An earlier version of chapter 2, by Roberto J. González, was published in Militarizing Culture: Essays on the Warfare State (Walnut Creek, Calif.: Left Coast Press, 2010).

An earlier version of chapter 11, by Jasbir Puar, previously appeared as “Citation and Censorship: The Politics of Talking about the Sexual Politics of Israel,” Feminist Legal Studies 13, no. 2. Published online, July 15, 2011.


Copyright 2014 by the Regents of the University of Minnesota

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Published by the University of Minnesota Press
111 Third Avenue South, Suite 290
Minneapolis, MN 55401-2520
http://www.upress.umn.edu

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
The Imperial University : academic repression and scholarly dissent / Piya Chatterjee and Sunaina Maira, editors.
Includes bibliographical references and index.

LB2825.I47 2014
371.010973—dc23 2013038691

Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper

The University of Minnesota is an equal-opportunity educator and employer.
Dedicated to Sri Rama Prasad Chatterjee—beloved baba, teacher, and friend. With deepest respect and gratitude.

And to the Irvine 11, the Davis Dozen, and all those scholars and students who paid the price.
This page intentionally left blank
# Contents

## Introduction

The Imperial University: Race, War, and the Nation-State

*Piya Chatterjee and Sunaina Maira*

## I. Imperial Cartographies

1. New Empire, Same Old University? Education in the American Tropics after 1898
   *Victor Bascara*

2. Militarizing Education: The Intelligence Community’s Spy Camps
   *Roberto J. González*

3. Challenging Complicity: The Neoliberal University and the Prison-Industrial Complex
   *Julia C. Oparah*

## II. Academic Containment

4. Neoliberalism, Militarization, and the Price of Dissent: Policing Protest at the University of California
   *Farah Godrej*

5. Faculty Governance at the University of Southern California
   *Laura Pulido*

6. The Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement and Violations of Academic Freedom at Wayne State University
   *Thomas Abowd*

7. Decolonizing Chicano Studies in the Shadows of the University's “Heteropatriarchal” Order
   *Ana Clarissa Rojas Durazo*
III. Manifest Knowledges

8. Normatizing State Power: Uncritical Ethical Praxis and Zionism  
   Steven Salaita 217

   Alexis Pauline Gumbs 237

10. Teaching outside Liberal-Imperial Discourse: A Critical Dialogue about Antiracist Feminisms  
    Sylvanna Falcón, Sharmila Lodhia, Molly Talcott, and Dana Collins 261

11. Citation and Censure: Pinkwashing and the Sexual Politics of Talking about Israel  
    Jasbir Puar 281

IV. Heresies and Freedoms

12. Within and Against the Imperial University: Reflections on Crossing the Line  
    Nicholas De Genova 301

13. Teaching by Candlelight  
    Vijay Prashad 329

14. UCOP versus R. Dominguez: The FBI Interview. A One-Act Play à la Jean Genet  
    Ricardo Dominguez 343

Acknowledgments 355
Contributors 357
Index 361
Introduction

The Imperial University

Race, War, and the Nation-State

Piya Chatterjee and Sunaina Maira

Storm Troopers and Students

Piya: January 19, 2012. It is midafternoon on a brisk and beautiful winter day in the Inland Empire of Southern California. I enter my second floor office in the Department of Women's Studies at the University of California, Riverside. The hallway is silent. It reminds me, sadly, of any colorless and functional corporate office building. I wish for sound, some sign of collective social life. This alienating silence is particularly acute today given the noisy scenes of protest (including some Rabelaisian revelries with drumming and chants) taking place just a few hundred feet away in the student commons. The Board of Regents of the University of California (UC) is meeting on campus to address the budget crisis that has, for some years now, imperiled this great public university system and led to severe tuition hikes. Students know that their fees will be raised again. Contingent faculty and other workers know they will be plunged into further precarity. For some years now, the alliances forged among student, faculty, and labor unions in response to the public education crisis have meant that any high-level UC administrators’ gathering is met with well-planned protests and resistance. But it also means that police officers and other law enforcement agents are in full gear and out in full force.

Earlier in the day, I join other protestors who throng the site of the meeting and whose mood is quite upbeat. “Whose university?” someone chants. “Our university!” replies the crowd. Plainclothes men mingle with protesters, lots of cameras are out. A friend, familiar with surveillance techniques, nudges me: “No need to get paranoid,” she says, “but you do realize we are all being photographed?” A police officer repeatedly asks us to clear the commons. “Our university!” chants the crowd in response. In that micromoment of regulation around who should people “the commons,” I sense that a fence is being
built—and reinforced—around who can inhabit this public space of higher education and what it means for them to do so. Whose university, indeed?

Later, sitting in my quiet office, I suddenly hear a loud buzzing sound outside my window. A police helicopter is circling over the empty sports field adjacent to the building. It might be an optical illusion (because from that lofty mobile panopticon, it can see much more than I can), but it seems to be circling an empty expanse of green. I watch as the helicopter’s circles become smaller, tighter—it begins to resemble a psychotic bee. It seems utterly mad: the silence within, the angry buzzing outside. Suddenly, a small troop of khaki-clad youth march around the corner to my right. They have little bandanas around their neck, they are in perfect formation—they pass by quickly. I blink hard because it seems so unreal—the quick, youthful military march whose steps I cannot hear. Later, I am told that they were deployed by the Riverside sheriff’s department.

This tableau feels surreal and I decide to move back to the noise and action near the student commons. The scene has now turned tense. Police in full riot gear are nose-to-nose with students who are pushing them back. Protestors want the police out of their commons. I learn from someone that some protestors have been arrested. The Riverside Police Department’s SWAT team is already here and the regents have been escorted to their meeting in what looked like a secret service mission and military cavalcade, fit for royalty: regents, indeed. By late evening, the protestors have dispersed, but some of us, witnesses and participants, remain—talking about the various registers of militarized presence: the sheriff’s scouts, the campus police in full riot gear, the SWAT team. The disruption of this collective protest seems to have hardly caused a ripple as we stand there in the now-quiet bucolic green expanse. But as if to remind us of the hyperreal qualities of this landscape of power, we hear the thump of marching steps. Twenty men in light green khaki march by in platoon formation. They make no sound except for the quiet thud of their steps. They are young, not much older than some of the students I teach. The SWAT team is going home.

What can we make of this strange coupling of the bucolic and the brutal, of storm troopers and students? How can we make sense of a corporatized alienation and silence alongside the visible regulation of the “public” and contours of permissible protest? How can we understand more deeply this militarized performance of state university power and its “normalization” within the quiet green peace of a public university campus? What is being “secured” in this performance of power?
Occupy the Occupation

Sunaina: November 2011. Just a few months prior to the events witnessed by Piya at UC Riverside, I had watched the pepper spraying of students by police on my campus, UC Davis. I was actually halfway across the world at the time, in Ramallah, Palestine. Pondering the question of U.S. public university students’ right to protest from contexts such as the occupied West Bank, where the basic freedom of mobility let alone right to education is highly restricted, underscores the ways in which higher education is firmly embedded in global structures of repression, militarism, and neoliberalism. In fact, that November morning while I was working in Zamn cafe, one of the many upscale coffee shops that have burgeoned in the new neoliberal economy of Ramallah, I looked up from my laptop and saw the image of Lt. John Pike, spraying UC Davis students with chemical weapons, on the large-screen television that was broadcasting Al Jazeera news. It was a slightly surreal moment.

The video of the attack on the student protesters, seated on the ground, quickly went viral and drew national and global condemnation of this stark staging of state violence against the 99 percent, renaming the campus “Pepper Spray University.” Not all who watched the video of the police attack on the student protesters, however, were aware that this dramatic event was the culmination of a long history of UC student protests, including at UC Davis, against tuition hikes as the burden of the UC and state’s budget crisis was increasingly placed on UC students. In the months leading up to the infamous incident of November 18, 2011, UC Davis students had joined the growing Occupy movement, inspired by the revolutionary uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt. In fact, they had protested just a few days earlier against the fee hikes and also the violent assaults by police on UC Berkeley students and faculty. Student protesters, some of whom belonged to Occupy/Decolonize UC Davis (UCD), occupied the administration building and erected tents on the campus Quad. The administration refused to allow Tahrir Square to be brought to the Quad, but the protesters insisted on their right to remain—in defense of the right to education. Then the pepper spray.

In fall 2009, UC Davis students had also occupied the administration building, and fifty-two protesters were arrested. In March 2010, three hundred protesters had shut down the campus bus service and marched to the freeway to attempt to block traffic; they were beaten by police with batons. Many of these students were youth of color, some were from immigrant and
working- or lower-middle-class families. When the Occupy/Decolonize UCD movement was launched in the wake of the Tahrir Square uprising, some began to also critique the ways in which neoliberal multiculturalism effectively masked the racialized politics of exclusion from higher education.1 In spring 2012, Occupy protesters began doing a regular sit-in at the U.S. Bank branch on campus, protesting the bank’s contract with the campus and the complicity of both institutions with mounting student debt and the privatization of higher education. On March 29, the bank was shut down, but eleven students and one faculty member were charged by the Yolo County district attorney with a slew of misdemeanors, facing up to eleven years in prison. Among the “Davis Dozen” were students who had been pepper sprayed and who were part of a lawsuit brought by the ACLU against the university. In fact, given that it was the university who had asked the district attorney to file criminal charges against the Davis Dozen, it was apparent that this much-less publicized case was an opportunity for the administration to clamp down on the campus Occupy movement after having been unable to do so in the fall, given the national and international outcry over the pepper spraying. Some student activists were also brought up individually for investigation by Student Judicial Affairs for issues apparently related to involvement in other campus activism. In other words, this was a tactic of legal pepper spraying.

One of the issues that had rocked the campus earlier in spring 2012, and in which some Occupy activists had been involved, was the attack on the Palestine solidarity movement at UC Davis in the wake of the controversial interruption of an Israeli soldier’s talk on campus by a student. Off-campus, pro-Israel groups began issuing vitriolic statements of condemnation, and UC president Mark Yudof sent a strident letter to the entire UC community condemning the disruption. The UC Davis Students for Justice in Palestine had actually staged a silent walkout at the event in order to avoid criminal charges similar to those that had harshly penalized the UC Irvine and UC Riverside students, known as the Irvine 11. These eleven students had disrupted the speech of the Israeli ambassador at UC Irvine after the 2009 massacre in Gaza and had been prosecuted by the Orange County district attorney for their civil disobedience. The criminalization of the Irvine 11 sent a chilling message to Palestine solidarity activists that free speech in the case of critique of the Israeli state was not free, even in the academy, and came with the price of possible felony charges by the state. But the case also sparked creative organizing strategies as student activists nationwide began
walking out of pro-Israel events with their mouths taped, silently perform-
ing a critique of censorship and the exceptional repression of open debate
on this issue. It became apparent that Israeli government officials and sol-
diers of a foreign (occupying) military—supported and funded heavily by
the United States—had more freedom of political speech on U.S. public uni-
versity campuses than college students (not to mention the fact that many
Arab and Muslim American youth have been subjected to FBI surveillance
and entrapment since 9/11).

In Ramallah, as the Arab revolutions swept across the region in 2011, Pal-
estinian youth, too, protested against military occupation as well as internal
repression. Palestinian students continue to be abducted and incarcerated
by Israel, which restricts their access to schools and colleges, as highlighted by
the Right to Education campaign at Birzeit University. Young activists began
stenciling graffiti on the walls of Ramallah with slogans such as “Occupy
Wall Street, Not Palestine” and “#Un-Occupy.” Student activists at UC Davis
were simultaneously rethinking the vocabulary of “occupy,” which signifies a
tactic of protest and also a colonial practice, and adopted the label “decolo-
nize” to indicate their solidarity with indigenous peoples. “Decolonize the
university” is their demand—occupy the banks and occupy the occupation
of other lands, other universities, and other societies transformed and devas-
tated by settler colonialism, militarism, and neoliberal capitalism.

The Imperial University

In a post-9/11 world, the U.S. university has become a particularly charged
site for debates about nationalism, patriotism, citizenship, and democracy.
The “crisis” of academic freedom emerges from events such as the ones we
witnessed in Riverside and Davis but also in many other campuses where
administrative policing flexes its muscles along with the batons, chemical
weapons, and riot gear of police and SWAT teams and where containment
and censorship of political critique is enacted through the collusion of the
university, partisan off-campus groups and networks, and the state. After
9/11, we have witnessed a calamitously repressive series of well-coordinated
attacks against scholars who have dared to challenge the national consen-
sus on U.S. wars and overseas occupations. Yet there has been stunningly
little scholarly attention paid to this policing of knowledge, especially
against academics who have dared to challenge the national consensus on
U.S. wars and overseas occupations and U.S. foreign policy in the Middle
East. Simultaneously, the growing privatization of the public university, as in California, has demonstrated the ways in which the gates of access to public higher education are increasingly closed and the more subtle ways in which dissident scholarly and pedagogical work (and their institutional locations) is delegitimized and—in particularly telling instances—censored at both public and private institutions. The 9/11 attacks and the crises of late capitalism in the global North have intensified the crisis of repression in the United States and also the ongoing restructuring of the academy—as well as resistance to that process—here as well as in the global South.

What does it mean, then, to challenge the collusion of the university with militarism and occupation, the privatization of higher education, and economies of knowledge from within the U.S. university? When scholars and students who openly connect U.S. state formation to imperialism, war, and racial violence are disciplined, then how are we to understand freedom, academic and otherwise? How is post-9/11 policing and surveillance linked to racial, gendered, and class practices in the neoliberal academy? Has the War on Terror simply deepened a much longer historical pattern of wartime censorship and monitoring of intellectual work or is this something new?

This edited volume offers reports from the trenches of a war on scholarly dissent that has raged for two or three decades now and has intensified since 9/11, analyzed by some of the very scholars who have been targeted or have directly engaged in these battles. The stakes here are high. These dissenting scholars and the knowledges they produce are constructed by right-wing critics as a threat to U.S. power and global hegemony, as has been the case in earlier moments in U.S. history, particularly during the Cold War. Much discussion of incidents where academics have been denied tenure or publicly attacked for their critique of U.S. foreign or domestic policies, as in earlier moments, has centered on the important question of academic freedom. However, the chapters in this book break new ground by demonstrating that what is really at work in these attacks are the logics of racism, warfare, and nationalism that undergird U.S. imperialism and also the architecture of the U.S. academy. Our argument here is that these logics shape a systemic structure of repression of academic knowledge that counters the imperial, nation-building project.

The premise of this book is that the U.S. academy is an “imperial university.” As in all imperial and colonial nations, intellectuals and scholarship play an important role—directly or indirectly, willingly or unwittingly—in legitimizing American exceptionalism and rationalizing U.S. expansionism.
and repression, domestically and globally. The title of this book, then, is not a rhetorical flourish but offers a concept that is grounded in the particular imperial formation of the United States, one that is in many ways ambiguous and shape-shifting. It is important to note that U.S. imperialism is characterized by deterritorialized, flexible, and covert practices of subjugation and violence and as such does not resemble historical forms of European colonialism that depended on territorial colonialism. As a settler-colonial nation, it has over time developed various strategies of control that include proxy wars, secret interventions, and client regimes aimed at maintaining its political, economic, and military dominance around the globe, as well as cultural interventions and “soft power.” The chapters here help to illuminate and historicize the role of the U.S. university in legitimizing notions of Manifest Destiny and foundational mythologies of settler colonialism and exceptional democracy as well as the attempts by scholars and students to challenge and subvert them.

This book demonstrates the ways in which the academy’s role in supporting state policies is crucial, even—and especially—as a presumably liberal institution. Indeed, it is precisely the support of a liberal class that is always critical for the maintenance of “benevolent empire.” As U.S. military and overseas interventions are increasingly framed as humanitarian wars—to save oppressed others and rescue victimized women—it is liberal ideologies of gender, sexuality, religion, pluralism, and democracy that are key to uphold. The university is a key battleground in these culture wars and in producing as well as contesting knowledges about the state of the nation.

We argue that the state of permanent war that is core to U.S. imperialism and racial statecraft has three fronts: military, cultural, and academic. Our conceptualization of the imperial university links these fronts of war, for the academic battleground is part of the culture wars that emerge in a militarized nation, one that is always presumably under threat, externally or internally. Debates about national identity and national culture shape the battles over academic freedom and the role of the university in defining the racial boundaries of the nation and its “proper” subjects and “proper” politics. Furthermore, pedagogies of nationhood, race, gender, sexuality, class, and culture within the imperial nation are fundamentally intertwined with the interests of neoliberal capital and the possibilities of economic dominance.

The chapters here link the critique of the university to the contemporary as well as historical workings of race, warfare, and the nation-state. They demonstrate that an analysis of the foundational linkages between the U.S.
academy and the imperial nation-state need to be critically scrutinized, especially in the post-9/11 moment, and that overseas imperial interventions are linked to domestic repression, policing, and containment that penetrate the university. In drawing attention to the core issue of U.S. imperialism, this volume goes beyond a liberal discourse of academic freedom, one that is generally bounded by the nation and individual rights. Shifting the focus from notions of freedom of expression, the chapters here link the battles over knowledge production and the policing of critical scholarship to the geopolitics of U.S. imperialism across historical time and space. The contributors to this book bring together seemingly disparate geographic areas and historical moments that are key sites of U.S. expansionism and U.S.-backed occupation (such as the Philippines, Palestine, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico) as well as varied fields of scholarship (such as American studies, cultural studies, Middle East studies, feminist studies, queer studies, and ethnic studies) precisely to show how knowledge building is central to the imperial project.

The chapters speak to one another across self-evident areas, themes, disciplines, and historical periods. Through multidisciplinary research, autobiographical reflection, and writing in theoretical as well as personal registers, the book offers an intellectual and political intervention that we have imagined as a project of solidarity. As scholars who spend long hours sitting in our quiet offices—occasionally interrupted by the buzz of a helicopter—or in cafes in zones of differential occupation, wondering what acts of violence are not being televised, we began working on this book in order to engage in a conversation that often only happens in university hallways or over cocktails at academic conferences but not enough in public and in print. The contributors to this book raise crucial questions about the imperial university that we hope will generate and contribute to an important, unfolding conversation with scholars, intellectuals, and students and also activists, policymakers, and interested readers in the United States and beyond.

Insiders/Outsiders/Solidarities

Our geopolitical positions—of our immediate workplaces as well as transnational work circuits—underscore the complex contradictions of our locations within the U.S. academy. These paradoxes of positionality and employment have seeded this project in important ways. We have both taught at the University of California for many years—in addition to other U.S. universities—and have been members of the privileged upper caste of
U.S. higher education: the tenured professoriate. We have each used these privileges of class, education, and cultural capital to live and work transnationally and have organized around and written about issues of warfare, colonialism, occupation, immigration, racism, gender rights, youth culture, and labor politics, within and outside the United States. In fact, we first began working together when we collaborated in 2008 on a collective statement of feminist solidarity with women suffering from the violence of U.S. wars and occupation, during the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan and the Israeli siege of Gaza. Yet our privileges of entry, of inclusion, and of outside-ness are also always marked by the “dangerous complicities” of imperial privilege and neoliberal capital, as the chapters by Julia Oparah; Sylvanna Falcón, Sharmila Lodhia, Molly Talcott, and Dana Collins; Vijay Prashad; and Laura Pulido powerfully remind us. Even as we have recognized the institutional privileges and complicities through which we can do this work, we have experienced at various moments and in different ways—as the chapters by Alexis Gumbs, Clarissa Rojas, Thomas Abowd, and Nicholas De Genova suggest—a keen sense of being “outsiders” within—in the university, in academic disciplines, in different nations.

As scholars and teachers located within “critical ethnic studies” and “women and gender studies,” we are also well aware of a certain politics of value, legitimacy, and marginality at play, especially as the dismantling of the public higher education system and attacks on ethnic studies around the nation accelerate. The struggles to build ethnic studies and women/gender/sexuality studies as legitimate scholarly endeavors within the academy, emerging from several strands of the civil rights and antiwar movements, are well chronicled and keenly debated. The precarious positions as well as increasing professionalization and policing of these interdisciplinary fields within the current restructuring of the university is a matter of deep concern; for example, in the wake of the assault on ethnic studies in Arizona, the dismantling of women’s studies programs, and in a climate of policing and criminalizing immigrant “others” across the nation.

