

SPECIAL SECTION: EVERYDAY TERRORISM

The terror of everyday counterterrorism

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(Received 18 May 2015; accepted 6 August 2015)

This article looks at the implications of the “domestic/everyday violence” = “war/terrorism” homology for thinking about “domestic/everyday” violence. Particularly, it contends that the normalisation of war/terror discourse in intimate/everyday violence brings with it intimate/everyday counterterrorism. It suggests that any benefits of naming everyday violence as terror are erased, subsumed or outweighed by the disadvantages of importing counterterrorism to the sphere of the intimate. Beyond the securitisation of the bedroom and the terror of intimate counterterror, this article contends that feminist and queer theorising provide insights about the nature of terror that show intimate terrorism in counterterrorism and make intimate/everyday counterterrorism doubly dangerous. As such, the equation of “everyday/intimate violence” = “war/terrorism” is counterproductive because of its bidirectional co-constitution. While the intimate plays a role in the constitution of war/terrorism, the re-direction of war/terrorism to the intimate/everyday is likely to accentuate the “terror” of intimate violation rather than temper it.

Keywords: gender; domestic violence; terrorism; counterterrorism; epistemology; sexual violence

Introduction

Catharine MacKinnon (1983, 656–657) once described the private sphere as “everything women have ever been allowed to be or have” while “at the same time, the private is everything women have been equated with and defined in terms of men’s ability to have.” Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1990, 112; emphasis in original) characterised this public/private distinction as a threshold – one between visible and invisible, between official and unofficial, between legitimate and silent. Sedgwick notes that these thresholds are frequently crossed by those in a position to use the powerful part of these “binarisms” (public, visible, official, legitimate), where “ceaseless crossing of these lines of oppositionality and of rank” do not function “to obscure such demarcations, but to heighten them” for those positioned less powerfully (Sedgwick 1990, 114). In other words, the ability of the dominant to cross the boundaries accentuates their rigidity for the disadvantaged.

A number of other articles in this special section, and the literature on which they were built, appropriately critique the ways in which the demarcation of “binarisms”, including but not limited to public/private, male/female and domestic/international, obscure the similarities between what is identified as “international terrorism” and what is identified as “domestic violence.” This creates a simultaneous hypervisibility for war and “international terrorism” and blindness to what scholars identify as “intimate war” (Pain 2015), “intimate terrorism” (Pain 2014) and “everyday violence” (Gentry, this issue). The

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reaction to this blindness has been important work homologising the disciplinary power, the violence and the inhumanity of “everyday terrorism” (see this special section’s introduction) and the violence that great powers in the international arena call terrorism, which argues that “domestic violence” *is* war/terrorism, and the invisibility of that relationship constitutes a problematically narrow and privileged knowledge of war/violence/terrorism.

This particular article, though, looks at the implications of the “domestic/everyday violence” = “war/terrorism” homology for thinking about “domestic/everyday” violence. Particularly, it contends that the normalisation of war/terror discourse in intimate/everyday violence brings with it intimate/everyday *counterterror*. It suggests that any benefits of naming everyday violence *as terror* are erased, subsumed or outweighed by the disadvantages of importing counterterrorism to the sphere of the intimate. Beyond the securitisation of the bedroom and the terror of intimate counterterror, this article contends that feminist and queer theorising provide insights about the nature of terror that show intimate terrorism *in counterterrorism* and make intimate/everyday counterterrorism doubly dangerous. As such, the equation of “everyday/intimate violence” = “war/terrorism” is counterproductive *because* of its bidirectional co-constitution. While the intimate plays a role in the constitution of war/terrorism, the *re-direction* of war/terrorism to the intimate/everyday is likely to accentuate the “terror” of intimate violation rather than temper it.

The article begins by suggesting a reconsideration of the language of “intimate terror” based on securitisation theory and Critical Terrorism Studies. It then moves to the problematic implications of the counterterrorist in the intimate/everyday, discussing it practically before talking about the epistemology of the terrorist/counterterrorist binary. The penultimate section links that epistemology of the counterterrorist back to the intimate, showing how it is important to understand the intimate in the constitution of terrorism but resist the conflation of intimate/terror.

Reconsidering naming intimate/everyday “terrorism”

I wasn’t even sure if there was rape. So I don’t think I could have been raped even though I think I was raped but I know I wasn’t because it barely existed or it didn’t exist at all . . . I didn’t want the man to be fucking me, but, I mean, that doesn’t really matter . . . I thought maybe it was rape because he hurt me so bad and I didn’t want to so much but I guess it wasn’t or it didn’t matter. (Dworkin 1991, 50)

In my view, there is no doubt that either Andrea Dworkin (cited above) or the many other examples cited by many other feminist scholars of victims of domestic/intimate terrorism are *terrorized*, plagued with fear, abused and injured in ways that words can do no justice to, not least in an abbreviated academic article like this one. It is not either the empirical reality of, or the affective experience of, terror, fear, pain and dehumanisation that I contest when I suggest caution in using the terminology of terror and terrorism to approach that abuse. Instead, it is the potential of the use of that terminology to entrench, rather than redress, that pain, abuse and dehumanisation that motivate me to suggest caution about, if not reversal of, the use of the language of intimate/everyday terrorism.

This is not to deny that intimate and public-sphere violence are similar *commissions*; this argument has been made in a number of different places over many years. Early feminist thinking about war and conflict posited a “war system” (Reardon 1985), linking sex-oppressive violence in the private sphere and sex-oppressive violence in interstate war. Reardon argued that, like domestic patriarchy, the war system is a system of

enforcement of dominance by threat and fear. Many feminist scholars in the intervening years have implicitly or explicitly linked the sexism of violence against women and the sexism of structures of militarism in global politics (see, for example, Tickner 1992; Whitworth 2004; Hooper 2001; Tickner 2001; Sjoberg 2006).

