conservative news website *The Blaze* to "Young Boy Strip Searched by TSA (New Link to TSA lies interview)." Tait writes as an introduction to the video:

The boy went through a metal detector and didn't set it off but was selected for a pat down. The boy was shy so the TSA couldn't complete the full pat on the young boy. The father tried several times to just hold the boys arms out for the TSA agent but i guess it didn't end up being enough for the guy...The enraged father pulled his son shirt off and gave it to the TSA agent to search, thats when this video begins.<sup>32</sup>

Tait's written description of the video also includes commentary on an encounter with "a man in a black suit" who attempted to convince him to delete the video. Tait also reported that he was followed by two TSA agents to his gate.

The commentary and the framing of the video appears to be far more provocative and damning than the video by itself. The only discernable audio in the video comes from somebody near Tait asking:

Unknown Passenger: "They're harassing a kid?"

Tait: "Yep"

Unknown Passenger: "Nice"

Tait: "It's Ridiculous"

Unknown Passenger: "Unbelievable"<sup>33</sup>



Visually, three TSA officers and the boy's father are huddled around the child. A male officer performing the pat down is handed the boy's shirt. The father steps to the side at the seventeen-second mark showing the boy without his shirt as the pat down begins. For ten seconds the agent conducts the pat down and then helps the boy put his shirt back on. The father and child then appear to be walking away and an officer is walking next to them. The video makes it clear that TSA conducted a pat down of a young minor without a shirt. Of critical interest is the rhetorical force of this video as it was disseminated.

Comments about the video fall into two categories: antagonistic remarks against individual TSA employees, and anxiety over TSA as a larger government organization. Posts were overwhelmingly anti-TSA with only a few commenters supporting TSA procedures. Comments on YouTube necessitated sampling. I read a six-month sample of comments, approximately 300 (from May 2012 to September 2012). I sorted the posts into dominant motifs, many posters commented on several themes at once. Approximately 270 contained scathing commentary about TSA that fell into the dominant themes I found. Comments on websites that disseminated the video did not require sampling. Within the larger categories of attacks on TSA employees and attacks on TSA as an organization, attacks on TSA employees included demeaning remarks and suggestions that agents are pedophiles.

A typical attack on TSA agents include this one posted by toolmkr:  
I feel so much safer seeing TSA groping a five year old. Were the passengers on the plane safer after that assault? Three agents surrounding the poor kid in case he resists. That fat cow standing there with her fat arms folded with her fat attitude, chewing her cud. What a disgrace. Have a nice vacation!!<sup>34</sup>

The dehumanization of individual agents is not uncommon in posts about TSA. In another post, libertyordeathus writes:

Ever wonder why pedophile priests who are defrocked get jobs as TSA agents? Now you know why. Ever wonder why someone who wants to keep 15 year old girls as a sex slave would want to be a TSA agent? Now you know why. Ever wonder why a guy who distributes child porn would want to be a TSA agent? Now you know why. Of course all of these actually happened. It's nice to know these NON-POLICE officers are allowed to sexually assault adults and children without repercussions. Perverts should apply.<sup>35</sup>

The broad suggestion that TSA employees are all pedophiles and that TSA is a haven for sex offenders is both unsubstantiated and widespread in the posts I studied; a common discursive practice sexualizes encounters between TSA and passengers. The need to sexualize encounters with TSA at times turns violent. For example, fishrcoolturtles2 writes “we should rape the TSA so they will know what it feels like.” This vitriolic, violent, and aggressive rhetoric typifies the obscene rage many posters expressed towards TSA employees.

A second broad area of affect in the comments I read was a persistent fear that TSA was perpetrating the downfall of the United States. Webdesignjunkie writes, “its just a matter of time before we have NO freedom.”<sup>36</sup> Commenters dealt with a perceived loss of freedom by questioning the legality of TSA actions and by seeking racial profiling. For example, on [www.dailypaul.com](http://www.dailypaul.com) a website devoted to supporters of Republican Representative Ron Paul, posters examined specific laws that authorize TSA’s actions.<sup>37</sup> Those postings claimed TSA is violating their rights. Posters emphasize the theme of the inevitable downfall of America by attacking the father in the video for capitulating with TSA, referring to him as one of “the ‘good Germans,’ alive and well in Amerika in the year 2010,” a reference to individuals who “do nothing” while these terrible events are being perpetrated.<sup>38</sup>

Racist posts were also common. On [theblaze.com](http://theblaze.com), JohnHenry writes:

Hey folks all you need to do to avoid all the hassle is wear a burkka and tell them you are a moslem and they will let you right thru. After all your “Religious Freedom” to kill all infidels comes first. I am shocked the news media has not informed you of your right to practice your “Peaceful Jihad” without harassment by your enemies>.<sup>39</sup>

In a similar post on texasgopvote.com, a website of bloggers seeking to reclaim a more politically conservative Texas, the video was introduced with: “Maybe if this young boy was wearing a burqa, he wouldn't have had to endure a strip search!”<sup>40</sup> The post claimed religious objections to TSA procedures have rendered all of TSA’s procedures useless. Online responses to this video demonstrate anxiety about individual TSA agents and about TSA as an institution. The articulation of the video to comments on these websites is evidence of the capacity of the video to affect; they are violent and vitriolic.

TSA’s official response stated “The boy’s father removed his son’s shirt in an effort to expedite the screening” and “[n]o complaints were filed.” Additionally, in an update almost a month later TSA clarified the need for a pat down in the first place, claiming: “The TSA officer intended to pat down the child, due to a TSA requirement to check passengers with bulky clothing, which the boy was wearing.”<sup>41</sup> Although appearing to clarify the situation, TSA’s response is tactically narrow nonetheless. TSA appears responsive without engaging the larger concerns and issues of airport (in)security, such as how to deal with children in airport checkpoints.

The video and the furor it produced are complicated; taken together they frame TSA as the entity doing the stripping. The video’s creator made it clear that the boy’s father removed the child’s shirt, yet descriptions of the video framed TSA as the perpetrator, accusing TSA of “Concentrating on 5 year old boys from Davenport Iowa going to visit Grandparents for Thanksgiving”<sup>42</sup> or using the headline “Tyranny: TSA

Strip-Searches Young Boy.”<sup>43</sup> Even when websites indicate the father removed the boy’s shirt, some detractors ignored that information. That it is possible for a video to produce such forceful and oppositional texts indicates the problematic nature of meaning making. The video mobilizes bodies to construct arguments, beliefs, and rhetorical enactments that matter in these digital domains even if they contradict other claims of fact about what happened. For some, this video could have been framed as “Father Removes Boys Shirt, TSA Conducts Pat Down.” When mixed with fears of the State visually inspecting and/or touching our bodies, breached civil liberties, encroaching government surveillance, fevered racist imaginations and pedophilia, the video gains force as it moves. The violent, at times pornographic, rhetoric mobilized by this video suggests the materiality and affect at work as artifacts articulate to their audience. The dominant themes of aggression towards TSA, fear of the deterioration of the United States, sexualizing TSA procedures, discussion of the legality of screening procedures, and calls for racialized profiling were a discursively articulated to Tait’s video. In the second video I study, the protagonist directly films their encounter with TSA.

*“Don’t Touch My Junk”*

“If you touch my junk I’ll have you arrested.”

-John Tyner “TSA Screening, Terminal 2, SAN, Nov. 13, 2010 - part 1”

“What they are doing would be illegal if they weren’t the federal government.”

-John Tyner “TSA Screening, Terminal 2, SAN, Nov. 13, 2010 - part 2”

The second video I examine was produced by an individual using his cell phone to record his protest of TSA procedures. This video demonstrates anxiety regarding TSA’s use of whole body imagers and pat downs. John Tyner’s video of his refusal to be

patted down by TSA captures this (dis)ease. The phrase “Don’t Touch My Junk,” was attributed to Tyner and widely disseminated online, despite the fact that Tyner never uttered it in the video.

Tyner’s two-part YouTube video attracted over 1.4 million views, a remarkable number for two reasons. First, the two parts are dramatically longer than most videos on the site—exceeding YouTube’s length limit (fifteen minutes), hence two videos. The first video is twelve minutes, the second runs for nine minutes and twenty-seven seconds. Second, Tyner did a number of press interviews after the incident became public and those videos are also on YouTube. There are a number of videos that compete for views with Tyner’s by repackaging the event into shorter more easily consumable clips. Like Tait’s video, Tyner’s saw significant traffic from *The Drudge Report* (31,423) and from mobile devices (61,591); however, it also had the most traffic from Tyner’s own website, directing almost 200,000 hits to the video. The audience demographics on YouTube are similar to Tait’s video; males (45-54, 35-44, and 55-64) dominate viewership.<sup>44</sup>

Tyner’s video differs from Tait’s, drawing less online interaction in terms of number of comments, but it attracted widespread attention from major news organizations. For example, Tyner’s video only produced around eight thousand comments on YouTube; search results for the video on Google return many more mainstream news organizations. Nonetheless, the content of the video, the YouTube comments, and postings around the web continue to express anxieties about state sanctioned touching, encroachment by the federal government, and intense anti-TSA affect.

John Tyner's video is shot covertly; the camera is facing the ceiling from the inside of a bin holding his belt and other miscellaneous possessions as they are x-rayed. The video opens with Tyner chatting with someone off camera and placing possessions in the bin. The viewer then sees the bin enter the x-ray machine before the screen goes completely dark and the bin emerges on the other side. The bin is eventually picked up and carried over to a secondary screening area where the viewer can hear, but not see, the remainder of Tyner's interaction with TSA representatives. Tyner is in line to be screened by a metal detector, but he is asked by a TSA Officer to go through a whole body imager. At this point Tyner is away from the camera, but when he and his possessions are moved to a secondary screening area the conversation makes it clear he has refused. When the officer describes the pat down Tyner says, "If you touch my junk I will have you arrested."<sup>45</sup> At this point the officer informs Tyner that he (the officer) will need to get a supervisor. The supervisor informs Tyner that he (Tyner) will need to complete the screening, which now must include a pat down. In the video Tyner asserts that he will go through the metal detector like other people are doing but he will not receive either a pat down or the imaging. A manager for TSA gives Tyner an ultimatum—he can cooperate with the pat down or he can be escorted out of the airport. Tyner chooses the latter, at one point insisting that only his wife and his doctor can touch him where TSA is required to touch him.<sup>46</sup>

There are three prominent themes evident in comments about Tyner's video: sexualized anxiety over TSA touching, antigovernment sentiment, and vitriolic comments aimed at TSA employees. First, there is a persistent concern that contact between TSA

and the public constitutes a sexualized encounter. For example, in a particularly vulgar post SonicYouth5469 writes:

I love how in any other circumstance this would be fucking illegal. It's arguably molestation. What if someone has been molested as a child? They have to fucking relive this shit? Or the other choice is be scanned nakedly and have some creep rub one out to them (which has happened already). But I guess it's legal when the gov't does it they are above the law. Pretty soon in order to leave yr house u will have to strip searched.<sup>47</sup>

Likewise, GoldeneyePwner focuses on the pat down as molestation, keying in on the need for a supervisor, “‘Actually we’re going to have a supervisor here because of your statement’ ... so I can molest you.”<sup>48</sup> On one hand, any touch by the State is by definition inappropriate, and on the other hand *dangerous* bodies should be touched. There is an obsession with touching, more than any other TSA practice. As Xoxonunuxoxo writes, “‘feeling up someone who isn't a terrorist is... i mean they scared teh crap out of a little girl before.”<sup>49</sup> TSA detractors continue to worry that TSA’s contact with them constitutes a sexualized encounter. The articulation of the video to commenters is productive of vitriolic comments and persistent worries about the State’s contact with bodies.

Second, antigovernment and anti-TSA discourses are the predominant responses to Tyner’s videos. These comments speak to a perceived loss of democratic values and a new fascism in the United States—often drawing on crude and vulgar analogies with the German Third Reich. Examples of these claims include NaturalGroundation’s clear antipathy for authority, “‘Security out weighs alot of things.’ Like your Free liberty. You will bend over and take it and you will like it if you want to fly.”<sup>50</sup> Another commenter, sinand99 writes, “‘Fascism finally arrived to USA. Nice to see america is slowly collapsing. Enjoy your nazi government, suckers :)’”<sup>51</sup>

Posters also discuss the legality of TSA action at checkpoints. In *The Week*, commenter bnm73 writes:

A person does not give up their rights to be free of unwanted sexual touching simply because they buy a plane ticket. A person does not give up the right to keep their sex organs private just because they buy a plane ticket. Most people can deal with a certain degree of intrusiveness, but the right of a person to keep their genitals to themselves is sacrosanct. How do you think any of the founding fathers would react to having a stranger say they had to grope them?<sup>52</sup>

Similarly, in a *Wired* article Luke writes, “It would seem TSA’s stance is ‘let us take naked pics of you... or at least just feel you up a little.’ It is DISGUSTING. The government has no right to do this... in fact, the government is supposed to protect us from agencies violating our personal rights like this.”<sup>53</sup> These comments are evidence of continued anxiety over the State’s practices of touching and scanning bodies of citizens at security checkpoints.

Online comments about Tyner’s video reiterated similar antigovernment affect that many anti-TSA posters express. For example, PACRAT writes: “Our rights are being taken away every day, that’s Obamas agenda. Israelis have far the best security in the world, but don;t expect the Feds to change this policy, because they don’t want to offend Obama’s friends. Who are these gropers anyway? Pilots have already weighed in, and how are the Aiirlines going to handle this invasion of privacy?”<sup>54</sup> AntiObama sentiment is common, especially because of increased use of whole body imagers and enhanced pat downs following an unsuccessful attempt to detonate an underwear bomb on a flight in December of 2009. These discussions are typical of the second theme that underscores posters’ worries about TSA’s role in undermining freedom in the United States.

Finally, posters make misogynist comments about female TSA employees. Bloodguzzler writes “Wouldn't you just love to hear that whore say that to Ben Franklin's



face? He said so himself that as Americans you are to never give up your rights under any circumstance.”<sup>55</sup> The need to denigrate the officer’s authority by sexualizing her, calling her a “whore,” engages in a gender politics that delegitimizes her presence and the authority of TSA. Dehumanizing TSA officers is not unusual. The bodies of TSA employees serve as vulnerable targets for hostility. For example, kellerbier2 writes “Who is worse? the slaves doing the pat downs? or the slaves submitting to pat downs?” Positioning both passengers and TSA employees as slaves in a historically passive and submissive role dehumanizes them. There are numerous examples of such comments. Norm writes, “Let’s face it. TSA is manned by people with little training, no experience and at minimum wage.”<sup>56</sup> It is not uncommon to see comments that attack the training, experience, wages, and self worth of TSA employees. Even in a post aimed at attacking President Obama, Canuck writes, “Yes, TSA employees are the vile beings who do his dirty work, but he is ultimately responsible for every assault.”<sup>57</sup> Often TSA employees are reduced to caricatures; commenter SteelRat writes:

My idea is that the TSA should hire only ugly, overweight men and castrate all of them. Then, no matter how you look, you know for a fact that you look better naked than any of the TSA Eunuchs who are looking at you.<sup>58</sup>

Comments like this continue to read sexuality into encounters with TSA—paradoxically seeking to remove sexuality from the very encounters with TSA that the commenter is sexualizing. Contact between TSA and the public is not sexualized in any *a priori* sense. TSA’s contact with bodies at checkpoints is not manifestly sexual; it is posters who may sexualize pat downs. The sexual violence online commenters desire to perform on the bodies of TSA officers demonstrates an overwhelming preoccupation with sexual anxieties.

TSA attempted to clarify what happened in Tyner's video and did so in a way that demonstrates the disjuncture between TSA and its detractors. TSA emphasized that individuals may always opt-out of AIT scans (whole body imaging), but if they do so they will be subject to another screening method, i.e., a pat down: "Obviously a passenger can't completely opt out of all screening if they opt out of AIT. That would not make good security sense."<sup>59</sup> TSA responds to some of the issues Tyner raised once he was pulled out of the line, but they never address Tyner's request to simply go through the metal detector. Even if it makes good security sense not to let passengers dictate the circumstances under which they are screened, TSA's explanation of Tyner's encounter remains part of TSA's policy of responding to issues, not to people. This impersonal approach and policy focus makes policy sense, but often emboldens its critics. Evidence of this can be found in the antagonistic tone of responses posted to TSA's response to Tyner's video. This antagonism suggests that current communicative patterns are unlikely to produce alternative politics for TSA and its critics.