The pressure on academics to fund one’s own research—following the dominant grant-writing models of science and technology—is now even more explicit in a time of fiscal crisis and deepening fissures between faculty in the humanities, social sciences, physical sciences, education, and business who occupy very different positions in an increasingly privatized university. Prashad reminds us in his chapter of the consequences of the fiscal crisis for college students who bear a massive and growing burden of debt. We
recognize these pressures on faculty and students as stemming from neoliberal capitalism and the university’s capitulation to a global “structural adjustment” policy that is now coming “home” to roost in the United States, as astutely argued by Farah Godrej in her analysis linking the neoliberal university to militarism and violence. The academy has also tried to market the notion of “public scholarship,” transforming activist scholarship into a commodifiable form of knowledge production and dissemination that can affirm the university’s civic engagement—confined by the parameters of permissible politics, as incisively critiqued by Salaita, Rojas, and Abowd. If we cannot—or choose not to—market our scholarship and pedagogies through these programs of funding and institutionalization, we find our work further devalued within the dominant terms of privatization in the academy. Given that neoliberal market ideologies now underwrite the “value” of our research and intellectual work, what happens to scholars whose writing directly tackles the questions of U.S. state violence, logics of settler colonialism, and global political and economic dominance?

We know from stories about campaigns related to tenure or defamation of scholars, often shared in hallways during conferences and sometimes through e-mail listservs and the media, that there are serious costs to writing and speaking about these matters. For far too many colleagues who confront the most taboo of topics, such as indigenous critiques of genocide and settler colonialism or especially the question of Palestine, the price paid has been extraordinarily high. It has included the denial of promotion to tenure, being de-tenured, not having employment contracts renewed, or never being hired and being blacklisted, as this book poignantly illustrates. Coupled with the loss of livelihood or exile from the U.S. academy, many scholars have been stigmatized, harassed, and penalized in overt and covert ways. There are numerous such cases, sadly way too many to recount here—most famously those of Ward Churchill, Norman Finkelstein, David Graeber, Joel Kovel, Terri Ginsberg, Marc Ellis, Margo Nanlal-Rankoe, Wadie Said, and Sami Al-Arian—but it is generally only the handful that generate public campaigns that receive attention while many others remain unknown, not to mention innumerable cases of students who have been surveilled or harassed, such as Syed Fahad Hashmi from Brooklyn College, while again there are countless other untold stories.10 These are the scandals and open secrets, we argue, that need to be revealed and placed in broader frames of analysis of labor and survival within the U.S. university system.11

As some of the chapters powerfully demonstrate, struggles against
censure, self-censorship, and institutional silencing are connected to longer genealogies in which the alliance between the academy and state power is abundantly clear. We consider this gathering of chapters an act of collective and collaborative solidarity between authors and editors, who in different ways have engaged and challenged the dominant codes of belonging and citizenship within the academic nation. Indeed, as the chapters suggest, these critiques also offer the possibility of a decolonized university—one in which we can both imagine and enact our pedagogies and scholarship through a postcarceral and nonimperial institutional lens, as suggested by Oparah and Falcón et al. and as gestured to by several other authors. Such a process of decolonization is possible through the work of solidarity. The collection joins a growing archive of urgent conversations about the future of critique and dissent in the U.S. university that we will continue to engage with through a web archive that accompanies the book. We hope this digital project will allow this conversation to spill over from the pages of the book and continue in the years to come.

Crises and Continuities

While the heightened patriotism in the wake of 9/11 and a decade of U.S. wars and occupation overseas have amplified the role of the academy in shaping our understanding of U.S. global dominance and simultaneously intensified attacks on “anti-American” views—particularly in relation to the Middle East and to Islam—there is nothing “new” about this state of emergency. Ongoing debates about the role of the imperial university are indicative of the “state of exception”; that is, the exclusion of some from liberal democracy and eviction from political rights is not a sudden break but is constitutive of the imperial state and the state of permanent war. The notion of the “imperial university” suggests that the War on Terror and the post-9/11 culture wars made hypervisible the persistent role of higher education in shaping the discourses of nationalism, patriotism, citizenship, and democracy. This is a key premise of our framework and one that underlies many of the chapters here.

Indeed, in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, Lynne Cheney and Joseph Lieberman’s American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA) and other neoconservative groups sounded a clarion call for an intensified scrutiny of scholarship that challenged U.S. dominance. These campaigns underscored the frontlines of the culture wars through robust deployment of notions
of patriotism and national security considered key to defending “Western civilization” in a nation presumably facing an existential threat. Animating this powerful sense of danger to U.S. dominance are specific kinds of “anti-American” scholarship and the dangerous knowledges they impart. Furthermore, the specter unleashed by unruly student protestors and the repression that they elicit can be viewed as one important aspect of this end game of cultural and imperial supremacy—and its pepper spraying and paranoias.

The post-9/11 policing of knowledge and the neoliberal restructuring of the university create pressure points that reveal the forces of political imperialism and the economic matrix within which they are embedded, as argued by Godrej and Prashad, among others. This is a matrix that is historically formed: an imperial “knowledge complex” is fed by the profitable business of militarism, incarceration, and war. A decade after 9/11, the crises of late capitalism in the global North (and the dismantling of public education) unravel the “safety nets” for many university students and employees; this is a process that Gumbs points out has a much longer genealogy that is intertwined with the racial management of populations within and beyond the campus. The “downsizing” of the university unmasks an ideological “precarity” even for critically engaged tenured or tenure-track faculty, among the most elite and “protected” of academic workers, as suggested by Pulido’s reflection on tenure battles in an elite, private institution. In fact, Oparah points out that private, liberal arts institutions are crucial to the corporate logics of the “global knowledge marketplace,” so that the neoliberal restructuring of the public university is clearly at work at private institutions as well, as wittily observed in Prashad’s account of his own college. Furthermore, Oparah argues that liberal arts colleges provide the corporate sector and the military-prison-industrial complex with “moral capital” precisely because of their supposed liberalism. As Prashad’s analysis suggests, the crises of “academic freedom” or student debt allow us to dig more deeply into the ways in which neoliberal practices and their geopolitics intersect—and how this informs the consolidation of the corporate university.

The bursts of dissent (both within scholarly production and in student protests and the Occupy movement) suggest that “business as usual” is being disrupted in the U.S. university. However, this dissent—and the modes of repression it provokes—begs the question of what sustains “business as usual.” Our introductory vignette, juxtaposing the bucolic green of a “peaceful” campus with the performance of militarized power, offers our unease with the normalized terms of “peace” in our elysian surroundings, not to
mention with the complicity of the U.S. state with military occupations elsewhere and the lockdown on open critique of particular foreign states. The police in riot gear do not signal something exceptional; rather, their presence unmask the codes of “the normal” in academic discourse and practice. It is a normalization that we see routinely in the grants that we are encouraged to apply for and in Department of Defense funding that many scientists, social scientists, and technologists receive for their research, as discussed in Roberto González’s chapter. The capital provided by these grants has built the foundations of some of the most powerful and preeminent universities in the world: MIT, Stanford, UC Berkeley, California Institute of Technology (Caltech), and many others. The alliance between military research and science, which is well known, builds the deepest strata of connection and complicity between imperial statecraft and the knowledge complex of the U.S. academy. This, also, is nothing new, as González and Oparah demonstrate in analyzing the historical, global economies within which U.S. intelligence and prison systems enact violent logics of incapacitation and counterinsurgency.

The contributors to this book seek to illuminate the historical continuities of crisis and the boundaries of regulation and containment, especially in the current moment, because they reveal the threshold of academic repression. This involves connecting analyses of localized domestic dissent (e.g., in student protests) to the censorship of scholarship and pedagogies of critique of U.S. state projects (especially related to support for Israel and the domestic and global frontlines of the War on Terror). Many of the chapters highlight that the regulation and repression of various forms of dissent share core ideologies—about corporate and militarized capitalism as the means and ends of state power as well as the deeper codes of cultural, racial, and national supremacy that they enable. When the University of California debates the purchase of an army tank, as it did in Berkeley in 2012, it crudely reveals the profound strategic confluence of military science and militarized praxis in fortifying the citadels of higher learning.

There are four overlapping arenas central to this complex field of engagement and debate that undergird the conceptual framework of our book: imperial cartographies, academic containment, manifest knowledges, and heresies and freedoms. These arenas provide a rubric for understanding the intersecting fronts of the academic, cultural, and military wars, and they also provide the scaffolding for the chapters that follow in this book.
**Imperial Cartographies**

Empires of knowledge rest on the foundation of racial statecraft, militarized science, and enduring notions of civilizational superiority. What we call “imperial cartographies” can be traced through the meshed contours of research methods and scholarly theories as they are staked out in the pragmatic mappings of conquest, settlement, and administration of U.S. empire.\textsuperscript{14} It is important to note that expert knowledge on “other” cultures and civilizations has been a cornerstone of the development of academic disciplines and used in the management of “difference” within the nation as well as the conquest and management of native populations by the United States, here and overseas.

For example, Victor Bascara examines an early iteration (and a model, perhaps) of what Bill Readings has called the “Americanization” of the university.\textsuperscript{15} Bascara’s chapter on the imperial universities founded in the U.S.-controlled territories of Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines after 1898 demonstrates how educational discourse and practices in the colonies exemplified a complex colonizing mission. Cultural “difference” was mapped within the classroom through a distinct racial and gendered lens, one that, however benevolently, consistently tracked the ideologies of U.S. military, cultural, and economic supremacy. The educational mission for inclusion and civilization “there,” on the periphery, became a laboratory for new regimes of governmentality “here,” within the immediate territorial borders of the United States.

If universities of the imperial periphery introduced a new governmentality and constructed mobile, but unequal, racial/gendered and national subjects, then these processes must also be understood within the epistemologies of “othering” being constructed by disciplines such as anthropology. Late nineteenth-century anthropology emerged through centuries-old scientific curiosity (and debates) about human difference as well as the administrative imperatives of other imperial powers, such as Britain.\textsuperscript{16} Theoretical constructions of categories such as “savage” and “primitive” were not mere reflections of ivory tower ruminations about human origins and human science or “cultural” essences but helped create the very scaffoldings of European and later U.S. imperial cartographies.\textsuperscript{17}

If these constructions of racial hierarchy shaped the curricular and disciplinary consensus about difference in the imperial university, then what can we say about institutional research practices that explicitly furthered state
projects, especially during times of internal and external crises, such as war? In other words, what happens when professional scholars use their disciplinary tools and training to further military projects to defend the “national interest”? Academic knowledges about others have been significant as both information and “intelligence” for the subjugation and administration of indigenous and minoritized communities, within and beyond the United States, as demonstrated by González’s fascinating research on the contemporary Intelligence Community Center of Academic Excellence programs that target students of color. While this volume does not explore the fuller histories of the relationship between the U.S. academy and war efforts throughout the twentieth century, we gesture to some historical “plottings” that signal an enduring coimplication between the institutionalized practices of the military and the academy. It is this deep historicized process of normalization that has created the dominant “consensus” and “silence” in the imperial university in the post-9/11 period.

During World War I, for instance, some archaeologists worked as spies to literally offer “on ground geographical knowledges” that, as David Price argues, were “highly valued in wartime intelligence circles.”18 This involvement, however, created controversy when Franz Boas, the preeminent anthropologist, protested the involvement of anthropologists with U.S. military intelligence.19 Though Boas was not supported by a majority of his colleagues, the controversy has shaped the debates about the politics and ethics of anthropologists’ relationship to military intelligence to this day, as addressed in González’s chapter and by the Network of Concerned Anthropologists within the American Anthropological Association.

The imperial university was deeply embroiled in issues of war, labor, and protest throughout the first half of the twentieth century and during the earlier Red Scare. World War I and its aftermath saw the targeting and deportation of anarchists and antiwar socialists during the infamous Palmer Raids in a period of heightened nationalism and repression. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) was cofounded in 1915 by John Dewey and Arthur Lovejoy; the latter resigned from Stanford University over a controversy regarding the abuse of immigrant labor by the industrialist Stanford family.20 In 1940, the Rapp-Coudert Committee was established to “investigate ‘subversive activities’ at public and private colleges in New York.”21 Faculty and students at the City College of New York were protesting fascism and capitalism through the 1930s, with progressive student groups staging mass protests and sit-ins. The committee actually subpoenaed and
questioned more than a hundred faculty, students, and staff; denounced more than eight hundred public school teachers and college faculty; and fired over sixty CCNY faculty.22

It is, of course, World War II and the ascendance of the United States as a global superpower that propelled the alliance between the U.S. state and the academy to new heights. The Manhattan Project and the development of the atom bomb sealed this intimate and soon inextricable link between scientific research and militarism. As R. C. Lewontin powerfully suggests, “It is not General Groves at his desk in the Los Alamos labs that has provided the symbolic image of the atom bomb project’s iconography but an Italian professor building an atomic pile under the spectator’s stands of the University of Chicago’s athletic field. It is there, not in the Nevada desert, that Henry Moore’s ambiguous fusion of a mushroom cloud and a death’s head memorializes the Bomb.”23 As U.S. and Allied forces launched themselves into the global theatre of war, they recognized that they needed condensed, accelerated training about the geographies and peoples they were encountering. Ironically, it was the Boasian commitment to field-based linguistic anthropology that created the capacity for “quickly learning and teaching the languages of the new theatres of warfare.”24 Further, Army Specialized Training Programs (ASTPs) were established on 227 college and university campuses,25 and some anthropologists helped create “pocket guides” for Army Special Forces. These booklets summarized a region’s geographical history and included gems of “cultural advice” such as “not approaching Egyptian women” and “not concluding that East Indian men holding hands are homosexuals;”26 early predecessors to the post-9/11 manuals on understanding “the Arab mind” or Islam used to train U.S. military interrogators and FBI agents in the War on Terror.

If the distilled study of “other cultures,” enabled by academic expertise, became important for warcraft in external theaters, other sets of research skills were used for the surveillance and containment of “others” within the nation-state. For instance, anthropologists at the Bureau of Indian Affairs monitored and influenced war-related opinion on Native American reservations.27 Some anthropologists were involved in studying Japanese American communities as they “adapted” to their lives in the concentration camps set up by the War Relocation Authority, “one of the most publicly visible and volatile topics relating to anthropology’s war time contributions.”28 Between 1945 and 1948, this rapid and intense distillation of “method” and “information” about world cultures consolidated in area studies, arguably a paradigm
shift in U.S. scholarship, and one that was based on an interdisciplinary approach that would literally carve out—and map—“regions” of the world.

By the end of World War II and the onset of the Cold War, the state-university compact to ensure that scientific knowledges would continue to serve U.S. global power was well assured. Noam Chomsky has argued that by 1945, U.S. wealth and power in the “international sphere probably had no counterpart in history.” Out of this mesh of forces of capital and superpower politics and supremacy emerged a consensus that state (and corporate) funding for “research and development” in science and technology in the service of military development was vital for the growth of universities.30

Warnings about the dangers of this deep alliance between the U.S. military and intelligence, civil society, and the academy came not only from the margins but also from the Oval Office itself. Dwight Eisenhower prophetically warned about consequences of the immense power inhered in what he called the “military-industrial complex.” Interestingly, in an earlier draft of this famous speech, he had apparently inserted the word “academic” in the now famous mantra of power, but it was deleted. It was another politician, William Fulbright, who issued a clear warning of the dangers of academic collusion with the militarized state when he stated, “In lending itself too much for the purpose of government, a university fails its higher purpose.”32 These concerns about the narrowing of the sphere of democratic debate were also being raised by distinguished scholars (such as Hannah Arendt and John Dewey33) but McCarthyism and a new wave of political repression ensured that questions were not asked about the business of war—or the reasons that the business of war was also becoming an academic business.34

This intersection of Department of Defense, Pentagon, and research university interests resulted in massive amounts of funding and shifted the fiscal nature of universities’ state patronage from land-grant, agricultural resources to the huge war chest of the defense establishment. This fiscal patronage was both overt and covert, involving individual academics and departments across the disciplines, not just the sciences, with support from military grants. Chomsky, for example, remembers that in 1960 the political science department at MIT was funded by the CIA; closed seminars were held and “they had a villa in Saigon where students were working on pacification projects for doctoral dissertations.”35 As González points out in his chapter, “the CIA supported social science research throughout the 1950s and 1960s to perfect psychological torture techniques that were outsourced to Vietnam, Argentina, and other countries.” World War II and the Cold War
had created, without a doubt, the prime “condition for the socialization of research and education.” At the height of the Cold War, social scientists were recruited to serve in military intelligence operations—whether gathering more “benign” forms of information, serving with the army in Vietnam, or teaching in the School of the Americas—and after 9/11, became “embedded” with the military in Afghanistan and Iraq.

It is important also to note the countervailing forces that exposed some of these practices of imperial cartography and research to critical scrutiny and engaged in social protest and academic dissent. The combined pressures of decolonization, the U.S. civil rights movement, and the anti–Vietnam War protests in the 1960s unmasked the collusion between knowledge production and U.S. warcraft at significant moments. For instance, a scandal erupted about Project Camelot, initiated by the Special Operations Research Office (SORO) in 1964 and aimed at Latin America, with the stated goal to “devise procedures for assessing the potential for internal wars within national societies.” When exposed in Chile, it drew “unwelcome attention” to the clear geopolitical, Cold War imperatives of area studies.

If area studies constituted a certain kind of imperial cartography, its design also had “unintended consequences,” as argued by Immanuel Wallerstein. Most importantly, it opened up “interdisciplinary studies” in new ways and dislodged traditional ethnography and Oriental studies, the dominant approaches for the study of “Others.” These shifts created space for more “radical” visions of interdisciplinarity and curricular formation in the 1970s—namely, in the demand for, and establishment of, both ethnic studies and women’s studies. Decolonizing and radical social movements (within and outside the United States), especially the antiwar movement, were profoundly important in carving out some space for alternative cartographies of knowledge—albeit marginal ones—within the university.

If the protest movements of the 1960s interrupted the hegemonic workings of the military-academy nexus, the post-9/11 historical moment, according to many, is a retrenchment and intensification of this matrix of power. It is important to recognize the paradox cohering within the processes of collusion and protest at work in the academic-military-industrial complex. On the one hand, if it were not for the ruptures of the 1960s, however short-lived, we as scholars in ethnic studies and women’s studies would not be employed in the very institutional sites that were created by those interventions. On the other hand, as Roderick Ferguson has argued and as Rojas and Gumbs suggest here, ethnic studies is increasingly part of an
institutional incorporation and recuperation of protest movements and dissenting scholarship that can reproduce the deeply imperial logics of management and violence. This recomposition and absorption rests in the very paradox of the material realities that greatly expanded the U.S. academy and historically allowed it to prosper—military funding and military science. It was a prosperity that meant, and continues to mean, the normalization and acceptance of great repression within the academy and beyond, as evoked by Godrej and De Genova. Both repression and protest, then, might be viewed as part of the Janus-faced coin of the imperial university as engendered by U.S. economic power, especially in the immediate postwar period: a global supremacy intimately connected to the state-military alliance that protected its global capitalist interests.

What, then, are the “new” avatars of this imperial cartography? There are powerful historical continuities in the academy of the alliances among the natural and technological sciences, the social sciences, and the military-prison-industrial complex (MPIC), or the academic-MPIC. It is important to theorize, and map, the international political economies that underwrite the immensely powerful alliances among transnational corporate capital (especially in the business of war and prisons), the military industry, and the state. González draws attention to the $60 million Department of Defense–funded Minerva Consortium, which continues to provide funding to social science research projects connected to “national security.” The role of the academy in these alliances consolidates what Oparah calls “dangerous complicities,” which inform the politics of institutional—and disciplinary—survival in difficult economic times.

Certainly, there has also been resistance to the consolidation of the academic-military-industrial complex, for example, by the Network of Concerned Anthropologists and academics opposed to the Human Terrain System and by some scholars in the American Psychological Association during the heated debate about the role of psychological experts in torture practiced by the U.S. military in the War on Terror. There is also a long history of scientists who challenged the military imperatives of defense research—for example, offering an alternative definition of national security during the era of the Cold War and the nuclear arms race—and who were themselves regarded as “national security threats.”

