Overkill:
The Sexualised Body in Violent Identity Politics

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to understand the nature of a particular kind of sexualised, abject violence that emerges in and through identity politics. This violence is practised against or through the body. I refer to this type of violence as ‘overkill’ and contend that it performatively constitutes identity in abject and sexualised ways through the weaponisation and brutalisation of the body. The thesis is situated within the literature on ethnic identities in conflict, which tends to under-theorise how this violence emerges and what this violence accomplishes by viewing violence as the outcome of pre-existing identity divisions. To address this gap, I introduce two theoretical approaches to the examination of violent identity politics. The first of these is the concept of performativity as formulated by Judith Butler (1990), which views identity as an iterative process constitutive of political subjectivity. The second is a theory of abjection as discussed by Julia Kristeva (1980), in which she argues that the constitution of identity is an exclusionary process that requires the simultaneous production of an other. Taken together, these theoretical approaches allow for an understanding of extreme violence as constitutive of a new kind of subjectivity that renders the other abject through sexualised discourses. There are two dynamics of overkill that this thesis explores: the brutalisation and the weaponisation of the body. Using an empirical study of the 1994 Rwandan genocide, I highlight the brutalisation of the sexualised body; through a second case study of the prison protests in Northern Ireland (1976-1981), I draw out the weaponisation of the sexualised body. I conclude by demonstrating the need for an understanding of identity as contingent upon markers of difference that are sexualised through abjection to establish a better explanatory framework for examining political violence.

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Chapter One

Not Only Why, But How: Asking Different Questions in the Study of Extreme Violence

Introduction

On the afternoon of 7 February, 1980, male prison guards in full riot gear entered the prisoners' cells in Armagh Gaol, a women's only gaol in Armagh, Northern Ireland (Aretxaga 1995, 128). The women had been called out of their cells to queue for dinner when male prison officers believed to have been brought in from the men's prison surrounded and corralled them into separate rooms. They were harassed by both male and female prison officers, beaten and strip-searched before being allowed back to their ransacked cells, where they were confined for days without access to lavatories (Weinstein 2007, 18). Twenty-three months earlier, in March 1978, the men in HM Prison Maze (colloquially known as the H-Blocks because of the shape of the buildings) had begun refusing to leave their cells: going to the toilets left them open to abuse and ridicule from the prison guards. When the guards responded by blocking the holes through which the prisoners emptied their chamber pots, the prisoners began spreading their excreta on the walls of their cells. Conditions deteriorated rapidly and as the condition of the cell walls grew worse, the prisoners slowly plunged themselves into darkness and decay.

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On 15 April 1994, thousands of men, women, and children were murdered in or on the grounds of the Nyarubuye Catholic Church. Valentina Iribagizo, twelve years old at the time of massacre, was taken to the church by her parents, who thought it would be safe for her there. When the massacre began, she survived because she became so covered in blood that the Interhamwe thought she was dead. She lived in the church, surrounded by corpses, and the dogs that came to eat them, for three days.

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Each of these vignettes in its own specific way demonstrates a particular type of violence that occurs in some cases of violent identity politics, and ethnic violence in particular. Ethnic violence as a field of study lacks an obvious common argument that explains, for instance, why some ethnically defined tensions erupt into horrific violence while others do not. While the study of ethnic violence seems to be constantly changing with new conflicts bringing new evidence and new criteria, what seems to remain relatively consistent is that when these conflicts do erupt into large-scale violence, this violence is quite often characterised by its extreme nature. Often, the bodies of individuals are explicitly targeted in ways that they would not be in, for instance, a war where bodies are collateral damage. This is based on the assumption that there is a qualitative difference between a massacre in a church and the destruction of soldiers on the battlefield. Collateral damage does not account for the brutality of the 1994 Rwandan genocide, nor does it explain the horror of the Northern Irish prison protests. During the 1994 Rwandan genocide, the body of the enemy (in this case, the Tutsi) was the primary, and effectively the only, target. The body is always the ultimate target of political violence, but the extremity of the violence is in certain cases particularly striking. It appears that this extreme violence to which bodies are subjected is rooted in something more than struggle, and more even than symbolism – rather, it is intended to communicate difference and as a mechanism of dominance.

Research Question and Hypothesis

Despite its being a striking and widely discussed feature in some instances of political violence, the existing literature on ethnic conflict has so far been unable to account for the visceral, abject nature of certain cases of ethnic violence. Many theories of ethnic violence have taken into account issues such as modernisation, manipulation by ethnic elites, instrumental concerns, and ancient hatreds. I argue that while these factors may explain some parts of identity conflicts, they do not account for those instances of conflict that display shocking levels of violence. Because we are

unable to account for how this violence emerges, we are unable to predict it, intervene in it, or punish it effectively. These instances of violence with which I am concerned appear to target the body in specific, aggressive, and highly sexualised ways. Rape and sexual assault occur in peacetime, and sexual violence as a weapon of war outside ethnic conflict is common (Cohen 2013). Still, there appears to be something else happening in these extreme cases of violent identity politics, wherein the sexual violence that occurs is often particularly abhorrent – or abject – and is intended to show not only the dominance but the total superiority of one group over another. The sexualised violence in these kinds of identity conflicts is not about the gratification of the perpetrator or perpetrators, but rather about breaking the other group, rendering the group inferior and rendering it abject. This abjection of the other is accomplished through sexualised violence done to the body of the other.

This type of abject and sexualised violence is rampant in accounts of extreme identity conflicts: narrative histories of the genocide in Rwanda are rife with horrific tales of rape, gang rape, and vivisection that detail the brutalisation of the body. In Northern Ireland's prisons, we find examples of sexual assault against prisoners culminating in resistance movements that weaponise the body in ways that are stunningly abhorrent. It is important to note that this thesis is not an attempt to draw a comparison between such cases, but rather each empirical study is demonstrative of different facets of extreme political violence, namely the brutalisation and weaponisation of the body, that I wish to explore. These cases suggest an intersection in the ways that the sexed body and the ethnicised body are mutually constituted and performed in some cases of violent identity politics, which I refer to as the intersectionality of embodied identities. I argue that by investigating and understanding this mutual constitution and intersectional performance, we gain a better understanding of how some identity-based conflicts produce certain types of extreme violence. Introducing and examining the relationship between performativity (as part of the normalising project of disciplinary power that produces dynamic and exclusionary modes of identification), the

gendering and sexualisation of the body (as sometimes opposing, sometimes complementary forces) and abjection explains how bodies become brutalised and weaponised in specific ways in these types of violent identity politics.

That these types of violence require investigation is based on a simple, core intuition – that something that causes so much human suffering is reprehensible, and attempts should be made to understand and explain it, to work towards some kind of predictive framework. The aforementioned examples of such violence have been met, largely, with horror by the international community. Though the legal response has not been the same, the colloquial responses to the specific instances of violence –the storming of Rwandan churches to massacre those seeking shelter inside, the No Wash Protest in Armagh Gaol – has been one of more or less universal horror. This horror, however, also paralyses, and explanations for and responses to this violence have so far been unsatisfying. Examining these types of violence may help us gain an understanding of how such extreme political violence comes about, and with enough examination, we may be able to recognise the types of identity formations that could become radicalised to produce such extreme violence, and with this knowledge prevent such violence from occurring. An explanation for these kinds of violence through the identification of certain commonalities may prove beneficial to scholars and policy makers working on related issues of political violence, such as mediation, intervention, or post-conflict reconciliation. More importantly, it may also prove more practically useful in providing a sense of when conflict may be intervened in to prevent extreme violence, by illustrating certain commonalities in the radicalisation of identity.

Rather than examining potential contributors to conflict such as the interests of the elite in order to explain why violence may arise from identity politics, I propose an alternative starting point – examining how identities can intersect in such a way that when they are radicalised, they

produce extreme forms of violence. Because these identity-based conflicts appear inherently different to other conflicts, I work towards crafting a theory of *how* identities come to be in such a way that this violence may arise. I argue that when ethnicisation and sexualisation intersect with one another, this extreme violence is produced. This also bridges the gap between scholarship on ethnic identity and ethnic conflict, in particular the disconnection between the two that allows theories of ethnic conflict to assert that identities are constructed while treating them as enduring elements. The keys to this are, I will argue, the concept of performativity (Butler 1990), as it accounts for the way in which identity is both constructed and normalised so that it appears natural and enduring. The second is the concept of abjection (Kristeva 1982), as it accounts for the horror that arises from discerning the identity of the self in relation to the identity of the other.

My hypothesis is that this type of violence arises as the result of the abject sexualisation of the other, and the performance of this abject sexualisation through the brutalisation and/or the weaponisation of the body of the other. More specifically, the other undergoes an ascribed process (which is to say that its production comes from an external group) of sexualisation that largely serves to feminise the other, rendering them deviant or perverse in order to dominate them. Given that the sexualisation of the other is connected to the self's ability to dominate it, then the self's feelings of abjection are inextricably tied to and associated with the sexualised other, and the self visits this association on the other through these specific forms of violence.

In Rwanda, for example, in the months leading up to the genocide, Tutsi women were depicted as sexual deviants, and commonly as succubi or ‘seductress-spies’ (Human Rights Watch 1996, 181), who intended to seduce Hutu men from ‘their’ women, to enslave Hutu men in the service of their own families, and who would ultimately choose, if availability permitted, European men, humiliating their Hutu suitors. Their sexuality was said to be their weapon, something that

Hutu men and women alike needed to be on guard against the predatory sexuality of the Tutsi, even in normal interactions (Human Rights Watch 1996, 17). The realities of the Tutsi women's disaggregated sexualities and individual sexual practices were completely irrelevant to the mythic production of their alterity, characterised by an exoticised sexuality. This otherness, which was framed in terms of the threat of domination and superiority, made Tutsi women vulnerable targets for sexual assault and for murder, as they were both discursively dehumanised and made threatening. The Tutsi women were therefore made vulnerable on two counts – their status as ethnic others with the deviance of practice attendant to that make them targets of destruction, and their status as women renders them targets of domination. The Tutsi women were brutalised because of their ascribed otherness and the attendant abject femininity.

While the 1994 Rwandan genocide addresses the brutalisation of the body in violent identity politics, the prison protests in Northern Ireland illustrate the weaponisation of the body. In the case of the No Wash Protest at Armagh Gaol, the abuse that the women suffered was entirely sexualised and intended to dominate through, for example, the restriction of menstrual sanitary products. (Fairweather, McDonough, and MacFadyean 1984, 222). The Armagh women were rendered deviant not only as republicans but as women who defied gender roles, and so the corporeality of their sexualised womanhood was turned against them. The prisoners in Armagh Gaol were therefore abjected on two counts – as women in prison, and as republicans. Their abjection was communicated to them through shame and punishments that were focused upon menstruation. When they joined the No Wash Protest, or more appropriately started their own, the Armagh women were able to weaponise their menstruation as an attack against the abjection they faced both inside and outside the prison. In this instance, the Armagh women weaponised their own ascribed otherness, weaponising their abject femininity. Both cases demonstrate one way in which the intersection of ethnicisation and sexualisation through abject produces extreme violence.

In the next section, I will start to lay the foundations for the theoretical framework and conceptual foundations of this project, which is to introduce a specific conceptual understanding of the abject and sexualised violence that we see in some cases of violent identity politics, and which I have called overkill. Overkill, which I have defined as violence that performatively constitutes identity in sexualised and abject ways through the brutalisation and weaponisation of the body, is contingent upon certain conditions of possibility. It eliminates agency and produces a subaltern subjectivity through abjection and sexualisation. To do this, overkill must emerge from certain conditions of possibility, which include emotional trauma between groups, gender inequality that manifests as pre-existing systemic exclusion, and conditions of abjection. The absences of the conditions of possibility that allow for overkill explain why this kind of violence does not occur in all situations of ethnicised tension or conflict.

Overkill and Conditions of Possibility: Emotional Trauma, Inequality, Abjection

The concept of 'conditions of possibility' is a way of conceptualising the constitutive structure of reality – conditions of possibility are not the cause to an effect, but rather formation that allows an understanding of causation to emerge. In the work of Michel Foucault, conditions of possibility are also referred to in the context of the *episteme,* the 'specifically *discursive* apparatus' (1980, 197) that determines the conditions of possibility of its contemporary knowledge. The *episteme* is, therefore, the constellation of discursive productions that contextualise and inform the conditions of possibility for social relationships. Pierre Bourdieu writes that while social interactions are often empirically studied, 'the truth of any interaction is never entirely to be found within the interaction as it avails itself for observation' (Bourdieu 1989, 16). In summation of this, there is a philosophical precedent for considering social interactions, and in particular social

interactions defined in terms of power relations, to be entrenched within the existent power/knowledge matrix, and reliant upon certain conditions of possibility.

The first condition of possibility that I will outline is emotion. Sara Ahmed (2004) discusses the politics of emotions, and emotive and affective states in the formation of identity and understanding. She argues ‘emotions create the very effect of the surfaces and boundaries that allow us to distinguish an inside and an outside...it is through emotions, or how we respond to objects and others, that surfaces or boundaries are made’ (Ahmed 2004, 10). She goes on to say that ‘[t]he work of emotion involves the 'sticking' of signs to bodies’ (Ahmed 2004, 13). Ahmed's work on the politics of emotion is interesting because of her clarifying reduction of her claims to the question ‘what sticks?’ (Ahmed 2004, 89). She interrogates the ‘stickiness’ of emotions i.e. the extent to which meaning is ascribed to objects that in turn evoke a reaction. Emotions such as love or disgust ‘stick’ to surface and provide a means of reading that surface, and they communicate the social positionality of that surface.

Overkill is a communicative form of violence. At the level of brutalisation, it produces and communicates difference; at the level of weaponisation, it militarises the difference in response to abjection and brutalisation. Both practices require an affective response in order to be effective. Brutalisation uses abject, sexualised violence to produce its victims as abject and sexualised. In Rwanda, rape was used to humiliate the Tutsi, as well as to harm the victim of the abuse. These events required a present emotive receptor that goes beyond a reaction to human suffering. Rather, it required a connection to the specific suffering of the victims, the Tutsi in this case. The rape of a Tutsi child needed to be felt by the Tutsi community, to illustrate the complete dehumanisation and powerlessness of the Tutsi people. It also needed to be felt by the Hutu community, so that the abjection and dehumanisation of the Tutsi reconstituted Hutu subjectivity as dominant and superior.

The weaponisation of the abject, sexualised body also requires and emotionally engaged audience that will be impacted in order to achieve its aims. The Hunger Strike Protest was impactful largely because of its ability to rally support in people outside the prison, which served not only to crystallise Irish identity but also to create a strong sense of anti-Britishness (Blatherwick 1981, 1-2).

The next condition of possibility for overkill is a systemic and pervasive system of gender inequality. The gendering and sexualising of the other is a critical condition of possibility for overkill. The sexualisation that occurs in overkill relies upon a pre-existing understanding of the feminine as subordinate to the masculine. The purpose of sexualisation in overkill is to render the other subordinate, inferior, to produce their bodies as public space for humiliation – in other words, to feminise. Without a pre-existing systemic exclusion of women (and marginalised masculinities), the feminisation of the other cannot take place, as it does not have a foothold. Patriarchal structures in Northern Ireland not only prescripted what were considered acceptable forms of participation for women, but made the participations of nationalist women a difficult navigation. Begoña Aretxaga argues that militant nationalist women 'become anomalies' and are representative either of the support for men or of women who 'act like men' (Aretxaga 1997, 10) . This abject sexualisation takes root in epistemic socio-cultural understandings of the feminine as both lesser and object (to the exclusion of recognition as a subject). The feminisation of the other in this context crosses the boundary between sexualising and gendering, which are not the same process but can and do often inform one another as both confer a kind of dominance.

The final condition of possibility necessary for overkill is a connection to abjection. Abjection occupies an interesting position not only to discussions of political violence, but also to socio-political relationships writ large. Abjection, according to Kristeva (1980), is one of the ways

in which we understand our culture, by determining what is outside of our culture. What is considered abject cuts across a variety of mediums – the abject can encompass practices, bodies, material items such as food, or bodily functions such as excreta and menstruation. Furthermore, practices and functions that are abject can render the body that performs them entirely abject, and menstruation illustrates this point. The emotive power of the abject comes from its being just beyond the reach of comprehension and legibility. In the case of overkill, abjection serves a productive function, by placing bodies in proximity to an abject – through abject bodily violence in the case of Rwanda, or excreta in the case of the Northern Irish prison protests. In order for the abjection necessary for overkill to take root (and to produce the emotive impact that it must), there needs to be a pre-existing lexicon of abjection. For instance, certain sexual practices but already be produced as deviant in order for their projection on to the outgroup to effectively render the group as deviant and abject.

Deploying Abjection

Abjection is the terror and disgust of being confronted with the other, whether that is on a bodily, micro-level or a macro-social level. Abjection is formed through exclusion and repulsion. The exclusionary nature of abjection is a critical component of its importance for overkill. Abjection is a means by which identity is formed and the cohesion of the ingroup formed against abjection is maintained. In other words, abjection is a means of defining who we are by defining who we are not. Barbara Creed (1986, 45) says that Julia Kristeva's (1982) essay, *Powers of Horror,* attempts to 'explore the different ways in which abjection, as a source of horror, works within patriarchal societies, as a means of separating the human from the non-human, and the fully constituted subject from the partially formed abject'. Two elements here stand out – the use of the abject for the separation of the subject from the abject, and its deployment in patriarchal societies. Abjection is both the border that separates us from them, and this includes practices done by 'them'

as well as those done by ‘us’ i.e. violence, and what defines those beyond the border of us.

The role of the abject within patriarchal societies is also important because of its connection to gendered and sexualised norms as a means of policing identity performance. The abject-feminine repeatedly emerges in the discussion and illustration of overkill, in the discursive production of the other meant to subordinate and confer dominance, in the sexualising and sexualised violence experienced by the other. Abject sexualisation is a primarily feminising production of the other in order to confer dominance, and it is worth noting that this sexualisation is conferred upon the other through sexualised violence. This will be discussed in terms of rape in the 1994 Rwandan Genocide, and in terms of the mirror searches in HMP Maze in Northern Ireland.

Abjection, therefore, covers a variety of processes that occur in overkill – it defines how the other is perceived and produced as well as the violence that is done to the other. This abject violence further constitutes the other as abject. It finds resonance in our understanding of the abject as something that does not belong to our subjectivity and is therefore frightening, but at the same time the abject repulses us, it also attracts us – there is a dual operation of fear and fascination that ensures our attention remains fixed on the abject. Abject violence in overkill, specifically in the brutalisation of the body, is an attempt to do more than kill or harm the other, but is a means of conferring utter dominance, complete humiliation with or without the death of the other. As a condition of possibility for the weaponisation of the body, which follows from brutalisation, abjection defines the violence that the body-weapon commits in order to produce the maximum emotive impact upon its opponent.

In the next section, I will highlight each of the case studies, the 1994 Rwandan Genocide

and the Northern Irish prison protests between 1976-1981, respectively, in order to discuss what facets of overkill they illustrate. It is important to point out that this is not intended to be a comparative study of two cases, and so no comparison between the two will be drawn. Rather, each case study has been selected because of its ability to clearly illustrate two processes of overkill.

Case Study Selection: What Rwanda and Northern Ireland Tell Us About Overkill

The first case study focusses on the brutalisation of the body in overkill, illustrated by the 1994 Rwandan genocide. The Rwandan Genocide occupies a special place in the history of political violence because of the extremity of the violence that took place, and because of the speed with which the genocide was carried out. The violence that occurred, that was done to the victims' bodies, was done at close range, was often highly sexualised, and was extreme. In addition to the well-known attacks on the victims that were done with machetes (Melvern 2004, Hatzfield 2008), there was the widespread use of sexual assaults and the use of vivisection (Appadurai 1998). The tremendous amount of attention paid to inflicting terrible suffering and humiliation on the bodies of the victims makes the 1994 Rwandan genocide a disturbingly clear illustration of the brutalisation of the body in overkill.

The first visible means of brutalising the Tutsi came through their discursive production as abject. In Chapter Five, this will be illustrated primarily through recollection, as well as transcripts of radio broadcasts from the state-supported radio station *Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines,* as well as editorials published in *Kangura* magazine that have been translated into English. Tutsi were commonly referred to as *inyenzi* which translates to cockroach. As will be discussed in Chapter Five, this was an intentional comparison that not only dehumanised the Tutsi, but produced them as a despised creature, gaining resonance for the dehumanisation of the Tutsi by juxtaposing them with a deplored insect with connotations of disease and filth. In addition to this juxtaposition,

Tutsi sexuality was produced as deviant, sometimes in the same piece (Human Rights Watch 1999). The propaganda campaign leading up to the 1994 genocide provides multiple and clear illustrations of the dehumanisation and discursive production of the Tutsi as abject.

Abjection is also visible not only in the discursive production of the Tutsi, but in the kinds of violence that occurred during the genocide as well, specifically sexualised violence and the practice of vivisection. Vivisection refers to the dissection of a still living being and is argued by Arjun Appadurai (1998) to have played an important role in the 1994 Rwandan genocide by providing a means by which the *genocidaires* could point to and prove difference between the Hutu and Tutsis. The vivisectionist violence of the genocide was also highly sexualised and occurred alongside the staggering amount of sexual violence that occurred and was itself abject. Because of the extremity of the violence and the tendency towards sexual violence, the 1994 Rwandan genocide provides clear illustrations of the intersections of ethnicised and sexualised embodiment as conferred upon the body by brutal, abject violence.

The second case study examines the weaponisation of the body in overkill, using empirical illustrations from the prison protests that occurred in HMP Maze (also known as the H-Blocks) and Armagh Gaol between 1976-1981. The men and women incarcerated and participating in the protests were Irish republicans resisting what they saw as the illegal occupation of Ireland by the British. Ex-prisoners held in both the H-Blocks and Armagh recount tales of abuse that particularly in the case of the male prisoners was strikingly sexualised. I discuss this sexualised violence against both women and men in the prisoners as a means of feminising the prisoners in a bid to subdue and pacify them. The prisoners resisted their abjection and feminisation first through the Blanket and then the No Wash Protest.

The No Wash Protest is particularly interesting because of its weaponisation of the feminised body and a mimesis of the alterity the prisoners faced as a result of the incarceration. The No Wash Protest involved in addition to a refusal to wash, the refusal to 'slop out' i.e. to dispose of their bodily wastes, which they instead smeared over the walls of their cells. This is one illustration of how the weaponisation of the body in overkill operationalises the abjection that is produced through the brutalisation of the body. The No Wash Protest was ultimately a failed exercise, largely because of its weaponisation of the feminised body and because the language of the protest, the use of faeces and menstrual blood, was too far beyond the comprehension of the people working in and outside the prison to understand. It ended with the Hunger Strike Protest which resulted in the deaths of ten young men. The Hunger Strike Protest still uses the language of the abject – the transformation of the virile male body into a corpse – but it is articulated from a position of militarised masculinity. In this way the weaponisation of the body through the Hunger Strike Protest is reclamation of agency, dominance, and of masculinity.

I will reiterate at this point that the two case studies presented in this thesis are in no way meant to be compared to one another. Rather, each of the cases provides a clear illustration of one of the facets of overkill that I draw out in this project and they are presented to illustrate one aspect of this phenomenon. The weaponisation of the body is interesting in this regard because it is reliant on the brutalisation of the body, which is to say that the weaponisation of the body occurs as a result of its brutalisation. Weaponisation is the radical deployment of the abjection that occurs in brutalisation, and as I argue in Chapter Six, it is successful in the case of the 1981 Irish Republican Hunger Strike in which it is driven by the reclamation of the strikers' (and more broadly the republican prisoners') masculinity. Further research beyond the scope of this project will examine the extent to which successful bodily weaponisation is typically a reclamation of masculinity and/or the resistance of marginalised masculinities and femininities against a normalised-hegemonic masculinity.

This thesis will begin by tracing the gap in the literature on ethnic conflict. That gap is around the existing literature's unsatisfactory interrogation of the following question: why does this abject and sexualised violence occur in some cases of violent identity politics? After discussing the gap in the existing literature, I will present two conceptual frameworks that help address this gap, which are the understanding of identities as performative and intersectional, and an understanding of abjection, to demonstrate that the identities that become radicalised towards overkill or as a result of overkill emerge from a constellation of difference markers that make up what we consider to be 'ethnic' identity. From here, the 1994 Rwandan Genocide and the Northern Irish prison protests will be discussed in order to provide an empirical illustration of the concepts discussed in the preceding two chapters. Finally, the thesis will conclude by restating the contribution to the existing literature, discussing the ways in which overkill emerges as a specific form of political violence, and discussing the ways in which overkill and the intersectionality of ethnic identity can be developed in future projects.

Structure of the Thesis

To begin addressing this research question and hypothesis, I will introduce the current literature on ethnic identity and violence to identify the gaps in this field of scholarship. Much has been written about ethnicity, ethnic identification, and the nature of ethnic violence, but an examination of this body of literature reveals a disconnection between the literature on ethnic identity and the literature on ethnic violence. More specifically, it appears that despite acknowledging that ethnic identities are socially constructed, the ethnic violence literature largely continues to treat ethnic groups as though they were enduring historical realities and not simply enduring in the minds of group members. In the case of Rwanda, the categories of 'Hutu' and 'Tutsi' as ethnic groups are acknowledged to be largely inventions of colonisers (des Forges 1999),

with the terms ‘Hutu’, ‘Tutsi’, and ‘Twa’ indigenously referring to much more fluid group classifications. Yet reports such as those published in *The New York Times* (see Gray 1994), and Human Rights Watch (1998) covering the genocide in Rwanda refer to the Hutu and Tutsi as distinctive, recognizable groups with a history of ‘bad blood’ between them. Group identities can be and often are exacerbated around ethnic tensions, with clear contemporary motives and causes such as economic resources or political gains, but the resulting conflict is then explained in terms of the groups' historic continuity. Investigating violent identity politics in such a way that traces a line from identity formation through to its radicalisation may provide a more holistic view of conflict.

More importantly, it appears that scholarship on violent identity politics has been largely unable or unwilling to account for the sheer horror of some instances of ethnic violence, which seems to produce a much more visceral type of violence then other types of conflict, and one that is largely inflicted upon bodies that are characterised in certain ways. In other words, some instances of ethnic violence include bodily violence on a shocking scale, and the ethnic conflict literature has not taken major steps in determining how these attacks on the body come about. The critical literature on ethnic violence has done the most to move research in this direction – Allen Feldman (1991) argues for the body to be the focal point of analysis in political violence, Lee Anne Fujii (2010) argues for the communicative value of extra-lethal violence, and Arjun Appadurai (1998) highlights the importance of vivisectionist violence for ‘discovering’ and producing ethnic difference. These contributions will be discussed at the conclusion of the literature review chapter, and will highlight the contribution of this project by outlining what overkill takes into account that previous critical understandings of ethnic violence have not – namely the intersectionality of ethnicisation and sexualisation in producing abject bodies and abject violence.

After examining the literature on ethnic violence to identify the gaps which I aim to fill, I will introduce the concept of performativity. Performativity as laid out by Judith Butler (1990) claims that identity is based entirely upon the continuation of certain normalised practices. I will discuss the role of the gendered body in Foucauldian analysis of power and violence as it informs an understanding of performative identity and the role of the body, ending with an argument for the merits of performativity in examinations of bodily political violence. Because one of my central claims is that the ethnicised body and the sexualised body are similarly constituted and similarly performed, which leads to the abject violence we see in ethnic conflict, this chapter will set up the theoretical grounding of my thesis – simply put, that performativity has much to offer scholars interested in the performance of identity and the embodiment of identity in political subjects. Performativity is, I will argue, the best way to attempt to bridge the gap between ethnic identity and ethnic violence, as it demonstrates how individuals form their identity, the tensions inherent in the assignation of unstable categories and what is lost in this, and the intersection between different modes of identification. Performativity also allows for a discussion of abjection in the formation of identity, and the importance of adherence to and the dangers of transgression from normalised practices of identity in the production of the self and the other.

Once I have shown how the concept of performativity helps us to understand violent identity politics, I will examine the roles of sexualisation, pain and embodiment in identity politics as integral to the performance of radicalised, violent identity. Taken together, I believe that the sexualisation of the ethnicised body, radicalised in times of serious tension and stress, can become weaponised in ways that directly reflect this sexualisation. This process of sexualising the ethnicised other taps into feelings of abjection that are produced in association with that other. The ethnicised other, I argue, fosters more than just a feeling of difference, but also a feeling of precarity and insecurity that makes it a target for the visitation of physical manifestations of that abjection in the form of violence. Abjection is the terror and disgust of being confronted with the other, whether

that is on a bodily, micro-level or a macro-social level. Abjection is formed through exclusion and repulsion.

To support this claim, I will be examining Julia Kristeva's *Powers of Horror* (1982), as well as Judith Butler's *Precarious Life* (2004) and *Frames of War* (2010), to foster a theoretical understanding of the connection between abjection and real political violence. Within this chapter, I will also be discussing the use of pain as a political tool as outlined in Elaine Scarry's *The Body in Pain* (1985). This connection, between the sexualised body of the other, the embodiment of identity and abjection, and subsequent radicalisation I argue is the key to understanding the particular type of violence that is evident in some cases of ethnic violence. I have called this violence 'overkill', to reflect its extreme, abject, and sexualised nature, and to indicate that this violence is more than instrumental or even symbolic in its attempt to eradicate and destroy. Rather, in addition to eradicating the other, overkill seeks to humiliate and to subordinate so thoroughly as to deny the subjectivity of the other.

Having situated my work within the field of violent identity politics and ethnic violence studies in particular, and within a framework of a performative theory of abjection and identity in Chapters Three and Four, I will examine two different dynamics of violent identity politics: the brutalisation of the body through the 1994 Hutu-led genocide of the Tutsi in Rwanda, and the weaponisation of the body through protests that erupted within HMP Maze at Long Kesh and Armagh Gaol in Northern Ireland in the 1970s and 1980s. The intention of this thesis is not to compare the two cases, but rather to use each as a means by which to discuss a different dynamic of the performance of ethnic identity through sexualised violence. Each adds a different dimension to the study of this intersection of sexualisation and ethnicisation, illustrating through its own dynamic the ways in which bodies are brutalised in the 1994 Rwandan genocide and weaponised in Northern

Ireland, and when identities radicalise and shatter. However, while these cases are different, what they have in common is a high degree of intersectionality between the ethnicised body, the sexualised body, the production of bodies as abject, and the performance of this abjection through abject violence. In other words, they are illustrative examples of what is meant by overkill, though they best illustrate different stages. One key difference between these two cases that is important for this thesis that that in the first case of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide, the abjection of the Tutsi is the result of the machinations of another group (the Hutu). In Northern Ireland, the protagonists take on their abjection – they 'abject' their own bodies to render them as weapons as a result of the abjection and brutalisation they received whilst in prison/

The first empirically focussed chapter presents the 1994 Rwandan genocide as a case study in which the body is brutalised through sexual violence, mutilation, and vivisection. In 1994, a group of Rwandans known by themselves and others as the Hutus led a genocidal campaign against another group, the Tutsis, lasting approximately one hundred days and resulting in the deaths of an estimated 800,000 people, namely Tutsis and moderate Hutus. International reaction to the Rwandan genocide was quite similar to that of the Bosnian crisis, namely that it was result of primordial tensions that had spilled into the twentieth century, as illustrated by some of the journalistic reports from both conflicts, published in the *The New York Times* (Gray 1994; Sudetic 1994, Burns 1993), calling to mind the ancient hatreds hypothesis of ethnic violence. The United States was reluctant to become involved in the conflict because of its exploits in Somalia, and a fear that the American voting public would not accept military engagement in 'another' African war zone (Sciolino 1994). Sciolino (1994) for *The New York Times* wrote: 'no member of the United Nations with an army strong enough to make a difference is willing to risk the lives of its troops for a failed central African state with a centuries-old history of tribal warfare and a deep distrust of outside intervention'.

The genocide in Rwanda is interesting for this study in terms of the way the body as a target of violence was utilised, but also given the extreme intimacy with which it was carried out. The identities of the perpetrators were not concealed and victims often knew their attackers. The method of killing was also quite intimate, as the *genocidaires* largely favoured the machete. There is no barrier in the Rwandan genocide behind which the weaponised body may gain distance from its target, the brutalised body. This method of killing was hand-to-hand and face-to-face. And while this certainly speaks to the extreme brutality of the genocide, and the human element of horror, it also implicates the body of both perpetrator and victim in ways that are different to Northern Ireland. Appadurai (1998) argues that the brutality and the mutilation of the victims by the *genocidaires* was an attempt to understand what made the other so different to the self, a hunt to understand what the real, biological differences between us and them could be.

In addition to the extremely personal method of killing, the Rwandan genocide featured a highly sexualised construction of the other, particularly with respect to Tutsi women. Prior to the genocide, a competitive opposition between Tutsi and Hutu women was discursively produced, where the former were largely considered to be more beautiful and more attractive (Human Rights Watch 1996, 16). Their beauty was connected to their outsider status, as the Tutsis were mythically constructed as more European than their Hutu counterparts as part of the Hamitic hypothesis (Mamdani 2001). Tutsi women were particularly emphasized as differences were to become more and more defined, and their differences took on a highly sexualised nature. Tutsi women thus occupied a position of unattainability which stirred resentment from both Hutu men and women, and were primed to be viewed largely as sexualised others. Further illustrating this, as the genocide loomed larger in the nearer future, Tutsi women were represented as sexually depraved, representations that were splashed throughout political cartoons (see Figure 1). Rwanda therefore

highlights the sexualisation of the other during ethnic violence, while also adding a new dimension of abjection of the other in terms of the violence committed more generally.

The second case study illustrates the weaponisation of the body that can occur as a result of the brutalisation of the body in overkill. During ‘the Troubles’ in Northern Ireland, prison inmates convicted of paramilitary activity were held under what was called Special Category Status, which afforded them many of the rights and privileges granted to political prisoners. This status was especially important to republican prisoners who saw themselves as engaged in a struggle against an illegitimate, colonising power because it added political legitimacy to their claim. Under Special Category Status, they were implicitly recognized as freedom fighters, not as criminals. The removal of Special Category Status under Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher’s program of criminalisation was a serious issue of legitimacy and identity. The practicalities of the criminalisation program included the instatement of prison work and the enforcement of the prison uniform (limited to the men in Long Kesh) among other things, but the implications of criminalisation ran much deeper than simply refusing a uniform – by refusing the uniform, the prisoners at Long Kesh were refusing an admission of criminality.

The refusal of the prison uniform, and with it the refusal of acknowledgement of criminal status, sparked a sustained period of violence and resistance within Northern Irish prisons, particularly HM Prison Maze (also called Long Kesh or the H-Blocks) and Armagh Gaol. It is important to note that while there was widespread violence throughout Northern Ireland during this period, and many lives were lost as a result of the conflict, the events of Northern Ireland did not involve the same style of systematic slaughter experienced in Rwanda. It is apparent therefore that abjection and bodily violence can occur in ethnic conflicts that are not defined by genocidal programs, and the body may become weaponised or brutalised even to the point of death without

the desire for the destruction of the entire group. Violent identity politics of this nature need not fall into the category of genocide in order to exhibit such extreme forms of violence.

Protests occurred in other prisons throughout the period, but these two locations saw the most dramatic and infamous events. The protests began in the H-Blocks with the Blanket Protest in 1976, in which prisoners refused a uniform and instead wore their prison-issue blanket. It escalated to the No Wash Protest in response to brutal and consistent assaults on the prisoners, which were largely sexual in nature. After years of the No Wash Protest, the prisoners in the H-Blocks played their strongest card, sending ten men to their deaths in a hunger strike that included many more strikers and volunteers. While the men's protest was viewed as appalling and the prison system lambasted for its treatment of the prisoners, the women's was viewed as something much more deeply scarring, for the women were not only surrounded by their own urine and faeces, but also by their own menstrual blood. The presence of menstrual blood complicated the view of the women's protest, for it made the No Wash Protest an issue that was both republican and feminist, challenging the normative silence around menstruation as their bodies were materialised as sexualised women (Aretxaga 1997). The No Wash Protest in both prisons used effectively the same tools (bodily waste), but were met with different responses, and ultimately, both failed. I will discuss how two apparently similar protests produced such radically different responses because of the communicative power of the abject.

It is the protest action of the republican prisoners that will be the focus of this case study of Northern Ireland. These protests represent a mode of bodily weaponisation in which the intended target of violence, the state, is out of reach, and the body of the perpetrator is effectively the only weapon available to them. The hunger strike in particular demonstrates this, as it is intended to effect political change. The prison protests also demonstrate the degree to which sexualisation and

subsequent hierarchies contribute to violent identity politics. As my analysis will demonstrate, the dynamics in place within the prisons were ones that relied on the feminisation and the subordination of the republicans, both male and female. This feminisation in turn relied upon sexualised violence and domination. The prison protests problematised this feminisation in both prisons and, wielded by both sexes, the body became weaponised, and potentially re-masculinsed, through a process of becoming abject. This illustrates the intersectionality of the sexualised and ethnicised body through its weaponisation.

I will conclude by showing the ways in which this project addresses a gap in the existing literature on identity and violent identity politics. I am interested in investigating and understanding the relationship between ethnic identity and violent identity politics in order to better categorise extreme violence and to understand how it may come about. So far, the existing literature has not accounted for the extremity of the violence, or the considerable attention to the sexualised body in these cases. This has left a lacuna in our ability to understand and predict or to intervene upon such cases of extreme violence. In order to adequately address and respond to this kind of violence, we must first be able to understand it.

This sexualisation of the ethnicised other is largely absent from the discussion of ethnicity, despite the sexualisation of the other consistently appearing as a notable element of violent identity politics through sexualised violence. Both concepts of performativity and abjection demonstrate the importance of sexualisation in establishing the identity markers and parameters of both the self and the other. Furthermore, performativity allows us to examine the tendency of identities to intersect with one another, which accounts for the high degree of sexualisation in ethnic conflicts, and the high degree of sexualised violence.

Addressing this gap does more than add to the discussion of ethnic or violent identity politics. An understanding of how extreme violence can erupt from identity formation and radicalisation can allow us to observe patterns in violent identity politics, patterns that may provide a predictive framework for the intervention upon these conflicts before they erupt into overkill. This is the main contribution of this project – in categorising the kinds of identity formation and abjection that allow for the radicalisation of identity necessary to produce overkill, it may be possible to recognise these processes before the violence begins.

Methods

The initial iteration of this project called for interviews to be conducted with ex-prisoners in Northern Ireland, based on the desire for primary data collection and for the data to reflect the experiences of the subjects. Concerns arose with this methodology, the first being the imbalance that would result between the two case studies. Because of funding, time, and language constraints, it was not possible to conduct similar interviews in Rwanda – narrative data from the 1994 Rwandan genocide would have to be collected from existing living history projects. As is the case with Northern Ireland, there is a wealth of living history, narrative, and interview data that has been collected, archived, and made accessible. A collection of open-ended interviews that have been translated into English are available for researchers at the Columbia University Library in New York City, and I was able to access these interviews as a Visiting Scholar in the winter of 2013.

Another major concern with interview collection in Northern Ireland was the ethical approval required for the project to move forward. The project itself raised concerns around risk and safety. The people who would be interviewed were considered vulnerable adults because of their time spent in prison, and so the ways in which this would be navigated needed to be taken into consideration. The emotional and physical safety of the interviewees needed to be considered.

However, given that they were imprisoned on charges of violent crimes, the interviewer was theoretically also in a position of precarity. Despite the fact that there was little chance of real danger to either interviewer or interviewee, the application for ethical approval forces the researcher to consider the potential of doing harm, and in particular emotional harm, in the process of data collection.

In the end, only two interviews were conducted and neither was usable for the project. One was not usable because of its content: the subject had requested to be a part of the project but was not actually imprisoned in Northern Ireland at the time. The second interview was unusable because the interviewee withdrew her consent to the interview after it was completed. The interview was unsuccessful even without the withdrawal of consent, but the withdrawal meant that even trying to salvage some of the data impossible. While this seemed like a catastrophe at the time, it forced the reconsideration of the rationale behind conducting interviews and how this would work within the project, rather than simply assuming that interviews were the best way to conduct original research.

In large part, the interview was unsuccessful because it was difficult to conduct a semi-structured interview around questions of gendered, sexualised, and ethnicised identity without priming the interviewee. Questions about gendering proved particularly difficult in this regard, which makes sense when considering Judith Butler's (1990) argument that performative structures create the things they seek to name makes sense – processes of gendering are obscured so that they continue to operate in power relations. Because the goal of the data collection was to determine whether or not there were iterative processes of gendering, sexualising, and abjection occurring, priming the interviewee to answer in such a way that answers were framed in order to match the interviewer's expectations or hopes – in other words to contaminate the data.

The reconsideration of the methodology of the project required a reconsideration of what the conceptual positioning, which is so heavily reliant upon performativity, required. Both case studies have been previously investigated not only by journalists and scholars but by legal analysts and living history archivists. Living history projects, such as the Dúchas Living History Project, the Prison Memorial Archive, and the Rwandan Genocide Memorial, have done a great deal of work collecting and preserving narratives of memory and extreme political violence. The Dúchas Living History Project and the Rwandan Genocide Memorial have collected these living histories via interviews that are audio and video recorded, respectively. These interviews are structured around very broad, very open ended questions such as 'where were you living?', and the interviewee is given the space to recount as much of their experience as they wish. This is important, because it allows victims of violence (and perpetrators of violence) to relay their own narration, and their words can be used to discuss their own experience. The generality of these questions is also important because the interviewee has virtually no discursive exposure to what the interests of the interviewers might be. Therefore when these histories reveal processes of ethnicisation, sexualisation, and/or abjection, they are more organic, less at risk of the interviewer contaminating the process. The Prison Memories Archive operates in a similar fashion; however, the histories collected have a spatial element as well, as interviewees are often brought to the prisons before telling their stories.

Supplementing this narrative data, there is a significant amount of archival and ephemeral data surrounding both conflicts. The University of Texas in conjunction with the Genocide Memorial at Kigali have transcribed hundreds of hours of radio broadcasts and have digitised archival issues of magazines. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda has also digitised much of the testimony, evidence, and decisions. In Belfast, researchers have access to the Dúchas Living History Project on the Falls Road, as well as the *Irish Times* microfiche archive and the indomitable Linen Hall Library's Political Ephemera Collection, as well as the Cardinal Thomas o

Fiaich Archive in the rectory of Armagh Cathedral in Armagh. This archive contains a substantial collection of ephemera, a good deal of it collected after the No Wash Protest and Hunger Strike Protest and related largely to protest action over strip searches. This primary data supplements the narrative history data by demonstrating the discursive productions of the subjects in a way that is divorced from recollection.

Chapter Two

From Blood Ties to Bloodshed?: Identity Formation in Understanding Violent Identity Politics

Introduction

This thesis seeks to understand how extreme, sexualised violence emerges in some instances of identity politics through an investigation of the intersectionality of ethnicised identity and sexualisation in abjection. This project is important to the overall study of political violence as it attempts to identify and understand the conditions under which identity may become radicalised to produce extreme violence, and what this new, radicalised identity seeks to communicate and accomplish. In order to arrive at this understanding, I have classified this violence as overkill to illustrate that it reconstitutes the political subjectivities of both the victim and perpetrator through the abjection of the sexualised and ethnicised body.

This chapter will examine the existing literature on violent identity politics in order to identify the gaps that this project will address. The existing literature frames violent identity politics in specific ways that fail to address some of the issues that I find particularly compelling within the field, namely why violence that occurs during some struggles over identity is so virulent or, as Lee Ann Fujii labels it, 'extra-lethal' (see Fujii 2012). Fujii uses this concept of the extra-lethal to 'refer to face-to-face acts of violence that are intended to transgress shared norms about proper treatment of persons and bodies' (Fujii 2012, 1). Over the course of this project, I will propose the use of the term 'overkill' to describe these types of violences, in order to account not only for the extra-lethality of Fujii's analysis, but to highlight that these acts of violence are of a distinctly abject and sexualised nature. To do this, I will begin by examining the literature on the formation of large group identity, specifically ethnic identity, before moving on to a discussion of previous work on

ethnic violence as a sub-set of violent identity politics. This is to understand what has been under-theorised in the existing scholarship in violent identity politics, namely extreme violence, and how it relates to identity formation and identity conflicts. Because the conflicts I am interested in are often framed as ethnic conflicts, I will be focussing upon the literature on ethnic identity and ethnic conflict.

