Entrance

A Theory of the Double

Twarz wroga przeraża mnie wtedy, gdy widzę, jak bardzo jest podobna do mojej.
(The face of the enemy terrifies me when I see how very similar it is to mine.)
—Stanisław Jerzy Lec, Myśli Nieuczesane

THE BOMBER. The all-caps bolded declaration juxtaposed against the image of an attractive teenager is a dissonant composition, one that scribbles in a tense interval into the score of the war on terror. For some, the image and its placement, reminiscent of Jim Morrison’s posthumous Rolling Stone cover (September 17, 1981), not only glamorized a terrorist, but worse still disrespected his victims. Three people were killed and about 260 injured on the final stretch of the 2013 Boston Marathon when Dzhokhar Tsarnaev and his older brother Tamerlan remotely detonated two homemade bombs. Tamerlan was killed during a shootout with police. The younger brother’s fate was foreshadowed by the caption accompanying the 1981 Morrison cover to which the 2013 one was widely compared: “He’s hot, he’s sexy, and he’s dead.” Tsarnaev was tried, found guilty of all thirty counts with which he was charged, and sentenced to death in 2015.

For others the image marked a cadence, the shifting of the war on terror into a new modality, however unpleasing. This sentiment was most clearly expressed by the Rolling Stone’s Matt Taibbi who ruminated about the nature of the “modern terrorist”: “You can’t see him coming. He’s not walking down the street with a scary beard and a red X through his face. He looks just like any other kid.” In Taibbi’s juxtaposition of the Tsarnaev cover to a 2011 Time magazine cover that posthumously featured Osama bin Laden (with “a scary beard and a red X”), the image
of the enemy-terrorist morphs from a clearly delineated other packed in neat Orientalist binaries into a figure that confuses the boundaries that demarcate us from other. This figure is the Double.

After 9/11 philosopher and cultural critic Slavoj Žižek asked, “Are we in a war? Do we have an enemy?” echoing the French philosopher Jacques Derrida’s post–Cold War reflections in which he lamented the violence that the loss of an identifiable enemy might bring. This lost enemy is the spatial-political structuring enemy central to the thought of German jurist Carl Schmitt. Yet, even as Žižek acknowledged the dispersion of the enemy into a shadowy network, he recognized the re-invigoration of the binary logic of the enemy image. Indeed, for the first decade of the twenty-first century, bin Laden (in name and image) acted as a synecdochic figure that stood in for a dispersed global enemy, providing a template for countless popular and political representations of threat, one built atop age-old Orientalist fantasies. The enemy, imagined as other, unifies a collective. By embodying what a collective is not—and externalizing blame, aggression, and evil—the other provides a clearly bounded adversary (by race, culture, religion, ideology, etc., however porous the political borders) against which to identify and be identified, against which to mobilize and be mobilized.

In 2010, Attorney General Eric Holder publicly announced that the threat facing the United States had changed. He warned Americans that they had reason to fear their neighbors, those “raised here, born here, and who for whatever reason, have decided that they are going to become radicalized and take up arms against the nation in which they were born.” Janet Napolitano, secretary of homeland security, reiterated Holder’s assertion in a statement to the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. She testified that the threat of homegrown terrorism—Americans taking up arms against their own country—has no “typical profile.” Certainly, the claim that the enemy is “walking among us” is a commonplace war on terror assertion. But it is a claim based on the loosening of state boundaries—the enemy walks across borders and within our cities. In the context of the war on terror, analysis of what threat looks like, that is, how it is represented, has continued to center on what the Italian political philosopher Carlo Galli calls the “hyper-representation” of others (the racialized enemy images that Žižek sees as reinvigorated).
But the Double figure that I develop in this book, and that Napolitano and Holder invoke, does not fit this mold. Rather, it is a threat explicitly communicated as one not clearly or categorically identifiable. It demarks a foe running loose within the country’s borders who might look, talk, and/or act “like us,” who might materialize in the people and places one would least expect, even a good-looking, pot-smoking, popular university student.