But the question remains, is scholarly dissent simply the other face of the coin of academic repression—that is, are expressions of protest doomed to be incorporated into the imperial cartographies they resist or is it possible for
them to create alternative mappings that resist recuperation? The chapters in this book allude to this enduring dilemma about resistance from within, directly and indirectly; some authors suggest that what is needed is a new paradigm that reframes the architecture of repression. For example, across distinctly different sites of (neo)colonialism and global capitalism, Oparah argues for an unmasking of a transnational carceral logic of “new” empire that traffics between the imperial core and its peripheries. She argues that it is not more, “countercarceral” knowledge that scholars resisting the “militarization and prisonization of academia” must produce in order to realize a postcarceral academy. Rather, academics must use their privilege to challenge the complicity of the academy with, and call for divestment from, prison and military industries. As Oparah and also Prashad eloquently suggest, the university must be reimagined as a site of solidarity with those engaged in struggles against neoliberal capitalism and organizing for the abolition of the academic-MPIC.

The chapters in this book provide analyses of imperial cartographies that can undergird this solidarity from within the academic-MPIC, uncovering the role of the carceral academy and exposing the hidden links between prison regimes in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as within the United States, not to mention secret prisons or “black sites” overseas. Orientalist constructions of terrorists or religious “fanatics” underwrite military interventions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan as well as counterterrorism programs in the United States. As scholars such as González have observed, counterinsurgency has a cultural front that rests on racialized understandings and management of populations, an argument that is extended in his chapter on intelligence training through new programs recruiting students of color for new, presumably cosmopolitan careers. Indeed, González argues that the new intelligence centers are predicated on a transnational, racial mapping where the “emphasis is on the importance of building an ethnically and culturally diverse pool of intelligence agents who might blend in more easily abroad” and on the need for “FBI agents who can speak to Muslim women that might be intimidated by men.” Curricular development in these new, multicultural sites of imperial knowledge production reproduce enduring racial/gendered stereotypes and old Orientalist binaries of the “East and West” necessary for new fronts of war.

This external Orientalized mapping is intimately coupled with racialized disciplinary regimes within the United States. If students of color in public universities are being targeted for intelligence training in more systematic
ways since 2001, then Oparah and Gumbs remind us of the historical presence of military recruitment and the prison industry at these same institutions. Oparah’s chapter remaps the indelible connections between U.S. militarization (abroad) and logics of carcerality (at home) through academic institutions that invest in and produce the capital, workers, and knowledges for an immensely profitable MPIC, one increasingly linked to foreign zones of occupation, such as in Palestine-Israel. These racialized, gendered, and classed mappings of an “empire within” are intimately linked to the subjugation of “foreign,” racialized others beyond U.S. borders—a simultaneous logic, and process, that is then used to contain, and target, dissent from within the imperial university.

**Academic Containment**

State warfare and militarism have shored up deeply powerful notions of patriotism, intertwined with a politics of race, class, gender, sexuality, and religion, through the culture wars that have embroiled the U.S. academy. The fronts of “hot” and “cold” wars—military, cultural, and academic—have rested on an ideological framework that has defined the “enemy” as a threat to U.S. freedom and democracy. This enemy produced and propped up in the shifting culture wars—earlier the Communist, now the (Muslim) terrorist—has always been both external and internal. The overt policing of knowledge production, exemplified by right-wing groups such as ACTA, reveals an ideological battle cry in the “culture wars” that have burgeoned in the wake of the civil rights movement—and the containment and policing demanded within the academy. Defending the civilizational integrity of the nation requires producing a national subject and citizen by regulating the boundaries of what is permissible and desirable to express in national culture—and in the university. As Readings observed, “In modernity, the University becomes the model of the social bond that ties individuals in a common relation to the idea of the nation-state.” Belonging is figured through the metaphor of patriotic citizenship, in the nation and in the academy, through displays of what Henry Giroux has also called “patriotic correctness”: “an ideology that privileges conformity over critical learning and that represents dissent as something akin to a terrorist act.”

This is where the recent culture wars have shaped the politics of what we call academic containment. For right-wing activists, the nation must be fortified by an educational foundation that upholds, at its core, the singular
superiority of Western civilization. A nation-state construed as being under attack is in a state of cultural crisis where any sign of disloyalty to the nation is an act of treachery, including acts perceived as intellectual betrayal. The culture wars have worked to uphold a powerful mythology about American democracy and the American Dream and a potent fiction about freedom of expression that in actuality contains academic dissent. This exceptionalist mythology has historically represented the U.S. nation as a beacon of individual liberty and a bulwark against the Evil Empire or Communist bloc; Third Worldist and left insurgent movements, including uprisings within the United States in the 1960s and 1970s and in Central America in the 1980s; Islamist militancy and anti-imperial movements since the 1980s; and the threat posed by all of these to the American “way of life.” The battle against Communism, anti-imperial Third Worldism, and so-called Islamofascism entailed regulating and containing movements sympathetic to these forces at home, including intellectuals with left-leaning tendencies and radical scholars or students—all those likely to contaminate young minds and indoctrinate students in “subversive” or “anti-American” ideologies.

What does it mean, then, to contain scholars who “cross the line” in their academic work or public engagement? Academic containment can take on many modalities: stigmatizing an academic as too “political,” devaluing and marginalizing scholarship, unleashing an FBI investigation, blacklisting, or not granting scholars the final passport into elite citizenship in the academic nation—that is, tenure. These various modalities of containment, which are discussed by Thomas Abowd, Laura Pulido, and Steven Salaita, among others, narrow the universe of discourse around what is really permissible, acceptable, and tolerable for scholars in the imperial university. All these modes are at work in the three important moments of ideological policing that we touch on here: World War I and the McCarthy era of the 1940s–1950s, the COINTELPRO era from the late 1950s to early 1970s, and the post-9/11 era or “new Cold War,” which is the major focus of this book.

Moments of social stress and open dissent about class politics in the United States during World War I and the first decades of the twentieth century make clear that containment worked in tandem with emerging definitions of “academic freedom.” As the U.S. professoriate began to build its ranks at the end of the nineteenth century and a few scholarsChallenged the status quo, “academic freedom” emerged as a way to deal with these dissenters as well as the “relative insecurity” felt by many in this new profession. Indeed, the tumult of the turn of the century led to a pattern within
the academy that has persisted—the exclusion of ideas as well as behavior that the majority did not like and an increasingly internalized notion that “advocacy for social change” was a professional risk for academics.

The AAUP’s Seligman Report of 1915 reveals that the notion of academic freedom was, in fact, “deeply enmeshed” with the “overall status, security, and prestige of the academic profession.” Setting up procedural safeguards was important, but its language regarding “appropriate scholarly behavior” and cautiousness about responding to controversial matters in the academy (by ensuring that all sides of the case were presented) suggested the limits of dissent. Academic freedom, then, is a notion that is deeply bound up with academic containment—a paradox suggested in our earlier discussion of protest and inclusion/incorporation in the academy and one that has become increasingly institutionalized since the formation of the AAUP.

The academic repression of the McCarthy era received its impetus from President Truman’s March 22, 1947, executive order that “established a new loyalty secrecy program for federal employees.” However, the roots of institutional capitulation—by both administrators and faculty—when the state targeted academics who were communists or viewed as “sympathizers” are much deeper. It is also significant that the notion of “appropriate behavior” for faculty rested on a majoritarian academic “consensus” about “civil” and “collegial” comportment. For example, Ellen Schechter notes cases prior to the Cold War where scholars were fired not necessarily for their political affiliations per se but due to “their outspoken-ness.” This repression from within—not just beyond—the academy reveals the cultures of academic containment where, as Pulido, Gumbs, and Rojas remind us, certain kinds of “unruliness” must be managed or excised.

The logic of academic containment was dramatically staged during the civil rights and antiwar struggles, when the FBI surveilled and arrested Black Power, anti-imperialist, and radical scholar-activists during the era of COINTELPRO (1956–1971). Angela Davis, most famously, was fired from UCLA by then California governor Ronald Reagan for being a member of the Communist Party. Some of these radical intellectuals went on to develop and establish programs in ethnic studies, critical race studies, and women’s studies, fields that later became embroiled in the conservative attacks that unfolded in the 1980s and 1990s against the specter of an “un-American” and “divisive” multiculturalism. Works such as Allan Bloom’s *The Closing of the American Mind*, Roger Kimball’s *Tenured Radicals: How Politics has Corrupted Our Higher Education*, and in some ways also David Hollinger’s
Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism generated anxieties about the presumed failure of university education to transmit an essential set of knowledges and a contentious debate about the divisiveness of multiculturalism and movements for group rights.52

Right-wing hysteria and neoconservative moral panics in the culture wars were accompanied by liberal concerns that ethnic studies, and to some extent women's studies and queer studies, were devolving into “identity politics.” Liberal-left intellectuals, such as Todd Gitlin, worried that ethnic and racial studies asserted an identitarianism that was an abandonment of a “proper” left politics. Salaita points out that Gitlin also criticized as irresponsible scholars who challenged the policies of the Israeli state, as have other progressive scholars open to critiques of militarism or colonialism—except in the case of Israel. In other words, the culture wars were fought not just between the right and left but within the liberal-progressive left as well.

In her painful—and politically revealing—experience with Chicana/o studies in California public institutions over the past twenty years, Rojas offers a glimpse “of the ways imperial projects order gender/sexual/racial politics at the public university” and the “resulting devastating violence deployed on subjects deemed dangerous to the colonial imaginary of a colonial, heteropatriarchal Chicano studies.” The difficult question that Rojas's “testimonio” addresses is how to connect this hetero-masculinist logic and violence—what she calls heteropatriarchalities—to the “incorporation” of ostensibly liberatory, decolonizing projects such as Chicano/a studies that were birthed through the antiwar and antiracist movements of the 1960s. We view this perverse “incorporation” of ethnic studies as the result of a dangerous “internalization” of the imperial project of the university and also as meshing well with the hetero-masculinist and classed cultures that shape the dominant, everyday practices of the imperial academy. Containment is not abstract at all—it is marked decisively, and often violently, on specific kinds of bodies whose presence is definitively marked as “Other,” as evident in Abowd's and Godrej's chapters. If one speaks from already dangerous embodiments, structured historically, then that speech risks always being seen as a threat. The “natives” within the academy must be most careful and most civilized in their speech, as Rojas and Abowd suggest. Their queer/sexed/raced bodies mark always-possible threats. There are enough natives who perform the terms of civilization and capitulation and contain themselves: that is how empires have always ruled—through tokenism,
exceptionalism, and divide-and-rule. When it comes from “within,” contain-
ment and silencing—as Rojas shows us—can be the most devastating of all.

These stories of academic containment must be situated within the cul-
ture wars and also within the context of what Christopher Newfield, among
other critics, calls a “long counterrevolution” against the gains of the civil
rights and left movements of previous decades. Newfield argues that right-
wing movements waged a cultural offensive that targeted “progressive trends
in the public universities” as an important front of “roundabout wars” on
the middle class, waged through the “culture wars on higher education”:
“The culture wars were economic wars” against the new, increasingly racially
integrated middle class, “discrediting the cultural framework that had been
empowering that group.” In other words, the culture wars were also class
wars staged on a racial battlefield, for the corporatization and privatization
of the public university, as in California, occurred as it was becoming more
racially integrated.

Several chapters illustrate the ways in which academic containment
emerges with and though the containment of economic, racial, and cultural
struggles. In Gumbs’s chapter, the class wars are situated in the racial man-
gement of student of color and immigrant populations in the CUNY sys-
tem in the post–civil rights era of open admissions and campus occupations
by students; violent policing to enforce “law and order” accompanied rising
incarceration rates of people of color. Similarly, Godrej’s chapter illuminates
the ways in which protests of university privatization and nonviolent civil
disobedience by students and faculty during the current budget crisis in
the University of California have been met with police brutality by increas-
ingly militarized campuses; casting these movements as a threat evades the
structural violence of tuition hikes, exclusion, impoverishment, home fore-
closures, and the “neoliberal disinvestment in the concept of education as a
public good.”

In effect, the neoliberal structuring of the university is also a racial strat-
 egy of management of an increasingly diverse student population, as increas-
ing numbers of minority and immigrant students have entered public higher
education. Well-funded, neoconservative organizations and partisan groups,
such as ACTA, David Horowitz’s Freedom Center, and Campus Watch, have
placed ethnic studies, feminist and queer studies, and critical cultural studies
in their bull’s-eye as the political project of leftist professors running amok in
the academy and teaching biased curricula. In addition, campaigns such as
Horowitz’s Academic Bill of Rights and Student Bill of Rights constructed
the figure of a new victim in the culture wars: the “American student” whose freedom to challenge these partisan faculty had been suppressed. According to these right-wing campaigns, “radical” scholars were force-feeding U.S. college students with anti-American views, and right-wing students were being marginalized and “discriminated” against due to their political ideology and affirmative action programs. Thus the language of marginalization and exclusion was turned on its head, as the discourse of right-wing victimhood and ideological discrimination was unleashed against the political movements and intellectual projects that opposed racial and class inequality.

In addition, the right appropriated the language of “diversity,” a key point of contradiction in the academic culture wars. For example, the “Students for Academic Freedom” campaign launched by Horowitz used the notion of “intellectual pluralism” to mask its well-orchestrated attack on the left. The cultural right manufactured a portrait of itself as the true advocate of intellectual pluralism and freedom, remaking diversity through a “free market” model based on the right to choice in the marketplace of ideas. The notion of choice, central to models of flexible accumulation and global economic competitiveness for proponents of neoliberal capitalism, underlies the tenet of intellectual choice. A “weak” multiculturalism and liberal notion of tolerance thus served the right well, for they used it to argue that the problem was not simply that of “diversity,” which they apparently embraced, but that there wasn’t enough “intellectual diversity” on college campuses. Teaching, and also research, was becoming one-sided, to the detriment of those upholding “true” American values, who were increasingly marginalized in hotbeds of left indoctrination into anti-Americanism on college campuses. In addition, as Pulido’s case study demonstrates, as faculty and administrators of color—not to mention women—have made their way into the ranks of university management, academic institutions can hide behind the language of racial (and gender) representativeness and tokenist inclusion to deflect critiques of systemic problems with faculty governance.

The strategic co-optation of the language of pluralism for academic containment is nowhere more evident than in the assault on progressive scholarship in Middle East studies and postcolonial studies and in the intense culture wars over Islam, the War on Terror, and Israel-Palestine. The 9/11 attacks and the heightened Islamophobia they generated allowed Zionist and neoconservative groups to intensify accusations that progressive Middle East studies scholars and scholars critical of U.S. foreign policy were guilty of bias and “one-sided” partisanship, as observed in accounts of censure,
suspicion, and vilification by Abowd, De Genova, and Salaita. The post-9/11 culture wars conjured up new and not-so-new phantoms of enemies—in particular, the racialized specter of the “terrorist.” This figure, and the racial panic associated with it, has been sedimented in the national imaginary as synonymous with the “Muslim” and the “Arab” since the Iranian Revolution of 1978–1979 and the First Intifada against Israeli occupation in the late 1980s. The War on Terror consolidated Orientalist caricatures of Muslim fanatics and Arab militants, but it is important to note that these also dredged up avatars of a historical logic of containment and annihilation of indigenous others.59 The native, the barbarian, and the foreigner converge in this cultural imaginary that legitimizes violence against anti-Western, uncivilized regions incapable of democratic self-governance and that is produced by expert knowledge of other peoples and regions. The wars in Iraq and “Af-Pak” and the global hunt for terrorists entailed an intensified suspicion and scrutiny of ideologies that supported militant resistance or “anti-American” sentiments and necessitated academic research on communities that were supposedly “breeding grounds” for terrorism.

The post-9/11 panic about Muslim terrorists and enemy aliens increasingly focused on the threat of “homegrown terrorism” as the War on Terror shifted its focus to “radicalized” communities within the United States, especially Muslim American youth. At the same time, as Godrej observes, the criminalization of those considered threats to national security has included the violent repression of Occupy activists and student protesters and indefinite detention authorized by the PATRIOT (Provide Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism) Act and the National Defense Authorization Act. Protests focused on higher education thus blur into dissent against U.S. warfare and the homeland security state in a climate of heightened campus securitization and university collaboration with the FBI in the interest of “public safety.” Anarchists are considered domestic terror threats to be contained, and Muslim or Arab American students (or faculty) who are also anarchists are subjected to multiple levels of containment and scrutiny, as suggested in the chapter by Falcón et al. Academic containment is clearly part of a larger politics of repression and policing in the national security state that affects faculty and students as well as the campus climate in general.

While the FBI has interviewed unknown numbers of Muslim and Arab American college students and infiltrated and monitored Muslim student organizations since 9/11, counterterrorism experts have generated models of
“radicalization” of Muslim youth, especially males, invoking cultural pathologies of “hate” and alienation. Regimes of surveillance, detention, and deportation of terrorists, or terrorist sympathizers lurking within the nation, are underwritten by a gendered and racialized logic: the imperative to save women, particularly Muslim and Middle Eastern women, from inherently misogynistic Muslim and Middle Eastern men. Cultural knowledge and academic expertise are needed to refine policies of humanitarian intervention in these imperial cartographies of nations or cultures whose women are in need of rescue and nations or civilizations in need of saving, as brilliantly argued by Jasbir Puar in her work on U.S. and Israeli homonationalisms. While it is easy to critique overtly racist commentators in the culture wars, we must note that it is not just right wing but also liberal critics and scholars who worry that a new “political correctness” is supposedly silencing critiques of cultures and religious communities whose social norms are inherently antithetical to Western secular modernity (that is, Muslims and Arabs). This allegation ignores the deafening silences in many quarters—including in the academy—about ongoing state terror against particular, racialized populations.60

Indeed, the antiwar movement has been dismally weak on most college campuses since 2003–2004 and there have barely been any campus protests against the wars and drone attacks in Afghanistan and Pakistan that continue to be waged by Obama or against the prison at Guantanamo. A troubling trend since 9/11 is that U.S. liberal feminism concerned about the oppression of Muslim women—but not about the occupation, colonization, and devastation of their societies by warfare or neoliberal capitalism—has found perhaps unlikely allies in neocon activists in the culture wars, from Irshad Manji and Ayaan Hirsi Ali to Horowitz.61 And equally significantly, these external attacks on critical scholarship have occurred in a context where the neoliberal privatization of the university has accelerated and where attacks on women’s and gender studies, queer studies, and also ethnic studies programs have intensified.

In addition, we see a gendered and racial logic in academic containment where the figure of the “angry Arab” (or Muslim) male scholar is often subjected to policing by a deeply politicized notion of academic “civility.” There is a general uneasiness about male scholars of color as inappropriately aggressive if they challenge the status quo, especially in the context of U.S. nationalisms and nationalisms allied with U.S. hegemony—that is, American Zionist movements. This is evident from the string of campaigns targeting
Arab and Palestinian male academics in the United States, such as Sami Al-Arian, Joseph Massad, Rashid Khalidi, and Abowd, who alludes to the racial logic in the allegations drummed up against him by Zionist activists and the dismal, and in some cases hostile, response of the university administration.

So while there are indeed Arab and Muslim female academics who have been targeted by Zionist campaigns, notably the Palestinian academic Nadia Abu El Haj, it is evident that Arab and Muslim masculinities are framed in the culture wars as inherently violent and potentially perverse. At the minimum, they are insufficiently conforming to or excessively threatening to white American masculinity, and, at worst, they are an existential threat to the nation, but in either case they must be contained. On the other hand, Arab and Muslim femininities are viewed by this same Orientalist logic as inherently victimized and in need of protection, but it is generally difficult to view the Arab or Muslim male scholar as in need of saving and support within the framework of liberal white “civility.”

Abowd pinpoints the unease with “uppity” Arab male academics who challenge the powerful status quo in the academy in a climate in which Arabophobia, not to mention Islamophobia, has consolidated the conflation of critiques of Israel with sympathy for terrorism. This is a moment in which even campus boycott and divestment movements focused on Israel are attacked as “anti-Semitic,” as evident in the firestorm over the panel on boycott at Brooklyn College in 2013, there is a complex conflation of racialization, racism, gendering, and right-wing nationalism that is at work here, one that Puar and Salaita address. Furthermore, as Abowd notes, overtly racialized constructions and suspicion of Muslim male academics—or academics who might be Muslim—as inherently anti-Semitic and militant and who must be disciplined, emerge in unexpected moments and in academic spaces where one would assume this kind of blatant racial suspicion is impermissible. Falcón et al’s chapter cites the poignant case of an Arab/Muslim American male student who was removed from the classroom by police and was considered a “threat” due to his radical, anti-imperialist critiques, which, not surprisingly, he felt increasingly fearful of expressing in class. Their chapter reminds us that we need to think more deeply about how the post-9/11 apparatus of policing and surveillance has affected students who feel the most vulnerable and has transformed the classroom environment.