Examining the existing literature

Thomas H. Eriksen (2001, 42) defines identity politics as ‘political ideology, organization, and action that openly represents the interests of designated groups based on 'essential' characteristics such as ethnic origin’. The study of identity politics forms a significant and important part of the overall body of political scholarship, but the existing explanations of the formation of identities that become politicised and then potentially radicalised towards violence is varied, and contains considerable contradictions and disagreements. Mary Kaldor (1999) defines identity politics as ‘movements which mobilize around ethnic, racial, or religious identity for the purpose of claiming state power’ (Kaldor 1999, 76). Her definition is consistent with Eriksen's (2001) and my own interpretation of identity politics as a struggle for political control by a group defined according to ascribed criteria. Kaldor's definition, with its emphasis on mobilisation, moves closer to an understanding that resonates with the radicalisation towards conflict.

Some of the literature that will be examined in this chapter on ethnic and ethnonationalist violence has highlighted single factors, such as economic competition (Gellner 1981), that may have causally contributed to some conflicts. As a result, many of these investigations have left a number of questions still unresolved, questions such as how identity politics can sometimes produce extreme forms of violence. In fact, suggesting that there may be a ‘cause’ of ethnic conflict is itself misleading, because the presence of two or more ethnic groups in a single geographic location does

not always, inevitably, spark a conflict–two groups may engage in conflict with one another in one location and coexist peacefully in another. Furthermore, violent identity clashes are dynamic, variable events that are inextricably rooted in the contexts out of which they arise, and we are therefore unlikely to find one root, and importantly one static cause that translates across so many varieties of contexts. There are, however, certain key similarities that appear across many of the conflicts that erupt into overkill. That identity politics must be present in order for violent identity politics to emerge is perhaps an obvious statement, but what is not obvious is what is meant by identity particularly in the context of ethnicity, nor how it arises and how it becomes radicalised from identity to violent identity. My argument is that the performance of intersecting identities in some cases, namely ethnicised and sexualised identities, produces a new kind of political subject that is radicalised to violence when combined in abjection. Abject, sexualised violence is performed as part of a new kind of political subjectivity, but this sexualisation as a process through which ethnicisation occurs is under-theorised by the existing literature.

I understand intersectionality to mean the mutual constitution through mutual performance of overlapping dynamics, and in the context of overkill, the ethnicisation and sexualisation of the body of the individual. Viewing ethnicity in this way, as intersectional, disrupts the idea of ethnic classifications as fixed, and problematises the idea of ethnic group affiliation as an inherently causal variable in violent identity politics. While an understanding of the ingroup members' affiliations to one another is paramount to the formation of the group, my argument is that the markers of difference that define group boundaries are often sexualised, thereby linking the performances of the ethnicised to the performances of the sexualised. This is to say that ethnicity, sexualisation and abjection intersect with one another. This suggests the importance of understanding how identity is constituted and how differences are performed for the study of violent identity politics.

In the ethnic conflict literature, ethnic identity is primarily accepted as a socially constructed concept, the formation of which is largely attributable to the contemporary socio-historical moment. The extent to which ethnic identity is 'constructed' or 'primordial' was debated between Ernest Gellner and his former student Anthony Smith at the Warwick Debate, held at Warwick University on 24 October 1995 (Bellamy 2003, 4). Smith contends that ethnic groups 'can trace a lineage back to antiquity' but that these roots 'need only be subjective' (Bellamy 2003, 4), while Gellner argues that ethnic groups 'claim an ancient heritage...that is actually a wholly modern construction' (Bellamy 2003, 4). However, it appears that when debates shift to discussions of ethnic conflict – that is conflict between two groups of different ascribed ethnicity – ethnic identity is treated as historically enduring, and temporally fixed. Despite acknowledging the role of the social in the construction of ethnic groups, constructivists such as Gellner (1981) treat ethnic groups as cohesive and fixed in order to explain how they interact with each other and the world around them.

This lack of engagement with the nature of identity formation in discussions of identity-based conflict has left considerable holes in the literature on violent identity politics, as the emergent rationales (e.g. instrumentalism, modernisation, elite entrepreneurship) are unable to give a satisfactory account of not simply why violence occurs but why *this kind* of violence occurs. Specifically, it is unable to account for the ways in which this violence, characterised by its sexualisation of the other and the high level of attention that is paid to the bodies of the targets of violence, occurs in these types of conflicts. The underlying assumption is that there is a qualitative difference between this type of violence – overkill – and other kinds of violence because of the extreme and abject nature of this violence, but that this difference has been adequately explained by the exiting literature. The extraordinary character of this violence is gaining some recognition in the existing literature, which has moved the conversation on from more traditional conceptions of violence. Tom Nairn (1997) highlights this in his critique of modernism specifically, citing 'the suspicion that modernisation theory was simply over-rational and 'bloodless' as an explanation for

processes in which so much non-reason is typically manifested, and so much literal blood has been spilt' (9). He contends that modernisation theory 'accounts for the material or vested interests in nationalism rather than its 'spell'...articulated around high-cultural politics rather than low-cultural glamour and popular identity' (Nairn 1997, 9).

Nairn (1997) aphoristically says 'the old presuppositions of modernism are losing their hold; but no one knows what new ones will replace them' (in Bellamy 2003, 7). More recently there has been work into the role of the body in ethnicity as part of a wider focus on ethnic conflict. This has examined the ethnicised body specifically as it pertains to the extra-lethal forms of violence that occur in some instances of violent identity politics. Arjun Appadurai (1998) relates the idea of uncertainty over verifiable differences between groups to what he calls the practice of vivisection in the Rwandan genocide. His use of vivisection is critical for imparting what he considers one of the key aims of extreme brutality, which is discovery (Appaudrai 1998, 11). He argues that vivisection was utilised in the 1994 Rwandan genocide as a means by which one group, the *genocidaires,* could pinpoint a pseudobiological difference that distinguished his group from the other, the Tutsi (Appadurai 1998, 11). I agree with his point, but would take it a step further in pointing out that much of the violence in these conflicts takes on a distinctly sexualised form, which suggests that it is worth examining the intersection of the sexualised identity with the ethnicised identity as it is played out through and on the bodies of individuals.

'Terminological Chaos': Defining the Terms of the Debate [1]

In what follows, I will focus upon the ethnic group that has a political aspiration[2], in order to

1. The phrase 'terminological chaos' appears in Connor, Walker (1978) 'A Nation is a Nation, Is a State, Is an Ethnic Group, Is a...' *Ethnic and Racial Studies 1* (October): 377-400.

narrow the focus of this project to the ethnic group as the ethnonation (or simply the nation). This is largely because of the impact of political subjectivity on identity, which contributes to the radicalisation of identity. This is not the same as a state, although 'nation-states' will combine an ethnic and a legal component. A nation may find its boundaries congruent with those of a state (thus creating a nation-state), but this is not always the case. When it occurs that these are not congruent, the lack of an autonomous state becomes problematic for the nation (as opposed to the ethnic group): Anthony Smith (1971) argues that 'nations can only be fulfilled in their own states' (20-21), and Ernest Gellner (1983) argues 'nationalism…requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones, and, in particular, that ethnic boundaries within a given state…should not separate the power holders from the rest' (Gellner 1981, 1).

While Gellner and Smith disagree on the origins of the nation, their definitions of the nation share the sense of an aspiration to political autonomy alongside an ethnically charged, territorial identification. Additionally, within a poly-ethnic state, there is considerable importance placed on the balance of power, in that ethnonations would strive to avoid domination by another group. This idea of domination is important to an understanding of overkill, as this kind of violence communicates the domination of one group over another. In order to arrive at an understanding of how groups of individuals become ethnicised, and how this ethnicisation interacts with other identifications through abjection to produce violence, I will begin by examining how the ethnic group is produced by reviewing the existing literature on ethnic identity groups and the formation of ethnic identity.

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2 The need for the distinction between ethnic group and ethnic nation is a source of contention in the literature, in part because it is difficult to conceive of an ethnic group that is devoid of political aspiration. Rothschild (1987, 115) suggests that the creation of this distinction serves to devalue the political aspirations of those groups seeking statehood with respect to others who may not. For the purposes of this thesis, referring to the nation as an ethnic group with a political aspiration is an analytical device to allow for the examination of literature that uses both terms without agreeing upon a difference between them.

In the existing scholarship on ethnic groups, nationalism, or ethnic conflict, an immediate problem consistently arises – the existing scholarship has yet to settle upon an agreed definition of the central terms. Anthony Smith wrote 'ethnic communities, so easily recognizable from a distance, seem to dissolve before our eyes the closer we come and the more we attempt to pin them down' (Smith 1986, 2). At a distance, it appears that ethnic groups can be viewed as distinct entities, with people falling neatly into categories such as Hutu and Tutsi. On closer examination, the reality of the situation is that ethnic group identification is fluid and membership is often externally ascribed (Eltringham 2004). Additionally, many of the characteristics that define ethnic belonging are absent in some cases. Joseph Rothschild defines ethnic groups as 'complex collective groups whose membership is largely determined by real or putative ancestral inherited ties and who perceive these ties as systematically affecting their place and fate in the political and socio-economic structures of their state and society' (Rothschild 1987, 115). Rothschild goes on to highlight the importance of 'grievances...and anxieties' in the contemporary imagination of the ethnic group (Rothschild 1987, 115). His understanding of anxiety and grievance as important to the contemporary understanding of the ethnic group is important, but he does not include the external ascription of the ethnic group in his definition. This external ascription of identity is important for understanding how groups become abjected.

> According to Anthony Smith, an *ethnie* consists of :
>
> 1.Symbolic, cognitive, and normative elements common to a unit of population.
>
> 2. Practices...that bind them together over generations.
>
> 3. Sentiments and attitudes that are held in common and which differentiate them from other populations (Smith 1986, 97).

This differs in some respects from Frederick Barth's (1969) definition of the ethnic group as a people that:

1. Is largely biologically self-perpetuating [due largely to practices of endogamy].
2. Shares fundamental cultural values, realized in overt unity in cultural forms.
3. Makes up a field of communication and interaction.
4. Has a membership which identifies itself and is identified by others, as constituting a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order. (Barth 1969, 10-11).

Despite the considerable degree of variation, a few important similarities emerge from these definitions. One of these is the emphasis on the psychic dimension of ethnic identification. By psychic I mean the psycho-emotional internalisation (Butler 1999, 19) of ethnic identification. Additionally, both Smith and Barth highlight what they respectively call 'normative elements' and 'fundamental cultural values'. There is a distinctly social element to the formation of the ethnic group, but one that is intrinsically felt by the individual. There is also a normative element that dictates the conduct of the individual, prescribing the actions of the individual in accordance with the larger social order.

In explaining the difficulty in providing a concise definition for either ethnicity or ethnonationalism, and in an attempt to explain the sometimes unpredictable effects that it has on global politics, Walker Connor asserts that its ambiguity stems from the fact that the core of a nation is 'intangible. This essence is a psychological bond that joins a people and differentiates it, in the subconscious conviction of its members, from all other people in a most vital way' (Connor, 1978, 91). Connor stresses the psychological nature of nationalist sentiment, citing Freud's examination of the unconscious (Connor 1993, 203), and criticising the scholarly community for demonstrating such 'scant respect for the psychological and emotional hold that ethnonational identity has upon the group' (Connor 1987, 73). He argues for the importance of cultural symbols in 'triggering' what he calls the 'nonrational core of the nation' (Connor 1993, 203). These assertions of the psychic and normative cores of ethnic affiliation are important to the radicalisation of identity

towards overkill, as they allow for understandings of nonrational attachments to groups as well as the importance of norms as markers of difference.

There are two predominant schools of thought concerning the origins of the nation and the impetus behind ethnic identity formation. The divide between the constructivist school of thought and that of the primordialists was amusingly cast in the Warwick debate by Ernest Gellner (Mortimer 1999, 31) and Anthony Smith (Mortimer 1999, 36) as a debate over whether or not nations have navels. Gellner argues that the analogy makes perfect sense—if Adam were created by God, as a creationist would argue, then he would be missing a navel (Mortimer 1999, 32), as navels are the by-product of the umbilical cord and therefore birth as we understand it. Likewise, if nations were a natural phenomenon concurring with the creation of man, nations would not have their own navel, which in this case is understood as traceable bloodline. Smith's understanding of the navel of the nation differs slightly from Gellner's in that for Smith it represents 'the memories and traditions and myths' of the nation (Smith 2004, 79).

For primordialists, particularly Anthony Smith, the point of departure from the modernists is the psychic importance of so-called premodern ethnic roots within groups, and not their actual existence. This is to say, whether or not the past happened as it is recalled is irrelevant to the fact that nations assign themselves these deep, intractable roots. According to Hale (2004), the real argument between the primordialists and the constructivists is not, in fact, simply a matter of ancient versus modern; rather, it is the extent to which ethnicity elicits an emotive response (Hale 2004, 462), by either elevating or suppressing in estimation the strength and durability of psychological bonds. It makes sense, then, for Anthony Smith to have re-titled primordialism as 'ethno-symbolists' (Bellamy 2003, 4). It appears then that the debate between primordialists and constructivists can be recast as the divergence between the historical and the contemporary. This

division is rooted in the conflicting epistemological context of the ethnic—where one side analyses the past historical foundations of a group, the other examines its arrival at the current historical moment.

There are considerable issues with primordialism as a tool for theorising ethnic identification, nationalism, and ethnic rivalry. Anthony Smith himself criticises primordialism as 'untenable,' accusing it of 'assum[ing] what is to be explained: why human beings are so widely differentiated by ethnic origin and culture' (Smith 1996, 457). Primordialism also fails to offer an explanation for why 'groups evolve or devolve, how some people are able to assimilate to other ethnic groups, and why some *ethnies* are ferociously, militantly xenophobic while others are more relaxed' (Smith 1996, 457). However, social constructivism, an umbrella term for a number of theories of ethnic groups that take ethnic groups to be largely a modern and social construct, may only tell that part of the story that is relevant to a modern historical moment. By focusing upon the constructed elements of ethnic identification (and thereby those elements that may be de-constructed), constructivism may downplay the strength of ethnic groups' emotive hold.

Constructivism does not imply that ethnic associations are not real or are otherwise illegitimate, nor does it dismiss the importance of history out of hand. Constructivism focuses on ethnic nationalism as a direct result of the contemporary social and political climate rather than the result of a genealogical heritage passed down through generations: '[m]embership in an ethnic groups is a matter of social definition, an interplay of the self-definition of members and the definition of other groups' (Wallerstein 1960, 131). In the following section, I will discuss social constructivism in more depth. It is important that social constructivism argues for the ethnic group to be understood as a social phenomenon, but equally important of this study is what it leaves out, namely the arrival at extreme violence.

Modernism as a subset of social constructivism emphasises the importance of the contemporary cultural and historic moment in understanding nationalism. Gellner's modernist argument asserts that some nations may have a navel, and some may not, but that '[e]ither way it is not essential' (in Mortimer 1999, 32). The nation, modernists argue, is a construct of the recent creation of the state, and economic and social revolutions that, along with increasing mobility between and among societies, made the human race more anonymous (Mortimer 1999, 33). Ethnic groups emerge as a response to this anonymisation, so that people may have a sense of belonging in an otherwise isolating world. According to Gellner, what appear to be psychological factors are actually psychological response to external, functional factors – belonging to a nation is not inherent to mankind, but with the progression to the modern age, it has become accepted as such (Gellner 1983, 6). The 'paradox' of nationalism is that it must be defined as a consequence of the age of nationalism, rather than the other way around (Gellner 1983, 55).

In Smith's view, modernism is not so much incorrect as incomplete, and Gellner himself stipulates that if the modernist approach only tells 'half the story,' then that half is enough for him (Gellner 1999, 33). The half of the story that modernism here seems to ignore, and that is problematic for primordialists, is the half that unpacks the main concerns that surround questions of nationalism and ethnicity—their endurance over time, and their unpredictability in global politics: '[i]n other words, the relationship between pre-modern ethnic ties and modern nationalism is the key to a large segment of modern national and international politics' (Smith 1996, 447). Here, Smith is allowing for the modernists' claim that nations may in fact be recent constructs, but their roots are not – however the modernist argument would claim those 'ancient' roots are invented or imagined, not experienced by the people who make up the contemporary nation (Anderson 1983).

What emerges from this confusion over the definition of ethnicity are some important agreed upon ideas, and some of which are problematic. The psychic importance of ethnic identification and the critical salience of boundaries between groups that are politicised by norms are fundamental to understandings of ethnic nationalism and identification. However, the contestability of the term 'ethnic group', its origins and its foundations, problematise it as a stable category, and therefore as a causal variable in conflict. There is something important about ethnic identity for these conflicts, but what it is about how such groups are formed that allows for this violence remains under-theorised. What can be drawn out from this ‘great divide’ (Bellamy 2003, 4) is an understanding of the power of the psychic connection of individuals to the ethnic nation, and that it is to some degree discursively produced[3]. I argue that a critical problem with this debate is that both primordialists and constructivists treat ethnic groups as cohesive and therefore as stable categories, which does not map on to the dynamism of ethnic conflicts. This becomes a problem in the literature on ethnic conflict, which uses this problematic vocabulary in order to address a complex question – why do conflicts emerge between some ethnic groups, and why do some of these conflicts produce particularly virulent forms of violence?

The Existing Literature on Ethnic Conflict and its Limitations

I have argued that the theories of primordialism and constructivism are so epistemologically divided that in order to speak to one another, theorists have had to treat ethnicity as a stable category. This has meant the loss of the dynamism and fluidity of ethnic identification in the gap between the natural and the social, the historical and the contemporary. This becomes problematic when this term, ethnicity, is used to explain certain forms of violent identity politics. In what follows, I will examine the existing literature on violent identity politics in order to understand how violence is seen to emerge from ethnic identity. The following themes have dominated scholarship

3 This discursive production can be deduced from Smith's use of 'ethno-symbolism'.

and shaped the ways in which scholars and policy makers think about ethnic violence: modernisation (Gellner 1983), theories of securitisation (Posen 1993), and more recently, ethnic terrorism (Volkan 1997) and chauvinist masculinity (Hayden 1993). The former two appear to distance themselves from the question of identity formation entirely, while the latter two nod to its constructed nature before treating it as natural, without addressing how its formation informs or paves the road to conflict. What emerges from an examination of these theories is that the issue of extreme violence remains either unaddressed, or treated as aberrant. My argument is that overkill is productive of violent subjectivities that define groups according to sexualised violence that communicates difference. In what follows, I will discuss what the existing literature tells us about violent identity politics to better understand the scope of what remains to be uncovered.

Resource Competition and Modernisation

Theories of ethnic conflict that stress conflict's relationship to modernisation call attention to two recurring themes: ‘the role of elite ambitions and the role of differential modernization of ethnic groups in fostering conflict’ (Horowitz 1985; 2000, 101). According to Gellner (1983), this is in large part because of the inherent differences between the structure of an industrial society and an agricultural one. Within the former, ‘territorial and work units are *ad hoc*: membership is fluid...and does not generally engage or commit the loyalty and identity of its members’ (Gellner 1983, 63). Because identification is no longer provided by any overarching social structure, as would be the case in, for example, a feudal society, ‘[t]he *nation* is now supremely important, thanks both to the erosion of sub-groupings and the vastly increased importance of a shared, literary culture’ (Gellner 1983, 63). Because modernisation is, as Huntington puts it, a process of homogenisation that ‘produces tendencies towards convergence among societies’ (Huntington 1971, 289), it is not surprising that people, particularly those engaged in perhaps the earlier stages of the modernisation process, may find this simultaneous devolution of identity combined with an expectation of

coexistence with those previously considered outsiders to be threatening, and in response to this, would create communities that were defined by the creation of boundaries, and by extension, exclusive. Exclusion does not necessarily ensure conflict, but where conflict is present, exclusionary identity is necessary in order to understand who belongs to the group, and who is outside of it.

Because of this ‘imagined’ (Anderson 1982) familial bond, Gellner refers to ethnicity as ‘entropy resistant’, which he defines as ‘based on an attribute which has a marked tendency *not* to become, even with the passage of times since the initial establishment of an industrial society, evenly dispersed through the entire society’ (Gellner 1983, 64). This implies that while certain identities such as social status may become more evenly dispersed throughout a given society over time, certain others may not. This will be particularly true for those ethnic groups that emphasise endogamy. Such entropy-resistant groups create ‘fissures, sometimes veritable chasms, in the industrial societies in which [they] occur...’ (Gellner 1983, 65). From this we can extrapolate that those identities that refuse to be assimilated will protect themselves by keeping others out. Looking back at the definition of ethnic identity as laid out by Smith (1986) and Barth (1969), and understanding ethnic identification as largely dependent upon the structuring and restructuring of the boundaries between us and them, this fortification of boundaries will likely occur in areas where ethnic group members are more likely to interact with people outside their group, and hence have a need to draw these borders.

Modernisation may also increase competition between ethnic groups (Bates 1974, 460), particularly when the benefits of modernisation are not felt by all groups at the same time. Using developing countries in Africa as an example, Bates argues that modernity creates an inherent dissatisfaction as it is increasingly ‘valued’ (Bates 1974, 460), meaning communities place a high

regard on relative modernisation. He continues, saying ‘the goods it [modernity] represents are scarce in proportion to the demand for them. The inevitable result is that people compete [for] land, markets, and jobs’ (Bates 1974, 460). This creates a new system of stratification, based on competition, but one that is also informed and works in tandem with previous systems that formed around traditional social structures (Bates 1974, 461-462). Much of this has to do with colonial administrations' grouping of peoples according to ‘tribal lines’ that provided administrative and land access to specific groups (Bates 1974, 466). Over time, this led to demands by ethnic groups for exclusive districts wherein they could control the resources and in turn the benefits of modernity and exclude outsiders (Bates 1974, 467). This power seizure along group lines created ethnic competition, with groups have differentiated access to resources and power under the colonial system, and ‘[t]hose groups which are more wealthy, better educated, and more urbanized tend to be envied, resented, and sometimes feared by others’ (Bates 1974, 462).

Bates's (1974) goal is to suggest ‘a way of looking at ethnic behaviour that emphasizes that it is a dynamic and rational behaviour’ that addresses the effects of modernity upon previously traditional societies (Bates 1974, 475). In doing so, Bates has agreed with Gellner’s assertion that ethnic group behaviour is due largely to the impact of modernisation on traditional societies and peoples. But like Gellner, in his desire to distance ethnicity from claims of a primordial foundation, Bates does not adequately address the symbolic nature of ethnic conflict, instead focusing on group desires to gain ground over others that they see as economic competition. While desire for economic or resource superiority no doubt plays some role in ethnic conflicts, particularly in competitions between nations, competition for resources alone does not explain the ruthlessness with which inter-ethnic violence is carried out. For example, as Horowitz (1985) points out, it also does not explain why some of the most horrific examples of ethnic violence have been carried out in parts of the world that are not considered modern (Horowitz 1985, 103), or do not demonstrate sharp economic disparities.

While modernisation theories of conflict provide an interesting analysis of the backlash of some ethnic groups against the homogenising effects of modernity, and expose how instrumental concerns such as economic factors can drive some conflicts, it provides little explanation for the types of violence that ethnic conflicts can produce, specifically extreme sexualised violence. By this I mean that while it may explain one potential motive for ethnic violence, it does not account for the extremity of the violence with which I am concerned. Even extreme competition does not explain why this kind of violence, overkill, occurs, because it does not address the radicalisation of identity through the sexualised abjection of the other. Resource competition may be a compelling motive for conflict, but it does not account for the sexualised violence with which this thesis is concerned.

Anarchy and the Security Dilemma

The security dilemma in ethnic violence studies is derived from the theory of the security dilemma in international relations (Cordell and Wolff 2010, 26; see also Waltz 1979). It is based on the assumption that the international system is one of anarchy, and that in order to survive as sovereign entities, states must 'seek security through the accumulation of (military) power' (Cordell and Wolff 2010, 26). This assumption of an anarchical world order and the resulting emphasis on security stems from the realist school of international politics, which Barry Posen calls 'the longest standing and most useful school of international relations theory' (Posen 1993, 27). Posen argues that anarchy 'leads to a competition for power that in turn inspires insecurity in neighbours' (Posen 1993, 28). Posen applies this to the ethnic violence that occurred in Eastern Europe after the collapse of the Soviet Union, arguing that the power vacuum that occurs in the wake of an imperial collapse creates an 'emerging anarchy' (Posen 1993, 27) that results in a bloody struggle for power and security between competing groups. Power, sovereignty, and therefore, security, are seen as a

zero-sum game, which makes competitors much more likely to eradicate groups that they see as threatening.

Because the security dilemma in international relations essentially describes the way that groups view themselves as sovereign or deserving of sovereignty and have a desire to either gain or express that sovereignty will interact with one another, it can be used to explain the interactions of such groups in other circumstances. The security dilemma of international relations can be used to understand the security dilemma of interethnic or intranational relations in a system that bears a condition of anarchy, and provided that one or both of the opposing groups have some desire for self-rule. The security dilemma in interethnic relations as with international relations claims that ethnic violence emerges as the result of a real or perceived threat. David Lake and David Rothchild (1996) argue that ethnic conflict is not caused by pre-existing, historical tensions or 'ancient hatreds' that simply boiled over with the collapse of imperialism, as primordialism may claim, but rather that 'intense ethnic conflict is most often caused by collective fears of the future' (Lake and Rothchild 1996, 41). The collapse of the ruling authority is the catalyst for ethnic conflict, because it inspires new fears about the security of the ethnic groups that are left behind after the collapse of a higher authority. At the core of these conflicts, the authors argue, is 'ethnic fear' (Lake and Rothchild 1996, 42).

In a strong state, strategic violence is the prerogative of the central authority (see Weber 1921), which is for clear reasons not the case in a failed or weak state (Fearon 1995, 384). When this decline occurs, or threatens to occur, groups begin preparing to fight for their survival, and these preparations, an integral part of what Lake and Rothchild identify as the strategic dilemmas important for ethnic conflict, may actually put the cycle of violence into motion (Lake and Rothchild 1996, 43). Anxiety about the use of violence by others as a means to gain political or

economic control may arise, and in the rush to ensure ones' own safety, the security dilemma emerges: 'what one does to enhance one's own security causes reactions that, in the end, can make one less secure' (Posen 1993, 28). This is because '[r]elative power is difficult to measure and is often subjectively appraised' (Posen 1993, 28), and measures taken by one group to increase its security will inspire a reaction in its opposition.

Lake and Rothchild (1996) argue '[a]s information failures, problems of credible commitment, and the security dilemma take hold, groups become apprehensive... and conflict becomes more likely' (Lake and Rothchild 1996, 41). They suggest that the fears which set these strategic dilemmas in motion arise from a weakening of the state, which need not be as catastrophic as the collapse of a state or empire, but may be as subtle as uncertainty for the future (Lake and Rothchild 1996, 44). This weakening of the central authority of the state, real or imagined, sets up the three strategic dilemmas that Lake and Rothchild argue must exist, either alone or in tandem with one another, in order for ethnic conflict to emerge. At the start, they argue, is 'competition for resources' (Lake and Rothchild 1996, 44): because the state holds the power to allocate resources, any perceived weakening of the state will naturally inspire groups to begin competing to ensure that, should the state wither, their needs will still be met. Lake and Rothchild stipulate that since violence uses up so much of the resources that competing ethnic groups are trying to secure, this competition is not enough to guarantee an eruption of violence (Lake and Rothchild 1996, 46).

The second dilemma, '[i]nformation failures', occur whenever one group possesses information that it intentionally withholds from the competing group (Lake and Rothchild 1996, 47). This creates 'problems of credible commitment' as fears that the other group will break promises for peace or cooperation in the future grow from this inequitable distribution of information (Lake and Rothchild 1996, 48). Groups with the potential to be in conflict with one

another have obvious incentives to hide aggressive behaviour (Lake and Rothchild 1996, 47), to avoid losing any strategic advantage, and even those groups without aggressive tendencies 'may prefer to absorb even high costs of war today to avoid being exploited tomorrow' (Lake and Rothchild 1996, 48). This begins the third and final dilemma, the security dilemma in interethnic relations. Fear that the other group may be hiding aggressive intentions can be enough to incite groups to begin preparing for war. In turn this may inspire the outgroup to either begin preparations themselves, or to strike first.

For those theorists that conceptualise ethnic conflict as essentially an issue of security, the idea that ethnic conflict is based on divisions of ethnicity is regarded as something of an accident, suggesting that where society is previously divided along ethnic lines, competition will naturally form itself as one between ethnic groups (Lake and Rothchild 1996, 45). Despite raising and explaining the necessary issue of fear that almost certainly plays a major role in explaining the particularly bloody quality of ethnic conflict, the security dilemma places a considerable emphasis on both static group identification and an incremental and strategic escalation of violence, both of which I find problematic in providing either an explanatory or descriptive framework for extreme violence. Importantly, Lake and Rothchild (1996) do not ignore factors such as myths, memories, and emotions in creating a narrative of the emergence of conflict. According to the authors, these emotional factors play a role in conflict, in that they 'build upon...fears of insecurity and polarize society' (Lake and Rothchild 1996, 41). These internal catalysts, according to the security dilemma, create a set of intragroup interactions that nurture fear and hatred as a group is preparing for a potential conflict to erupt, and can prove the tipping point from political or economic competition to outright bloodshed.

What is problematic here are two assumptions[4] – the first is that the security dilemma assumes that ethnic groups are sufficiently internally cohesive for fear to be an end point of identity expression, rather than a causal variable of identity formation itself. The symbolism upon in which these conflicts are grounded is questioned in the security dilemma – Paul Roe (1999, 189) points out that both Posen and Stuart Kaufman (1996) question the empiricism of the historical grievances in intrastate conflicts. But the stability of the category of the ethnic group itself is not addressed, and this foundational premise of a cohesive group that becomes violent assumes a large part of what is to be explained, at least for this project. The question that this thesis attempts to answer is not only why ethnic groups may become violent towards one another, but why some ethnic conflicts become violent in abject, sexualised ways. Given my argument that overkill is productive of violent subjectivities, the fear that traditional theories suggests emerges from an existing group is in contrast to fear as being a major factor in what forms those groups.

More recent work on the security dilemma in ethnic conflict has allowed for greater variation in both ethnic identification and ethnic fear (Rose 2007, 9). William Rose (2007) cites Badredine Arfi (1998)'s argument that earlier iterations of the security dilemma does not ‘satisfactorily explain the emergence of ethnic fear and violence’ (Arfi 1998 in Rose 2007, 9) because it views groups as fixed, and not as variables. Arfi (1998) argues instead that it is the restructuring of ethnic groups that creates fear and insecurity (152), and this restructuring and concurrent destabilisation confuses the pattern of interethnic interactions, and this is what leads to fear of the other group. While I take issue with the causal importance of elite manipulation that Arfi argues to be the first step in this restructuring (Arfi 1998, 153), and his framing of intraethnic behaviour as a structure under which individual members of a group operate (Arfi 1998, 152), I agree with his basic assumption that ethnic groups undergo a dynamic shift in ethnic conflict.

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4 Other concerns that the use of the security dilemma to explain ethnic conflict include its applicability to ‘small’ conflicts (Xu 2012), and the lack of an anarchical system in intrastate conflict (Kaufmann 1996 in Roe 1999).

Where I diverge from his claim is when this shift takes place and how, arguing instead that the radicalisation of group identity produces the identity of the group, rather than taking the group as a given unit that then changes in response to destabilisation. Instability, I will demonstrate in the following chapter on the concept of performative identity, is always inherent in identity formation.

Furthermore, the security dilemma assumes a strategic and incremental escalation of violence that appears misaligned with the violence that occurs in the cases of identity politics with which I am concerned. Overkill is, rather than an incremental or instrumental increase in violence, asynchronous, lacking a logic of escalation, and instead erupting quickly and violently. This is in large part due to the rational underpinnings of the security dilemma as a whole – there is an emphasis on fear as systemic (Ignatieff 1993, 16 in Roe 1999, 190) and systematic, increasing in tandem with the actions of the other group. More recent applications of the security dilemma to ethnic conflict, such as Rose's (2007) essay, emphasis that the extremity of the violence of ethnic conflict stems from the intensity of the insecurity felt by the group (or groups, where alliances form). Insecurity and fear as seen in the security dilemma may explain isolated acts of symbolic violence that are similar to the types of violence that I have described as overkill, and could go as far as to consider them communicative of the group's strength as a deterrent to the other, but would regard the repetition, and indeed the day-to-day nature of overkill as strategically profligate.

Group Comparison Theory

Complementing his emphasis on the psychological factors inherent in nationalist sentiment, Walker Connor (1972) provides a possible explanation for the spread of particularly contentious forms of ethnonationalism, emphasising the importance of the media in allowing militant ethnonationalist sentiment to gain such strong footholds around the world. According to Connor, the increased communication with a world beyond a nation’s own immediate borders has, rather

than promoting assimilation, produced the opposite, serving rather to further entrench ethnonationalist identification by more clearly delineating the boundary between us and them, and promoting a message of self-determination (Connor 1972, 1994: 38).

After unpacking some of the more prominent explanations for ethnic conflict such as modernism, instrumentalism and pluralism, Donald Horowitz (1985) argues that such theories are insufficient for a variety of reasons, in large part due to the fact that they emphasise different aspects of ethnic conflict while downplaying those elements of ethnic conflict that do not fit with their proposed theory (Horowitz 1985, 140). Of pluralism, a sociopolitical condition of multiple groups, in this case ethnic groups, he argues that it assumes a 'clash of incompatible values,' while those that emphasise modernisation or other economically-based claims credit a 'struggle for resources' (Horowitz 1985, 140). These are problematic, he says, because they contradict one another in the first instance, and focus on wholly different aspects of conflict in the second (Horowitz 1985, 140). More problematic is what they do not address, the features that I would agree with Horowitz are some of the most important of ethnic conflict: 'the significance of symbolic issues' and 'the important role of ethnic-group anxiety and apprehension' (Horowitz 1985; 2000, 140). Because these key issues go unaddressed, the level of violence and ensuing trauma continues to leave onlookers baffled. Horowitz asserts that in developing a comprehensive understanding of ethnic conflict, scholarship should focus on linking the assets of the above theories (i.e. pluralism and economic determinations), which he determines are their accounts of mass and elite concerns, respectively, and to account for those two variables that he has determined as vital (Horowitz 1985, 140). 'A bloody phenomenon,' he argues, 'cannot be explained by a bloodless theory' (Horowitz 1985, 140).

Horowitz cites two phenomena—'group comparison' (Horowitz 1985, 141) and 'group

entitlement' (Horowitz 1985, 185). Group comparison theory is the more complex of the two. The concept of group comparison is familiar from Barth's (1969) theory of ethnic groups as defined principally by the maintenance of those boundaries that separate them from other groups (Barth 1969, 14). If we accept this, we can understand Iris Marion Young's (1997) theory of identity as a relational construct. Young argues that '[g]roup differentiation is best understood as a function of structural relations rather than constituted from some common attributes or dispositions of group members' (Young 1997, 385). This suggests that the differentiated identities of groups have more to do with differences from other groups than with commonality within a group, and the social structure that surrounds them than upon biological or ascribed attributes that members and members alone possess. Ethnic identification is a contemporary realisation, not a biological or even social certainty. Young's account also helps to understand why ethnic groups that are geographically separated may have different experiences with other groups, even if those other groups are the same across regions.

This relational understanding of ethnic identity does more than explain how ethnic groups may arise or even interact, as it unpacks Horowitz's first critical variable in the exposition of ethnic conflict, that of group comparison. Horowitz says that group comparison results in 'the struggle for relative group worth' (Horowitz 1985, 143). The question of group worth, he argues, becomes salient when groups find themselves interacting with one another, and from these interactions, '[s]tereotypes crystallize, and intergroup comparisons emerge' (Horowitz 1985; 2000, 143). The goal of these comparisons is to create a 'favourable evaluation' of the groups in question (Horowitz 1985, 144), which is important to the group's, and by extension to the individual's, sense of self-worth. These comparisons can stem from colonial structures of power that placed some groups in control of their neighbours, or that subjugated entire populations and left all seeking the approval of the colonisers.

It is reasonably easy to accept the notion that as social beings, individuals pursue a positive self-identity that emerges from positive reinforcement garnered from the rest of society (see Cordell and Wolff 2010, 38). The desire for a positive group comparison is an integral part of those explanations for ethnic conflict that centre on a theory of social identity and social-psychological explanations of conflict (see Cordell and Wolff 2010, 37). Ed Cairns (1982, 227) examines the conflict in Northern Ireland under the lens of social psychology, applying a social psychological framework to a conflict that he believes has been incorrectly assumed to be 'a rational struggle for power in economic and political terms'. It is the intensity of the emotions surrounding the conflict in Northern Ireland that lead Cairns to believe that there is something more at stake than these 'rational concerns, but these rational concerns serve an important function to provide tangible justification for conflict, and to ensure that it is enduring.

Cairns uses Tajfel's (1982) definition of social identity, writing: '[s]ocial identity will be understood as that *part* of the individuals' self-concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership' (Tajfel 1982, 2). Cairns explains the implications of this theory by saying that Tajfel 'suggests that we tend to structure our social environment in terms of groupings of persons...thus simplifying the world we live in' (Cairns 1982, 278). This definition is left intentionally open-ended to allow for an interpretation of social identity as essentially fluid. Cairns supports Tajfel's theory of social identity, 'because the theory recognizes the powerful influences of economic and political processes, rather than attempting to ignore them as other psychological theories of conflict do' (Cairns 1982, 295). It is through this that we begin to see emerge a much more complex understanding of ethnic conflict.

Cairns applies this understanding of ethnic violence as a multi-dimensional social reality to the situation in Northern Ireland, where the conflict has been treated as one of racial bias, and yet where those 'stereotyped cues' are 'slowly learned' rather than being readily visible to either side (Cairns 1982, 280). He argues that 'what exists in Northern Ireland is in many ways closely resembles a racial situation but it is essentially a ‘social construction of ethnicity,’ which is historically based' (Cairns 1982, 280-281; see also Burton 1978). Cairns goes on to say that this construction provides evidence for Tajfel’s conditions for important social categorization (Tajfel 1974). The first of these ‘is that the division of the social world is made along lines which produce two clearly distinct and non-overlapping categories’ and that ‘there exists a serious difficultly...of passing from one group to another’ (Cairns 1982, 281).

The social comparison and differentiation in the case of Northern Ireland appears particularly strong, given that ‘observers have been surprised to note that...the potentially cross-cutting categories of sex and class are relatively unimportant’ (Cairns 1982, 281). Put another way, the process of differentiation and the maintenance of the ethnic boundary is so strong and so psychologically salient that it has managed to overshadow other forms of identification that may have allowed individuals to view themselves as something other than utterly distinct from the opposed group. I disagree with his argument and point to the gendered divisions and gendered violence in Northern Ireland. The impact of these comparisons is either a sense of a group’s inherent superiority, or an imposed inferiority and an accompanying victimisation. (Cordell and Wolff 2010, 39). This struggle for dominance is the result of a sense of group entitlement, also mentioned by Horowitz (Cordell and Wolff 2010, 39; Horowitz 1985, 185), and combines the desire for the instrumental powers (i.e. 'rational' explanations) as well as symbolic powers (Cordell and Wolff 2009, 39).

Social comparison theory brings us closer to an understanding of violent identity politics in its emphasis on a perception of distinct boundaries between groups, as well as through its allowance for tension and conflict as emergent from this boundary. What it does not provide is an account for the high degree of sexualisation of the other in extreme cases of violent identity politics, nor does it speak to the degree of abjection that is important in determining these boundaries. It is possible to deduce that the abjection of the other may be a function of the value placed on the other with respect to the self, but this presses the theory to its extreme. Suggesting that groups will view themselves as superior to other groups does not evoke the extremity of the violence that this project investigates, and most importantly does not account for the intersection of ethnicised identity with sexualised identity – and in fact, social comparison theory under Cairns claims that ethnicised identity supersedes any other large-group identification. All of these concerns make social comparison theory unsatisfactory for examining the types of violence with which this thesis is concerned. It is a considerable gain in terms of its emphasis on the boundary between groups, but does not investigate the formation and policing of that boundary enough to explore its utility in extreme violence.

Elites, Fear and Ethnic Terrorism

More recent theories of ethnic conflict began moving the discussion towards explanations that consider psychological factors, providing a more complex understanding of the emotional tie to the ethnic group. Vamik Volkan (1997) expands upon the idea of elite manipulation as a factor to include the tie that the elites feel to the group. Volkan (1997) also asserts that while the number of ethnic conflicts may be decreasing with time, the conflicts that do arise are more violent in nature, and that if ethnic wars are on the decline, then ethnic terrorism is on the rise (Volkan 1997, 16). Volkan contends that this is because more terrorist attacks are being carried out by groups defining themselves along religious or ethnic, rather than secular lines (Volkan 1997, 16). He defines ethnic

terrorism as ‘situations in which terrorist leaders have excessive attachment to their large-group identity and seek to enhance it through widespread violence’ (Volkan 1997, 157). Ethnic terrorism emerges as a new category for two reasons, the first being that it allows for a wider range for targets of violence, including sites of cultural importance, and smaller scale attacks. It also suggests an increased dependence on a single leader or handful of leaders. The fact that terrorist groups are more often than not led by one, or perhaps only a few, individual(s) makes it an interesting platform for examining the role of elites, albeit in a small setting, in contemporary ethnic conflicts. The role of elites in ethnic conflict has often been demonstrated as a means for the personal gain of a few at the expense of the masses, and ethnic terrorism offers an evolution of this idea to address new forms of violence. Volkan offers a psychological investigation of those who seek control of an ethnic terrorist group, and his introduction of psychological analysis of terrorist leaders provides an interesting and new dimension.

While psychological study of a terrorist organization’s leadership would be, at the very least, difficult[5], Volkan cites the work of political psychologist Jeanne Knutson, who found a common thread amongst terrorist leaders in Northern Ireland: ‘all had been the victims of terror themselves, all had experienced violations of their personal boundaries that damaged or destroyed their faith in personal safety’ (Volkan 1997, 160). Because of these experiences of personal victimisation, ‘terrorist leaders tend to shore up their internal sense of self by seeking the power to hurt and by expressing their sense of entitlement to power’ (Volkan 1997, 161), and those who take a prominent role in terrorist organizations ‘have a psychological need to ‘kill’ the victimized aspects of themselves and the victimizing aspects of their aggressors’ (Volkan 1997, 162). We see this fear of domination and/or subjugation by a foreign other in Posen’s security dilemma, but here Volkan has scaled it down from an explanation of mass anxiety to that of the individual. In doing so, he

5 Recently, there has been more work done on the strategy and psychology of, in particular, violent dissident groups in Northern Ireland (see Horgan 2013).

allows researchers to see how memories of past victimisation can inspire actions of extreme aggression, not only in groups but within the individual.

Ethnic terrorism is rarely a successful venture (Volkan 1997, 159). While it may seem obvious that terrorism would have a limited impact in terms of creating real social and political change, the underlying reason for its lack of success is somewhat more subtle —'the very fact that a terrorist leader clings so tightly to the terrorist group...works against the efficacy of the group's officially stated goals' (Volkan 1997, 163). The terrorist leader cultivates an inflated sense of large-group belonging, and creates the terrorist cell as a response to a perceived need in the large-group community. The group, and the leaders' role in aiding the group, are the primary sources through which the terrorist leader draws his/her identity. If the terrorist group were to actually meet its aims, 'it would no longer be needed and would eventually dissolve', creating an 'identity vacuum' for the leader (Volkan 1997, 163). This crisis of identity is similarly picked up in discussions of abjection and precarity in identity formation, to which I will turn in Chapter Four, wherein the self is bound to the other in order to understand its identity.