This book fills this gap and analyzes security discourses that do not depend exclusively on hyper-representations of threat. Instead, it focuses on discourses that also rely on the regular invocation of markers of likeness and similarity. The articulations of likeness in security discourse are not to be taken as self-evident claims. Rather, much like those of difference they are “non-factual” constructs. In other words, I examine the exploitation of the murkiness against which hyper-representations are said to be deployed by the state. Here, the bin Laden image is overlaid (and as I will show neither erased nor discarded) by multiple, shifting others; Tsarnaev’s is only one iteration in an ever-expanding series. Contra the other, the Double is a figure that, in failing to externalize the negative of a collective’s own self-image, functions to disrupt the collective, marking the group as fractured. It takes the ambivalent and productive splitting of cultural theorist Homi Bhabha’s stereotype (simultaneously dangerous/active and obedient/passive) and redirects it onto one’s own community. More broadly, I show throughout this book that the Double is a modality of communicating threat that reflects the cultural-political plane on which contemporary security discourses operate. Here, the spectrality of the structuring enemy migrates onto the plane of representation. In this process members of a collective are marked as potentially dangerous, both suspect and susceptible.

Indeed, the breadth of events and actors described as terrorist has expanded in recent years, accompanied by the proliferation of debates concerning who is “the real terrorist” (though the seed of either growth is not to be found in the rubble of the Twin Towers). Referring to groups who participate in arson and other acts of sabotage, the Federal Bureau of Investigation announced in 2008 that “ecoterrorism” was the country’s number-one domestic terror threat. In both 2009 and 2015, the Department of Homeland Security stated that the nation’s most dangerous terrorists sprang from the political right—racist white
supremacists and the Sovereign Citizen movement, respectively. The violence of the former most recently materialized when nine African American churchgoers were massacred in Charleston, South Carolina. The latter consists of loosely affiliated individuals who reject the authority of the federal government, several of whom have targeted and killed police officers. The violence against persons and property in these contexts is carried out by white men. However, in their warnings to the American public, Holder and Napolitano were concerned with neither the activist left nor the racist right. Rather, in both instances they were referring to jihadists.

There have certainly been incidents of jihadist violence in addition to the Boston Marathon bombing that have perplexed commonplace war on terror stereotypes. In 2011, Daniel Patrick Boyd, a former high school football star and small business owner from North Carolina, plead guilty to conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists. As did a New Jersey woman, Colleen LaRose (aka Jihad Jane), that same year in an unrelated case. In 2015, a Protestant-raised Oregon man turned al-Qaeda operative named Adam Gadahn was killed in a drone strike. A federal grand jury indicted him for treason nine years earlier. All three home-grown jihadists are Caucasian. More recently, sympathizers and recruits of the self-proclaimed “Islamic State” (ISIS) have left pundits similarly perplexed (such as the case of a nineteen-year-old white woman, Shannon Maureen Conley, from Colorado who was arrested by federal agents as she was about to board an Istanbul-bound flight, her first and last stop before heading to Syria). But, as this book will show, invocations of likeness in the context of terrorist threat, like those found in the statements of Holder and Napolitano, are not limited to those who are white. In this effort, here I depart from the Tsarnaev case and return to it in the conclusion.

In this book, I am not interested in adjudicating whether or not, or how much, an individual (threat, enemy, or foe) is “like us.” This is often the work of rabid nationalists, though hardly exclusive to them. Rather, I approach claims of likeness from a more oblique angle. The original valence of Polish poet Stanisław Lec’s aphorism in the epigraph is ethical and unhinging. It draws attention to how a collective can take on the monstrous qualities it projects onto its adversary in times of war. The moment he describes is not one of identification, nor is it simply...
a matter of role reversal. It is a fundamentally disruptive experience of asymmetrical refraction in which identification itself is put into doubt. Holder and Napolitano’s statements, however, are best read as instrumentalizing Lec’s aphorism, in what I call the discourse of the Double. What terrifies both Holder and Napolitano is not the simultaneous yet disjointed and disjointing realization of one’s own brutality and one’s adversary’s humanity, but an enemy that blends into the crowd. Certainly, their conjuring of the Double is also disruptive, but is enacted through a governmental modality that services contemporary securitization. When Žižek illustrates that the work of identifying the enemy through markers of difference is never factual, but rather a laborious constructive process sometimes intricate sometimes crude, he risks naturalizing likeness, stating, “[the enemy] cannot be directly recognized because it looks like one of us.” Here, without naturalizing the expressions of difference often used in producing images of the enemy, I seek to investigate the work of constructing likeness in the realm of security. This book focuses on the functionalities of making the claim that a terrorist is “like us” in a variety of respects, the historical and media backdrop against which this claim is and can be made, and the political repercussions of doing so.