Recently, a significant amount of work both in political science and in geography has explored those links in more depth. Geographer Rachel Pain has argued that “domestic violence and international warfare are a part of a single complex of violence” (2015, 64), and that “everyday terrorism (domestic violence) and global terrorism are related attempts to exert political control through fear” (2014, 531). Pain (2015, 64) explains that this association is not a trickle-down or one-directional effect, where political violence causes domestic violence. Instead, Pain (2015, 65) rebuts the “common characterization of domestic violence as involving only isolated individuals and private spaces” to understand it rather as a political act of the exertion of control. For these reasons, Pain supports the call (for example, Sylvester 2013, 4) for scholars of war and conflict to “stop averting our eyes and decide to descend into the ordinary of violence.”

These are important realisations, but, I argue, they lead to a problematic conclusion: the securitisation of intimate/everyday violence through the use of terrorism discourses. For decades, scholars have noted that there are some risks to “securitisation” – that is, the speech act of naming something security at the national or international level (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998). In this view, there is a discursive power in naming something as security; with that naming comes a sense of urgency, a sense of emergency that demands attention and directs resources towards solving the problem of whatever the threat to security is. The securitisation of the environment, for example, highlights the urgency of environmental problems and directs both popular and governmental attention towards solving those problems above those problems which remain outside of the realm of security, and thus outside of the realm of immediacy (Trombetta 2010; Floyd 2010).

At the same time though, a number of scholars have pointed out risks, or harms, of securitisation. Some of those harms have had to do with the policy landscape generally: if too many things are securitised, then policy planning cannot possibly address them all; “emergency” thinking does not always make for the best policy solutions, and competitive arguments over what to securitise deplete the resources that could be used to address the problems (see, for example, Roe 2012; Heck and Schlag 2013; Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998). While these issues may have merit, this article is going to set them aside to address another set of problems, namely the obstacles that securitisation puts in the way of solving the particular problems that are securitised.

Critics of the securitisation of policy problems have used an argument similar to the old adage that “when all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail” to argue that securitisation can be ineffective (Kratochwil 2001; Vannoni 2012; Heng and McDonagh 2011). When a problem is securitised, it is often put into the sphere of security, and addressed with the tools that the security sector has to address problems, namely military power (Hyndman 2007; Campbell and Shapiro 2007). Since military power is ill-suited to deal with many emergencies, often the product of the securitisation of those emergencies is poor-fitting solutions that can be counterproductive. An illustrative example of such a problem was the securitisation of the post-Hurricane Katrina flooding in New Orleans in the United States in 2005, which the United States government addressed with militarised institutions like the National Guard and the Department of Homeland Security (Martin and Simon 2008; Graham 2012). Reports both at the time and after the fact suggested that the militarisation of the disaster relief had some negative effects not only on the local

population, but on the net results of the efforts to save lives and begin the rebuilding process (Ruben and Maskovsky 2008; Coaffee and Van Ham 2008).

It is my contention that the counterterrorist in the bedroom is the conceptual and practical equivalent of the AK-47 in the soup kitchen: a potentially disastrous result of securitisation. To be clear, I am not arguing that Hurricane Katrina was not a humanitarian emergency of epic proportions (at least in terms of the United States' domestic experiences of humanitarian emergency). Nor am I arguing that everyday/intimate violence and abuse is not the largest humanitarian problem in global politics today. Quite the opposite; there is compelling evidence that everyday/intimate violence is one of the greatest threats to people's security globally, and one of the greatest sources of terror to people – certainly as grave as if not more grave than the acts that policymakers in global politics traditionally and easily label as “terrorism.”

The gravity of these violences makes the label “intimate terror” tempting; the public is afraid of terrorism, openly discusses that fear and knows that terrorism is a bad thing, right? And intimate/everyday violence receives almost no attention from that same public, despite its (increasing) severity? So calling everyday/intimate violences terrorism is both an *accurate description* of what happens and an appropriate technique for grabbing those violences the attention that they so desperately need, right?

Those temptations, though, do not make the label of intimate/everyday terror a panacea for solving the problems of the severity of, and silence around, intimate/everyday violence. I suggest that there are reasons for caution, both in concerns about terrorism discourses that have been traditionally voiced by Critical Terrorism Studies and beyond those concerns.

Critical Terrorism Studies scholars have warned about the use of terrorism discourses, often with particular concern about how “terror” comes into the security sector. Particularly, critical scholars interested in “terrorism” and “terrorism studies” have long critiqued the construction and securitisation of “terrorism”¹ through what they have alternately called “terror talk” (see Katz 2006) and “discourses of terrorism” (see Gunning 2007; Jackson 2007). The suggestion that the idea of “terrorism” is sensationalised and should be de-sensationalised is not new to the claims in this article, even if the source of the sensationalisation is identified differently (see, for example, Barrinha 2011; Steuter 1990; Epkins 2012; Sageman 2014; Sjöberg and Gentry 2007). In fact, a number of practitioners in the policy world even in the United States have backed off of the terms “terrorist” and “counterterrorism” in favour of the terms “violent extremism” and “countering violent extremism,”² characterising “terrorism” as a spectrum rather than an aberration. This understanding of terrorism as a spectrum has shown some openness to deconstructing the distinction between “terrorism” and “political violence”, as well as to recognising the links between intimate/everyday “terrorism” and global “terrorism.”

In this article, I agree with the concerns that motivate some Critical Terrorism Studies scholars to express concern with terrorism discourses generally and the securitisation of terrorism specifically, but also want to extend those concerns using gender analysis to show other potentially negative effects of the use of terrorism discourses to describe and deal with intimate/everyday violence. Returning to the passage from Andrea Dworkin's *Mercy* above, I make the (perhaps controversial) argument that nothing is better about Andrea's situation for calling it intimate terrorism. No inarguably morally good saviour can parse Andrea's confusion and produce out of it something that does not constitute rape. No reclassification can undo Andrea's intimate pain and fear, or stop it from reproducing in her mind and in her life. No counterterrorist can forcibly stop the abuse Andrea is experiencing and re-constitute the identity and knowledge that she lost in the

process. In fact, it is the counterterrorist *in* the intimate that I contend provides a decisive argument *against* labelling intimate/everyday violence as terrorism.