The racial and gendered logic of academic containment is powerfully evident in De Genova’s autobiographical chapter, which suggests that the critique of white male scholars who directly challenge dominant ideologies
of militarism and U.S. foreign policy, if expressed in terms that unsettle the acceptable academic consensus in elite institutions, is also deeply troubling and compels other academics to distance themselves from dissent considered beyond the pale. Processes of racialization and gendering—the building of consensus around war and nation making—are intertwined with the daily work and lived experience of scholars within the university, making it a highly charged site in debates about the mission of higher education and the future of the nation-state.

**Manifest Knowledges**

The U.S. academy has been built, historically, on a set of conceptual and political foundations about what it means to educate people about freedom, democracy, and citizenship. The university is an institution that has roots in an Enlightenment project of liberal Western modernity and was founded as a space historically open only to male, propertied subjects. In addition, as we have argued and as the chapters demonstrate, the U.S. university has been a space where foundational histories of settler colonialism and Manifest Destiny have been buttressed, exposed, and contested. The linkages between the university and the global expansionism of the United States are thus crucial to explore if we understand the academy as an imperial university that produces what we call “manifest knowledges”—what is, and what can be, known about histories of genocide, warfare, enslavement, and social death and what are manifestly insurgent truths.

All the chapters in this book speak to this issue, some more directly than others. Gumbs brilliantly excavates pedagogies of both disciplining and subalternity in the teaching of English composition, which she describes as a tool for making expendable, minority student populations “composed” in the context of imperial racism and genocidal violence—manifest knowledges are enacted in both police brutality and overseas invasions, from New York to Grenada and Palestine. Black feminist poets June Jordan and Audre Lorde subverted the dictates of what Gumbs describes as “police English” in criminology programs that supported the pedagogy of police brutality, insisting instead on teaching black English and exploring how imperialism, in the United States and elsewhere, defined who was human.

There is by now a robust body of scholarship in several fields such as American studies, Native American studies, indigenous studies, ethnic studies, queer studies, and feminist studies that has challenged canonical tenets
of U.S. history and Manifest Destiny. Yet it is also very apparent that manifest knowledges about state violence and imperialism continue to be contested in the settler colony and its academy—including knowledge about U.S. support for other states’ violence and settler colonial policies, as pointed out by Salaita, Gumbs, Falcón et al., and Puar, as well as by Abowd and Oparah. Manifest knowledges thus involve the production, and policing, of foundational truths about a global apparatus of settler colonialism that extends beyond the United States to other imperial and colonial sites. Scholarship and critical teaching of U.S. foreign (imperial) policy in Iraq and Afghanistan and, in particular, of U.S. support for the Israeli state and its colonial and apartheid policies have long come under fire from a constellation of right-wing and pro-Israel think tanks and groups. Critiques of the contradictions between a state practicing discrimination based on religion and race and its self-professed image as an exemplar of “liberal democracy,” in a sea of backward and antidemocratic Arab and Muslim nations, began to mount around the world and, gradually, in the United States, particularly on college campuses. There has been growing condemnation of Israel’s illegal occupation, especially in the wake of the massacre of civilians in Gaza in 2008–2009, the murder of international solidarity activists aboard the humanitarian aid flotilla trying to break the siege of Gaza in 2010, and the second war on Gaza in fall 2012. As Abowd notes, the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement in the United States has grown since 2008–2009, but this has also led to an unprecedented demonization of Palestine solidarity and Muslim American student groups, who became increasingly engaged with antiwar activism and progressive-left alliances after 9/11. American Zionists rejected the possibility that there could be “human rights” for Palestinians—a population synonymous with “Islamic Jihad.”64

For instance, in 2010, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) blacklisted Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), a Palestine solidarity organization with autonomous campus chapters across the nation, as one of the top ten anti-Israel organizations in the United States—along with the Muslim Student Association, the leftist antiwar coalition ANSWER, and Jewish Voice for Peace—for daring to “accuse Israel of racism, oppression and human rights violations.”65 The ADL was outraged that “SJP chapters regularly organize activities presenting a biased view of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including mock ‘apartheid walls’ and ‘checkpoint’ displays, presentations by sensationalistic anti-Israel speakers and longer programs like Palestine Awareness and Israeli Apartheid weeks,” featuring “speakers who described Israel as an
‘ethnocentric racist society’ and Zionism as ‘inherently undemocratic.’” The report, and the scare quotes therein, revealed precisely what was so effective about these student protests but so threatening to a group such as the ADL, which has long masqueraded as an antiracist organization advocating for civil rights—except in the case of Israel-Palestine, where it supports racial discrimination and the suspension of civil rights.66 Salaita astutely observes that this contradiction arises from a situation in which “support for Israel is actually necessitous of proper multicultural consciousness” for academics and so considered normative and apolitical, while support for Palestinian rights is considered indecently “political.” The academic battle over the permissibility and boundaries of knowledge production about Israel-Palestine has thus become one of the most charged sites of manifest knowledges in the imperial university today.

As SJP activists began using creative protest strategies, erecting mock checkpoints and simulacra of the Israeli “security wall” in the middle of campuses, the racial politics of Israeli state technologies of policing, segregation, encampment, collective punishment, and displacement of Arabs and Muslims suddenly erupted into plain sight in the U.S. academy. This provoked a vicious backlash from those who had long sought to suppress these “facts on the ground” and support the Israeli state’s exceptionalism, including in the academy, as noted by Salaita and Puar. The ADL, for example, has a long history of blacklisting and harassment of faculty who are critical of Israel, such as Noam Chomsky and William Robinson, a sociologist at UC Santa Barbara who was accused of anti-Semitism for his critique of Israel’s war on Gaza in 2009.67 The threat of “deportation” from the academic nation—which can and has resulted in the loss of livelihood—creates a stifling climate of repression in which many faculty and doctoral students engage in self-censorship, altering their research agendas and teaching for fear of threats to their careers.

The ADL is just one of many prominent, off-campus groups active in the culture wars related to Israel-Palestine that regularly intervenes in college campuses and documents cases of anti-Semitism conflated with “anti-Israelism” and, consequently—as Puar notes in her chapter and Salaita has observed elsewhere—promotes the indivisibility of Israel and Jewishness.68 This tactic has been taken to new levels in campaigns to define campus activism critical of Israel as racist and anti-Semitic and hence in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, as well as in the California State Assembly resolution HR 35, mentioned by Prashad, which makes a similarly stunning move.69
But the point is also, as Salaita has argued, that groups such as the ADL have used the language of liberal humanism and tolerance, civil rights, and antiracism to promote and consolidate the commonsense that “support for Israel is a prerequisite of responsible multicultural citizenship,” nowhere more evident than in the U.S. academy. Furthermore, Puar’s groundbreaking work on homonationalism incisively critiques the ways in which the production of Israel as gay friendly and thus liberal and modern has made Israeli “pink-washing” of its repression and violence against Palestinians, including queer Palestinians, an effective strategy for recruiting liberal gays and lesbians worldwide. This liberal, “multicultural conviviality” conflates American and Israeli exceptionalisms and produces a commonsensical pro-Israelism that defines acceptable national belonging and multicultural citizenship here in the United States—not simply in Israel or only for Jewish Americans. This manifest knowledge has become a cornerstone of notions of “civility” and of academic freedom in the U.S. academy, as indicated by Abowd’s chapter as well as De Genova’s observations of the fliers attacking him as betraying Israel, not just the United States, after 9/11. This is because, as Salaita points out, allegiance to U.S. state power is conflated with loyalty to Israel.

At the same time, the book is unique in situating an analysis of the Palestine issue, which often seems “exceptional” in the U.S. academy, in relation to a longer genealogy of settler colonialism and a broader structure of McCarthyism that extends beyond Middle East studies and implicates fields such as feminist, queer, and ethnic studies. It in this regard that Gumbs’s eloquent chapter on the poetics of solidarity offers a different window into the writing and pedagogy of June Jordan and Audre Lorde, situating it in relation to their anti-imperialist critiques of the Israeli assault on Palestine and also the U.S. invasion of Grenada in the 1980s. Puar also interrogates the ways in which Israeli homonationalism is entangled with the politics of global gay and lesbian organizing and anti-Muslim racism in Europe and the United States and undermines transnational queer and feminist solidarity through regimes of censure within and beyond the academy. Manifest knowledges are, thus, produced and regulated in multiple sites, and these chapters offer alternative archives of composition and citation, censure and solidarity.

As the normative commonsense and also the censorship of the Palestine question has begun to dissolve somewhat in the academy in recent years and the Arab uprisings shifted the dominant narrative about the “Arab and Muslim world,” if ever so slightly, a new front of the culture wars has shifted its focus to solidarity with Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim queers and women.
who must be rescued by the West from homophobia, honor killings, or other “cultural crimes.” Puar points out that the “woman question,” as a rationale for colonial domination, has increasingly been replaced by the “homosexual question,” harnessing sexual rights to a discourse of racial and cultural superiority and buttressed by academic knowledge circuits. As Gumbs argues, in an earlier moment, black feminist writers developed a queer poetics of survival and insurgent knowledge production in the context of racial panics over saving white femininity from the threat of minority and immigrant males and in an era of assaults on the self-determination of Third World nations. Manifest knowledges of gender and sexuality are thus intimately bound with colonialist and racial logics of rescue and freedom in modernity that infuse the culture wars.

Falcón et al. bring the question of manifest knowledges as a queer and feminist question into the classroom and into the context of transnational feminist pedagogy and collaboration as part of their Collective of Antiracist Scholar Activists. They grapple collectively with what it means to teach antiracist, feminist critiques of capitalism, imperialism, and heteronormativity while not falling prey to the university’s demand for “superserviceable feminism” and “competitive individualist” scholarly production as women scholars with and without tenure-track positions. The form of their coauthored chapter/dialogue creatively expresses their desire for challenging the demands for neoliberal productivity while being cognizant of their complex institutional positions and the opportunities available as academics to teach feminist, critical race, and postcolonial theory. As scholar-activists, their pedagogy and collaboration become a method for resisting manifest knowledges, not just about U.S. imperial culture, but about what it means to be a “proper,” productive academic. As hinted at in our opening reflections on the Occupy student movement, Falcón et al.’s chapter calls on us to create anti-imperialist spaces of knowledge production and pedagogy within our classrooms and “occupy” the imperial university.

Heresies and Freedoms

Following from the production of manifest knowledges and logic of academic containment in the imperial university, the chapters in this section explore how liberal codes of academic freedom are undermined or consolidated as neoliberal privatization weakens spaces of critique in the academy. The chapters by De Genova, Prashad, and Dominguez in the concluding section of
the book, as well as other chapters, critique what could be described as the “holy grail” of academic freedom, one of the pillars upon which academic liberalism builds its edifice and which is central to the academic wars. We argue that there is a narrowing of the field of possible dissent in the U.S. academy precisely because of the ways in which the repression of knowledge production and the resistance to academic repression are both constituted through notions of academic freedom and academic heresies.

We gestured earlier to how the development of “academic freedom” took place against the backdrop of World War I and the early twentieth century precisely because of the nonconformity of individual scholars in class and wartime politics. Academic freedom emerged as a way to both negotiate a sense of professional insecurity as well as construct a measured response to matters of “national interest” (such as anticapitalist or antiwar protest). This was a critical time for establishing the protocols of professionalism for academia. Ellen W. Shrecker, in her magisterial study of McCarthyism’s effects on the academy, argues that the pivotal Seligman Report by the AAUP in 1915 “reveals how deeply enmeshed the notion of academic freedom was with the overall status, security and prestige of the academic profession.”73 It is apparent that academic freedom continues to be fragile given the increasing professionalization of the academy and hypercompetitiveness of the academic job market.

Indeed, De Genova’s experience of “crossing the line” at Columbia University, in the post-9/11 climate of hypernationalism, is part of a genealogy that he traces to 1917, when Columbia penalized two faculty members for their public opposition to World War I. A controversy arose at the time about the distinguished historian, Charles Beard, who remarked in 1916 (during debates about U.S. “neutrality”) that the “world’s strongest republic could certainly withstand the inconsequential effort of a single ‘To Hell with the Flag’ comment.”74 Outraged trustees at Columbia interrogated Beard about his comment and political views in an unpleasant echo of De Genova’s own account of academic repression. Though Beard was eventually “exonerated,” he resigned when his two colleagues at Columbia were terminated due to their political views. A powerful precedent about the boundaries of political—especially antistate—speech was set into motion.

Where were “academic freedom” and the AAUP during this ferment? The newly created organization kept a distance from the unrest enveloping the Columbia campus and was “unwilling to offer its limited assistance to those being driven off campuses.”75 Schecter argues that the AAUP’s early
discussions of academic freedom sought primarily to protect faculty from outsiders’ “meddling” with scholar’s teaching and research by setting up “procedural safeguards.” But these safeguards could not adequately address political dissidence or any political positions that were considered “unsympathetic” by the majority of academics. What appeared to be “protection” was really about perceptions, and evaluations, of institutional loyalty and “appropriate” behavior that would not jeopardize the professionalism and status of academia.

When the litmus test of the AAUP’s politics and “academic freedom” arrived four decades later, in the form of McCarthyite repression, the academy’s capitulation to state imperatives and the subsequent destruction of many individual careers and lives should not come as a surprise. Prashad points out that faculty were expelled for their relationship to the Communist Party under the guise of defending academic freedom, for to be a Communist was to be enslaved by dogma and to be unfree. Academic freedom was constructed through a negative and reactive polarity to create the narrow boundaries for “permissible dissent” rather than a positive protection in support of dissent. Clyde Barrow observes, “It created an intellectually defensible zone of political autonomy for the professoriate, which . . . sufficiently circumscribed as to exclude as unscholarly whatever political behavior the leading member of the academic community feared might trigger outside intervention.” Even when university presidents could have protected their faculty, most did not, as in the case at the University of Washington discussed by Prashad. The fact that some university administrators could, and did, resist assaults on academic freedom showed that universities could have defied state repression—but most chose not to.

Loyalty to the institution and profession was built on a hegemonic consensus (including among “liberal” faculty) of protecting economic security, most importantly for the majority. Indeed, adherence to this “corporate ideal” was premised on the artificial bifurcation of “politics” and “administration” so that the (administrative) protection of tenure (and other procedural safeguards) could be seen as outside of the realms of the “political.” As the chapters by De Genova, Prashad, and Salaita suggest, this ideologically constructed bifurcation continues to haunt radical and progressive scholars in battles over tenure, employment, and teaching today, even if the particular definition of what constitutes the threshold of the “political” shifts over time in the imperial university.

Clearly, if academic freedom is invoked as a “holy grail” in regulating and
containing the proper subjects of the imperial nation, the “bad” citizen of the
academy is considered heretical. As Ricardo Dominguez and Pulido, Abowd,
and De Genova eloquently discuss, acts of transgression of the boundaries
of belonging to the academic nation illuminate how narrow, and fragile, the
universe of dissent is. While it is perhaps easy to pinpoint, if not always to
counter, the campaigns of right-wing and conservative scholars and activists
against academic dissent, these chapters highlight an important point—that
for academics, censorship and repression generally comes wrapped in a lib-
eral mantle, and it is waged through the language of diversity, dialogue, and,
often, academic freedom itself. Right-wing and neoconservative activists—or
what Prashad calls “cultural vigilantes”—in the culture wars have not only
strategically reshaped the discourse of diversity and feminism, as alluded to
earlier, but also appropriated the language of “academic freedom.” Indeed,
right-wing groups such as Horowitz’s Students for Academic Freedom have
used the notion of “intellectual pluralism” to police teaching and invoked
academic freedom as a new ideological battle cry for the right. So the fol-
lowing are the crucial questions: How is it possible to transform academic
freedom into a justification for the closing down, rather than opening up, of
intellectual and political debates? What inheres in the principle of academic
freedom that allows it to be appropriated, apparently seamlessly, by those
who align themselves with the political and economic status quo?

The answers lie, to a large extent, in the definition and utilization of aca-
demic freedom as a liberal principle and in the paradoxes that this liberal
politics generates in the academy and beyond. Prashad argues that the lib-
eral precept of academic freedom draws on John Stuart Mills’s conception
of the necessity of “contrary opinions” for providing checks and balances
for social norms but not for enabling a “transformative political agenda.”
A Eurocentric genealogy of academic freedom would trace it to notions of
critical pedagogy in German universities in the eighteenth and nineteenth
centuries, intertwined with notions of economic and political liberalism
embedded in Enlightenment modernity.

Cary Nelson, the renowned president of the American Association for
University Professors (AAUP), who for many U.S. academics represents the
face of institutionalized academic freedom, writes, “Academic freedom thus
embodies Enlightenment commitments to the pursuit of knowledge and
their adaption to different political and social realities.” The AAUP issued
the Declaration of Principles on Academic Freedom and Academic Ten-
ure in 1915, and for some scholars, such as Robert Post, this declaration is
the “greatest articulation of the logic and structure of academic freedom.”

According to Post, this is because it conceptualizes academic freedom as based on “compliance with professional norms” specific to academic labor and on the safeguarding of scholarly expertise that produces “professional self-regulation” and “professional autonomy” for faculty. Yet even Post acknowledges that there is a paradox inherent in this conceptualization based on academic labor, for these professional norms are not so easily defined and so academic freedom is “simultaneously limited by, and independent of, professional norms.” A critic of the AAUP’s unwillingness to protect scholars targeted by McCarthyism suggests the AAUP upholds procedural freedom without an understanding of the importance of expanding its understanding of political freedom: “Stripped of its rhetoric, academic freedom thus turns out to be an essentially corporate protection. And as we trace its development during the Cold War, we should not be surprised to find that it was involved more often to defend the well-being of an institution rather than the political rights of an individual.”

Other scholars, such as Judith Butler, also point out that the AAUP’s formulation of academic freedom intended to “institutionalize a set of employer-employee relationships in an academic setting,” not to guarantee academic freedom as an individual right. While she agrees with Post that academic freedom should not be rooted in “individual freedom” or simply in First Amendment rights of freedom of expression, she goes further to point to the collusion between the university and the state in defining professional norms and professional freedom in scholarship and to emphasize that expectations of what is permissible for academics are always historically evolving and often politically motivated. So these professional constraints are contingent and contested, not fixed; Butler argues, “As faculty members, we are constrained to be free, and in the exercise of our freedom, we continue to operate within the constraints that made our freedom possible in the first place.”

We take these critiques of an individually based, constrained, and “weak” notion of academic freedom further, arguing that academic freedom is perhaps not tenable as a basis for a just struggle for “freedom,” if that struggle needs to be defined by affirmative principles rooted in progressive or left conceptions of freedom, justice, and equality, as suggested by Prashad. In other words, academic freedom is not, and should not be, the holy grail of dissent. Academic freedom is generally understood—and operationalized in the U.S. academy today—as an ideologically neutral principle of freedom
of expression and First Amendment rights. It is thus a libertarian, not just liberal, notion of individual freedom, and it is framed as a core principle of Western modernity and democracy, serving both the liberal-left and the conservative-right. In this model, neo-Nazis or antiabortion advocates have the same rights to academic freedom in the university as do queer activists or antiwar proponents. There is no progressive ethos built into the principle of academic freedom, and this is what makes it easily available for recuperation and resort by the right as much as the left. Prashad makes the important observation that even the academic left often tends to take refuge in the “safe harbor” of academic freedom rather than engaging in a struggle for “genuine campus democracy” and labor rights for workers on campuses and for the right to education as a public good and for a “culture of solidarity,” as evoked by Dominguez.

Perhaps one of the most ironic examples of what could be described as the use of academic freedom as a smoke screen for larger struggles over other kinds of freedoms was the cancellation of the AAUP’s own conference on academic boycotts, slated to be held in 2006 at the Rockefeller Conference Center in Bellagio, Italy. The conference featured a diverse group of scholars with a range of views on the strategy of academic boycott—some in favor, some opposed—within the context of the emerging, global debate about the Palestinian call for an academic boycott of Israeli academic institutions, inspired by the boycott of South African institutions in the apartheid era. However, under mounting pressure from Israeli and pro-Israel academics, the meeting was cancelled.