For example, an anonymous commenter attacks alleged weak points in TSA security:

Does it make good security sense that a majority of the cargo in the cargo hold of passenger carrying aircraft has not been screened? Does it make good security sense that thousands of airport workers don't receive any sort of screening? Does it make good security sense that pilots are put through these screenings but TSA workers are not? Why is the TSA suddenly hung up on what makes good security sense? It doesn't seem to have mattered much thus far.<sup>60</sup>

In another comment Ayn R. Key described screening choices as either a "nude scan or aggressive groping."<sup>61</sup> Another anonymous person expresses a similar tone: "With all due respect, having your genitals probed and fondled is punitive. TSA agents who perform this procedure should be arrested, convicted and registered as sex offenders."<sup>62</sup>

The website Know Your Meme, a warehouse for internet culture, curates Tyner's experience with TSA under the titles John Tyner, "Don't Touch My Junk," and "TSA Gate Rape." "Don't Touch My Junk" became a rallying cry for TSA critics who supported Tyner's resistance to the agency. Although the change was subtle, when disseminated the title became more repeated than any other part of the video. Moreover, when examining the comments made about the video both on YouTube and other sites, the video articulated with other fears about TSA, the government, President Obama, and fears of fascism and Nazism that made the video a locus of collective phobias about governmental occupation. The video swarmed through networks articulating with bodies, histories and beliefs, and people who viewed it disseminated messages expressing their fears of being touched by the State, their fear of the government, and their contempt for TSA employees. Materially, the articulation of texts to bodies underscore a relationship to rhetoric beyond symbolic content. At this symbolic-material relationship these texts are invoking identities to act.

### *And Those Who Fly?*

One of the common threads running through the sites responding to the Tait and Tyner videos are explicit threats that if a TSA employee were to ever pat the commenter down they would place the officer under a citizen's arrest or physically assault them. Assaults against TSA employees are rare, and when they do occur they are the result of lost tempers rather than planned resistance.<sup>63</sup> Many who comment claim they will refuse to fly as long as TSA is present in airports. These refusals to fly, a lack of citizen arrest, and very few actual assaults on TSA all suggest that many people commenting on these

stories may either be nonflyers or their online bravado is just that. By contrast, a less publicized website devoted to frequent fliers includes a robust discussion of both videos, hosts over 55,000 posts on issues of security and borders, and features strident criticism of TSA. Yet, its tone is less virulent, less antigovernment, and tempered by practical experience with TSA.<sup>64</sup> Although those who post often challenge TSA's procedures, it seems their frequent travel moderates their anti-TSA affect.

Regarding Tait's video, commenters at flyertalk.com initially responded as if TSA had removed the boy's shirt and then conducted the search. However, over the course of their discussion, lasting 151 comments and more than a month, the conversation shifted to finally acknowledge the boy's father removed the shirt. The conversation then bifurcated into two primary topics: a discussion of TSA's correction of its initial story that the child set off the walk through metal detector, and a discussion of whether the child's genitals were touched.

Discussions of the change in TSA's story shows a distrust of TSA as a government agency and contempt for TSA employees, colloquially referred to as 'smurfs' on the forum (a reference to the 1980s children's cartoon featuring blue-hued protagonists). However, even among self-identified libertarians on the site, strident antigovernment rhetoric and Nazi references are rare. Their distrust of TSA seems weathered by experience. For example, commenter txus chides TSA for initially claiming the boy set off the metal detector and speculates TSA will never correct its blog.<sup>65</sup> Lurker1999 writes, "I love the body language of the 3 smurfs looming over the child and clearly posturing to intimidate the adult." Comments like this are common on *FlyerTalk*; posts that routinely dissect almost every aspect of the video, attempting to pinpoint

TSA's failures. Although some of the criticism ventures into the abusive, dehumanizing posts seen on other sites are rare on *FlyerTalk*.

Although discussions of TSA actions elicited some disagreement, there was near unanimous animosity towards the patting down of children. This discussion supports the ongoing concern about vulnerable bodies in checkpoints. MKEBound's rhetorical question summarizes such affect, "Can you clearly answer the following question: If a child under the age of 12 is selected for a pat down for any reason does the TSA screener pat down/touch/brush their hand over the genital area?"<sup>66</sup> Even when blame for the events shifts from TSA to the parents, the events are constructed as a violation of the child's vulnerable body. VonS writes, "Only a sick parent would want their child to experience being molested. You have out done yourself with this comment."<sup>67</sup> Blaming the parent is common. Perceived harm to children evokes rage from commenters on *FlyerTalk*. Comments about Tait's video on *FlyerTalk* point to more moderate responses regarding alleged TSA malpractice; this is also true for Tyner's video.

Responses on *FlyerTalk* to the Tyner video were more vitriolic than were responses to Tait's, though still less so than the other sites I surveyed. Some comments referred to the Third Reich and expressed vitriolic antipathy to TSA. For example, MajorJim writes, "I kept hearing a common theme from the TSA workers, along the lines that they were allowed to do this, and just following orders. I seem to recall the 'just following orders' defense did not work too well at the Nuremburg Trials."<sup>68</sup> Despite that tone, the over 400 comments about Tyner's video focused primarily on praise for Tyner's ability to remain calm in the video—he was celebrated in the forum but rarely to the same degree elsewhere. *FlyerTalk* applauded Tyner's willingness to opt out of the system

altogether, a choice that many on the website simply could not make. The theme on *FlyerTalk* was also much more positive than the other sites I studied, celebrating Tyner instead of engaging in the abrasive personal attacks on TSA employees.

One of the aims of this chapter has been to track electronic resistance to TSA. Although there is certainly an argument that not flying is a form of anticapital resistance, part of what makes videos of resistance to TSA so popular is they articulate with the desire to perform resistance of TSA at security checkpoints. *FlyerTalk* discussion of tactics for resistance and their legal consequences offers an online community where resistance can be expressed. When user Boggie Dog writes sarcastically that “TSA is surely winning the hearts and minds of the public” it speaks to a serious desire for resistance.<sup>69</sup>

#### *Implications of Online Resistance to TSA*

One of the explicit aims of this study is to track the movement of discourse from encounters in airports to their capture on recording devices, to their dissemination across the public screen. However, with the advent of online commenting and the public screen, researchers have the advantage of accessing reactions to conversations that we otherwise may not see or hear. The themes of these posts I have examined critically are evidence of how these videos articulate with particularly strident antigovernment affect. By way of concluding this chapter I will draw out several implications.

An obvious drawback of studying online discourse is the inability to verify the veracity of posted comments. A pervasive phenomenon among internet commenters are individuals who purposefully post provocative material to offend and derail online

conversation (known as trolling).<sup>70</sup> Regardless of their provocative intent, trolling posts exist in the material world and articulate to other discussions about TSA. Moreover, the repetition in comments articulated to these videos suggests common anxieties about the State and the body, anxieties that materialize in airports. Dismissing online comments on the public screen because of the presence of trolls ignores the presence of hyperbolic provocateurs in the public sphere. Even the most outlandish comments are material articulations of discourse to these videos and other videos like them.

The helplessness of resisting TSA is underscored by the fact that these conversations occur online, isolated and away from airports. Although the videos do originate in airports and show fliers resisting TSA's directives, embodied protests of TSA activities have been slow to materialize and have had little effectiveness.<sup>71</sup> One of the cogent elements of online commentary is that online forums provide privileges one does not have in airports: time and more degrees of freedom of expression. Flying is already a privileged activity that requires access to wealth, mobility, and leisure. Making security procedures and concerns an issue to write about online requires internet access, and the leisure time and freedom to engage in such discussions. For all of the posts about fascism and government oppression, a relatively few have the privileges and rights that allow for the resistive discourse discussed this chapter.

Resistance, especially vitriolic resistance, is easier to mobilize in places like YouTube than it is in airports. TSA often cites statistics on consumer satisfaction with their screening techniques.<sup>72</sup> When an incident occurs in an airport, TSA clarifies procedure and carries on. This strategy works because the bulk of online resistance to

TSA is predicated on discourse that would not merit official response; it is not a credible challenge to administrative logic.

My aim here is not to dismiss anti-TSA forces or to ask that they use mainstream reason to critique TSA. In fact, I am in favor of creative modes of resistance for the ways it can provoke State forms to respond. That said, current modes of resisting—especially those critiqued in this chapter—have been largely unproductive. If communication can play a role mitigating the conflicts between TSA and its critics, both TSA and its detractors might change how they do and do not communicate if they wish to alter their current communicative status quo (assuming TSA would desire any such change). There are obviously some who would refuse any productive communication with TSA. Those who do not fly or who think TSA is an escalation of American fascism will likely not be persuaded that TSA has merit. Likewise, the logic of security on which TSA is built will likely not be modified or erased anytime soon. Given the disconnect between TSA and those who post anti-TSA comments online, there are at least six ways current anti-TSA messages are undermining efforts to critique the agency. Although my intention is certainly not to discipline free speech or rhetorical practices, my commitment to being critical of *de facto* surveillance is at odds with the reactive nature of anti-TSA discourse.

First, many TSA critics argue for privatization as a solution to TSA but neglect any explanation of why corporate surveillance is preferred to State surveillance. Given the anxiety in responses to being seen and touched, especially children's bodies, it is unclear why corporate actors adhering to the logic of late modern capitalism would eliminate these fears. A prominent theme of TSA critiques is a specifically antigovernment, antibig brother sentiment. As I discuss in Chapter III, concern over



surveillance is not unfounded. Even in places where TSA is using private companies to perform security screenings they use the same procedures as TSA. Security has only gotten more stringent and it is unlikely that most consumers or the federal government would want to relax security restrictions any time soon.

Second, many critics assert that TSA is unconstitutional despite a number of court rulings affirming the constitutionality of TSA's procedures—most recently by the United States Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals.<sup>73</sup> While there are legal challenges underway, and legal challenges represent the proper venue for such claims, telling TSA it is unconstitutional when the Supreme Court has ruled otherwise is an untenable approach. Knowing your legal rights is absolutely crucial, but knowing them as the law defines them is more important than how you think the law ought to define them.

Third, those who call *everything* TSA does “security theater” ignore the agency's ability to cope with real threats and post-9/11 innovations. Since 9/11, airport security has undergone a massive change in its techniques for securing our air transportation infrastructure. TSA is not an impenetrable wall of security and critics have taken to calling its efforts security theater to claim it is more about creating the appearance of security than actual security. That said, some techniques that have been added post-9/11 may offer more advantages to the screening process. That does not make them inherently good, but it does mean critics need to be more nuanced than to claim all their efforts are security theater. I offer a more extended critique of security theater in Chapter V.

Fourth, both critics and TSA must cope with the fact that threats innovate, thus children, the elderly, the disabled, and so forth can be terrorists. The people who constitute threats, and the means by which threats are brought to airports and aircraft are

malleable. This is why profiling, aside from its unconstitutionality, is ineffective.

Moreover, as I discussed earlier in this chapter, many of the calls for profiling emerge from racist imaginations.

Fifth, at some point the number of weapons routinely found at checkpoints ought to be addressed. Threats persist and TSA finds an alarming number of handguns at security checkpoints. Although the strange items they find attract the most attention, the number of weapons they find as a matter of course warrants attention. Many critics focus their efforts solely on terrorism, but there are other potential threats to air travel. Although there is an argument to be made that these threats to security can be found without enhanced pat downs and whole body imaging technology, or without TSA altogether, many material forces are driving the desire to arm the friendly skies.

A polarized debate driven by the issues I have identified above is unproductive. Those who argue that TSA is “proudly molesting grandma’s & little kids since super-lez napolatino took office” delegitimize resistance. Aside from it being an example of a personal attack and hate speech,<sup>74</sup> I point to this tweet in particular because of the continued, and perplexing, argument that TSA is associated somehow with advancing a homosexual and pedophilial agenda.<sup>75</sup> Critics of TSA would be more productive if they were to engage the agency in less hostile, personal, and hyperbolic ways.

Our bodies are one of the fundamental anxieties TSA procedures appear to be intensifying. A constant obsession in the threads I studied was with the surveillance of and contact with the body. Investment in the security of the body as a coherent and individual entity that must remain unmolested was nearly unquestioned. Moreover, when legitimate reasons to disturb the sanctity of one’s body are suggested, commenters

respond forcefully by calling them TSA apologists and plants. The central conflict between TSA and its critics surrounds not only investment in the Western concept of the body and subject, but anxiety over the grounds upon which the body and subject are constituted and controlled.

### *Conclusion*

In this chapter I have explored the dissemination of videos of TSA checkpoints as they articulate to online discussion boards and produce rhetorics resistive to TSA. In doing so I have argued for replacing the concept of viral videos with the concept haecceity, arguing that these videos move like swarms containing pieces of material discourse that articulate to other discourses in different ways as they are disseminated. In my analysis I have shown how two videos—a popular video of a child being searched without his shirt on and a video of a traveler refusing to be patted down—moved across the public screen articulating with affect that ultimately reveal a desire to read encounters with TSA as fascist and as sexualized.

The ability for these videos to articulate with viewer discourses about an (in)security assemblage demonstrates their material function. Pieces of discourse get disseminated and become evidence for what the viewer desires in order to frame their own resistive narratives about TSA. These videos function as machines that connect with the desires of the viewers even when such connections alter what the video's curators claim the videos mean. These videos, these haecceities, swarm through an assemblage articulating with desires and flowing in creative ways that generate resistance to TSA, ways that are problematic for both TSA and its critics.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> TheJimmyAndEricShow, "TSA Speedo Protestor," YouTube video, November 23, 2010, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9sL3uMWujmw> (accessed December 14, 2010).
- <sup>2</sup> ABC, "Chaffetz Wants Ban on Airport Whole Body Imaging," *ABC 4 News* (Salt Lake City), April 22, 2009, <http://www.abc4.com/content/news/slc/story/Chaffetz-wants-ban-on-airport-whole-body-imaging/9eQFe4o-Uka9A-D5-RCWxg.csp> (accessed May 5, 2010).
- <sup>3</sup> Luke\_Tait, "Young Boy Strip Searched by TSA (New link to TSA lies interview)," YouTube Video, November 19, 2010, [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XSQTz1bccL4&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XSQTz1bccL4&feature=player_embedded) (accessed October 5, 2012).
- <sup>4</sup> xcannabiscom, "Prison Style Strip Search of a 7 Year Old Boy at SLC International Airport," YouTube Video, November 23, 2010, [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2phv9Zcce8&feature=watch\\_response](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2phv9Zcce8&feature=watch_response) (accessed December 14, 2010).
- <sup>5</sup> "Response to 'Young Boy Strip Searched by TSA,'" *The TSA Blog*, November 22, 2010, <http://blog.tsa.gov/2010/11/response-to-young-boy-strip-searched-by.html> (accessed December 14, 2010).
- <sup>6</sup> Nick Salvato, "Out of Hand: You Tube Amateurs and Professionals," *TDR: The Drama Review* 53, no. 2 (2009): 4.
- <sup>7</sup> Lucas Hilderbrand, "YouTube: Where Cultural Memory and Copyright Converge," *Film Quarterly* 61, no 1 (2009): 49.
- <sup>8</sup> Kristen English, Kaye D. Sweetser, and Monica Ancu, "YouTube-ification of Political Talk: An Examination of Persuasion Appeals in Viral Video," *American Behavioral Scientist* 55, no. 6 (2011): 733.
- <sup>9</sup> English et al., "YouTube-ification of Political Talk: An Examination of Persuasion Appeals in Viral Video," 734-735.
- <sup>10</sup> Patrick Vonderau, "Circuitry in Motion: Rhetoric(al) Moves in Youtube's Archive," *Enculturation* 8 (2010): 1.
- <sup>11</sup> Patrick Vonderau, "Circuitry in Motion: Rhetoric(al) Moves in Youtube's Archive."
- <sup>12</sup> Lucas Hilderbrand, "YouTube: Where Cultural Memory and Copyright Converge," 54.