Volkan also provides an explanation for why masses paradoxically choose to follow ethnic elites even when there is no possibility of any real gain for them, material or otherwise. Volkan describes ethnic belonging as being huddled under a large canvas tent, which serves as an additional layer of protection against the outside world (Volkan 1997, 164). When terror 'shake[s] the ethnic tent, individuals beneath it respond by strengthening their investment in ethnicity' (Volkan 1997, 164). In other words, when individuals perceive that their identity is threatened, members of the ethnic group may respond by firming up their ethnic boundaries. Furthermore, Volkan asserts '[t]hat a leader is able significantly to influence a large group's identity is a clear indication that the followers have internalized his message' (Volkan 1997, 181).

Volkan's psychoanalytical approach to ethnic terrorism and the role that a charismatic leader may have offers a more varied depiction of the role of elites in inciting ethnic violence than simply casting them as opportunistic manipulators of symbols in pursuit of the benefits of modernisation, instead carefully tracing the transition from victim to aggressor in individuals. He is also able to account for the ruthlessness with which ethnic violence can be carried out, particularly with respect to actions that perpetrators claim were orders passed down along a hierarchy. His depiction of these leaders as victims of terror who are determined not to be victimised again finds connection to both the role of chauvinist nationalism in ethnic conflict and is part of the basis of psychoanalytical approach to ethnic conflict. The idea of ethnic terrorism brings us closer to an understanding of the emotive weight of ethnicity, and its addition of the idea of victimisation to the construction of the group in general and the leader specifically is compelling. What it does not account for is the role of individual members of the groups who are not leaders – Volkan's hypothesis does not provide a satisfactory account of violence from the top down because of its focus on the leadership of groups, nor does it explain the sexualised nature of that violence. Volkan places a tremendous emphasis on the ability of leaders to stir people to action, but he does not investigate how they are able to so thoroughly manipulate masses as to provoke the terror necessary to produce overkill. He also does not account for why or how the targets of ethnic terrorism are sexualised in this process, or why sexualised violence in particular is so prevalent.

Robert Hayden and Chauvinist Nationalism

Robert Hayden (1993) begins bringing the vocabulary of domination and extermination into the discussion of violent identity politics, using empirical evidence from an ethnic conflict known for the considerable degree of sexualised violence in the civil wars that emerged out of the former Yugoslavia. He explains the collapse of the former Yugoslavia as 'the triumph of chauvinist

nationalism' (Hayden 1993, 73). Intellectuals 'who abandoned previously held humanistic orientations for chauvinistic ones' (Hayden 1993, 74) fuelled what he calls a 'transition...from regimes of state socialism to one of state chauvinism' (Hayden 1993, 74). He argues that justifications for nationalism come largely from beliefs of the narrators' perspective as superior and the others as inferior (Hayden 1993, 74). These conceptions of internal superiority and external inferiority were not limited to ethnic intellectuals—Hayden criticises the standards of anthropology that dismissed the civil war in the former Yugoslavia as an Eastern perversion of Western ideologies (Hayden 1993, 75). He argues that war broke out 'not because of eastern pollution of western rationality, but because of the political allure of chauvinistic nationalism is what has been called an 'ethnic shatter zone'' (Hayden 1993, 76).

In order to unpack Hayden's understanding of violent identity politics, I will continue using his example of the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia. The former Yugoslavia also provides an example of the type of violence with which I am concerned in this thesis, as the extremity of the violence falls very much into the category of overkill. Hayden argues that the interconnectedness of the people of Yugoslavia posed a problem for nationalists, and the partial-imagining of a Yugoslav community was a crucial component of the extreme blood-letting during the civil war (Hayden 1994, 6). Volkan, whose work shares much of the base of chauvinistic nationalism, highlights the tendency for terrorist groups towards 'a campaign of internally directed terror' (Volkan 1997, 159), meant to silence opposition within the group and to create the imaginary of a unanimous voice. This imaginary was likewise necessary for nationalists in Yugoslavia, who were determined to prove that the ethnic groups living in Yugoslavia could not coexist under any arrangement that left them in a unified polity, which Hayden refers to as 'empirical nonsense' (Hayden 1994, 8). There were mixed regions that saw neighbourly interactions and, more importantly, mixed marriages, but to the nationalists with their plans of secession, 'these mixed territories were not only anomalous, but *threatening* [emphasis added], since they served as living disproof of the nationalist ideologies'

(Hayden 1994, 6). This more than anything, he argues, led to the extreme violence of the civil war, as ‘the mixed regions could not be permitted to survive as such, but their populations, which were mixing voluntarily, had to be separated militarily’ (Hayden 1994, 6). The single-minded emphasis on self-determination made the homogenisation of the populations of the republics an absolute necessity (Hayden 1994, 16), making the drive towards homogenisation by ethnic cleansing of territories an ideological necessity. Violence became an inevitability closing in on the republics from two fronts: the fervent need to expunge the other by bureaucratic and military means, and the resistance of the minority population to discrimination and/or forced resettlement.

For Hayden, chauvinist nationalism is the incendiary mechanism through which ethnic difference erupts into ethnic war. Chauvinist nationalism is an intrinsically exclusionary doctrine that necessitates the dominance of the inherently superior ingroup over the inherently inferior outgroup. Through Hayden’s exposition of chauvinist nationalism, we are able to connect the intense fear of ethnic conflict with its sometimes seemingly disproportionate violence through its fears for and focus upon the purity of the ethnic nation. While he does not problematise ethnicity itself as a category, instead taking ethnic identification for granted, Hayden comes closest to my understanding of dominance and superiority in the traditional ethnic conflict literature, but he also leaves the question of how this identification leads to violence unaddressed. This epistemological shift in the understanding of ethnic violence that emerges after the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia from a modernist interpretation to one that is understood as a largely social or psychological phenomenon, and therefore distinct from other types of conflict, is immensely important. What emerges from this is an acknowledged inability to pin ethnic violence to one overarching catalyst. Ethnic conflict is a multi-faceted, richly layered category of violence, one that is based upon a dynamic and fluctuating categorisation of people.

Critical Interventions into Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict: Campbell, Fujii, and Feldman

More recently, there has been a turn towards critical understandings of ethnic identity formation and radicalisation towards conflict. In some ways these have begun as a critique of constructivism. Although constructivism accounts for the formation of identity in terms of the impact of the social –as opposed to the natural– to a greater degree than primordialism, its differentiation from primordialism is not as complete as it may appear. This becomes apparent in treatment of concepts such as culture or identity as fixed variables. As Lee Ann Fujii (2010) notes, 'constructivist scholars end up reifying identity or treating it as something people simply have, even as they acknowledge that the context...is subject to change' (Fujii 2010, 2). In the context of political violence, this becomes particularly problematic because '[w]hen reifying groups, it becomes all too easy to link outcomes of violence to the supposed properties that inhere in groups' (Fujii 2010, 3).

Here Fujii draws out a major issue with primordialist assumptions about the foundations of ethnic groups that are tacitly accepted by constructivist interpretations of violent identity politics, which I discussed earlier in this chapter. When groups are treated as internally cohesive, interpretations of violent identity politics slip back to primordialist assumptions about how those identities come about. Modernist approaches such as Gellner's refer to a certain coherence of groups the creates the conditions for competition. In turn this leads modernism to treat violence and competition both as inevitable, and as the result of identity groups that are formed prior to conflict. Extreme violence becomes an aberration, which obscures the attempt to examine what it may be trying to accomplish. A framework for analysing ethnic violence must take great account of the emotional, visceral elements of ethnic violence while not reifying the category of ethnic groups and allowing it to stand as a causal variable

One of the strongest critiques of constructivism was written by David Campbell (1992), in response to constructivist contentions with post-structuralism as framework for international relations. He argues that '[o]nce social practices are signified as culture and rendered as a substance, they are intelligible as variables' (Campbell 1992, 217). This is problematic because culture, and what constitutes it is 'under theorised...Considered briefly to be one of a number of 'summary labels for social factors', 'culture' is figured as no more than that which is not material' (Campbell 1992, 217). This means that identity itself is 'rendered....as a variable that can be inserted into already existing theoretical commitments' (Campbell 1992, 218). The critical complaint with constructivism, therefore, is that it takes an under-theorised concept, which Campbell identifies as 'culture' and which I have discussed as 'ethnicity', and uses it as a fixed variable in order to explain other phenomenon.

In the next chapter, I likewise argue that the theory of performative identity be applied to ethnicity. The groundwork for this has been laid with the work of Fujii (2010), who discusses the performance of identity in the context of extra-lethal violence. She argues '[i]f we start with the notion of identity as performative all the way down, then violence becomes a type of identity performance, rather than an expression of extant identities' (Fujii 2010, 24). This is an important contribution to not only the wider literature but this project in particular, as it suggests that violence is constitutive of the violent subject, and not the other way around. This is important for my understanding of overkill as a means of conferring identity both on aggressor and victim. Fujii, however, focuses her research on violence that ends in the death of the victim (Fujii 2012), but that goes beyond simply killing, taking into consideration brutal murder as well as the desecration of corpses.

In a similar vein to Fujii, Allen Feldman (1991) also argues for performative understandings

of identity as particularly informative for the understanding of violence; however Feldman is concerned with identity not only as performative, but as embodied. His book about the conflict in Northern Ireland locates violence as spatial, and he goes as far as to call the book 'an ethnography of surfaces' (Feldman 1991, 2), wherein the primary space or surface is the body. In many ways my understanding of ethnic identity is in agreement with Feldman, given his focus upon identity formation as performative and embodied, but there are key moments of departure. Published prior to Campbell's (1992) strong critique of constructivism, Feldman (1991, 1) uses the same language of constructivism that Campbell finds problematic, notably his use of the term 'culture' and its precarious position as a variable. Feldman (1991, 1) locates violence in Northern Ireland within a 'political' and 'material' culture that exists in tandem with 'an ensemble of performed practices'. I find this problematic largely because it closes the space for intersections of identity markers, where a mode of 'culture' is delineated as a set of markers rather than a constellation of markers of difference.

In connection with this, Feldman does not examine the impact of sexualisation or gendering on embodied violence, which is particularly striking given his careful and thorough analysis of interview data that explicitly and repeatedly references sexualised violence, from mirror searches to the use of prisoners' naked bodies as a means of humiliation (Feldman 1991, 193). Just as sexualised violence is absent from his discussion, also absent is the impact of gendering, as his analysis focuses exclusively on male prisoners to the exclusion of female prisoners – women are only brought into the discussion as they highlight the brutalisation of the men. For example, one interviewee describes the tit-for-tat humiliation of being arrested by a female officer, whilst assuming that she is likewise embarrassed to be in his presence as he is wearing only his dressing gown (Feldman 1991, 99). This is an important exclusion for this project, because it misses what I consider to be a key contribution of performative understandings of ethnic identity formation, which is its intersectionality with other difference markers.

Following his critique of constructivism in *Writing Security* (1992) Campbell argues for a different conception of ethnicity in *National Deconstruction* (1998). Ethnicity in his later work as an non-referential signifier are a precedent for my own conception of ethnicity as a constellation of difference markers rather than as stable categorisation. Campbell argues that '[e]thnicity is...better understood as a component of the representational politics of identity/difference – particularly the identity of 'others'' (Campbell 1998, 92). Campbell attributes ethnicity to power and power relations, and that claims about the existence of ethnicity are less about a stable, instrumental variable, and are instead designed to 'effect specific inclusions or exclusions, thereby recalling themes concerning the violence of representation and the order of intelligibility' (Campbell 1998, 93). He goes on to say that the violence with his argument is concerned, the Serb-Croat war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, was intended to 'produce a society in which the divisions between people could be clearly seen and enforced' (Campbell 1998, 93). Violence is in this way performative of difference, particularly as it distinguishes between ingroup and outgroup members. Campbell also destabilised the idea of ethnicity in his arguments, which foundationalises the understanding of identity politics in overkill. Violence in Campbell's work is constitutive of identity – overkill adds to this understanding of violence that it renders the other abject through sexualisation and sexualised violence.

There have been many important contributions to critical understandings of ethnicity and ethnic violence, and in particular some that have called for understandings of ethnic identity and ethnic violence as performative. It is within this body of work that this project is situated. I argue for ethnic identity to be viewed as performative, and for ethnic violence, and in particular extreme ethnic violence, to be considered as constitutive of subjectivity rather than as the by-product of a cohesive or pre-existing subject. However, the intersectionality of identity that becomes

comprehensible through a performative lens is under-theorised in much of the critical ethnicity literature, particularly with respect to the intersection of ethnicity as a constellation of difference markers rather than as a causal variable and the sexualised difference markers. It is here that an understanding of this violence as overkill, and therefore as performative of intersecting difference markers, makes a significant contribution to the existing literature. This intersectionality allows for the mutually informing performances of embodied ethnicisations and sexualisations in abjection – and this is the critical contribution of this thesis. This intersectionality and attendant sexualisation of the other is crucially left out of these discussions, and it is this sexualisation that defines the type of violence with which this thesis is concerned.

Not Only Why, But How: The Missing Link in the Literature

There are consistent themes that are addressed in the literature on ethnic identity formation and ethnic conflict. These include the psychological pull of ethnic ties, and the emotional impact of identification that is felt by the ethnic community. Whether socially constructed or otherwise, it is undeniable that under certain circumstances, people feel their ethnicity strongly, and form a considerable emotional attachment to their group. The radicalisation of identity politics into extremely violent identity politics arguably lies in this emotional attachment, but how exactly this emotional attachment comes about remains unclear from the existing literature. Though it sheds light on the emotional gravity of ethnic affiliation by framing ethnic groups as familial in nature, primordialism is unable to account for violent identity politics wholly because of its assumption of the naturalness of ethnic identity, which is contradicted by the fact that ethnic identity is not always salient in the individual or within the group, and ethnic conflicts are themselves dynamic events. Ethnic groups express their identities differently according to different geographic or social contexts, and more problematically, people can move from one ethnic group to another – it was not uncommon in pre-1935 Rwanda, for instance, for people to change their ethnic affiliation according

to their circumstances because these groups were originally a different type of social categorisation, which were generally economic (Mamdani 2001, 98). These classifications became 'racialised' and 'naturalised' by colonisers, in particular the Belgians (Mamdani 2001, 77). There are too many empirical contradictions to primordialism for it to underpin any theory of violent identity politics.

As has been previously shown, constructivism addresses the differential salience of ethnic affiliation, and allows for a permeability of ethnic group boundaries. It also dismisses the notion of ethnic affiliation as granted *a priori*, as an extension of the family. These are important departures from primordialism, as is the fact that constructivism privileges the specific contemporary cultural and historic moment in which ethnic groups operate, and out of which violence can emerge. While it does considerably more than primordialism to account for the permeability and malleability of identity, constructivism also struggles in this regard and remains too static a theory to account for much of what occurs in violent identity politics. It suggests a sort of top-down imposition of identification, where individuals are subjected to externalities such as modernisation or the manipulation by ethnic elites. While considerably more dynamic than primordialism, constructivism as a theory still remains too static to account for such a fluid phenomenon as identity formation and identity politics.

Another important factor that emerges from these discussions of ethnic identity is the relational nature of that identity, which suggests that in order to construct a coherent understanding of what a group's identity is, the group must have a collinear definition of what it is not. Identities cannot exist in a bubble, separated from their external context and from the groups that surround them and with which they must interact. Both primordialism and constructivism allow for this border and in fact include it in their respective definitions of ethnic groups, but after acknowledging its presence it is left unaddressed. I argue that this border does more than allow for the existence of

groups through a process of delineation, but rather propose that the formation of this border is inextricably linked to the formation of identity and the radicalisation of identity in violent identity politics. This border is formed through a process of separating the self-object from the other-abject, and it is through this process of abjecting the other that extreme violence can emerge.

Finally, there is the importance of the normative structures that inform identity that emerges from both primordialism and constructivism. While Barth (1969) does not explicitly use the language of normative identity, the idea fits with his discussion of 'share[d] fundamental culture values' (Barth 1969; 1998, 10-11). Normative identity, particularly as outlined by Foucault (1976), serves two purposes in its formation of ethnic identity. The first of these is the prescriptions it places on the behaviour of group members, which is to say that normative structures inform the appropriate performance of identity within the group. The second is its implication that what is outside the group is negative or abnormal. Normative behavioural prescriptions define what ‘good’ behaviour is for members of the group and carry a negative assumption about behaviours that do not fit this model. From this emphasis on the normative, we can begin to see where negative assumptions about outsiders or others take their root.

The problem that arises from the existing literature is the lack of a coherent understanding of how the formation of ethnic identity leads to violent identity politics. There is an acceptance of the performance of identity as being context-specific, and this contextualisation extends to discussions of violence. What is not clear is what about the formation of contextually formed groups that leads to violence under certain conditions. There is a failure of communication when violent identity politics is discussed, for largely these discussions ignore what has come before in the literature on identity formation. Theories such as modernisation and the security dilemma point to ethnicity as being a social phenomenon, but when they discuss ethnic groups in conflict, identity is treated as a

given, as a natural fact rather than a social one. While work has been done into the psychological impacts of ethnic group affiliation (Volkan 1997), this is still treated as a natural piece of human identity.

My contention is that addressing this gap in the identity literature also bridges the gap between identity formation and violent identity politics. Why groups will conflict with other groups is not, I argue, the important question, but rather scholars should be interrogating how conflict emerges from within these groups. How identity is radicalised brings us much closer to an explanation for extreme violence. What is needed is a concept of identity that allows simultaneously for its dynamism and the feelings of naturalisation that it inspires. Performativity provides an account for the psychological underpinnings of large-group identity formation, and also accounts for the ways in which one identity can intersect with another and inform its performance. This is important as not all individuals will perform their identity in the same way – the gender of the individual in question will impact strongly upon the ways in which they interact with not only their own group but with outsiders, and will necessitate different behavioural norms. In explaining the psychological underpinnings of identity formation, performativity also accounts for what is left over in the formation of identity, which is to say that it provides an explanation for how the other is constructed alongside the self. This is key to understanding *how* identity is radicalised in order to produce extreme violence, and with its understanding of identity as productive and its emphasis on the creation of and adherence to social norms, performativity provides an interesting lens for examining the nature of overkill.

Chapter Three

'The Personal Is Political': A Performative Theory of Bodily Violence

Introduction

This project addresses the extreme violence that emerges in some instances of identity politics. I will argue that where extreme violence emerges out of violent identity politics, there is a concurrent sexualisation and abjection of the body of the other. Central to my argument is that we gain a greater understanding of how this violence emerges by examining identity politics through a theoretical framework of performativity as was introduced in the previous chapter, following an examination of the existing literature on ethnic identity formation and ethnic conflict. Ethnicised and sexualised identities are both large group identities that rely on a high degree of normalisation, naturalisation and repetition. Both are constituted in ways that evoke a high degree of emotional attachment. Acceptable performances of identity become increasingly restricted through the emphasis on normalised behaviour, and pronounced when there is a potential for conflict to arise, as identity groups fortify their borders in response to the external threat of the other. Where ethnicised and sexualised identities are performed together, groups can become radicalised and produce the abject violence characteristic of ethnic nationalism. These performances, as well as their violent effects, are always visible at the level of the body. This chapter will introduce and explore the concept of performativity and the recognition of politicised identity as embodied, theories that have evolved from Michel Foucault through Judith Butler's work, and its usefulness in the examination of political violence and ethnic conflict.

So far, I have examined the existing literature on ethnic identity formation and violent identity politics in order to identify any gaps that could account for how extreme violence emerges, and what this violence attempts to do. I first examined the two primary schools of thought with regards to the formation of identity, primordialism and constructivism. While the former takes

ethnic identity to be natural and historically enduring, the latter takes ethnic identification to be the product of its social environment. What is compelling about ethnic identity as a field of study, however, is that it is empirically demonstrative of its contemporary nature, meaning that it appears clearly grounded in its contemporary time and place. However, it appears to act as a natural component of human identity. I take ethnicity to be a changeable, dynamic concept of one kind of group identity that is best understood as a constellation of intersecting markers of difference – an umbrella term for a large group differentiated by myriad potential markers of difference. I argue that ethnicity is best understood not a natural or a fixed category, and not a causal variable in violent identity politics, but is rather part of a constellation of markers of difference that make violent identity politics possible.

Campbell (1992, 226) argues 'identity is an inescapable dimension of being, rather than an epiphenomenal property', and proposes that a post-structuralist framework, specifically a performative concept of identity, is more revelatory of how identity operates because performativity 'see[s] culture as a signifying part of the conditions of intelligibility that establish the conditions of possibility for social being' (221). Though undeniably important, Campbell's application of Butler's concept of performativity to international relations has been criticised, notably by Cynthia Weber (1998), for failing to address the role of the sex/gender binary in international relations. She argues '[t]he unintended effect of Campbell's use of Butler is to performatively underplay and/or exclude sex, gender, and sexuality from International Relations investigations of sovereign nation-states as performative effects of discourse' (Weber 1998, 79).

Performativity as a concept argues that identity is productive of itself, while at the same time, it requires the appearance of being natural and enduring. Performativity argues identity to be exclusionary through the creation of and dependence upon norms that intersect with one another –

in the cases of the violence studied here, this intersectionality is between ethnicised and sexualised identities. These norms establish the boundary between the inside and the outside of the group, with those things, practices, or people that fall outside that boundary considered dangerous and threatening. Performativity also highlights the importance of the body in discussions of identity politics – identity is reliant upon performance and exclusion, and these both require bodies. Bodies are the materiality of identity. In what follows, I will unpack a theory of identity as embodied and performative, arguing that it allows us to understand how sexualised violence occurs (through the sexualisation and abjection of the other), and how new, violent subjectivities are produced through overkill.

Michel Foucault and the Body in Power

The body as a unit of analysis in the examination of power relations emerges in the work of Michel Foucault (1977). Here I will examine Foucault's docile bodies thesis, his view of the sexed body and its construction in relation to power dynamics, and the emphasis on normalisation to situate the body in an examination of power and to open an understanding of the body as a pivotal concern for the study of power-effects such as identity and violence. This will demonstrate the pivotal role that the body plays in political dynamics, as well as the impact of the manipulation of the body, examining how it creates the political subject. The political subject is the result of the productive and juridical nature of power. Power is always a productive force, while juridical power is one sub-set of power. These effects of power operate in tandem, and on the body, and will be explained below. The title of his seminal work on disciplinary power, *Discipline and Punish*, was suggested by Foucault himself when the original title, *Surveiller et Punis*, proved a challenge to translators (Foucault 1977, 1). *Surveiller* has no direct translation to English, falling somewhere between 'surveillance' and 'observation', and is the translation by Foucault of Bentham's 'inspect'

(Foucault 1977, 1). That in the end he chose 'discipline' as the closest understanding of *surveiller* reveals two things about his intention: first, that this word should indicate that this type of power include discipline, but also a sense of an omnipresent eye on the bodies of those under its power – surveillance as a policing of norms. It suggests that discipline of the body is not only about rigorous psychological control, but a control through a visualisation of the body that relies upon the materiality of the body. It is this materiality of the body that will be particularly important for this thesis – I am concerned with the physicality of identity performances, arguing that in order to better understand how the body is utilised as a weapon or target in violent identity politics, it is more useful to begin with an understanding of identity as an embodied practice.

In *Discipline and Punish*, a work that is part historical account, part philosophical excavation of the punitive systems of justice, Foucault (1977) argues that the body is useful to society only inasmuch as it can be rendered 'docile' (Foucault 1977, 138); that is 'subjected and practised…a body manipulated by authority rather than imbued with animal spirits' (Foucault 1977, 159). Disciplinary power renders the bodies of individuals 'docile', meaning that the body 'may be subjected, used, transformed, and improved' (Foucault 1977, 136). Foucault uses examples of the student and the soldier to illustrate this discipline of the body (Foucault 1977, 166-168), highlighting in particular the obedience with which they perform expected duties at the appropriate moment: '[a]t the word *take*, the children, with their right hands, take hold of the string by which the slate is suspended…' (Foucault 1977, 167). Foucault illustrates that the actions of the children's bodies are coordinated to commands, with an understanding by the students of the regimentation of their movements and obedience to that regime. The body of the individual is trained and conditioned in such a way that it (the embodied individual) responds to external commands by acting in a prescribed fashion, and failure to adhere to these prescriptions will result in punishment. In this way the body is rendered docile, meaning that it follows the prescriptions of the external authority. This is important for the study of normalised identity, as it predicts that individuals will

largely docily adhere to norms of behaviour once they have been trained, practised, or as Foucault (1977) says, drilled to be docile.

Foucault conceptualises the body as both the object and the source of power. Power 'allows bodies, gestures, discourses, and desires to be identified and constituted as something individual' (Foucault 1997, 30). Bodies, then, are intelligible in as much as they are invested with power: '[t]he individual is in fact a power-effect, and at the same time....the individual is a relay: power passes through the individuals it has constituted' (Foucault 1997, 30). Bodies[6] do not only give substance to power, but power just as importantly makes particular bodies possible. Power, through the prescription of normative behaviour, is the means by which bodies are made legible, coherent within society. According to Butler (1997), Foucault is concerned not only with 'the body of the prisoner, but...the materiality of the body of the prison' (Butler 1997, 34). She concludes that because the prison without the vestiges of power is merely a building, 'the prison is *materialized* to the extent that it is *invested with power*, or, to be more grammatically correct, there is no prison prior to its materialization...' (Butler 1997, 34). Spaces, then, can and do manipulate and produce the bodies that occupy them. The manipulation of the body according to Foucault determines the nature of its subjectivity – some bodies are discursively produced as criminal, degenerate, while others are labelled normal (see Foucault 1976). Control over the body in the Foucauldian model will yield control of the individual made material by that body, and reveals the inscription of power on the body. Power infuses the bodies of individuals and, as Campbell (1992, 221) points out, makes

6 I use 'bodies' rather than 'people' in order to highlight the importance of the material body in politics and in power, and to avoid creating a distinction between the mind and the body. This is to reject a voluntaristic interpretation of identity as related to the body, where voluntarism would imply that individuals may opt out of certain identity markers. Voluntarism as understood by dualism (specifically Cartesian dualism as proposed by Descartes 1641) is argued by Butler (1990 and 1993) to create a false separation of the mind and the body, whereas performativity encapsulates the adherence to identity markers as a 'strategy' of maintaining cultural legibility which is inherently unstable. Butler also argues that Beauvoir (1949) presents a dualist understanding of femininity in her book *The Second Sex*, though Sara Heinämaa (1997) argues that Butler's assessment of Beauvoir's concept of 'becoming' as voluntarism is a misreading. Heinämaa (1997) presents Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* as fundamentally phenomenological, and if we accept her reading of Beauvoir alongside Butler's suspicion of free will and agency in identity performance, we can begin to collapse the distinction between the mind and the body as false binary.

bodies socially intelligible.

Producing Bodies: Judith Butler and Performativity

Foucault's (1977) juridical power thesis, in its establishment of the productive nature of power, is a precursor to Judith Butler's (1990) concept of performativity. She explains 'juridical systems of power *produce* the subjects they consequently come to represent' (Butler 1990, 3). This means that the subject, through the adherence to the norms of juridical power, continuously reiterates the legitimacy of those norms. Performativity as a concept holds that identity is produced, rather than constructed. Butler also argues that juridical power 'effectively conceals[s] and naturalize[s]...the political construction of the subject [that] proceeds with certain legitimating and exclusionary aims' (Butler 1990, 3). In particular, what stands out as important to the discussions of identity such as ethnicity and gender are the issues of naturalisation, internalisation and legitimation. This suggests that identities such as these rely upon the concealment of the construction of their norms in order for them to appear natural and enduring, and upon a normalisation of performances that is policed through this legitimation and exclusion. Their naturalisation renders them legitimate, shrouding their operations in the discursive production of their enduring nature. Because certain performances of identity are naturalised as appropriate, those that fall outside are excluded.

Butler (1990) argues that identity is not merely a social construct but, in accordance with Foucault's productive notion of power, produces those subjects that it is in turn produced by. Performativity posits that identity is the result of existent power dynamics, whereby preconceived notions of proper identity materialisation (social norms) create the ways in which identity materialises. It does this repeatedly, over time, as identity continues to be acted out, again and again. Rather than existing outside of the body, identity norms are created by the very bodies they

claim to define and control, and the process of naturalisation that emerges from repetition of normative behaviours creates a sense of the norms' endurance. Heteronormative assumptions about gender are a good starting point for considering this. Women, for instance, are often considered nurturing, suited as caregivers, and this is often connected to pregnancy and childbirth. It 'makes sense' for women to be natural caregivers because of their ability to produce children, and because of its roots in biological determinism this appears natural. Women tend to fill employment roles that require care as a specification, such as nurses or carers[7].

The political subject, Butler says, does not simply act out identity repeatedly the way that an actor performs a part, but rather ‘this repetition is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject’ (Butler 1997, 95) – in other words, the acts make the subject, not the other way round. This is important because performance of identity is not the end point of the subject, meaning identity performances are not the actions of a fully formed subject; rather, it is performance itself that constitutes identity and subjectivity. Ritualised acts, the repeated material expressions of identity performed over time result in the materiality of identity. This identity becomes subsumed by the body that it claims to identify and is so accepted, so seemingly natural that it appears to be (to borrow from the ethnicity literature) biologically perpetuated, which in turn renders the operations of power inscrutable. In the case study of the 1994 Rwandan genocide, killing made the actor a 'Hutu' – the actions of the *genocidaires* and the Interahamwe rendered what it meant to be Hutu, and the rape of Tutsi women by Hutu men was used as a sort of rite of passage (see Human Rights Watch 1996).

The issue of naturalisation is critical to performative identity. One of the effects of this

7 This is reflected in the 25 September 2013 report by the Office for National Statistics, which reported that in the United Kingdom, 82% of those working in care or leisure were women, and 77% of those working in administrative or secretarial roles were women. Managerial roles were dominated by men at 66%.

naturalisation is that the identity-markers themselves escape questioning, are held apart from examination (Butler 1990, 3). The identity becomes the cause of actions and interactions rather than their effect. This is the point at which assumptions about violence as the endpoint of cohesive identity groups that are foundational social constructivist interpretations arise. Performativity problematises the assumption that categories such as ethnicity are stable (see Campbell 1992), and that actions are the result of a pre-formed, fixed identity, allowing for the contributions of an understanding of violence such as overkill as a constitutive factor of identity. When violence is treated 'as a surface expression of 'deeper' socio-economic and/or ideological contexts...[it] is denuded of any intrinsic semantic or causal character' (Feldman 1991, 19).

Butler (1990) highlights critical arguments surrounding the problems theorising the embodiment of identity. She writes '[b]odies cannot be said to have a signifiable existence prior to the mark of their gender' (Butler 1990, 12). This means that a body does not become a body until it has an assigned identity (in the case of her argument, gender), and therefore an assigned role in society. That body must then be maintained in accordance with social normative prescriptions of behaviour. She goes on to pose the question: '[t]o what extent does the body *come into being* in and through the marks of its gender?' (Butler 1990, 12). Gender is one of the first markers that an individual embodies – bodies are gendered *in utero* before becoming a physical body, when parents begin preparing a nursery or buying clothes for the unborn baby.

` Butler demonstrates that the gendering of the body is not an interpretation of behaviours through biological cues, but rather a process by which a person is said to be a body that can be socially understood. To defy these expectations causes considerable trouble – there is a considerable amount of violence that is done to the transgender community, with the Trans* Violence Tracking Portal, a project aimed at identifying violence that specifically impacts the trans* community,

identifying 102 murders reported between January and April 2014 (TVTP 2014). Transphobia is a striking example of the dangers of defying gender norms, as violence, fear, and derision towards trans* individuals comes not only from those who appear to adhere to normalised gendered prescriptions of behaviours, but also from the LGB (lesbian, gay, bisexual) community and from feminism[8]. Naturalised identities, then, carry with them certain prescriptions of behaviours that can be difficult to resist.

Butler asks '[i]s materiality a site or surface that is excluded from the process of construction, as that through which and on which construction works...I want to ask how and way 'materiality' has become a sign of irreducibility...' (Butler 1997, 28). One of her hypotheses is that if materiality, specifically that of the body, is premised within 'a problematic gendered matrix' (Butler 1997, 29), then the process through which 'matter is rendered irreducible simultaneously ontologizes and fixes that gendered matrix in its place' (Butler 1997, 29). By making the body a fixed ontological starting point, other processes, including but not limited to sexualising, become fixed. In *Bodies that Matter,* Butler (1997) attributes more to the materiality of the body, arguing that performance doesn’t materialise a sort of underlying essence, but rather that performance *is* the essence, that as the visual display of identity, it is the identity. This idea of the relationship between identity and its embodiment, is critical, for I argue that this materialisation produces the types of bodily violence that we see in some instances of violent identity politics. Performativity provides

8 In the UK, the Stonewall organisation (http://www.stonewall.org.uk/) has been accused of ignoring the concerns of the trans* community through their stance against homophobia, which here includes anger/fear towards bisexuals. Stonewall has answered these accusations by acknowledging that while it does not lobby directly on trans* issues, it recognises the considerable discrimination levied against trans* people and has allied itself with a number of trans* organisations. In addition to ignoring the trans* community, some online communities and organisations such as Gender Identity Watch (http://genderidentitywatch.com), which is presented as a watchdog community for legislation that may police gender identity, actively deny that Trans* individuals should have access to protections or even to the solidarity associated with feminism and feminist activism. The literature on transphobia reveals some striking commentary on transsexuality specifically that consists of thinly veiled rage – Sandy Stone (1987) quotes Janice Raymond (1979) as defining male-to-female transsexuality as rape by deception. This considerable resistance to a trans-inclusive feminism is particularly interesting given the resistance to normative gender prescriptions associated with feminism.

the epistemological groundwork for a theory of embodied violence, as it allows us to understand that it is through violence that political subjectivities are conferred and solidified.

A Note on Performativity versus Performances

To reiterate, performativity can be summarised as the concept that identity 'is the stylized repetition of acts through time' (Butler 1988, 520), 'that discourses constitute the objects of which they speak' (Bialasiewicz et all 2007, 406), as subjects perform the discourse that claims to name them, and that under performativity '...identity amounts to the repeated and public actions, activities, and practices that make them real' (Fujii 2010, 7). While this last point is certainly a significant component of what it means to be performative, that there is a 'dramatic' (Butler 1988) element to identity performances, there is some danger in suggesting that performativity amounts to nothing more than an acting-out of identity. There is more that performativity has to offer-- for example, the ability to examine the nature of subjectivity, the nature of power dynamics with respect to how identity is performed, and the impact of normalized identity on the unknowing and perhaps unwilling subject. That the subject is treated differently is an important starting point in drawing a line between the concepts of performativity and performance, '[p]erformativity is a discursive mode through which ontological effects....are established. Performativity thereby challenges the notion of the naturally existing subject' (Bialasiewicz et all 2007, 408), while by contrast, '[p]erformance presumes a subject' (Bialasiewicz et all 2007, 408).

Reducing the performative to performance, I argue, suggests a superscripted identity that individuals play out that overlays a ‘real' identity – Fujii for instance references the use of traditional dance in order to appear 'exotic' for an 'audience' (Fujii 2010, 8). Performativity, by contrast, argues that there can be no ontological distinction between the performed and the ‘real’ in the mind of the subject, and in fact it is the performed and the performance that create the subject,

and in turn the subject that determines what will be performed. Performance can be said to occur within the performative structure, as it presumes the subject that is made through performativity and 'occurs within the conditions of possibility brought into being by the infrastructure of performativity' (Bialasiewicz et all 2007, 408). The acts that are repeated by the subject in order to shape identity are performed in the sense that they are actioned. These repeated acts of culture are what Butler would refer to as 'performance which is performative' (Butler 1988, 528). But I argue that the most important thing about these performances is that the subject does not know that they are not natural – they are not, for the subject who performs them, disingenuous. That the performing subject believes these acts to be natural is of critical importance, for without this internalised understanding of these stylised acts as natural, they cannot be understood as enduring, or adherence to them as obligatory. Their normality, their natural state, keeps them in operation.

The subject could no more disavow the performance of its identity than it could disavow its being possessed of a body, because the body makes its performative performance possible, and its performative performance makes the body legible. The body, the site of inscription, is as crucial to identity as the existence of alterity, abjection, the other. It relies upon its performative performance in order to give itself meaning not only to be recognizable and accepted by society, but also the subject relies upon these performances to give itself meaning in order to be recognisable *to itself.* To suggest that performative acts are a play before an audience or is otherwise an affectation strips the subject of the markers of its own materiality. Identity performance, even in the adoption and mimesis of alterity or otherness, is not a knowing, ingenuous projection from the Self, but rather is identity itself. Moya Lloyd (2007) notes that attempts by various theorists, including but not limited to Julia Kristeva (1982), to create some kind of signifier or 'radical element' (53) that is outside of culture is rejected by Butler as 'an effect of discourse that is presented as if it were not' (Lloyd 2007, 53).

Embodied Identity

In keeping with my argument that sexualised and ethnicised conceptions of the body are intersectional with one another through their performative nature, I also understand these identities as embodied. The normative behaviours that inform the performance of identity rely upon bodies to be known, read and done. There can be no sexualisation or ethnicisation without making recourse not only to a body, but to a body that behaves in a particular way or set of ways under changing circumstances. Thomas Csordas (1990, 5) argues for embodiment as a paradigm and epistemological foundation of the social sciences in particular, understanding 'that the body is not an *object* to be studied in relation to culture, but is to be considered as the *subject* of culture'. This reflects previous arguments about the nature of subjectivity, that an understanding of embodied identity is not an end point, but is rather constantly produced and reproduced within a constellation of norms and markers of sameness and difference. This is in contrast to previous ways of thinking about the body as 'fixed, material entity subject to the empirical rules of biological science, existing prior to the mutability and flux of cultural change and ...characterized by unchangeable inner necessities' (Csordas 1990, 1). This new understanding of the body has marked a shift in the ways in which the body is theorised, as the idea of biological rigidity is increasingly seen as problematic and the internalisation of social conditions and norms is increasingly recognised as the means through which bodies begin to 'matter' (Butler 1993).

Bringing the body to focus as materialised by social constraints is an important process for theorising the political subject, because separating the body from the mind allows for social forms of power to make recourse to 'naturally occurring' phenomena of the body that the mind may interpret. Social forms of power that manifest in the body are safe in relative obscurity. It is through the body that power is reified, and the study of power is by necessity the study of power as an

embodied force. Theorising the body presents a necessary shift and a complex challenge, for while '[t]here is no innate body ... there are bodies' (Eistenstein 1996, 32), meaning that while there is nothing outside of signification that leads us to an understanding of bodies, and yet bodies remain. The challenge is to create a theory that addresses the dichotomous roles of the body as something that is contextually created and as something that simply is. My argument is that, viewed through Butler's lens, while a body may be, everything that is understood about that body, from its sex to its ethnicity, is discursively produced. This argument is also made by Cynthia Weber (1998), who argues that Butler 'is not saying that there is no materiality to the body...Rather, she is saying that the identity of any body, the ways we *understand* the materiality of the body, does not pre-exist all manners of performative expressions...' (Weber 1998, 80).

According to Foucault (1977), it is always the body that is at issue in questions of power. In writing about the political violence of Northern Ireland and bringing the issue of the body to the forefront of the discussion, Feldman says of Foucault's work '[t]he body becomes a spatial unit of power, and the distribution of these units in space constructs sites of domination' (Feldman 1991, 8). He goes on to argue '[r]eserved spaces of political representation and the political formation of the body are coextensive historical developments. Domination's reality is organized through the logic of mythic instantiation, and the body is a central medium of the political instant' (Feldman 1991, 8)[9]. What this means for the study of the relationship between the body and power is that the body becomes itself the operation of power, and grounds it in the contemporary political and social

9 Approaching instantiation, specifically mythic instantiation, from a critical art historical perspective gives a clearer understanding of a metaphysical concept. I understand instantiation in this context to be related to Aristotelian instantiation, which claims that objects are reflective of a universal. From an art historical perspective, instantiation collapses the distinction between the discourse of images and the discourse of words. Subjectivities are conferred upon the spoken, rather than the seen (Mitchell 2003, 60). Instantiation in this context is the assumption of the object to be a 'place-holder' for an ideal (Mitchell 2003, 58). Reading Feldman (1991, 8) in this way reveals that power and domination operate by appearing as a 'place-holder' for a mythic ideal or universal, and this instantiation takes place through the body of the political subject. It is through the body of the political subject that power becomes real in the contemporary historico-political moment.

moment. The body is the enforcer of power, and also the recipient of the forces of power. It is through the actions of the body that power and its prescriptions and normalisations are acted continuously, and are therefore continuously reproduced. It is through the body as a political artefact that power is, in a word, done.

The prison protests in Northern Ireland provide an example of this. Feldman (1991) makes a compelling case for the primacy of the body in political subjectivity, and this is visible in the struggle for control over the bodies of the prisoners in the H-Blocks. The protests shifted from the creation of a repellent surface to protect the Blanketmen from the prison guards to a complete denial of the prisoners' bodies through the Hunger Strike Protest, which shrank the bodies of the strikers until they were unreachable corpses. There is, therefore, an intimate relationship between the body and power, and by extension the body and violence. Power exercises itself *and* makes itself known on the bodies of its subjects especially through violence – there are no bodies without power, just as there is no power without bodies (see Foucault 1977, Butler 1997, Feldman 1991). It would be impossible to discuss power, society, culture, or violence without making recourse to the body, for it is only through the body that such things exist. The body of and as the political subject receives violence, it bears the immediate markers of violence, and after a time, the scars of that violence.

Feldman writes that the body impacted by political violence is itself invested with political agency (Feldman 1991, 7), and that '[t]he body, altered by violence, reenacts other altered bodies dispersed in time and space; it also reenacts political discourse and even the movement of history itself' (Feldman 1991, 7). Power, and its attendant violence, is an historicising force that grounds the body within its current historical moment while making recourse to the past. The body made political agent by violence bears the scars of that violence, and carries that memory forward into the future, which can in turn make present and future claims to violence appear more legitimate as

retribution for past injustices. In the case of the Rwandan genocide, the Hutu Power movement claimed the historical power of the Tutsis over their own people in order to cast the genocide as revenge for the past and insurance against its happening again. An editorial published in *Kangura* argued '[a]dministratively, the Tutsi regime has been marked by two factors: their women and cows. These two truths kept the Hutu in bondage for four hundred years. Following their overthrow in the 1959 social revolution, the Tutsi have never given up' (Kangura 40 1994). The essayist then goes on to claim the 'identical' nature of the '*inyenzi'* of the 1990s, and the 1960s. History for the Hutu was not to repeat itself, and the bodies of the Tutsi would be inscribed with the superiority and dominance of the Hutu through overkill.

The Importance of the Insider/Outsider Binary

One thing that emerges from the examination of violent identity politics is the necessity of the radicalised exclusion of abnormality to protect the ingroup. The achieved end for the regulatory state is not an organised, serialised mass of obedient bodies, but a regularised, normalised mass that remains productive in all the economies in which a human body operates. While the mechanisms of power existent in modes of the disciplinary and the regulatory may differ, there are important points of overlap, particularly between delinquency and (both in tandem and explicitly concerning) the sexualised nature of the body that Foucault contends is a 'matter for discipline, but also a matter for regularization' (Foucault 1997, 252). Producing this regularised society is not possible without some conception of the irregular, and this relational understanding of production is omnipresent – the importance of boundaries in ethnic groups (Barth 1969), and affiliations of community (Young 1990). The division that arises, Foucault's 'binary division and branding …the constant division between the normal and abnormal' (Foucault 1977, 2004; 3), makes visible a contrast to normalcy, an ab-normalcy, and in doing so makes this ab-normalcy a part of the regulatory state's production of delinquency. The disciplinary power economy creates the idea of the omnipresent delinquent and

weaves this fear and understanding of delinquent behaviours into the population of the regularised body politic.

Campbell (1992) describes the relationship between fear, delinquency, and the regulation of the body politic in relation to state security and foreign policy. In international relations, he argues 'danger...disciplines relations, and sequesters an ideal of the identity of the people said to be at risk' (Campbell 1992, 3). His understanding of identity as important for the production of threat is particularly important to my own argument about relationship between identity formation and extreme violence. Campbell argues that identity is relational, and is understood in terms of difference to outsiders (Campbell 1992, 9), and that dangers and threats can be interpreted from '[t]he mere existence of an alternative mode of being' (Campbell 1992, 3). He applies this understanding to the production of the state, arguing that 'central to that regulation and normalisation, and to be understood as a privileged instance of the stylized repetition of acts, is foreign policy and the articulation of danger' (Campbell 1992, 11), providing a model of the body politic as regulated by the imposition of norms. Foucault speaks of this as a 'discourse of battle' waged 'by a race that is portrayed as the one true race, the race that holds power and is entitled to define the norm, and against those who pose a threat to the biological heritage' (Foucault 1997, 61). It is this 'true race', or as Campbell puts it, 'true identity' (Campbell 1992, 3) that is regulated through norms and through recourse to fear of the delinquent or the abnormal.