The AAUP, instead, published online many of the papers intended for presentation at the conference, but it also issued a report strongly condemning the academic boycott. Joan Scott and Harold Linder, who had helped organize the conference and later edited the online publication, expressed dismay that the conference was canceled, but they also concluded that the AAUP’s “principled opposition to academic boycott” was an expression of its commitment to academic freedom. While Joan Scott later revised her position in an eloquent essay, this seemingly contradictory position is an argument that is often used in opposition to the academic boycott, in the case of Israel, and it expresses a deeper paradox that illuminates the fault line at the core of academic freedom—as does the entire saga of the failed conference. Is it possible that closing off the possibility of a boycott of academic institutions—in the context of their complicity with military occupation and
apartheid policies—is an expression of academic freedom, or is it a denial of that academic freedom? And whose academic freedom is being upheld?

Lisa Taraki, a sociologist at Birzeit University in the West Bank who was scheduled to present at Bellagio, noted in her paper, “I think that the abstract ideas of academic freedom and the free exchange of ideas cannot be the only norms influencing the political engagement of academics. Often, when oppression characterizes all social and political relations and structures, as in the case of apartheid South Africa or indeed Palestine, there are equally important and sometimes more important freedoms that must be fought for, even—or I would say especially—by academics and intellectuals.”

Omar Barghouti, a Palestinian intellectual who is, like Taraki, a cofounder of the Palestinian Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI), argued that the AAUP was “privileging academic freedom as above all other freedoms.” Citing Judith Butler, he argued that this position excluded the freedom of “academics in contexts of colonialism, military occupation, and other forms of national oppression where ‘material and institutional foreclosures . . . make it impossible for certain historical subjects to lay claim to the discourse of rights itself’. . . . Academic freedom, from this angle, becomes the exclusive privilege of some academics but not others.”

Barghouti and Taraki make two crucial points: First, they state that academic freedom cannot trump other rights to freedom (and other freedoms)—the right to freedom of mobility for students and scholars to attend college, to travel to conferences, and to do research; the collective right to self-determination; the freedom from occupation and racial segregation; and, in essence, the freedom to live in peace, dignity, and equality. As suggested by our introductory vignettes, the freedom and right to education of students living in zones of occupation and war overseas must be linked to the freedom of students and scholars working—and protesting—within the imperial university. Proponents of the academic boycott of Israeli institutions argued that the campaign is, thus, in support of and produces academic freedom, and also supports human rights for all—as it was in the boycott of South African institutions. Second, they allude to the selectivity of the principle of academic freedom—why South Africa and not Palestine?—and the ways in which the U.S. academy (like the Israeli academy) and professional associations such as the AAUP are firmly embedded in a political context while pretending to be outside or above it.

This adjudication of neutrality and self-professed impartiality is, in fact, a political stance, as argued by Salaita and illustrated by De Genova’s
reflections on the limits of academic solidarity with radical critiques of U.S. imperialism. The holy grail of academic freedom shores up the political commitments and investments—not to mention the intellectual freedoms—of powerful academics and constituencies and fails to protect the commitments and interventions of the heretics who are less powerful or far outside the status quo. This is powerfully illustrated by the intense political campaign targeting De Genova for his “blasphemous” criticism of U.S. military violence and Dominguez’s farcical play about his experience of being investigated by the FBI and UC San Diego due to the Electronic Disturbance Theater’s “virtual sit-in” protesting the UC fee hikes and the Transborder Immigrant Tool project.91 We must ask, why is it that some cases of academic “blasphemy” provoke an outpouring of sympathy and support from colleagues while other cases are considered too heretical to warrant (ready) solidarity?

Nelson’s own writing on academic freedom is instructive in revealing the AAUP president’s political position on academic freedom and its limits—just one instance of exceptionalisms in the intense debate about academic freedoms and heresies among distinguished, progressive scholar-activists. In No University Is an Island: Saving Academic Freedom, Nelson denounces “major fractions of the Left,” especially academics, who have apparently “grown increasingly hostile and unforgiving toward Israel.”92 Nelson’s sweeping statements include anecdotal observations of departments (unnamed) that have apparently refused to consider job candidates who do not support the two-state solution or who support Israel, proclaiming without any specific evidence that there is a hostile academic environment for “faculty and students with sympathies for Israel.”93 One wonders if Nelson is speaking of the same U.S. academy that the authors in this book—and so many other scholars—inhabit and work in or whether he is, indeed, living on “an island.”

We discuss the Bellagio train wreck and Nelson’s position here because of the prominent role of the AAUP in adjudicating and defining the boundaries of academic freedom—and academic heresies—as evident in more recent controversies.94 Despite the AAUP’s otherwise impressive record on issues related to academic labor, the issue of Palestine-Israel seems to be a sticking point for the organization, as is the case in so many other liberal-progressive spaces, including academic ones—precisely because it is obfuscated through a discourse of academic freedom. This illustrates the fault lines in a principle of academic freedom that evacuates politics, in selective instances, or circumscribes and contains what is proper politics for academics, shaping the
stance that scholars can or should take in response to twenty-first-century occupation, settler colonialism, wars, apartheid, and encampment.

Steven Best, Anthony Nocella II, and Peter McLaren, in their edited volume on academic repression, incisively observe that academic freedom, in fact, functions as an “alibi for the machinery of academic repression and control” and ends up justifying the “absorption of higher education into the larger constellation of corporate-military power.” They argue, is constitutive of the academic-military-industrial complex, a framework that situates the university squarely within, and not outside of, the network of state apparatuses of control, discipline, surveillance, carcerality, and violence, as alluded to by Dominguez and as argued by Godrej, Oparah, and Gumbs. In other words, as Taraki and Barghouti also suggest, it does not make sense (for progressives-leftists) to fight for academic freedom outside of the struggle against neoliberal capitalism, racism, sexism, homophobia, warfare, and imperialism. To state it more clearly, there can be no true “freedom” in the academy if there is no such freedom in society at large.

The holy grail of academic freedom, defined within the liberal parameters critiqued by Prashad, has been institutionalized as a limited and problematic horizon for progressive academic mobilization. Academic freedom maintains the illusion of an autonomous university space in a militarized and corporate society such as the United States and in a “surveillance society and post-constitutional garrison state” that continues to be consolidated under Obama, as suggested by Dominguez and other authors. This does not mean giving up entirely on invoking academic freedom, for it can be, and is, often strategically used as a minimal line of defense to introduce critical ideas and broaden public debates within the academy. However, progressive campaigns organized around the principle of academic freedom often run into a profound fault line in their mobilization, if not also organized around larger political principles. In our experience, campaigns focused on organizing in defense of scholars targeted since 9/11, especially those working in Middle East and Palestine studies, often end up struggling with these same contradictions if they attempt to cohere simply around “academic freedom” rather than a more rigorous (progressive) political consensus, given how fractured the academic left is when it comes to Middle East politics and Israel-Palestine.

Critics of the academy, such as Readings, make a fundamental point: “The University is not going to save the world by making the world more
true,” and it must be viewed as all institutions are, not as an exceptional space or site of radicalism and “redemption” but as a site where “academics must work without alibis, which is what the best of them have intended to do.”98 In other words, the university is an institution within an imperial nation-state—a point understated by Readings—and so any struggle waged within or against it must not romanticize its progressive possibilities and must be squarely situated within a struggle that extends beyond its hallowed walls. This is what the Occupy movement, discussed at the outset, attempted to do on many campuses, and this is also why it was so brutally suppressed—because it made a linkage between the university and larger structures of power, as in earlier movements of student uprising, that was fundamentally threatening to the imperial university.

Conclusion: Decolonizing the University

Scholars working in zones of occupation, militarism, settler colonialism, and imperialism, here and there, call on us to recraft our notion of “academic freedom” by focusing unflinchingly on the larger structural forces and deeper alliances between the MPIC and the academy. If we heed this call seriously, we are moved to think about the question of freedom—academic and otherwise—in a much deeper way. Ultimately, our project is to decolonize the imperial university, and the chapters here help us understand how imperial cartographies produce manifest knowledges and logics of academic containment that structure the U.S. academy and its repression. Academic heresies and insurgencies are constitutive of this critique of the holy grail of academic freedom and of the spaces that we can create in our pedagogies and academic work through forms of intellectual guerilla warfare and theaters of dissent, as suggested by Rojas and Dominguez, among others. This involves not shying away from forms of speech and scholarship that compel unease, as De Genova courageously suggests—challenging genocide, “death,” and the many forms of violence under white supremacy and in the settler colonial state. We can build on Gramsci’s critical work on hegemony in thinking of insurgent spaces within the academy that must be fostered in alliance and direct engagement with those “organic intellectuals” or movements beyond the university, even as those alliances are surveilled or censured. If this book is a project of solidarity—one we hope will continue to evolve through our web archive—it aims to help support and build dissent focused on dismantling empire, and thinking freedom otherwise.
Notes


8. For an incisive exploration of some of these contradictions, see Mary E. John, “Postcolonial Feminists in the Western Intellectual Field: Anthropologists and Native Informants?, ” Inscriptions 5, no. 6 (1989): 49–74.


13. See, for example, Erin O’Connor and Maurice Black, “Academic Freedom and


15. Bill Readings, The University in Ruins (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), 2. It is important to note here, though, that Readings’s argument about “Americanization” of the university is embedded within his subtle readings of globalization in the current period and not a wholesale argument about U.S. hegemonic expansion. We use his term to signal this early twentieth-century model that is certainly about the latter, especially in epistemological and curricular formations as Bascara outlines.

16. For the most comprehensive study of the emergence of these ideas in the history of anthropology, see George Stocking, Race, Culture and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

17. For example, some of the earliest British ethnologists were also colonial administrators—who became experts on the languages and “customs and manners” of the natives whom they tried to both understand and control. See Peter Pels, “From Texts to Bodies: Brian Houghton Hodgson and the Emergence of Ethnology in India,” in Anthropology and Colonialism in Asia and Oceania, ed. Jan van Bremen and Akitoshi Shimizu (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1999), 66; Sita Venkateswar, Development and Ethnocide: Colonial Practices in the Andaman Islands (Copenhagen: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 2004).


24–38. McFate’s article provides a fascinating and detailed analysis of the Boas controversy.


21. Ibid., 22.

22. Ibid., 21.


24. Price, Anthropological Intelligence, 74. The 1942 Intensive Language Program was “designed to plug American campuses directly into war prepared-ness” (Price, Anthropological Intelligence, 75).


27. Ibid., 27.

28. Ibid., 165.


33. Giroux, The University in Chains, 161. He notes, “ACTA is not a friend of the principle of academic freedom, nor is it comfortable with John Dewey’s notion that education should be responsive to the deepest conflicts of our time, or Hannah
Arendt’s insistence that debate and a commitment to persuasion are the essence of a democratically oriented politics.”


35. Chomsky, “The Cold War and the University,” 181. Half of MIT’s $200 million budget in 1969 was funded by the military (Ibid., 182); see also Feldman, *Universities in the Business of Repression*, 208, for a table on 1983 DOD Contracts at MIT.


37. For the role of anthropological expertise and training in war, see Price, *Anthropological Intelligence*, and also Roberto González’s chapter. For more contemporary analysis, see John D. Kelly et al., *Anthropology and Global Counterinsurgency*.

38. For a detailed discussion of Project Camelot and the Chilean exposé, see Wallerstein, “The Unintended Consequences of Cold War Area Studies,” 220–23.


42. See Alfred McCoy, *A Question of Torture: CIA Interrogation from the Cold War to the War on Terror* (New York: Henry Holt, 2006).


46. Readings, *The University in Ruins*, 181.


48. See Ellen W. Schrecker, *No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 12–23. In the 1890s, scholars such as Robert T. Ely, a prominent economist, were targeted for their critique of industrialists and what was viewed as pro-Left views. In Ely’s case, a member of the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents charged him with supporting strikes and unions. Faced
with losing his job, Ely capitulated. Schrecker notes that Ely’s victory was an important sacrifice in terms of the practice of “academic freedom” by “accepting the Regent’s authority to censor his political views and more significantly by accepting a restricted notion of appropriate academic behaviour” (italics ours). See Schrecker’s comprehensive and brilliant analysis of this “foundational” moment of academic “containment” (in our terms), 15–17.

49. See Schrecker, No Ivory Tower, 15.

50. Ibid., 18.

51. Ibid., 63.


53. Newfield, Unmaking the Public University, 268.

54. Ibid., 5–6.

55. Ibid., 3–5.

56. The bills are promoted by Students for Academic Freedom, whose webpage has the credo, “You can’t get a good education if they’re only telling you half the story”: http://www.studentsforacademicfreedom.org.


58. Newfield, Unmaking the Public University, 115–21.


60. Chatterjee and Maira, “An Open Letter to All Feminists.”

61. Maira, “‘Good’ and ‘Bad’ Muslim Citizens.”


63. For example, David Horowitz’s ad in the New York Times in 2011 defaming 150 U.S. scholars who supported the academic and cultural boycott of Israel as anti-Semitic proponents of “blood libel” against Jews.


71. Ibid., 3.


75. Ibid., 228.

76. Ibid., 14.

77. Ibid., 229.


80. Ibid., 71.

81. Ibid.

82. Ibid., 75.


85. Ibid., 128.
90. The AAUP called for divestment from corporations complicit with apartheid South Africa in 1985 and acknowledges that this was a “form of boycott,” if not an academic boycott as such. Joan W. Scott et al., “On Academic Boycotts,” AAUP, http://www.aaup.org/report/academic-boycotts.
91. It is interesting to note here the chilling parallels of Dominguez’s surreal interview with FBI agents at UCSD with what happened in the McCarthy period: “It was not uncommon for a faculty member to be called to an administrator’s office to be interrogated in the presence of an agent of the FBI or some other government operations. It was believed quite appropriate for academic administrators to initiate an investigation into the political life of faculty.” See Lionel S. Lewis, *Cold War on Campus* (Piscataway, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1987), 251.
93. Ibid., 110.
94. This was made ever more apparent in the controversy that erupted about the issue of AAUP’s *Journal of Academic Freedom* on academic boycott that included several articles in support of the boycott and was followed by a rebuttal by Nelson and criticism by pro-Israel academics. See *Journal of Academic Freedom* 4 (2013), http://www.aaup.org/reports-publications/journal-academic-freedom/volume-4.
96. Ibid.
97. Ibid., 27, 29.
Neoliberalism, Militarization, and the Price of Dissent

Policing Protest at the University of California

Farah Godrej

In this chapter, I argue that the neoliberal logic of private capital at work in the privatization of the University of California is necessarily intertwined with the logic of militarization and the criminalization of dissent. I will argue that the deliberate and systematic privatization of one of the nation’s greatest public education systems engenders—and in fact requires—a militarized enforcement strategy that relies on criminalizing those who dissent and on being able to engage in legitimized violence against such dissenters as and when necessary. The enforcement of the tuition hikes, budget cuts, and other so-called austerity measures at the heart of the privatization strategy is an irreducibly political project, not simply because it relies on a rhetorical political strategy that cleverly assigns responsibility for privatization to recalcitrant state legislators who insist on state disinvestment in public education rather than to those elites within the UC leadership who stand to benefit from such privatization. It is political and politicized in a much deeper sense in that it is able to plausibly and powerfully squash all public dissent from this plan by casting those who dissent against its neoliberal logic as criminal, ensuring that the “price” of their dissent—whether in terms of violence, jail time, or simply public stigmatization—is high enough to discourage further dissent. It uses the legal-political resources of the neoliberal state and replicates the neoliberal state’s complicity with private capital in order to build political legitimacy for its repression of dissenting views.

The basic premise of my chapter—that the leadership of the University of California has since 2009 been committed to the deliberate and systematic privatization of one of the nation’s premier public education systems—should not be in question. This plan involves being complicit with the state’s disinvestment in public education and shifting the burden of payment for education from society to individual students. The effect of this shift hits the
least privileged the hardest, so that the accessibility and affordability of this education is eroded, particularly for those who are least able to afford this burden. Access to education in this system is now meant to require one of two routes: already having the wealth and privilege to pay the exponentially multiplied fees or taking on unimaginable amounts of student debt in order to do so, which in turn provides profitable investments for banks. The outcome of this deliberate plan is to further widen the already massive inequalities of income so as to reinforce existing privileges of race, wealth, class, income, and so forth. Indeed, as Chris Newfield has so convincingly argued, the financial and political crises of public universities are the result of a conservative campaign to end public education’s democratizing influence on American society.1 One of the greatest experiments in democracy, the University of California’s commitment to accessible, affordable public education, had created unprecedented levels of social and economic mobility over the past forty or so years while creating a racially integrated mass middle class. But Newfield skillfully demonstrates how the expansive vision of an equitable America that emerged from the postwar boom in college access has gradually been replaced by the emergence of the antiegalitarian “corporate university,” which contributes to the ongoing erosion of the college-educated middle class.

The specifics of the University of California’s strategy of systematic privatization should not require much exploration; vocal critiques by dissenting scholars within the UC system have repeatedly demonstrated that the so-called austerity measures such as tuition cuts, fee hikes, and budget cuts are not to be seen as the somewhat desperate response of a hapless and helpless UC leadership with no other choice in the face of a bankrupt state that insists on disinvestment.2 The convincing choruses of “What else can we do?” constitute the first discursive political victory of the UC leadership, ensuring that the state is seen as the political problem and that the leadership’s own abdication of responsibility for forcefully and publicly advocating for public education is utterly occluded. Indeed, what is occluded above all is the fact that privatization, rather than being a necessary evil, comes about as the result of deliberate complicity with—and in fact advocacy of—neoliberal disinvestment in the concept of education as a public good by the very people charged with protection and disbursement of this public good. And consequently, education is systematically reframed as a private good existing in the sacred neoliberal realm of individual choice, something therefore to be commodified and paid for by those who have the resources. But it is crucial
to recall that such reframing is the result of a rhetorical strategy by precisely those who would profit from this commodification and privatization.

However, in order to be able to enforce the tuition hikes, budget cuts, and other “efficiency” and “austerity” measures at the heart of this privatization strategy, the UC leadership has relied on a concomitant strategy of plausibly and powerfully squashing all public dissent from this plan. I argue here that the enforcement strategy has two distinct but interrelated components. First, it uses a militarized police force in order to inflict injury and violence upon any protesters. Second, it engages in the deliberate and systematic criminalization of all dissent that arises in opposition to this plan. The two components are of course intertwined, for the one requires the other: all violence inflicted on a dissenting public must be legitimized and justified as a necessary measure in the public’s own interest to maintain law and order against ostensible criminal threats. Together, these combined elements of militarization and criminalization are designed to ensure that the price of protest is so high that dissent against the privatization strategy becomes prohibitively expensive. The neoliberal language of “price” and “expense” here is of course intentionally multivalent. It includes the literal “price” in terms of financial cost of ensuing legal battles but also refers to the cost of being labeled as a criminal in the public imagination or of suffering injury by police forces. The higher these costs, the more those involved in dissent are incentivized into silence through a carefully constructed chilling effect on all forms of speech and action that criticize, protest, or dissent against the privatization plan.

Militarization

The UC protests against privatization predated both the Arab Spring and the Occupy Wall Street movements, beginning as early as 2009 in response to the UC leadership’s commitment to the systematic privatization of the system along with its implicit support for the state’s disinvestment in public education. By 2011, however, the moral outrage of dissenters within the UC system was largely aligned with that of the emerging Occupy movement, itself in turn inspired by the Arab Spring. Despite the obvious differences among these movements—with the Arab Spring focused specifically on the critique and removal of undemocratic military dictatorships and repressive neoliberal regimes—both movements share, in Anne-Marie Slaughter’s words, the “same fundamental drivers: a deep sense of injustice and invisibility.” Dissenters within the UC system, like their counterparts
Farah Godrej in the Occupy movement and elsewhere, expressed public anger at the increasing power of private capital, the impunity with which it operated in enriching its own profit-making agents while impoverishing the vast majority of citizens, and the state’s collusion with the self-enriching power of capital through increasing disinvestment in public services such as health care and education. And the tactics of expressing such dissent were remarkably similar in both the Occupy movement and the movement in support of public education, which involved the occupation of public spaces such as university campuses, parks, or other areas surrounding seats of local government, along with the traditional markers of nonviolent protest such as chanting, singing, sitting-in, raising slogans both verbal and pictorial, and generally drawing attention to the injustice of the overarching framework of racial and socioeconomic inequity that framed the lives of the protesters. In a few cases, the protesters engaged in specifically disruptive yet nonviolent action such as blockading the entrance to a bank or refusing to allow officials to leave a building. Across the board, the movements were mostly avowedly peaceful and nonviolent in both symbolic intent and actual practice, although, as we will see later, there were some exceptions to this.