- <sup>13</sup> Lucas Hilderbrand, "YouTube: Where Cultural Memory and Copyright Converge," 49.
- <sup>14</sup> Lucas Hilderbrand, "YouTube: Where Cultural Memory and Copyright Converge," 48.
- <sup>15</sup> Dylan Wolfe, "The Video Rhizome: Taking Technology Seriously in *The Meatrix*," *Environmental Communication* 3, no. 2 (2009): 320.
- <sup>16</sup> Dylan Wolfe, "The Video Rhizome: Taking Technology Seriously in *The Meatrix*," 320.
- <sup>17</sup> Dylan Wolfe, "The Video Rhizome: Taking Technology Seriously in *The Meatrix*," 321.
- <sup>18</sup> Dylan Wolfe, "The Video Rhizome: Taking Technology Seriously in *The Meatrix*," 321.
- <sup>19</sup> Dylan Wolfe, "The Video Rhizome: Taking Technology Seriously in *The Meatrix*," 320.
- <sup>20</sup> Mark Bonta and John Protevi, *Deleuze and Geophilosophy: A Guide and Glossary* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 94.
- <sup>21</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guatarri, *A Thousand Plateaus* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 261.
- <sup>22</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guatarri, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 512.
- <sup>23</sup> As Russell and I argue in our study of men who intentionally contract HIV/AIDS in San Francisco, State HIV prevention public health campaigns ignore ways of living that are outside of state sanctioned reason. These antistate desires are particularly exigent for agencies who must, as part of their mission, respond to critics who refuse to meet the State on the same plane of rationality. See Nicholas Russell and George F. McHendry, Jr., "Dangerous Desires: The Limits of Argumentative Reason in Public HIV/AIDS Health Campaigns." In Robert C. Rowland *Reasoned Argument and Social Change: Selected Papers from the 17<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference on Argumentation* (2011), 644.
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## CHAPTER V

### THE AIRPORT AS REPERTOIRE AND MY BECOMING- RHETORICIAN

#### *Act II: The Repertoire*

“The problem of writing: in order to designate something exactly, anexact expressions are utterly unavoidable. Not at all because it is a necessary step, or because one can only advance by approximations: anexactitude is in no way an approximation; on the contrary, it is the exact passage of that which is under way.” Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari<sup>1</sup>

“The security guard asked me for like 80 minutes ‘Are you who you say you are?’ and finally he writes liar on the back of my hand and lets me pass.” *The Onion*<sup>2</sup>

In September of 2011 I had exhausted all of my options for on-site research with TSA and at Salt Lake City International Airport. In a month, I would again travel through SLC and undergo TSA security procedures. My access to the airport is granted as consumer, not as a researcher. TSA denied permission for me to observe or interact at screening checkpoints; my observations posed a security risk. TSA’s official channels for public inquiries could barely process my request. My attempts were redirected to contacts for media interviews or, ironically, to an office that handles whistleblower calls from employees. Each of my attempts was foreign to TSA. It took nearly two months to locate someone at TSA who could give me a response to my request. With limited justification,

TSA said it would be impossible for me to conduct participant-observation research. In hindsight, my naiveté is obvious. However, TSA suggested I contact the administrators at my local airport to see if they were willing to let me conduct parts of my study outside of checkpoints. I confidently called them and attempted to set up a meeting. Instead, I was asked to email a proposal. In my stomach, I knew I was already walking down a dead end. I translated my rhetorical and performative methods into bullet points and emphasized my willingness to offer executive summaries and presentations of my work for the airport as *gratis* consulting work. I would spend the next three weeks attempting to gain access to the airport.

The airport initially responded negatively, claiming that my work would be too invasive and would disrupt their customers' experience. Certainly any form of research involving contact between researcher and informant can be construed as invasive, so I was not surprised by their concerns. I replied that there were a number of ways I could shorten the length of my study or the intensity of my study to accommodate their concerns. I suggested once more a face-to-face meeting. The last reply I received wished me luck, but confirmed they could not assist me, which eliminated the possibilities for my initial research design; I began formulating alternatives.

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In Mid-November 2011, I arrived at the airport for my flight to New Orleans for the annual meeting of the National Communication Association. As I went through security, I paid attention to the security screening process, opting out of the whole body imager and requesting a pat down. I made sure to attend to the affect of every word, every touch, and every emotion. After leaving the screening, I sat through a now familiar

ritual that I have completed every time I go through airport security since 2009; I took out a small tablet and began to write notes about my experience. These notes have become an important resource.

After finishing my notes, I sat at the gate and continued rereading Kafka's *The Trial*.<sup>3</sup> I read it partly for the irony, partly out of anger, and partly to appreciate a more ridiculous regime of governmentality than I was encountering. I even joked on Twitter about reading Kafka in airports. A friend replied with a link to the satirical publication *The Onion*'s story, "Prague's Franz Kafka International Named World's Most Alienating Airport," lampooning annual lists of the most delayed airports.<sup>4</sup>

In the archives of airport security are complex articulations that are more diverse than public narratives about airports. I move to the repertoire with an explicit aim of holding on to the archive's complexity, even pulling the archive into the repertoire when possible. This chapter chronicles my efforts to maneuver through airport spaces, using my own body as an affective membrane for registering and recording airport security practices. In doing so, I explored my own journals and notes on flying, on security, and on TSA to explore checkpoints as affective, embodied, material-rhetorical spaces.

### *The Repertoire*

In this chapter, my dissertation shifts focus to the embodied, often fleeting, encounters between bodies and airport security regimes. As Diana Taylor explains, the repertoire "enacts embodied memory, performances, gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing."<sup>5</sup> These embodied acts enact rhetoric through bodies and in spaces. They complicate the act of archiving because of their fleeting nature. However, the repertoire is

not closed off from the archive, “the moves of the repertoire [are] enacted for the archive. The scenario functions as the frame that enables the transfer from the repertoire to the archive.”<sup>6</sup> That is, in everyday life our bodies are affected and called to act. These acts, ways of being, performing, and becoming, are at times captured by archives that record, digitize, and save them for posterity. Act I of this project is concerned with moving across archival texts to map the affects of an airport (in)security assemblage; this second act recovers a repertoire of performances in airports. It functions as an “act of transfer” for my own performances in airports by situating them in the archival pages of this project. Carefully transferred from enacted performance to journal entries to the pages that follow, everyday performances of airport security retain their locations in the repertoire, and at the same time enrich my ability to theorize the regimes of (in)security present in airport spaces.

### *Introduction*

George: “How does one, ethically, or at all, go about studying that which refuses to even open a small crevice for analysis?”

Sean: “Research in an ‘opposed environment’... aka espionage”

This tongue in cheek response via Twitter between Professor Sean Lawson and myself lays bare the central perils of a research agenda that probes even the most public parts of a State machine. This chapter analyzes ethical dilemmas I confronted as I set out with rhetorical field methods on performance-based embodied research encounters in airports. In the face of the constraints on my research design, I explore the tensions encountered when researching and participating in a State machine that denied me access as a *researcher* but that welcomed me as a *customer*.

This chapter looks at the impossibility of politics established in Chapter III and the stalled politics in Chapter IV and asks: What is the potential for political resistance via material rhetoric through embodied research in airport checkpoints? I enter the State-form under the sign of *customer*, capital in hand, and also more covertly under the sign of *researcher*. In the first half of this chapter I look at the overlap of rhetoric and performance to suggest methods for researching airport security. The second half of this chapter is devoted to critiques of travel journals, spaces, and experiences from three years of travels through airports under the sign of passenger.

My analysis of the production of (in)security in airport spaces is derived from my own field notes taken over three years while traveling for personal and professional reasons. Using performance as an embodied research methodology, this work represents a portion of the research I envisioned initially. I analyze the layers of performed security using my own body to register the affective modes of being touched by the State. I analyze these encounters looking for ways to resist the striated spaces of airport security checkpoints. Over the course of writing these journals I have experienced routine trips through metal detectors, light pat downs, trips through both types of whole body imagers that TSA uses, and enhanced pat downs prompted by my refusal to use whole body imagers. While attending to my own experience of these processes, I have written extensively about them.

Two factors have increased TSA's scrutiny of passenger's bodies, including the use of enhanced pat downs. First, in response to the so-called underwear bomber in December 2010, TSA instituted a new pat down procedure that increases the degree of physical contact with the bodies of passengers.<sup>7</sup> Travelers are subjected to three possible

screening methods: whole-body imagers, metal detectors, and a hands-on pat down. Any traveler selected for the whole body imager who refuses is subjected to an enhanced pat down, which consists in a TSA agent using palms and fingers to pat and touch areas of a passenger's body to check for concealed weapons.<sup>8</sup> These enhanced pat downs require agents to feel up and down arms and legs, back and chest, and inside and outside a passenger's thighs. As Jeffrey Goldberg of *The Atlantic* reports, a TSA agent explains, "We have to search up your thighs and between your legs until we meet resistance." Resistance in the case of a male passenger is their "testicles,"<sup>9</sup> leading some, including the Massachusetts ACLU, to cry foul: "To call it a pat-down is a euphemism."<sup>10</sup>

Second, the implementation of more invasive pat downs and the increased use of whole body imagers (WBI) produced a public outcry during the fall of 2010. As the new pat down procedures went into place and some passengers refused the WBI scans, stories of less than professional pat downs began to surface on the internet. A TSA official gave a passenger such a rigorous pat down that the passenger's urostomy bag broke and soaked the traveler in urine.<sup>11</sup> Such stories have gained notoriety, perhaps, because of TSA's refusal to publically document their effectiveness, i.e., attacks that have been thwarted at checkpoints. Absence of attacks on its own cannot account as evidence of TSA effectiveness.

Enhanced hands-on procedures and high profile gaffs on the part of TSA have begun to produce resistance to TSA's procedures. I argue that the space of airport checkpoints offers the potential for performative acts of resistance, but that acts of security hinder resistive politics. Practices of security and resistance become performative modes (security-performative and resistance-performative) that take on a

sense of *poesis*. They produce a secured airport and a defiant public. Bodies that TSA “secures” produce affective states of security and anxiety. They remind travelers that living in a globalized world includes fear of the next terrorist strike.

This chapter proceeds in four sections: First, I draw on research in rhetoric and performance studies to outline a way of navigating airports as a researcher. Second, I critique notions of theatricality in discussions of airport security and generate concepts of “security-performative” and “resistance-performative” to address the political tensions present in airports. Third, I turn to my own passage through airport spaces to consider security and resistance as performance in airports. Finally, I consider the difficulty of resistance in airport spaces and the implications of those difficulties. I argue that elements of rhetorical field methods, especially embodied forms of rhetorical criticism and the performed and affective nature of airport (in)security rhetoric, provide a means to study airport security in a restricted environment.

### *Performing Rhetorical Field Methods*

This chapter grounds itself in the tradition of performance studies and sees in everyday, cultural performances the potential for radical reconfigurations of what the body can do within, against, and beyond a given set of spatial constraints. It rejects the notion that the doing of everyday life is simply banal. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari contend that things can always be otherwise, “one’s potential becoming... [depends on] the extent that one deviates from the model.”<sup>12</sup> The performance of society, its rituals, its movements, its conventions, require striated space. We construct this world as we go but do so in intelligible and (re)producible ways (*poesis*).<sup>13</sup> This view of space is informed by



the work of Deleuze and Guattari, but relies on the arc of performance studies outlined by Dwight Conquergood in “Ethnography, Rhetoric, and Performance.” Conquergood argues that performance studies is grounded in three views of performance, “This critical genealogy can be traced from performance as *mimesis* to *poesis* to *kinesis*, performance as imitation, construction, [and] dynamism.”<sup>14</sup> Here *mimesis* refers to performance as “faking, not making,” *poesis* as “making not faking,” and *kinesis* as “breaking and remaking.”<sup>15</sup> Refusing the turn to performance as mimetic inauthenticity is crucial to a view of performance studies as material in the making, breaking, and remaking of society.

With attention to *poesis* and *kinesis*, this chapter contends that resistive action produces material accomplishments in the world. Resistance can make immanent moments of living otherwise. In a regime of *poesis*, culture does not precede our enactment of social rituals, they become at one and the same time. Gaps in hegemonic forces may actually be part of hegemonic power flows that construct negotiated class relations through routines of acquiescence and resistance. For example, while many TSA detractors consider opting out of whole body imagers a form of resistance, they are still consenting to the authority of TSA. Dwight Conquergood, following Homi Bhabha, argues that *kinesis* is a dynamic “breaking and remaking” that allows for intervention, struggle, and change in society.<sup>16</sup> I want to be careful here; I am not casting resistive *poesis* as fake resistance and falling back onto the terrain of *mimesis*. Performances of resistance activate modes of *poesis* that relieve social tension by giving voice to difference.

The structures of airport security allow for certain types of resistance that work within the overall airport security regime. An example of this is allowing passengers to

opt-out of whole body imagers but requiring them instead to receive pat downs. This allows angst against TSA in checkpoints to be relieved before tensions routinely become unbearable and travelers refuse to cooperate. Without such preestablished relief valves, it is entirely possible that more instances of noncompliance with TSA directives might occur. However, by framing security procedures with the discourse of choice, TSA can negotiate compliance more readily as part of the *poesis* of airport (in)security.

Performances, by their very nature, can be difficult to track and critique. They are ephemeral rhetorics that may escape recording and transcription. Diana Taylor's *The Archive and the Repertoire* argues that the rift between the archive and the repertoire "does not lie between the written and spoken word, but between the *archive* of supposedly enduring materials (i.e., texts, documents, buildings, bones) and the so-called ephemeral *repertoire* of embodied practice/knowledge (i.e., spoken language, dance, sports, ritual)."<sup>17</sup> The archive takes the position of a preferred epistemological source while the repertoire "enacts embodied memory: performances, gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing—in short, all those acts usually thought of as ephemeral, nonreproducible knowledge."<sup>18</sup> This chapter breaks from the archive to focus on the ephemeral, i.e., experiences, imaginings, and fantasies from my encounters with airport security checkpoints. My aim is to implicate my body and the bodies of others as a site of struggle.

Ann Laura Stoler's *Along the Archival Grain* can be read as an ethnography of an archive that recognizes "archiving-as-process rather than archives-as-things. Most importantly, it looks at archives as condensed sites of epistemological and political anxiety rather than as skewed and biased sources."<sup>19</sup> She reads along the grain trying to

open the archive to see what is there beyond the top-down structure of the archive as colonizer. In the same way, I want to avoid being dominated either by the logic of TSA or by the many resistive movements that have emerged in response to TSA's expanding reach. I am actively seeking to cultivate *minor-histories* that disrupt desires for security and freedom and that complicate the way those desires have been cast as foes in the space of airport checkpoints. I position myself as a researcher in a liminal space between TSA and its detractors desiring to resist the touch of TSA. I find myself a clear outsider to the discourse and violence called for by TSA's detractors. Acting as *ad-hoc* archivist of the structures of feeling that dominate TSA (in)security, I am collecting minor rhetorics that speak the anxieties of our border crossings and that invite visual and tactile State inspections of our bodies. Stoler is clear: "'minor' histories should not be mistaken for trivial ones. Nor are they iconic, mere microcosms of events played out elsewhere on a larger central stage."<sup>20</sup> The means for capturing the ephemeral performative utterances in airports is complex, especially given the difficulty associated with accessing and researching airport spaces. Airports are difficult to congregate in; they are spaces of clearly defined striation, orchestrated movement, and exclusion (participation is predicated on belonging).

Rhetorical field methods, as devised by Michael K. Middleton *et al.*, "are a practical and theoretical synthesis of [critical rhetoric], performance studies, and ethnography that function as an orientation that utilizes methodological tools from (but is not bound by) these subdisciplines in order to understand 'live' rhetorics."<sup>21</sup> Although Middleton *et al.* are not the first rhetoricians to engage in fieldwork, they do offer a programmatic approach to rhetorical criticism in the field.<sup>22</sup> They argue that the

discipline has been engaged in two decades of *ad hoc* projects with too little theoretical work to suggest how rhetoricians go about working in the field. Middleton *et al.* argue this pattern is problematic because of a limited “development of central methodological and analytic commitments that inform in situ rhetorical analysis.”<sup>23</sup> Rhetoricians working in the field have yet to have sustained conversations about their assumptions. Middleton *et al.* adapt the practices of critical rhetoric, e.g., calling for critics to bring their commitments to the field, to gather artifacts for criticism, and then to depart the field to perform analyses of the rhetorics they collected.<sup>24</sup>

This project overlaps with rhetorical field methods when my own body enters airports as an instrument for collecting live rhetorics. In ongoing research, McHendry *et al.* examine the immanent, affective, and bodily dimensions of doing rhetorical field work. They argue, “Between entering a particular site of rhetorical action and efforts to analyze and report on those rhetorics, *in situ* rhetorical critics are faced with a range of situations and choices in the field that cut to the core of one’s political and intellectual commitments.”<sup>25</sup> The specific drive to get artifacts to analyze can too often overdetermine the experience of a body in the field. As a corrective, attending to affective and embodied dimensions of fieldwork can leave a researcher open to experiences and texts that cannot be studied traditionally. The trappings of consumer travel are bound to my body. Even if I desired to be free of the affective dimensions of airport (in)security, I still find comfort in the rituals of securing airports and aircraft on which I depend when I travel. These affects are complex embodied states and the notion of the body, performance, and affect require more interrogation.

*Performances of Affect and My Becoming-Rhetorician*

“This is because the [*Body without Organs*] is always swinging between the surfaces that stratify it and the plane that sets it free. If you free it with too violent an action, if you blow apart the strata without taking precautions, then instead of drawing the plane you will be killed, plunged into a black hole, or even dragged toward catastrophe.” Deleuze and Guattari<sup>26</sup>

“We set against this fascism of power active, positive lines of flight, because these lines open up desire, desire’s machines, and the organization of a social field of desire: it’s not a matter of escaping personally, from oneself, but of allowing something to escape, like bursting a pipe or a boil.” Gilles Deleuze<sup>27</sup>

Resisting TSA’s (in)security apparatus is made possible by the various becomings elicited in airport checkpoints. The ways in which airports are *secured*, and the ways current security practices *mean* for bodies, are provocative for refiguring resistance to TSA. Things could be otherwise, but not without constraints. It is not enough to be anti-TSA, to allow one’s body and politics to be defined reactively to TSA. Rhetorics draw their intensity from their capacity for affective force. The affective dimensions of performed discourses are particularly evocative. As Elena del Rio argues:

Deleuze’s understanding of the body as an assemblage of forces or affects that enter into composition with a multiplicity of other forces of affects restores to the body the dimension of intensity lost in the representational paradigm... In this sense the creative activity of bodily forces is ontologically akin to a performance... In the gestures itself and the movements of the performing body, incorporeal forces or affects become concrete expression-events that attest to the body’s powers of action and transformation.<sup>28</sup>

Yet, for del Rio and for a material rhetoric it is not about a representational politics of resistance, but about remaking bodies and spaces via alternative politics that disrupt the normative flows of power. We cannot settle for the hope of more or better representation; the need is for an immanent remaking of the material politics in any given checkpoint, or the distribution of affect in a State (in)security apparatus.