The counterterrorist in the bedroom

Policy discourses often frame counterterrorism, or countering violent extremism, as policy plans or sorts of policy frameworks. Grammatically, though, the subject, the executor, of counterterrorism is an understood subject – unnamed – while the object of counterterrorism (the actual or potential terrorist) is always named. The understood subject of counterterrorism policy, the counterterrorist, is a spectre – the assumed constitutive other of the terrorist, the assumed good guy, whose identity is rarely if ever explicitly discussed. Whenever the label of “terrorist” is applied, there is an assumed constitutive other counterterrorist. The category of “terrorist” is a condition of possibility for the category of “counterterrorist” – a defined, moral(ised) good that combats “terrorism” of whatever kind it confronts. Labelling intimate/everyday violence as terrorism labels the intimate/everyday abuser as a terrorist, and implicitly calls for an intimate/everyday counterterrorist to counter that abuser’s terrorism.

Thus, with the logic of understanding intimate violence as terrorism comes the logic of combating intimate violence with counterterrorism. Critical Terrorism Studies’ critiques of the logic of counterterrorism in global politics foreshadow some of the negative consequences of importing the counterterrorist into the intimate sphere. Richard Jackson (2015, 33, 34), for example, identifies an “epistemological crisis of counterterrorism” where the label of “terrorist” is distributed on the basis of a paranoid, “what if” approach to identification of threat and locus of fear. That “what if” creates the subject of the terrorist. Jackson describes:

We could say that the epistemological crisis is constituted by a known, an unknown, and a moral imperative. The *known* of the epistemological crisis is the assertion that, no matter what, there will be more terrorist attacks. . . . The *unknown* is simply that we do not, and cannot, know exactly who, when, where, why, or how the next inevitable attack will occur. . . . Finally, the moral imperative is that we simply have to do everything in our power to prevent the unknown but inevitable coming terrorist attack. (Jackson 2015, 35–36; emphasis in original)

Jackson (2015, 36) continues that this crisis “produces a state of deep anxiety and even panic about the future, because it involves an intense state of tension between the ‘known and the unknown.’” Still, he contends, this confusion “is neither necessary nor inevitable” but instead “functional to power holders, harmful to the aims of counterterrorism as well as human security, and ought to be resisted and deconstructed by citizens and scholars” (Jackson 2015, 35). In Jackson’s view, the paranoid knowledge of the subject “terrorist” creates a counterproductive counterterrorism, which replaces the potentially productive counterterrorism. To Jackson, the counterterrorist is situationally paranoid based on a misreading of the problem of terrorism, and therefore situationally dangerous. This view, extended to intimate/everyday violence/terrorism, would suggest that it is important to guide everyday counterterrorism with a lack of paranoia and a clear understanding of the problem, which would make the everyday counterterrorist helpful, rather than dangerous.

I argue that Jackson has misdiagnosed the problem and therefore failed to understand its depth. This constitution of the counterterrorism by the known of future terrorism, the unknown of the future “terrorist,” and the moral imperative to stop him/it is a constitution fundamental to the idea of the “terrorist” and therefore fundamental to the construction of

the counterterrorist as the terrorist's constitutive other. If the "terrorist" is defined by the threat of violation s/he poses, the counterterrorist is constituted by a personified inviolability. This inviolability, however, is not a physical inviolability, but a paranoid inviolability built on the fear of, and resistance to, an unclear scenario of violation. This *epistemology* of the terrorist/counterterrorist binary is what makes the counterterrorist in the bedroom/intimate sphere so terrifying.

The epistemology of the terrorist/counterterrorist binary

Understanding the epistemology of the terrorist/counterterrorist binary requires accounting for how one gets to be classified on one side of that binary or another, and how that classification is constitutive rather than descriptive. This could be described in a number of ways, but I find Michael Warner's (1999) *The Trouble with Normal* to be a particularly apt metaphor. Warner (1999, 1) begins with the provocative (and apparently irrelevant for these purposes) suggestion that "almost everyone sooner or later . . . succumbs to the temptation to control *someone else's* sex life" (emphasis in original). It is *why* and *how* this control comes to be that is of theoretical interest.

According to Warner, the temptation to control someone else's sex life manifests in the production of categories of "normal" sexuality (heterosexual [or heteronormative] and reproductive) as opposed to "abnormal" sexuality. The existence of normal sexuality and its constitutive other abnormal sexuality begets various modalities of sexual governance, which have proliferated into "thousands of ways to govern the sex of others", "directly, through prohibition and regulation, and indirectly, by embracing one set of tastes as though they were universally shared, or should be" (Warner 1999, 1). In other words, the existence of normal sexuality, though reliant on the existence and identification of abnormal sexuality, creates the possibility of (and incentivises) regulating, marginalising and looking to exterminate the "abnormal." The desire to regulate others' sexuality is instantiated in moral terms, as Warner (1999, 1) argues. Most people come to associate the "normal" sexuality with moral good, and the abnormal sexuality with the moral bad. This is why even people who might otherwise have a negative impression of government interference in individual behaviour may come to favour the regulation of sex and sexuality. As Warner (1999, 1) explains, "most people cannot quite rid themselves of the sense that controlling the sex of others, far from being unethical, is where morality begins." In fact, "not only do we do this; we congratulate ourselves for doing it."