America’s anxieties concerning traitors and turncoats are hardly new. The Oath of Allegiance conscripts new Americans into the service of defending the nation “against all enemies, foreign and domestic.” In the same vein, one need only think of the Cold War cries of “Reds under the bed.” Thus, this book falls within a well-tread interdisciplinary nexus that grapples with the relationship between identity, media, and citizenship in times of conflict. However, within this tradition, home-grown terrorism in its specificity has received little attention. Terrorism as an idea has had several lives, but only recently has security discourse sprouted the concept of homegrown terrorism, generating a unique context within which the spectral or phantom enemy materializes in the communication of threat. Moreover, while the Double resurfaces in various historical moments, albeit in period-specific articulations, it has not been deployed as a heuristic through which to make sense of identity in and for war. The academic tradition that has examined the ways in which an adversary is imagined as or made identifiable and knowable has largely rested on notions of the other. American
World War II propaganda exemplifies the use of stereotyped images—of the Japanese, for example—to mark threat, as do the many fictional portrayals both pre- and post-9/11 that the face of Osama bin Laden has come to represent. While the histories to which these examples are tied belie assertions that conflict is ever so neatly bounded, the question remains: how does the formulation of a threat as one that explicitly blurs the boundaries of representation in and for security, those thought so crucial for waging a successful campaign, affect the rhythms played on the drums of war?

This book breaks down this question into component parts in order to adequately address the issues of identity, media, belonging, and citizenship it raises. How is difference—racial, ethnic, classed, and religious—communicated within articulations of a threat that is said to be indistinguishable from the citizen (distinct from those in response to a lost enemy)? How is likeness injected into visual and textual representations of the homegrown threat? How do media practices (digital and analog) of terrorist groups, citizens, and counterterrorism efforts inform and structure invocations of the Double? What does the conjuring of the Double reveal about contemporary modalities of enmity and power? How are citizenship and belonging reimagined through the Double? What is the relationship of the Double to the other, to boundaries of inclusion and exclusion? What securitizing practices does the Double accompany and facilitate?

An adequate footing from which to address these questions requires a genealogy of homegrown terrorism, one that addresses the discourses, representations, conceptualizations, practices, and strategies of communicating threat found in both popular culture and official government matters. Too often the concept of terrorism is applied retroactively ignoring the conditions that facilitate its resonance and historical particularity. In contrast, here I situate homegrown terrorism in (and as arising out of) the past forty years or so of security discourse in the context of US politics. While history is surely replete with terror and doubles, the genealogy mapped in this introduction is intended to reveal the historical conditions and theoretical maneuvers that underwrite the concept of homegrown terrorism as it emerged during the Obama administration (a period accompanied by premature and politically motivated asser-
tions of postraciality) and provide a base from which to theorize its accompanying figure, the Double.

The historical ground out of which homegrown terrorism and the Double arise is multilayered. Making sense of it involves retracing the transformation of terrorism from a vilifying term used in piecemeal fashion into a concept around which contemporary conflict is organized. Also required are surveys of the increased racialization of Arabs and Muslims coalescing in the brown-Arab-Muslim-other as well as the depoliticization of particular modes of violence; both are internal to the organization of actionable knowledge on and about terrorism. Together, these three intertwined histories illustrate how the Double takes its shape in the confounded boundaries of conflict, acquires its existentially threatening quality, and is formulated as a figure that inversely mirrors the citizen, respectively. In short, this genealogical triad forms the complex harmony over which the dissonant melody of the Double is played.

Terrorism: From Epithet to Refrain

*International-Domestic-Homegrown*

The word “terror” was introduced into European languages in the writings of the Benedictine monk Bersuire in the fourteenth century. It was not until another half millennium had passed that, in the wake of the French Revolution, “terrorism” entered popular parlance and, soon after, the *Oxford English Dictionary*: “a government policy intended to strike with terror those against whom it is adopted.”9 Over the following century, terrorism would be divorced from the state and become “associated with anti-state violence under the impact of the Russian terrorists of the 1880s and the anarchists of the 1890s.”10 Out of the transformation from state to non-state violence arose the central conundrum of terrorism: one man’s terrorist is another’s freedom fighter.