It is therefore perhaps all the more worth noting that each of these movements was ultimately met with a violent, militarized force deeply disproportionate to its peaceful character, while the respective authorities engaged in dispersing these protests justified this militarized violence through the use of rhetoric that served to paint its targets as potentially dangerous and threatening. The Occupy encampments were systematically dismantled, throughout winter 2011–2012, by various city mayors employing police and other law enforcement authorities who sometimes manhandled or otherwise violently dragged, slammed, and beat protesters in the course of arresting or handcuffing them.

The response to protests at the Davis, Berkeley, and Riverside campuses of the University of California in 2011 and 2012 was rather more dramatically disproportionate. In November 2011, in a series of iconic images that would soon evoke international outrage, police in riot gear armed with assault weapons were recorded pepper spraying, beating, and shoving batons into the stomachs of nonresisting, nonviolent student and faculty protesters occupying the Davis and Berkeley campuses. Two months later, scenes of similarly disproportionate militarized response were seen at the Riverside campus where the UC regents were meeting, ostensibly to discuss another set of tuition hikes and budget cuts in the course of privatization. Protesting
students and faculty surrounding the location of the regents meeting were faced with police in riot gear and eventually shot with lead paint bullets. While students and faculty chanted; peacefully blockaded a building; and repeated their intent for peaceful, nonviolent expression of dissent, the administration responded with a massive show of militarized force. Police from every UC campus were mobilized and eventually supplemented by officers from the Riverside Police Department and the Riverside County Sheriff’s Department, while helicopters circled overhead and officers took sniper positions at high points on campus buildings, as described in the introduction to this book. Viral videos taken on cell phones showed police pushing fences into crowds of students, shoving batons into the bodies of protesters, slamming heads into the ground, dragging bodies across the ground, and shooting guns loaded with lead paint bullets.

Much was of course written and said about the moral illegitimacy of the administrative response in each of these cases. But what is worth emphasizing here is that the militarization of campuses seems crucially linked to the privatization of public universities. UC Santa Cruz professor and former president of the Council of UC Faculty Associations Bob Meister articulates the link between the privatization of public universities, the financial services industry, and the national and global security industry:

Since 9/11 the US defense industry of the Cold War has morphed from being mainly in the military hardware business into a new role as global provider of security services that enables government and corporations throughout the world to outsource intelligence, policing, background checks, construction of secure sites and various operations that may need to be deniable—as well as the public relations efforts necessary to support such deniability. Most Americans do not know that there is a huge domestic market for services provided by the defense industry. . . . The fastest growing market for the defense and security services industry is in the area of local government and public agencies that feel threatened by political protests, such as the Occupy movement, and that have reporting and other obligations under the Patriot Act.4

UC Davis professor and poet Joshua Clover, who was arrested as part of the civil disobedience movement against privatization, goes on to point out that while the specifics of such connections may vary, the systemic logic is clear:
“Heightened campus security is inextricably linked to heightened campus securitization in its two main forms: the decision of universities to pursue a certain line of investment strategies which move money away from educational services and into capital projects; and the corresponding decision to cover those educational costs by shifting burdens to students at a rate which can only be financed though student loans, concomitantly providing profitable investment for banks laden with otherwise fallow capital. The rise in tuition and indebtedness within the context of economic crisis simply is the militarization of campus; they are one and the same.”

In other words, to paraphrase UC Davis faculty member and activist Nathan Brown, police brutality is an administrative tool to enforce tuition increases precisely because of the link between privatization and militarization. In short, it is no accident that we see the repeated deployment of armored, armed, militarized police forces on campuses where large crowds of students and faculty and staff gather to protest the erosion of the accessibility and affordability of public education. Nor should it have been surprising that in July 2012, the UC Berkeley police department briefly considered the purchase of an armored military tank with grant funds from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The UC administration is willing to, able to, and indeed does deploy militarized force in order to make the cost of dissent high. Note that its deployment of both campus police and external police forces makes the neoliberal state complicit in the militarization of these campus spaces. So this is one sense in which it is in the administration’s interest to make sure that the cost of protest and dissent is high. The message is clear that if dissent occurs publicly and collectively, those involved are likely to be pepper sprayed, beaten with batons, shoved to the ground, shot with lead paint bullets, and so forth. It is better, in short, to stay home and silent rather than to participate in such events.

The extent to which the UC leadership wants to underscore its encouragement of such silence can be seen in the text of a travel advisory ostensibly issued by the UC Office of the President (UCOP) before May Day protests of 2012. The memo apparently warned UC students, faculty, and staff to avoid all rallies and demonstrations as a precaution and offered “tips for reducing vulnerability,” which include “avoid[ing] all large gatherings,” because “even seemingly peaceful rallies can spur violent activity or be met with resistance by security forces.” Furthermore, one is advised to avoid “cities with a large immigrant population and strong labour groups.” If this advice is not followed, the memo offered a glimpse of the violent and militarized response that likely
awaits: “Bystanders may be arrested or harmed by security forces using water cannons, tear gas or other measures to control crowds.” Members of the UC community that must travel near protests should “dress conservatively . . . maintain a low profile by avoiding demonstration areas . . . [and] discussions of the issues at hand.”8 As Mark Levine notes, such advice might well have been offered to a black person in a white neighborhood forty years ago: “Dress well, stay low, don’t talk to strangers, stay clear of the police, and most of all, don’t do anything to draw suspicion to yourself. And for God’s sake, don’t mess with the one per cent.”9 When those tasked with advocating for public education issue such public messages, the thinly veiled warning to dissidents within the UC system is clear: stay away from places with lots of poor immigrants and/or wage-working people, especially those with the nerve to fight for their rights; keep your head down; keep your voice down; don’t cause trouble; and don’t get involved with troublemakers. Or else.

Criminalization Part I: Rhetoric

I turn now to the second component of the enforcement strategy. The second thing that the UC system needs in order to enforce privatization is the ability to make the cost of dissent high by systematically criminalizing those who protest, speak out, and dissent against privatization. This criminalization takes two forms. The first is a kind of rhetorical criminalization, which we actually saw used most effectively in the nationwide dismantling of Occupy encampments, where city and local officials justified the often violent expulsion of the occupiers with the vague and unsubstantiated threat that such people posed to law and order. The city authorities responsible for authorizing the often violent expulsion of Occupy encampments engaged in forms of rhetoric designed to justify the need for such violent response by casting the protests as potentially threatening and even perhaps criminal, with the idea that the extended occupation of public spaces by citizens (some of whom were unemployed) posed a threat to law and order. While the precise nature of the threat was rarely specified, such justifications often used the rhetorical strategy of linking the presence of protestors to unemployment, bad personal hygiene, the recreational use of alcohol and narcotics, and sometimes sexual predation. The general image evoked was that of dirty people who have no jobs and nothing better to do than to shout loudly about their anger, get drunk, and perhaps prey on innocent women. In the public imagination, it was suggested, such people should be seen as somehow threatening, and
their loud, angry, and disruptive behavior—along with their somewhat questionable status on the margins of society, as evidenced by the dodginess of their personal bearing and activities and their concentration in large numbers in tents in public places—should be seen as a source of concern. And it is precisely this concern that should rightfully cause city officials to bring in the forces of law and order.

The UC leadership’s rhetorical strategy in defense of its own militarized response to various protests was uncanny in its similarity. Perhaps the best example comes from Nathan Brown’s excellent analysis of the Reynoso report, in which UC Davis chancellor Linda Katehi, a month after the pepper spray incident at Davis, offered her explanation of why she had to authorize police presence in order to remove protesters from the Quad: “We were worried at the time about that because the issues from Oakland were in the news and the use of drugs and sex and other things, and you know here we have very young students . . . we worried especially about having very young girls and other students with older people who come from the outside without any knowledge of their record.”10 To quote Brown, “The best rationale our Chancellor can come up with (after a month’s reflection) for a major police operation against non-violent student protesters is ‘the use of drugs and sex and other things’ in the midst of ‘very young girls’. . . . In brief, all [she] has to offer in its defense is the danger of sex and drugs, of ‘older people,’ and the terribly frightening specter of ‘Oakland’ [presumably referring to the Occupy Oakland debacle].”11 Indeed, this rationale echoed almost exactly the somewhat absurd logic repeatedly employed by city authorities that the combination of public anger and many bodies in tents and the possible presence of sex and drugs automatically equals a potential threat that must be squashed through a militarized police response.

But other rhetorical moves made by UC leadership were rather less laughable and must be taken more seriously in their deliberate intent to criminalize dissent. Perhaps the most infamous was the attempt by UC Berkeley chancellor Robert Birgenau to rationalize the police beating of unarmed and unthreatening students and faculty by claiming that linking arms and forming a human chain in order to prevent police from gaining access to an encampment, as the Berkeley protesters did, was “not non-violent civil disobedience.”12 Indeed, such a discursive strategy, while widely reviled and thus hopefully repudiated (Chancellor Birgenau subsequently resigned, citing personal reasons), was notably never contradicted by anyone in the UC leadership. Meanwhile, its logic rested on the ability to argue that the actions
of the protesters were loud enough, aggressive enough, confrontational enough, and disruptive enough—even if they were not directly violent—to warrant the violent response. In other words, protesters had provoked or invited police violence simply through the disruptiveness and provocation, and thus the subjectively perceived aggressiveness, of their tactics.13

But what precisely had the protesters done that could be perceived as aggressive, confrontational, disruptive, and thus deserving of violence? Or, in other words, what about their behavior could have plausibly, albeit subjectively, been interpreted as “not nonviolent”? Indeed, a wonderful analysis of these rhetorical strategies in the blog Reclaim UC reminds us that it is precisely the fact that the protesters refused to submit to the commands of the police that placed their actions outside the category of “nonviolence” according to the rationality of the police. The only thing remaining in the realm of the nonviolent, according to this logic, “is the absolute, uncritical obedience to their authority . . . in short, ‘non-violence’ according to the police means the uncritical compliance with the growing arbitrary power of the sovereign.”14

Similar logic was used in the case of the UC Riverside (UCR) response to the crowd of student and faculty protesters at the regents’ meeting on Riverside’s campus, also mentioned in the opening vignette of this book’s introduction. The administrative response to the hundreds-strong unarmed crowd—chanting peacefully, often using humorous slogans, music, drum-beats, and dance—was to declare the nonviolent assembly unlawful and to issue the command that everyone disperse or otherwise be subject to forcible removal. Through this declarative act, conducted anonymously and without any public justification (the precise responsibility for the declaration of unlawful assembly remains as yet unaccounted for by the UCR administration, despite repeated requests), every single student and faculty member doing nothing other than standing in a public space at a public university was thereby criminalized. When protesters refused to disperse and instead more actively surrounded the location of the meeting, police in riot gear escalated the situation by shoving batons and fences into the bodies of protesters and eventually shooting lead paint bullets at an entirely unarmed crowd. While the UCR leadership subsequently expressed the usual regret for the injury to protesters, at no point did their rhetoric do anything except defend such violence as regrettably necessary by pointing to the threats posed by the angry and active opposition of the protesters.

In both a public communiqué to the campus as well as a town hall
meeting, then UCR chancellor Tim White repeatedly relied on the argument that the protestors were somehow potentially threatening and that they were endangering the safety and security of all present. Despite the existence of multiple videos demonstrating that it was clearly the police in riot gear rather than the unarmed protesters who had escalated the violence, the UCR administration continued to use vague, questionable, and nebulous imagery in order to argue otherwise. At a town hall meeting on March 6, 2012, White projected photos of protesters carrying signs, claiming that such signs were potentially injurious. According to White, other photos ostensibly showed students menacing or threatening members of the administration, yet not a single one of these images showed anything other than protesters in various confrontational poses, sometimes expressing anger. No actual violence or threat of violence is seen in any of the photographic or video evidence. Yet the administration continued to rely on vague and unsubstantiated threats to public safety in order to justify bringing in a highly militarized police force and the subsequent escalation of violence.

A system-wide review of the various campus responses to protests was then conducted by the UC general counsel and the Berkeley Law School dean at the request of UC president Mark Yudof. Despite the lip service it paid to the importance of “free expression, robust discourse and vigorous debate,” the resulting Robinson-Edley report was even more striking in the discursive gymnastics it produced in order to further widen the scope of the university’s ability to respond to protest with a variety of militarized strategies. It begins by stating that civil disobedience “by definition involves violating laws or regulations, and that civil disobedience will generally have consequences for those engaging in it because of the impact it can have on the rest of the campus community.” Thus the report preemptively suggests that offering any resistance whatsoever to any “regulations” (without examining what can fall under the scope of such “regulations”) can be construed as threatening, provocative, confrontational, and potentially violent and thus worthy of whatever “consequences” the campus authorities deem fit. In an echo of the discursive strategies that preceded it, the very presence of militarized forces on campuses is deemed to be beyond question, and at no point do these reports and strategies address the responsibility to curb the largely disproportionate responses that such militarized forces present to unarmed resisting dissenters. But if unarmed protesters express any confrontation or active opposition in response to such militarization, then they have perhaps
automatically declared themselves suspect and even worthy of a violent response.

In one fell swoop, the administrative response to campus protest has managed to completely subvert the logic of nonviolent protest, effectively criminalizing all forms of it by focusing on the potentially threatening nature of such protest. If the very refusal to submit to authority, and indeed the moral obligation to actively and confrontationally oppose such authority is at the very core of nonviolent resistance, then reserving the right to construe any such form of active opposition or resistance as threatening (and thus worthy of “consequences”) potentially criminalizes all nonviolent protesters for undertaking the very act that defines nonviolence resistance. And in continuing to insist that civil disobedience can “have consequences” because of its “impact” on a community, these strategies serve to hint darkly that disruptive and confrontational actions that express public anger can be equated with dangerous and potentially threatening behavior, thus justifying a potentially violent response. In invoking this logic, the Robinson-Edley report seems to reserve the right to criminalize protesters for nonviolent behavior if it can be deemed sufficiently oppositional or disruptive.

Moreover, leading with the assumption that civil disobedience can have an “impact on a campus” is similar in rhetorical function to the “ticking time bomb” scenario in debates on U.S.-sponsored torture. That is, the question encourages the interlocutor to imagine a hypothetical situation that would justify the use of force and suggests that we use such hypothetical situations as the basis of policy. It allows administrators to equate disruptive and potentially embarrassing student behavior with “dangerous” behavior, which requires a police presence—ostensibly for safety. At the same time, it functions to shift critical attention away from the actual use of repressive force, which generally has little or nothing to do with these hypothesized rationales. Leading by assuming that civil disobedience requires punishment because of its “impact” seems to leave the door open for a militarized response with no justification other than the vague and unsubstantiated threat of a so-called impact on campus.

It should of course be noted that in many of these instances of protest, the behavior of protesters was often disruptive, confrontational, oppositional, and laden with anger. At Berkeley, this meant simply locking arms and the refusal to disperse. But in other cases, protesters refused to allow officials to leave and blockaded exits. Angry and perhaps offensive language was thrown at police officers. The regents’ meeting was occupied by students
and eventually shut down. Authorities could have responded by recognizing the underlying causes of such expressions of public anger or choosing to recognize their moral underpinnings, even while disavowing those actions that were offensive or perhaps rude. They could even have acknowledged the slipperiness of terms like “violent” or “nonviolent,” recognizing that nonviolent resistance spans a wide variety of different kinds of actions, some of which can be more disruptive, aggressive, and confrontational than others, while clarifying which forms of aggression are worthy of a violent response and which are not. Any of these statements would have fallen within the realm of reasonable moral responses to such situations. Instead, the UC leadership has chosen to adhere to an uncritical, monolithic, and unrepresentative caricature of all confrontational and disruptive methods of resistance as always potentially threatening.

Thus the UC leadership’s ability to justifiably criminalize nonviolent dissenters appears to depend on making a convincing argument that anger, disruption, confrontation, and provocation equal danger to public safety. It rests on the ability to argue that dissenting loudly and collectively about the erosion of one’s access to affordable public education makes one a threat to public safety, dangerous enough to warrant a heavily weaponized response in the name of the so-called public. What remains unexamined, of course, is who in particular represents this “public” whose safety is ostensibly at risk in such situations: in a mass e-mail to the UCR community following the regents’ meeting protest, Chancellor White bemoaned the fact that nine of the officers involved in the militarized response—“our coworkers who are police”—received minor injuries. The bloodied knuckles sustained by police officers in the course of shoving batons into the bodies of protesters becomes the justification for the use of force: these very injuries, the e-mail suggests, demonstrate why the police “did need to use force at times . . . to protect themselves and ensure safety for others.” Such appeals to “public” safety rest on the absurd assumption that if a confrontation between unarmed nonviolent protesters and those ostensibly charged with protecting public safety results in violence, then such violence must somehow be traceable to the party that is disruptive and confrontational yet unarmed rather than to the party that adheres to the most militarized, weaponized, and militant techniques of preemptive repression ever known to humankind. The “public” whose safety requires protection is easily conflated with those who already have legitimately sanctioned weapons at their disposal (thus ostensibly representing and supposedly protecting this public), while disruptive,
Criminalization Part II: Laws

The second form of criminalization evident in the squashing of dissent uses the legal power of the neoliberal state and its complicity with the forces of
capital to criminalize nonviolent protestors through legal channels. In March 2012, twelve UC Davis students and faculty—including Joshua Clover—were arrested and faced twenty-one misdemeanor charges and up to eleven years in jail for nonviolently blockading the campus branch of U.S. Bank. In early 2012, Clover and the eleven students—now dubbed the “Banker’s Dozen”—had conducted a nonviolent sit-in at the bank office to protest its role in, and profiteering from, the ongoing privatization of public education at UC. The sit-in was designed to draw attention to the problematic nature of the relationship between the banks and the privatizing university. University contracts with banks encourage tuition hikes because banks stand to profit directly from rising tuition while the administration comes to rely on funding from bank contracts. Thus UC Davis’s contract with U.S. Bank was explicitly predicated on the continued shift of funding for education from public to private sources. When the bank was finally forced to close its campus branch office in breach of its contract with UC Davis, it held the university responsible for all costs, claiming they were “constructively evicted” because the university had not responded by arresting the “illegal gathering.” Shortly thereafter, at the behest of the UC Davis administration, the Davis district attorney charged the so-called Banker’s Dozen with twenty counts each of obstructing movement in a public place and one count of conspiracy. If convicted, the protesters would face up to eleven years each in prison and $1 million in damages payable to U.S. Bank.

Another case of legal criminalization was in response to a March 29, 2012, meeting of the regents at UCLA, when three students were arrested and manhandled by police, even though they were not disobeying any police orders or resisting in any way. The students were charged with criminal offences, strip-searched, and, even more onerously, forced to post bail in excess of $10,000 each, which necessitated their raising $6,000 to pay the fees for their bonds. All three students had previous records of having engaged in civil disobedience at other times and were thought to have been targeted for this reason. UC president Mark Yudof is on record as having thanked the officers who conducted their arrest. Despite the subsequent dismissal of all charges by the San Francisco district attorney, the bond money posted by the students was not recoverable.

At the regents’ meeting protest at UCR in January 2012, Ken Ehrlich, a lecturer from the UCR art department, also known to have been involved in previous instances of public protest against privatization, was assaulted by several police officers, subsequently charged with felony assault, and held on
$25,000 bail. Witnesses say that at the time of his arrest, Ehrlich was doing nothing other than holding a protest sign in the shape of a book. A video of the protest shows Ehrlich being pushed into the police line and then being slammed to the ground and dragged across the pavement by police. Although all charges were subsequently dropped, Ehrlich was forced to raise funds for his legal defense in the interim, money that is yet again not refundable or recoverable.