At the core of performances of airport (in)security is the *securing* of the affective states of passengers who travel. Affect is a critical concept for understanding the articulation of rhetoric, the body, and performance. However, to say that securing affect is critical does not mean that TSA is engaged in controlling the emotional states of passengers; affective work is much more nuanced. As Deleuze and Guattari contend, “On the one hand it is a machinic assemblage of bodies, of actions and passions, an intermingling of bodies reacting to one another...” meaning that the body finds itself in overlapping social formations. Del Rio refers to this as the bodies’ capacity to “affect and to be affected by other bodies.”<sup>29</sup> Del Rio argues that affect goes beyond emotionality, “Affect precedes, sets the conditions for, and outlasts a particular human expression of emotion.”<sup>30</sup> Emotionality is seen as a particular expression or range of expressions conditioned by cultural stimuli. Affect precedes that conditioning, allowing emotionality to occur—in airports it would be a range of reactions to TSA along with ensuring a larger affect about security.

The tie between body, affect, and performativity deserves attention here. Both Deleuze and del Rio stress the importance of the body to affect. Del Rio mentions performativity: “Thus, the performing body presents itself as a shock wave of affect, the expression-event that makes affect a visible and palpable materiality.”<sup>31</sup> Although the body expresses emotive capacities, the deeper performance of affective states is an actualization of a wide array of material articulations within a field of performative expression. In other words, at certain points throughout the experience of airport (in)security many different emotions are likely to be expressed. However, an assemblage of airport (in)security itself functions, in part, to generate the affective dimensions of our

ritualized performances of security assuring a bodily compulsion to participate in security even amid anxiety about what is or is not being secured.

One of the frequently used terms to describe the work of TSA is “security theater.” This term embodies a pervasive and pejorative view of performance as *mimesis*—an act of faking not making—insinuating that the work of TSA is to make travelers feel safe while ignoring actual security needs. When TSA is referred to as security theater, the suggestion is that they are putting on a show while leaving passengers unsafe. This concept ignores the affective and collective dimensions of security. I advance two different concepts, *security-performative* and *resistance-performative*, to provide contrast to security theater. These concepts are grounded in *poesis* and view airport security as constructing the world through their rituals and performative acts. I am moving beyond the staging of theatricality and of pretending to realize absolute security; security is as much about mastering the affective dimensions of flight—conditioning the ways the body prepares for and performs in flight—as it is about regulating what can and cannot be brought into airports.<sup>32</sup>

Security theater is becoming a buzzword to describe the staging of security processes that reassure the public they are safe while offering little safety. The term derives from Bruce Schneier’s *Beyond Fear: Thinking Sensibly about Security in an Uncertain World*.<sup>33</sup> Security Theater is defined as the use of some “countermeasures [that] provide the feeling of security *instead of* the reality...They’re palliative at best.” Schneier objects to security theater because it treats the problem of security threats at a surface level while ignoring causal roots. He offers examples such as the posting of National Guard troops in airports (even though their guns do not have bullets) or tamper-

resistant packaging; in either case they offer few actual security measures.<sup>34</sup> Quixotically, Schneier does recognize that security theater *may* provide *some* actual good because it allows a marketing of security that reassures a public when little can be done to counter an actual threat.<sup>35</sup>

There is a sense in which security theater takes on another meaning traced to the very notion of theatricality. As Diana Taylor argues there is a strong bias against theatricality because people want to ‘get real.’ To accept security theater as a comprehensive critique of TSA’s airport (in)security assemblage we must discount, in its entirety, the affective dimensions of airport security. Security cannot be permanently achieved; security is accomplished in part by generating an affective apparatus that articulates with bodies in spaces that regulate bodies, rituals, and cultures provisionally.

In the end we have a *poesis*, a performance (previously defined in Chapter II as the ways bodies, spaces, and identities come to be negotiated in the world) that constructs our material world.<sup>36</sup> I object to notions of security theater as simply theater and turn to performance instead—if these acts are part of a performed social field then they have the material effect of constructing contingent security that produces affects of security. To be clear, I am not arguing that we ought to welcome security precautions that have little to no material effect. However, I want to (re)map the discursive field of security theater, with the concepts *security-performative* and *resistance-performative* as my orienting thought-forms.

*Security-performative* and *resistance-performative* are doubled concepts. Their doubled-ness is not a mutual exclusion, but as Mary S. Strine argues “they might be thought of as complementary projects that interrelate dialectically, providing each other



with valuable critical perspective.”<sup>37</sup> First, the performatives of security and resistance have an edge that can produce material consequences. That is to say, the performative is, as Strine contends, “the historically situated interplay of performance’s contractual, provisional nature; its condition of social reflexivity and critique; and, its improvisational and transformational potential forms the energizing, destabilizing center of performance as a focus of study.” Strine defines the two terms:

Whereas performance encompasses a broad range of social behaviors, forms, and effects, performativity refers more specifically to the complexities of discursive practices, to the often unconscious investments and desires that circulate in all discourses, and to the decisive effects that various modes of discursive action have on individual and group subjectivities and identity formations.<sup>38</sup>

*Security-performative* is a concept of “thought in action” that demands material changes come to pass in a moment of negotiating contact between two bodies in a securitized space.<sup>39</sup> It is an act of hegemonic force where desires can be felt in terms of contact and affect. *Security-performance* refers to expectations for security screenings to be everyday normalized modes of contact between the State apparatuses and members of the public. *Resistance-performative* is a radical potential for *kinesis* to transform a flow of power through a security checkpoint even if only for a fleeting moment. It can be a moment where a prohibited item is purposely concealed from TSA. *Resistance-performance* is a reactive form of outrage that reifies the very systems it opposes. We can think *resistance-performances* as programmatic reactions that demand opposition while simultaneously ordering obedience. As I argue in the next section, there is far more potential for engaging in *security-performative* than *resistance-performative* because of the differential in power present in checkpoints.

These concepts are related to one another in that one only needs security when it is being resisted. They are consubstantial concepts that call into action one another at a moment of performance. *Security-performative* is the *poesis* of TSA check points and are unstable and make *resistance-performatives* possible. My analysis in this chapter explores the affects of the rituals of TSA security procedures as captured in my own experiences at security checkpoints.

*The Politics and Poetics of Airport Surveillance*

“My body, my head, my heart, and my tongue were in training. My small acts of resistance, inspired by my hero Pancho Villa, ran up against the disciplinary machine.”<sup>40</sup>  
Diana Taylor

“*Statecraft was not opposed to the affective, but about its mastery.*”<sup>41</sup> Ann Laura Stoler

One of the first mass resistance movements against TSA after the implementation of the enhanced pat down was a “National Opt Out Day.” TSA gives every passenger the right to “opt out of enhanced screening such as advanced imaging technology” but demands that those who do opt out “receive an equivalent level of screening to include a thorough pat-down.”<sup>42</sup> The opt-out day was supposed to jam the system by having passengers commit en-mass to opt out and thus overwhelm the ability of screeners to give enhanced pat-downs to everyone. *We Won't Fly* is a (now defunct) group dedicated to raising awareness for passenger rights at TSA checkpoints. *We Won't Fly* was one of a number of groups who saw the day before the Thanksgiving holiday (a notoriously busy travel day) as a prime target for opting out. With airports already at capacity, it was the perfect time for a kind of *resistance-performative* that could rewrite the rules of security

at individual checkpoints throughout the nation—breaking and remaking the terrain upon which airport security operated. *We Won't Fly* informs passengers:

Say 'I opt out!' Tell your friends, family and community so they know how to protect themselves, too. Be prepared for delays and intimate TSA groping. At least you will avoid the risk of cornea damage and skin, breast and testicular cancer and the humiliation of a virtual strip search.<sup>43</sup>

*Slate's* William Saletan is incredulous of *We Won't Fly's* efforts lamenting “You’ll trade a fast, invisible, intangible, privacy-protected machine inspection for an unpleasant, extended grope. In effect, you’ll be telling TSA to touch your junk.”<sup>44</sup> Both *We Won't Fly* and Saletan are caught within the demands of the *security-performative* because they have already prefigured that *resistance-performances* occur within a predetermined field of two alternatives: a whole body scan or an enhanced pat-down. Although some reports claim that “National Opt Out Day” overwhelmed airports and caused TSA to revert to metal detector screenings instead of WBI’s and enhanced pat-downs,<sup>45</sup> TSA claims that all opt-outs were screened and airports experienced normal security procedures. Most passengers opted out of opting out.<sup>46</sup> Nonetheless, a loose coalition of websites is continuing to argue that one can resist TSA by choosing not to fly and, when you do fly, opting out. Websites like [flywithdignity.org](http://flywithdignity.org) and [thousandsstandingaround.org](http://thousandsstandingaround.org) catalog passenger complaints and are planning various no fly day activities in protest. These political activities continue to engage in a *security-performative* where radical alternatives (even the potential of not flying) are undermined by figuring resistance as opting out. As I argue later, however, there are ways of performing one’s self in the checkpoints that may offer flashes of *resistance-performatives*.

Several other sites of resistance target TSA as an organization and seek to lobby for change at the policy level by arguing TSA actions are immoral or unconstitutional.

Resistance along the axis of morality pursues two paths. First, Eugene Delgaudio, a representative on the Loudoun County, VA Board of Supervisors has argued that TSA's enhanced pat-downs are part of a "wide-scale homosexual agenda." He argues that because TSA does not discriminate in its hiring practices based on sexual orientation it provides the gay and lesbian community special rights that mean "the next TSA official that gives you an enhanced pat-down could be a practicing homosexual secretly getting pleasure from your submission."<sup>47</sup> Delgaudio's opposition to TSA shows a clear conflation of homosexuality and stereotypes of uncontrolled sexual desires. Moreover, his opposition to the pat downs sexualizes the encounter. His outburst is not trivial; it suggests an active tension between bodies and the State.

Another objection to TSA policy has come from children's rights advocates. These advocates argue that when TSA pats down children, they interact with them as if it were a game, a technique used by pedophiles. As Daniel Tencer at *Rawstory.com* explains, "Telling a child that they are engaging in a game is 'one of the most common ways' that sexual predators use to convince children to engage in inappropriate contact."<sup>48</sup> Further, "Children 'don't have the sophistication' to distinguish between a pat-down carried out by an airport security officer and an assault by a sexual predator."<sup>49</sup> This form of resistance may achieve partial success; TSA is reviewing the way it may screen victims of sex abuse. However, TSA indicated in response to these particular concerns that they have no plans to alter screening policies at this time.<sup>50</sup>

Concerned citizens, news outlets, and lawmakers have raised objections to TSA; however, such resistance seems to be diverse and often it is refuted directly by TSA's own blog, providing an immediate reterritorialization of the discursive terrain upon which

*security-performatives* and *resistance-performatives* are enacted. Many *resistance-performances* have reached a farcical point. Take for example 4th Amendment Wear, which sells a line of undergarments with the fourth amendment printed in metallic ink they claim is visible to TSA screeners.<sup>51</sup> Though the efficacy and legibility of the garments are unsubstantiated, this novel product line produces the kind of resistance the State apparatus desires—resistance within the logic of a *security-performative* that complies with the demands of the State. It seems impossible to imagine a *resistance-performative* given the results of opt out days, fears of a homosexual agenda, or even in the face of parents’ fears.

#### *Tacit Admissions*

From time to time TSA has moments of self-awareness that demonstrate the productivity of *security-performatives* in airports. While browsing through my twitter feed for messages about TSA I stumbled upon a picture someone had posted from Austin Bergstrom International Airport that reads “Thank You for Participating in Security.”<sup>52</sup> TSA recognizes the participatory aspects of airport security; they come in contact with cooperative and noncooperative bodies as a routine part of performing security. At General Mitchell International Airport in Milwaukee, Wisconsin—an airport I travel through frequently—a sign just past security reads, “Recombobulation Area.” This sign indicates a designated space for disoriented and discombobulated passengers to reassemble themselves before proceeding to their gates. These signs are tacit reminders about the performative and affective nature of airport security. These reminders were cues for my body as well.

When performing fieldwork, I often would alternate between compliance and opting out. However, despite the notion that airport security ought to be a uniform experience from city to city and check point to check point, any traveler can attest to variations. These differences are variables that have always confounded me—an extreme example of this is that despite frequent travel and opting out of TSA’s advanced imaging technology, I have never experienced the abuses critics of TSA routinely cite (I am not suggesting they do not exist, my data simply cannot verify it).

The following paragraphs are examples of the travel journals I wrote while doing field research on TSA. The main column contains the journal text while the smaller column on the left represents my observations about the journal text, written subsequent to the right-hand journal entry. In early March of 2010, I traveled from Salt Lake City to Phoenix and then on to Anchorage and then back to Salt Lake City a few days later.

*At the start of the security checkpoint I hand my ID to the employee who checks my documents. She looks behind her, noticing I can't proceed yet. There is a small wait because the woman ahead of me has a baby, stroller, and car seat in addition to her own belongings. The TSA employee thanks me for not being impatient while waiting for the mother with child ahead of me. She even pantomimes the body motions of an impatient person—she slowly slides her hands down to her waste and then sighs loudly before chuckling. She hands my ID and boarding pass back to me and tells me to have a nice flight.*

Given all the pressure to perform placed on our bodies by TSA, our fellow passengers also create social pressure that demands we perform security correctly and efficiently or suffer the consternation of their sighs and nudges.

*I proceed forward, rushing to get my belongings ready for the x-ray machine. My shoes come off, then my belt. I notice how grainy the floor is—the texture of the carpet is rough through my socks. My liquids need to be removed, as does my laptop computer. I feel rushed as the man behind me not too subtly nudges my belonging forward. These nonverbal cues help to remind me to do security faster. Meanwhile, the woman with child has yet to be scanned so I have nowhere to go. Still somewhat flustered my belongings slip forward on the conveyer belt and I am cleared to walk through the scanner.*

Unless I was planning on testing noncompliance, the speed of the entire operation helps

*In all the commotion and rush I forget to remove my hooded sweatshirt. The TSA agent stops me, my baggy sweatshirt seems to be a potential threat and he requests to search me by hand. His demeanor is professional and friendly, and even the scent of his fruit flavored gum seems to provide an atmosphere of ease. It is rather strange that the small scent of gum relaxes me, but it humanizes our interaction.*

*Nonetheless, I am experiencing dissonance. I know I have provided no cause for such a search yet I comply without a second thought. My body and my intellect are at odds with one another. These performances are part of my area of study, a so-called*

stem resistance. My expertise, and yet I even thank the agent after he pats me down.

body was Even as thoughts of doubt linger my body was finished with its

complying before I compliance and the urgency to get through it was enough to stifle

had thought about any questions.

doing anything

differently. I had no The pat down is satisfactory and I am reconnected with my

concern about belongings. Feeling rushed to clear this secure area as I hurry

having my body across the floor with my belongings, I glance back and notice the

groped. mother with her child has been selected for a secondary screening.

She is being searched while balancing her infant child in her

hands. Is she a threat? I will never know, I assume she wasn't as

ten minutes later I see her reemerge at the same gate I am at, she

will be on my flight.

Although this procedure seems fairly routine, when the stress of crowds and time is added the result can be dramatically different. After my flight landed in Phoenix, I left the sterile part of the Airport so that I could return through a TSA checkpoint before my flight to Anchorage.

I approach the Unlike Salt Lake, this security line is unruly. I have no way of ever

security line and see knowing, but TSA seemed wholly unprepared for the number of

one line and only a passengers attempting to clear security. The line has spilled out

few TSA into the waiting area and passengers seem frustrated. The man in

employees are front of me looks at his watch, then his ticket, and back to his

working. A line of watch—he is impatient.



passengers extends  
15 yards down the  
corridor.

*A TSA officer is walking through the line and moving barricades to attempt to move the line into an orderly queue and clear people out of the open concourse. Two passengers approach him and request to be moved to the front of their line because of their flight times. The agent refuses. The line moves slowly and I am getting more anxious, worried my flight may leave without me. I can feel the stress of wait times and security materialize in my body—my shoulders tense up and my back begins to ache.*

One thing I have  
noticed consistently  
is that many TSA  
employees are  
surprised when I  
respond to their  
casual questions or  
when my demeanor  
is polite—  
especially when I  
am polite while  
opting out of  
security procedures.