What is interesting in this particular series of arguments is the way in which the idea of biology appears in service of a socio-political claim. The use of race as a biological, or at the very least a heredity, category resonates with literature surrounding the justification for ethnic identifications that exist through claims of familial or blood ties. That 'race' has a connotation of such a stark and inevitably insurmountable distinction between groups makes the guardianship of

the boundary between them seem more of an imperative: '[t]his is the internal racism of permanent purifications, and it will become one of the basic dimensions of social normalization' (Foucault 1997, 62). If the boundaries between populations are viewed as utterly insurmountable, their permeation will be viewed as dangerous. This also has the effect of deeming any outsider a threat to normalisation, as a delinquent, and the notion of 'purification' has particularly aggressive implications.

There is a wide secondary literature that explores biopolitics and ethnicity (though there is a conflation of race and ethnicity here that arises from Foucault's use of the term). David Macey (2008) relates the themes of Foucault's (2004) *Society Must Be Defended*, a posthumously published series of lectures, many of which relate to themes of security, threat, and otherness, to legislation allowing for the indefinite detention of psychiatric patients and/or criminals considered 'Dangerous People with Severe Personality Disorder' (Macey 2008, 120). Macey points out that this legislation, called the White Paper ('Reforming the Mental Health Act' 2000), does not require that a person have been convicted of committing a crime before being referred for evaluation under this act, which 'means that individuals suspected of having a severe personality disorder can be detained indefinitely' (Macey 2008, 120) for the purposes of keeping society safe. His narrative connects this quasi-literal pathologisation of abnormality (quasi- because there is a lack of good diagnostic criteria, and treatment options, for personality disorders) to the idea of race, racism, and the cohesion of groups under 'race'. Race here extends the conception of race beyond skin pigmentation to encapsulate multiple understandings of otherness such as class[10] – the contemporary post-

10 For more discussion on the overlap of biopower and ethnicity, see Achille Mbembe (2008)'s essay published in the same volume. Mbembe relates biopower to 'the state of exception and the state of siege' (Mbembe 2008, 156), where the state of exception 'continuously refers and appeals to exception, emergency, and a fictionalised notion of the enemy' (Mbembe 2008, 156). For Mbembe, the 'politics of race' is intimately connected to the politics of death, or 'necropolitics'. Others, such as François Debrix and Alexander Barder (2012), have expanded the discussion of biopower still further as to examine its utility in explaining or accounting for horror and violence. They argue 'Foucault's emphasis on race (the constitution and further elimination of 'different' or 'other' racial categories or the corollary notion of the purification of one's 'own' race or species) is emblematic of how biopower...relates to enemy

aspirational working class (the 'chavs') in Britain has been documented to stand in for the other to middle class (see Jones 2011). Macey's discussion of *Society Must Be Defended* tells us two things – first is his illustration of Foucault's pathologisation of the other as a necessary component for identity divisions. The second is that 'real' differences between races need not be present – the other can look exactly like the self and still be dangerous.

The notion of the membranous boundary that surrounds identifiable populations creates a systemic tension within the formation of identity. According to Foucault, it justifies action on the part of the social body against encroachment or a threat to the purity of the normalised population, and for Butler, the absence of such fluidity would render identity itself impossible. 'Identity,' she writes, 'is not thinkable without the permeable border, or else without the possibility of relinquishing a border' (Butler 2010, 43). This idea of the necessity of an other in order to define the self is familiar: one of Barth's four criteria for a definition an ethnic group is that the population 'has a membership… which identifies itself and is identified by others, as constituting *a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order* [emphasis added]' (Barth 1969, 10-11). Groups must internally recognize what makes them distinct from one another. Social boundaries are encouraged in order to repel delinquency within the population, and this border is often policed by abjection, which will be discussed in Chapter Four.

Concluding Thoughts: Performativity, and Policing the Boundary between Others

In this chapter, I have introduced the concepts of performativity and embodiment in order to

life' (Debrix and Barder 2012, 101). More on their treatment of alterity and enmity is discussed in the conclusion to this thesis.

provide a new perspective on the formation of identity in such a way that it allows for an understanding of identity as simultaneously natural in appearance, and dynamic, as appearing to be comprised of discrete categories of difference while being comprised of a matrix of intersecting markers of difference. This chapter focused upon bringing the body into discussions of identity and violent identity politics. Having discussed other understandings of ethnicised identity formation and how it leads to conflict, I argued for a shift in the focus from primordialist or constructivist understandings towards an understanding through the lens of embodiment and performativity. To unpack these concepts, I examined the works of, in particular, Michel Foucault and Judith Butler, to highlight the importance of the body in any discussion of power, and the importance of the body in discussions of identity.

Foucault's work on power, in particular biopolitics, surveillance, and regulation, is of particular importance to my argument that the intersectionality of sexualised and ethnicised identity in abjection produces certain kinds of extreme violence, which I have labelled 'overkill'. Foucault's biopower thesis not only highlights the importance of the body in discussions of power and violence, but it also explains the concepts of regulation and surveillance as a means of policing the body politic and ensures that norms are abided by. Normative assumptions about identity markers are important for the understanding not only of how identity formation occurs, but for introducing questions about transgression or failure to adhere to norms. Butler (1990) discusses this in terms of heteronormativity as part of her concept of performativity, and it will be picked up again in Chapter Four in my examination of abjection and the abject.

Having discussed Foucault's theories of the body in power and biopolitics, I moved on to discuss Judith Butler's concept of performativity. Unlike social constructivism, performativity provides a different way of looking at group identity that explains how something socially

constructed could exercise the pull on the individual that we associate with large group, seemingly natural or biologically imparted identities such as ethnicity and gender. These categorisations carry with them an imperative of social legibility and thus require of the individual a certain type of performance. In this way identities such as gender and ethnicity exhibit a high degree of intersectionality – they operate in similar ways to one another, and they elicit similar emotional responses in the subject, and their performances inform one another. While the overlap between gender and ethnicity has been noted in the literature (see Ashe 2007), using performativity as a theoretical approach to examining the materiality of ethnicity allows us to approach that intersectionality on a deeper level – it allows for sexualised and ethnicised identities to be viewed as correlative, perhaps even causal, not simply synchronistic. The parameters of each are defined by their performances, and transgressions against the normative claims of these parameters are met with aggressive responses, particularly instances of inter-group combative struggle. In Butler's work, we find this within her discussions of heteronormativity and the dangers of illegibility, and in ethnic conflict, we see this not only in its aggression, but in the ways in which aggression takes as its target bodies that are sexualised in particular ways.

Performativity rejects the idea of a natural subject existing prior to signification. The only means by which a body can be given a legible meaning is through the existent power structures that produce the discourses through which we come to ‘know’ the world around us, which for Butler poses a substantial risk about our ability to speak within this system at all: ‘[t]o speak at all in that context [of power relations] is a performative contradiction, the linguistic assertion of a self that cannot ‘be’ within the language that asserts it’ (Butler 1990; 2006, 158). It is through this performative contradiction that dominance arises, for as Butler understands it, dominance is the ‘denial’ of a body that exists prior to language, or put another way, before signification’ (Butler 1990; 2006, 161). This system of domination also serves to create ‘an artificial ontology, an illusion of difference, disparity, and consequently, hierarchy’ (Butler 1990; 2006, 161). Without this system

of domination the naturalness of divisions upon which identity relies would be refuted and a hierarchic division of subjects impossible to justify or to maintain.

Expanding upon this, in the next chapter I will elaborate on the exclusionary nature of identity to unpack how abject sexualisation arises, in order to understand how overkill emerges from violent identity politics. The following chapter will examine further the other that is produced and policed through the regulation and surveillance discussed by both Foucault and Butler as part of the formation of identity. To do this, I will discuss Julia Kristeva's (1982) theory of abjection, and demonstrate how, when abjection combines sexualisation and ethnicisation of the other, extreme violence becomes possible.

Chapter Four

Overkill, Power and Horror: Embodied Abjection and the Ethnicised/Sexualised Other

Introduction

This project explores the relationship between large-group identity formation and the particularly virulent forms of violence that occur in some instances of identity politics, arguing that it is the intersection of the ethnicised and sexualised body in abjection that produces this extreme violence, which I have called overkill. So far, I have demonstrated that the existing literature on ethnic violence does not satisfactorily account for the ways in which ethnic identity formation can lead to the radicalisation of identity. I have argued that this is because the literature on ethnic conflict has not engaged with the literature on ethnic identity formation in such a way that it explains how violence, and extreme violence in particular, can arise. To address this gap, I have proposed that ethnic identity be viewed as performative, meaning that ethnic identity should be viewed as productive of ethnic groups. In addition to accounting for a key problem in the literature on ethnic identity, that ethnic identity appears simultaneously natural and constructed, performative understandings of ethnic identity account for the ways in which identity can become radicalised when groups are faced with one another.

Having demonstrated the value of engaging with identity politics through the conceptual foundation of the performative embodiment of identity, I will begin exploring the concept of the abject as part of the construction of the self and the other. This allows for an understanding of how the production of group boundaries and group differences rely upon the exclusionary production of the outsider as abject by exploring how identity is produced by the individual. This exclusion creates a sense of precarity towards and abjection of the other, and these processes account for the particularly aggressive violence that sometimes occurs in violent identity politics. The presence of

the other has been previously documented within discussions of ethnic identity and ethnic group formation as a necessary condition for the understanding of one's group in relation to what is not within one's group (see Barth 1969). This chapter will focus upon the experience of abjection in the face of the ethnic other, and the sexualisation of the ethnic other in such a way that it embodies that abjection. The abjection of the other makes violence against the other conceivable.

The abject can be understood as the foil to or opposite of the subject and as a necessary condition for the understanding of the self (Kristeva 1982). When faced with the abject, the self experiences a virulent reaction, and a need to destroy or flee from the abject. I will explore the relationship between abjection and otherness or othering, the use of abjection in creating and maintaining social boundaries, and will conclude by examining the effects of the abject embodiment of the other in radicalising ethnic identities in the context of ethnic violence. I will move on to an evaluation of the sexualised body, discussing the understanding of the sexed body as a cultural construction and a performative entity in its own right. The sexualised body is particularly interesting in the examination of the workings of power on the body, as it occupies two spheres of domination – the stark division of bodies into two categories (male and female) that interact with the parameters of power in different ways, and in the normalisation of sexuality and the appropriate expression of sexual desire.

In what follows, I will examine the relationship between embodiment, othering, and abjection, discussing the ways in which the body of the other is discursively produced as abject and subsequently becomes a target for violence. I argue that the targeting of the other is the result of its abjection that includes the sexualisation and ethnicisation of the body, and that as a result of this, the body of the other becomes the real embodiment of abjection to the self. I will then discus the role of the precarity of the body in Butler's work (and of the self, by extension), the impact of

melancholia on the formation of the other and the abject, and emphasise the hostility, rage, and fear that these dynamics can and do produce to show how it links to this kind of conflict, overkill. I will conclude this chapter by examining the relationship between the abjection of the other, the ethnicised and sexualised embodiment of alterity, and violence. The primary argument of this thesis is that during some cases of violent identity politics, the body of the other becomes sexualised and ethnicised in such a way that it becomes abject in the eyes of the subject. This abjected, ethnosexualised other creates a feeling of vulnerability and precarity that radicalises ethnic identity to the point that extreme violence erupts. Post-structuralist interpretations of violence, evolving from the ideas of Butler, allow for an examination of how this fear and the attendant melancholic rage that is created by the precarity of the self in relation of the other (or put another way, the subject in relation to the abject), that results in this extra-lethal violence, overkill, that is attendant to some identity conflicts. These conflicts utilise the sexualised body of the other specifically as brutalised, and potentially evolving to the weaponisation of the body following its brutalisation. This will lead to my understanding of this extreme violence, which I have labelled overkill.

The Abject Boundary Between Self and Other

In her later writings, Butler (2004a; 2009) discusses the ideas of melancholia and precarity in relation to the presence of the other, and the subsequent violence directed at the other. Her discussion of melancholia is based on her interpretation of Freud (1917 in Butler 2004a, 20-21), and suggests that our relationship to what *we are* is contingent on what *we are not* – that is, the psyche is haunted by what it has lost in order to gain its social legibility. Similarly, the psyche is aware of its fragility in relation to the other, as it is both constituted and potentially destroyed by what it is not. I argue that this highly emotive construction of the subject yields a highly emotive response when it is threatened with destruction, and when turned outward, towards an ethnicised other, can yield the extreme forms of violence. In her later works Butler carries her theory of performativity to

its next logical phase, through the examination of the violence inherent in othering. Our reaction to the other is one of abjection.

Abjection is a complex term in that it can be understood and used to refer to one or a number of things related to physical objects and emotional reactions, but what is consistently understood about abjection or the abject is the combination of horror, disgust, and terror that it inspires. Abjection, in its simplest iteration, is the horror experienced by the self when faced with the non-self, or rather the part of the self that it does not wish to acknowledge. Bodily waste, soiled food, and deviant behaviour all take on the status of the abject. Julia Kristeva (1982) writes that '[t]he abject has only one quality of the object- that of being opposed to I' (Kristeva 1982, 1). There are, according to Kristeva, two roles that the abject plays in the construction of the psyche. On the one hand, the abject is an affront to the super-ego[11], its antithesis and opposite (Kristeva 1982, 2). Because it is within the scope of our understanding of reality (the ego), but is abhorrent to the normative, perfectionist desires of the super-ego, the abject repulses by highlighting the reality of that which is abject, highlighting how close the self is to that with which it is disgusted. Abject functions, abject objects, abject bodies, and abject deeds incite a reaction within the self to flee, or to destroy the abject.

Abjection is more than mere disgust, but disgust combined with terror, horror, and shock. Abjection does not refer to any rational level of anxiety or fear or even disgust, but is described by Kristeva (1982, 2) as that which 'beseeches a discharge, a convulsion'. It is the basest of reactions, one that demands violence, in whatever form – fleeing, shaming, or destroying. Abjection, and its

11 The super-ego is one of the three strata of the psyche according to Freud (1923). In contrast to the Id, which is given over to more primitive, hedonistic desires, and the ego, which is largely pragmatic, the super-ego is that part of the psyche that governs the Self towards a normative outcome. It is helpful to conceive of the super-ego as a policing force, a conscience that steers the psyche towards its best possible self.

connection to the sexualised body and political violence, will be the focus of this chapter, beginning with an introduction to the connection between abjection and the body.

One of the interesting things about abjection is that there is a certain amount of attraction, even desire, when faced with the other, and a need to preserve the life of the other. Abjection poses a paradox in the dependence upon the existence of that thing that I am not in order to understand what I am. The need for the other is tied to the need to exist. Butler argues 'a boundary is given up or overcome precisely in order to establish a certain connection beyond the claims of territory' (Butler 2009, 43-44). This connection, according to Butler, is due to what she considers to be a shared precariousness of human existence. This shared precariousness, as well as any existent boundary, defines the relationship of the self to the other, as the (perhaps tacit) acknowledgement of both 'our' and 'their' precariousness instigates and/or perpetuates struggles for domination and cycles of violence. This adds an understanding of precarity, of vulnerability to harm, that forms part of the foundations of group identity consolidation. While precarity is present in any body that is exposed to any other body, because any other body could potentially do our body harm (Butler 2004a, 28), it takes on particular connotations in the arena of the socio-political: 'precisely because each body finds itself potentially threatened by others,' Butler writes, 'who are, by definition, precarious as well, forms of domination follow' (Butler 2010, 31). The threat of domination by a body not our own, or to recall Foucault, a body that may ‘pose a threat to the biological heritage' (Foucault 1997, 61) of our body, makes increasingly more salient our own precarity, which in turn signals and motivates the self to lash out against the invading body with violence.

This dual reception of the other will be discussed in terms of the psychological push and pull felt when confronted with the abject. We may not utterly destroy the other, no matter how convinced we may be that the continued existence of the other will ultimately result in our own

destruction. The reason that we may not, or our nation or ethnic group may not, destroy our other has more to do with what we share than what we want to take from one another, or even the threat of retaliatory violence from either the other or some other external party, though Butler admits that this latter consideration is undoubtedly valid as well (Butler 2010, 43). What is critical to Butler is 'that the subject that I am is bound to the subject I am not, that we have the power to destroy and be destroyed, and that we are bound to one another in this power and this precariousness' (Butler 2009, 43).

In addition to being a target of disgust and repulsion, abjections are also '[t]he primers of...culture' (Kristeva 1982, 2). This means that the abject is, and 'generates' (Tyler 2009, 78) the boundary that determines what is inside the cultural norm, and what is not. Given that the super-ego is associated with culture because of its normative impetus, and its policing of the acceptable versus the unacceptable, the abject represents that which is outside culture – it is itself a boundary. Though things that disgust may often be considered 'unclean', Kristeva asserts that it is 'not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order' (Kristeva 1982, 2). The abject is not simply the opposite of law, as 'there can be a grandeur in amorality' (Kristeva 1982, 2), but rather, '[a]bjection...is immoral, sinister...a terror that dissembles....' (Kristeva 1982, 2).

The terror inherent in abjection stems from the fact that it represents and polices the line between self and what is outside the self, and rather than simply remaining outside of the self as an opposition that can be acknowledged and ignored, it figures as part of our selves that we wish to be rid of – it represents how that boundary may be traversed, or even disappear. There is a danger in the abject in that it tempts us with the loss of our self; however, through the fact that we are repulsed by the abject, it ensures that this border remains intact. Laura Wilcox (2014) uses the

example of the 'leaky' (67) female body, a reference to the abjection of menstruation, which she links to discussions of suicide bombers. According to Wilcox, the abject of the body of the suicide bomber disturbs the sovereignty of the state, and demonstrates the disruption of 'system and order' (Kristeva 1982, 2) that the abject always threatens.

The body and the abject are inextricably linked because the body and the self are inextricably linked. Lisa Blackman (2008) writes that in the confrontation with the abject, for instance spitting saliva out of the mouth, '[t]he inside literally becomes outside, threatening the very borders and boundaries between the inside and outside that are central to the maintenance of the human subject as a unified, self-contained individual' (93). Maintaining this notion of the 'self-contained individual' is critical for the maintenance of self and other (Blackman 2008, 93). Furthermore, it is through the embodied performances of identity that the body is created and that political subjectivity is materialised. It is also through the body that abjection is experienced. Abjection and much of what is considered abject stems directly from the body: vomit, excreta, and corpses all implicate the body directly, as the body is their source. Winfried Menninghaus goes on to argue that in Kristeva's work, this distinction between what belongs to the self and what belongs to the other is always determined by disgust, and that '[t]he scandal of filth, of refuse, of the unclean consists in the infiltration...that reveals the body's laboriously achieved identity as brittle and deceptive' (Menninghaus 2003, 373).

Abjection in this way polices the boundary of identity, as it prevents us from taking on the identity of others. Kristeva also points out that '[f]ood loathing is perhaps the most elementary and most archaic form of abjection' (Kristeva 1982, 2), and she uses the example from her childhood of being repulsed by skin forming on a glass of milk to illustrate this as one of the most basic of abjects. Food (or prohibitions against food) is often a signifier of culture, a means by which a body

quite literally takes in its cultural identity and/or rejects other identities. The rejection of certain foods as abject directly relates to our unwillingness to allow our bodies to take on something potentially poisonous, which is to say poisonous to the self, for 'disgust brings eminent affective powers to bear: it processes elementary civilizing taboos and social distinctions between what is foreign and one's own' (Menninghaus 2003, 2). Food loathing and the anxiety towards food that has been consumed or partially consumed by another is intimately connected to the idea of contamination or pollution (Miller 1997).

These examples illustrate the argument that the body is the site of both doing (subjectivity) and un-doing (abjection). But the body is also the materiality of social norms, as a territory and signifier of power, the site of the reproduction of power. This makes the relationship of the abject to the self more problematic. Giving oneself over to the abject would be to fundamentally deny one's place in the social normative order, and to disrupt the preservation of that order, as well as to disturb the very identity of the self. If the terror of the abject for the individual is tied to its fear of what it simultaneously is and is not, and the 'brittle and deceptive' (Menninghaus 2003, 373) nature of what we are, then the terror of the abject for the social body is that it threatens the very norms that preserve and sustain it. Imogen Tyler (2009) interprets Kristeva's concept of the abject as an ‘account for ...disruptions within the life of the subject and in particular those moments when the subject experiences a frightening loss of distinction between themselves and...others’ (78), which can be applied not only to the body of the individual subject, but to the body of the society as well:

> ...abjection can explain the structural and political acts of inclusion/exclusion which establish the foundations of social existence....it is through both individual and group rituals of exclusion that abjection is 'acted out'. Abjection thus generates the borders of the individual *and* the social body (Tyler 2009, 78).

We can see that abjection demarcates the boundaries of the individual and the social, and can be a means by which political agency is gained or disavowed through a disruption of political and social order. Menninghaus (2003, 389) notes the ability of the gay rights movement to 'condemn their own cultural abjection as a repressive function of patriarchal authority'. Menninghaus's argument illustrates how abjection can become a politically deployable force if one considers oneself to be outside the social order, or if one wishes to enforce the social order against a body seen as abject[12]. The use of abjection as a weapon of resistance and subversion can be seen in the prison protests in Northern Ireland, most explicitly in the No Wash Protest.

The abject, or rather more accurately the abject body, can be politicised either for or against the social order. It can be used to demonstrate the failings and transgressions of the other, as in the 1994 Rwandan genocide, or as a weapon used against the social order, as in the Northern Irish prison protests. In the case of the No Wash Protest in Northern Ireland, the prisoners responded to being marked as outside the social order through criminalisation and subordination through sexualised abuse, which is to say their abjection, by rendering their bodies abject and weaponising this abjection by forcing the sterile social order (in this case the employees of the carceral regime) to live with faeces and blood. The weaponisation of bodily waste marked not only the bodies of the protesting prisoners, but the bodies of the prison guards who were contaminated by it. However, more than just the disruption of social norms, the abject refers to the exclusion from social norms, and the exclusion from subjectivity.

While an understanding of abjection and its rejection goes a long way towards

12 This idea of subversion is also presented by both Kristeva (1982) and Butler (1990). Butler criticises Kristeva for 'locating subversion outside of culture, ' (Lloyd 2007, 54) for according to Butler, 'subversion...must be a cultural practice' (Lloyd 2007, 54), meaning that there is no 'outside-culture' in which subversive elements may form. Lloyd (2007, 51) argues that according to Butler, 'the politics of performative acts....is a subversive politics', which she reads as Butler's 'favouring subversion over reform or revolution'.

understanding the extreme violence we see in some instances of violent ethnic identity politics, it does not tell the whole story. There is more than disgust and terror present in these cases – there is also a strong sense of rage and a need to communicate this combination of affects. Abjection as argued by Kristeva leaves out a full understanding of the fear of the other, for the abject is not just repulsive but also dangerous. Other scholars such as Wilcox (2014) and Menninghaus (2003) have opened the vocabulary of the abject to discussions of sovereignty and fear, and this project evolves still further to bring it to bear on identity formation in the context of violent identity politics. It is this fear, which is related to the ambiguity of or uncertainty towards the other (see Appadurai 1998), and the interrelated melancholic rage that fills in these gaps.

Precarity, Melancholia, Hostility

Ambiguity is inherent in the self's understanding of the abject (Creed 1986). Because the abject exists along the boundary of the self/other, it is inherently a grey area, as it is simultaneously understood as being not entirely divorced from our understanding of the world, but since it is discursively produced as outside the identity of the self, it is marginalised in terms of its legibility. We are inextricably tied to the other by virtue of this boundary, for it is through the boundary of what we are not that we come to understand who we are. Barbara Creed writes that '[a]lthough the subject must exclude the abject, it must, nevertheless be tolerated, for that which threatens to destroy life also helps to define it' (Creed 1986, 69). Considering the necessary toleration of the other in cases like the 1994 Rwandan genocide is difficult – what this suggests is that there must always be an abject, an other, and enemy, in a united group. In ethnic divisions, where the 'real' factors that separate groups are difficult to define, this creates a paradox: the self may not fully understand how or in what fundamental ways the other(s) are different, but they are still recognised as different, and that difference threatens the purity and potentially the survival of the self. Appadurai (1998) notes this difference, and most importantly this uncertainty over difference, in the

1994 Rwandan genocide as a major contributor to the extremity of the violence. He links the practice of vivisection in the Rwandan genocide as an attempt to stabilise 'the signs of bodily difference' (Appadurai 1998, 911). Vivisection, like the evisceration of pregnant women, was a means of assessing difference in the Tutsi.

Because the other threatens the purity of the self, the other must be destroyed even if, paradoxically, the destruction of the other brings about the destruction of the self inasmuch as what is destroyed is the marker of what makes up the self. Butler (2010, 43) notes that '...the subject that I am is bound to the subject I am not, that we each have the power to destroy and to be destroyed, and that we are bound to one another in this power and this precariousness'. For Butler it is not only for the relational understanding of the self that an other is necessary, but rather that '[i]dentity...is not thinkable without the permeable border, or else without the possibility of relinquishing a boundary' (Butler 2010, 43). This suggests that it is not only the presence of a boundary that is necessary for either group or individual identity, but the vulnerability of that border to incursion or even disintegration is an integral part of defining what lies inside the boundary. The 1994 Rwandan genocide against provides a good example of this – much of the identity of the Hutu was tied to memories of exploitation and domination by the Tutsi, which was made more salient as the Tutsi women were produced as infiltrators who would enslave Hutu husbands (HRW 1996, 16). This is further reflected in the hate speech that circulated prior to the genocide – in a specific example, an editorial published in *Kangura* entitled ‘A Cockroach (*Inyenzi)* Cannot Bring Forth a Butterfly’, accuses the Tutsi of attempting to plotting to re-establish rule over the Hutu, saying '[t]hey are all related since some are the grand children of others. Their wickedness is identical. All the attacks were meant to restore the feudal-monarchy regime' (*Kangura* 1994). Without this discursive production of the Tutsi as consistently attempting to enslave the Hutu, and the Hutu as a formerly subjugated people, what it would have meant to be Hutu in relation to the Tutsi remains unclear.

The precarity of the self in relation to the abject is a significant factor in producing certain types of political violence, particularly when that abject is embodied by the other through practices of exclusion that include the political and the social. The embodiment of abjection by the other, who is outside subjectivity having been excluded and produced as other, is readily apparent in ethnic violence: in the case of the 1994 Rwandan genocide, there was a heavy emphasis in the anti-Tutsi propaganda upon the rumoured sexual depravity of Tutsi women in Rwanda. Butler writes '[p]recarity designates that politically induced condition in which certain populations... become differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death' (Butler 2010, 25) – this exclusion and abjection make up the process by which the other become dehumanised and therefore more vulnerable to injury. These populations acquire their differential exposure to violence through '[f]orms of racism instituted and active at the level of perception [that] tend to produce iconic versions of populations who are eminently grievable, and others whose loss is no loss, and who remain ungrievable' (Butler 2010, 24). The grievability of a life is connected to its belonging to either the self of the abject – a life's grievability is a direct result of its being recognised as part of the self, making the lives of the other ungrievable. Butler notes that 'when such lives are lost...since, in the twisted logic that rationalises their death, the loss of such [other] populations is deemed necessary to protect the lives of 'the living'' (Butler 2010, 31).

The life of the other, which is excluded from subjectivity and the loss of which, according to Butler, cannot be grieved, is also discussed by Giorgio Agamben. According to Agamben's (1995) concept of 'bare life', there is life that is infused with political subjectivity and that which is not. Put simply, bare life is 'life stripped of form and value' (Diken and Lausten 2005, 291). Jay Bernstein (2004, 3) explains Agamben's concept of bare life as one side of 'a separation... between the culturally elaborated normative authority of the good life for man and the mere fact of life, whose

goodness appears not as an authoritative claim, but ...as a contingent occurrence beyond the governance of reason or the laws of society'. Bare life is that which is outside political subjectivity (Agamben 1995), but is also a requirement of the political, because 'this structure of the inclusive exclusion of bare life is constitutive of... the political' (Bernstein 2004, 4). This idea of bare life as being life which exists without subjectivity or value that can be extinguished in a demonstration of power, further supports my understanding of the importance of the production of the other. In particular, bare lives illustrate the precariousness of the life of other with relation to the self, particularly since it is unequal.

As the other is precarious in relation to the self, the self is also precarious in relation to the other as it fears contamination by the other. 'Each of us,' Butler argues, 'is constituted politically in part by the virtue of the social vulnerability of our bodies – as a site of desire and physical vulnerability, as a site of a publicity at once assertive and exposed' (Butler 2004, 20). She argues that this mutual vulnerability leads to forms of domination 'precisely because each body finds itself potentially threatened by others who are, by definition, precarious as well' (Butler 2010, 31). When the other comes to be constructed as something that threatens the survival of the self, it in turn becomes something that must be destroyed, and defines its position of relative precarity by acknowledging the precarity of the self in the face of the other. There is, therefore, a certain emotive, psychic attachment to the other, as the production of the other is one of the more important factors of identification. The self is defined by its position relative to the other even if and as the other threatens the survival of the self, and this emotive response carries through to the violence that is enacted against the other.

The emotive response of precarity is connected to another remainder in the exclusionary construction of the self. There is a melancholic attachment to the other even as it is rejected and

lost, because the other expresses the boundary between the self and what is outside the self – there is an emotional investment in as well as an existential connection to the other as it marks this boundary. Interpreting Freud's (1917) 'Mourning and Melancholia', Butler concludes that 'melancholy at first appears to be an aberrant form of mourning, in which one denies the loss of an object (an other or an ideal) and refuses the task of grief, understood as breaking attachment to the one who is lost' (Butler 1997, 167). The loss of the other is ungrievable from the start. Grief over the loss of the other, the lingering question of what might have been given a different identification, is one that remains unexpressed, and '[i]nsofar as grief remains unspeakable, the rage over the loss can redouble by virtue of remaining unavowed' (Butler 1993, 236). In defining itself in relation to the other, the self gives up the possibility of a different type of possible identification, but this loss is never acknowledged as such.

This is the value of the extreme violence in ethnic conflict and what sets it apart from other kinds of violence – the violence is intended to communicate these two interrelated processes of the abjection of the other and this unspeakable rage at the ungrievable abject. Violence in this context becomes a performance of abjection and a performance of rage, and the violence itself, through the weaponisation or brutalisation of the body, communicates both of these. The unacknowledged, uniterable, and perhaps in terms of the subject the unknowable, loss of the abject-other 'translates into a heightening of conscience' (Butler 1997, 183), that gathers intensity and ferocity from 'aggression in the service of refusing to acknowledge a loss' (Butler 1997, 1983). It is the uniterability of the loss of the abject that makes it so powerful in producing this visceral reaction of rage. This rage is understood as 'the social foreclosure of grief' through which 'we might find what fuels the internal violence of conscience' (Butler 1997, 183), or put another way, 'a loss in the world that cannot be declared enrages' (Butler 1997, 185). This melancholic rage is bound to the alterity of the other, its uncontrollability through its defiance of social norms. This ungrievable loss creates melancholia, which in turn requires 'redirecting rage against the lost other' (Butler 1997, 193).

This combination of embodied abjection with the embodiment of otherness can produce a particularly virulent form of political violence because of the cataclysmic tandem reaction of hatred and disgust:

> What disgust adds to hatred is its distinctive kind of embodiment, its way of being unpleasant to the senses. It also subjects hatred's volatility to disgust's slow rate of decay...Hate wishes harm and misfortune on the object of hatred but is very ambivalent about wishing the hated one gone; disgust merely wants the thing relocated and quickly (Miller 1998, 35)

The potency of this desire to hurt combined with the desire to eradicate has the potential to create extreme forms of violence between identity groups. This desire for the other combined with the desire to see the other eradicated radicalises the relationship between the subject and the abject-other and creates a strong destroy-or-be-destroyed sense of peril in the subject. This will, under some circumstances, inspire the subject to lash out in violence against the abject other that itself takes on abject form, inscribing the embodied abjection of the other upon the physical body of the other itself.

Abjection of the Sexualised Body and the Feminised Other

Having outlined the concepts of identity, abjection, and precarity, and their connection to melancholic rage in the previous sections, in this section, I will discuss the intersection of the abjection and sexualisation of the other in the production of violent identity. This intersection informs the practices of sexualised violence in extreme cases of identity politics. By sexualised abjection, I am referring to the production of the other as abject through discursive allegations of deviant sexual behaviours and characteristics. This abject sexualisation provides the critical markers

of difference that separate ethnicised groups. I understand sexualised violence to refer to violence that weaponises and/or brutalises the sexual morphology of the other. This means that sexualised violence is that which targets the sexual characteristics of the othered body, referring to the ways in which the body is penetrated, brutalised or degraded, as well as violence addressed at abjecting and dehumanising through attacks upon the sexual behaviour of the other.

Power utilises different bodies in different ways, infusing certain bodies with it while defining others according to its absence. Empowered bodies are inherently hierarchical, by virtue of establishing a classification of empowered and marginalised. Butler argues that power 'distributes 'identity' to male persons and a subordinate and relational 'negation' or 'lack' to women' (Butler 1990, 53). Debbie Lisle (1999, 68), in her examination of gender and its use in constructing difference in travel writing, argues 'traditional notions of gender are one of the most powerful mechanisms of difference used to bolster the familiar/foreign landscape…' Gender differentiations, and its hierarchal structure, are so engrained as to provide a lens through which other hierarchal differentiations can be read. Lisle refers to this as a 'gender core', and it is stabilised ontology that allows for further deductions to be made – 'for example, being a 'man' causes one to be rational, aggressive, and dominating, while being a 'woman' causes one to be accommodating, emotional, and complacent' (Lisle 1999, 70). These normalised assumptions are echoed not only in relations between 'genders' as unequal in power relations, but among groups that are discursively produced through gendered discourse.

Continental feminist theorists in particular have argued that the feminine is only ever at issue in discussions of gender and sex as a foil to the masculine (see Irigary 1985, Beauvior 1976), and that this subordination begins with and takes place through an intervention upon the feminine that informs the female of her inferior position (Beauvoir 1976, 267). Butler, who makes great use

of the work of continental feminist theory in *Gender Trouble,* claims this process as one central to the formation of all gender identity: '...gender identity appears primarily to be the internalization of a prohibition that proves to be formative of identity' (Butler 1990, 86). This is what Beauvior refers to when she famously wrote that one is not born a woman, but becomes one (Beauvoir 1976, 267), for '[o]nly the *intervention of someone else can establish an individual as an Other* [emphasis added]' (Beauvoir 1976, 267). Irigary (1985) argues that it is impossible even to speak of femininity with any sincerity, as this will always and can only be done through masculine discourses (Irigary 1985, 126). This leads to an understanding of marginalisation and othering as contingent, dependent upon feminisation. Marginalisation renders the subject subordinate, denying the subject characteristics such as agency or dominance. It strips the individual of such 'masculine' characteristics as dominance and renders the individual subordinate, passive, and even inferior – possessing feminised characteristics.

There is a further relationship between the sexualised, specifically the feminised, body and issues of domination and power. Discussing the gendering and sexualising of the body in tandem is not to conflate the two terms – while each is distinct from the other, they do inform one another and can occur in tandem, particularly in discussions of power relations. To fully understand this relationship, it is useful to reiterate the performative nature of sexuality and the sexualised body in particular, to understand how social interventions materialise bodies as others. The notion of a biological sex that is granted a body before birth, prior to its subjectivity, is pernicious, for it reifies assumptions about the illegibility of the body that are rooted in biological determinism. Political feminism that argues for equal opportunities for women and an acceptance of gender as a cultural construct frequently confronts the spectre of biological determinism that asks, for instance, if women are better nurturers given their role as bearers of children. LGBTQ activism is affronted with the same sorts of questioning that asserts heterosexuality as biologically productive and therefore 'natural'. Anne Fausto-Sterling (2000) argues that '[a]s we grow and develop, we literally

...construct our bodies, incorporating experience into our very flesh' (Fausto-Sterling 2000, 20). She argues for the 'ero[sion of] distinctions between the physical and the social body' (Fausto-Sterling 2000, 20), which problematises the assumption that physical distinctions between bodies, whether sexual or ethnic, inherently 'matter'. It is difficult to ask questions of social norms that do not run into this notion of some things being fixed ontological points that are irreducible. Of these questions, the cultural construction of biological sex – by which I mean not sexual practice, but the male/female determination – face potentially the most difficult obstacles. This is also seen in exclusionary discourses around questions of ethnicity; for example, the distinction between Hutu and Tutsi was ostensibly grounded on phenotypic differences such as the facial features of the Tutsi, which were considered more 'European'. This created a false biological distinction between the groups.

The sexed body is from its conception socially determined, and this process creates a stratification of normalised behaviour. Butler (1997) argues 'for feminism to proceed as a critical approach...it must ground itself in the sexed specificity of the female body'(Butler 1997, 28). This is important for two reasons–it asserts the necessity of the materialized body as the unit of analysis and it recognizes the importance of the sexed, material body specifically. She argues that 'gender is the cultural significance that the sexed body assumes' (Butler 1988, 524). Through discourse and psychoanalytic analysis, sexuality with respect to the feminine appears to occupy a tense, paradoxical space. On the one hand, the sexuality of the woman is often denied, her desires as a sexual being problematic and in need of control, and her chastity lofted as necessary and good in order for her to carry the banner of a moral society. Yet on the other, discussions of femininity and even the use of the term 'female' bind women to their animal (and therefore primitively sexual) nature (Beauvoir 1976, 3). Feminised sexuality is dangerous, and in need of control and subordination.

In the 1994 Rwandan genocide, this sexualising dynamic of power worked on the bodies of both the Hutu and Tutsi women, where the former were held up as good, true and loyal to 'their' men, while the Tutsis were constructed as predatory and perverse, using their sexuality to lure Hutu men into a position of slavery (HRW 1996, 17). This use of female sexuality served the Tutsi men for their women lured the inferior Hutu into servile positions, demonstrating that even in the use of her sexuality, the woman is always at the service of the man. Even the hyper-masculinisation of the self is done in relation to and through processes of the feminisation of the other, with the other being characterised as weak, and closer to animalism or savagery. The notion of the feminine is always present in discussions of sexualisation, because, to reiterate Beauvoir, the only intervention that can be made on the other is the process of othering itself. Sexualisation is never a positive thing – feminising renders the individual subordinate, savage, subaltern, and tied to delinquency, and we can see this in the damning references to Tutsi sexuality. This sexualisation of the Tutsi, and Tutsi women in particular, was performed in the considerable sexualised violence of the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

The Delinquent in 'Us': Sexualisation and Othering

The abjection of the ethnic other occurs in two overlapping, complementary ways, through an ascribed embodiment of the other whereby the group is ethnicised and sexualised. The notion of 'racial purity' and the defence of the group against outsiders becomes increasingly more important, and the interventions upon the other in order to render it both ethnicised as an other-group, and sexualised as deviant and delinquent. This creates a boundary that defines the purity of the group identity against the impurity of the other. My argument is that this hyper-vigilance with respect to group purity, and the resulting violence that is inflicted on the other in defence of the group's purity, is an important part of theorising the particular forms that some radicalisations of ethnic identity can

take, but is still only a part. My understanding of this radicalisation is that it creates these types of violence as it implicates the performances of the body in specific, sexualised, and abject ways. While the conditions under which this occurs will vary across time and space, it will include the sexualisation, the dehumanisation, and the abjection of the other.

Historically, discussions of race demonstrate the classifications of entire peoples as inherently inferior to others, which Mamdani (2001, 13) calls 'race branding...whereby it became possible not only to set a group apart as an enemy, but also to exterminate it with an easy conscience'. Butler (2009, 42) carries this point further, arguing that 'we imagine that our existence is bound up with others with whom we can find national affinity...who conform to certain culturally specific notions about what the culturally recognizable human is'. Butler's assessment is important because it reveals how and why outsiders are excluded to the point of dehumanisation. Dehumanisation is an important part of exterminatory discourse (see Lindqvist 1992), wherein the other is referred to in terms of their supposed beast-like nature (Lindqvist 1992, 8). The discussion of an us/them binary produces an alarming ferocity, where ‘they' can be exterminated as something other than the culturally recognisable human. An understanding of the role of dehumanisation in identity politics is important for my understanding of overkill, but it does not tell the whole story – dehumanisation is part of a process that includes the intersection of ethnicisation and sexualisation in abjection.

There is a strong link between the ethnicisation and the sexualisation of the body, particularly in cases of tensions that build along the boundaries between ethnic groups. While these connections can seem incidental, I argue them to be critical to understanding violence as overkill. Nagel writes '[e]thnicity and sexuality are strained, but not strange, bedfellows' (Nagel 2000, 113). She goes on to argue '[t]he borderlands that lie at the intersections of ethnic boundaries are

‘ethnosexual frontiers’ that are surveilled and supervised, patrolled and policed, regulated and restricted...' (Nagel 2000, 113). She also references the need for sexual propriety within the community that is based on heteronormative conceptions of gender and the stereotyping of both the virile-masculine self and the delinquent-feminine other according to these gender hierarchies (Nagel 2000, 113). This lack of sexual propriety was a common stereotype of Tutsi women prior to the 1994 genocide, and served as a foil for the propriety and purity of the Hutu. In another example, when the women in Armagh Gaol began their own No Wash Protest, which included the use of menstrual blood that Aretxaga (2009) credits with bringing forward the sexualised nature of the women, and therefore their maturity and agency. This was met with extreme discomfort and aversion both by the unionist and republican communities. Both of these demonstrate the abjection of the feminine-other in these cases.

Based on imaginary configurations of the individual (for example, the subordination of women as the weaker sex, the subordination of the African as savage), these hierarchical divisions can and do have very real effects on the lives of, in particular, the subalterns. This can also be seen in discussions of hegemonic masculinities, which argue that certain expressions of masculinity are inherently superior to others, subjugating other masculinities, and including the subjugation of all femininities. Ashe (2012) discusses this in term of the construction of masculinity in Northern Ireland, where in particular Republican paramilitary masculinity was viewed by the Loyalist community as aberrant and dangerous, in contrast to the noble Unionist masculinity. These expressions of masculinity are subject to cultural and historical influence, as the ways in which someone may 'be a man' differ significantly across time and space. Hegemonic masculinity 'was not assumed to be normal...But it was certainly normative' (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, 832), and it dictates not only the aspiration to this normative manliness on an individual level, but also the use of hegemonic masculinities to promote a specific image of the larger self-image (that of the group) in contrast to a subordinated other. This leads to the feminisation of other groups in the attempt to

establish, protect, or propagandise the masculinity of the in-group, even when the differences between groups are being framed as primarily ethnic.

Through these processes of race-branding and sexualisation, the body of the other truly becomes the body of the other, meaning that the body of what was previously simply the body of another individual belonging to another group, becomes infused with a new alterity, and embodies otherness. The sexualisation and ethnicisation of the body of the other are processes through which alterity becomes recognised and ascribed. They occur in tandem and produce the abject body of the other. Abjection can be instrumentalised in community building through its demarcation of what is acceptable and unacceptable. Miller argues '[d]isgust has...powerful communalizing capacities and is especially useful and necessary as a builder of moral and social community' (Miller 1998, 195). He goes on to say that 'disgust marks boundaries in the large cultural and moral categories that separate pure and impure, good and evil...' (Miller 1998, 220). This boundary is critical, not only because it defines who is in or out of the group, but because it demonstrates what is considered to be either in or out of the group – what behaviours and/or what individuals will be punished for transgressions against the boundary between us and them: '[a]cross this boundary values are projected that define the characteristics of the self and the Other; force is then mobilized to ensure that the boundary and the differentiated identities remain intact' (Papastergiadis 2006, 432).