Warner then explores the methodologies through which normal sexuality is valorised and reified while abnormal sexuality is demonised and marginalised. Warner explains that the disciplinary regulation of "normalised" sexuality happens through an "ethics of sexual shame", where shame is used as a mechanism to discipline sexualities according to universalised expectations, a constitutive feature of political and social culture. To Warner (1999, 89), "the normal" in sexuality is an exercise of both privilege and disciplinary power "designed both to reward those inside of it and to discipline those outside of it." The existence of "the normal" has a function of "invalidating, delegitimising, or stigmatising other relations, needs, and desires" (Warner 1999, 99).

I suggest that the insertion of "terrorism" into everyday/domestic violence creates a logical equivalent to Warner's "normal" sexuality – the "counterterrorist" – into the everyday and the bedroom. In the everyday and in the bedroom, the "counterterrorist", seeking inviolability, licenses him to constitute, identify and combat the "terrorist." Intimate/everyday violation is, in this frame, constituted *into* "terrorism" and then replaced in the "domestic arena," such that the violent "defense" against the fear of

violation from the political sphere is *added* to the intimate/everyday violation. In other words, the counterterrorist *against* intimate terror is a force of control, regulation and disciplining, directly and indirectly. If, as Pain (2014) argues, everyday terror is a violent act of control, then in the everyday (if not generally), counterterrorist *reproduces* terror in the intimate sphere, manifest as a violent act of control. The need to be vigilant *against* (everyday) terror for the counterterrorist is constitutive of, and itself, terror. In the name of the moral good of protecting the victim/woman from the moral bad of intimate terror, the counterterrorist comes to see his/her *act of terror* as a moral good: “far from being unethical, it is where morality begins.” The domestic counterterrorist, then, would essentially be replicating the terror s/he “counters”, and congratulate him/herself for doing it (in Warner’s words).

Yet in the world where the counterterrorist is associated with inviolability, which is associated with the ideal masculinity, the counterterrorist is *presumed good* while the terrorist is subject to the shame of having disappointed universalised expectations. The counterterrorist, the normal, is in a position of privilege and disciplinary power, *not only* vis-à-vis the domestic terrorist, but also vis-à-vis the invisible victim of domestic terrorism whose existence necessitates and depends on the counterterrorist but who individually does not often merit embodied subjectivity. The domestic counterterrorist, then, in Warner’s words, is a status of reward for those in it and discipline for those outside of it: the terrorist is stigmatised and delegitimated, the victim of the terrorist is invisibilised and the counterterrorist is honoured.

Underneath that honour, though – underneath the chivalry of the defined-good of the counterterrorist – is the violence associated with the regulatory and controlling function of domestic counterterrorism. This creates a “protection racket” *in the bedroom*, where the domestic counterterrorist serves the purpose of (and receives valour for) protecting the innocent women and children who are subject to abuse, without reference to whether or not the innocent women and children actually *receive* protection and/or actually benefit from it (see, for example, the discussion in Peterson 1977; Young 2003; Sjöberg 2006; Sjöberg and Peet 2011). This “protection racket” entrenches sexism through the enforcement of traditional gender roles, the invisibility of the “protected” woman and the valorisation of traits associated with chivalric masculinities. This creates the distinct possibility that the discourse of intimate/everyday terrorism plays a counterproductive role in efforts to intervene in the abuse that (mostly) women suffer at the hands of (mostly) male domestic partners.

In this sense, positioning the domestic abuser *as terrorist* positions a domestic saviour as counterterrorist *de jure*, without attention to any *de facto* consequences. The combination of the search to purge the abnormal and the politics of control that go with it, though, make the counterterrorist a *de facto* threat in the private sphere/intimate arena, and therefore in everyday life. The counterterrorist in global politics is a force of toughness and inviolability, constituted as an aggressive seeker of that inviolability through the attack and control of possible threats of violation. Whatever makes intimate/everyday violence terrorism, this sort of aggressive seeker of inviolability likely constitutes.

For example, describing “both terrorisms”, Pain (2014, 534, 537) emphasises the “role of fear in spatial entrapment” as fundamental to *feeling* terrorised, where “terrorism, then, is an attempt to impose or disrupt an order through violence and fear.” While Pain focuses on the intent of the act, it is possible to understand these dynamics in the reaction to the act, and even in the fear of an act not yet committed. In those terms, the counterterrorist counters the terrorist’s (uncertain) violence and (therefore causing) fear with certain

control of that potential violence, in theory to end fear. That far-reaching control, however, is itself a certain cause of intimate fear.

Looking back to Andrea's situation, in this view, a domestic counterterrorist, looking to show inviolability and exert control, would pile onto Andrea's fear and abuse, re-terrorising her. And a proliferation of domestic counterterrorists could hurt many more people than Andrea, even in the name of saving them. Yet, many will insist, it remains the case that Andrea is/was *terrorized*, and that however politically risky, the metaphor between global and intimate/everyday terrorism is apt, because it is accurate. The remainder of this article contends that any accuracy of the analogy between intimate/everyday and global terrorism happens at, and extends to, the level of the intimate constituting the fear of the (global) terrorist, and therefore contributes to deconstructing, rather than encouraging the more comprehensive construction, of the terrorist/counterterrorist dichotomy.

The epistemology of the intimate in the construction of the terrorist/counterterrorist binary

The epistemology of the closet

To see the relationship between the intimate and the construction of the concept of terrorist, it is important to look at the impact of the construction of Warner's "abnormal" on those who come to be classified within it. In other words, the category of "abnormal" is not just a label for those who already are and were always abnormal; it is a constitution of a category of the abnormal and formative of the experience of those who live in/with abnormality. This is part of the formative nature of abnormality that Eve Sedgwick (1990) described in *The Epistemology of the Closet*. In 1990, Sedgwick (1990, 231) made the argument that the abnormalised space of "the closet" is constitutive of ways that "the homosexual" can know the world, and the ways that the world can know "the homosexual," where one could see "the spectacle of the closet as the truth of the homosexual." Sedgwick (1990, 71) contended that "the closet is the defining structure for gay oppression in this [the 20th] century", and backed up that argument with the contention that the closet (or its spectacle) constructed knowledge of self and knowledge of other. Three ways that Sedgwick sees this relation are of interest in this article.