*I am overcome with a sense of dread as the line crawls forward. Seeming to respond to the swell in the line, additional agents open up another line and we seem to be moving much faster. My time comes and the woman who checks my ID is incredibly friendly. With a smile she asks, “How are you?” I respond by saying I am doing well and ask how her night is going. She looks surprised, as if most don’t bother to respond. After checking my ID and my boarding pass I am cleared to continue on my way.*

*I enter the line that seems to have the fewest people, though it is painfully clear all three lines are beyond overburdened. I get my belongings on the table and even remember to remove my sweatshirt this time. There will be no need for a pat down, as I*

That I lack the kind of negative experiences many report with TSA likely has everything to do with my own body politics—white, male, young, able-bodied.

Fear of missing a flight provides an additional powerful leverage for complying with security.

There is a monumental amount of stress with no outlet built into airport

*think I have complied with all the proper regulations. My worry about time is foremost on my mind and I will, at this point, do almost anything to get to my gate without further hassle.*

*There is an overwhelming sense that everybody is rushed, the person behind me keeps shoving their items into mine as I try and get my possessions back together. I am annoyed, and it seems ridiculous. A single line divides into three screening checkpoints, and then is recombined into a single area with no benches or places to put belonging except for the end of the security line. I cannot find any place to gather my things—the flow from line to line, from scanner to screener all seems to be disorienting. The stress and frustration makes me want to lash out at the person behind me who thinks shoving his stuff into mine will really make me want to go faster, to lash out at the person who designed this space, to lash out at the staffing decisions that created this mess to begin with—instead I sulk to my gate and discover that my flight is delayed and I sit for another thirty minutes before my six hour flight.*

checkpoints.

A few days later after my conference in Anchorage I am exhausted and in need of sleep. My flight is a red eye, but at least it is direct. My skills as a field researcher feel dulled—too many panels, too few hours of sleep, but nonetheless I arrive at security ready to collect more data.

<p>The researcher's body is important when talking about rhetorical field methods because that body as a research instrument does not have an unlimited supply of physical and affective capability.</p>	<p><i>I am exhausted and admittedly slow as I proceed through the security checkpoint. I have no interest in dealing with this routine for the third time in as many days. The three hours of sleep I have gotten each night has dulled my perceptive abilities. Days of conversation behind me, an overnight flight ahead of me, I want to just phone these field notes in. Nonetheless, I do my best to focus. Aside from my own personal fatigue there is little stress at the checkpoint. I am somewhat surprised at how overstaffed the checkpoint appears. Three lines are open even though it appears only a handful of passengers are present. Besides being overstaffed, TSA officers here lack the ease and pleasant attitude I encountered in Salt Lake City and Phoenix. It's not that they are rude or unpleasant; they seem efficient but come off as cold. The officer holds my ID under a UV light to check for a watermark, the guard goes back twice. She furrows her brow, staring intently at my name. She almost seems distrustful—she takes her pen and follows along my name on the boarding pass</i></p>
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*ensuring every letter matches. She is thorough—and apparently now convinced I belong on the other side of the checkpoint she lets me proceed.*

As part of the  
affect/emotion  
connection I am  
always searching  
for a friendly TSA  
employee to  
reassure me—  
knowing full well  
that their  
reassurance has  
everything to do  
with the *security-*  
*performative.*  
The moment of  
flirtation between  
the woman and the  
agent underscores  
TSA detractors’

*Despite my will, my body is resisting even basic tasks. It takes me forever to get my shoes and belt off, to remove my jacket, take my laptop out of its case, and display my liquids in a quart size generic Kroger plastic bag. Nobody is behind me so there is no rush, and since my flight does not leave for three more hours I am not compelled to hurry. A young TSA agent is helping push my belonging to the scanner. She seems much more easy going than her colleagues. She smiles and seems to be the friendly face I could not find before. I pass through the metal detector.*

lingering fear of the sexualization of airport security based on fears of pedophilia and sexual assault at airport checkpoints. *The passenger behind me gets held up—her sweatshirt raises suspicion and a female TSA agent (the same one who helped me) comes over to pat her down. After she has been searched by hand, the male employee controlling the metal detector offers a flirtatious gaze in her direction, joking that she was searched because she was from Colorado. She smiles back and is polite but the advance seems to be one way. I engage her in conversation about Colorado (my home state) and the TSA agent goes back to monitoring the machine. I ask the woman behind me how she is doing, and with a large smile on her face she quips, “I just got patted down!” I laugh and collect my belongings.*

*Relaxing at my gate, my encounters with TSA are not complete. TSA has begun patrolling my gate area. I am not sure what to make of their presence. They have moved from the constructed space of the security checkpoint. Their presence seems undistruptive and innocuous. I even exchanged a passing glance with one TSA agent in the bathroom as he fixed his hair and I washed my hands. He then proceeded out to wander the gate area. After about five minutes they left the gate area without incident. Was this routine?*

Almost any encounter in an airport is permeated with a sense of expected routine, and the lingering presence of TSA in my gate waiting area disrupts that conditioned

affect. Although every takeoff and landing, every screening, imaging, and pat down is marked by repetition and difference (no two tracings are ever the same), TSA simultaneously instantiates that repetition and disrupts it. One of the difficulties of my own frequent repetition of security rituals is that without intentionally changing up my own routine, I began to notice that I would lose subtle differences in each experience. Gradually, I would mix and match going through the advanced imaging scanners and opting out for pat downs—occasionally I would still be sent through a metal detector only. There were times when I experienced TSA disciplining the space of airport security more dramatically.

The rituals of airport security, its affects and conditions, create a kind of self-policing both in airport spaces and before we reach them. My body is ready for this ritual

*[October 2012] In Las Vegas, I enter the screening checkpoint, having just wrapped up a relaxing vacation, my mood is a bit demure at the prospects of returning home. I enter the security checkpoint ready to take notes and record my encounters. My hand slips along the back of my belt—I can feel the worn out leather meeting the cold metal of the buckle—my instinct to remove my belt actually occurred about eight feet too early because I have yet to reach the gray plastic bins for my possessions and the other passengers around me have yet to prepare their bodies.*

*As I reach the conveyor belt for the x-ray machine I hold up the line just a little bit by waiting for my bags to enter before proceeding. You are supposed to wait until your bags enter before you move on, but for some reason there is always some impatience*

by what I am and  
 am not wearing, by  
 what I have brought  
 and not brought to  
 this secured space.

*at lingering for your possessions to enter the machine. I always find the huffs and sighs and other non-verbal cues of the passengers behind me provide as much persuasion to move along through security as TSA does. I am traveling with my partner and so I have a buffer from the impatient angst of those around me, but nonetheless, their breath and bodies wear on my refusal to hurry on through this cultural ritual—those expressions only grow louder when I refuse the millimeter wave scan.*

Unlike the most  
 vocal and strident  
 anti-TSA activists,  
 even when I refuse  
 certain TSA  
 directives I have  
 never felt  
 threatened or  
 intimidated. I  
 certainly have  
 encountered  
 individuals whose  
 days would have

*As I declare quietly but clearly that I don't want to go through the millimeter wave scanner, the TSA officer, a tall and stocky gentleman who looks to be in his late thirties, replies curtly "fine, wait here, it will be a while." He directs me through the metal detector and then has me stand just past the detector while I wait for someone who can pat me down. This is the first time I recall encountering hostility from TSA and I am pondering his curtness while I wait. I can see my partner collecting my belongings from the x-ray machine; it is somewhat disconcerting that nobody stops her. Then moments later another officer in his late forties or early fifties with cropped dark hair directs me to an area about fifteen feet from where I am standing to conduct the pat down. The pat down itself seemed in every way unremarkable—touching certain places with the fronts of his hands including my arms, back and*

proceeded in a smoother fashion had I not opted out. I am not questioning the truth of the experience of those who feel assaulted, but I wonder what they bring into those interactions that differs from my experiences. Though TSA now recognizes the right to film and record in airport spaces, you can still get a sense of unease surrounding the practice that goes beyond security

*legs, more culturally sensitive places are touched with the back of his hands, my inner thighs until he reached my testicles, my buttocks. He ran his hands around the inner waistband of my pants. All of this is fairly standard and often, I must confess, can even tickle—a strange thing for me to admit both as a researcher and as an adult.*

*However, to my periphery a slightly different routine is occurring; I can see a supervisor circling my pat down, his sweater a signal of advancement and increased authority. He barely caught my eye on his first pass, but I noticed him making eye contact with me. Then moments later he circles back around and I notice he is directly blocking my view of my partner. He speaks: “Are there any concerns you have that I can address?” I think “Where to start? Perhaps I should ask him about panoptic space and TSA.”*

*But before I can answer he is more direct and there is a sense of hostility in his tone, “Is there any particular reason you are opting-out today?” My reply was a bit of a dodge, “No, there is no one specific reason I am opting-out.” I can tell he is displeased, but I am also confused by his presence here. About twenty seconds later my pat down is concluded and he tells me to have a nice flight, I return the gesture by telling him and the man giving me a pat down to have a nice day. As I walk over to collect my belongings my partner tells me she was recording the pat down*



itself. *with her cell phone and he saw her (once he saw her, he made sure to obstruct her view of me and mine of her). The use of proxemics in this checkpoint is fascinating. The ability of the supervisor to separate the two of us by using the space between us shows an adept spatial strategy. Additionally, his engagement with me seems predicated on his observation of someone recording my pat down and his proximity to me was designed to occlude that recording.*

Even passing through the most routine security encounters there are blockages and flows of difference that disrupt the desire for sameness in airport security checkpoints. Resistance in the airport to TSA's airport (in)security assemblage is dependent on becoming-"matter out of place"<sup>53</sup> However, my experiences made it clear that the striations in these spaces prohibit becoming-other. TSA's celebrated "layers of security" are able to cope with matter that is out of place. Hence, when I opt-out of a whole body scanner, I may inconvenience a particular TSA employee, but I am in no way threatening to destabilize an entire assemblage. It is this principle that makes the dispersed resistive tactics of Opt Out Week-style protests unlikely to succeed. The business of airports and the function of security is about metering entrance to spaces and creating inclusion and exclusion. Airports are almost impossible to congregate in, and the design of Opt Out protests does not seek mass mobilization in a single space. The sense of isolation that occurs with space also occurs because of time. Even if activists are located in the same city, they may fly at different times on the same day or different days of a given week. Although a weeklong protest is needed given the enormity of the

national air infrastructure, the week-long timeframe undermines the overall efficacy of the protest.

I am arguing here that what has become the default method of resisting TSA (opting out individually or as part of a collective action) only embeds our bodies further within the strata of TSA security procedures. There is closeness to the State found in being patted down, but it requires acquiescence to State surveillance. The political potential of that difference has yet to be leveraged into political resistance at either the molecular or molar political level.

All of these encounters are unremarkable and banal. They share one common element—compliance. They are expressions of the *security-performative*. Like most of my field notes, the security procedures produce a hectic space where the demands of the space, TSA, and those around me produce compliance and limit time for reflection on the efficacy of TSA's procedures. This limited space is, in part, what makes resisting TSA so difficult. Without shared space for resistance and confrontation, it becomes very difficult to produce counter-politics. More importantly, the bodily performance and stress of these environs generates affective states that make compliance not only preferable but practically assures it.

### *Affects of Difference and Other Utopian Tales*

Writing about my experiences in TSA checkpoints creates a flush of anxiety. I am aware that researching TSA is outside of the prescribed affect of airport security. I am able to cope with that anxiety by knowing that I belong in the airport, I have paid my

access to that space. By placing my body in the performative field, I am able to explore resistance and compliance in the moment of being touched by state apparatuses.

<p>My desire to be in the whole body imager was rather strange. For how little I fly I don't consider the machine a serious threat to my health and I know for my research I needed to experience it. However, the degree to which I affectively desired its gaze was unexpected. I was so taken with collecting data that any concerns I had with the technology, even</p>	<p><i>Walking into the screening area in the international terminal at San Francisco International Airport (SFO), I had to choose between two lines—one would place me in the cue for a WBI and the other would offer a routine metal detector/bag x-ray. My heart was racing; I had to be in the apparatus, I had to know what it felt like to be in the gaze of the state. As I walk in an agent tells me to put my arms over my head and spread my legs, my body awkwardly finds this position (I don't believe I have ever been asked to do this before). The machine spins around me for a moment, the door opens, and I am told to wait. Less than a minute goes by and I am told I am clear and can proceed. My body was scanned by the eye of the machine and this time I passed. I quickly jot notes about the experience but I get caught up with the affect of the experience—I feel a mix of shame and sadness. It was so easy and I did not want it to be easy. My desire to construct a resistance-performative moment was countered by my desire to get the research and so in the course of a few minutes an anonymous agent somewhere saw beneath my clothes.</i></p>
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my critical insights,  
 evaporated at the  
 chance to seek out  
 an experience in the  
 apparatus.

While my own desire to enter the millimeter wave scanner at SFO was driven largely by research concerns, my desire for security affectively drives such desire as well. Despite assertions by anti-TSA antagonists that the public are dupes, tricked by TSA, these collective rituals drive a *security-performative*. The rituals of airport security uphold a *security-performative* underscored by a desire to give over control of our bodies, of space, and of the affective dimensions of air travel. It is in these spaces that passengers come to desire a kind of microfascism (see Chapter IV). We desire our own oppression. One of the aftereffects of terrorism's radical creativity is the reminder of how fraught our daily routines are, how vulnerable to disruption they can be. The reaction of desiring control and our participation in routines that discipline our bodies demonstrate this premise.<sup>54</sup>

Again my own desires for TSA's routines are clear.	<p><i>[November 2011] At Salt Lake City International Airport (SLC)</i></p> <p><i>after clearing a metal detector my oversized gray sweater is apparently too bulky for the screener's eye. As I stepped through the metal detector a very polite TSA officer with a frail figure tells me he needs to perform a "light pat down"—my immediate reaction was let down. My disappointment was sincere, I was after the enhanced pat down but with no WBI machines in use I had</i></p>
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*nothing to opt out of; my body was unable to signify the demand for more stringent measures. Nonetheless, as the agent felt my arms and hips I wondered if he could sense my disappointment and I wondered what he was thinking.*

The remarkable proximity of the state and bodies in TSA security performances is terrifying and simultaneously fascinating. There is the potential in these touches for pain and pleasure to occur. An agent can hit a sore muscle or a wound or they can touch a body in a way that delights the senses. One way to shift thinking about resistance in airports is to move away from schemes of grand resistance in airports and to seek out a politics of difference in the touch of TSA. Despite numerous confrontations with TSA their authority continues in airports and while provoking TSA and recording interactions produces provocative images, its impact in undoing TSA has been negligible. Chapter IV illustrated how many TSA detractors consider themselves one act of resistance away from defeating TSA. This is unrealistic. In pushing for alternative and less hostile affective experiences with TSA it is possible to reclaim control over the embodied relationships of airport security. How does enjoying an encounter with TSA or refusing to be paranoid change the politics of your encounter with TSA? Simple acts of taking time and resources from TSA can be resistive. Although these small breakages may not be grand gestures that undo TSA—an explicit goal of many anti-TSA activists—they underscore the politics of contested touching at checkpoints. For example, Thomas D. Sawyer’s urostomy bag being pushed too hard by a screener and leaving him covered in urine<sup>55</sup> or a *CNN* reporter claiming “I felt helpless, I felt violated, and I felt humiliated,”

after a pat down<sup>56</sup> suggest clear failures to secure the sterile affects TSA demands of bodies in their checkpoints.

This chapter has continued to invoke the body's material presence in checkpoints. The actual process of moving through airport checkpoints, and being recognized by the state as bodies with differences, represents potential for molecular politics and an iteration of *resistance-performativity*. The political challenge is how to capitalize on molecular practices of becoming-recognized as the state strategizes ways of not seeing the public in airports.

TSA itself also shows signs of struggle over affect in airport spaces. In an online collection of TSA employee responses to the rollout of enhanced pat down techniques, TSA employees evince difficulties with their role in enhanced pat downs. The comments are a reminder that the *security-performative* works by contestation and negotiation. *Flying with Fish* reports, "Each of the 17 TSA TSOs that responded to me detailed their personal discomfort in conducting the new pat downs, with more than one stating that it is likely they are more uncomfortable performing the pat down than passengers are receiving them."<sup>57</sup> The responses contain homophobic notes, fear for the state of liberty, and unease at what it means to do security in airports. One agent explains, "It is not comfortable to come to work knowing full well that my hands will be feeling another man's private parts, their butt, their inner thigh..."<sup>58</sup> Another remarked, "I am a professional doing my job, whether I agree with this current policy or not, I am doing my job. I do not want to be here all day touching penises."<sup>59</sup> Another lamented, "I was asked by some guy if I got excited touching scrotums at the airport and if it gave me a power thrill. I felt like vomiting when he asked that."<sup>60</sup> One last comment notes, "I don't know

how much longer I can withstand this taunting. I go home and I cry. I am serving my country, I should not have to go home and cry after a day of honorably serving my country.’’<sup>61</sup>

These breaks in the State’s securing of affect are illuminating. Given the anxiety regarding participation in these routines of airport (in)security experienced by passengers, the same would be true for TSA agents. The refusal by Transportation Security Administration to make employees available for my research or to the media to comment outside of public relations contacts suggests a desire to secure official affect surrounding these procedures. That hegemony leaks is a given in any social formation and so the affective struggles of TSA employees demonstrates the need to reinforce the culture of airport (in)security for TSA as well as for the general public.