Once outside the boundary of us or the self, the other becomes in some instances much easier to dehumanise, and this dehumanisation relative to the self becomes a danger for those others. Papastergiadis writes '[o]nce the Other is constructed in the position of debasement, abjection and evil, they are excluded from the field of human values....and moral obligations' (Papastergiadis 2006, 433). This exclusion from human dignity makes the policing of the border between us and them all the more important (Papastergiadis 2006, 433), '[f]or if the nature of the

Other is composed of animalistic appetites and malicious calculations, then 'they' will be driven to violate the boundary' (Papastergiadis 2006, 433). This boundary and its guardianship is in place not only to keep the other out but to ensure, through the performances of adherence to 'our' accepted norms, that the self does not find itself on the wrong side of the border. Once excluded, the other must be continuously held in its place outside the sphere of the self. This need for exclusion may take the form of a pathologisation of the other, likening its presence to that of vermin, infection, or other contaminant, as I have previously discussed in terms of biopolitics and security in Chapter Three (Masey 2008). This in turn increases the need for the securitisation of the border between the self and the other, which can also be viewed as the subject and the abject as the other begins to embody perversion, filth, and disease: '[t]he fantasy of the anxious self relies on strong boundaries and heightened vigilance against any sign of violation. This boundary becomes invested with the need for security against decline and contamination' (Papastergiadis 2006, 433).

An example of this is the discursive production of the Tutsi as vermin prior to the 1994 genocide, when the Tutsi were commonly called *inyenzi* (cockroach). Interviewed survivors discussing the Rwanda genocide 'mention the fact that Tutsi were described in ...dehumanizing terms such as *inyenzi* (cockroach) and *inzokas* (snakes)... – terms that suggested Tutsi were dangerous and needed to be dealt with harshly' (Totten and Ubaldo 2011, 14). These epithets were not only part of the propaganda that spread in the years before the genocide, but were reportedly part of the everyday discourses of the Hutu as well (Totten and Ubaldo 2011, 14). While declaring the inhumanity of the Tutsi, Hutu propagandists also stressed the ethnic boundary between the two groups, rejecting the idea of a Rwandan nation as 'a Tutsi trick to divide and weaken the Hutu by destroying their sense of ethnic identity' (des Forges 1999, 61). The Hutu were a proud Bantu-descended ethnic group- the Tutsi, foreign invaders (des Forges 1999, 61), bent on imprisoning the Hutu or otherwise destroying the Hutu's sense of self.

Foucault's concept of disciplinary power can add to an understanding of these processes, as disciplinary power works (and did so in Northern Ireland during the Troubles) to secure the non-delinquent population from threat within itself. The cellular organisation that is part of Foucault’s disciplinary power model is diffused throughout the entire social body, beginning with prisons and production and working through the very fabric of society. The cellularity of the prison transfers its 'perpetual surveillance of a population' (Foucault 1977, 281) to the 'entire social body' (Foucault 1977, 298), through a 'production of delinquency' (Foucault 1977, 285), where delinquents are 'everywhere present and everywhere to be feared' (Foucault 1977, 286). Normalising technologies for scrutinising and regulating the body proliferate throughout society. One area of discourse that emerged surrounded the 'problem' of sex. That sex would have to be addressed by disciplinary or regulatory regimes is hardly surprising, given that, as Foucault points out, the body was placed under masterful and productive control rather than being allowed to give itself over to more base or primal urges. 'It is in the nature of power,' Foucault writes, 'to be repressive, and to be especially careful in repressing useless energies, the intensity of pleasures, and irregular modes of behaviour' (Foucault 1976, 9). Sex had to be controlled, and effective control, as demonstrated by the reappropriation of the Panopticon, requires surveillance and scrutiny. Sex must be spoken about, but who was allowed to speak of it and who was not, and in what contexts, would need to remain tightly regimented. Foucault argues:

> The couple imposed itself as model, enforced the norm, safeguarded the truth and reserved the right to speak while retaining the principle of secrecy. A single locus of sexuality was acknowledged in social space as well as the heart of every household, but it was a utilitarian and fertile one: the parents' bedroom. (Foucault 1976, 3).

The heteronormative matrix creates a norm that serves a utilitarian function necessary for

the social body. Only the heteronormal couple was allowed to acknowledge their sexuality, whilst other sexed bodies were forced into silence. Silence is, according to Foucault's framework, another form of discourse (Foucault 1976, 27), that produces a sexual delinquent that is everywhere present and everywhere to be feared. While this silencing does not in and of itself produce or even assume the inevitable production of brutalisation against the other, it is another argument for the exclusion of other as outside the frame of normalised sexuality, and for 'deviant' sexualities to become treated as other. For Foucault, sex is the pivotal factor in the proliferation of mechanisms of discipline and normalisation; it is also at the centre of a system of 'dividing practices that separate off the insane, the delinquent, the hysteric, and the homosexual' (Deveaux 1994, 224). Sexualisation and in particular the sexual delinquent make up a very important part of the creation of the normative self, and sexual delinquency becomes a discursively assigned trait of the other.

The sexualised and delinquent body poses a particularly nuanced threat to the social body, and its being brought to public attention inspires an emotive reaction from the social body. The No Wash Protest that took place between 1976 and, roughly, 1981, in both the men's and a women's gaol in Northern Ireland provides an illustration of this point. While neither protest was particularly enthusiastically supported (unlike, for example, the Blanket Protest that began in Long Kesh in 1976), the men's protest was framed as a 'step-up' process of resistance against brutality suffered within the prison (Campbell, McKeown, O'Hagan 1994; 2006, 31) and later as a means of re-clothing the body whilst on the blanket (Feldman 1991, 175), the women's No Wash Protest was either viewed with complete horror from both sides of the ethnic battle or was virtually ignored (see Weinstein 2006; see also Aretxaga 1995). Feminist scholars have drawn many parallels to Foucault’s description of the Panopticon as the paradigm of disciplinary power, that at the level of the social body, women have so wholly internalised the normative structure of idealised womanhood that they 'are…fearful of the consequences of ‘noncompliance,’ and ideals of femininity are so powerful that to reject their supporting practices is to reject one’s own identity'

(Deveaux 1994, 226). The reception of the Armagh No Wash Protest supports this claim, as the women involved disturbed the boundaries of acceptable behaviour for women, even women in prison, by ignoring both the pre-eminence of hygiene placed upon women, and the tacitly acknowledged taboo that surrounds menstruation, its discussion and even its very acknowledgement, in nearly every social context.

What the previous discussion brings forward is an explanation for the extreme forms of ethnicised and sexualised violence, overkill, which can occur in violent ethnic identity politics. I have previously demonstrated the need for a new framework for examining violent identity politics, the utility of performativity in addressing this gap, the role of the body in an examination of violence, and the ways in which the intersection of ethnicised and sexualised identity in abjection produces exclusionary discourses that can become radicalised towards overkill. The combination of these leads to an understanding of overkill, which I argue provides an understanding of the kind of violence with which this thesis is concerned, how it emerges, and what it attempts to accomplish. My understanding of overkill is that it is qualitatively different to dehumanisation discourses that lead to extermination – overkill accomplishes more than just destroying or attempting to destroy an enemy group, but communicates the abjection of the group through the specific types of violence that it employs, namely the weaponisation and brutalisation of the body.

'Exterminate All the Brutes'[13]*: Bodily Inscription, Dominance, and Overkill*

According to Butler's reading of Irigaray, the only way of seeing 'the philosophical relation to the feminine' is by recognizing that feminine as the outsider, as 'the unspeakable condition of figuration' (Butler 1997, 37). She says

13 Lindquivist, Sven (1992). *Exterminate all the Brutes'*. London: Granata Books.

> This exclusion of the feminine from the proprietary discourse of metaphysics takes place, Irigaray argues, in and through the formulation of 'matter'. Inasmuch as a distinction between form and matter is offered within phallogocentrism, it is articulated through a further materiality. In other words, every explicit distinction takes places in an inscriptional space that the distinction itself cannot accommodate...It is this unthematizable materiality that Irigaray claims becomes the site...for the feminine *within* a phallagocentric economy (Butler 1997, 38).

To feminise some*body*, then, is to render that body uniterable, is to mark it by exclusion – the feminisation of the body is tantamount to the exclusion of that body. The female body by this understanding does not *matter* – and since it does not matter, it is more readily subjected to harm. In her discussion of gendering as a process through which bodies come to be understood (Butler 1990, 12), Butler points out that there is an historical association of the body with the female, in contrast to that of the mind with the male (Butler 1990, 16), and argues that this tying down of the 'female' to 'her' body is itself a form of control, arguing '[t]he identification of women with 'sex'... is a conflation of the category of women with the ostensibly sexualized features of their bodies and, hence, a refusal to grant freedom and autonomy to women as it is purportedly enjoyed by men' (Butler 1990, 27). I suggest that this raises the question of whether or not embodiment, particularly the forcible embodiment of an individual by another, inherently feminises the individual in that it ties him or her to his or her body.

We see this in the way that ethnic violence may be written upon the bodies of victims. This is evident in the case of the Hunger Strike Protest in Northern Ireland in 1981. Hunger striking has strong links to passivity, to typically 'female-dominated' illness (i.e. anorexia – see Ellman 1993), but I argue that the 1981 protest should be viewed as an attempt by the strikers to reclaim their bodies from a forced embodiment of feminsation and abjection. It can be read as: 'if you hold our

bodies captive and force us to mark them in one way, we will refuse any marker and we will deny you access to our bodies by rendering them repulsive. If that is not enough, we will refuse to take your food and our bodies will waste before you.' The wasting of the body becomes a categorical re-masculinisation, evoking such masculine characteristics as pro-activeness, militancy, and the domination of the rational mind over the body. In the Rwandan genocide, rape and other sexualised violence was used as a mean of locating difference and as a means of communicating dominance.

This extreme violence that makes up overkill does more than hurt or kill – it acts out abjected difference and communicates the dominance, and more fundamentally the distinctive identity, of the ingroup over the outgroup. For Appadurai (1998), extreme brutality literally marks difference on the bodies of the other (and while he uses the Rwandan genocide as an example, the bodies of the republican prisoner participating in the No Wash Protest and the Blanket Protest clearly marked their difference), and is a diagnostic tool for discovering difference. Furthermore, there is the concept of sacrificial violence in Girard (1972), who claims that mimetic rivalry (which is similar to Butler's (2010) concept of melancholia) leads to violence, a violence that is used to sate the desires of the group and helps explain in part the rage of the self against the other. All of these bring us closer to an understanding of how such extreme forms of violence may emerge from violent identity politics.

Fujii (2010) argues that violence of this kind is not an aberration of identity, but is itself the identity – violence is performative of violent identity, not a feature of another identity. I also understand extreme violence to be performative of violent identity, rather than an endpoint for an identity group that becomes violent. This understanding of violence leads to my understanding of overkill. Overkill is the sexualised weaponisation and/or sexualised brutalisation of the body. It is particularly aggressive, and is intended to communicate difference, exclusion, and domination. It

sends a message that the other has been stripped of agency and subjectivity. Overkill is itself performative, commuting the identity of the self as aggressive, dominant, masculine, and the other as abject, subjugated, and feminine. This type of violence does not police norms: it eradicates, humiliates, and expels difference.

Conclusions

So far, I have examined the existing literature on ethnic identity and conflict, and discussed the theoretical understandings of performativity, embodiment, and abjection of the other. In attempting to address the question of why some instances of violent identity politics produce extreme forms of violence that are highly sexualised and focus upon the body in specific ways, I have identified a gap in the literature on ethnic identity formation that has left it unable to provide a satisfactory account for how identity appears natural while being socially constructed. This gap has prevented some traditional theories of ethnic conflict from addressing the extreme nature of some conflicts. I have proposed an understanding of ethnic identity as performative, to account for its appearing natural and enduring while in reality being constructed. This has also expanded the understanding of identity in conflict, as it has allows us to understand how abjection and the intersectionality of identity markers such as ethnicisation and sexualisation informs violent identity politics. In the remainder of this thesis, I will demonstrate through the use of empirical evidence that it is this collision of these abject performances of the embodied other that lead to the extraordinary levels of violence that we see in some cases of ethnic violence, where the body is either weaponised, brutalised, or in some instances, both. It is my contention that the performativity of ethnicity is the bridge between the ontologies of ethnic identity formation and the scholarly struggle to understand ethnic conflict, and why it can take such sensational forms. I argue that viewing identity as performative exposes the intersectionality of ethnicisation and sexualisation,

which when produced through abjection can lead to overkill.

Overkill produces two types of violence that are not mutually exclusive to one another and may occur in tandem, which are the brutalisation and the weaponisation the body. Empirically, I will begin by discussing the ways in which the body in Rwanda was brutalised as part of the 1994 genocide. Beginning on 6 April 1994 and lasting approximately one hundred days, the Rwandan genocide represents one of the greatest spectacles of death, for its reliance on what Fujii (2010) calls 'extra-lethal' violence. There are a few features of the genocide that are distinct and which I will argue contribute to the construction of the abject other. The violence suffered by the victims was as intimate as it was fast-paced, as the weapon most associated with the violence is the machete. This meant that the *genocidaires* were in exceptionally close physical proximity to their victims, and the manner in which death was dealt out implicated the body in a way that was incredibly intimate and direct, and resulted in their dismemberment, evisceration, and vivisection. Sexual assault and rape was rampant during the genocide, which itself carried on from a campaign of sexualisation of Tutsi women that cast them as deviant and themselves abject. Tutsi women were viciously raped, often numerous times and by numerous attackers, and either left for dead or immediately killed. Some were kept in sexual slavery as the 'wives' of the *genocidaires*, and continue to live with their captors in exile. Additionally, the corpses of murdered women were reportedly raped after their deaths. These incidents illustrate the collision of abject violence and the sexualisation of the embodied ethnic other.

Following my discussion of the brutalisation of the body, and demonstrating one potential outcome of brutalisation, the second empirical chapter will focus on the weaponisation of the body through the prison protests in Northern Ireland. The notion of the body as a weapon creates some tension in political scholarship, particularly as the transformation of the body into a weapon carries

with it the underlying assumption on the part of the agent of the possibility if not outright certainty of his or her death. Such practices are deemed 'irrational, pathological, suicidal' (Bargu 2009, 634). Bargu (2009) refers to the 'metamorphosis of human beings into weapons of war' as ‘unsettling' (364), arguing that the actions of weaponised political bodies 'assert that their political cause is worth dying...for, that they would prefer to die rather than settle for a life whose terms they cannot choose or effectively change according to their political views and collective will' (Bargu 2009, 364).

In the conflict in Northern Ireland, the weaponisation of the body was deployed as a means of resistance within the prison system. This weaponisation took two distinct forms in the No Wash Protest and the Hunger Strike Protest. Each protest relied upon the body, specifically the sexualised body, for its impact. In the following chapter, I will demonstrate that this weaponisation of the body stems from a melancholic desperation, that the body become the site of exteriorised abjection. The No Wash Protest as a scatological weapon not only made the bodies of the incarcerated objects of disgust, it weaponised the sexualised body, particularly as in my discussion of this protest, ‘scatological’ will refer to the deployment not only of faeces but of menstrual blood, encompassing multiple forms of bodily waste. It internalised and then externalised its relationship to the abject other, in this instance the colonising force of the British, in a spectacle of bodily resistance that ultimately culminated in the deaths of ten men by hunger strike.

Chapter Five

'Go and Kill Your Neighbor'[14]: The Brutalisation of the Body in the 1994 Rwandan Genocide

Introduction

The first empirical chapter of this thesis will focus one form of the intersection of ethnicised and sexualised identity in the body, this time focusing upon the body as primarily a target rather than a tool of violence through its brutalisation. So far, I have discussed the existing scholarship on ethnic identity formation and violent identity politics in order to identify a gap in the literature, which I argue to be the intersection of ethnicised and sexualised identity in the formation of radicalised identity that is communicated and produced through overkill. I went on to introduce performativity as a conceptual framework for this study, as it accounts for the production of a dynamic, intersectional, and exclusionary identity.

Having identified two dynamics apparent in overkill, the brutalisation and the weaponisation of the body, in this chapter I will discuss the first dynamic, the brutalisation of the body, using the empirical case study of the 1994 Rwandan genocide. The brutalisation of the body is the first dynamic to emerge from the abjection of the other that produces and is produced by overkill. Once the other has been produced as abject, the subject attempts to destroy it – but not only to destroy it by causing death, but to humiliate and dominate it to the extent that the subjectivity of the other is removed. Abjection and othering are initially externally-ascribed events, which means that the self, the subject, recognises the other as abject and reacts to that abjection first. Weaponisation of the body may follow on from this as the other takes on and performs its own abjection to strike back at the subject. The 1994 Rwandan genocide clearly illustrates the brutalisation of the sexualised body through widespread genocidal practices such as rape, gang rape, and evisceration. As will be

14 Phrase attributed to Gourevitch (1998)

discussed in this chapter, much of the discursive production of groups leading up to the genocide was intended to sexualise the other, in this case the Tutsi, and much of the violence was, in addition to being a particularly gruesome example of brutalisation, highly sexualised.

It is important to note once more at this stage that the term 'sexualised' is used in this discussion in a slightly different manner to how it is normally used. In some cases, sexualisation as a concept may carry with it an assumption about desire and desirability, which is not directly relevant to this discussion. Desire is not necessarily excluded from my application of sexualisation, but neither is it the focus; rather, I am more interested in the sexualisation and/or the gendering of the individuals within a group as a means of conferring or denying power. Sexualising and gendering are separate processes with separate impacts, and it is not my intent to conflate the two. Sexualisation here refers to the reduction of the body to its sexuality and/or its sexual characteristics, whilst gendering in this context refers to the ascription of gender-coded stereotypical characteristics (e.g. feminine passivity versus masculine aggression). Both are displays of power that operate in separate spheres, but do often occur in tandem. In the cases presented in this thesis, this tandem operation can be seen in the intersection of the body and power through a forcible ascription or removal of these gender-coded characteristics through sexually defined violence, which is to say violence that targets the sexual body and/or uses the language of sexualisation. What is of interest is the focus on the way in which the production of the other through sexualised tropes is at the root of abjection.

The extremity of the violence that occurred during the genocide proved difficult to come to terms with, to process, and to remember, particularly in Western popular culture. This reflects the sort of cognitive disconnection that the brutalisation of the body in overkill produces – the abject violence of overkill touches on the affective receptor that confounds the recognition of the subject

or indeed the human. Popular depictions of violence including but not limited to the Rwandan genocide have been accused of white-washing the horror, both in the sense of making it more palatable for audiences (Dokotum 2012), and in romanticising intervention through heroic-western tropes (Scott 2003). There are two Hollywood productions that deal with the brutalisation of the body in Rwanda, one directly and one indirectly. *Tears of the Sun* (2003) is nominally set in Nigeria, though the civil war depicted is thought to 'represent a collage of recent real-world African atrocities, evoking wars in places like Rwanda, Liberia and Sudan' (Scott 2003). *Tears of the Sun* is the story of a US Navy SEAL team tasked with evacuating U.S. Nationals from Nigeria, a very real country that is tearing itself apart in a fictional civil war (*Tears of the Sun* 2003). The most memorable, and indeed gruesome, scene in the film depicts the protagonist US Navy SEAL team 'clearing' a village where a massacre is taking place, and the film makes a point of noting the intimacy of the killings (preformed often with machetes), as well as sexual violence – one of the SEALs shoots a man as he is raping one of the villagers (*Tears of the Sun* 2003). While this film does attempt to confront the horror of genocidal violence, it does so at the expense of the conflicts that it portrays by collapsing ethnicised violence into a single trope of tribal warfare that is in some fashion dealt with by the (white) West. This resonates with the 'ancient hatreds' theorisation of ethnicised conflicts, particularly those on the African continent, but *Tears of the Sun* does this not only through the conflation of at least three different and dynamic events, but through the over-emphasis of the efficacy and scope of Western (particularly American) aid.

Focussing exclusively on the 1994 Rwandan genocide, *Hotel Rwanda* (2004) is based upon actual events. This narrative film tells the story Paul Rusesabagina, manager of the *Hôtel des Mille Collines*, who is forced to take in refugees fleeing the violence and becomes their lifeline once the United Nations pulls out of the country (*Hotel Rwanda* 2004). The film was well-received by audiences as it 'gripped the imagination of the world and was lauded for publicising the 1994 Tutsi Genocide, which was seriously underreported at the time' (Dokotum 2012, 2). However, as

Dokotum also points out, the film was criticised for 'trivialising' the violence (Dokotum 2012, 2). It is the case that the violence of the genocide is not directly confronted in the film and is instead alluded to more than depicted, but the accusation of trivialization is too harsh. Rather, what *Hotel Rwanda* demonstrates is the difficulty of Western audiences in understanding and confronting the violence. In his memoir, Reverien Rurangwa says '[t]here is a sort of unfathomable ‘mystery of evil’ in such inhumanity committed by humans' (Rurangwa 2009, 31), and the struggle to depict and come to terms with the extremity of the violence speaks to this.

During the 1994 Rwandan genocide an estimated eight hundred thousand to one million people were killed in the span of one hundred days. It is not, however, only the scale and speed of the violence that is particularly horrifying, but also the kinds of violence that occurred. The *genocidaires* not only killed on a massive scale, but the methods they used to commit genocide were intimate in terms of both the relationships between some of the killers and some of the victims as well as the methods employed in the genocide. Lee Ann Fujii (2011) highlights this in the title of her book, *Killing Neighbours,* and the fact that the weapon of choice for the majority of the killers was the machete, which required both close physical proximity to the victim and a considerable amount of physical effort illustrates the intimacy of this violence. There was also widespread sexual violence and sexualised mutilation, including rape, gang rape, castration, and the evisceration of pregnant women:

> The killers used all types of torture possible on earth...To traumatize and terrorize their victims, people were picked at random from the group in churches and stadiums and chopped into pieces in front of frightened Tutsis who did not know when their turn would be. These victims were first starved and dying of thirst. There are some whose legs and arms were chopped and left bleeding. In many places like in Butare, Nyanza and countless other areas, people were buried alive. Pregnant women were sliced into pieces, the babies

taken out of the womb, slaughtered and then it would be the mother's turn (Kimenyi 1996, 109).

The silence of traditional approaches to ethnic violence discussed in the second chapter with respect to the extreme nature of the violence that comes out of some conflicts is becomes quite starkly apparent when examining the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Erin Baines (2003) writes of a 'lacuna...between the macro-level theoretical scholarship and the 'details of the genocide as a series of acts of violence' (Baines 2003, 479). The brutality of the killing in the 1994 Rwandan genocide resists explanations such as elite manipulation or economic disparity, for although these were contributing factors and certainly played a role, they cannot account for the horror with which the genocide was committed. Survivor Marie-Louise Kagoyire said 'I don't believe in the jealousy explanation, because envy has never driven anyone to lay children in a row in a courtyard and crush them with clubs' (Hatzfield 2000, 130). Territorial competition does not address overkill, or provide an explanation for it. Often survivor testimony repeats this idea of the brutality of the genocide resisting simplistic instrumental explanations – it was simply too horrifying. Kagoyire's testimony goes on to say 'they became obsessed with burning our photo albums during the looting, so that they dead would no longer even have a chance to have existed' (Hatzfield 2000, 131). Survivor Innocent Rwililia asked '[i]f there was killing to be done, they had only to kill, but why cut off arms and legs?' (Hatzfield 2000, 113).

Rather than put forward a model or rubric for explaining how genocide may come about, or suggesting an inherently causal variable that explains genocide, what this project seeks to draw out, here through an examination of the brutalisation of the body in ethnic violence, is the existence of certain trends – the abjection and sexualisation of the ethnicised other – that make such extreme violence possible. Rather than treating ethnic identity as something that is created then

disseminated, or that exists *a priori,* extreme identity violence is better understood as the result of a constellation of identities and identity norms both ethnicised and sexualised that intersect with one another and are naturalised in order to make extreme violence possible.

The intimate, extra-lethal violence of the Rwandan genocide brings forward a number of interesting problems that highlight the intersection of the sexualised body with the ethnicised body in extreme political violence. First, the violence itself is abject- Arjun Appadurai (1998) discusses the prevalence of vivisection in the genocide as an attempt by the *genocidaires* to stage the difference separating the self (Hutu) from the other (Tutsi). Vivisection refers to a living-dissection, which is to say that it is the cutting open of a living being for exploratory or experimental purposes. It is distinct from dissection because the subject is still alive, and so in the case of the 1994 Rwandan genocide the bodies of the victims of vivisection were opened whilst still living. To Appadurai and Fujii, the abjection of the other was quite literally inscribed on the body of the other (Tutsi) through a campaign of abject violence – the mutilation of the corpses of the Tutsi serving as a grotesque marker of difference. Fujii (2010) argues that extreme violence is itself an identity performance, rather than a boiling over of long-standing hatreds. This accounts for two important factors in extreme brutality: the extremity of the violence that can occur, and the dissolving of a distinction between group identity and group violence. Groups are not necessarily inherently violent or hostile to any one particular group, but rather, the violence that emerges in these extreme cases of identity politics is the result of a specific kind of radicalisation of identity and creates a new kind of violently exclusionary identity.

What is left out in these previous discussions, however, is this additional radicalisation of the violence through the ethnicisation and sexualisation of the other, which in the case of the 1994 Rwandan genocide was the Tutsi. Prior to the genocide, the anti-Tutsi propaganda campaign made

the sexuality of the Tutsi, particularly the Tutsi women, a highly salient feature of a campaign of hate speech. The presentation of the Tutsi woman as a succubus was an integral part of the hate campaign against the Tutsi (Human Rights Watch 1996, 18). Ethnic difference was revealed and disseminated through an alleged difference in sexual norms, and these alleged norms were explicitly targeted as degenerate and abject. Tutsi women were called 'seductress-spies' (Human Rights Watch 1996, 18) whilst Hutu women were the 'more honest' (Human Rights Watch 1996, 17). During the genocide, there was wide-spread sexual violence that included the rape of victims prior to death (with both male and female victims), the rape of corpses, gang rape, sexual slavery, and the intentional transmission of HIV to victims through rape.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will demonstrate how the sexualisation of the Tutsi was part of a campaign of dehumanisation and abjection, which made unthinkable acts such as vivisection not only thinkable, but actionable. This abjection not only made the brutalisation of the Tutsi body possible, but the brutalisation of the Tutsi became performative of their abjection, and by contrast, the affirmation of the subjectivity of the Hutu at the expense (and removal) of that of the Tutsi. I will begin this chapter by discussing some of the background to the 1994 genocide, specifically with a focus on the ethnicisation of both the Hutu and the Tutsi. My intention is to demonstrate that the distinction between the two groups was ultimately historically constructed, and difference in this case was produced in order to create two groups, one of which had to be discursively produced as other in order to allow for its extermination. From there, I will move on to a discussion of the propaganda campaigns that attempted to solidify difference through the abject sexualisation and dehumanisation of the Tutsi. Finally, this chapter will examine the use of vivisection and sexual violence to respectively ascertain and codify difference through performative violence. This violence was what I have described as overkill – communicative and productive of abject difference in the other through the highly aggressive, sexualised use of violence.

Background to the 1994 Genocide

On 6 April, 1994, the Presidents Juvenal Habyarimana and Cyprian Ntayamira of Rwanda and Burundi respectively were on board an aircraft that was shot down by a still unknown party, killing the two heads of state and members of staff (Melvern 2004, 134). This assassination is said to have sparked approximately one hundred days of genocide that killed an estimated 800,000 to one million people (Mamdani 2001, 5). While the exact nature of Habyarimana's assassination may remain a mystery, it is generally understood to have been the catalyst for the genocide; however, it is relatively obvious given the enormous degrees of preparation that the Hutu's genocidal campaign against the Tutsi was not a spontaneous response to the assassination. The machinery needed to carry out genocide was in place and well prepared before 6 April 1994 – the Hutus already had the machetes and the widely disseminated hate radio, and other types of propaganda, at their disposal (see Dallaire 2003). The hate radio program had as early as 26 November 1993, two months after its broadcasting agreement was signed, been accused to disseminating hate speech (Melvern 2004, 55) The propaganda campaign had begun well in advance of the genocide, and its dehumanisation of the Tutsi was immensely important.

The argument that the 1994 Rwandan genocide was a conflict between two competing and inherently different African 'tribes', and that I reject, has passed into common parlance quickly through journalistic reports. The 'ancient hatred' hypothesis gained a significant foothold in the explanations that immediately followed the downing of the presidential plane on 6 April 1994. *The New York Times* reported '[t]he bloodletting in Rwanda and Burundi runs through the history of both countries as fluidly as the meandering Akanyaru River that marks their common border' (Gray 1994). Jerry Gray, explaining the context of the genocide, observed that '[t]ribal problems exist in virtually every African country' (Gray 1994). The assumption that conflicts on a continent as

diverse as Africa can be singly simplified to 'tribal' in nature, a term which is not defined in journalistic reports, is problematic in its framing of violence as reducible to an unquestioned label. Gray then goes on to claim that since the populations of Rwanda and Burundi were both largely agricultural, 'competition for land is at the root of much of the ethnic animosity' (Gray 1994). *The New York Times* published another article, written by Donatella Lorch, days after the genocide ended, in which she writes that the genocide transformed Rwanda into 'a laboratory … a microcosm from which to learn what can happen when politicians seek to ride sectarian forces of hate' (Lorch 1994). Lorch, quoting Alison des Forges, asserted that the genocide was the result of elite intervention into existing tribal hatreds, crafted to ensure that the existent Hutu-dominated power structure remained in place. These kinds of arguments are effectively primordialist in nature and grossly misrepresent the nature of conflict in Africa, foremost because the assumption that all conflicts in a given non-Western region will be sufficiently similar to be reduced to a single (and infantalising) cause (tribal hatred). This clashes with my argument, laid out in Chapter Two, where I demonstrated that elite manipulation and instrumental concerns did not account for the types of violence with which this thesis is concerned.

Initial accounts of the genocide attributed it to either a failure to constrain historical hatreds or instrumental approaches driven by contemporary economic or political considerations. Gray (1994) reported that the genocide was largely the result of economic competition (Gray 1994), whilst shortly thereafter Alison des Forges asserted that the 'genocide resulted from the deliberate choice of a modern elite to foster hatred and fear in order to keep itself in power' (des Forges 1999, 6). While my intention here is not to claim that either Gray or des Forges were outright or entirely wrong, I argue that these initial accounts of the violence did not focus on what I find compelling about the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Both these and similar explanations were accepted as adequate accounts of the violence – the horror of the violence itself was regarded as incidental, symptomatic of the intensity of the hatred. Elite intervention and socioeconomic power hierarchies certainly

played a role, but do not account for the extremity of the brutality- likewise, uncertainty over difference contributed significantly but does not consider fully how the demonisation of the Tutsi made the type of violence that occurred, and particularly its sexualised and brutal nature, possible.

Two elements of the Rwandan genocide stand out: the speed with which such massive destruction of human life was carried out, and the deeply personal, even intimate manner in which the mass exterminations were performed. The victims in Rwanda were in the majority of cases hacked apart with machetes, mutilated, or blown apart by grenades. In addition to the intimate, face-to-face mode of killing that was implemented during the genocide, rape and sexual violence were rampant. Human Rights Watch (1996) points out that while the number of sexual assault victims will never be known with certainty, thousands of women of have come forward about the assaults they experienced, which given the stigmatisation of rape and of being the victim of rape suggests a considerable number of silent victims, both among the living and the dead. Largely it was Tutsi women who were targeted for rape, although Hutu women too were victimised, particularly those who were married to Tutsi men (Human Rights Watch 1996, 65). The reasons that the perpetrators gave for these assaults all resonate strongly with the existing literature on rape in conflict – 't]hey would say things like ‘a certain girl was too proud – so we raped her and then killed her’….[t]hey would say ‘we wanted to see how Tutsi look’'(Human Rights Watch 1996, 60). Tutsi women were raped, the interviews conducted by the Human Rights Watch suggest, to humiliate them for their perceived superiority, and because the perpetrators wanted to see how different the Tutsi really were to their attackers.

The use of rape as a weapon of genocide in Rwanda has been well documented, and in fact was brought before the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in the successful conviction of Jean-Paul Akayesu. The Akayesu judgement was a landmark decision not only for the successful

conviction of genocide, but his conviction of collusion in the rape of Tutsi women and girls and the recognition by the court of rape as genocide. There has been considerable work done on the use of rape as a war strategy or technology of genocide, and with considerable focus on the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the genocide in Rwanda. Beverly Allen (1996, xii) said of the widespread rape of Croatian and Bosnian women that it was 'clearly the result of a combination of social causes...the specter of limitless power of one human over another, where the one with the power bears absolutely no responsibility, no accountability, for his actions'. She goes on to say that 'all rape is related in that it derives from a system of dominance and subjugation' (Allen 1996, 39). Rape as a weapon has also been discussed as a means of punishing members of other groups (Milillo 2006, 197). The two conceptions of rape and its deployment as a technology of genocide as punishment for the transgressions of the group as a whole, and as means of conferring and demonstrating power and superiority are the most directly relevant to my argument[15]

My argument is that the extreme violence of overkill is not symptomatic or merely symbolic, but constitutive of identity, as through the act of violence, violent identity is performed and therefore is produced. Bringing in the performance of violent identity as constitutive of political subjectivity goes further still in accounting for the extremity of the violence that occurred in Rwanda between April and July 1994, but stops short of accounting for the intimate nature of the violence and its fascination with the sexualised body. Considering the genocide as overkill ties these disconnected explanations for aspects of the killing together by drawing out the performance of violent identity as a radicalisation of the perception of self/other, and highlighting a need to

15 This focus on dominance and punishment does leave out interesting and important discussions of rape as a perpetuation of patriarchal and sexist social structures (Allen 2006, 39), the question of gender-based crimes as being kept separate from overall issues of human rights (MacKinnon 2006, Kelly 2000), and the tension between 'normalised' violence and anomalous violence in 'societies under stress' (McWilliams 1998). These and other arguments have not been directly engaged with in the interest of narrowing the focus of a wide, diverse, and compelling body of literature. For the purposes of understanding rape as a technology of overkill, I have focused on analysing sexualised violence including rape as it pertains to the domination and abjection of the other.

abject and exterminate, not merely to understand or even kill the other. Viewing the ethnic other, in this case the Tutsi, as abjected explains both the Hutu's vivsectionist fascination with the body of the Tutsi, as well as the rage with which the bodies of Tutsi were mutilated and destroyed. The other becomes something whose very subjectivity must be exterminated, not only killed but utterly humiliated and annihilated – but only after being visibly demonstrated to be and marked as different. This is the importance of vivisection in the Rwandan genocide, and the history of violence in Rwanda leading up to the genocide – Beatrice Nikuze, a genocide survivor, in testimony collected by the Genocide Archive of Rwanda, said '[e]very time there happened something awful in the country the Tutsi were always the scapegoats and were mercilessly killed' (Nikuze n.d.). This demonstrates that the othering of the Tutsi was systemic to the Rwandan sociopolitical dynamic, wherein the problems of Rwanda were blamed on the outsiders and punishment was given.

The footholds gained by theories such as the 'ancient hatreds' hypothesis are understandable if ultimately unsatisfying as explanations. The ancient hatreds hypothesis in particular takes root in the colonial structure of East Africa in general, and specifically colonial rule in Rwanda and Burundi. Alison des Forges (1999, 31) writes 'Rwandans take history seriously. Hutu who killed Tutsi did so for many reasons, but beneath the individual motivations lay a common fear rooted in firmly held but mistaken ideas of the Rwandan past'. Des Forges begins her history of Rwanda with an explanation of its earliest settlement, highlighting that prior to the eighteenth century, people generally grouped themselves along family lines or around specific leaders, eventually developing a common language and set of cultural practices (Des Forges 1999, 31). Consolidation and the increasing sophistication of the Rwandan state led to a more 'clearly defined...governing elite' (Des Forges 1999, 32), at which point the division between Hutu – 'meaning originally a subordinate or follower of a more powerful person' (Des Forges 1999, 32) – and Tutsi – 'which apparently first described the status of an individual...rich in cattle' (Des Forges 1999, 32) – became concurrently more defined. She emphasises however that these delineations were 'not yet completely fixed

throughout the country' when the European colonisers entered Rwanda (Des Forges 1999, 32). What I wish to emphasise here is that the distinction between Hutu and Tutsi was not, at this stage, primarily an ethnic one in the sense that it would later come to be understood – a founded on 'tribal' difference. Rather, socioeconomic distinctions became codified as ethnic boundaries that could be later called upon to fragment Rwandan society into two antithetical and competing ethnic groups. Mahmood Mamdani (2001, 60) refers to this as 'the contradictory nature of cultural and political developments. The very people who came to be integrated into a common cultural community... became polarized into two distinct and even antagonistic political identities'. While on the one hand 'Rwandan' meant a set of shared commonalities, it was underscored by the production of two distinct types of Rwandans.

Mamdani (2001, 56) also emphasises the pre-eminence of exploitation in the consolidation of the Rwandan state, and its impact on the view towards difference between Hutu and Tutsi. He categorises the view of group difference according to the perception of the division lines of the groups themselves, saying that 'Tutsi power' tended to claim 'no difference' whilst 'Hutu power' claimed 'distinct difference' (Mamdani 2001, 56). Mamdani argues that these two are not in fact contradictory positions but rather complementary interpretations of Rwandan social history, each speaking to different moments in history (Mamdani 2001, 57). A substantial part of what it meant to be Hutu was what it meant to have been previously marginalised, and Hutu identity, especially Hutu Power, relied upon memories of exploitation and exclusion. Therefore whilst I agree that there is an historical discontinuation between each hypothesis and the state of group separation in 1994, I also argue that this is explicable through and indeed demonstrative of the vested interest of the other to deny difference. The Tutsi as the other did not recognise themselves as distinctly different from the Hutu, but the Hutu relied upon conceptions of this difference particularly in justifying their suppression and eventually extermination of the Tutsi. This operated in a slightly different way in Northern Ireland – the republican prisoners rejected not the otherness of Irish/republican, but the

otherness of the criminal criminals.

There is an historical precedent for violence between the Hutu and Tutsi that helped in establishing a myth of enduring hatred between the two. From the colonial period, the Tutsi were the dominant, though numerically the minority, group. The Hutu on the other hand were largely excluded from positions of political control. Slowly catching on through the 1950s and gaining momentum following the 1959 revolution, the 'political landscape...reversed' (Twagilimana 2003, 62), which is a somewhat euphemistic reference to the fact that after 1959 it was Hutus killing Tutsis, rather than the other way around. It was then the Tutsi who were excluded from a variety of roles in Rwandan society, from political positions to education. This exclusionary discourse 'served as the ideological basis for an independent Rwanda' (Twagilimana 2003, 62) that followed the 1959 revolution, which suggests that the Tutsi as the other within Rwandan society formed the initial ideological consolidation of post-colonial Rwanda. This polarisation could then be called upon in times of crisis. This consolidation based upon exclusion is consistent with both an understanding of identity as performative and as relational to the discursive production of the abject. The exclusion of the Tutsi became a naturalised part of Rwandan identity, as their exclusion cemented and reified their status as other.

During the 1959 social revolution for independence, the violence against the Tutsi arguably approached genocide, constituted as revenge killings for oppression during the colonial period. Aimable Twagilimana (2003, 73) writes '[t]hus a racist ideology sealed the end of the Hutu revolution, and the years that followed it became the foundation of political policies'. She argues that rather than rejecting the racist ideology of colonialism, 'the new regime instead appropriated it...to deny the Tutsi their deserved place in Rwanda' (Twagilimana 2003, 73). Specifically, Twagilimana refers here to the Hamitic hypothesis, which claimed that the Tutsi were not originally

from the geographic area that would become known as Rwanda, unlike the Bantu-descended Hutu. Also unlike the Hutu, the Tutsi were considered more closely linked to the Europeans. The Hutu revolution took the Hamitic ideology of colonialism and used it against the Tutsi, highlighting their status as outsiders, in an interesting demonstration of Feldman's (1991) 'mimesis of alterity' seen in the prison protests in Northern Ireland.

It is important to discuss the prior record of violence between Hutu and Tutsi not because of any suggestion of ancient hatreds latent and inevitable in Rwandan society, but rather because it illustrates how racist, exclusionary, and exterminatory discourse shaped what it meant to be Hutu, Tutsi, and Rwandan. This allows for an understanding of violence as not an aberrant or exceptional event, but rather as tied to banal, everyday performances of Rwandan identity. Rothbart and Korostelina (2006, 5) write of a 'threat logic [that] recasts Self and Other within a preformed dogma, elevating their roles to a timeless universal law'. The threatening nature of the other becomes so naturalised as to become in many respects banal, salient in times of crisis and not in times of calm. This accounts for fluctuations between intergroup conflict and cooperation – '[d]uring periods of crisis, the threatened group denigrates the Other as uncivilised, savage, subhuman, or demonic. Negative iconography is retrieved from mythic stories of the past' (Rothbart and Korostelina 2006, 1). This is notable in both the case studies of Northern Ireland and the subsequent weaponisation of the abject body, and this case study of the brutalisation of the abject body. In Rwanda, the Tutsi (and in particular the Tutsi women), were discursively produced as cunning, manipulative, and sexually deviant. One journalist quoted by Human Rights Watch said 'Tutsi women were made for sexuality and beauty...Tutsi women were seen as spies because they know how to present themselves to whites and to Hutu men, so they became an arm of the RPF' (HRW 1996, 19). Even in this recounting of the propaganda, Tutsi women are still produced as sexualised objects, with the use of phrases like 'made for', and becoming 'an arm of the RPF'. This discursive production of the demonic, abject other, reliant upon a mythic past of conflict,

contributed the most to the violence in the 1994 genocide.

'Always yell with the crowd...It's the only way to be safe'[16]

There has been a considerable attempt in the current literature on the 1994 Rwandan genocide specifically, and violent identity politics more generally, to understand and rationalise its beginnings. The history of exploitation and conflict in Rwanda has left the 1994 genocide ripe for instrumentalist explanations. Given the history of exploitation in Rwanda and the assumption of the greater relative wealth of the Tutsi, it can be tempting to explain the genocide as a class struggle. However, such instrumental explanations fall short of explaining either the nature or purpose of the violence. As survivor Berthe Mwanankabandi pointed out, instrumental explanations fall short of explaining the reality of the violence that took place during the genocide: '[t]hose who just wanted to steal our homesteads, they could have simply chased us off, the way they'd managed to do with our parents and grandparents in the North. Why cut us as well?' (Hatzfield 2000, 189)[17]. Violence was a means of separating the insiders (Hutu) from the outsiders (Tutsi), and violence such as rape was used to initiate Hutus as *genocidaires* (Human Rights Watch 1996, 40).

The group consciousness of the Hutu, at least in terms of how they saw themselves when compared with the Tutsi, was fundamentally altered in such a way that the *genocidaires* were able to see themselves not only superior in the face of an inferior enemy people, but as human in the face of a dehumanised enemy. Odette Mupenize, who was shot below her jaw before being hacked with machetes and taken to a field hospital, recounted that Interhamwe came to the hospital and told the doctors '[w]e are killing Inyenzi and you are healing them! They ordered us to go out; the doctors

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16 Phrase attributed to Orwell 1949.

17 The terms 'cut' or 'hit' are often used to describe an attack with a machete.

told us they had no choice and we had to leave...They had stopped the doctors from treating us saying that: ‘you don't have to treat those cockroaches’' (Mupenzi, n.d.).

Phillip Gourevitch (1998) makes an alarming and astute observation of a major feature of the nature of genocide, saying that it, 'after all, is an exercise in community building. A vigorous totalitarian order requires that the people be invested in the leaders' scheme, and while genocide may be the most perverse and ambitious means to this end, it is also the most comprehensive' (Gourevitch 1998, 95). There are certainly elements of truth to this idea of genocide as formative of groups at the same time that it destroys one. Genocide does form a distinct self/other separation along the direst lines, wherein membership quite literally means the difference between life and death. Participation in genocide, whether through killing, mutilating, or orchestrating violent acts also ensures that the blame for the genocide is diffused throughout a larger portion of the self – it binds the self to the cause of genocide through mutual responsibility for both the destruction of the other and its outcome.