First, Sedgwick (1990, 70–73; 249–251) makes the argument that the closet itself is epistemologically constitutive. The argument is that the constitution of self-as-secret ("they mustn't know, but must know, and therefore can't know") creates the closeted self as a shadowy figure, both afraid of being known and afraid of not being known (Sedgwick 1990, 250–251). The constitution of the queer *as closeted* defines both the closet (the unspeakable) and the queer (as unspeakable). This leads Sedgwick (1990, 3) to argue that "the relations of the closet – the relations of the known and unknown ... have the potential for being particularly revealing, in fact, about speech acts in general." The revelation to which Sedgwick (1990, 107) is referring is the notion that a "reflexively structured mutiny panic" "enforces a paranoid symmetry" wherein "closets" become recognisable, and knowledges are structured around closetings.

Second, Sedgwick (1990, 206) makes the argument that the *stability* of the closet is a condition of possibility of normalising outside-the-closet behaviour. Analysing "The Beast in the Closet", Sedgwick (1990, 206) suggests that "the possibility of Marcher's achieving a genuine ability to attend to a woman – sexually or in any other way – depends as an absolute precondition on the dispersion of his totalising, basilisk

fascination with and terror of homosexual possibility.” Sedgwick (1990, 183–184) cites Bray (1982), with the argument that “‘homosexuality was not conceived of as part of the created order at all,’ but ‘part of its dissolution. As such, it was not a sexuality in its own right, but existed as potential for confusion and disorder in one undivided sexuality.’” In this understanding, a closeted confusion/disorder/other constitutes a marker for clarity/order/self. There is no “out of the closet” without the perpetuation, stability and existence of *a* closet. Judith Butler’s (1993, 19) inquiry “for whom is outness an historically available and affordable option? Is there an unmarked class character to the demand for universal ‘outness?’” resonates here; for there to be an “out”, there must always be an “in”; for there to be uncloseted and normal sexuality, there must always be closeted and abnormal sexuality.

Third, Sedgwick argues that it is a combination of fear *of* and fear *in* the closet that makes it stable and enduring enough to serve the necessary role of constitutive other for “the outside” of the closet. Sedgwick (1990, 206) suggests that closeting has a fundamental “element of deceiving the world” and of “window dressing” because of a “compulsion” “to invest it with the legitimizing stamp of visible, institutionalized genitivity.” People are *in* the closet because of a “paranoid knowing,” and people are closeted because “the force and direction of paranoid knowing . . . are manipulable” (Sedgwick 1990, 104). The closet, then, constitutes the knowledge of those in the closet about themselves and about the other/world, and constitutes the other/world’s knowledge of those who have closeted themselves from it or been closeted by it.

In a second edition, Sedgwick (2008, xv) contextualises *The Epistemology of the Closet* as written at the height of the AIDS emergency in gay American communities, suggesting that

the history is important, . . . for understanding some of the tonalities and cognitive structures of *Epistemology of the Closet*: how the punishing stress of loss, incomplete mourning, chronic dread, and social fracture . . . [which] imprinted a characteristic stamp on much of the theory and activism at the time.

One could read, then, that *The Epistemology of the Closet*’s totalising argument can be traced to, accounted for by and even apologised for how closely it was linked to the totalising nature of the AIDS epidemic in the United States in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Another way to read it, though, is to suggest that the *shaping* nature of the context in which knowledge of the world is being formed can be exacerbated by trauma *within* the small space of that context. It is this latter reading that dominates my analysis below, which uses these three ways that Sedgwick understands the epistemology of the closet to understand the epistemology in/of terrorism, especially in the context of the international influence of the post-9/11 United States.

Epistemology of the closet in/of terrorism

There are some parts of Sedgwick’s argument about the constitutive nature of abnormality that I will not use in thinking about the epistemology in/of terrorism. This section does not adopt Sedgwick’s understanding that there is a universal constitutive experience (“the closet”) or sort of (or labelled sort-of) people (“the closeted”). What it does suggest is that the *insecurities* associated with abnormality, *and* the fear of abnormality, are constitutive of insecurities with *the other* that form the basis of the distinction and reification of the terrorist/counterterrorist dichotomy.

The first major source of utility of Sedgwick's work as a metaphor for thinking about the intimate terrorist/counterterrorist binary is the framing of the closet as a *privatisation* of taboo sexualities. After all, the (figurative) everyday/intimate is a privatised space where knowledge is produced/made/silenced/denied. Many people describe sexual(ised) experiences as identity-constituting or knowledge-constituting, yet few people explicitly discuss the epistemology of the bedroom, of sexuality and of sexualisation and its influence on how fear and violability are known and constructed.

Return, for example, to the passage from Andrea Dworkin's *Mercy* earlier in this article. The passage is about rape, but it is also about the epistemology of rape. In it, the audience is to assume that such a thing as rape exists, but Andrea's main character (Andrea) is not sure it exists, is not sure what it is, and is not sure it happens to her. She does not think she could have been raped *even though* the audience is to read that she *was raped* – because the ways that she *knows* rape make the idea that she was raped nonsensical. The ways she knows rape are built on a privatised, silenced, terrorised epistemology of abuse and insecurity which cannot be confirmed or denied because it cannot be spoken.