### *Conclusions*

The repertoires performed in TSA checkpoints are inherently unstable. On both sides of screening, a sincere desire for safety mixed with anxiety over how to perform, given the inability to secure air travel, permeates the scene. The resulting gaps are a series of daily-negotiated performative struggles that affect bodies in airport spaces. Such performances cannot be deemed *mere* theatricality, or security theater, because they exercise a much larger consubstantial effort in (re)making the culture of security at the airport. Air travelers and TSA mutually engage in routines of airport security and are enjoined in mutual affects that are part of the work of an airport (in)security assemblage.

The concepts *security-performative* and *resistance-performative* illuminate the conjoined efforts to speed on security routines and to resist them in ways that implicate

practices of airport (in)security on our bodies as we move through airport spaces. However, the very striations of the space itself have thus far deflected the radical possibility of the *resistance-performative*. After all, passengers can only protest so far unless they wish to be kept from boarding their flights. Yet for all of the appearances of the fixed nature of these striated spaces, behind them are constantly shifting practices that undermine and reify the power of the State as bodies move through screening checkpoints.

Throughout the second half of this chapter, I have narrated my own encounters in airport spaces to flesh out *security-performativity* and to express the difficulty and complexity of *resistance-performativity*. As is already clear, from both my introduction and the demonstration in this chapter, these notes are limited because of my lack of access to these spaces. That said, what is available to me are my critical theorizations of the material rhetorics of TSA detractors, TSA rhetoric and practices, and my encounters with bodies in these spaces, which provide insights into the ways security checkpoints are striated and make resistance difficult.

The repetition of airport security through my travels, those I narrated here and those I did not, highlight a sense of isolation. For all of the contact with TSA and fellow passengers, the moment of entering TSA's whole-body imagers or receiving a pat down is one of isolation. One is literally barred from going back, but one cannot yet proceed. In that moment the State holds a body in its touch or gaze and it is that precise capture that makes collective action seem impossible. Although pat downs and whole body scans have different speeds and intensities—at face value the scan is faster and less intense, while a pat down is slower and much more intense—both function in ways to deflect



political potential. That erasure of collectivity, although keeping terrorism at bay, also makes resisting TSA very difficult.

One conceit present in all of my notes is a commitment at all costs to travel to my destination. This is true of almost all who enter security checkpoints. As long as TSA was following what I knew to be proper protocol, I would in the end comply so I could make my flight. Indeed, in Phoenix I even gave up any notion of refusing a whole-body scan because the risk of missing my flight was too great. These pressures, to make flights and to stay on time, along with the persuasion or coercion of passengers around me, form a powerful affect that encourages compliance.

The sighs and groans from bodies of fellow becoming-passengers that have been unwittingly transformed into *de facto* TSA officers by their insistence that their fellow travelers comply is a powerful piece of an airport (in)security assemblage; the irony matches the material effect. The urgency that comes from standing in a queue also encourages compliance. My contention throughout this project has been that airport security is a collective routine and a sign of that collectivity is found in the multiplicity of heterogeneous bodies that constitute airport security.

Although my reflections, admittedly, can only account for my own experience in these spaces and can exist as data suggestive of how others see, think, and feel in these spaces, they are nonetheless an account of affect produced in moments of airport (in)security. They reveal conflicting desires for these routines and at the same time for resistance to those routines. For me, TSA is a mass mobilization of new surveillance technology that has tested the legal, rhetorical, bodily, and affective limits of our contact with the State as we move through the its security checkpoints. The creation of such an

agency, its expansion and legality, and the paradoxes of remaining political in such spaces confound my own respect for the need to secure a population on the one hand, and my commitment to a discriminating radical politics of difference on the other.

My notes illustrate my own struggle to go with the flow and my unwillingness to perform a radical politics in airports. That struggle is, however, not unusual in airports. Their designs, regulations, regimes, and their purposes make collective unity and political expression nearly impossible. In crafting sterile and apolitical spaces, the suppression of dissent in the name of security is a very dangerous practice, especially as TSA uses technologies that peer beneath clothing or that touch bodies.

For my body (which is admittedly a privileged body in terms of race, class, sex, and gender performance) I am concerned about what TSA refuses to see via their advanced threat detection software and by the ways that their touch is made so routine that they do not feel the bodies that attempt to protest their scanners by opting out. TSA's refusal to recognize bodies as subjects in check points is far more concerning than any demand for more privacy, especially as TSA seems increasingly willing to grant more privacy to passengers. TSA policy has increasingly granted passengers retreats into private screening rooms of more heavily redacted images that mask the contact TSA has with passengers' bodies. Privacy is poor cover for the increasing affective demands of airport (in)security.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 22.
- <sup>2</sup> The Onion, "Prague's Franz Kafka International Named World's Most Alienating Airport," *The Onion*, n.d. <http://www.theonion.com/video/pragues-franz-kafka-international-named-worlds-mos,14321/>
- <sup>3</sup> Deleuze and Guattari provide their own treatment of Kafka's work including *The Trial* in Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Kafka: Towards A Minor Literature* (Minneapolis, MN, University of Minnesota Press, 1986).
- <sup>4</sup> Though Kafka International is apocryphal, the facsimile created by *The Onion* resembles airports imagined in our worst nightmares. In *The Onion's* Kafka Airport, passengers are referred to as "S" and when they have complaints they are instructed "to fill out [sic] complaint form and place it in an envelope addressed to the hospital in which you are born" and that "you must understand all problems are traveler's own. If you only made certain to follow proper protocols no such problems would exist. Properly follow proper protocols." See The Onion, "Prague's Franz Kafka International Named World's Most Alienating Airport."
- <sup>5</sup> Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 20.
- <sup>6</sup> Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, 57.
- <sup>7</sup> Mary Schwager, "Terrorist Underwear Bomb: Changes Needed in Airport Security," *Examiner.com*, December 29, 2010, <http://www.examiner.com/x-1893-News-You-Can-Use-Examiner~y2009m12d29-Terrorist-underwear-bomb-Changes-needed-in-airport-security> (accessed December 14, 2010).
- <sup>8</sup> Hugo Martin, "Arline Industry Sees Improvement, Yet Fees Keep Coming," *Los Angeles Times*, August 30, 2010, <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/aug/30/business/la-fi-travel-briefcase-20100830/2> (accessed December 14, 2010).
- <sup>9</sup> Jeffrey Goldberg, "For the First Time, the TSA Meets Resistance," *The Atlantic*, October 29, 2010, <http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2010/10/for-the-first-time-the-tsa-meets-resistance/65390/> (accessed December 14, 2010).
- <sup>10</sup> Jeffrey Goldberg, "For the First Time, the TSA Meets Resistance."

- <sup>11</sup> Harriet Baskas, "TSA Pat-down Leaves Traveler Covered in Urine," *MSNBC.com*, November 22, 2010, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/40291856/ns/travel-news/?ocid=twitter> (accessed December 14, 2010).
- <sup>12</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 126.
- <sup>13</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 474.
- <sup>14</sup> Dwight Conquergood, "Ethnography, Rhetoric, and Performance," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 78, (1992): 83-84.
- <sup>15</sup> Dwight Conquergood, "Ethnography, Rhetoric, and Performance," 83-84.
- <sup>16</sup> Dwight Conquergood, "Ethnography, Rhetoric, and Performance," 84.
- <sup>17</sup> Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, 19.
- <sup>18</sup> Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, 20.
- <sup>19</sup> Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 20.
- <sup>20</sup> Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*, 7.
- <sup>21</sup> Michael K. Middleton, Samantha Senda-Cook, and Danielle Endres, "Articulating Rhetorical Field Methods: Challenges and Tensions," *Western Journal of Communication* 75 no. 4 (2011).
- <sup>22</sup> See Michael K. Middleton, Samantha Senda-Cook, and Danielle Endres, "Articulating Rhetorical Field Methods: Challenges and Tensions." Middleton et al. provide a comprehensive summary of the key contributions to this conversation, "...more recent work by rhetoricians utilizes participant observation, and other in situ methods, to critique embodied, often mundane, forms of rhetoric (e.g., Blair, Jeppeson, & Pucci, 1991; Dickinson, Ott, & Aoki, 2005, 2006; Endres, Sprain, & Peterson, 2007, 2009; Hasian & Wood, 2010; Katriel, 1987, 1993; McCormick, 2003; Medhurst, 2001; Stromer-Galley & Schiappa, 2006; Taylor, 1998; Zagacki & Gallagher, 2009). Likewise, critics, including Blair (1999, 2001), Dickinson (1997, 2002, 2006), Pezzullo (2001, 2003, 2007), and Simonson (2010), have used in situ methods to focus attention on rhetorical places and performances expanding both the range of what counts as rhetoric and the critical vocabularies

informing rhetorical analysis.” And “These efforts at in situ rhetorical analysis are valuable because they sharpen the ability for CR [critical rhetoric] to engage seriously the voices of marginalized rhetorical communities and mundane discourses that often evade critical attention (Hauser, 1999; Ono & Sloop, 1995; Sloop & Ono, 1997).” Many of these works have been central to my own thinking on rhetorical field methods including Carole Blair, Marsha S. Jeppeson, and Enrico Pucci, “Public Memorializing in Postmodernity: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial as Prototype,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 77 no. 3 (1991); Greg Dickinson, Brian Ott, and Eric Aoki, “Spaces of Remembering and Forgetting: The Reverent Eye/I at the Plains Indian Museum,” *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 3 (2006); Carol Blair, “Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites as Exemplars of Rhetoric’s Materiality.” In *Rhetorical Bodies*, eds. J. Selzer and S. Crowley 16-57. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press. Carol Blair, “Reflections on Criticism and Bodies: Parables from Public Spaces,” *Western Journal of Communication* 65 (2001); Greg Dickinson, “Joe’s Rhetoric: Finding Authenticity at Starbucks,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 32 (2002); Greg Dickinson, “The Pleasantville Effect: Nostalgia and the Visual Framing of (White) Suburbia,” *Western Journal of Communication* 69 (2006); Phaedra Pezzullo, *Toxic Tourism: Rhetorics of Pollution, Travel, and Environmental Justice* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2007). Kent A. Ono and John M. Sloop, “Commitment to a Telos: A Sustained Critical Rhetoric,” *Communication Monographs* 59 (1992); Kent A. Ono and John M. Sloop, “The Critique of Vernacular Discourse,” *Communication Monographs* 62 (1995).

<sup>23</sup> Michael K. Middleton, Samantha Senda-Cook, and Danielle Endres, “Articulating Rhetorical Field Methods: Challenges and Tensions,” 400.

<sup>24</sup> Michael K. Middleton, Samantha Senda-Cook, and Danielle Endres, “Articulating Rhetorical Field Methods: Challenges and Tensions,” 400.

<sup>25</sup> George F. McHendry Jr., Michael K. Middleton, Samantha Senda-Cook, Danielle Endres, and Megan O’Byrne, “Transecting Rhetorical Field Methods: Doing Rhetorical Criticism on a Plane of Immanence,” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Western States Communication Association, Albuquerque, New Mexico, February, 2012).

<sup>26</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 161.

<sup>27</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 19.

<sup>28</sup> Elena del Rio, *Deleuze and the Cinemas of Performance: Powers of Affection* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 3-4.

<sup>29</sup> Elena del Rio, *Deleuze and the Cinemas of Performance: Powers of Affection*, 10

- <sup>30</sup> Elena del Rio, *Deleuze and the Cinemas of Performance: Powers of Affection*, 10
- <sup>31</sup> Elena del Rio, *Deleuze and the Cinemas of Performance: Powers of Affection*, 10
- <sup>32</sup> I am intentionally echoing Ann Laura Stoler's quotation "Statecraft was not opposed to the affective, but about its mastery."<sup>32</sup> Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*, 71.
- <sup>33</sup> Bruce Schneier, *Beyond Fear: Thinking Sensibly About Security in an Uncertain World* (New York: Copernicus Books, 2003), 38.
- <sup>34</sup> Bruce Schneier, *Beyond Fear: Thinking Sensibly About Security in an Uncertain World*, 38-39.
- <sup>35</sup> Bruce Schneier, *Beyond Fear: Thinking Sensibly About Security in an Uncertain World*, 39.
- <sup>36</sup> Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, 3-4.
- <sup>37</sup> Mary S. Strine, "Articulating Performance/Performativity: Disciplinary Tasks and the Convergencies of Practice." In Judith S. Trend eds. *Communication Views From the Helm for the 21st Century* (Boston: Allyn and Beacon, 1998), 314.
- <sup>38</sup> Mary S. Strine, "Articulating Performance/Performativity: Disciplinary Tasks and the Convergencies of Practice," 313.
- <sup>39</sup> Michael K. Middleton, Samantha Senda-Cook, and Danielle Endres, "Articulating Rhetorical Field Methods: Challenges & Tensions."
- <sup>40</sup> Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, xv.
- <sup>41</sup> Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*, 71.
- <sup>42</sup> Transportation Security Administration, "Enhanced Pat-downs," *The TSA Blog*, August 27, 2010, <http://blog.tsa.gov/2010/08/enhanced-pat-downs.html> (accessed December 14, 2010).
- <sup>43</sup> We Won't Fly, "For Basic Human Dignity and Liberty at Airport Checkpoints," *We Wont Fly*, <http://wewontfly.com/> (accessed December 14, 2010).

- <sup>44</sup> William Saletan, "This Junk Won't Fly: The idiocy of airport-scanner 'Opt-Out Day,'" *Slate.com*, November 22, 2010, <http://www.slate.com/id/2275681/> (accessed December 14, 2010).
- <sup>45</sup> We Won't Fly, "For Basic Human Dignity and Liberty at Airport Checkpoints."
- <sup>46</sup> Transportation Security Administration, "Opt Out Turns Into Opt In," *The TSA Blog*, November 24, 2010, <http://blog.tsa.gov/2010/11/opt-out-turns-into-opt-in.html> (accessed December 14, 2010).
- <sup>47</sup> WTOP, "Va. Lawmaker Claims Pat-downs Part of 'Homosexual Agenda,'" *WTOP*, December 1, 2010. <http://www.wtopnews.com/?nid=25&sid=2182930>
- <sup>48</sup> Daniel Tencer, "Exclusive: TSA Frisks Groom Children to Cooperate with Sex Predators, Abuse Expert Says," *The Raw Story*, December 1, 2010, <http://www.rawstory.com/rs/2010/12/airport-patdowns-grooming-children-sex-predators-abuse-expert/> (accessed December 14, 2010).
- <sup>49</sup> Daniel Tencer, "Exclusive: TSA Frisks Groom Children to Cooperate with Sex Predators, Abuse Expert Says."
- <sup>50</sup> Daniel Tencer, "Exclusive: TSA Frisks Groom Children to Cooperate with Sex Predators, Abuse Expert Says."
- <sup>51</sup> "4th Amendment Wear," *The Cargo Collective*, <http://cargocollective.com/4thamendment> (accessed December 14, 2010).
- <sup>52</sup> [Photograph] Katiekills, "Thank You For Participating in Security," April 13, 2011, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/katiekills/5616870009/>
- <sup>53</sup> Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. (New York: Routledge, 1984), 50.
- <sup>54</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (New York: Penguin, 1977), 38.
- <sup>55</sup> Harriet Baskas, "TSA Pat-down Leaves Traveler Covered in Urine," *MSNBC*, March 25, 2011, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/40291856/ns/travel-news/t/tsa-pat-down-leaves-traveler-covered-urine/#.UOsYN6VQq5c>
- <sup>56</sup> Jim Barnett, "TSA to Phase in New Pat-down Procedures at Airports Nationwide," *CNN.com*, October 28, 2010, [http://articles.cnn.com/2010-10-28/travel/airline.security.pat.down\\_1\\_pat-down-tsa-statement-random-screening?\\_s=PM:TRAVEL](http://articles.cnn.com/2010-10-28/travel/airline.security.pat.down_1_pat-down-tsa-statement-random-screening?_s=PM:TRAVEL) (accessed December 14, 2010).

<sup>57</sup> Steven Frischling, “TSA Enhanced Pat Downs : The Screeners Point Of View,” *Flying with Fish*, November 18, 2010, <http://boardingarea.com/blogs/flyingwithfish/2010/11/18/tsa-enhanced-pat-downs-the-screeners-point-of-view/> (accessed December 14, 2010).