My departure from Gourvevitch's claim is with the emphasis on the investment of the people in the charismatic leader, because such a leader does not fully account for the extremity of the violence of, in particular, the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Even given pressure to participate in such acts as gang rape, which has been well documented as having occurred (see Human Rights Watch 1996), conformity and coercion do not satisfactorily explain how such violence became the norm of group membership in the first instance, which I have discussed in Chapter Two with respect to Volkan's (1997) ethnic terrorism thesis. Furthermore, genocide is not always about community building but may also be about community splitting – the ethnic cleansing following the collapse of Yugoslavia was as much to do with dividing the community that had begun to identify as Yugoslav as it was solidifying Serbian or Croat identity (Hayden 1996). The impact of extreme violence on a

community is not unidirectional – genocide exterminates one community to solidify another. It accomplishes this by producing and naturalising violence as a form of ingroup identity, wherein ingroup identity becomes reliant upon the extermination of the sexualised-deviant abjection of the outgroup.

This community-building impact of genocide is connected to Fujii's (2009) concept of extra-lethal violence as a performance of a new kind of identity. In her analysis of the Rwandan genocide, she deals with what she dubs the 'ethnic hatred' and 'ethnic fears' hypotheses by noting that while '[b]oth approaches offer intuitively compelling explanations for mass violence...ethnic masses do not act as a single unit, but a variety of groups and groupings that do not always follow ethnic lines' (Fujii 2009, 5). She also effectively summarises one of the primary flaws of traditional theories of ethnic violence, stating '[g]enocides are dynamic, while categories are static. In dynamic settings, context and conditions change, sometimes in an instant. These changes...can shift actors' relations, perspectives, motives, and identities' (Fujii 2009, 8). As I have argued in Chapter Two, an understanding of the dynamic nature of violent identity politics requires an understanding of the dynamism of identity formation and identity performance. It is logical to assume that a series of events that is characterised by its shifting nature would need to be explained in terms of shifting foundations. This view of ethnic conflicts allows for an examination of ethnic identity as intersectional with other identities, namely sexualised identities, which reveal different types of violent identity performance.

While I do take issue with some of Fujii's arguments, notably that she focuses exclusively on violence that results in the death of the victim (Fujii 2010), she does highlight what I consider to be critical elements of the ways in which identity was radicalised during the genocide. Namely she argues for the idea of the performance of violent identity, emphasising the need to view violence as

'a type of identity performance, rather than an expression of extant identities' (Fujii 2010, 24). One point on which I depart from Fujii, particularly her interpretation of identity performance is at her definition of performance itself, as I have argued in Chapter Three: she refers to ethnicity 'not as an external force that acts on people, but as a 'script' for violence that people act out...I use the term *script* not to evoke habitual or everyday practices, but to refer to a play or piece of theater, the performance of which constitutes an event....out of the ordinary' (Fujii 2009, 12). She identifies the variance of performance in this idea of identity as a script, just as actors in a play will have different interpretations of the same role (Fujii 2009, 13).

In a modification of Fujii's argument, I argue instead that these variations come not from varied 'textual' interpretations but rather because people themselves vary – fluctuations in identity performance will 'naturally' arise from the numerous and individualistic ways in which people perceive their identities and themselves. The script that Fujii identifies does inform performance through normative prescriptions of behaviour, but I argue that it does specifically impact the habitual and every day. Reflecting back upon Butler's theory of identity as performative (Butler 1990), we understand identity to be a naturalised process that operates within a compulsory matrix. Identity in this way is productive of that which it claims to be produced by (Butler 1990). Radicalised identity produces violent subjects, and this violence is naturalised within its compulsory matrix (to borrow from Butler's notion of the compulsory heteronormative matrix). Violence as identity in this way must be naturalised and treated if not as banal then at least as contextually appropriate.

We can see this in the framing of the violence as 'work' for the Hutu to complete – survivor Emmanuel Murangira discussed the use of Caterpillar tractors and bulldozers to clear away the dead, evoking images of a construction site (Totten and Ubaldo 2011, 87), which speaks to the

banality with which the genocide was treated. The subjects who participated in the genocide were constituted through their participation, and so actions such as bulldozing bodies into mass graves became a naturalised performance of that identity. It begins with the naturalisation of difference, in this case buoyed by a connection between contemporary difference and past domination and violence, and leads to violence as the natural/naturalised reaction to the abject other, who has been rendered abject through its sexualisation.

Furthermore, I am suspicious of the use of performance to denote an identity that is 'acted out', as this implies that there is something disingenuous about the identity performance for the individual, that it is another layer of identity that overlays a 'true' identity in the same way that an actor assumes a character that is not her own. Rather than a superficial scripting of identity in times of crisis, this violent, radicalised identity that emerges during a crisis such as the 1994 Rwandan genocide is the identity of the violent, radicalised individual. Previous non-violent identities are obsolete. Hatred of the other takes on an Orwellian ahistoricism: we are at war with the Tutsi. We have always been at war with the Tutsi. And yet while there was certainly an extended history of violence between the Hutu and Tutsi, there was also a history of shared language, religion, and culture (des Forges 1999, 31), in addition to intermarriages and children of mixed background. Hatred of the Tutsi had to be if not outright manufactured, at least made salient and radicalised in order to make genocide not only a possible act in the minds of the non-radicalised Hutu population, but a necessary one. The performance of Hutu identity did indeed need to be scripted, but I argue that this script was part of the normative matrix of Hutu identity, and its performance, as with the other identities with which this intersected, such as normalised sexual practice, was compulsory. Woven into the web of what it meant to identify as Hutu was its antithesis and the required response, which is to say that a part of the intersectional constellation of Hutu identity was a sense of the Tutsi as the other, the antithesis of the self, and as abject.

So far, this chapter has given the historical context of the 1994 Rwandan genocide, highlighting the history of exploitation and conflict from the colonial and post-colonial formation and reformation of the modern Rwandan state to the genocide. Two important trends have been noted: the first is that the history of colonialism in Rwanda had a tremendous impact on its history moving forward after the dissolution of colonial power, particularly through the consolidation of ethnic groups that were based upon and solidified around socioeconomic stratification and exclusion. The second is that conflict was very much a part of the history of Rwandan, with ebbs and flows of coexistence and co-mingling interspersed with periods of fragmentation and conflict. These histories of fragmentation made the differences between the groups psychologically salient, and were easily called upon to reify group boundaries. These boundaries were then defined along normative, sexualised lines.

The remainder of this chapter will focus directly upon the events that immediately led up to the 1994 genocide and the violence that actually took place during the genocide. I will be making heavy use of testimony gathered by a variety of living history and research sources, using the words of the survivors to speak to the impact of the violence. This reveals a heavy dependence on discursive productions of not only the Tutsi but the Hutu as well, as ideas about difference (between groups) and indifference (to the humanity of the other, which in this case always refers to the Tutsi) resurface repeatedly. The second half of this chapter begins with a discussion of the dehumanisation of the Tutsi, before examining the role of vivisection and sexual violence in stripping the already dehumanised enemy of its very subjectivity.

Sexualisation, Brutalisation, Dehumanisation: The Road to Genocide

Violent identity politics begins with radicalised hostility towards the other. This hostility towards the other begins with a perceived threat towards the self from the other, and there is a causal loop between the identity of the self and the perception of a threatening other. Rothbart and Korostelina (2006, 1) note that '[s]tudies have shown that high salience of ingroup identity promotes negative opinions of outgroups'. Hatred of the other is intimately connected with the body of the other, and this is quite viscerally seen in the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Abjection demarcates the boundaries of both the individual territory and the social territory, and can be a means by which political agency is gained through a disruption of political and social order (see Wilcox 2014), or denied as in the case of the Rwandan genocide through processes of abjection and dehumanisation.

The brutality of the 1994 Rwandan genocide was about far more than consolidating the identity of the Hutu (although it did this as well) – the violence of the genocide was intended to assert the dominance of the Hutu over the Tutsi, to humiliate and render them abject. As previously stated in the definition of overkill in Chapter Four, this violence was communicative of the differences between the groups, the exclusion of the Tutsi and the domination of the Hutu. The Tutsi were stripped of their subjectivity, and were thus appropriate targets for extreme violence, being denied humanity and the right to existence. Beatrice Nikuze recalled ‘the policemen took us to Sonatube where we stayed for a short time. A man called Rusatira came and said, 'Take the garbage to Nyanza.' (By saying ‘garbage’, he was referring to us)’ (Nikuze n.d.). Francine Niyitegeka, a survivor whose child was butchered in her arms, said 'I endure a kind of shame over feeling hunted like that...just because of what I am. The moment my eyes close upon that, I weep inside, from misery and humiliation' (Hatzfeld 2000, 43). Another survivor, Freddy Mutanguha, recalled

The one thing I keep remembering is the way they’d get people from their hiding places and

> run after them with dogs. I remember a certain man called Canisius, he had many dogs that were used in hunting people from the bushes where they were hiding. Once they caught them, you'd hear screams that meant they had been killed. They run after them as though they were animals, Tutsis were no longer human beings then. I remember how Tutsis were denied their rights as human beings. They had become like animals and they started killing Tutsis as they believed they were not human beings. They believed they were killing something else, not human beings. I remember that thing so well and it hurts me (Mutanguha, n.d.).

Prior to the genocide there was a considerable campaign of dehumanisation through abjection against the Tutsi. Tutsi were commonly referred to as *inyenzi*, meaning cockroach. A survivor who wished to remain anonymous said '[a]fter the genocide I made a joke with a friend; '[t]he reason I didn't die in 1994 is because I had died before, psychologically died before.' All I heard for years in school was 'You are stupid! You are a cockroach!'' (Totten and Ubaldo 2011 67). Another survivor of the genocide said of the insult '[b]eing called an inyenzi also bothered me because it's [being] pointed out you are dangerous and you need to die. And everyone hates them in Rwanda because they get in our cupboards, and you try to do everything to get rid of them' (Totten and Ubaldo 2011, 46). Here the dehumanisation of the Tutsi is apparent to the point of being obvious, as the Tutsi are discursively reproduced as insects, and something to be destroyed. This survivor's addition that 'everyone hates' cockroaches is an interesting and more telling observation of the abjection of the Tutsi. It is no accident that the Tutsi were reproduced not only as pests, but as something hated to the point that its destruction was universally desired. Cockroaches are associated with disease and evoke a reaction of disgust, and it was this association that was the goal of abjection of the Tutsi.

Figure 1.

'Propaganda cartoon from the Rwandan Genocide' by *Kangura* (1994)

Propaganda played a considerable role in rallying the Hutu population against the Tutsi, and was a major aid in the dehumanisation of the Tutsi population as a whole. Anti-Tutsi propaganda was not limited to the now infamous hate radio the *Radio-Television Libre des Mille Collines* (RTLM), which broadcasted hate speech as well as orders to kill throughout the genocide, but also took place through the publication of political cartoons in magazines and newspapers such as *Kangura*. Figure One, published in *Kangura* in February 1994, discursively produced as other both the Tutsi (through an assumption of the deviant and hypersexual nature of Tutsi women), and the United Nations, particularly General Dellaire. This production of the dangerous other/foreigner was not limited to this cartoon, or indeed to *Kanugra*, but was rather rampant throughout – speaking to RTLM on 12 April, 1994, Kantano Habimana said, '[t]he whites have just abandoned us and that is no surprise! ...If you depend so much on them, you will eat trash. You should not rely on their assistance or their lies because they are always after their own interest' (RTLM 1994). Just under a month later, on 17 May 1994, Gaspard Gahigi, Editor-in-Chief of RTLM, said '[f]or a long time, the white man has harboured the erroneous conception that the Tutsis are the good people. In the white

man's view, the Tutsi is more handsome and more intelligent...' (RTLM 1994). This illustrates the continuous production of a Tutsi/white alliance that conspired against the Hutu, casting the Tutsi as other whilst simultaneously referring to sexualised difference. In the same address, the Americans are produced as corrupt, with references specifically to lobbying the US president to 'kill the Hutus' (RTLM 1994).

As is explicitly demonstrated by Figure One, the sexualisation of the Tutsi women in the months leading up to the genocide was particularly visceral, and it was through discursively producing Tutsi women as sexually deviant that Hutu Power propagandists highlighted the alleged desire of the Tutsi to 'infiltrate' and dominate the Hutu (Human Rights Watch 1996, 16). In an address to RTLM on 12 April 1994, Jean Kambanda[18], Prime Minister from the start of the genocide, said of the Tutsi 'they are already there [Arusha] with their *Ibizungerezi* [beautiful girls – Translator's note] to seduce the people with their malicious smiles' (RTLM 1994). In the same statement, he says of the RPF's advance to Kigali '[t]hey will all be exterminated and none will live to tell the disastrous story' (RTLM 1994). Also speaking to RTLM, Kantano Habimana compared the Tutsi to 'a girl of easy virtue' who cannot hide that she is 'licentious' once she is pregnant (RTLM 1994). One Tutsi woman who survived the genocide and was interviewed by Human Rights Watch recounted some of the propaganda, which warned Hutu men that '[t]hese [Tutsi] women are very sexual, and they sleep with their Tutsi brothers' (Human Rights Watch 1996, 16). Figure 1 implies that Tutsi women used their sexuality to 'win over' foreign/Western authorities and to gain favour with them at the expense of the Hutu. The outsider status of the Tutsi is highlight as well,

18 Kambadna was the first head of state to be convicted and sentenced for the crime of genocide. As part of the Prosecutor's stated facts of the case, '(vii) Jean Kambanda acknowledges that, on or about 21 June 1994, in his capacity as Prime Minister, he gave clear support to Radio Television Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM), with the knowledge that it was a radio station whose broadcasts incited killing, the commission of serious bodily or mental harm to, and persecution of Tutsi and moderate Hutu. On this occasion, speaking on this radio station, Jean Kambanda, as Prime Minister, encouraged the RTLM to continue to incite the massacres of the Tutsi civilian population, specifically stating that this radio station was 'an indispensable weapon in the fight against the enemy'. (ICTR 1998).

with the unsubtle suggestion of the alignment of the Tutsi with an alien force. The juxtaposition ensures a connection between one foreign invader and an other (see Mamdani 2001).

The accusations of sexual impropriety on the part of the Tutsi were not limited to political cartoons. *Kangura,* which was effectively the print version of the RTLM in terms of the propaganda it produced, published numerous articles, essays, and editorials aimed at othering and dehumanising the Tutsi. In one editorial, entitled 'A Cockroach (*Inyenzi)* Cannot Bring Forth a Butterfly', the author opens by claiming the numerical minority position of the Tutsi was due to incestuous marital and reproductive practices. He goes on to claim '[t]he history of Rwanda tells us that the tutsi [sic] has remained the same, and has never changed. His treachery and wickedness are intact in our country's history' (*Kangura* 1994). Tutsi men are thus rendered untrustworthy and devious. He continues, saying that the Tutsi's source of power as 'their women and their cows', calling the women 'vamp' and the men 'snakes', accusing the men of rape and sexual assault against Hutu women and girls. Women are thus relegated to the same social position as cattle, before both men and women are accused of sexual impropriety.

There are many processes at work here, all of which point to a common discursive production of both the ethnicity and the sexuality of the other. This particular editorial sexualises both female and male Tutsi, turning Tutsi women into tools for the men, and the Tutsi men as sexually deviant and violent. Fidelma Ashe (2012), refers to the importance of rendering the masculinity of the outgroup abject (239) as a means of demonstrating ingroup superiority. She argues that paramilitary masculinities in Northern Ireland are discursively produced as '‘sadistic’, ‘perverted’, and ‘psychopathic’' (Ashe 2012, 239). Parallels to the production of Tutsi masculinity are certainly apparent, as we can see from the *Kangura* editorial and its use of words such as 'treachery' and 'wickness' (*Kangura* 1994). The *Kangura* editorial frames Tutsi masculinity as

deceptive, manipulative, and violent, while also framing Tutsi femininity as likewise manipulative, in the service of Tutsi masculinity, and sexually deviant.

As I have previously argued, and a central claim of this thesis is that there is an intersection between the ethnicisation and the sexualisation of the body, particularly in cases where tensions build along ethnic boundary lines. These connections can seem incidental – des Forges says of the propaganda that circulated via the national radio that it 'equated the Hutu-Tutsi difference with the fundamental difference between male and female' (des Forges 1999, 61). Indeed, Joanne Nagel (2000, 113) argues '[t]he borderlands that lie at the intersections of ethnic boundaries are ‘ethnosexual frontiers’ that are surveilled and supervised, patrolled and policed, regulated and restricted...' The real differences in ethnicised and sexualised practices of either group can be extraordinarily difficult to see at the margins between them, and it is all but impossible to locate where one group ends and another begins. This boundary is marked by exclusionary criteria that are read as deviation from the norm, outside and dangerous. Nagel also references the need for sexual propriety within the community that is based on heteronormative conceptions of gender and the stereotyping of both the (virile) self (men) and the (effeminate) other according to these gender hierarchies (Nagel 2000, 113). This lack of sexual propriety was a common stereotype of Tutsi women, and served as a foil for the propriety and purity of the Hutu. This abject deviance as a marker of difference fuelled hatred and fear, but the evidence of difference was lacking. Violence became a means of finding, of solidifying, and of marking difference.

The Purpose of Vivisection: Extermination and Examination in Extreme Violence

Arjun Appadurai (1998) argues that, in studying an event like the 1994 Rwandan genocide, the most 'striking feature of such violence...is its site and target – the body' (Appadurai 1998, 6). He emphasises how frequently the horrifying violence done through and on bodies appears in the

literature on ethnic violence (Appadurai 1998, 6), and argues for examining the importance of uncertainty in producing the extreme violence seen in some instances of ethnic violence. As Appadurai explains, viewing extreme violence in identity politics as the result of uncertainty rather than as the result of a 'heightened conviction' (Appadurai 1998, 1) brings us closer to an understanding of how extreme violence is produced. Uncertainty and the fear it produces can spread like a virus through a population, whereas conviction for a cause may be harder to propel.

Appadurai focuses his arguments, as I have, on conflict 'associated with appalling physical brutality and indignity – involving rape, mutilation, cannibalism, sexual abuse, violence against civilian...populations' (Appadurai 1998, 3). His reasoning for narrowing his focus is similar to my own: 'f]ocussing on bodily violence between actors with routine...prior knowledge of one another is...a way to illuminate 'threshold' or 'tip-over' conditions, where managed or endemic social conflict gives way to runaway violence' (Appadurai 1998, 4). Additionally, I add that given that overkill as a concept or predictor of violence attempts to explain this extreme violence, it is logical to confine the study to the object of interest. Traditional theories, I argue, aggregate violence in such a way that the role of the individual becomes lost. When this occurs, violence runs the risk of being treated as systemic within a fully realised political structure, or an outlier that gains notoriety without being indicative of the individuals' understanding of the events. What this project is concerned with is the manner in which extreme aggression, through the weaponisation of the self or the brutalisation of the other, becomes possible through the psychic build up to Appadurai's 'threshold'. Traditional theories of violence are unable to account for the lack of incremental or chronological build up in overkill – extreme violence of this kind can erupt in an instant without following a linear trajectory. The goal of this violence is furthermore not a display of superior strength but rather the exposure and expulsion of the abject.

Uncertainty in Appadurai's work is connected to Lisa Malkki's work on the ‘relationship of purity to identity’ (Malkki 1995 in Appadurai 1998, 7). He focuses on her 'necrographic map' (Malkki 1995 in Appadurai 1998, 7), which draws on Feldman (1991) and his understanding of the body as part of the spatial formation of violence. Necrographic maps understand bodies as a materialisation of difference here realised through not only physical markers but through the violence that reveals them or is implied by them. In Malkki (1995, 88), these symbols of difference become the means by which bodies are marked for death. Bodies as necrographic maps become signifiers of difference, a means of materialising difference, in both Feldman and Malkki (Pohlman 2012, 204) Through these maps of 'bodily difference' (Malkki 1995, 88), difference is produced, which at the same time highlights Appadurai's theories of uncertainty in extreme violence. The juxtaposition of purity to identity is a tense and paradoxical, yet readily recognisable concept – nearly if not outright impossible to attain and yet intrinsically in need of preservation.

The abjection of the other and the exterminatory discourse that arise in the face of the abject other coalesces around this idea of preventing the contamination of the self by the other. The idea of a 'pure-bred' identity group is nearly absurd – individuals marrying across groups being just one of the ways in which the purity of a bloodline can be diluted over generations if indeed bloodlines can be said to have existed at any stage in history. Often in cases of extreme violence, such blurring of the bloodlines is common (e.g. in the former Yugoslavia, and indeed between Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda), and it is this blurring of the boundary that causes the visceral reaction that leads to a radicalisation of identity. The paradox is that abjecting the other is a response to the encroachment of the other on the self/us – but this encroachment is ever present, whether the other is perceived as a threat or not. The goal of abjection discourse is therefore never fully realised because the abject can never be fully eradicated.

This in many ways relates to Appadurai's uncertainty thesis. There are few if any 'real' differences between groups – in the case of the Hutu and Tutsi, difference had to be magnified and codified under colonial rule (see Mamdani 2001). Intermarriage between the Hutu and Tutsi did occur (Des Forges 1999, 8) although it was not as common in Rwanda prior to the genocide (see Des Forges 1999, 32) as in other sites of ethnic cleansing such as the former Yugoslavia (Hayden 1996). Additionally, prior to, during, and following the genocide, the Hutu and Tutsi shared more than they did not – a common language, common religious practices, and a common cultural history. Difference had to be produced, and was largely accomplished through the dissemination of anti-Tutsi propaganda. But even with this propaganda the differences between the groups were built upon flimsy foundations. The primary means by which difference was produced was through allegations only, and so their reality had to be confirmed. Without the narrative of sexual deviance, difference could likewise not be assured. This instability of categories leads to the uncertainty Appadurai's thesis relies upon.

Appadurai refers to his thesis as an understanding of a 'species of uncertainty' that 'drive[s] projects of ethnic cleansing that are both vivisectionist and verificationist in their procedures. That is, they seek uncertainty by dismembering...the body under suspicion' (Appaduai 2006, 5). His argument is that uncertainty is sought out and must to be verified through the vivisection of the other. This is important for my understanding of this violence as abject, as it alludes to the fascination with the abject that accompanies the repulsion towards it. Furthermore, the repulsion of the abject is always a repulsion *towards* in these instances rather than a repulsion *from* – the Tutsi were actively and aggressively sought out for examination and extermination. This repulsion towards the abject is a propulsion to extreme violence. This vivisectionist violence often intersected with sexualised brutality, and rape as a means of discovery was common. It was also a common practice to cut open pregnant women and to remove the fetus, killing both:

> Before the Interahamwe entered the church they began to check on the ground to make sure all of the people [sprawled out, wounded or murdered] had died. One person they found who had not been killed was a woman who was pregnant, and they grabbed her and began to terrorize her. They began to ask her for money, but she didn't have enough [to satisfy them] and they pulled her clothes off and they wanted to see how Tutsi children looked when that are still in the mother. They took the mother and cut her [sliced her open]. She fell down and the baby [fetus] fell outside of her. That mother screamed until she died (Totten and Ubaldo 2011, 119).

This practice of cutting out unborn babies combines both vivsectionist violence with sexualised violence as a means of 'discovering' biological difference and brutalising a woman's body through the site of her reproductive capability.

Uncertainty about the real differences between the self and the other may quickly lead to fear of the other, and abjection is a response that combines fear and uncertainty. Particularly with respect to refugees as the other, this is sometimes referred to as the invasion complex (Papastergiadis 2006). What is important for this study in Papastergiadis's invasion complex is the understanding of the other as abject as a rationalisation for inflicting violence upon it. Papastergiadis utilises Kristeva's understanding of the stranger to establish the boundary between self and other, the projection of values across this boundary, which justifies the use of violence against the other and in doing so, 'minimi[ses] the acknowledgement of violence in the self' (Papastergiadis 2006, 432) – 'The violence against the other is...seen not only as a necessary form of self-defence, but as a justified response towards the faceless....other' (Papastergiadis 2006, 433). We can see this defensive language in a radio address given to RLTM on 22 April, 1994 by Kantano Habimana, in which he says 'we can be happy about the fact that people have now united; they have understood that the democracy [*short silence*] of thieves whose objective is to steal power as well as

robbing people of what they have achieved in a period of thirty years' (RLTM 1994). The Tutsi here are produced as outsiders attempting to steal Rwanda from its people. Papastergiadis highlights one of the reasons that defending and maintaining this boundary is so vitally important, that because the other is produced as abject, they are outside the boundaries of social propriety, for '[o]nce the Other is constructed in the position of debasement, abjection and evil, they are excluded from the field of human values, civic rights and moral obligation' (Papastergiadis 2006, 433). The difference in language, the use of 'constructed' in Papastergiadis and the use of 'produced' in this project is not merely semantic, and is a departure in the theoretical framing of otherness- rather than seeing the ascription of otherness as a one-off event, viewing this as performative allows us to understand othering as a continuous and productive process.

Rape and Sexual Violence

Appadurai's uncertainty hypothesis resurfaces in survivors' accounts of the sexual violence in Rwanda. It is commonly reported that the *genocidaires* said things like '[w]e want to see if a Tutsi woman is like a Hutu woman' (Weitsman 2008, 575), making reference to sexual difference between Hutu and Tutsi women before raping their victim. One woman recounted that her attacker called others to 'see how Tutsikazi are on the inside' before cutting out her vagina and displaying it on a stick outside (in Weitsman 2008, 576). This is an example of a brutal attempt at discovering difference that is again highly sexualised – the difference that the *genocidaire* was interested in discovering was related directly to the Tutsi woman's sexual being, with the expectation that it would be so fundamental as to be visible to passers-by. This example also highlights the use of sexualised vivsectionist practices that make up the considerable brutality of the genocide.

A joint Human Rights Watch/ Africa and Human Rights Watch Women's Right Project (1996) details the experiences of women raped, gang-raped, raped with objects, and mutilated

(Human Rights Watch 1996, 39). According to the report, this often occurred 'after they had witnessed the torture and killing of their relatives...Some women were forced to kill their own children before or after being raped' (Human Rights Watch 1996, 39). Even in death women were not spared violence, as '[s]urvivors report that ...militia even raped the corpses of women they had just killed or women who had been left for dead. After killing women, the militia would frequently leave their corpses naked and with legs spread apart' (Human Rights Watch 1996, 40). Rape is a frequent occurrence in political violence, with justifications ranging from humiliation of the enemy to the assumption of rape as the discovery of men's inherent power over women (Brownmiller 1975, in Milillo 2006, 198). This is particularly problematic, as it makes assumptions that simultaneously strip the sexual agency of both men and women – rendering male sexuality savage and beyond control, and women as mere objects of sexual expression (violent or otherwise).

The Human Rights Watch Report also describes the practice of *genocidaires* capturing Tutsi women and taking them as 'wives', which the report considers 'Individual Sexual Slavery' (Human Rights Watch 1996, 56). Referring to these arrangements as marriages, the Human Rights Watch argues, 'obfuscate[s] the total lack of consent by the women' (Human Rights Watch 1996, 56), arguing instead to their being the 'looted possession of the militiamen' (Human Rights Watch 1996, 56). The choice for some women and girls became sexual slavery or death. Rosette Sebasoni Musabe testified that 'I remember this man called Niyonsenga who came and told me he wanted to help me flee so I wouldn't die...I was still very young but I could understand that he either wanted me to become his wife or he had in mind to rape me...I went on and told him, 'I'd rather be killed than becoming your wife or fleeing with you'' (Sebasoni Musabe, n.d.).

One of the more important and surprising narratives of the sexual violence in the 1994 Rwandan genocide surfaced as part of the Akayesu judgement. It was the first time that an official

stood trial before an international criminal court, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), and was convicted of the crime of genocide. Jean-Paul Akayesu, former mayor of Taba, was found guilty on nine counts of genocide and crimes against humanity for his role in the massacres that took place within his commune. Multiple witnesses were called to testify to Akayesu's collusion with the genocide and began to reveal the staggering degree to which rape and sexual violence were a part of the genocide: so much so that the indictment was amended by the prosecution due to the 'spontaneous testimony of sexual violence' (ICTR 1999). This was in large part due to the specific testimony of Witness J, who gave evidence of the common practice of the Interahamwe of raping young girls at the bureau communal, including her three-year-old daughter (ICTR 1999). The Akayesu judgement is a particularly important event in genocide jurisprudence and in genocide scholarship, because it stands as an official, international, and legal recognition of rape as genocide.

The argument that part of the rationale of genocidal rape is the humiliation of the enemy is considerably more convincing then rape as sexual expression. 'Ethnic cleansing focuses the violence on bloodlines even though it is played out on and through gender...War rape [and genocidal rape] is sexualised violence that seeks to terrorize, destroy, and humiliate a people through its women' (Eisenstein 1996, 59). Patricia Weitsman (2008) writes 'a woman's identity never really stands alone; it is always juxtaposed by her sexual relationships with men, whether coercive or consensual' (564). She highlights the gendered dimension of the Rwandan genocide, emphasising that '[m]uch of the propaganda leading up to the killing was directed at Tutsi women' (Weitsman 2008, 572), in particular 'their supposed promiscuity and their feelings of superiority toward Hutu men...As a consequence, much of the violence was directed at women' (Weitsman 2008, 573). Weitsman points to estimates suggesting that 90% of the survivors of the genocide were the victims of some form of sexual assault (Weitsman 2008, 573). Survivor Jean-Baptite Munyankone said '[w]e did not mock the women who had been raped, because all the women

expected to be raped' (Hatzfield 2000, 71). Rape was used by the Interahamwe not 'as a mechanism to propagate more Hutus … [but rather] as a mechanism to try to take life. Nearly 70 percent of the women raped contracted HIV' (Weitsman 2008, 577), and this does not take into account the number of women who died as a result of sexual violence and assault and who may also have been exposed to the HIV/AIDS virus.

Rose Marie Mukamwiza, who after the genocide was elected president of her community's *gacaca,* considered herself trusted in her community 'because no amount of money can wash away my shame' (Totten and Ubaldo 2011, 36). Rose Marie was raped in front of her surviving children after having witnessed the deaths of her husband and five of her children – her husband was killed by a machete and when the killers tossed a grenade towards his body, five of her children who had been hiding by their father were killed in the blast (Totten and Ubaldo 2011, 26). Her daughter, who also survived and witnessed her mother's rape, asked her repeatedly what the soldiers had been doing to her; her mother answered '[t]hat's another problem with the war, like how they killed people. That was their way of killing me' (Totten and Ubaldo 2011, 33). Now that her daughter is old enough to understand what she saw, Mukamwiza feels shame in front of her (Totten and Ubaldo 2011, 33). Shame is a common reaction to sexual assault, and often stems from correlating feelings of dehumanisation, or being stripped of self-worth and dignity, and this is echoed by republican prisoners recounting their experiences, as will be discussed in the next chapter. This is the communicative value of rape and sexual violence in violent identity politics and extreme brutality. Rape is the aggressive denial of the humanity of the survivor, who in the moment of victimisation is made both an object of sexualised power and is rendered abject. The position of the abject is conferred upon the victim in the moment of that assault, a means by which the victimised subject is constituted.

The use of rape as a tool of genocide, and as a means of brutalising and rendering the body of the other abject during the 1994 Rwandan genocide is staggering. The use of rape as a tool of the genocide was even mentioned by RTLM presenter Kantano on 28 May 1994, relaying a story not only of rape but of men being beaten for allowing their wives to escape before they could be raped. The threat of rape was ever present – Josephine Murebwayire survived the genocide after hiding in a seminary toilet for fear that if she was discovered alive, she would be raped:

> So I sat among the corpses and then after a while I asked myself what I was doing then I walked around and then decided to go in the toilet. Let me hide in the toilet, I was thinking to myself that if they return except killing me they were also going to do other bad things, I was really afraid they were going to rape me. So I went in the student's toilets, I looked for the filthiest and went in it. I said to myself that if they come to use the bathroom they won't go in the dirtiest, I stood behind the door and that is exactly what happened. They kept coming to use the toilets but they didn't enter in the one I was in. (Murebwayire, n.d.)

Murebwayire hid in the toilet for five days before a student of the seminar found her and gave her the first drink of water she'd had since the massacre. (Murebwayire, n.d.)

Survivor Beatrice Nikuze recalled an incident wherein Interhamwe were searching the bush for Tutsi who had escaped a massacre:

> People were screaming in agony, babies being hacked to death, young ladies from Kicukiro being raped and murdered… I remember Oliva; Oliva was… Oliva was murdered so maliciously imaginable. She was raped first and later tortured to death ...I could hear her crying for help from where I was. All I know is that they killed her by inserting strings and pins in her sexual organs. They inserted several things that they came across in her. They first selected pretty girls and killed them as they desired but they first raped them. (Nikuze n.d.)

Conclusions

Using the 1994 Rwandan genocide as a case study, this chapter has drawn out the role of abject sexualisation through the brutalisation of the body in extreme violent identity politics. The 1994 genocide involved numerous, sometimes competing, processes of identity production to create and then sustain the conditions under which such extreme violence becomes imaginable and possible. It required the dehumanisation of the Tutsi, accomplished through the spread of propaganda, as well as the production of the Tutsi as the abject other. This production of the Tutsi as abject relied upon both the production of Tutsi women as sexually deviant, as well as the emphasis upon the deviant masculinity of the Tutsi male, which also made recourse to claims of sexual violence by Tutsi men against Hutu women. Furthermore, because real differences between the two groups were difficult to prove and in need of production themselves, the level of uncertainty over the nature of Tutsi otherness propelled vivisectionist violence as an evolution of exterminatory discourse.

Violence against the other is more than instrumental, and aims to do more than eliminate the threat posed by that other. RTLM presenter Kantano speaking on 28 May 1994 called for the Tutsi to be exterminated saying '[i]f you are a cockroach then you must be killed, you cannot change anything' (RTLM 1994).Violence in this case is expressive and productive, as it reifies the produced dehumanisation of the other. The cutting out of foetuses from their still-living mothers to examine their difference *in utero,* the rape and mutilation of corpses, and the arrangement of the corpses of rape victims with legs spread are all demonstrative of the rage against the sexualised female other, where their sexual deviance was displayed even after the victims' deaths. The violence in the 1994 Rwandan genocide was intended to humiliate the Tutsi as a whole through the individual degradations experienced by the victims, and was itself communicative of their difference and their

abjection.

During the one hundred days of the genocide, violent acts against Tutsi bodies reconstituted the Tutsi, and the Hutu, identities, as dehumanised abjects and as killers respectively. Killing became an integral part of Hutu identity. Survivor Innocent Rwililiza confronted and threatened a group of Hutu, which included an old man who begged not to be killed. When Rwililiza countered that the Hutu were slaughtering Tutsi, and that if the man feared for his own life if he refused to kill, then he could simply walk past hiding Tutsis, '[h]is reply to me was ‘That is a good idea, I hadn't thought of that.’ I started to yell, I was incensed: ‘It never occurred to you that you could simply not kill us?’ He answered, ‘No: from killing so much, we forgot to think about you.’' (Hatzfield 2000, 102-103).

What the 1994 Rwandan genocide tells us about extreme violent identity politics is that it relies upon an assumption of deviant sexuality in the production of otherness, and this emphasis on the sexualisation of the other informs, contextualises, and makes possible the actual violence that is conducted upon the body of the other. In contrast to the weaponisation of the sexualised body in cases such as Northern Ireland, the body becomes sexualised through deviance in order to render it a target of violence. As in cases of weaponisation, the sexualisation of the other is an early-warning alarm of the tipping point to extreme violence, but in this case, it is the threat of targeting of othered groups that needs to be taken into consideration by external observers. This abjection through sexualisation makes overkill a performance of group identity not only possible, but normalised to the point of its being a characteristic of group membership.

In the next chapter, I will be exploring another type of overkill which may occur as a

reaction to the brutalisation of the body – the weaponisation of the abject, sexualised body. To do this, I will be examining the prison protests that occurred in Northern Ireland in HMP Maze at Long Kesh (also called the H-Blocks), and Armagh Gaol, between 1976-1981. This examination will focus primarily upon the No Wash Protests that occurred in both prisoners, and the Hunger Strike Protest that occurred in the H-Blocks. These protests illustrate the weaponisation of the abject, sexualised body as a result of its brutalisation, and in the following chapter I will demonstrate this brutalisation through the protests as it inspired the weaponisation of the body.

Chapter Six

'Nor Meekly Serve My Time': The Weaponisation of the Body in the H-Blocks and Armagh Gaol

Introduction

The main research objective of this thesis is to understand why some instances of identity politics produce extreme violence. The types of violence with which this project is concerned are abject, sexualised, and focused on the body. I have argued that rather than viewing ethnic identity as a top-down construction, what is required is a theory of ethnic identity that understands it as dynamic, intersectional, and embodied, in order to account for how it is experienced at an individual level, produced through common, socially normalised practices, and may become radicalised in certain instances of conflict and not in others. I have framed this type of violence as overkill, by which I refer to specific acts of violence that brutalise (and potentially then weaponise) the body in explicitly abject and sexualised ways. Overkill communicates the abjection of the other, renders the other abject through violence, and is characterised by its extremely aggressive and sexualised nature. Overkill constitutes new subjects through the performance of violence while simultaneously stripping the other of its subjectivity, so this type of violence is more than just symbolic, but is an integral part of the constitution of the other. The violence performs the abjection of the other through its sexualisation and ethnicisation of the other, illustrating the intersection of these identities.

In the previous chapter, I discussed the brutalisation of the sexualised, abject body using the 1994 Rwandan genocide as illustration. In what follows, I will examine the weaponisation of the body that can occur once the body has been brutalised in overkill through the protests mounted by Northern Irish republican prisoners in HMP Maze at Long Kesh, also called the H-Blocks, and Armagh Gaol between 1976-1981. These protests were called the Blanket Protest, the No Wash

Protest and the Hunger Strike Protest, respectively. Each protest demonstrates distinct ways of viewing the body as being weaponised through abjection, and all rely upon the sexualisation of the body. The weaponisation of the body in overkill can evolve from its being brutalised, and this chapter will illustrate how the protesters in the prisons took on their own abjection and weaponised it, in what Foucault refers to as a mimesis of alterity. While the Rwandan genocide is a good illustration of the brutalisation of the body in overkill, it does not demonstrate the evolution of overkill to weaponisation. The prison protests in Northern Ireland, however, illustrate how the sexualised brutalisation of the body can lead to the weaponisation of its abjection.

To reiterate, abjection is understood as the horror and repulsion experienced by the self in the face of the other – it combines a sense of uncertainty, terror, and a desperate impulse to eliminate the abject to preserve the purity of the self. Abjection, particularly where it intersects with the sexualised body, marks the boundaries of difference literally upon the body. The prison protests demonstrate the use of the abject, sexualised body as a weapon in extreme violent identity politics. In the case of Northern Ireland, sexualisation is used to describe the use of menstrual blood in the women's No Wash Protest, which brings to the public attention the sexualised bodies of the women imprisoned. We can also see the tandem operation of gendered violence and sexualised violence in the H-Blocks, with the use of sexual violence against the Blanketmen that I argue was intended to render them docile and passive, i.e. feminised.

In this chapter, I will use empirical evidence drawn from the prison protests in Northern Ireland between 1976 and 1981 to demonstrate the ways in which the abject body can become weaponised in certain cases of violent identity politics. I will begin by briefly summarising the context of the Troubles in Northern Ireland during the 1960s, 70s, and 80s. The history of the Troubles has been told many times, and so I will be focusing on the parts of the historical narrative

that are most necessary for understanding the prison protests in the H-Blocks at Long Kesh and Armagh. Specifically, I will examine the carceral politics surrounding paramilitary actions during the Troubles, from the introduction of internment to the policy of criminalisation. Criminalisation was seen as a way for the British government to render the conflict and its participants illegitimate. Its historical excavation is therefore directly relevant to this case study, since the decision to respond to paramilitaries as criminals rather than political prisoners contributed directly to the protests in the prisons.

The No Wash Protest occurred in both Armagh and the H-Blocks, but because the former was undertaken by women and the latter by men, they created different constellations of the intersection of identity, and demonstrate different ways in which the abject body can be weaponised through its abjection. I argue that the No Wash Protest, in rendering the body abject and making its corporeal and uncivilisable characteristics salient, feminised it. It exposed the primal body and externalised it in order to achieve its emotive effect on the outside community as well as to provoke and disturb the prison guards who daily confronted the sights and smells of human bodies and human filth. In Armagh Gaol, the protest brought the sexualised bodies of female prisoners to view in the republican struggle, and it occupies an interesting position in the history of not only Irish political struggle but political violence more broadly. The No Wash Protest in both prisons was an extreme form of resistance that was as difficult to understand as it was horrifying, but in Armagh Gaol it took on an additional level of abjection because the participants were women, and the protest itself therefore included menstrual blood. The No Wash Protest in Armagh is therefore a compelling example of the weaponisation of the sexualised body in violent identity politics as it relied upon the demonstration of the abject feminised body.

In the H-Blocks, the prison guards responded to this feminisation of the prisoners' bodies

through an increased campaign of distinctly sexualised violence. As this progressed, the prisoners moved to a different form of violence, the Hunger Strike Protest, which I argue was a reassertion of their masculinity. This protest occupies a tense position in the examination of the body as a weapon, because it weaponises the body through a denial of the needs of the body, pitting the two sides of the perceived mind/body binary against one another. This assertion of the dominance of the pro-active, rational, and therefore masculine mind over the reactive, irrational, and therefore feminine body, particularly as it coincided with the ending of the No Wash Protest, leads me to argue that the Hunger Strike Protest was a reclamation of the masculinity of the protesters – if the Blanket and No Wash Protests gave too much access to the prisoners' bodies through the nakedness of the Blanketmen in the former and the foregrounding of bodily waste in the latter, the Hunger Strike Protest denied that access, literally shrinking the volume of physical space occupied by the body. The Hunger Strike Protest was an assertion of the proactiveness of the prisoners and dominance over their own bodies that challenged the dominance of the prison regime. The Hunger Strike also rendered the body of the striker abject through its wasting, recalling the corpse. Ultimately, the Hunger Strike was successful at achieving its aims where the No Wash Protest was not, because of the manner in which the Hunger Strike Protest weaponised the abject body. These examples demonstrate the weaponisation of the abject, sexualised body as one kind of overkill.

The Road to Armagh and the H-Blocks: Internment and Criminalisation

The history of the republican movement and its struggle for recognition is a long one, and this paper will focus primarily on the history that led directly to the protests that occurred in the H-Blocks at Long Kesh and Armagh Gaols between 1976 and 1981: the Blanket Protest, the No Wash Protest, and the Hunger Strike Protest. This period represents a dynamic interplay between the prisoners, the prison regime, and the British government that was dramatically played out upon the bodies of the prisoners themselves. The prisoners' weaponisation of their bodies is particularly

distinct in this period, and was the primary strategy of the prisoners for achieving their political aims.

For the purposes of this account, the beginning of the road to the protests began with the re-introduction of internment. Internment, or the practice of extra-judicial incarceration through detention without trial, was deployed at various times throughout Northern Irish history. It was reintroduced during Operation Demetrius in August 1971, when hundreds of alleged republican paramilitaries were arrested and imprisoned without trial (ECHR 1978). The reintroduction of internment was meant as a 'sweeping-up' (ECHR 1978) of the IRA in an effort to stem the tide of violence in Northern Ireland. This spectacularly backfired, and the level of violence in Northern Ireland, particularly in London/Derry and in Belfast, increased dramatically in response to internment. In addition to extrajudicial incarceration, republican prisoners claimed abuse at the hands of the authorities charged with their interrogation. This abuse occurred during interrogation, through what was known as 'the Five Techniques'[19] of the interrogation process, and these were largely reliant on sensory deprivation to force confessions. The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) agreed in its 1978 hearing of the case *Ireland vs. the United Kingdom* that the Five Techniques constituted 'inhuman and degrading treatment' (ECHR 1978, accessed 2013). This ruling was anticipated with a considerable degree of trepidation by the Northern Ireland Office, who feared the potential publicity that a decision criticising the government could gain (Marshall 1980, 1).