These and other instances of legal criminalization demonstrate clearly the collusion between university and state authorities in defense of private capital. In instances where the university does not directly criminalize its own faculty and students, it appears to encourage and even assist the state’s legal authorities to act against those who threaten the systemic logic of privatization and neoliberalism. Even when charges are subsequently dropped and protestors pay no price in terms of their criminal records, they are left with the literal cost of financing their own bail or legal defense to the tune of thousands if not millions of dollars. Dissent is literally made to be prohibitively expensive. In contrast to the public rhetoric and discursive strategies addressed in the previous section, we see here that the university uses a strategy that calls upon the legal resources and mechanisms of the state to replicate the state’s hostility to dissent against privatization and neoliberal disinvestment in public services. What is particularly clever about such a strategy is its delivery of threats without the use of speech or discourse. The discursive message is indeed that those who do not keep their heads low and their mouths shut will be made to pay a high price, quite literally. But this threatening message is never actually spoken. Rather, it is conveyed through the use of legal prosecution in which the university itself never seems to be directly involved but is always lurking in the shadows, always willing to comply with and support—if not encourage—such prosecution against dissenters.

Conclusion

I have offered here a particular window into the ways in which the interests, mechanisms, and operations of both the university system and the neoliberal state are aligned with those of private capital. Of course, that the academy is made to strategically ally with capital as a key piece of neoliberal consolidation should not surprise us. Rather, what is worth noting, I have argued here, is the necessity of the linkages between disinvestment in public education,
militarization, and the criminalization of dissent. These necessary linkages demonstrate this volume’s premise that the university is an institution embedded in the hierarchies and inequalities of U.S. racial, gender, and class politics and shed light on the confluence of military and industrial interests as they appear within the U.S. university. I have sought also to emphasize the systematicity and multilayered complexity of this phenomenon. That is, the various pieces of this picture necessarily go together, as rhetoric, law, bureaucracy, and the force of arms all combine effectively to produce the desired end.

The neoliberal logic entailed in the privatization of the University of California is, I have argued, necessarily interlinked with the logic of militarization and the criminalization of dissent, because it employs a militarized enforcement strategy, coupled with a political rhetoric that criminalizes the specific behaviors involved in protest and dissent against these strategies. The militarization of the university campus is thus not simply a reflection of the increasing militarization of American law enforcement based on the logic of ongoing threats to public safety encoded in years of the War on Drugs and the War on Terror.25 Rather, such militarization is one prong of a necessary enforcement strategy designed to convey that dissent against privatization is meant to be costly in inflicting various forms of legitimized violence upon those who dissent. The second prong of the enforcement strategy also conveys that dissenters will pay a high price by being criminalized, either through rhetoric that paints them as violent and therefore marginal, unworthy, and undesirable in the public imagination or through legal machinations that force them to expend tremendous financial resources on extricating themselves from prosecution.

The language of cost and price here, of course, reminds us of the ongoing hegemony—and perhaps victory—of the conceptual frameworks of neoliberalism and its theoretical accompaniments, such as rational choice theory, predominantly featured in neoclassical economics. These strategies of criminalization and militarization rest on sending signals to adversaries, encoded precisely in these languages, wherein value and worth are measured in terms of indicators such as price or cost, and rational actors are assumed to be guided by a universally comprehensible incentive structure. Thus the strategies of criminalization and militarization rest on de-incentivizing dissent, so to speak, assuming that dissenters will measure the costs inherent in their actions and choose rationally to cease from engaging in such dissent. The continued insistence on dissent is therefore resistance to the logic of
neoliberal privatization on multiple levels: it not only calls out the complicity of the university with the neoliberal state and the forces of private capital but also continues to dissent despite the “incentives” offered in exchange for desisting from dissent. And in so doing, it should be signaling its rejection not simply of privatization but of the entire conceptual baggage of neoliberalism, including its logics of rational choice, cost, price, and incentive, as well as its logic of structural violence. In other words, the ongoing struggle against the logic of neoliberal privatization requires that dissent continue, despite its high “price.”

Notes


7. The full text of the travel advisory e-mail no longer appears anywhere online,

8. For more reports on the text of the travel advisory, see Jon Weiner, “May Day Warning from the University of California President: ‘Avoid All Protests,’” *Nation*, April 30, 2012, http://www.thenation.com/blog/167642/may-day-warning-u-cal-president-avoid-all-protests#. Meanwhile, there is now some controversy over whether the travel alert came from UCOP or from Connexxus, the UC travel website. See Christopher Yee, “UCOP Says That Yudof Warning Travelers to Avoid May Day Protests Was False,” *Daily Californian*, May 1, 2012, http://www.dailycal.org/2012/05/01/yudof-warns-travelers-to-avoid-may-day-protests.


19. I owe this point to my colleague Bronwyn Leebaw.


21. Ibid.


24. Ibid.

In spring 2009, I was near the end of my yearlong tenure and promotion review at Virginia Tech. Tech is a research university that requires a decent amount of publication from its humanists, though its expectations are not what most would consider rigid or excessive. My tenure and promotion case had the added complication of being a year ahead of schedule (potentially four years, depending on the viewpoint). Counting my three years on faculty at the University of Wisconsin, Whitewater, I applied for tenure and promotion in my sixth year out of graduate school rather than during my seventh, as is customary at Tech. My strong record of publication and teaching provided me a good reason to go forward a year early. It was also a practical decision: because my research and writing deal with controversial material, I did not want to give fanatical groups and individuals any more time than they needed to derail my career (though tenure is no foolproof protection against politically inspired termination). This concern was not merely quaint paranoia, unfortunately: various right-wing groups, aided both tacitly and directly by more liberal colleagues, have successfully damaged the academic careers of scholars such as Norman Finkelstein, Joel Kovel, Margo Ramlal-Nankoe, Thomas Abowd, and Tariq Ramadan. Given the volatile nature of academe, it didn’t seem prudent for me to bide any time.

Although I have published widely and have spoken at every available opportunity in support of Palestinian freedom and indigenous rights more broadly, I toil away more or less undetected, happy to belong to a small but devoted group of scholars and activists whose work assesses comparable themes with the same type of committed methodological approach. I enjoy a productive and comfortable professional life, one that puts me in a better economic and existential position than the vast majority of the world’s population. This lucky reality often causes me to chuckle at professorial claims of
untenable busyness or inordinate stress: our lives for the most part are those of comfort and privilege, and we are remarkably fortunate to be paid to write and then talk about what we write. I place a high value on my job, then, and I am eager to protect it. Navigating promotion in higher education is tricky, as anybody who has done it knows, for me mostly because I find it difficult to balance my antiauthoritarian viewpoints with the pressures of conformity that tacitly dominate professorial advancement. As tenure is so profoundly intertwined with institutional loyalty, notions of scholarly responsibility, and other implicit expectations, tenure is useful for university administrators because it socializes faculty into particular modes of thinking that virtually eliminate meaningful contestation.

I bring up these points because it's important to think about what it means to act ethically and responsibly in academe, in terms of both institutional presuppositions and communal commitments—two phenomena that do not usually correspond. While most scholars and university administrators talk glowingly of engaging broad audiences and working to improve the world, such talk is invariably in the abstract, denoting a reproduction of ideals and not actual change—at least not the type that would threaten the socioeconomic privileges most administrators and professors ardently protect. It is sometimes from within this gap between discursive showmanship and substantive praxis that controversies over faculty activism and scholarship arise. Without judging the quality or veracity of their efforts, I would suggest that scholars who commit themselves to any sort of advocacy that contravenes institutional sensibilities or interests earn a reputation (or notoriety) as consciously “political,” rather than equally active scholars whose advocacy happens to reinforce or complement institutional sensibilities. This observation seems obvious, but it is one that warrants further exploration. At stake are people's livelihoods, professional futures, and conceptions of responsibility. The issue of the political in academe therefore deserves a closer reading than its general treatment to this point. It is an issue that exists most conspicuously and contentiously in the interrelated frameworks of Zionism and the Israel/Palestine conflict. To be more specific, charges of unjustifiably politically motivated research and of unwarranted politicization of scholarship work overwhelmingly—sometimes implicitly but often explicitly—to maintain Zionism's normative status and to protect Israel from any serious criticism, no matter how demonstrable and legitimate.

I am deliberating these matters frequently nowadays, inspired by the hostile atmosphere in academe toward junior scholars devoted to justice for
Palestinians and my own experience with tacit articulations of such hostility. I became interested in the uses of the word “political” after having received a favorable letter from my department’s personnel committee—which decides tenure and promotion cases on behalf of the entire department—in response to my request that the committee assess the viability of my early candidacy. I excitedly read the letter stating support for my decision to seek early promotion and tenure. Among the nice things the committee had to say is, “It is clear to the Committee that you are a devoted and passionate teacher. We are very impressed.”

However, nestled within the glowing prose were some nettlesome suggestions in the form of inexact adjectives. I found myself rereading the following two sentences, somehow annoyed, and increasingly agitated: “In the area of research, the Committee understands your significant contributions in two areas—political literary analysis and the polemical political essay—both of which strive to put the situations of Palestinians and Arab-Americans at the center of public and intellectual debates in the United States.” The assessment continues to note that I “have produced a formidable amount of searing, impassioned, and seemingly groundbreaking work.” These observations struck me as adjective-happy, but not merely as a result of poor writing.

The word “polemical” stands out as a judgment of my politics rather than an evaluation of my work’s scholarly quality. The word “political,” seemingly innocuous, is even more disturbing. First of all, there are problems of connotation in the letter’s prose: essays are by their nature political and often polemical in their style (though it is not an adjective I would use to describe these particular essays). Moreover, the committee appears to have created an entirely new category of writing especially for me: “political literary analysis.” As flattered as I was to defy categorization so lustrously, I suspected that the new category wasn’t meant to inspire admiration. I tried my best not to be insulted by the backhanded compliment the committee offers: “We look forward to the future development of your research and scholarship.” Taken together, these curious uses of adjectives signaled the presence of a story I feared would remain hermetic. Something dubious was afoot. The word “political” was all it took to trigger my suspicion.

It turns out my suspicion was valid. Although my tenure and promotion case successfully made it out of the department—and subsequently the college and university—it apparently invoked some intense controversy, particularly around my writing focused on critical analysis of colonial discourses, including various Zionist narratives. Especially vexing to certain members
of the committee was the commitment, expressed in different ways in some areas of my scholarship, to communally oriented and proactive methodologies—a commitment that I would love to claim I invented but that in reality exists in the mainstream of indigenous studies as well as in a cross-section of critical and postcolonial approaches. This commitment relegated my scholarship to various delegitimizing taxonomies intimating a lack of professional seriousness or objective scholarly gravitas. Ultimately, it was the unusual quantity of my research that ensured my success; had I not produced a large body of research, I am certain I would have faced a much more hostile judgment. My politics were protected by my profuseness. I’ve been aware of this possibility since graduate school, which is one of the reasons why I have been such an ambitious writer: I knew that if I planned not to shy away from my ethical commitments (particularly to Palestinian liberation) then I’d better be able to conjure a dossier whose productivity was unimpeachable. Though I am a highly biased observer, I feel that my scholarship is of a solid theoretical and rhetorical quality, so I do not wish to imply that prolificacy is or should be an effective means of concealing substandard research. I merely want to point out that it is a necessary protective mechanism for those who challenge power structures, whether or not they are adroit scholars.

The entire process, which reinforced my informed cynicism about the ability or willingness of most academics to actually practice instead of merely theorizing justice, has taught me much about the uses of rhetorical connotation and coded discourse in all manner of promotion in academic communities. In the following sections I will contextualize my admittedly tame experience within a broader analysis of tacit modes of ethical and methodological conformity in academe. I will examine in particular how academics committed to some form of Zionism deploy the term “political” as a destabilizing and denunciatory mechanism, one that is effective because it has become self-explanatory. I use the term “normatization” rather than the more familiar “normalization” to denote a discursive process of rendering Israel normative in narratives of multiculturalism and modernity. Whereas “normalize” generally (but not always) refers to a geopolitical relationship between nation-states, including economic and cultural exchange, “normatize” highlights the ways that a particular discourse becomes accepted as natural or commonsensical. Focusing on Israel’s normatization, then, draws attention to its position as a standard of responsible morality and acceptable intellectual citizenship.
Political Action; “Political” Acting

Let’s look at what the following term means and what it connotes: “political,” adjectivally, as in “political literary analysis” and “political essay.” When we assess the phrase “political literary analysis,” the term “political” does not supplement or elucidate the act of analysis; instead, it devalues and delimits it. The adjective is both a signal—something of a sophisticated wink— and a denunciation. At its most basic it tacitly signals denunciation without technically denouncing anything. It is a passive-aggressive commentary that relies on a number of malformed assumptions. The term, when used to describe another person’s scholarship, functions as polite denunciation because of its ability to signal a disapproval that need not be articulated. These days, after decades of culture wars, its connotations are clear and largely specific, but the term retains its self-invented pretense of disinterest, rendering it safely hostile—that is, hostile without displaying explicit hostility. The adjective “political,” an imputation disguised as a descriptor, is both accusatory and exclusionary.

The malformed assumptions underlying the use of that adjective are worth analysis. The most noteworthy assumption inherent in its use is that people can make judgments from a genuinely nonpolitical place. Other noteworthy assumptions include the notion that political scholarship can be identified based on immanent or enunciated positions that are unsavory, not on the mere fact of stating a position itself; the belief that ostensibly disengaged scholarship is not attached somehow to sociopolitical phenomena; and the idea that acceptable scholarship is timeless and amaranthine in such a way that it transcends history altogether. There is a clear demarcation for designating scholarship as “political”: academic work that systematically challenges state power and other forms of entrenched institutional authority. Those who offer the designation are inevitably in the thrall of state power or in some way embody institutional authority. There is no demonstrable exception to this formula. The deification of objectivity and the bastardization of the political reinforce a status quo that renders academe remarkably conservative intellectually and institutionally conformist (i.e., conformity to dominant ethical and intellectual paradigms becomes a prerequisite for advancement).

I am certainly not the first person to critique the power-serving functions of academe, nor have the uses of the word “political” to that end gone unnoted.1 Edward Said’s Orientalism explores the matter. Said writes, “What
I am interested in doing now is suggesting how the general liberal consensus that ‘true’ knowledge is fundamentally nonpolitical (and conversely, that overtly political knowledge is not ‘true’ knowledge) obscures the highly if obscurely organized political circumstances obtaining when knowledge is produced. No one is helped in understanding this today when the adjective ‘political’ is used as a label to discredit any work for daring to violate the protocol of pretended suprapolitical objectivity.” Said was aware in his later years that the problem he described grew progressively worse; by the time of his death in 2003 the problem had become nearly intractable. Now a description of an academic’s scholarship as political can be debilitating if it is raised as part of an organized movement to threaten his or her career.

By now, theorizing politicization in particular areas of scholarship has become something of an industry. A new organization recently came into existence based explicitly on the mythology of nonpolitical scholarship (itself an unacknowledged but unmistakably politicized secession). This new organization, Association for the Study of the Middle East and Africa (ASMEA), was cofounded by the well-known Orientalist (and Said antagonist) Bernard Lewis and neoconservative commentator Fouad Ajami as an antidote to the supposedly radical Middle East Studies Association (MESA). When ASMEA was first incorporated, Lewis offered the empirically and theoretically indemonstrable complaint that “the study of the Middle East and of Africa has been politicized to a degree without precedent.” The irony of ASMEA’s move to disaffiliate from a space it conceptualizes as unjustifiably political is that its most prominent members, Lewis, Ajami, and Kanan Makiya, have been high-level advisors for George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, and other powerful leaders. All three scholars advocated for the 2003 invasion of Iraq, a war that Makiya was especially adamant about. ASMEA’s notion of political thus refers not to activities or to methodologies but to ideology—more specifically to whether one’s ideology supplements or challenges state power. By uniting their ideologies with the exercise of foreign policy, ASMEA’s leaders delimit the range of scholarly inquiry and produce a highly injunctive culture of methodological evaluation.

Contentious topics in academic communities, then, often arise from the nexus of ideological contestations that find expression through tendentious diction, the term “political” being the most frequently used and heterogeneously connotative. The “political” in academe, however, is invariably associated with the actual exercise of power, which is why there is more at stake than mere semantic quibbling. Our ability as intellectuals to cultivate ethical
purpose in our work as proactive scholars depends on the anatomization of the same terms that normatively discredit the idea of scholarship as a form of humane engagement. Few scholars have analyzed the important role Zionism has played in these phenomena, an analysis I shall now undertake.

Apolitical Zionism; “Political” Palestinians

To discuss Zionism in an analysis of scholarly culture and state power presents myriad difficulties. Before I enter into this analysis, though, it would be useful to contextualize my usage of the terms “Zionism” and “Zionist.” As I indicate earlier, the terms are heterogeneous, but there is one common element to all versions of Zionism that render it cohesive: the notion, in whatever form, that Israel should exist as a Jewish nation-state culturally and demographically, an entity to which Jews anywhere in the world have access (a privilege withheld from the native Palestinians). I would identify Zionist as any belief that proclaims or assumes that Israel has a normative claim to Jewish majoritarianism or any narrative that treats Israel as timeless and exceptional. There are ways in which such narratives can be delivered crudely and ways that they are imparted subtly. Their articulation in any fashion is a reasonable criterion for identifying a Zionist orientation. The term “Zionist,” in any case, is not usually eschewed by Israel’s supporters or by liberal multiculturalists. It is the sort of term that can be deployed as an insult or accusation, but more generally it articulates an unthreatening commitment to Israel as a nation or an idea. Although I try to avoid employing the descriptor “Zionist” as either insult or accusation, I do conceptualize it as connotative of unjust and unethical viewpoints.

First, to criticize Zionism as a political movement or a philosophical commitment is practically verboten. (Indeed, it is sure to earn one’s work the label of “political.”) Second, Zionism is highly disaggregated politically, temporally, and morally. Third, most Zionist academics vociferously deny playing any role in the marginalization of pro-Palestine scholars and in fact portray themselves as devoted civil libertarians. And finally, numerous allegiances among academics also play a role in the circumscription of acceptable (read: state/corporate sanctioned) politics. Profoundly colonialist structures pervade North American academic institutions based on a history of ethnic cleansing and the subsequent unwillingness to allow indigenous peoples academic or political self-determination. The majority of these
allegiances to power among corporatist and colonialist university officials are affiliated with or complementary of Zionism.

In addition to these problems, other phenomena play crucial roles in the contentiousness of university culture wars: interpersonal conflicts, budgetary squabbling, inveterate conformity, rhetorical ineptitude, hegemonic ideals, and simple political cowardice. I want to limit my analysis to the predominance of Zionist narratives and their austere expectations because of their particular institutional function: one that can be detected and interrogated and one that has gone largely uncommented. Zionist academics and organizations focused on the academy, both liberal and conservative, are without question the largest impediment to the development of justice-oriented intellectual communities in American universities.

An entire right-wing industry has arisen in opposition to “political” scholarship in the past two decades. This industry includes David Horowitz’s many enterprises, Daniel Pipes’s CampusWatch, and the National Association of Scholars, in addition to frequent editorializing in venerable publications such as *The New Republic, Weekly Standard, National Review,* and *Commentary;* mainstream periodicals frequently join the chorus. This industry has been discussed ad infinitum, and I don’t want to rehearse that discussion here.6 I bring it up to identify the policy leanings of ostensibly nonpolitical actors, which are inevitably located within whatever at the time is considered by the state to be the national interest. Such actors make no secret of their political underpinnings or intentions. A more interesting site of analysis involves a class of generally progressive scholars who work in areas such as feminist studies, labor studies, or American studies and uphold the ideals of liberal discourse through emphasis on free exchange, empiricism, and theoretical inquiry. These scholars predicate a substantial portion of their scholarly production on concocting a form of critical exceptionalism for Israel, one in which both Zionism and the idea of a Jewish state are spared the type of hard inquiry we direct at other issues and geographical regions.

Zionism, however, is customary to the point that self-identified progressive scholars can endorse or even promote it without any real sense of contradiction. In fact, articulating support for Israel is actually necessitous of proper multicultural consciousness; it is how one indicates that he or she has entered into the spaces of modernity rather than wallowing in the barbarities of an uncultured Third Worldism. The viewpoints outwardly critical of Zionism get burdened with labels like irresponsible, anti-Semitic, and the ubiquitous “radical.” Examples of this phenomenon are numerous. I shall
provide a few so that we can explore the discursive features that render Zionism a form of apolitical politicizing. The phrase “apolitical politicizing” is both descriptive and oxymoronic, one that juxtaposes my own viewpoint with a more general observation about the tendentiousness of deduction in most academic discourses. My own viewpoint, one informed by evidence I will present later, is that Zionism's supporters are political in the same way that many culture warriors use the term to describe supporters of Palestinian liberation—that is to say, it is a type of commitment that aspires to a particular material outcome. Zionism, however, has achieved a normative status as a discourse and a commitment that allows its advocates to conceptualize their work as apolitical. In this sense, the terms “normative” and “apolitical” are coterminous, sometimes interchangeable. Because Zionism has achieved (or created for itself) a normative status, its purveyors have appropriated the stubborn ideal that scholarship can and should be disinterested to assume a policing function on the supposed politicization of scholars and campuses. Zionism, then, has become a force of apolitical power, compelling a class of scholars to identify and condemn politics in academe not because the political itself is objectionable but because the wrong kinds of politics are objectionable.