This passage, out of Chapter 3 of *Mercy*, follows a discussion in Chapter 1 of the sexual molestation and possible rape of a then-nine-year-old Andrea, who tries to explain to her parents what happened. Nine-year-old Andrea, in turn, does not have the words to describe what happened. When her parents become convinced that penetrative sex did not happen (which actually is not clear from Andrea's discussion of the events), they conclude "thank god nothing happened." To the parents, the risk of violation is in penetrative sex, anything else is "nothing." While nine-year-old Andrea is sure that something happened, that certainty fades in her later teenage years and early twenties. That and other experiences discussing rape and whether or not people are raped leads 20-year-old Andrea to the above passage, where she is hesitant to classify forced sex that caused injury as rape because she has come to believe that rape does not exist, or that she is not among those who could be raped.

Andrea's case is an extreme one; she doubts the existence of rape and the existence of self because of private-sphere sexual abuse and private-sphere verbal abuse that followed it. Still, I want to propose that Andrea's experience – where her knowledge of violence in the world was shaped by fear and uncertainty originating in the intimate sphere – is neither unique nor particularly extreme, either in the everyday or in global politics. In fact, Pain lays the foundation for understanding a relationship between *feeling* intimate violence and *feeling* political violence, even as most of the attention in her recent work goes to the nature of the commission of the act. Pain (2015, 67) discusses the mix between love, fear, hate, responsibility, duty, care, shame and pride that victims of intimate violence often feel, contending that "feelings and behaviors on the world stage . . . mimic intimate relations." Therefore, "domestic violence and international war can be understood as intimate war" (Pain 2015, 72). Reading this next to Sedgwick's argument about the intimate *structuring* knowledge, I am interested in the ways in which the emotional content of intimate warfare constitutes knowledge of, and interaction with, the arena traditionally understood as the public sphere, and/or even the international.

Thinking about Andrea's experience of rape (if it was rape when she could not know that it was), it is my argument that what is happening to Andrea is her experiences of the intimate interacted with what others told her about her experiences of the intimate to *shape her ability to know*. These emotional and communicative experiences did not only shape her ability to know *rape*, but also shaped her ability to know self – self's relation to others, pain, fear and other emotions associated with interpersonal interaction. This

shaping is much like the shaping explored by Sedgwick, namely contingent on time, place and situation, but nonetheless constitutive of both worldview and interaction with the world. In this situation, experiences of and fears of intimate/everyday violence shape the ability to know and experience (violence).

Specifically, Sedgwick (1990, 107) shows that intimate/everyday fear is constitutive of fear more generally. She argues that the fear of outing, and of the violability that comes with it, creates a panic which enforces “paranoid symmetry” of the epistemology of the closet. While there are myriad ways that the closet/being closeted can be understood to be constitutive of experience and knowledge, Sedgwick focuses on fear – fear of one’s secret being revealed; fear of hurt or even harm coming from the revelation of that secret; fear that causes one to live in a way constantly cautious about discovery; fear that causes one to keep others at arms’ length in order to avoid discovery; fear that causes one to mislead others about who one is; and fear that causes one to have an adversarial relationship with enemies whom one does not really know but is acutely aware exist. This is a fear of one’s body being violated, fear of the loss of one’s (perceived) purity, fear of hurt or even harm coming from that violation, fear that causes one to live in a way constantly cautious about violation, fear that causes one to keep others at arms’ length in order to avoid violation, fear that causes one’s confusion about what happens to self and who self is, and fear that becomes directed at an unknowable enemy and often, therefore, everyone and no one at the same time. This is the sort of fear that Pain describes as the goal of both intimate/everyday and global terrorism.

It is this fear that constitutes the closeted, the out, the abnormal, the normal, the terrorist and the counterterrorist not only as subjects but as epistemological subject-positions – as different ways of knowing, and of experiencing knowledge. The private-sphere, closeted queer is necessary to the imaginability of a public-sphere, publicly acceptable, normalised straight. The epistemological subject-position of the closeted/abnormal is impossible without the foil subject-position of the out/normal. As Sedgwick describes, a closeted/disorder/other constitutes the clarity and order of “self” as normal. This is the metaphor of the epistemology of the closet that I want to apply to thinking about the epistemology of the terrorist/counterterrorist binary – the subject-position of the terrorist is not possible without the foil subject-position of the counterterrorist.

The epistemological subject-position of the counterterrorist

Nancy Huston (1982) made a very similar argument about epistemological subject-positions in war narratives. She argued that war narratives frame self-state as “the good guys” who need to fight a war against “the bad guys” as the constitutive other. In this view, their opposition to “the bad guys” defines “the good guys”, who rely on the existence of “the bad guys” to constitute their (politicised) identities. In a very similar way, “counterterrorists”³ are defined (even in nomenclature) by their opposition to “terrorists,” an identity which is only possible with a perception of stability to the referent of the idea of the “terrorist.” This identity/definition requires the “terrorist” to be both conceivable and like Sedgwick’s (1990, 183–184) homosexual, “not conceived of as a part of the created order at all” but “part of its dissolution”. The “terrorist” as the destruction of order is constitutive of the *existence* of non-terrorist order and the identity/constitution of the counterterrorist.

If the terrorist is the dissolution of order, the counterterrorist is its reconstitution. Cynthia Weber (*forthcoming*) describes this in detail, suggesting that “‘the terrorist’ is out of place in civilisation. S/he is the opposite of civilisation. For ‘the terrorist’ is a pure form

of ‘civilizational barbarism’.⁴ The *stability* of the existence of “the terrorist” and his status as an outsider, to “the counterterrorist” and the civilisation that s/he is constitutive of (reliant on the terrorist’s existence), I contend, is made possible by the epistemology of intimate (in)violability constituting the existence of “the terrorist” even without his/her materiality.