In the United States terrorism has long been a label used to vilify non-state actors. The pages of the *New York Times* provide a glimpse into this practice. The term first appeared in the newspaper in the 1850s, in column inches allocated to stories concerning anti-Abolitionist (“Pro-Slavery Ruffian”) violence in Kansas, Iowa, and Tennessee. The actions
of racist groups, such as the Ku Klux Klan, have also long been—though certainly not consistently—referred to as terrorism therein. October 19, 1859, marked the first time the term was used in a headline within the *New York Times* (in reference to vigilante violence in Louisiana).\(^{11}\)

In the early 1970s there was a distinct change in how terrorism was invoked in US politics. From a solitary staccato invective, terrorism gradually became an increasingly sustained (and sustaining) reverberation, namely, a refrain. Much like in its more conventional usage—a recurring phrase that connects various melodic and harmonic elements and gives a piece of music its identity—a refrain (*ritournelle*) in the work of French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari marks out a territory by aggregating and holding together various objects, bodies, utterances, movements, and actions. At times referred to in Foucauldian terms—as an episteme and/or dispositif—the terrorism refrain, as a constellation of symbols, statements, definitions, presuppositions, and practices through which to make sense of particular violent phenomena, marks what is and can be discussed and dealt with as terrorism.\(^{12}\)

The turning point at which terrorism coalesced into a guiding lens through which to make sense of the world is contested. Sociologist Lisa Stampnitzky’s study on how experts created terrorism marks the 1972 massacre at the Munich Olympics as a decisive event. For others, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is central.\(^{13}\) The political context in which discourses of terrorism took hold in the United States was undoubtedly complex: the American war in Vietnam spurned a crisis of legitimacy in US politics; wars of decolonization continued to illustrate how a state’s monopoly on violence could be wrestled away; airplane hijackings surged in the 1960s and 1970s; anti-Communist hysteria continued to fuel misguided global operations; and political violence within US borders peaked in 1970. Perhaps, the defining act to come out of all of this was not one that involved any direct physical harm. Rather, it was an executive command. In 1974, with the United States on the brink of defeat in Vietnam, President Richard Nixon abolished the Attorney General’s List of Subversive Organizations, setting in motion a shift in security focus from subversion to terrorism (though these anxieties remained overlaid until the end of the Cold War and beyond). Nixon’s move was prefigured earlier that year when the House Committee on Internal Security held hearings and published a staff study under the rubric of terrorism.\(^ {14}\)
Around the same time, an academic field began to take shape around the notion of terrorism, a key landmark of which was the 1977 establishment of *Terrorism: An International Journal*. The connection between government agencies and the academy in ushering in an era in which political violence was increasingly made sense of as terrorism cannot be understated. Researchers and agency representatives attended the same conferences and government perspectives were regularly published in academic journals; Stampnitzky vividly outlines the details and nuances of this process. The resulting alignment of interests is unsurprising: one Cold War–era study asserted that 90 percent of terrorist groups either were Marxist or had pro-Marxist sympathies. Similarly predictable is that even in the proliferation of definitions and debates about terrorism that began to emerge at the time, much of the field of terrorism studies adopted an uncritical statist view that precluded or explained away the possibility of “state terrorism.” In effect, the delegitimizing valence of terrorism—which was never done away with in the transformation of terrorism from epithet to refrain—was maintained and institutionalized under the guise of objective inquiry in favor of the state. This relationship continues into the present through journals, think tanks, and sanctioned talking heads on network news.

Early on, the purview of terrorism was international in scope, concentrated on foreign policy with a particular emphasis on how left-wing and revolutionary groups affected the interests of the United States. In other words, terrorism was largely a foreign land. For example, an early classification of terrorist organizations mentioned only one US group. More revealing in this respect is terrorism’s initial migration into the US Legal Code. First introduced by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978, the definition in the code currently cited by legislation was introduced by the 1987 Foreign Relations Authorization Act. These acts placed terrorism into Titles 50 (War and National Defense) and 22 (Foreign Relations and Intercourse), respectively; that is, they firmly situated terrorism in the realm of foreign policy. A preoccupation with the foreign or international continued into the 1990s and beyond as domestic groups were mentioned only in passing in many academic studies. The work of one prominent commentator on terrorism, journalist Brigitte L. Nacos, is indicative. Her 1994 *Terrorism and the Media* made no mention of domestic groups. The second edition of the book changed the
subtitle to include the Oklahoma City bombing. In a later work, *Mass-Mediated Terrorism*, she asserted that the incident brought about an increased awareness of domestic terrorism in the United States but did not devote any significant attention to domestic terrorism until her 2005 *Terrorism and Counterterrorism*.