19 'The Five Techniques' referred to tactics used by interrogators and included 'wall standing' (UNCAT 2008, 3), during which the detainee was forced to stand four or five feet from a wall with his fingertips touching the wall without moving (ECHR 1978); 'hooding' (UNCAT 2008, 3), which consisted of 'putting a black or navy coloured bag over the detainees' heads and, at least initially, keeping it there all the time except during interrogation' (ECHR 1978); 'subjection to noise' (UNCAT 2008, 3), wherein 'pending their interrogations, holding the detainees in a room where there was a continuous loud and hissing noise' (ECHR 1978); 'sleep deprivation' (UNCAT 2008, 3), wherein 'pending their interrogations, depriving the detainees of sleep' (ECHR 1978); and 'deprivation of food or drink' (UNCAT 2008, 3), which involved 'subjecting the detainees to a reduced diet during their stay at the centre and pending interrogations' (ECHR 1978).

Internment created an increase in the prison population, which led to a change of strategy on the part of the British government. All three protests that were mounted in the H-Blocks, and the No Wash Protest in Armagh Gaol, occurred as a response to this change in policy towards those convicted of violence related to the political and social tensions in Northern Ireland during the period known as 'the Troubles'[20]. Prior to the Gardiner Report of 1975, prisoners incarcerated for paramilitary participation were granted Special Category Status, which for the republicans amounted to being held as political prisoners (Campbell, McKeown, O'Hagan 1994, 1) Special Category Status afforded the prisoners held for paramilitary activity privileges associated with political prisoners, including the right to refuse prison work, freedom of association with one another, the right to their own clothes rather than a prison uniform, and separation from those not convicted of political crimes, Ordinary Decent Criminals (ODCs).

While there were periods of relative calm in Northern Ireland at this time, internment did not fully achieve its aim. In 1972, the Diplock Commission recommended a series of changes to the judicial process that included doing away with internment in favour of what would come to be known as the Diplock Courts, where those accused of paramilitary involvement stood trial, but before a judge only (Cairns 1982). Additionally, the burden of proof was shifted from the prosecution to the defence, which meant that the accused were responsible for defeating their accusers in court without the benefit of a jury of their peers. As a result, the prison population dramatically increased, with a number of prisoners being held for political crimes and held under Special Category Status, which separated them from the rest of the prison population as political prisoners or prisoners of war. Despite Special Category Status, the Diplock system demonstrates a shift away from the acknowledgement of the conflict as a legitimate struggle, as the accused were

20 Three women in Armagh Gaol participated in the hunger strike that was staged in 1980; however, they did not participate in the 1981 strike that led to the end of the No Wash Protest and to partial concessions by the British government. The Armagh women were, as were all female prisoners, allowed to wear their own clothes, although they were routinely searched and punished for fastening paramilitary uniforms. The Armagh women were on a no work protest against the removal of Special Category Status.

denied the accepted judicial process of, for example, a jury or assumed innocence.

Following the Gardiner Report of 1975 and the subsequent introduction of the policy of criminalisation, which decreed that the prisoners would be treated as ordinary criminals, Special Category Status was revoked. Anyone convicted of a crime related to paramilitary activity after 1 March 1976 would be given a prison uniform, expected to perform prison work, and would be treated as an ODC under this new policy of 'Ulsterisation, criminalisation, and normalisation' (Weinstein 2006, 17). This policy shift denied the existence of political prisoners within the United Kingdom and denied the political legitimacy of the conflict itself. Through the refusal to acknowledge the legitimacy of the republican struggle, the prisoners were effectively disempowered and disenfranchised. In determining that paramilitaries should be treated as criminals and marking them as such, the British government took the first steps towards the abjection of the republican prisoners in labelling them delinquent and outside social norms by denying the political legitimacy of their resistance.

Incarceration and Resistance: Protests in Armagh Gaol and the H-Blocks

The prison uniform was a means by which the British government was able to write a rejection of the legitimacy of the republican nationalist struggle on the bodies of the republican movement. Foucault (1977) mentions this use of the prison uniform as a marker of criminality explicitly in *Discipline and Punish,* and in turn Feldman (1991) restates the importance of wearable markers of status and identity, which he calls 'embodied transcripts' (7). He uses the example of the sandwichmen of Parisian arcades in the nineteenth century, wherein the wearer of the sandwich board was clearly visible and clearly marked in his role (Feldman 1991, 7). The protests that this chapter investigates began as resistance by the republican prisoners against this reinsription as criminals (see Feldman 1991), beginning immediately upon their arrival in the prison with the refusal to wear the prison uniform. The prison uniform became the symbol of the criminalisation

policies, and when Kieran Nugent was imprisoned in September 1976 (Weinstein 2006, 17), he refused it, wrapping himself in his prison blanket instead, and thus beginning the Blanket Protest. The men who participated in the protest became knowns as 'the Blanketmen', creating a new performance of republican identity within the H-Blocks. The Blanket Protest was a powerful protest in terms of its visuality. However, as illustrated by a memo issued by the Northern Ireland Office on 4 April 1977, the protest did not appear to have the desired impact on the prison regime – Mr. E Barry wrote that the protest had the 'ironic' impact of making prison discipline easier 'because of the protesters self imposed cellular confinement' (Barry 1977, 3). This same memo, however, expresses concern for 'the danger that it will attract outside support in the form of violent action by para-military organisations which may be directed against the prison service or take the form of widespread attack' (Barry 1977, 3).

Two years after Special Category Status was revoked, the Blanketmen began the No Wash Protest, in response to the abuse they suffered when leaving their cells to shower or on their way to empty their chamber pots. The fact that the Blanketmen were naked left them both emotionally and physically vulnerable to abuse from the guards, and testimony from the prisoners illustrates that the guards did not waste the opportunity to humiliate and subjugate (see Feldman 1991; Sands 1981; Campbell, McKeown, O'Hagan 1994). Memos released by the Prison Records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) discuss medical evaluations for prisoners who alleged abuse by the guards (McKechnie 1980, 3).One prisoner interviewed in Feldman (1991) recounts the escalation of the harassment, saying that the guards 'were giving you a strip search as you were going up to the toilet and as you were coming down' (Feldman 1991, 167).

These searches included what were known as the 'mirror searches', during which the (usually violently resisting) prisoner was forced to squat naked over a mirror in order to fully expose his rectum, after which they could then be digitally searched by the guards. Former prisoner Tommy

McKearney described the experience to the Prisons Memory Archive, saying

> You were taken out, at most you had a towel...then you see there was the search. One at a time you had to come walking out...naked except a towel... a linen hand towel, a tea towel... They'd have taken you here and there would have ten screws standing around you know? And they had a mirror... see those mirrors there? [indicates a mirror the size of a hand mirror]. A mirror that size there taken off... and you had to squat over that so they could view your backside. And we simply refused to do it for them so in the end they started beating us. And the beating...they just walloped and battered and beat men anyway. And then you see you were sitting in the cell and it was always a dread, you didn't know what to expect. Sometimes it was worse than others. A vicious, brutal time... It was just gratuitously as you were walking by, they'd just give you a wallop. (McKearney, n.d.)

The Blanketmen responded to this abuse by refusing to leave their cells to wash or to go to the toilet, beginning the No Wash (sometimes also called the 'Dirty') Protest.

The No Wash Protest in both the H-Blocks and Armagh was a spectacle of the resistance of the abject body. Speaking years later to the Prisons Memory Archive, former prison guard John Hetherington said '[the No Wash Protest] really crept up on us...We were caught in between government policy and a very determined bunch of men. I don't know whether to regard it with admiration on the one hand for sheer bloody-minded determination, or horror, really...' (Hetherington, n.d.). The production of the prisoners as abject was already well under away with the strip and mirror searches, which communicated the degradation and subordination of the prisoners through the control that was exerted over their bodies. Because the Blanketmen were harassed whenever they went to the toilet, they began exclusively using their chamber pots to avoid leaving their cells. They were met with further harassment when going to dispose of the pots' contents, which led them to try tipping them out through the windows or under the cell doors. When the guards prevented them from disposing of their chamber pots by boarding the cell windows and

obstructing the doors, the Blanketmen began covering the walls of their cells with their excrement in a mimesis of the abjection they experienced from the guards. There was no single event that led to the beginning of the No Wash Protest; rather, it was a response to the humiliation and harassment they suffered because of the Blanket Protest.

There is an interplay between humiliation and sexualisation that plays out on the bodies of the prisoners during this protest, particularly through the struggles over domination and power. My use of the idea of violence as played out upon the prisoners is deliberate – the violence experienced by the prisoners was itself performative, was intended to inscribe the prisoners as passive, with no control over either their bodies or their environment. This idea is introduced in Elaine Scarry's (1985) work on torture, *The Body in Pain*, in which she argues that torture is used to unmake the victim by stripping him or her of their access to language, and therefore their connection to the outside world.

Similarly, the use of sexualised violence was intended to strip the prisoners, particularly the Blanketmen, of their political agency, their legitimacy, and their masculinity. In the case of 'male-directed sexual violence' (Onyango and Hampanda 2011, 237), it is most often 'used to enhance political or military aims through humiliation [or] intimidation' (Onyango and Hampanda 2011, 237). As I have argued in Chapter Four of this thesis, there is an inherent hierarchy in the distribution of bodies as units of power, and drawing from Butler (1990), men are granted identity while women are viewed as a negation of that identity (Butler 1990, 53; see also Irigaray 1974). Expanding upon Beauvoir's (1976) argument that feminsiation is a becoming rather than something granted a priori, the 'othering' of the individual is a distinctly feminine and/or feminising experience, for if the feminine is constructed as that which is lacking, by extension the other will be understood as feminine. Sexualising the other, and the subsequent feminising of the other, also renders the other inferior and most important for issues of power relations in general and in political

violence specifically, subject to domination. I argue that the Blanketmen were feminised through a process of abjection, which renamed them as an other that was lacking such masculine characteristics as dominance and agency.

With the escalation of the Blanket Protest to the No Wash Protest and the concurrent escalation of the mirror searches by the guards, the violence that the prisoners experienced increased alongside the ways in which their bodies were weaponised. Tom McKearney, speaking to the Prisons Memory Archive, recalled the violence he experienced in refusing to submit to a mirror search during a wing move.

> ‘I come to the circle and PO [principle officer] was here and the PO said to me ‘Right get down over the mirror’ and I said ‘I'm not doing that’ and he said ‘right take him back’ and what they done was they grabbed me by the ankles and the arms and they turned me upside down and they run me back like a squeegee back to my cell right down the landing.’ (McKearney, n.d.)

In describing the mirror searches in interviews (see Feldman 1991), and living history narratives (see Campbell, McKeown, O'Hagan 1994), ex-prisoners frame the events in much the same way that victims of rape recount their attacks. If the prisoners were unlucky enough to be found with contraband, the abuse they suffered escalated. One ex-prisoner, who was dragged 'to the boards', meaning brought to a room for a further search and interrogation, when a mirror search revealed a pen and paper he had tried to smuggle in by hiding it in his rectum, said of the experience

> When they left and the door closed, I sat down on the small stool [the guards had forced him to bend at the waist over a stool]. Once I knew they weren't coming back, I cried. I had no clothes on...I remember feeling dirty, I wanted to ask for a bath...The only thing I thought to myself was that they couldn't hurt me any more than this (Campbell, McKeown, O'Hagan

1994, 91).

Feldman writes '[t]he rectal mirror examination was a ceremony of defilement' and argues that the mirror searchers were themselves a kind of colonisation (Feldman 1991, 174). Feldman's connection between the searches and colonisation is an interesting one. The mirror and cavity searches the prisoners endured undoubtedly extended the control of prisoners' bodies from the external to the internal. His use of colonisation is also interesting because of its inherent patriarchal hierarchy – colonisation involves the control of a native population achieved in many respects through a process of othering and feminising the native (see Said 1978). Furthermore, there is a recognised link between colonisation and surveillance (Mitchell 1988), implying that surveillance is important for the control of the population. The mirror searches forcibly expanded the surface area of the surveyed body.

These extreme methods of control intended to break the prisoners would have, if successful, left the prisoner in a state of submission and passivity, ultimately leaving him feminised. The overtly sexualised and excessive violence of these searches (it is also worth noting that the prisoners in question generally agreed to surrender their parcels prior to these examinations in order to avoid them) were intended to be displays of superior strength, which was accomplished through this sexualised assault. The search was a means by which the guards attempted to occupy and control the body of the prisoner, which is an alternative deployment of the language of colonisation to describe the process of bodily control upon which colonisation relies (see Mitchell 1988, 95-127).

The No Wash Protest was inherently feminising as it drew direct and considerable attention to the more primal, uncontrolled aspects to the bodies of the Blanketmen, referential to Kristeva's (1982) uncontained, abject female body. Part of the feminising discourse of colonialism involves the discursive production of the native as primal or savage, and there is a considerable focus on the abjection of the feminine because of the feminine's resistance to being contained (see Kristeva

1982, Wilcox 2014). Two ways in which the prisoners were feminised were through forced washes and through mirror searches. Forced washes were mandated in a memo to the Governor of HMP Maze on 28 September 1978 by the Northern Ireland Office in order to protect both prison staff (particularly medical staff) as well as to nominally to protect the health of the other prisoners (Barry 1978, 1). The forced washes were horrible, traumatising experiences for the prisoners, and for their families – the mother of two prisoners on the No Wash Protest who was brought to the H-Blocks for the Prison Memories Archive became distressed at the sight of the visiting room because of the memory of the forced washes, saying 'When I look at this place now and know what happened to him in those days it is dreadful … It does bring very clearly, there is no doubt, even after all these years … it is very vivid!' (in Aguiar 2014, 10).

The trauma of the forced washes is depicted in the film *Hunger* (2008), in which we see Bobby Sands (Michael Fassbender) hauled into the toilets to be shaved and bathed while resisting violently. What is striking about this scene is not only the experience of Sands, whose body we see quite literally tossed and manhandled, but the emphasis on the body, particularly the hands, of the prison guard. This particular guard, Raymond Lohan (Stuart Graham), is viewers' first encounter with the narrative of the film, as we see him gingerly washing his hands at home before he goes to work at HMP Maze, first checking under his car for bombs (*Hunger* 2008). These opening scenes of the film are arguably the most powerful not only in the piece itself but in preceding depictions of the Troubles for creating a sense of tension so palatable that the viewer is immediately on edge – this is accomplished largely through the stripped saturation of the shots and the lack of dialogue. Lohan arrives at the prison and we witness Sand's forced wash – he is hauled into the toilet, his hair shorn and his face shaved. When his head is forced up, he spits in Lohan's face, who then punches him once, and misses his second attempt, hitting the wall behind him instead. Sands is dragged unconscious from the toilet and thrown back into his cell, and Lohan again washes his now bloody hands, and the reason for his earlier tenderness becomes clear (*Hunger* 2008). It is a striking parallel

of the brutalisation of the body of the prisoner and the consequence of accidental brutalisation of the guard, and the juxtaposition between the care and the lack of care of injuries received. It also reflects the brutalising manner in which the prisoners were 'cared for', as the forced washes, which were nominally intended to improve the hygiene and therefore health of the prisoners inflicted a considerable amount of damage, and reflect the struggle between feminisation through brutalisation, and the reclamation of masculinity through weaponised abjection.

Hunger also deals with the mirror searches that were put in place to stop prisoners from bring contraband into the prison. The scene depicting the mirror searches is one of the most brutal in the film, and the impact is evident not only in the suffering of the prisoners, but in the suffering of the guards as well – one of the riot police is visibly frightened by the spectacle of these abused and naked bodies, and the end of the scene shows him huddled behind the riot shields, weeping (*Hunger* 2008). The mirror searches were clearly sexualised due to their visual and physical invasion of the Blanketmen's bodies. The aggression with which these searches were carried out strongly suggests an attempt to quite literally beat (and shame) the Blanketmen into submission, and the use of this sexualised violence was engineered towards rendering the Blanketmen passive. This was an attempt by the prison guards to feminise the Blanketmen, and the Hunger Strike Protest, as a reaction to and resistance against this feminisation, was an attempt by the strikers to reclaim the masculinity of the Blanketmen as a whole. Similarly, the No Wash Protest in Armagh was a response to the domination of the Armagh women by the prison regime, the political system, and the gender domination that pervaded society (Aretxaga 1997).

Deploying the Abject: Scatology and Decomposition as Weapons of the Body

To reiterate a central point made in the previous conceptual chapters, I understand the body to be the site of multiple identities, and wherein multiple forces intersect to make up its inscription, and its subjectivity. I have previously outlined the intimate relationship between the body and

identity, the body and violence, and the body and power, arguing that for these three (identity, power, violence) to exist, there must be a body through which they are understood, and are therefore able to exist. The body becomes a 'point of transaction' (Feldman 1991, 177) for opposing forces that 'fetishise' it as either given to one fixed set of meanings or another. I understand Feldman's use of fetishisation in this context as a mixing of a Marxist/Hegelian understanding of fetishism to be the foundation of religious superstition, and the Freudian understanding of the fetish as a substitute for an object of sexualised desire or disgust (Freud 1927). The fetish works to infuse the material with a desired set of meanings, and the fetishised body becomes the living symbol of a particular politics. Taken together, the fetished political body becomes the idol of political ideology, an object infused with meaning and coveted or abjected for its embodied transcription. In embodying these forces, according to Foucault, the individual is 'bifurcated….He internalizes the application of alien force onto his body; the action of the Other is metaphorized as his own activity' (Feldman 1991, 178; Foucault 1979, 202-203).

I understand Focault's argument to be that when the individual, the self, is confronted with the expectation of its alterity, or the assumption of othering within the self and the subsequent performance of otherness and abjection, the individual will respond in such a way that s/he embodies both his/her own perception of self, and the opposing force's perception of him/herself as other. Where Feldman takes issue with Foucault's analysis is the lack of acknowledgement that this process is not externalised, but internalised; that is, the prisoner (in both Foucault's example and in the case of the Northern Irish prison protests) is *self*-bifurcated, in a process Feldman calls 'the mimesis of alterity', and which he argues is the foundation upon which all prison resistance is mounted (Feldman 1991, 178). This self-bifrucating process performed by the prisoner is the means by which he or she effectively transforms from individual to symbol where the individual body became the means through which large-group differences were established. I take this a step further, arguing that the mimetic alterity is not only internalised but normalised, and through its

performance becomes the identity of the prisoners.

Prisoners recount the need to participate particularly in the Blanket Protests in order to appear fully committed to the cause (Feldman 1991, 158). Protests in the prison became the way in which the identity of republican prisoners was produced. In turn, 'this established the body as the invariant for all political valuation and exchange in the prison' (Feldman 1991, 179), whereby the bodies of the prisoners, through their interactions within and with the prison, became the producers of the political in the H-Blocks and Armagh. Letters that were confiscated from the prisoners to revolutionary regimes such as Angola and Catalonia illustrate the discursive production of the Blanketmen and Armagh women as repressed resistance against British tyranny, referring to 'a concerted campaign of torture and barbarity has been waged against naked and defenseless [sic] Republican socialist prisoners who simply refuse to yield to Britain's policy of criminalisation' (Dalzell et al, 1981, 2).

The protests also served to consolidate identity outside the prison – in a letter dated 17 August 1981, David Blatherwick talks about the importance of supporting the protests in the Catholic community, saying that '[t]hey [the Catholics] find themselves under increasing tribal pressure at least to acquiesce in a cause they know is wrong' (Blatherwick 1981, 1). Then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, in a letter to Cardinal o Fiaich, said that the motives of 'the shadowy and evil men behind them [the hunger strikers]' amounted to 'a propaganda victory. They want to turn Catholic against Protestant and Nationalist against Unionist, and to stir up the feelings of the minority community against Government and the forces of law and order' (Thatcher 1981). Whether or not the community did disagree with the actions of the Provos, this demonstrates that the protests (in this case the Hunger Strike Protest), was recognised as a community-building exercise. This again highlights the relationship between overkill and identity formation – as

discussed in the previous chapter, the brutalisation of the abject body produced both group identities, and here it is the weaponisation of the abject body that accomplishes this consolidation.

This mimesis of alterity in Northern Ireland through the No Wash and Hunger Strike Protests is a particularly compelling materialisation of the relationship between the other, the self, and abjection versus subjectivity. This is connected to the precarity of the self in relation to the other. Precarity I have discussed previously in terms of Butler's discussion of the precarious life and of grievability, particularly as it related to the relationship between melancholia, identity, and rage (Butler 1993, 234-236). Because of the inability of the self to release the other, and conversely the other's threat to the self's existence particularly when the other is perceived as abject, the other occupies a singularly tense and frightening position. The other cannot be destroyed as the self requires it to understand itself, but the other must be destroyed in order to protect the self from contamination or eradication (see Kristeva 1982). The Blanketmen occupied an obviously precarious space, both for themselves through their nakedness and potential exposure to abuse, and for the British government as reminders that the legitimacy of the Northern Irish struggle could not be easily dismissed. They were constantly reminded of this through the abuse that they suffered which led them to their protests.

The Blanketmen also found themselves in the centre of a constellation of competing transcriptions, which Feldman (1991) calls a central feature of political violence – in this case, to identify as the Blanketmen, the men of the H-Blocks merged their identity as the self (republicans) with an identification as the abject-other to the prison system (protesting prisoners). The Blanketmen internalised their ascribed identity as the abject-other inscribed upon them through the brutalisation they received at the hands of the prison guards, then externalised through the performances of their identity, i.e., through their protests. In doing so, they normalised abjection as part of the identity of the republican prisoner.

Mary Corcoran (2006) writes '[a]s the disputes over criminalization hardened into overt conflict in the prisoners, their bodies assumed a central place in the prison struggle' (Corcoran 2006, 171). Focussing on her discussion of the women's protest and the Foucauldian analysis of the body as a 'two-way conduit for forces of domination' (Corcoran 2006, 171), she mentions, and the selections from her interviews support, that the women in her study recognised their bodies 'as both objects of retribution and as instruments of war' (Corcoran 2006, 171). She considers this conception of the body as a weapon to be a 'dual meaning of the self' (Corcoran 2006, 171), wherein 'the body is a two-way conduit for force of domination in that 'after investing itself on the body, [power] finds itself exposed to a counter-attack in that same body'' (Foucault 1980, 56 in Corocoran 2006, 171). While she ultimately concludes that this form of protest is essentially passive, she draws out in the above quotations the fact that the prisoners viewed their bodies as weapons.

In addition to interpreting the protests as a form of warfare, Feldman (1991) reads the No Wash Protest as an attempt by the Blanketmen to re-clothe themselves in something other than the prison uniform, thereby escaping the materiality of criminalisation whilst simultaneously denying the wardens complete access to their bodies. Because the Blanketmen's refusal to wear the prison uniform was met with widespread cavity searches of the inmates, the 'prison regime....extended the logic of compulsory visibility from the surface to the interior of the prisoner's body' (Feldman 1991, 173). He then argues '[t]he No Wash Protest by the prisoners reclothed their naked bodies with a new and repellent surface of resistance...in its soiled condition the cell was no longer a unidimensional and totally transparent optical space' (Feldman 1991, 175). After years of complete visual exposure and the attendant vulnerability from this unending visibility, it follows that the protesters would attempt to cover themselves in another way, and evidence from within the prison regime suggests that their weaponisation had a considerable impact on the prison regime. In the notes from a meeting that took place on 12 February 1980, to discuss the No Wash Protest in the H-

Blocks, Mr. E. Barry, Assistant Secretary in the Northern Ireland Office, acknowledged the distress of the prison guards and advised caution in disseminating information about potential medical risks for fear of industrial action: he cautioned that raising concerns over protective clothing would alarm the guards, 'giving them a reason to ask for more money' (McKechnie 1980, 2). The nakedness of the Blanketmen resulted in a new level of vulnerability, which the No Wash Protest counteracted by shrouding their bodies in dirt and waste.

While I agree that the consequences of the No Wash included this visual obscuring of the prisoners' bodies, I argue that there was much more to the No Wash Protest than a desire for a refusal of surveillance. The creation of a repellent surface that was meant to render the bodies of the prisoners as weapons with which to resist the prison regime was the more important consequence. Namely, the No Wash protest was an attempt to weaponise the bodies of the prisoners through the process of rendering them abject. The prisoners in the No Wash Protest through their actions embodied the abjection they faced as the other, and their use of their own bodily waste to cover their cells and their bodies manifested the dehumanisation that they had experienced through the prison regime and at the hands of the prison guards.

The case study of the Northern Ireland prison protests has been selected because it is a clear example of the weaponisation of the abject body that evolved from its brutalisation. The use of the body as a weapon creates considerable conceptual tension, since it is the body of the agent that is ultimately harmed. Even in the case of suicide bombers, in which other people are harmed, the body of the bomber is specifically and horrifically damaged. Banu Bargu (2010) presents '[t]he human weapon' to be 'the subject-object of violence' (Bargu 2010), whereby the body of the antagonist is simultaneously that which commits violence and that which is harmed by the violence. This violence, in the case of the prison resistance in Northern Ireland, is intimately connected with not

only the ethnic identity of the republican prisoners as Irish, but also their sexualised identity as Blanketmen or Armagh women, as the protests in both prisons weaponised the body in ways specific to their sex. Understanding this intersection and recognizing it in the ways in which the body is implicated in ethnic violence adds to the understanding of how identity performance produces such extreme forms of violence that are often highly sexualised.

There are a number of assumptions in the literature on the weaponisation of the body as to the intended target of the human weapon. Human weapons challenge normalised notions of sovereignty (Bargu 2010, Linos 2010, Uzzell 2012), but the real symbolic target of the violence can be understood as the human weapon's own community (Dingley and Mollica 2007, 9). The question of the destabilisation of sovereignty as a goal of human weapons is an interesting one, and appears to be a major theme connecting individual instances of bodily weaponisation across different contexts and different modes of weaponisation. This destabilisation of sovereignty stems from the evolutionary shift of power from sovereign power, in which power means to 'let live and make die' to the regulatory power of bio-politics, in which power is to 'make live and let die' (see Foucault 1977). That the human weapon would bring about his or her own death in direct challenge to the sovereign is destabilising in its own right. The human weapon goes a step further than this, for '[w]hen life itself is negated in the struggle to challenge sovereignty, the power of life and death that the sovereign exercises becomes useless' (Uzzell 2012). This challenge empowers the body-weapon as it disturbs what is accepted as normal: the assumption of self-preservation, and of the ability of the sovereign to control and regulate the population. Destabilising the notion of 'normal' behaviour through the denial of the instinct of self-preservation, the body-weapon becomes abject to the biopolitical system by choosing death over life.

The community's role in the success of a body-weapon is also, perhaps equally, important. While the community additionally provides some of the context of the weaponisation of the body, I

argue that its importance is mainly in giving an audience to the performance of the body-weapon. Dingley and Mollica (2007) place a very heavy emphasis on the role of religion in creating the possibility of human weapons, which risks burying those examples of body weaponisation that occur in secular contexts, but in doing so they highlight the importance of the readability of bodily weaponisation as a performative protest. By making the argument for the significance of community response in bodily weaponisation, it is also important to note that the protest must use the language of the community that relates to what the protester is attempting to achieve. Religious iconography can create a juxtaposition between divinity and the actors themselves, and this is one way in which the suicide protest may be legible. This legibility is problematic for the No Wash Protest, which was too horrifying and outside a socially acceptable vocabulary for either resistance or martyrdom. Conversely, the Hunger Strike Protest, in weaponising the abject masculinised body, was able to rally the republican community outside the prison. The Hunger Strike Protest ended the No Wash Protest, as demonstrated in the notes of a meeting that took place 2 March 1981, the day after Bobby Sands began his fast, in which it is noted that all protesting prisoners requested clean cells (which sparked industrial action from the prison guards) (MacKay 1981). All of the emotive impact of the protests in both prisoners was channelled into the one operation of the hunger strikes.

In the republican prison protests, abjection is the medium through which the body of the prisoner becomes weaponised. The extreme nature of the No Wash Protest, for even in the context of abject protest it seems to stand apart, and its reliance on the weaponisation of the feminine rather than the masculine, made it too difficult for the community to grasp. Aretxaga (1997, 137) cites the reactions of male visitors (notably Tim Coogan) to Armagh Gaol as being far more repulsed by the women's protest than the men's, asking '[w]hat can make thirty dirty women more revolting than four hundred dirty men if not the exposure of menstrual blood?'. While there is power in the abject's incomprehensibility, it must walk a fine line wherein that incomprehensibility that is still recognisable and legible, and the No Wash Protest was beyond the comprehension of its targeted

political movement. The No Wash Protest in Armagh demonstrates the contextually-specific nature of the weaponisation of the body, as the manner in which the body may be weaponised will depend upon the community that it addresses as well as the tools (discursive and corporeal) at its disposal. There must be at least some level of understanding on the part of the community, otherwise there can be no galvanisation towards effective change, which is one reason that the No Wash Protest may have failed where the Hunger Strike Protest succeeded.

Evidence suggests that the Hunger Strike was so successful at rallying public support that it reached Irish-descended populations in the United States, and rattled the British government to the point of calling for an American public relations firm to advise on how best to keep negative public opinion from mounting in the Irish-American population (Elton 1981). There were also protests in Britain and in Europe, with a weekly bulletin covering 23-30 July 1981 from the Northern Ireland Office noting protest demonstrations in Leeds, as well as an instance of red paint being splashed on the British Library in Paris, France (MacKay 1981). The backlash of the hunger strike, specifically the deaths of any of the strikers, was threatening enough that the Taoiseach, in a recorded phone call to 10 Downing Street on 12 May 1981, a week after the death of Bobby Sands, pleaded with the strikers to complain to the ECHR, and failing that, pleaded with the Government to do the same, in order to halt the strike before the death of Francis Hughes (Harrington 1981). Hughes was declared on strike by the Medical Officer at HMP Maze on 15 March (Emerson 1981), and died shortly after the Taoiseach's call. Bodily weaponisation is dependent upon the response of the self and other communities, a point on which even scholars in disagreement can agree (Pape 2005, Linos 2010). The critical differences between the two protests were the genders of the bodies utilised, and the abjection weaponised. This is supported by other examinations into the protests, who argue '[t]he spectacle of prisoners willing to starve themselves to death... was considerably more communicable than prisoners living in their own excrement and urine' (McEvoy 2001, 107).

More recently, there has been some compelling discussion of the use of the body-weapon in reclaiming the identity of the self (Linos 2010, 8). The assumption here is that 'suicide violence may be considered an extreme form of reclaiming the violated body – a force that ultimately rejects oppression' (Linos 2010, 8). When the large-group identity of the self is severely threatened, Linos argues the body-weapon serves to retrench that identity by 'reject[ing] oppression and allow[ing] the indivdual to reclaim the body through self-directed violence' (Linos 2010, 8). I find this to be a compelling and valuable insight that is concurrent with the needs of the body-weapon to galvanise the community as well as the argument that violent identity is performative. It connects the body-weapon intimately to the larger struggle they aim to serve, and draws a parallel to Fujii's (2010) arguments on violent identity performance and Appadurai's (1998) discussion of vivisection in extreme violence as a means of discovering difference in the other – here, however, rather than etching the difference of the other on the body of the other, the body-weapon instead uses the body of the self to reclaim its ingroup identity. The more poignant the threat, the more viscerally the encroachment of the other is felt, and consequently the more radicalised the identity of the self becomes and the more violent the extraction of the other.

'The Colour of Shame': Menstruation and Abject Womanhood in the No Wash Protest

One of the critical contributions of this thesis are the insights gained from examining the deployment of the abject through the weaponisation of the body is an understanding of the high degree of intersectionality in the production of embodied identity, particularly sexualised and ethnicised identity. The performances of identities meld into and reinforce one another. Ethnic domination may be expressed through gendered and sexualised domination both within the group and without, and this line of causality can run in either direction. Here we find that the abject has another role to play in political violence, particularly in extreme forms of violent identity politics, which is that the abject often characterises the nature of the violence itself. Because identity in these cases is exclusionary, with outsiders viewed as dangerous and a threat to the security of the self, the

other is violently rejected, as the object violently rejects the abject. The violence itself that occurs materialises this sense of abjection, for as identities are written upon the body, so too are abjections. The abject is written upon the body both through its weaponisation, in the case of this chapter, or through its brutalisation, as will be discussed in the context of the Rwandan genocide of 1994. In the two sections that follow, I will examine the No Wash and Hunger Strike Protests individually as examples of the weaponised abject body. Ultimately I will conclude that the Hunger Strike succeeded where the No Wash failed because of its deployment of the masculinised, rather than the feminised, body. In this section, I will discuss the No Wash Protest at Armagh Gaol in order to illustrate the weaponisation of the abject, feminised body, which I conclude led to its ultimate failure.

'There is menstrual blood on the walls of Armagh Prison in Northern Ireland' opens the editorial by Nell McCafferty printed in the *Irish Times* (McCafferrty 1980). It is a compelling opening statement not only because of its content but the directness with which it is delivered. Menstrual blood, now as then, is not generally a comfortable or acceptable conversation. As disturbing as the No Wash Protest in the H-Blocks was, the 'protest of dirt' in Armagh was met with much more horror, and a great deal of confusion. Aretxaga (1997), one of the most prolific, and in fact one of the very few, writers on the women's No Wash Protest, comments that '[i]f the men's Dirty Protest was incomprehensible, the women's was unthinkable, generating in many men, even among the ranks of supporting Republicans, reactions of denial' (Aretxaga 1997, 129). She argues that the No Wash Protest in Armagh infused a gender dynamic into the general 'rejection of the civilising mission of British colonialism' (Artexaga 1997, 140) that founded the protest as a whole. I understand her argument to be based upon Kristeva's (1982, 4) understanding of the abject as defiant towards, and rejecting of, civilisation, as it is disruptive of 'identity, system, order'. I argue that this dramatic spotlighting of sexual difference through the Armagh No Wash Protest highlights the intersectionality of gender and ethnicity in the body of the individual. Through this

intersectionality, the Armagh women were able to weaponise their bodies against the political domination they experienced both as republicans and as women.

The abjection of menstrual blood is well analysed in much of the literature surrounding disgust and the body horror. Kristeva (1982) discusses the abject woman in the context of abject motherhood, with the mother being a major site of abjection in her understanding. Like other forms of abject that Kristeva discusses (that is, having to do with the functions of the body primal), menstrual blood 'collapse[s]...the border between inside and outside [of the body]' (Kristeva 1982, 53). Menstrual blood demonstrates the ambiguity of the border, and particularly the borders of the body. Kristeva (1982) also argues that because menstrual blood is connected to motherhood, and therefore womanhood, the rejection of menstrual blood is tied to the rejection of corporeality (Kristeva 1982, 53). Barbara Creed (1986, 52), in her examination of abject womanhood through horror films, argues that there is a psychological connection between evil, sin, and female sexuality[21]. Creed connects this not only to the evils of female sexuality but to Freudian fears of castration as well (Creed 1986, 52). In the body-weaponisation literature, Wilcox (2014, 70) discusses the anxiety surrounding the 'leaky' female body. Menstruation, then, occupies a space of considerable cultural significance in terms of its status as taboo.

It is difficult to pinpoint precisely where the No Wash Protest at Armagh fits into Northern Irish historiography – the women imprisoned at Armagh were convicted as republican

21 In Creed's analysis, there are significant parallels drawn between sin and evil – she notes the use of religious iconography in films such as *Carrie* and their more overt use in *The Exorcist* as demonstrative of the juxtaposition between menstruation, blood, shame, and sin. The understanding of female sexuality as sinful from a religious reading is founded in certain interpretations of Genesis 3:6, specifically the story of the Temptation and Fall of Man, wherein Eve, the first woman, is lured to commit the first sin and tempts or persuades her husband to commit sin, which ultimately leads to them both exiled from Paradise. However, alternate readings of Genesis 3 in which the verse is translated more closely reveal that the authors of Bible appear only to suggest that Eve gave Adam the forbidden apple, suggesting that the idea of woman as temptress is the result of theological interpretations of the Bible, rather than a reaction to what actually appears in the Bible (Higgins 1976, 640).

paramilitaries, and their protest was certainly grounded in republican ideology as the result of its own cycle of violence that began with the removal of political status and the refusal to do prison work under the new criminalisation regime. But there was also the issue of resisting the sorts of patriarchal violence that defined life in Armagh Gaol, as in other carceral regimes, and with the attendant abjection and pathologisation of women who disturb gendered expectations of women by committing crimes (see Corcoran 2006). This raises problematic questions about the motives behind the protest: were the prisoners protesting the patriarchal prison regime, and therefore the State, or the patriarchal structures of their own community. The answer, in short, is both – in a single protest, the women of Armagh resisted both the normalisation as criminals and the normalisation as women. One of the problems consistently raised in the examination of the women's No Wash Protest was that it 'could not at once be both a feminist issue *and* the same as the men’s protest in Long Kesh' (Weinstein 2006, 26) as each appealed to a different and competing audience, although of course it was precisely that – a republican and a feminist issue. This tension left many of the protesters' contemporaries unsure of whether or not to support the protest and raised the question of its efficacy as a demonstration of Irish identity.

While it is not my intention to discuss in detail the implications of feminist support, or lack thereof, for the Armagh No Wash Protest, this ambiguity highlights the considerable issue of the illegibility of the protest – that is, what precisely the target of the protest was to be. It raises the following question: could the Armagh women through a single protest resist the domination of both the self and the other. While it certainly attempted to do this, ultimately the No Wash Protest in Armagh failed, coming to an end not through an escalation to hunger striking (for the Armagh women were excluded from the 1981 Hunger Strike Protest), but through a removal from the protest strategy entirely in the shift from the No Wash to Hunger Strike Protest by the male-dominated IRA command (Beresford 1987). While the women continued to resist through a refusal to undertake prison work, their own protest did not advance even as they were increasingly subjected to strip

searches. There is an additional layer of illegibility to the No Wash Protest (both in Armagh and the H-Blocks) given the extreme form of protest, which confused the message sent to the community – the protesters were abject not only to the regime they resisted but to their own community as well.

Legibility in the Weaponisation of the Feminised Body

The issue of legibility for the Armagh women arose before the protest began – by virtue of being female and in prison, they had already transgressed gender paradigms. This is indicated not only by the prisoners but female guards as well. Margaret Skelly told the Prisons Memory Archive '[i]t wasn't about danger or a threat. It was about being conspicuous, I think...If you're a woman in a prison, everybody knows you.' (Skelly, n.d.). The women in both prisoners were hyper-visible. The feeling of abjection, the insecurity and horror that the subject feels when confronted with the abject, is in large part due to the subject's inability to understand it. This illegibility of the abject is similar to Freud's understanding of the uncanny, where the abject (like the uncanny) is simultaneously 'repulsive and fascinating' (Tyler 2009, 80; see also Freud 1919).

This potential for illegibility and the anxiety that this produced was also felt in the men's prison; Peader Whelan, one of the Blanketman, said of the protest '[w]hile we were worried about our health, we worried too about how people would see our going against everything we had been taught and if they'd understand it' (Campbell, McKeown, O'Hagan 2006, 41). The legibility of the protest – that is, the ability of those outside the prison to understand it – appears to have been quite lost in translation, as visitors to the prison such as Archbishop Tomás Ó Fiaich commented largely on the horror of the situation (Ross 2012), rather than upon what the protest was attempting to accomplish. Visitors from the International Red Cross, who came to view the living conditions of the prisoners under strict mandate of political neutrality, noted that the prisoners decried their living

conditions to be ‘irrelevant compared to their political demands’ (Hayes 1981, 2). Discussions of the protest also framed it in such a way to ensure that the responsibility for the conditions of the protest were the protesters and not the government: in a memo dated 24 October 1980 the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland said ‘[i]t is by their own decision that the protesting prisoners go on living in conditions which must be offensive to all civilised people’ (Atkins 1980, 2) which made its reception even more difficult.

In addition to its use of the language of the abject, the women's protest posed a considerable problem for contemporaries trying to frame a reaction to the events in the prison. It was rooted in the same principles as the Blanketmen's, and a desire for solidarity among and continuity between the male and female paramilitaries can certainly be read into both the protest and the fact the prisoners demonstrated a degree of camaraderie amongst themselves: Bobby Sand's diary makes frequent references to the Armagh women – on the first day of his hunger strike, he wrote in his diary of 'the girls in Armagh...[t]here is so much I would like to say to them, about their courage, determination, and unquenchable spirit of resistance' (Sands 1981, 5). However, the women's protest was ultimately set in motion by an event that excluded the men in the H-Blocks because it involved the domination of women by men at the behest of women.

The No Wash Protest in Armagh differed slightly to the protest in the H-Blocks, in that the men's protest was a response to a sustained period of abuse, in contrast to the women's which began as a result of a search for ‘paramilitary style’ clothing (Barry 1980, 1). Accounts of the strip search(es) that led to the women's protest implicate men as the main aggressors, with female guards encouraging their actions (Aretxaga 1995, Aretxaga 1997, Weinstein 2007). Ex-prisoners also discuss the attempted regimentation of menstruation through the rationing of sanitary towels (Fairweather 1984, 222). More importantly, the protest itself impacted women in a way that it did

not impact men, for while both groups suffered surrounded by their own waste, women dealt with addition of menstrual blood. This added more than just another factor with which to contend, but rather surrounded the women with the physical expression of their outsider status within their own group – the menstrual blood marked them as abject within an abject as sexualised women within an othered group.

I have argued that the protest resisted two forms of domination – the political domination of the Northern/Irish by the British, as well as the patriarchal domination of women within the prison system. I use 'patriarchal' domination to suggest that this was institutionalised oppression, and it was in some instances perpetrated by women (that is, by female prison guards). This domination was in some ways similar to what the men experienced in the H-Blocks, particularly when strip-searching was introduced; but it also took on women-specific forms. One of the Armagh women pointed out that in the gaol, women were required 'to state when their period was due...if it started earlier that anticipated or came more often then expected, then too bad. The women still had to make due with the quota of sanitary towels allotted to them' (Fairweather, McDonough, and McFadyean 1984, 222). The authors comment that this was a 'particularly humiliating form of punishment...[designed] to break the prisoners in an exclusively female way' (Fairweather, McDonough, and McFadyean 1984, 222). I agree with this assessment, particularly given that it was punishing without cause – menstruation is rarely a process of clockwork consistency, and the idea that a woman should be punished for menstruating out of turn is absurd. It demonstrates a likewise absurd attempt at disciplining and controlling the uncontrollable female body. The rationing of sanitary towels and the refusal to supply them was domination for domination's sake. It suggests a precursor to the women's No Wash Protest, as having experienced domination through their menstrual cycle, the menstrual cycle became a weapon of resistance.

The weaponisation of menstrual blood did not begin with the women of Armagh, but with the guards themselves, and it was used as a weapon against the men before it was used as a weapon against women. Feldman (1991) publishes an interview with a prisoner about the process of interrogation who recounts the story of a fellow inmate whose girlfriend was brought in for questioning as well:

> They took ----'s girlfriend, dragged her into Castlereagh while he was under interrogation. Stormed into his cell with a soiled sanitary towel they took off of her and said 'Do you know what you're putting this woman through here?' It was meant to degrade her and to degrade him. She broke and made statements. (Feldman 1991, 135)

While the factual status of this example is uncertain, the power of the violence implied is clear for those recounting the event: the interrogators sought to degrade the man in their custody, and did so effectively by bringing his girlfriend's menstruation into view. Stripping a woman of her sanitary towel is itself sexual assault. Menstruation is something that women keep private, and this unidentified man's girlfriend would have been forced to either hand it over or would have had it taken off of her, in either case violating the privacy of her body. It also suggests that women are in some way disadvantaged by their menstruation, that women who are menstruating have something to hide and are weakened by it – that her boyfriend was being held and interrogated was struggle enough, but that she was also menstruating at the time made it somehow worse. Menstruation is a natural biological process, but despite this, it is clearly viewed as something that about which a woman should be ashamed, and should therefore be concealed. Menstrual blood occupies a space of considerable horror and revulsion, 'more' abject even than urine or faeces. It is, in point of fact, just another form of bodily waste, but it also demonstrates the sexualised, uncontained (Kristeva 1982) female body.