This is because one of key functions of the epistemology of the intimate is to constitute the feminine as susceptible to violation and the masculine as inviolable. If the masculine is inviolable, and someone/something with a vested interest in identification as masculine and/or association with masculinity is violated, then something more than the violation is signified. What is signified in the violation is the loss of masculinity, and with it, the loss of traits associated with masculinity: bravery, independence, protector status and honour, to name a few. The preservation of this particular sort of masculinity becomes tied to the preservation of (an impossible notion) inviolability. With those ties comes a paranoid fear of attempts to violate (however unlikely they are to be successful) and the constitution of an “other” as an “enemy” to identify the possibility of attempts to violate. States and nationalities, like individual men, become invested in being *not susceptible* to rape/violation *as an identity investment*. This is a stable fear that requires a constitutive other – the by-definition inviolable, but constantly guarded against violation, counterterrorist.

In other words, the constitution of the particular masculinity by both *inviolability* and the ability to protect women from violation creates a state of what Sedgwick would call “paranoid knowing” where the slightest risk of violation is to be vigilantly combated, lest the perception of inviolability be revealed as a farce. I argue that this is a condition of possibility not only for the existence of counterterrorism and the counterterrorist, but also for what Richard Jackson (2015, 33, 34) calls the “epistemological crisis of counterterrorism” where the label of “terrorist” is distributed on the basis of a paranoid, “what if” approach to identification of threat and locus of fear. In other words, “terrorism” is not *only* an empty signifier constituted by the fear of (intimate) violation; whether as a result of that fear or as a co-constitutive cycle with that fear, people who commit acts classifiable as “terrorism” exist, both in the intimate/everyday and in the global political arena.

Those people become the subject (both actually and as proxy) of the fear that drives the counterterrorist, and therefore counterterrorism efforts. The epistemology of the bedroom that constitutes the “terrorist” subject both creates the category of people who commit acts of terrorism (determining the existence of the category even if it were empty) and, once it is populated, serves as an incentive for those *perceiving* terrorism to overpopulate the category of those understood as terrorists. In other words, the “paranoid knowing” of the perceived-inviolable counterterrorist *puts people in the category of terrorist* because of what Sedgwick (1990, 206) calls a “compulsion” to “invest in” the legitimisation of the normal and the delegitimation of the closeted/other. At least some of these people’s categorisation as “terrorist” has little to nothing to do with their actions (and something but very little to do with their locations, identities and the like); instead, their classification as “terrorist” is a product of the counterterrorist’s fear of violation.

Without the application of the language of everyday/intimate terrorism, the (global political) “counterterrorist” is a category without a clear analogy in the everyday/intimate; violation in the everyday/intimate is often quiet, privatised, unreported or dealt with quietly. Naming everyday violence and abuse as “terrorism”, though, creates space for a category of “counterterrorist” – people who react to the perceived threat of the “terrorist”, looking for protection and/or vengeance. While the related deprivatisation, announcement,

report and attention is crucially important for obtaining recognition for and resources to solve the problem of everyday/intimate violence, the corresponding “solution” of the intimate counterterrorist leaves something to be desired, both practically (as discussed above) and as an epistemological subject-position.

Returning to Sedgwick’s work, it is a combination and interaction of fear of closeted sexualities and fear *in* the closet that makes the closet a stable trap and a stable source of epistemology. I am arguing that the *logic* of the epistemology of the closet applies to the terrorism/counterterrorism *synthesis* – that it is the combination of *fear of* terrorist violation and *fear within* the category of people labelled as terrorists that constitutes terrorism as a stable trap and an ongoing phenomenon. Take, as an example, the 9/11 attackers, whose existence can be understood as transformative for the political and academic category “terrorist”. The idea of the “terrorist” and the constitution of the “counterterrorist” existed well before 11 September 2001, and other places in the world than the United States. The 9/11 terrorists were people who may have been understood to be in the category of “terrorist” by many Americans whether or not they actually ever committed acts of violent extremism, as young, Arab men (see, for example, Davies 2003; Ellmann 2002/2003; Baker 2002; Swiney 2006). They responded to that (potential) categorisation with a number of precautions about visibility, and indicators of membership in the social group of *insiders* in American society (as students and/or employees) in a way that suggests that they had *knowledge* of the potential categorisation *as* terrorists (Ross 2011). In other words, the existence of the category of terrorist was epistemologically constitutive of the 9/11 hijackers’ perceptions of their constitutive others, and of their constitutive others’ perceptions of them.

Though the trajectory of the 9/11 hijackers was likely set long before the cautious measures that they took to avoid being understood as “terrorists” previous to 11 September 2001, the hijackings and killings that they committed cemented both them as “terrorists” and the importance and urgency of the category of “terrorist” in the American public consciousness. Prior to 11 September 2001, the United States’ perception of inviolability was riding high after a victory in the Cold War and perceived-successful interventions in a number of 1990s conflicts around the world. While the category of “terrorist” existed and counterterrorism strategies constituted and were constituted by that category, the validity of the threat to violate the inviolable, masculine American state seemed more distant pre-9/11, and closer to reality post-9/11. In other words, what changed on 11 September 2001 was not the intimate *logic of* global terrorism as constituted by the unidentifiable threat to violate the inviolable, but instead the *credibility* of that threat and therefore the *urgency* of reacting to it.

9/11, then, serves as the contextualisation and history to the epistemology of the bedroom and everyday/global terrorism that the AIDS emergency did to the *Epistemology of the Closet*. Sedgwick (2008, xv) suggested that the AIDS emergency was crucial to understanding “some of the tonalities and cognitive structures ... which imprinted a characteristic stamp” at the time. This context both *responded to* the epistemological status of the closet at the time that made possible both closeted homosexuality and the depth, breadth and public reception of the AIDS crisis, *and* deepened fear and despair that entrenched the closet as epistemologically totalising. As I mentioned above, the logic of Sedgwick’s argument can be applied to thinking about the *shaping* nature of the context of intimate global terrorism exacerbating the *urgency* of the influence of the epistemology of the bedroom in constituting the counterterrorist (and therefore/thereby) the terrorist, both epistemologically (in terms of knowledge of self/other/world/violence) and relationally.