Columbia University journalism professor Todd Gitlin, for example, writes of “political intellectuals” having lost their way. In *Intellectuals and the Flag*, an appeal for more devout liberal patriotism, Gitlin assesses today’s irresponsible scholars in the context of the New Left foibles of Gitlin’s gilded youth in the 1960s and 1970s: “The New Left revolt against power was also a revolt against authority—sometimes, that is, against legitimate power [his emphasis]. It wasn’t only economic, political, and military power that the student movement resisted: it was the claim to knowledge, the bedrock of professionalism itself.” Subsequently, the “New Left’s graduates and successors pursued their quarrel with universities in manifold ways,” one of the primary ones being an inveterate suspicion of patriotism. By making a distinction between legitimate power and challengeable power, Gitlin sets up an arbitrary valuation that replaces the authority he attributes to irresponsible scholars with his own based on the level-headed critique of power he claims to offer.

It is worth emphasizing that Gitlin is not against the political itself; he is against the wrong type of political, that which challenges what he conceptualizes as legitimate authority. He argues in favor of a “politics of limits,” noting that “there must be limits to what human beings can be permitted to do with
their power.”9 The primary limit is in relation to criticism of Israel, something Gitlin is keen on suppressing (in its more radical forms) or restricting to a type of dutiful scolding, like responsible critiques of the United States: the point is not to assail it but to urge it to do a better job of upholding its unassailable ideals. Israel is the besieged canary in Gitlin’s vigilant mine: “Israeli policies bring the ranters out of the woodwork, but their delusional rants and rank forgeries simmer beneath the surface, waiting for opportunity.”10 Gitlin’s version of the political is profoundly injunctive; it demands a patriotic subtext in order for scholarship to assume proper responsibility.

Eric Lott has analyzed this form of coercion, suggesting that “9/11, a profoundly global event, was hypernationalized in its immediate aftermath [his emphasis].”11 He later explains, “No advocate of patriotism in this era can afford not to acknowledge the way love of country is inextricably, often mortally, bound up with the power that country wields in the world.”12 Lott’s identification of national power is crucial to our understanding of apolitical politicization, particularly insofar as hypernationalism is bound up with allegiance to Israel’s interests. Gitlin and others suggest, without actually saying, that support of state power constitutes an assumed apolitical perspective, whereas (some?) structural critiques are indecently political, a function of what Lott calls “neoliberal culturalism.” Take this passage from the eminent liberal philosopher Michael Walzer, in an article titled “Can There Be a Decent Left?”: “The radical failure of the [academic] left’s response to the events of last fall [9/11] raises a disturbing question: can there be a decent left in a superpower? Or more accurately, in the only superpower? Maybe the guilt produced by living in such a country and enjoying its privileges makes it impossible to sustain a decent (intelligent, responsible, morally nuanced) politics.”13 Walzer goes on to conflate anti-Israel activism and scholarship with Islamic fundamentalism, a decidedly indecent union, he argues.14 Walzer’s arguments, like Gitlin’s, constitute an entrenched instance of methodological hypernationalization because they attempt to conjoin—and demand that others conjoin—an intellectual apparatus with a corporeal notion of decency, one trained on the respectability supposedly inherent in liberal nationalism. America and Israel are ideas to be sustained and exported.

Every academic who has raised this type of argument is, in fact, a self-identified Zionist, which doesn’t so much point to a conspiracy as it does a discernible pattern worth discussion. It’s not necessarily the Zionist outlook that produces the disturbing methodological philosophy, but there’s unquestionably a correlation between support for U.S. state power and support for
Israel. This is so because Zionism is a profoundly chauvinistic ideology, one that is essentially ethnonationalist and accepted as responsible at the governmental level in the United States. As Jonathan Schanzer, writing in the neoconservative *Middle East Forum*, puts it, too many professional spaces are providing “a soap box for Palestinian apologists and Israeli detractors,” which compels professors “to bully their students, apologize for jihadists, and teach fringe ideas in the classroom.”\(^{15}\) This sort of political commitment is apt to get one labeled, perhaps even by the eminent Henry Louis Gates Jr., a “demagogue” or a “pseudoscholar.”\(^{16}\) It is for this reason that the preeminent U.S.-born historian Michael Oren can serve in the Israeli military during a time of brutal attacks on Palestinian civilians—as he did during the Israeli invasion of the Gaza Strip in 2008–2009—without it being condemned as an unjustifiably political act. (So even though critiques of militarism are common among liberal academics, there is an exception in the case of Israeli militarism—writing this just after Stand with Us brought an IOF soldier to Davis and the admin attacked [falsely, it turns out] students for disrupting the talk!) The reification of state violence is itself profusely violent, but it is morally permissible because it is the covetousness of state action that most informs the ethos of academic marketplaces. This phenomenon often plays out unevenly to the extent that certain state actions are permissible to critique and less covetous in the academy than others (the invasion of Iraq is permissible to critique, for example). Yet there are very few cases in which Zionist orientations are not marketable and in which pro-Palestinian orientations are.

The interrelation of state power and academic ethos is central to the conservative disposition inherent in most contemporary scholarship. (I use the term “conservative” here not to identify a political orientation like Democrat or Republican but to denote a conventionality in methodological approaches to issues contextualized by serious moral consequences.) Outspoken or tacit support for Israel, which can include judicious scolding but not structural denunciation, is coterminous with a proper display of intellectual patriotism. The conflation of American patriotism with Zionist devotion supplements a dialectic in which notions of responsibility underline policy formation on both local and international levels. This dialectic exists in all sorts of political commitments in American universities, but most insidiously among classically liberal scholars like Gitlin, Gates, and Walzer, whose injunctive entreaties for moderation circumscribe what it means to investigate critical issues responsibly and so exert influence in fields beyond Middle East studies. The
moderation they seek is moderate only in the sense that forces more powerful than the scholars have deemed them acceptable. There is nothing inherent to any idea that can be evaluated outside of its relationship with various historical and political forces. Proper moderation, then, merely reflects a set of interests that are dutifully recycled by self-identified moderates, who are not so much purveyors of their own ethical commitments as they are inventions of moderation's beneficiaries.

These factors point to a reality that cannot be overlooked if we are to adequately understand the function of the political in academic promotion and scholarly evaluation: there are economies inscribed in the production, publication, dissemination, and reception of scholarship. The circulation of academic research and its attendant value systems are indivisible from financial inducement, career advancement, and reputational credibility. As such, academic research is necessarily tendentious insofar as it can never be produced completely beyond pecuniary factors. This marketplace of scholarly publication affects the development of tacit judgments of the permissible and the frequency with which certain issues are covered. That most forms of Zionist thought are not only permissible but requisite to one's rapid ascension illuminates an engagement of state power with the structures of scholarly production. (The forms of Zionist thought that are explicitly fascistic are discouraged but certainly not absent from American universities.) By conflating responsible scholarship with at least absence of critique of implicit devotion to Zionism, most professors and administrators wield the term “political” in order to disesteem potential subversives while remaining smugly oblivious to the rudimentary intimations of their diction.

While it might be unpopular to point to Zionism as a culprit in restricting our range of scholarly inquiry (a conspicuous factor that far too many people tiptoe around), it is worth noting that nearly every recent instance of egregious academic harassment, those in which somebody's academic job was threatened, was performed by self-identified and ardently committed Zionists. Universities have been subject to intense demands (often organized by nonacademics) to fire professors or have taken such an initiative themselves, in numerous cases: Nadia Abu El Haj at Barnard College; Norman Finkelstein at DePaul University; Joseph Massad at Columbia University; William Robinson at the University of California, Santa Barbara; Joel Kovel at Bard College; Terri Ginsburg at North Carolina State University; and Margo Ramlal-Nankoe at Ithaca College. There are also dozens of unreported cases
of which I am aware anecdotally in which emerging scholars were passed over for jobs or promotions because of the “political” nature of their work.

Creating an unassailable quantity of publication is not the solution to this problem, however. With four books on my CV, I still barely made it through the departmental level of promotion. The point, in any case, is that it should not be incumbent on scholars whose work might be dubbed “political” to do ungodly amounts of research in order to ensure job protection; the tenets of academic freedom are supposed to perform that task. Anyway, most of the scholars who have been pressured or dismissed produced ample and groundbreaking research, which likely drew attention to them in the first place. Researchers who focus on controversial issues or who choose to participate in the public domain need the protections, however abstractly articulated, that are so paramount to the mythos of American higher education. Rather than demanding an enforcement of academic freedom, it might be useful for us to appraise the insidious descriptive commonplaces that, like “political,” undermine whatever protections academic freedom has the power to offer. The language and spirit of academic freedom cannot account for the delegitimization inherent in terms like “political,” which can be passed off as objective or normative when in reality its purveyors raise it deliberately to target scholarship or activism that threatens the preponderance of state power.

How does one challenge a phenomenon that is both abstruse and extra-legal? There is no singularly effective way, but we can work to change the archaic ethics of scholarship, which were created during an era of colonization in the twentieth-century United States and in an atmosphere of near-total Eurocentrism, the perspective they in turn support and sustain. Although today’s world is much more complicated than any disinterested methodology can explain, it is the myth of untainted knowledge that continues to predominate in academe. No piece of scholarship has ever been nonaligned. It is a matter of whether a piece of scholarship is aligned with the right set of politics that determines whether or not it achieves the exalted status of objective and nonpolitical. The default position of state power as a coded synecdoche of responsible scholarship is constantly reinvented as normative by those who seek to uphold what they conceptualize as timeless standards of objective inquiry. There are all kinds of problems with this default position beyond merely its methodological foolishness.

Most important, by reifying the political as an unserious, unsavory presence in scholarship, Zionists and other traditionalists reinforce their own power by retaining ownership over the term “political.” (Regarding the term
“traditionalist”: Zionists may evoke all kinds of different political identities, most of them decidedly untraditional, but when it comes to their complaints about “political”—i.e., anti-Zionist—scholarship, they are the most traditional of all culture warriors.) Moreover, this strident use of the term “political” creates exclusive spaces in academe; those spaces preclude the articulation of serious, in some cases groundbreaking, research. They tacitly limit the pursuit of knowledge. They actively limit the pursuit of justice. They make American universities stupider than they need to be. No matter what the guardians of proper scholarly ethos proclaim about the need for researchers to remain disengaged, it is perplexing to me that one could produce work that has nothing to do with improving the terrible conditions of the world and in the communities we are supposed to serve. I should emphasize that it is not naïveté or romanticized distortion that leads to this perplexing injunction; it is the knowledge, at least tacitly understood, that most scholars are part of the same power structure they so intently maintain.

The Ethics of Antistate Inquiry

In calling for an ethics of antistate inquiry, I would like to offer a few comments in closing on the potential of academic research to be both responsibly meticulous and ardently unaffiliated. I would be remiss not to acknowledge the tremendous debt of gratitude I owe to the work being done in the field of native and indigenous studies. Indigenous critics such as Andrea Smith, Dale Turner, Robert Warrior, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, and Taiaiake Alfred, along with various writers working in ethnic and postcolonial studies, have explored ways that nonobjective scholarship (an inevitable and good thing) can engage communities and projustice movements.17 In the spirit of this scholarship, I would argue that being ardently unaffiliated to institutional power is a particularly crucial aspect of reorganizing the academic ethos. Although the myth of objectivity dictates no affiliation with political parties, paid sponsors, or special interest groups, objectivity in practice implicitly demands allegiance to state power (often in the form of a commitment to Zionist ideals). It is this implicit demand that I would like to see scholars challenge and ultimately reject. It should not be the goal of research and teaching to recapitulate modes of authority or reinvent the ethos of colonialist pursuits. We should focus on searching out the truths that serious inquiry will uncover if it is unaffected by a need to overcompensate for its inherent biases by retreating to the default position of apolitical advocacy. Worldly
narratives show over and again that the exercise of state power affects academic research and impedes the quest for useful knowledge; it rarely supplements or inspires such a quest. As intellectuals and researchers, we have an opportunity to productively examine the substantial gaps between unidirectional corporate ideals and the multivalent needs of diverse human communities. This opportunity will never come to fruition if we feign objectivity and avoid the political.

We can start by reclaiming the “political” from apolitical politicos. It is a term that needs to be deterritorialized from its normative position, where it is intertwined with gender, race, class, and sexuality in both tacit and obvious ways. More specifically, the term “political” needs to be taken out of the lexicon of Zionist and right-wing activists, scholarly and otherwise, who employ the word as a form of passive-aggressive attack, a coded way to betray the liberal ideals of academic freedom without technically contravening them. “Political” is an encoded signification whose connotative meaning illustrates fascistic tendencies that actually displace it from the humanistic context it claims to inhabit. It then reasserts its own form of apolitical power—that is, a power that pretends to be rational, affiliated with a politics that purports to be nonpolitical. This pattern represents the same commonsensical rationalism concealing elite authority that Antonio Gramsci highlighted nearly a century ago.

I would also suggest that humanistic scholars continue to think about what it means to produce controversial and thus “political” work. Although the connotations of political research are still overwhelmingly negative, new generations of scholars, following the lead of their courageous forebears, are undermining the venerable colonialist structures of academic work. It is a project worth joining. Doing “political” research is not merely a byproduct of its connotations. It means that somebody is upset and names work as political, which indicates that the work is challenging some type of convention, something every worthwhile piece of scholarship does. It isn’t necessarily desirable or requisite that research in the humanities and social sciences is controversial, but it shouldn’t be seen automatically as negative if it is. Controversy and discomfort aid the pursuit of knowledge; they do not hinder it. The pursuit of well-researched knowledge directly contravenes the propaganda apparatus on which Israeli colonization relies, a major factor in the juxtaposition of normative scholarship with fealty to Zionism as conflated with U.S. patriotism. If we do not learn to engage the “political” in useful and creative ways, American universities will have succumbed indelibly to the
preponderance of state power in epistemological systems by having deferred inquiry in favor of the prestige that attends responsible complaisance.

I do not believe that a methodological norm should exist for research in which moral issues are central to both exposition and analysis. Beyond authorial integrity, there are too many variables in humanistic research to employ injunctive expectations, especially if those expectations tacitly supplement the interests of worthy subjects of critique (such as Zionism or American militarism). Scholars should, where possible, create relationships with social, cultural, and political communities, for there is nothing morally or methodologically wrong with intertwining scholarship with organic movements for justice; there is only something normatively wrong with such a move based on the antiquated ethos of the colonialist academy.

In reflecting on my own experience with being labeled “political,” I realize that the word is powerful enough to displace people from their livelihoods or stall their upward mobility. This power alone is enough for principled scholars to be profoundly suspicious of the term and its connotations. By continually reinventing the myth of disinterest and objectivity, we give weight to a set of archaic values that energetically perform a tendentious neutrality. It would be more useful to assess how disinterest and objectivity are aligned with various apparatuses of power and authority and to interrogate how a commitment to Zionism is central to that alignment. Zionism is akin to the patriotic demand American society places on esteemed celebrities: it is the implicit criterion by which one’s commitment to responsible pedagogy and research is determined, and so it is able to heavily influence one’s market value as both an intellectual and public figure. The outspoken political orientation of those who attack “political” scholars makes this point eminently clear. Devoted and silent Zionists never face negative tenure decisions because of their use of overly “political” methodologies. Devoted and silent Zionists, however, routinely engender negative tenure decisions for others.

It is for this reason that I prefer the terms “principled” or “communal” rather than “responsible” to describe justice-oriented scholarship. Although any adjective will have unintended connotations or be wrapped up in competing paradigms, the term “responsible” has too often been used to underline the charge of “political” as a mode of disaccreditation. If it is responsible to be at least tacitly patriotic—that is, devoted to articulations of state power—then exercising responsibility in contemporary academe is contrary to humane ethics and useful theorization. The point is to make sure that describing what we do coheres with the outcomes we desire. If
we desire justice-oriented outcomes, then we need to dislodge current notions of responsibility from their entanglement with Zionist and American chauvinism. The late Iris Marion Young explores these possibilities in her splendid book *Global Challenges*:

A dictatorship is a ruling power that imposes its own political desire and interests on others even in the face of their objections or protest. I conjure the idea of global dictatorship in order to invoke the ideal of its opposite, global democracy. The institutions of stronger global cooperation and regulation that we should envision and work for have to be thought of as democratic. Among other things, this means that they do not replace institutions through which peoples exercise a right of self-determination, but provide means through which self-determining peoples can be represented in transnational decision-making on terms that insulate smaller or less powerful groups from domination and exploitation.18

The idea of scholarship working in conjunction with, or even in the service of, global movements for self-determination is not a new one, but it is one that remains sufficiently marginalized. I would like to suggest that we consider the possibilities of engaged scholarship not merely as affirmational but also as oppositional. I don’t speak of oppositional scholarship as an entrée into contentiousness but suggest a principled, nonobjective, interested stance against the global dictatorship enforced by the interchangeable axes of American imperialism, Zionist colonization, neoliberal economies, and corporate warfare.

A productive place to locate this intellectual labor is in indigenous communities, where the juxtaposition of research with communal development is fluid and uncontroversial. There is a remarkable energy in the world beyond the academy for ground-level change, a site of action where theorization is often more germane and sophisticated than in formal academic institutions, as we saw in the early stages of the Egyptian and Tunisian revolutions. By confining ourselves to the spaces inhabited by the supposedly unimpressionable elite, we ensure a recirculation of intellectual and material resources into limited and specialized institutions. I do not believe that the production of research should be democratic, but its dissemination should not be so patently undemocratic. We need to think more about how the work we do as scholars coheres with the struggles of projustice advocates in all social
and economic strata. I don’t have all the answers to these propositions, but I do know that on the cusp of promotion to associate professor, I’ve learned a few things about scholarship: if it claims to be objective, then it’s lying to you. And if it’s not political, then it doesn’t exist.

Notes

3. For example, see the cases of Joseph Massad and Nadia Abu El Haj.
5. I use the term “pro-Palestine” with some hesitation because it doesn’t adequately capture the moral and historical reasoning for one’s support of Palestinians. It instead implies a tendentious political orientation to which one adheres stridently or even unthinkingly. In reality, anybody with basic knowledge of Palestine’s history would easily come to identify as “pro-Palestine” based on the undeniable justice of the cause of Palestinian liberation and decolonization. I use “pro-Palestine” in this sense, then, as a way to denote those in favor of justice and to identify a particular attitude that Zionists find unacceptable.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., 84.
12. Ibid., 185.
14. In the same article he writes, “But ideologically primed leftists were likely to think that they already understood whatever needed to be understood. Any group that attacks the imperial power must be a representative of the oppressed, and its agenda must be the agenda of the left. It isn’t necessary to listen to its spokesmen. What else can they want except . . . the redistribution of resources across the globe,
the withdrawal of American soldiers from wherever they are, the closing down of aid programs for repressive governments, the end of the blockade of Iraq, and the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel? I don’t doubt that there is some overlap between this program and the dreams of al-Qaeda leaders—though al-Qaeda is not an egalitarian movement, and the idea that it supports a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is crazy. The overlap is circumstantial and convenient, nothing more. A holy war against infidels is not, even unintentionally, unconsciously, or ‘objectively,’ a left politics. But how many leftists can even imagine a holy war against infidels?”


16. These terms are taken from Gates’s controversial 1992 New York Times op-ed “Black Demagogues and Pseudo-Scholars,” which can be found at http://www.nytimes.com/1992/07/20/opinion/black-demagogues-and-pseudo-scholars.html. Gates was specifically concerned with a book sponsored by the Nation of Islam about Jewish complicity in the slave trade, which he conceptualized as anti-Semitic. However, the article was widely seen by Afrocentric and pro-Palestinian writers as an unjustifiable concession to a set of Zionist political demands on black anti-Zionist scholars.