<sup>58</sup> Steven Frischling, “TSA Enhanced Pat Downs : The Screeners Point Of View.”

<sup>59</sup> Steven Frischling, “TSA Enhanced Pat Downs : The Screeners Point Of View.”

<sup>60</sup> Steven Frischling, “TSA Enhanced Pat Downs : The Screeners Point Of View.”

<sup>61</sup> Steven Frischling, “TSA Enhanced Pat Downs : The Screeners Point Of View.”



## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION: IMPLICATIONS FOR MATERIALIST APPROACHES TO RHETORIC THROUGH AN AIRPORT (IN)SECURITY ASSEMBLAGE

“For Deleuze and Guattari it would be a tragedy for the present opportunity in human-becoming to be reduced to the homogenizing effects of a process of globalization that reterritorializes onto the oedipal subject of lack whose insatiable hunger can only be fed through consumerism... Capitalism is going to destabilize identity in any event.” Tamsin Lorraine<sup>1</sup>

The extent of the Transportation Security Administration’s interaction with bodies cannot be underestimated. Fueled by a discourse of fear, a large governmental agency has been created to monitor the bodies and affects of the traveling public. This is no small task. TSA’s scale, whether measured by the millions of bodies it screens each day, the billions of dollars it spends each year, or the time and energy expended in securing airports, is remarkable. There are many ways of reading TSA: a patriotic actor protecting America from the next 9/11, a rising force of State fascism in America, part of a homosexual agenda desiring to grope bodies, a pedophile’s paradise, among others. I engage with these claims about TSA at the ontological level by assessing their movement within an assemblage of airport (in)security discourse.

I began this project for two reasons. First, for the last seven years I have spent my academic career understanding reactions by the United States to the events of September 11 and trying to problematize the easy bifurcation of the world into pre-9/11 and post-9/11 epochs. The transition of airport security to TSA control following 9/11 is both an instantiation of post-9/11 reactionary thinking and a government agency that now outlives visceral reactions to 9/11. It is simply no longer enough to say TSA succeeds because of the shadow cast by 9/11. As a result, I became convinced that an investigation of the rhetoric of TSA was warranted.

Second, as a rhetorical scholar the embodied, affective, and material implications of rhetoric are unavoidable. As I began to study bodily rhetoric, I can remember traveling through a TSA checkpoint and trying to consider all of the rhetorical, spatial, and performative practices necessary to keep that checkpoint operating. I was surrounded by passengers complying with directives to walk from place to place, to allow their belongings to be searched, and to do so without questioning the State's authority. In that moment I saw diverse rhetorical phenomena that articulated to my broadening thinking on what rhetoric meant. I could think of no better place to explore the nature of material rhetoric.

The stakes of this project are monumental, especially given my orientation toward power and critical rhetoric.<sup>2</sup> Throughout this project I argue that the rhetoric of TSA makes resistance in airports difficult. It is cause for concern that the State has created spaces where collective action and expression are nearly impossible, and has done so both through spatial control and via a regime of affective discourse. Through the rhetoric of TSA appears as mundane order-words, "step forward," "raise your arms," or "I am

going to pat you down,” those words come with an entire affective order that instructs us how to perform in airports. Ann Laura Stoler’s edict, “Statecraft was not opposed to the affective, but about its mastery” is apt here.<sup>3</sup>

The preceding chapters have advanced a material rhetorical criticism based on the ontological philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari and used that approach to map and critique an airport (in)security assemblage that surrounds the Transportation Security Administration. The material rhetorics of surveillance used by TSA (as evidenced by their whole body imagers, enhanced pat downs, security lines, procedure manuals, and security discourse) limits the possibility for resistance in airports. The movement of bodies through airports is productive of a discursive environment that makes political resistance difficult and, in the case of the whole body images, places the subject under erasure. Through a series of critiques, I have argued for the impossibility of political resistance at the airport and for the ways that political opposition online has become increasingly marginalized.

In Chapter I, I introduced this project, offered an overview of my research aims and introduced the Deleuzian concepts that would serve as thought-forms for this project. In Chapter II, I outlined my materialist approach to critical rhetoric and articulated it to the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze. This philosophy of rhetoric is then used to perform the critiques that occurred in Chapters III through V. Chapter III examined the State’s use of redaction via a training manual for TSA employees and a series of images produced by TSA’s whole body imagers. I argued that these documents cast TSA as a reactive force that limits the action they can take; moreover, I claimed that the imagers eliminate the potential for political resistance in airport checkpoints. Chapter IV looked for political

resistance to TSA online. I looked at the articulation of videos of disruptions of standard TSA procedure at checkpoints to online discussions among TSA detractors. In these online forums, calls for violent and gratuitous sexual acts against members of TSA are common and demonstrate the fraught politics at stake surrounding TSA. Chapter V explored my own travels through TSA checkpoints by critiquing my travel journals over three years of going through TSA checkpoints. I examined the affect of moments when I am subject to state surveillance.

This conclusionary chapter has four major sections. First, I draw out five major implications of this dissertation. (1) I consider the role of affect in doing material-rhetorical criticism. (2) I examine my role as a researcher in this project. (3) I look at the violent rhetoric deployed by TSA detractors and its relationship to paranoid-fascist desires. (4) I examine performativity in airport security checkpoints. (5) I look at the differences between imagistic and tactile surveillance used by TSA. Second, I examine my lack of access to airports for extended *in situ* research as a limitation of this study and discuss how I reoriented this project in response to that limitation. Third, I discuss three opportunities for future research extending from this dissertation. Finally, I conclude.

### *Material Rhetorics of Desire*

The first implication of this study is the role of affect in doing material-rhetorical criticism. By examining an airport (in)security assemblage, I have critiqued artifacts as they move with force and articulate to one another. I have emphasized the capacity of these artifacts to affect bodies. However, a rhetorical artifact is also affected by its articulations. Reading a video that ostensibly showed the aftermath of a father removing

his son's shirt to speed up a TSA search, the artifact was changed and disseminated as if TSA stripped the boy. As each successive comment engaged in a retelling of the strip-search narrative the rhetoricity of the video became materially bound to the view of TSA as strip-searchers even after the video's creator emphasized that TSA did not strip search the boy. The artifact was contextually bound and changed in a way that reconfigured how it was *read* and encountered in the world. This shift is important because the artifact both affected and was affected by its encounters with these discussion boards.

The images produced by TSA's whole body images also have this capacity to be affected by their articulation to the body. Because directing millimeter waves at the body produces the images, in the seconds it takes to make the images the body can move and alter the final product; there is the potential for the body to affect the image. Chapters III and V detail the lengths to which the State has directed bodies to perform in security checkpoints; these images depend on that conditioning and were it to fail, the State would need to take a new image or pat you down. Although I still argue that the machines render the body as an asubjective form, it is possible in the machine to distort the image and force the State to direct you to a pat down.

This ability to affect State apparatuses shows the dual capacity of affect and the mutual nature of material rhetorical exchange. Although the affective nature of airport (in)security on passengers is obvious, the tacit ways in which bodies can disrupt visual scans, impede pat downs, act disorderly in lines, and refuse to comply with TSA shows that they can direct and affect what occurs in TSA checkpoints. Some of these actions can take the shape of resistive acts to disrupt TSA. Other times these actions can be the result of the failure of TSA to properly instruct bodies on how to perform in airport spaces.

Nonetheless, it is a reminder that even as an artifact is disseminated it is not a final product and its capacity to be affected, (re)read, and (re)disseminated is important to its rhetoricity.

The artifacts in an airport (in)security assemblage are in motion seeking articulations, and those articulations are productive of new rhetorics that identify lingering social desires. My reliance on rhetoric as material movement exerting force as artifacts that affect and are affected, emphasizes that in doing rhetorical criticism we remain in a gerund flux. Part of the work is to map articulations among artifacts. Because this work requires our presence we must also account for our own position as a researcher.

*My Positionality: Resistance and Transparency*

A second implication of this study is that it challenged my position as a researcher. I am firmly committed to critiquing the methods of surveillance used by TSA. The dominance of the logic of security in airport spaces and the degree to which TSA largely escapes oversight provides cause for concern—even if their efforts are legitimate. The speed and affective nature of TSA’s bodily rhetoric are unprecedented in airport spaces; that it operates under a veil of secrecy is troubling. For Deleuze and Guattari affect is the capacity to “affect and be affected.”<sup>4</sup> As a rhetorical critic interested in force, I have been transfixed by the capacity of TSA to affect bodies in such a way as to limit or elide politics from their screening checkpoints. The ability to strip political presence from space and limit the time for rhetorical engagement is problematic.

On the other hand, I am not comfortable with the rhetoric being mobilized against TSA. The videos I studied activated homophobic, racialized, and violent rhetoric. The

nature of these rhetorics almost made me want to disengage from TSA detractors altogether. Later in this chapter, I will offer a more direct analysis of the discourse of TSA detractors. The discourse in Chapter IV revealed that in the spaces where resistance to TSA was flourishing, a rhetoric that sought to affect TSA in a dehumanizing way was taking shape. As I argue in Chapter IV, a viable means for provoking reforms and response from TSA is not likely found in this type of discourse.

This project emphasizes the overall lack of information we have about TSA and airport security. As I argue in Chapter III, even when disclosure occurs, the redaction done by TSA forces a kind of reactive politics that limits interventions into airport security. Usually TSA detractors have posited that TSA must be eliminated or privatized. I do not see the situation as that grave; such calls seem premature. TSA has existed for just over a decade and if opposition to the organization can operate from less reactive positions and creatively organize in airport spaces then there are still opportunities to affect TSA. This alternative approach sums up my position as a researcher. I find the status quo untenable, but as much as TSA has produced such an environment, its detractors have heightened the impossibility of action through their own discursive choices. I find myself on the outside looking in, desiring alternative ways of engaging TSA, but left with few options to actualize it in airports. Part of what has made my own position so tenuous is the paranoid-fascist rhetoric used by TSA detractors who sexualize their encounters with TSA.

*Desire, Sexual Assault, and the Privileged Body*

A third implication of this study is the relationship between the vitriolic and violent discourse of TSA detractors and their paranoid-fascist desires. To explicate this implication I will first describe the paranoid-fascist pole of desire and then discuss TSA detractors' relation to privilege. First, one of the most difficult tasks in this project has been locating what drives the virulent rhetoric that emerges from TSA detractors. The insertion of violent sexual politics into airport checkpoints was immediately obvious in my study of online comments about videos of airport security. The confluence of antigovernment rhetoric, homophobic fantasies, racism, and violence at first seems almost inexplicable. It is irresponsible to leave such phenomena unexplained, especially given Deleuze and Guattari's contention, "Every investment is collective, every fantasy is a group fantasy and in this sense a position of reality."<sup>5</sup> No matter how abhorrent I find rhetoric calling for the assault and rape of TSA agents, such rhetoric arises out of the collective fantasies of TSA detractors and shares collective affects about TSA. That affect taps fears about a change in the way the State interacts with bodies.

The paranoid-fascistic drive in TSA detractors helps explicate their discourse. Drawing from Deleuze, Hawes argues, "A paranoid or fascist subject is overcome by scarcity and deficiency and clings tenaciously to its whole identity in networks of social-production..."<sup>6</sup> Hawes' reference to fascism is not to be confused with the State-fascism TSA detractors reference, but instead it refers to a politics of domination, control, and asserting one's will over others. In a Deleuzian sense "fascist desire is the desire for codes to replace the decoding that frees flows under capitalist axiomatics..."<sup>7</sup> Contemporary capitalist relations destabilize traditional identity creating anxiety.<sup>8</sup>



Deleuze calls this microfascism. Bonta and Protevi define microfascism as “the construction of a ‘thousand monomanias’ ... Such micro-fascisms spread throughout a social fabric prior to the centralizing resonance that creates the molar apparatus of the State.”<sup>9</sup> Paranoid-fascist desires at the micro or molecular level are driven by an economy of lack in airport spaces.

The logic of lack for TSA detractors is especially clear; the lacks of rights and the lack of personal security are all pervasive in the rhetorics of resisting TSA. The violent rhetoric that desires to assert force over TSA is aimed at gaining what the detractors feel they lack. This desire for what is lacking heightens the tension and aggression the detractors have towards TSA because, as Hawes argues:

Conflict thereby is imagined as the product of desire for what is lacking: the greater the material, semiotic, psychic, organic, inorganic, and geographic lack, the more value it acquires, the more intense the competition for it becomes, the more reactively it evolves, and the more traumatic its effect. ... Transcendent hope springs eternal—“as soon as (resources are redistributed such that one gets enough or more than enough of what one desires), transcendent satisfaction will have been achieved”. But “as soon as...” never arrives.<sup>10</sup>

The conflict between TSA detractors and TSA is over affect and material experience in airports. Because TSA does not operate from a perspective that perceives the lack its detractors identify, they do not see any harm nor do they see any urgency to change. The moment of “as soon as” is not on the horizon for TSA. On the one hand, it is possible to see the logic by which TSA detractors have come to view themselves as injured parties, even if their discourse is unimaginably hateful. On the other hand, it is impossible to see detractor discourse as productive to TSA because of its constant reactionary politics.

That TSA detractors sexualize encounters with TSA is part of their paranoid rhetoric about the sexual domination of TSA over their (i.e., detractor’s own) bodies.

That paranoid fear leads to a fascist desire to dominate the bodies of TSA in return. Certainly an officer could touch a passenger's body in a way that is sexually provocative or offensive. Bodies contain histories and memories and so as a hand touches a body part it can trigger memories of past trauma that are difficult to bear in that moment. It is also theoretically possible that a representative of TSA could find touching a body sexually gratifying. A passenger, too, could find himself or herself enjoying this strange and different touch. In each of these possible scenarios, the sexualization of the encounter is supplied by a participant, from the lingering embodied history of past abuse to the thrill of being touched by the State. Sexuality is added to an encounter that lacks an *a priori* sexual politics. Put simply, when TSA touches bodies or even brushes genitalia it is not necessarily sexual. To contend that any contact with genitalia is sexual speaks to collective paranoia about sexuality, but says little about TSA.

Deleuze's discussion of the paranoid-fascist subject is important to TSA detractors; Chapter IV demonstrated that the deeper their paranoia became of sexualized encounters with TSA, or of the Federal Government destroying their way of life, the more TSA detractors gave voice to a violent and microfascist desires to dominate and control the bodies of TSA. TSA produces a lack of identity and subjectivity, a condition that is especially acute for these detractors; the products of these relationship productions are paranoid and fascistic desires for control and domination.

Second, that TSA has inspired such obscene discourse is also largely about privilege. One possible but incomplete explanation for anti-TSA discourse is that disaffected antigovernment activists see TSA as a prime target to rail against big government. This would help explain the implication in Chapter IV that many

commenters may not fly often or at all. However, this explanation of anger towards TSA is incomplete given the viciousness of TSA detractor rhetoric. For both everyday travelers and for TSA detractors the materiality of TSA's contact with them is a violation of the privilege that comes with belonging to business and leisure classes. Chapters III, IV, and V demonstrate the encroachment of TSA on bodies through material rhetorics of (in)security. This presence through visual apparatuses and through pat downs is unusual for bodies that are, under normalized mainstream circumstances, considered law-abiding citizens.

The severity of the retreat to paranoid-fascist reactions may have to do with violations of expected privilege. Airports and air travel are spaces of extraordinary privilege. Alice Miles argues that the inequalities of airports mirror class structures in society.<sup>11</sup> Traveling is a privileged activity that requires access to capital and leisure. Joe Sharkey claims that those class structures extend to security lines as privileged customers are given separate access lines that are faster and less cluttered.<sup>12</sup> Accessing airports and airport security requires money and leisure commonly reserved for upper-classed participants. Although there are exceptions, the classed nature of air travel suggests that passengers may be largely protected from the types of contact with the State associated with less privileged classes. Class privilege certainly does not ensure a life free from encounters with the State, in the aggregate it opens up ways of living that are less likely to face such difficulties.

Gender is another area where privilege is also clear. YouTube's analytics found that the primary audience watching the videos studied in Chapter IV were men. Given the patriarchal character of U.S. society, white male bodies are in the aggregate less likely to

experience unwanted physical advances or invasive touches as part of everyday life. TSA's touch is invasive. Likewise, the persistence of calls for racial profiling and at times calls to leave white bodies alone suggests demands for white privilege. In demanding that *other* bodies receive scrutiny that white bodies do not, it is clear that for some TSA detractors race is also marked for scrutiny.

Although this project did not conduct a systemic analysis of race, gender, and class of online commenters in response to TSA's actions, some ancillary data on viewers of the videos, access to air travel, and the content of the comments does point to a confluence of white, male, leisure class privilege as a contributing factor in driving tensions between TSA and its detractors. Although it is certainly not the only factor, the introduction of regimes of contact by the State targeting a public that has heretofore occupied privileged positions helps explain but not excuse the vitriolic reaction of TSA detractors.