Menstruation was weaponised by the prison regime not only to degrade men, but women

who were held for interrogation as well. Artexaga (1995) refers to the menstruation of the prisoner as ‘a sabotage of the body' (Aretxaga 1995, 139), and recounts the story of Brenda Murphy, a republican writer who participated in the Dirty Protest and who told of her experience in her short story 'A Curse,' in which a woman held for interrogation discovers her period and must discuss it with her male interrogator:

> ‘I've taken my period’ she said simply. ‘I need some sanitary napkins and a wash.’ He looked at her with disgust. ‘Have you no shame? I've been married twenty years and my wife wouldn't mention things like that.’ But I don’t this would be an atypical response for many men of that generation, whatever their ethnic background. What is the colour of shame? All she could see was red as it trickled down her legs (Murphy 1989, 226-227 in Aretxaga 1995, 139)

Here menstruation is an act of betrayal by the woman's body, forcing her to discuss her weakness, and her shame. Menstruating women are not viewed as strong, which further illustrates the link between feminisation and disempowerment. Women are at their weakest and most subjugated when their female-ness is most difficult to deny or avoid. This juxtaposition is itself simple, but it becomes more complex where feminisation/disempowerment intersects with identity – the case of Murphy, her lack of agency was communicated through her captivity as a republican prisoners and her 'ill-timed' period.

Aretxanga writes, '[t]he prisoners’ excreta and menstrual blood tap into the interconnected domains of prison violence, colonial history, unconscious motivation, and gender discourses' (Aretxanga 1995, 126). These women, by virtue of their first *being* in prison, then by forcing their menstruation into public discourse, put themselves at odds with conservative views about the roles and proper behaviour of women. Menstrual blood carries with it its own set of taboos, and while other elimination processes are thought to be unclean, menstruation carries the additional weight of

not only being an unclean process but a process through which the entire body of the woman is considered unclean (see Leviticus 15:19). Excrement itself may be dirty, but menstruation renders the whole person unclean, undesirable, and untouchable.

The Armagh protest brought into focus the presence of women as political prisoners and protesters in way that made them distinct from the men, and it did this through the use of menstrual blood as a weapon of resistance. Outside the prison, the weapons of womanhood had been those of 'the invisibility of women's bodies' (Aretxaga 1997, 38), and she cites a story of a young woman and her mother-in-law who carried guns and ammunition past a group of British guards without being questioned or even stopped (Aretxaga 1997, 38). '[A]s subjects of history women have also been erased from the public arenas of politics and war' (Aretxaga 1997, 38), and this erasure ensures that when a soldier meets a woman, even in a war zone, his suspicions are not raised as they would be had he met a man. There was no such invisibility in Armagh prison, however – those women were understood to be political agents through the actions that led to their conviction. In the absence of their invisibility within political space, the women of Armagh's protest instead made hypervisibility of their womanhood a method of resistance. If menstruation is kept invisible, weaponising the woman's body through abjection will instead make it extremely visible.

The Armagh No Wash Protest gained a great deal of attention, and while it did not succeed in regaining Special Category Status for the prisoners, it did have some impact. In response to the protest, the Government was extremely sensitive to the type of information that got out about the protest– which is called 'lying propaganda' on the part of Father Dennis Faul (n.a. 1980c, 1) – and its reception, wherein the Government stresses the need to avoid 'steps likely to harden or consolidate the women's protest, or to give the propagandists any legitimate openings to complain of harsh treatment by the authorities' (n.a., 1980c, 2). Weinstein (2007) mentions three large groups

outside the prison who weighed in upon the Protest: the republican movement, who attempted to use (or exploit) the sex of the Armagh women to garner support; the feminist movement, who were divided over whether or not support the women; and the Catholic Church, who framed the protest as largely a humanitarian concern (Weinstein 2007, 19). Ultimately, however, the Armagh No Wash Protest was, as it was with the men's, unsuccessful in achieving its stated aims. My argument is that in order to effectively weaponise the body, what the body-weapon perceives as its target community must be able to rally around the actions of the body-weapon, but the No Wash Protests strayed too far into the abject to be accessible to the community. The weaponisation of the bodies of the Armagh women certainly produced an emotive effect, but one that was too horrified to inspire the necessary sympathy.

'The Savage Reduction of the Flesh'[22]: Abject Masculinity in the Hunger Strike Protest

In the previous section, I discussed the No Wash Protest in Armagh Gaol as an illustration of the weaponisation of the ethnicised and sexualised body through abjection. I have argued that the women's protest was ultimately unsuccessful as it weaponised abject femininity, and was outside the scope of legibility. The protest proved too horrifying and too divisive to rally support to the republican cause, and a change of tactic was initiated when, on 1 March 1981, Bobby Sands began the Hunger Strike Protest that would result in his death and the deaths of nine other Blanketmen. I read the 1981 Irish Republican Hunger Strike Protest as a redirection in the weaponisation of the abject body, this time deploying the abject masculine body. The Hunger Strike Protest was more easily readable and was more effective in rallying support outside the prison, and it ultimately succeeded where the No Wash Protest failed. It was also the second hunger strike undertaken in the prison; a previous strike in 1980 had failed when the strikers were close to death. The 1980 Hunger

22 This phrase attributed to Maud Ellman (1988). It is also the title of a previously published piece, 'The savage reduction of the flesh': violence, gender and bodily weaponisation in the 1981 Irish Republican hunger strike protest' (O'Branski 2014).

Strike was treated as a nominal victory for the republicans in the first instance, who attempted to scratch some gains which the Government said amounted to a failed 'face-saving exercise' (n.a. 1980a, 22) saying that the demands of the strikers 'would go far to give, and are intended to give, the protesting prisoners control over their lives in prison, and could not be agreed to by the Government, since to do so would be to legitimise and encourage terrorist activity' (n.a. 1980b, 2). This illustrates that the Hunger Strike Protest was consistently a struggle for legitimacy.

Allen Feldman (1991) says of the H-Block protests that '[s]ymbolization in the H-Blocks was forged in violence, it was often violent in itself, and it never failed to engaged life-and-death issues' (Feldman 1991, 163). He goes on to argue '[t]he H-Blocks teach us that within the ecologies of violence, knowledge, representation, and cultural genesis begin and end in the body' (Feldman 1991, 166). Each of the three protests that occurred in the H-Blocks represent a different mode of bodily weaponisation in which the intended target of violence is out of reach, and the body of the prisoner is effectively the best or only weapon available to them. While the prisoners were in close physical proximity to the prison guards, and most of their interactions would have been with the guards, the prison guards as individuals were not, in the case of the protests, the direct targets. Violence that directly targeted the prison guards occurred when IRA and INLA members outside the H-Blocks orchestrated their assassinations. Rather, the intended victim of the protest was, broadly, the British government, via public opinion. Westminster was seen as an illegitimate occupying force, and perhaps more specifically Margaret Thatcher and her policies. In this regard the protest was largely successful. David Blatherwick of the Political Affairs Division said in a confidential letter dated 17 August, 1981 '[t]he effects of the strike so far are bad enough. The Provos and INLA have gained a new batch of recruits. The feeling of alienation, bitterness and frustration we detected in Catholic areas in May has grown steadily stronger. People are becoming anti-British and less ready to give the system their support' (Blatherwick 1981, 2). By undertaking their hunger strike, the strikers intended to force the government's hand in acquiescing to their 'Five

Demands': the right not to wear a prison uniform; the right not to do prison work; of free association with other prisoners; one visit, letter, and package a week; and the restoration of remission. These amounted to recognition of political status, or the return of Special Category Status.

The Hunger Strike Protest was orchestrated to mean the end of the No Wash Protest. My reading of the Hunger Strike Protest is that through the bodies and actions of the strikers, the prisoners as a unit reclaimed their collective masculinity, where masculinity implies agency, power, and dignity. They were no longer subjected to the passifying/paternalisitc measures of the prison regime, such as forced washes. Most importantly, they were no longer engaged in a protest that was so heavily reliant on the more primal features and functions of their bodies as the No Wash Protest because the Hunger Strike Protest did not rely on the wastes of the body. Dating back to Aristotle, there is an epistemological connection between the masculinity and the mind, femininity and the body. Through the more ascetic Hunger Strike Protest, the strikers crossed over that binary claim the superiority of their minds over their subjugated and beaten bodies in a classic subordination of the feminine by the masculine.

There is a discursive echo of the hunger strike to an historic/mythic past that is specifically Irish, as there is some suggestion that hunger striking was included in the pre-Christian Celtic legal system as a means by which the less powerful could protest the actions of the more powerful. This became better known though WB Yeats's 'The King's Threshold'. But as O'Malley (1990) points out, 'there is nothing especially Irish' about hunger-striking (O'Malley 1990, 25). 'The myth of hunger-striking,' he argues, 'is more powerful than the history of hunger-striking itself' (O'Malley 1990, 25), and that it 'fuses...the legal code of ancient Ireland, [the] self-denial that is the central characteristic of Irish Catholicism, and...the propensity for endurance and sacrifice that is the hallmark of militant Irish nationalism' (O'Malley 1990, 25). Whatever the real history of hunger-striking in pre-Christian Ireland, the 1981 Hunger Strike Protest did establish a mythic genealogy

between the rebels of the 1916 Easter Rising, in particular the hunger striker Thomas Ashe, and the prisoners of 1981. In addition to establishing their protest as part of a tradition in Irish resistance politics, this connection helped in legitimizing the protest in the minds of the people as freedom-fighters participating in an Irish traditional of resistance rather than terrorists. It also echoed their ethnicisation as Irish or Irish-republican by producing their belonging to a group that was other to the British self.

Hunger striking occupies an uncomfortable position in the discussion of political violence. It does have a history of being a form of peaceful, nonviolent protest, and one of the major criticisms of hunger-striking as a form of political violence is the idea that if a hunger striker is granted his or her demands, s/he will end the fast, meaning that the death of the hunger striker is not an assured outcome (Biggs 2008), as in other instances of bodily weaponisation such as suicide bombing. While this is the case in some hunger strikes, it is not applicable to all, and the testimony of the 1981 Irish hunger strikers demonstrates that it was not the case in this particular protest. Bobby Sand's diary frequently and with surprising clarity discusses his resignation to death (Sands 1981), and O'Malley (1990) describes the words of Kieran Doherty nine days before his death on hunger strike as spoken with 'the lucidity of one for whom the certainty of his own death has become a matter of comfort rather than regret' (O'Malley 1990, 7). He later uses words like 'nonchalant' and 'cavalier' (O'Malley 1990, 115) to describe the strikers. A twenty-two page report on the 1980 Hunger Strike released by the Prison Records Office of Northern Ireland says 'the single most important factor was that the seven bunger [sic] strikers just did not have the will to die. They may have been misled into thinking that their protest would succeed easily, and as it became increasingly clear that their deaths were going to be in vain, the fear of death probably became an increasingly significant factor' (n.a. 1980, 19). This was not the case in the 1981 strike.

What is crucial to an understanding of the 1981 Hunger Strike Protest is that the strikers

went in with the acceptance of the certainty or likelihood of their own deaths, and they fasted anyway. Feldman (1991) writes '[t]he Blanketmen viewed the 1981 Hunger Strike as a military campaign.... it was a modality of insurrectionary violence in which they deployed their bodies as weapons' (Feldman 1991, 220). A letter to Cardinal o Fiaich from then-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Humphrey Atkins emphasises that the Hunger Strike Protest was built entirely around the demands of the prisoners themselves- Atkins writes 'I had to pay attention also to what the protesters themselves said. They had made it only too clear what kind of status, and what kind of prison regime they wanted' (Atkins 1981, 2). In this same letter he makes it clear that the protest is viewed as violent: 'the Government [will] maintain its stance not to yield wound principles in the face of violence, whatever form that violence may take' (Atkins 1981, 3). The strikers themselves appear to have viewed the protest not only as a military operation for a political gain, but as a defensive operation to hold back the abuse the other prisoners were experiencing. Father Oliver Crilly recalled Tom McElwee, one of the strikers, describing this defensive motivation behind the Hunger Strike Protest:

> There was a high level of hostility and brutality in the relationships within the prison all the time. Tom also said to me that while he was on hunger strike, it was as if he was interposing his body like a block of wood to take the pressure, to hold the pressure from coming down on his comrades in the prison....While Tom was on hunger strike, he felt that he wasn't just working for the Five Demands but that he was actually preventing the kind of brutality that they had experienced in the prison (Crilly, n.d.).

This militarised framing of the hunger strike by the strikers themselves demonstrates that theirs was not a passive protest but was intended to force the hand of Thatcher's government in recognizing the Irish republican cause as a legitimate political one.

Reading the Hunger Strike Protest in this way offers a better understanding of one role of the body in ethnic violence, and how it produces extreme expressions of violence. The prisoners

chose the most virulent form of resistance available to them in order to create the maximum emotive effect. This is what separates the hunger strike of the Irish republicans from those which could be labelled passive or nonviolent resistance – their strike was intended as a violent act, and it was intended to inspire violence outside the prison, which it managed successfully (O'Malley 1990). The Hunger Strike Protest weaponised the subjugated and feminised bodies of the strikers by re-writing them as simultaneously and paradoxically masculine and abject. It was both an oppositional protest in that it resisted the feminisation of the prisoners through the abuse they suffered from the guards, and a strategic deployment of the abjected male body against an opponent. One of the more salient abjections is the corpse – it is a human body, but it is without life. I may look at a corpse and recognize it to be a person that I know, but that person is gone. The corpse is a confrontation of mortality, of impermanence, and the ultimate confrontation with corporeality, which the horror of the abject helps the self to avoid. It is this abjection, the corpse, which the hunger strikers used as a weapon against what they viewed as colonialist domination.

The Hunger Strike Protest involved two contingent processes – the reclamation of the strikers' masculinity, and the reduction of the bodies of young men to corpses. The emotive power of the protest came from this wasting of youthful male virility. The violence that the prisoners experienced through the Blanket and No Wash Protests were intended by the prison guards to pacify them, to quite literally beat them into submission, and it was strikingly sexualised. Testimonials from the prisoners graphically recount the ways in which their bodies, and in particular their genitalia, were brutalised when they left or more typically were dragged from their cells (Campbell, McKeown, O'Hagan 1994). Given that the prisoners were naked when they were not in their cells and therefore were entirely exposed to visual and physical assault, the fact that this vulnerability was capitalised upon in such a way that targeted their sexual organs directly corresponds to sexual assault, which here means violence done to a vulnerable body that specifically implicates the sexual characteristics of that body. While the brutalisation of the

prisoners in this manner was done to inflict a maximum level of pain, it did so by exploiting the vulnerability of the prisoner's bodies. It sent a clear message that the most vulnerable parts of the Blanketmen's bodies were within the grasp of the prison regime, and this vulnerability could be exploited to ensure the domination of the prisoners by the guards.

Mary Corocoran (2006) says that all prison protests are inherently passive, and are embedded in the power regimes against which prisoners resist, and therefore '[b]odily practices of resistance, then, cannot aspire to... autonomy' (Corcoran 2006, 99). In contrast, the hunger strike should be read as a process of bodily resistance and weaponisation, but as Foucault indicates, one that is inherently founded in the dynamics of power against which it resists. The nature of the prison protest demands that it operates within the discourse of power – that is to say, it is reliant on the prison for its legibility, its structure, its impact. The agency of the imprisoned body is, like any body, already inscribed by its relationship to power – the prisoners only have so many tools with which to mount their protest, and only so many options in terms of what kind of protest they can mount.

The Hunger Strike Protest was a means by which the prisoners crossed from the savage captivity defiled by their own bodies in the No Wash Protest to the more ascetic Hunger Strike Protest. In this movement, the prisoners moved across the Aristotelian feminine body/masculine mind binary and in doing so they moved away from the symbolic feminisation to a reclamation of their masculinity. Feldman (1991) says of the Hunger Strike Protest that it represented a sort of catharsis for the prisoners, that '[t]he ending of the No Wash Protest furthered the imagery of ritual purification associated with the Hunger Strike' (Feldman 1991, 247). The purification that Feldman discusses was the transition between the corporeal protest of the No Wash, which focused exclusively on the body, to the more aesthetic hunger strike. One of the things that it symbolized was separation of body and mind, a dominance of the masculine mind. In the last entry of his diary,

Bobby Sands wrote '[t]he body fights back sure enough, but at the end of the day everything returns to the primary consideration, that is, the mind. The mind is most important' (Sands 1981, 60). Through the bodies and actions of the strikers, the prisoners as a unit reclaimed their collective masculinity. They were no longer subjected to the passifying/paternalisitc measures of the prison regime, such as the forced washes. Most importantly, they were no longer engaged in a protest that was so heavily reliant on the more primal features and functions of their bodies as the No Wash Protest. This reclamation of masculinity is important for the concept of overkill because it illustrates the tandem sexualisation and weaponisation of the body in extreme cases of violence, wherein the sexualised body is deployed in order to reclaim sexualised dominance.

Conclusions

This chapter has focused upon the body as a weapon through its transformation into the abject, as one of two empirical studies of the performance of the ethnic body in certain types of ethnic violence. This second empirical study was used to illustrate the second stage of overkill, wherein in some instances the body that has been brutalised can become weaponised, and its sexualised abjection used to strike back at its attacker. This performance of the ethnic body is informed by the intersection of the ethnicised body with sexualised body of the other. In this chapter, the weaponisation of the body demonstrates this intersection: the No Wash Protest in Armagh relied upon the abject and sexualised body of the ethnicised Irish and republican woman, and the Hunger Strike Protest relied upon the refusal of a particular mode of sexualisation, the use of brutalising violence to feminise the prisoners of Long Kesh. In their refusal to submit to violence, and their refusal to be remarked as criminals, the men of the H-Blocks weaponised another abject, that of the corpse.

To arrive at this conclusion, I have examined the nature of the protests themselves. The two protests upon which this chapter focused were directly protesting the shift from political recognition

of the prisoners to a policy of criminalisation. This shift meant the struggle of the Irish republicans inside and outside the prison would be viewed as criminal, or at best terrorist, activity, rather than a legitimate struggle of a native population against colonizers. The recognition of Irish republicanism as a political cause, and by extension the recognition of the conflict itself as legitimate was what lay at stake in these protests, and so the actions of the protest had to be themselves readable as legitimate. This meant that the prisoners could not fashion weapons etc., to fight back against the regime, but had to weaponise themselves. More importantly, the use of the bodies of the prisoners galvanised the emotional response of the community outside the prison walls, and inside proved a powerful tool of resistance.

Through the No Wash Protest, the Armagh women weaponised their bodies in a way that was quite specific, in that one of the tools of their resistance was menstrual blood. Although the men of the H-Blocks participated in a similar action, the women's protest through its use of such a tabooed function communicated the abjection of the prisoners' bodies with greater force. The power of this protest came from its illegibility, the fact that the protest not only used the language of the abject but because of its inaccessibility was itself abject. The horror and confusion, the pre-verbal sensation of disgust at the protest was the emotional weight that carried the prisoners' demands to the public outside. The No Wash Protest speaks to the abjection of the colonised other, and weaponises the idea of the feminised savage common to colonialist, and especially exterminatory, discourses (see Lindqvist 1992). It also disrupts the gendered assumptions of proper expressions of femininity, in particular that women should be clean, and that the mystification and taboo of menstruation is not to be challenged.

The Hunger Strike Protest of 1981 represented a tactical shift in the prisoners' strategy of resistance. The No Wash Protest had proved feminising, in its use of the women's sexualised bodies

in Armagh, its opening up of the male body to extreme aggression in the prison, and its focus on the body which is typically associated with femininity. The Hunger Strike Protest changed the dynamic of the struggle as it shifted to a more ascetic, and therefore masculine, approach. It did not, however, complete this transition, as protests of the body will always remain rooted in the body, despite claims to an ascetic mythic tradition and its remaining a bodily resistance is what led to its success – the protest's weight rested on the fact that the bodies of young men were wasting away to corpses. Unlike the No Wash protest, the Hunger Strike was ultimately successful in that the prisoners were awarded a de facto recognition of political status without being officially recognised as such. Taken together, these protests demonstrate one way in which the intersection of the sexualised and ethnicised body can produce the types of abject violence we see in some cases of ethnic violence. The prison protests in Northern Ireland were performative of a new type of identity, the identity of republican prisoner, of Blanketmen and Armagh women, and their ethnicisation and sexualisation were played out through the weaponisation of their bodies.

Chapter Seven

Conclusions and Contributions

Thesis Summary

This thesis began with questions about the nature of violent identity politics, namely how some instances of identity politics have produced extreme forms of abject violence that uses or targets specific bodies in ways that appeared highly sexualised. Two examples of this violence used in this thesis were the genocidal rape in the 1994 Rwandan Genocide and the use of menstrual blood in the No Wash Protest in Northern Ireland as this violence tended to occur in identity-based political conflicts that were often labelled in the existing literature as ethnic conflicts. My initial research question was to what extent the intersection of embodied ethnicity and sexualisation contributes to extreme forms of violence.

I began this thesis by introducing the existing literature on the formation of ethnic identity, because of the tendency for these conflicts, which are characterised by abject, sexualised violence, to be labelled as ethnic. In examining the literature on ethnic identity, it became clear that there were considerable issues throughout the literature, and there was a notable lack of cohesion in terms of both the definition and the deployment of ethnicity. Furthermore, my reading of the ethnic identity literature revealed inconsistencies in the ways in which ethnicity was framed, discussed, and utilised, but some scholars agreed that a group was considered ethnic if they shared some number of cultural characteristics, and if they were recognised as a group by those outside (Smith 1986, Barth 1969). While it did clearly emerge that ethnicity is a category of group identification, as it is felt as a very real marker of difference, it is one that appears as an overarching description of membership loosely defined in terms of language, culture, endogamy, territory, and most critically,

social normative practices. I therefore understand ethnicity to be a matrix of intersectional markers of difference that are often sexualised and are policed by abjection.

The lack of a clear definition of ethnic groups poses considerable difficulty when it came to understanding ethnic conflict, in particular when examining the roots of ethnic conflict. Many of the explanations for ethnic conflict discussed in Chapter Two dismiss the idea of ethnic groups as naturally occurring phenomena, but treat them as such in order to arrive at their respective understandings of how ethnic conflict arises. This was because ethnic groups needed to be understood as internally cohesive in order to treat ethnicity as a causal variable in conflict. It appeared that in order to explain ethnic conflict, scholars were underestimating the importance of the formation of ethnic identity in the first instance. In order to better explain the roots of ethnic conflict, I began to construct my own understanding of how conflict emerges from the roots of identity formation, taking into consideration identity as dynamic, embodied, and intersectional particularly with respect to sexual norms.

In order to ground the research question in a theoretical framework, I turned in Chapter Three to the literature on performativity and embodied identity. This provided me with a conceptual foundation that could simultaneously account for identity as seemingly natural, and as empirically dynamic. As explained by Judith Butler (1990), performativity is a theory of identity that views it as productive, that it ‘‘produces’ what it claims merely to represent' (Butler 1990, 3). By acting out the norms prescribed by identity markers, individuals ensure that those markers continue to define the parameters of that group. Butler argues 'the political construction of the subject proceeds with certain legitimating and exclusionary aims, and these political operations are effectively concealed and naturalised...' (1990, 3). This highlights two important elements of ethnic identity – that it appears as natural, and that it is intrinsically based upon binary operations of inclusion and

exclusion. That identity appears as natural accounts for the confusion in the existing literature, particularly in bridging the gap between the ethnic identity literature and the ethnic conflict literature, as viewing identity as performative allows for it to be understood as neither wholly enduring or wholly constructed, but appearing as both.

Viewing identity as performative also allows us to think about violence in a new way. If the individual material actions of a subject are productive of his or her identity, then violence is not the effect of another underlying cause, but rather is itself productive – an act of violence done either to the subject or by the subject constitutes that subject in the moment of violence. Because of the emphasis on the materiality of the body in making identity possible, I understand identity to always be an embodied force. Identities are understood through performances that are always made possible by the body, and so the effects of identity politics are made known through actions done to and on bodies. The body is produced as identity is produced, through the material performances of the body (Butler 1993). For this reason I have examined violence in terms of the physical acts committed against and by bodies, viewing violence as constitutive of the subjectivity of both its victims and its perpetrators.

This theoretical emphasis on performativity and embodiment revealed the importance of the concept of the abject in the formation of identity, in particular the emphasis on inclusion and exclusion, and the necessity of the body for the expression and performance of identity. In Chapter Four I showed that abjection encompasses the exclusion of the other to understand what is included in the self, marks and polices the boundary between the self and other, and also accounts for the feeling of confusion, revulsion, and fascination with that boundary and what is outside of it. Abjection combines a feeling of disgust with a feeling of terror, fascinating as it repels. Kristeva (1982) discusses the abject in terms of the individual and the formation of understandings of the

self, as that which must be rejected in order for the self to be fully realised. Because of this, the abject is simultaneously constitutive of the self and threatening to it. Butler (2004), in her reading of Freud, claims that this rejection of the abject produces a melancholia in the subject, an unrecognisable grief over the loss of the abject, that can turn into rage over its denial. Abjection therefore delineates the differences between ourselves and others both as individuals and as social groups, and those acts that represent the border are met with confusion, disgust, fear, and rage. Tracing the theoretical roots of this project back to Butler's early formations of performativity (Butler 1990), we see that difference as abject behaviour marked through deviant sexual practices and norms.

Taken together, the theoretical foundations in conceptions of performativity and abjection have led me to the understanding that the constitution of ethnicity is done through the marking of differences. Differences are produced through the discursive production of aberrant or deviant sexualities, and are marked through sexualised violence. These markers of difference intersect with other markers of difference, such as heritage, religion, or class. Group identity is inherently exclusionary, and it views outsiders as threatening and dangerous. The danger of the other is framed in terms of the perceived sexual differences between groups – outsider males rumoured as rapists, or outsider women as sexually depraved, for example. The concept of ethnicity is formed as the normality of the self against the alleged and ascribed deviance of the other, and sexualisation demarcates these boundaries. The shoring up of the boundaries of the group along sexualised lines produces the practice of endogamy that is mentioned as one of the markers of an ethnic group by inspiring fear and distrust of the sexual norms of other groups. These are relaxed in the absence of tensions, and strengthened in times of crisis.

This argument led me to the concept of overkill, introduced and explained in Chapter Four

of this thesis, and applied to two empirical case studies in Chapters Five and Six – the 1994 Rwandan genocide and the prison protests in Northern Ireland respectively. I introduced the concept of overkill to the study of violent identity politics in order to begin categorising the extreme violence that has so far been under-theorised in the existing literature. It appeared that in cases of extreme violence, there were patterns of abjection and sexualisation that emerged from the performance of violent identity. Overkill is the sexualised weaponisation and/or brutalisation of the body. It is constitutive, productive, and communicative violence, and it utilises the language of abjection to confer its meaning. Overkill is violence that strips the target of its subjectivity, and remakes both perpetrator and victim in a new kind of subjectivity. The operation of overkill in the brutalisation of the body is the more obvious of the two, whilst in the weaponisation of the body it is perhaps more subtle, particularly where it involves self-directed violence, and is an evolution of overkill from the body's brutalisation. In the Northern Ireland case, the weaponisation of the bodies of the prisoners is done through the mimesis of their own abjection – the body-weapon abjects itself in order to communicate the denial of and to reconstitute its subjectivity. Unlike other forms of violence, overkill does not attempt to police, to render docile, or to alter, but rather seeks to identify difference, shame the bearers of that difference, and to eradicate that difference. Violence in these cases becomes a new kind of identity that is performed and embodied.

The relationship between violence, identity, the body, and performativity plays out in two dynamics of overkill – the brutalisation and the weaponisation of the body. Each explains a different aspect of the relationship between embodied abjection and embodied identity that make up overkill. It is important to note that these two case studies are not intended to be compared against one another, but rather are being used to discuss two different claims about the dynamics of overkill, the brutalisation of the body in Rwanda and the weaponisation of the body in Northern Ireland. In the 1994 Rwandan genocide, the identity of the *genocidaire* was bound up in the brutalisation of the body of the Tutsi, and through rendering the Tutsi body abject through violence,

the identity of the Hutu was likewise produced and performed. Through the prison protests in Northern Ireland, we gain an understanding of how abjection is itself performative. The prisoners through their protests performed their own abjection as they assumed the identity of protesting prisoners, and using the vocabulary of that abjection weaponised their bodies in resistance to their own othering.

What each of these case studies has demonstrated is the importance of the intersection of ethnicity and sexuality in abjection in certain instances of violent identity politics. Whether the body is brutalised, weaponised, or both in overkill, we can see the emergence of a pattern in the sexualisation of the ethnicised, abject other. This sexualisation has been unaccounted for in previous examinations of violent identity politics yet does appear as a common feature. We can see that in both case studies, the sexualisation of the Tutsi and the republican prisoners respectively constituted their identity, and did so such that they were starkly distinct from the Hutu and the loyalists. The boundaries that set the limits of their identities were each policed by abjection, and their subjugation was iterated through sexualised violence both iterative and physical.

Contributions: Ethnicity as intersectional and the conditions of possibility for overkill

One critical claim of this thesis is that ethnicity should be viewed less as a cohesive, coherent category and more as the intersection of numerous identities, the boundaries of which are policed by sexualised norms. Ethnic identity is intersectional with other types of identity. This is not to suggest simply that people will have an ethnic identity in addition to their class, religious, or gender identities, but rather to argue that ethnicity is intrinsically and inextricably tied in to these other modes of identification. Viewing ethnicity not only as performative but as intersectionaly performative with gendered and sexualised identity is a departure from previous conceptions of ethnic identity especially as it relates to conflict. Ethnicity in this view is not essentialised as a

causal variable in violent identity politics, but is rather a larger categorisation for several markers of difference. These markers are in turn policed by abjection and are often sexualised. When these differences become overtly marked by sexualised difference and become radicalised, we find the conditions of possibility for overkill.

The concept of intersectionality is vitally important to an understanding of overkill. I understand ethnic identity to be a constellation of difference markers, some which are sexualised, and which are policed by abjection. The intersectionality of ethnicity blurs the lines around ethnicity as a cohesive category, which produces the same kinds of uncertainties that emerge when faced with the abject. This uncertainty leads to sexualised brutalisation, whilst the concurrent mimesis of abjected alterity leads to sexualised weaponisation. The evisceration of pregnant women in Rwanda is a visceral example of the interaction between sexualised brutalisation and uncertainty, while the Hunger Strike Protest is a clear example of sexualised weaponisation.

The constitution of ethnicity is done through the marking of difference through sexualised violence. These sexualised differences intersect with other markers of difference, which can be racialised physical markers, cultural markers such as food and dress, many of which are rolled together under the category of ethnicity. Ethnicity is formed as the normality of ingroup practices against the deviance of outgroup practices, and these differences can begin as divisions of language, food, religion, and so on – whatever is available to make divisions clear. In Rwanda, this is clear in the sexualisation of the Tutsi as deviant, and the alleged differences in sexual practices and preferences that were produced as part of the propaganda leading up to and during the genocide

By examining the prison protests in Northern Ireland, I demonstrated the intersectionality of ethnicised and sexualised identity in the abjected body through weaponisation as one kind of overkill. We can see the processes of sexualisation and brutalisation at work in the interactions of the prisoners with the prison guards, in particular abuse surrounding menstruation and strip and mirror searches. Outside the prison, the republican struggle was delegitimised as criminal by the policies of Margaret Thatcher, with further subjugated the prisoners. Their ethnicisation was accomplished not only by their production as other, but internally as well, as the Blanketmen solidified their Irish identity through, among other things, learning Gaelic. The prisoners, through their protest and in what Feldman calls the mimesis of alterity but that I have more explicitly referred to as a mimesis of the abjection experienced through their brutalisation, weaponised their own ethnicised and sexualised bodies.

This sexualisation is an important condition of possibility for overkill, and in particular is important to the asynchrony of the violence that occurs and what it attempts to accomplish. Violence or the threat of violence here is not about the communication of the strategic presence of the self, which is how a theory of overkill differs from an understanding of the security dilemma, but rather is about the demonstration of the abjection of the other and the conference of a new subjectivity based upon that violence. Above all, increases in violence through corporeal acts or discursive means are not chronologically incremental, where an action by one group leads to a proportional stepping up by another. Rather these events are entirely asynchronous, and herein lies the considerable problem with predictive models – because the road to the 'threshold' of extreme violence is not an instrumental or strategic stepping-up, ethnic tensions can move from banal to horrifying rapidly and without a clear logic of escalation. Therefore it is not the purpose of this project to map out a series of empirical events for which to look so that the international community may have a precise and knowable moment at which to step in and break a cycle of violence. This is because I understand violent identity politics to be a fluid, dynamic process that is entirely context

dependent and therefore defies neat, predictive modelling. To rephrase David Horowitz (1985), bloody and passionate phenomena cannot be explained by a sterile and static (or singular) theory.

Both case studies illustrate the asynchronicity with which violence of this kind may escalate – despite having been prepared in advance of the assassination of Habyarimana, the Rwandan genocide erupted into extreme brutality almost at once. That said, an asynchronistic build-up is not the same as a random, unpredictable, or inevitable one, and the key is the presence of sexualised discrimination and domination. Ethnic identification is formed through the marking and ascription of sexualised difference. We have seen this in both Rwanda and Northern Ireland as presented here, but this is equally visible in cases outside this project such as Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina, wherein ascribing difference through sexualised markers leads to sexualised violence. Even at the most banal level, in societies that do not display much in the way of tendency towards extreme violence, sexualised deviance of the other is visible. In France, there has been and continues to be considerable tension over the so-called 2010 'veil ban', which made any practice of covering the face in public illegal.

What made these laws pernicious was not simply the letters of the laws themselves, which can be superficially read as an extension of the Ferry Laws in the case of the 2004 school ban and the increasing securitisation of civil society in the case of the 2010 veil ban, but rather their spirit- the ways in which these bans were framed and the people who were directly targeted. The bans were discursively produced in terms of stopping the public displays of Islamic religious practice, but specifically the practise of Islam by women. It framed Muslim femininity as something in need of rescue from the West, rendering Muslim women passive, infantalised, and Orientalised. In turn, it produces Muslim masculinity as aberrant and deviant, framing the veil solely terms of oppression to the exclusion of other narratives (See Al-Saji 2010, 877). The Muslim community as a whole was

alienated to its own sphere, through considerable emphasis on placed on what set them apart from the 'normal' French population. This compounds the point of difference being produced as the sexualised differences between the normal self and the aberrant other – while this is not to suggest that France is about to erupt into extreme violence, it speaks to the importance of recognising the production of sexualised difference. Such differences are encoded in the very structure of society, naturalised and accepted, and they can therefore go unnoticed and unquestioned.

Finally, abjection is an important condition of possibility for overkill. Overkill, importantly, emphasises the considerable importance of abjection to an understanding of extreme political violence, and how violence can tip the threshold to extremity. Abjection, in particular embodied abjection, is a concept that is new neither to the social identity literature nor, in recent years, the literature on political violence. Particularly within the study of suicide terrorism, abjection has emerged as the language through which the message of the terrorist is communicated (Wilcox 2014). Abjection becomes a tool for communicating difference, and for destabilising the status quo and conceptions of normality, particularly when weaponised. The primary target of abjection is, according to the literature that has recently emerged on the politics of abjection, states and state sovereignty as a concept (see Linos 2010, Wilcox 2014). This is largely indebted to the work of Achille Mbembe (2003), and his theory of necropolitics, and the role of death in sovereignty.

While there is this emergent vocabulary of abjection in political violence, the terms are still being negotiated. In their book *Beyond Biopolitics,* Debrix and Barden (2012) discuss the relationship between alterity and what they call enmity, saying '[t]his theme of enmity derived from the notion of abnormality or counter-conduct is crucial to biopolitical understandings of alterity (90). They argue that the production of otherness lends 'credibility to the implementation and proliferation of biopolitical practices' (91). They also recognise the inability of the biopolitical

thesis to account for extreme violence, relaying the story of a teenage suicide bomber whose mutilated remains became so fused with those of her victim that the victim was only identified when her severed head, previously thought to belong to the bomber, was identified by her mother (Debrix and Barden 2012, 93). Their assessment of extreme violence, but with a considerable and specific focus on events like suicide bombings, is that the victims and attackers are so destroyed as to be indistinguishable from one another. 'Terror', which they hold to be distinct from 'horror' is a tool of the biopolitical, and it relies upon both 'recognition and rejection' (Debrix and Barden 2012, 92) – horror remains outside the biopolitical.

More recently, Laura Wilcox (2014) uses abjection in her discussion of the weaponisation of the body in such a way that it refers not 'to corpses or bodily fluids per se, but rather, that which does not obey borders and challenges the existence of such borders' (Wilcox 2014, 68). In contrast, here and elsewhere (O'Branski 2014), I argue that abjection refers to corporeal states and actions explicitly. Abjection is not only that which marks borders by challenging them – it is the message from the other side of that border as well. Abjection is the response to both the membrane between the Self and what is outside, while at the same time, abjection is that which is outside, the corpse, the faeces, and the menstrual blood. Abjection is uncertainty, terror, and disgust, but it is also that same uncertainty, terror, and disgust made material by the corporeality of the abject itself, as well as the body of the abject other.

Contributions: Overkill as a specific form of political violence

This thesis has argued for a shift in the understanding of violence, specifically for an understanding of the extreme violence that can occur in some instances of violent identity politics as a specific form of political violence, overkill. Violence is not a symptom or an extension of behaviour stemming from underlying prejudices, but rather violence is itself constitutive of the

subject. Violence is therefore inherently political – it produces the subjects that it claims to be used by, and it confers a new subjectivity upon them. Recent work on violence in politics has put forward similar arguments that violence should be viewed as productive and above all political – Charlotte Heath-Kelly (2013, 176) argues that violence is itself a 'discursive tool' in international politics. She argues that violence, and specifically torture, 'destroys language' (Health-Kelly 2013, 23), which allows for the remaking of not only the subject, but the regime.

Torture for Health-Kelly is used to 'substantiate the symbolic order of the group while de-realising the narrative governance of the state' to create a new 'name' under which power operates (Health-Kelly 2013, 44). Her work is an important intervention into the study of political violence in international relations for its examination of violence as indistinct from the political, and therefore arguing against the notion of violence as an interruption of the political. As Feldman (1991) points out, violence is not a point at which a fixed subject arrives. Extreme political violence is not an outlier, or a symptom, nor is it the end product of a linear cause and effect chain. Far from being either systematic or aberrational, violence is productive and constitutive of political subjectivity, and rape, hunger-striking, beatings of the naked body comprise the constitution of subjects through violence. This concept of sexualised violence as subjectivity-driven, which is to say that it reconstitutes the subjectivity of the victim as abject (or a non-subject) while affirming the perpetrators' subjectivities is an important point for overkill as a distinct form of political violence.

The asynchronistic build-up of overkill is another point of departure from other forms of political violence. If we know how difference is framed and we know that the tipping point between tension (as in France) and extreme violence (as in Kosovo) is more akin to a spark in a powder keg than a set of scales, what can be done to prevent events such as the 1994 Rwandan genocide or the degrading torture in Northern Ireland? There are a number of recommendations to be made, some

practical and short-term, others systemic and long-term. Because of the extremity of violence in cases such as the Rwandan genocide, the tendency of the international community has been to write the violence off as depraved, which leaves us without a legal system with which to either intervene or to satisfactorily prosecute after the violence has ended. The Rwandan genocide is a good example of this – intervention was of little use, and the sheer scale of participation in the genocide has meant that many of the survivors come face to face with their attackers on a daily basis. Rather than the viewing extreme political violence purely through the lens of its extremity, it must be recognised as the politically constitutive act that it is.

Short-term, any increase in sexual violence in ethnically divided societies can and should be taken more seriously – rape, violence against women, and sexual assault should be treated as causal events, not as symptoms of existing tension. Intervention in these cases would need to be swift – every time violence is committed in these situations, a new subject is constituted, and the battle against the solidification of violent identities is lost. This would mean any peacekeepers or other authorities on the ground in divided societies would require a stronger policing mandate so that they could effectively respond to sexually motivated crimes. This will be particularly visible in locations where women's rights are not recognised, not enforced, or otherwise drowned out by patriarchal systems. In Rwanda women were largely considered to be the dependence of first their fathers, then their husbands (Human Rights Watch 1996, 19), and domestic violence was common enough that '[o]ne Rwandan proverb states that a woman who is not yet battered is not a real woman' (Human Rights Watch 1996, 20). Violence constitutes subjects that are themselves violent, or who are targets of violence, and stopping this cycle of iterative violence requires intervention before that subjectivity is constituted.

Longer term, this would call for considerable effort to be made in halting banal, every day sexualised discrimination and domination. This could be accomplished through a mapping of sexual violence, degrading sexualised discourse, and hate speech. Similar projects are already under way through social media and other grass-roots campaigns. One such project is Hatebase, an online repository that identifies and catalogues hate speech as part of the Sentinel Project for Genocide Prevention. The website provides a visual map of where hate speech is occurring and what kind of speech is taking place – and included in the project's definition of hate speech is the use of degrading sexualised terms. Butler (1997, 18) argues that hate speech works to 'constitute the subject in a subordinate position', and so the importance of hate speech in the formation of identities, and in producing the norms under which the identities will operate and which they will in turn produce, cannot be underestimated. Viewing dominating and hate speech acts as banal and a normal – and therefore excusable – part of society encourages their naturalisation, and resistance in the form of calling attention to these speech acts goes a long way in disrupting their normalisation.

Development in future research projects

There are multiple potential avenues for developing the concepts of intersectionality in political violence and of overkill. Two of these that I am interested in exploring are the ways in which space impacts upon performances of violent identity, and the extension of the examination of sexualised identities in suicide protests in order to further develop the understanding of the body as a weapon in overkill. The necessity of a border or boundary has been an important consideration throughout this thesis as it is through the creation and subsequent protection of a boundary between groups that identity politics, and especially violent identity politics, arises. Abjection polices the border between groups and defines the kind of violence that occurs in overkill, and is itself a condition of possibility for overkill. Moreover, the spaces in which overkill operates within the case studies presented in this thesis are specifically gendered. This raises questions about the impact of

space on the radicalisation of identity in extraterritorial spaces such as prisons or camps, as well as domestic or 'safe' spaces such as churches and schools. These gendered spaces could provide an interesting lens through which to examine the ways in which the communication and performance of boundaries lead to an embodiment of sexualised and violent identity, and gendered space could be another condition of possibility for overkill.

The second area to be developed is the impact of certain practices of sexualisation and gendering in radicalising identity towards bodily weaponisation. There is a significant and interesting gap in the study of political violence and in particular the use of the abject body as a weapon in political violence. While the weaponisation of the body in the context of suicide terrorism has been the focus of some academic inquiry, and some important contributions have been made to its understanding, the *body* that is itself weaponised has emerged relative recently (Linos 2010, Bargu 2011). The transition to the focus on the body, and its utility as I see it, is this – once suicide terrorism was posited as having some kind of internal logic (Pape 2003), the object of that logic became the value of that logic. Suicide terrorism was clearly attempting to achieve something, and whatever it was attempting to achieve was embodied by its target. Pape (2003) argues for quite stable, coercive, and instrumental concerns as the goal of suicide terrorism, where the value of the attack is determined by the number of people killed and/or the amount of property destroyed.

In contrast, I argue that there is something else that needs communicating, a target beyond the victims, and this requires the abjection of the terrorists' or suicide protesters' bodies. Some (Linos 2010, Wilcox 2014, Biggs 2008) argue that the message is a challenge to the state or the status quo. I argue that challenge to be to othering, and suicide terrorism to be a challenge to dominate power relations that is communicated through the sexualisation of the body-weapon. As demonstrated in Chapter Six of this thesis, the power of the body-weapon is in its embodiment of

the abject and its weaponisation of that abjection, but this argument would benefit from further exploration and development. Specifically this would involve exploring to what extent different practices of gendering or sexualising lead to different modes of bodily weaponisation. Put another way, it would interrogate questions such as the factors that drive suicide bombers in Palestine and how these factors differ from those that drive self-immolation in Kurdistan.

Through these two potential avenues for future research, the arguments made in this thesis can provide a foundation for further projects and allow for deeper insight in to the research questions, namely how does this kind of violence, overkill, come about, and make further contributions to the existing literature on violent identity politics. Each would expand upon the work done in this thesis, which has introduced a different way of viewing and understanding extreme violence through the introduction of the concept overkill as abject violence done through the brutalisation and/or weaponisation of the abject and sexualised body. Further questions about the role of gendered spaces or examinations of suicide protests could lead to new understandings of the conditions of possibility of overkill, and deeper insights into this kind of violence.

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