Whether with post-9/11 urgency or pre-9/11 distance, the epistemology of the intimate can be seen both as constitutive of everyday/global terrorism *as subject and signifier*, and a metaphor for the relationships between “terrorists” and “counterterrorists” in global politics. In other words, *knowledge of fear*, violation, exposure, uncertainty *and* the related feminisation that those bring is constitutive of the identity of the counterterrorist and therefore of the existence (and often population) of the category of terrorist. Thinking about the epistemology of the bedroom – about intimate/terror, violation and the fear of violation – can help understand the links between intimate fear and fear of terror, between the intimate and the global. Like Andrea was constituted *as raped* but *as not* raped by the combination of violent sexuality and social conditioning, the category of “terrorist” is constituted as impossible (since the counterterrorist is inviolable) and looming (since the counterterrorist must be threatened to prove inviolability).

The post-9/11 counterterrorist in the intimate/everyday

The fear of violation that is constitutive of the counterterrorist is a gendered, structural social relationship in (personal and global) politics, where the signification of the act of violation holds steady across a number of different sociopolitical contexts. The act of raping Andrea, the act of forcing oneself into her, the act of hurting her in the process – these are *acts* of feminisation. The result of robbing her of a sense of self’s entitlement not to be violated, skewing what she knows about the world and how, and causing her life to be and revolve around pain, is a *result* of feminising the victim.

Feminist scholars have argued before that “the competitive use of coercive force generally relies on the *masculinisation* of self and the *feminisation* of the enemy” (Sjöberg 2013, 119; emphasis in original). Feminisation is “subordinating people, political entities, or ideas by associating them with values perceived as feminine” (Sjöberg 2013, 147, citing MacKinnon 1993). As Spike Peterson (2010a, 244) suggests, the signification of feminisation reaches far beyond abuse that men directly perpetrate towards women. She suggests that “not only subjects (women and marginalised men) but also concepts, desires, tastes, styles, ‘ways of knowing’ ... can be feminized” (Peterson 2010b, 19). This feminisation has “the effect of reducing their legitimacy, status, and value” and as a result “normalises” gender differences and gender-based subordination (Peterson 2010b, 21).

I am not arguing that victims of global terrorism, like victims of abuse in the intimate/everyday, are feminised, violated and held to be inferior. In fact, here, I am less interested in the relationship between private violation and global terrorism than I am in the constitution of the knowledge of fear of global terrorism. The *fear of* global terrorism is the fear of the signification of feminisation – being open to violation, losing the ability to protect oneself from violation, and therefore reacting with many of the reactions characteristic of the bedroom fear of violation. The epistemology of the intimate – specifically, the fear of violation – and the epistemology of “terrorism” have in common this constitutive fear.

It is that constitutive fear that leads the counterterrorist to seek vigilance against and control of violence that s/he cannot predict, measure or understand, but that is enveloped in the category of the terrorist. It is then that wide-ranging seeking of control which constitutes the counterterrorist as, in Jackson’s view, ineffective and overreaching. In my view, it is also what makes the intimate/everyday counterterrorist a particular threat, both conceptually and in practice. Conceptually, the intimate counterterrorist would have to perform counterterrorism through efforts to control an unidentified threat of intimate/everyday violence. This sort of control is distinguishable from the sort of control

exercised by the intimate terrorist only by the subject's place on the terrorist/counter-terrorist binary and the intent of the act. While those differences may be more than signifiatory, and the "good guys" may act to control violence while the "bad guys" control *through* violence, each act involves the control *of* the experience of the (presumptive but invisible) victim of everyday/intimate terror.

Conclusion

This article has argued that the *transportation* of the logic of terrorism and counterterrorism *into* the everyday/intimate is problematic because it creates a figure of the intimate counter-terrorist, who is problematic both conceptually and practically for combatting intimate/ everyday violence. It has argued *against* the use of "terror talk" to discuss intimate violence and intimate violation. Using Warner's (1999) *The Trouble with Normal* both literally (to argue against the normalisation of "everyday" terrorism) and metaphorically (to explain the structures of discipline imposed by the constitution of the domestic counterterrorist), it has made the argument that the homology of "everyday/intimate violence" = "war/terrorism" is counterproductive *because* of its bidirectional co-constitution. Naming intimate "terrorists" is a condition of possibility for the category of "counterterrorist" – a defined, moral(ised) good that combats "terrorism" of whatever kind it confronts.

Using Sedgwick's (1990) *The Epistemology of the Closet* as both an example of the logic of marginalised epistemologies and a metaphor for the constituted category of terrorist, I argued that the understanding the epistemology of the intimate provides insight into the epistemology of the terrorist/counterterrorist binary. While the epistemology of the intimate might tell us something about the constitution of war/terrorism, the importation of the terrorist/counterterrorist into the intimate/everyday sphere reifies and extends, rather than solving, everyday/intimate fear and violence.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the journal editors for their help on this special section, and Caron Gentry for her careful and critical reading of this and other work. The anonymous reviewers for this special section helped make this piece stronger and clearer. Mistakes remain my own.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes

1. For the use of this language, see Abrahamsen (2005).
2. See, for example, the Department of Homeland Security: <http://www.dhs.gov/topic/countering-violent-extremism> (accessed 17 May 2015); the White House: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/02/18/fact-sheet-white-house-summit-countering-violent-extremism> (accessed 17 May 2015); the Department of State: <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/cvesummit/index.htm> (accessed 17 May 2015); USAID: http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/VEI_Policy_Final.pdf (accessed 17 May 2015); and the Department of Defense: <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=128249> (accessed 17 May 2015, referring to Russia).
3. See for example, Livingstone (1990, 27).
4. The term "civilizational barbarism" is quoting Huntington (1996, 321).

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