TSA surveillance initiates a becoming-other. That becoming initiates capacities to affect and be affected. Drawing from Deleuze and Guattari, Bonta and Protevi define becoming as, "the production of a new assemblage...the entry into a 'symbiosis.'"<sup>13</sup> In a becoming, each body enters a relation and ceases to be what it was before, experiences a new relation of intensity, a new materiality. As Bonta and Protevi point out, Deleuze and Guattari use the figure of the wasp and the orchid as a model for becoming, when the wasp enters the orchid it is a matter of "becoming a piece in the orchid's reproductive apparatus."<sup>14</sup> The orchid and the wasp are entering into relations with one another that alter the matter and function of both wasp and orchid (Deleuze and Guattari term this "a becoming-wasp of the orchid and a becoming-orchid of the wasp"<sup>15</sup>). The exchange

between the wasp and the orchid is profound because in encountering one another they are changing their function in their environment. They are becoming other than what they were before.

In airport checkpoints, bodies enter relations that initiate becomings. The rhetoric of TSA and TSA detractors, as demonstrated throughout this project, materializes the products of these becomings. Given this project's claim to study material rhetoric, I have centered my study in part on material-semiotic production and force of rhetoric over semantic-representational meaning. These becomings are at the molecular level, and are productive of discourse. As I have been arguing throughout, a becoming-paranoid-fascist is initiated reactively from TSA's ability to see bodies or touch bodies. The threat to class privilege, or gender privilege, or race privilege, or a combination thereof, threatens the majoritarian status of some. These becomings are remarkable for their production of violent rhetoric. TSA detractor rhetoric evidences Deleuze and Guattari's paranoid-fascist pole of desire; encounters between TSA rhetoric and detractors set free flows of material-rhetoric that marginalize resistance to TSA. Part of why such obscene discourse is set free is because TSA represents a violation of expected privilege in spaces of leisure.

#### *Material Performativity and Airport Security*

As a fourth implication, the provisional nature of security depends on the performativity of airport security. In Chapter V I introduced two concepts: *security-performativity* and *resistance-performativity*. These concepts explain that airport (in)security is an ongoing accomplishment, as are efforts to resist TSA. Airport security is not a final act that declares once and for all an airplane or airport safe, but a cultural

production of routines that we engage in that produces security at airports. *Security-performativity* refers to the acts we perform in airports with TSA to create a secure airport and in doing so engage in collective rituals of security. Without collective participation airports cannot be secured and TSA cannot do its affective work.

*Resistance-performatives* break and remake the culture of airports against TSA directives. These are small acts that undermine TSA rules and regulations or horrific attacks on airplanes. My research shows TSA's ability to eliminate resistance from airports makes *resistance-performatives* rare. Instead, *resistance-performances* became a default mode of acting out against TSA. *Resistance performances* are reactive knee-jerk actions that try and oppose TSA while accepting their overall regime, such as refusing a whole body scan but accepting a pat down.

This cluster of concepts has import for the ontological orientation of this dissertation; it provided a means of analyzing how airport (in)security is accomplished in process. Airport security is too often talked about in language that is final, permanent, or as an either or dilemma. Airports are not either safe or not in a permanent sense; every day TSA and the public must participate in rituals that persuade the public that it is safe to fly. This persuasion work is not just in the form of traditional rhetorical acts (speech and text) but through embodied and affective discourse. In using performatives as conceptual schema to analyze airport (in)security I was able to understand TSA as processual drama that matters in airports. Such efforts are elided when the affective nature of airport (in)security is ignored and airport (in)security is reduced to procedures and efficacy. Efficacy is important. However, it is not the only element in TSA rhetoric.

*The Visual and the Tactile*

As a fifth and final implication, the divergent nature of imagistic and tactile surveillance offered different types of artifacts for study. This dissertation investigated both visual/imagistic and tactile surveillance. That my analysis maps both State practices of looking and touching is significant as each represents an entirely different type of security practice. On the one hand, whole body imagers, promised as quick, private, and invisible, striate airport space and erase subjects from the visual register of airports. As an artifact, these images are the product of scans directed at bodies and had to be read visually as evidence for how whole body imagers engage bodies. In airports, in a matter of seconds a passenger passes through the machine and then moves along unless a suspicious item is detected. The design of the whole body imagers works to redact the force of the technology, to keep its force from the view of passengers.

On the other hand, enhanced pat downs, promised as an alternative to whole body imagers, engage in tactile inspection of bodies and another means of assuring compliance from the public. As an artifact for criticism, pat downs are embodied experiences that required me to put my body into the hands of the State. The lingering force of a pat down is a matter of affect carried through my body. In airports, pat downs are thorough affective affairs that make the intensity of TSA security clear. As opposed to security through redaction, pat downs redact little and aggressively engage the bodies of the traveling public.

In practice, these modes of surveillance compliment one another to counter threats to airports and airplanes. The State's readiness to conduct one or both of these modes of surveillance emphasizes the complexity and intensity of TSA security. Although

passengers can exercise some control in requesting a pat down, once they enter airports they cannot escape TSA surveillance. Either through the visual register or through practices of touching, I have found that TSA uses rituals of security to produce affective experiences that aid in their efforts to secure airports and airplanes.

### *Limitations*

My intended project was to be an extension of the rhetorical field methods work of Middleton et al., but I was denied research access to Salt Lake City International Airport by TSA.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, throughout this project I have articulated a version of rhetoric that emphasizes embodied experience in spaces. Rhetorical field methods have directly shaped my thinking. Although I do not think every critical rhetorical project should follow this trajectory, when a project implicates embodied and spatial rhetoric, *in situ* research can be invaluable.<sup>17</sup> Because rhetoric is not just a textual phenomenon, critical rhetoricians have an opportunity to consider the performative aspects of our discipline and to design provocative methods for doing rhetorical fieldwork.

Originally I had hoped to spend months at Salt Lake City International Airport talking with passengers about how they get ready for security, what they leave at home, how they pack to make the process easier, and to talk with them after security to collect their experiences and affects. I hoped to use this data to analyze how everyday travelers talk about and experience airport (in)security. My dissertation provides a lot of data about TSA and TSA detractors, but there are only glimpses of average passengers. By performing extended *in situ* research I would have been able to see how checkpoints are regularly used and experienced and this would have been valuable for adding complexity



to my understanding of affects of airport (in)security. As valuable as that those may have been, I failed to get the clearance necessary to do this ethnographic fieldwork at SLC International. I delayed my dissertation for months and worked through bureaucratic obstacles, but was ultimately unable to convince either TSA or the Salt Lake City International that my study was worth the potential inconvenience and/or risk. That impediment forced me to shift the orientation of my dissertation.

Although the lack of site access limited my ability to perform rhetorical field methods in airports, it enabled me to reorient my project. To compensate for this necessary change in my dissertation, I shifted my focus to ontological questions and away from the epistemological questions I had initially intended. Had I been given access to airports, my project would have been largely consumed by understanding what airport (in)security means to passengers. Although meaning making is an important function of rhetoric, I have argued throughout this project that it is secondary to the ontological force of rhetoric. That transition proved to be both fortuitous and profound.

In Chapter II, I advanced a version of rhetoric based in a materialist ontology and argued force and affect were primary and that meaning and representation were secondary. In effect, I argued that texts can and do come to mean many things and the force of those meanings are what is primary for rhetorical critics. In Chapters III and IV, I demonstrated the force of TSA rhetoric as it articulates to bodies. The further I moved through an assemblage of airport (in)security discourse the more I found meaning and issues of epistemology increasingly relative, while force and articulation as a material and ontological function of rhetoric became increasingly important. Although there is still value to knowing what people make of TSA, what they do with that knowledge and how

it affects their body has dominated this study. The artifacts critiqued in chapters three, four, and five provide ample grounds for interrogating material functions of rhetoric and exploring the questions I ultimately asked.

Returning to the contrast of materialism and representation that is prominent throughout this dissertation, I want to note the embedded nature of representation in materialism. I have, necessarily, set materialism against representation for the purpose of arguing what is lost when we ignore ontological approaches to rhetorical criticism. Throughout my argument there is a dichotomous logic of either materialism or representation even as I prefer to write in terms of foregrounding materialism to representation. This was a necessary choice in order to argue for the opportunities made possible by ontologically based rhetorical criticism.

Give the rift between materialism and representation perpetuated in my dissertation; in future work I will examine how representation can support my emphasis on materiality. For example, while Chapter IV demonstrated the fractured logic and unpredictability of meaning making, representational logics were still present and in many ways were entrenched within my materialist critiques. As videos of TSA screening passengers were disseminated online it was clear that struggles over what those videos represented mattered. As I continue to develop my materialist approach to rhetorical criticism I want to take a fuller account of how representational acts are fundamental to the material experiences I study. In moving forward in this direction I can write into the rift I created between these two overlapping approaches to communication.

### *Opportunities*

This dissertation is provocative for the future projects it suggests. Three important lines of flight emerge from my work on critical-material rhetorics of TSA. First, this project initiated a study of the force of rhetorical artifacts at the affective level. I examined the relationship of artifacts to each other and their articulation to bodies in airports and online communities. This approach was centered on the force of rhetoric and argued that force is in the nature of rhetoric not an after effect. Rhetoric as a discipline is still governed primarily by an epistemological regime. However, this project points to the limits of epistemology as a *telos* for rhetorical study by illustrating the multiplicity of meanings articulated to texts, and it demonstrates the utility of working rhetoric ontologically by mapping how rhetorical artifacts move across an assemblage.

Although the contestation over the meaning of videos of TSA screening passengers in Chapter IV is interesting, the conjuncture of videos and comments provides an opportunity to see rhetorical production in action. Online discussions are fundamentally different from rhetorical field methods, but they share an interest in *kairos* (timing and opportunity). As a rhetorical artifact meets an audience, additional artifacts are produced and become available for critique. The production of responsive rhetorics disseminated along with original artifacts belongs in an assemblage of texts that speak to the force of rhetoric. I am not calling for audience studies or effects research; increasingly rhetoricians have access to discourses produced by encounters with primary artifacts they are investigating either via *in situ* research or via online discussions. The opportunities provided by investigating the ontological force of rhetoric, as material,

forceful, and productive phenomena better equips rhetorical critics to address to the capacity of rhetoric to matter in the world.

Second, this dissertation's reliance on a variety of artifacts underscores both the multisensory nature of TSA and a diversity of rhetorical phenomena. This study utilizes training manuals, images, videos, online discourses, airport security checkpoints, and my own body as artifacts for rhetorical criticism. I explored the relationships among these artifacts in an airport (in)security assemblage to emphasize how artifacts affect one another. Directives from TSA administrative personnel have direct consequences for my body when I traveled; they initiated regimes of touching that led to a TSA agent feeling along the inside of my waistband. The ability to map my embodied experiences and TSA directives provided a productive way of reading the rhetoric of TSA. In essence, I was able to see TSA directives articulated to an array of bodies and experience that discourse on my own body. This suggests that as rhetoricians we can use our bodies as affective membranes to register rhetorics. In doing so, we open up the potentiality of experiencing a wide variety of rhetorical artifacts as they come together in space. Although not all rhetorical projects could make use of such an approach, *in situ* rhetorical critics seem especially able to use their vulnerable bodies as means of supplementing other data gathering tools.

Third, the mobilization of space and affect by TSA in airports precludes resistance. Although TSA has not outlawed political speech, their security procedures, spatial design, and rhetorical order-words make resistive expression (even if you accept the consequences of such expression) rare and nearly impossible. Although I have concentrated my focus on rhetoric produced by TSA detractors, more mundane affects of

security and silence are produced in TSA checkpoints. In Chapter V, I argued that security was a joint performative venture between TSA and the public, and that the relative ease with which TSA conducts its screening operations underscores the success of that venture. As is true of hegemony in general, TSA is most productive when they have to exercise little force at all. Repeatedly as I traveled, passengers knew to line up, empty their belongings, raise their arms in the scanner, and proceed to their gates. In just over a decade TSA has fundamentally altered the routines of passengers in America's airports. TSA provides a rich case study for reimagining a collective routine, disseminating that reimagined routine, and widespread performances of that routine. The process by which TSA manufactures consent, analyzed throughout this dissertation, is of use for scholars interrogating hegemony. TSA has continued to evolve how we go through airport security and in less than three years has added new technology and enhanced pat downs. Their techniques remain provisional and yet they continue to gain the consent of the traveling public.

### *Conclusion*

I have argued in this chapter for five implications stemming from this project. First, I have argued that affect plays a significant role in the study of material rhetorics. Second, I argued that given the bifurcated nature of TSA and TSA detractors it was difficult to remain transparent about my own position as a researcher. Third, I argued that the violent discourse of TSA detractors is related to Deleuze and Guattari's paranoid-fascist pole of desire and that their retreat to that discourse is related to the privilege of air travel. Fourth, I argued that performativity was critical to securing airports. Fifth, I

suggested that although imagistic and tactile surveillance techniques are very different, they work together in TSA checkpoints. In addition to the implications of this project, I argued that the refusal by TSA and SLC International to let me study airports forced me to reconfigure my approach to this project. Finally, I suggested opportunities for future research.

Looking forward, it is hard to imagine tensions surrounding TSA security becoming less intense. TSA detractors are locked in a reactive becoming-paranoia and see the dismantling of TSA as their end goal. Simultaneously, TSA is entrenched within the Department of Homeland Security. TSA seems committed to better security through technology and TSA detractors continue to view new surveillance technology as dangerous and abusive. Part of the intransigence against TSA is that they are a governmental organization. As long as TSA discourse defines the United States' enemies as an asymmetrical threat willing to attack airplanes I do not perceive a reduction in TSA's role in airport security anytime soon. Political opposition to TSA is dangerous for members of Congress. Although a few politicians publicly vilify the organization, including Rep. John Mica, Rep. Jason Chaffetz, and Sen. Rand Paul, they have yet to find the political capital to marginalize the agency. Any attack on airports or airplanes that came after Congressional action to hamper TSA would be politically costly. This all suggests that TSA will remain a force in airport security, and with every misstep tensions between TSA and TSA detractors will produce more paranoid-fascist discourse.

Both TSA detractors and TSA are providing paranoiac discourses here. TSA justifies the intensity of its security procedures because the U.S. continues to surrender to paranoia over security threats. If TSA is to be believed, airports are on the front lines of

the next attack and it could come any day. Although the veracity of such claims are unknown and TSA avoids talking about any attempts to breach airport security, this dissertation has repeatedly illustrated TSA's emphasis on the everyday nature of threats. The banality of TSA security is set in contrast against the extraordinary danger of terrorist attacks. With those stakes, TSA works to encourage passengers to give in to the paranoia that constructed an airport (in)security assemblage to begin with.

I have argued throughout this project that rhetoric articulates to bodies with force. Our connections to rhetoric matter, not in the sense that they are important, but in the sense that they are material. Throughout this project I have provided examples of rhetoric articulating to bodies and in those moments subtle and profound affects are produced. That affect is, in part, the force of rhetoric. To study the force of rhetoric is to account for the work of affect at the moment a text articulates to a body. Although we may struggle with how to apprehend such moments they are essential to rhetoric's material abundance. Rhetoric as an abundant, material, and forceful phenomena demands rhetorical criticism that draws us as critics into a vulnerable world of affect and to account for being affected by the artifacts we study.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Tamsin Lorraine, *Deleuze and Guattari's Immanent Ethics: Theory, Subjectivity, and Duration* (New York: SUNY, 2011), 74.
- <sup>2</sup> Raymie E. McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis," *Communication Monographs* 56 (June 1989): 91.
- <sup>3</sup> Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 71.
- <sup>4</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 261.
- <sup>5</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (New York: Penguin, 1977), 280.
- <sup>6</sup> Leonard C. Hawes, *A New Philosophy of Social Conflict*, "Unpublished Manuscript, 20.
- <sup>7</sup> Mark Bonta and John Protevi, *Deleuze and Geophilosophy: A Guide and Glossary* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 86.
- <sup>8</sup> "Capitalism is going to destabilize identity in any event." Tamsin Lorraine, *Deleuze and Guattari's Immanent Ethics*, 74.
- <sup>9</sup> Mark Bonta and John Protevi, *Deleuze and Geophilosophy*, 86.
- <sup>10</sup> Leonard C. Hawes, *A New Philosophy of Social Conflict*, "5.
- <sup>11</sup> Alice Miles, "First Class or Economy? Airports Hold a Mirror to an Unequal World," *New Statesman*, August 1, 2011.
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- <sup>13</sup> Mark Bonta and John Protevi, *Deleuze and Geophilosophy*, 59.
- <sup>14</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 10.
- <sup>15</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 10.
- <sup>16</sup> Michael K. Middleton, Samantha Senda-Cook, and Danielle Endres, "Articulating Rhetorical Field Methods: Challenges and Tensions," *Western Journal of Communication* 75 no. 4 (2011): 400. And George F. McHendry Jr., Michael K.



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