Despite the preeminent focus placed on the world outside of the United States, over time domestic spaces incrementally garnered more attention, altering the territory enclosed by the terrorism refrain. While the Attorney General’s List of Subversive Organizations has never been replaced by a list of domestic terror groups, the FBI was nonetheless designated as the lead agency on terrorism within the United States in 1982. The agency focused on a variety of groups, such as Puerto Rican separatists and racist right-wing groups under the umbrella of “Aryan Nation Affiliates.”19 It was not until 1992, however, that a distinction between international and domestic varieties of terrorism was entrenched in the US Legal Code. From the mid- to late 1980s and into the 1990s, academics followed suit and a variety of extremisms within America increasingly found their way into the pages of journals and books about terrorism. This included the racist, white supremacist right, abortion-clinic arsons and bombings—which, at the time, were increasing in frequency and exposure—and environmental terrorism or ecoterrorism. While the state and its violence was rarely the subject of inquiry, forms of racist violence endemic to US history were partially absorbed into discourses of terrorism, partially, it suffices to say, because the categorization of racist violence as terrorism remains more inconsistent than other forms.20

In 1995 two white supremacists brought down much of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building by detonating a forty-eight-hundred-pound truck bomb. The Oklahoma City bombing was certainly a catalyst in annexing domestic spaces into the territory of terrorism. More importantly, it was also in the unsettled dust of the attack that “homegrown terrorism” was first uttered in US political discourse (the reasons and repercussions of which will be discussed in conjunction with the racialization of Arabs and Muslims below). Homegrown terrorism became a permanent fixture in security discourse a decade later in the wake of the 2005 London bombings when it was discovered that the perpetrators had grown up in the United Kingdom. In the United States, the term
became widespread around 2009. While homegrown and domestic are often used interchangeably, the Department of Homeland Security offers the following definition:

A homegrown violent extremist (HVE) is a person of any citizenship who has lived and/or operated primarily in the United States or its territories who advocates, is engaged in, or is preparing to engage in ideologically-motivated terrorist activities (including providing support to terrorism) in furtherance of political or social objectives promoted by a foreign terrorist organization, but is acting independently of direction by a foreign terrorist organization. HVEs are distinct from traditional domestic terrorists who engage in unlawful acts of violence to intimidate civilian populations or attempt to influence domestic policy without direction from or influence from a foreign actor.21

Much like the increased focus on domestic terrorism before it, homegrown terrorism also reconfigures the territory of terrorism. It does so not by expanding the space encompassed therein, but by altering the organization of the terrorism refrain in a more fundamental way. At first encompassing largely foreign actors, then an increasing amount of domestic players, with homegrown, a global quality emerges. The once guiding spatial distinction (domestic/foreign) collapses in homegrown: domestic actors (Americans or, at least, American residents) are operating in line with foreign ideologies. The Double begins to take shape in this confounded boundary.

Homegrown terrorism distinctively captures what Carl Schmitt called “absolute hostility,” a mode of enmity characterized by global ideologies and a lack of any spatial or temporal limits: adversaries are not confined or locatable in delineated spaces and operations of combat are not constrained to a particular battlefield.22 But changes in the nature of conflict—a result of technological, tactical, and normative innovations—do not fully account for the emergence of the phenomenon of homegrown terrorism, particularly in how it is conceptualized, debated, and combated. Another key lineage integral to the problematic of homegrown terrorism is hinted at in the DHS definition above. It makes explicit something that the term “homegrown” itself implies: a foreign seed (of terror) takes root in American soil (in a manner beyond infiltration), the outgrowth
of which can take multiple and shifting forms. Thus, as homegrown collapses the neat binary between foreign and domestic, it does so without fully negating either category—even if, as I will show, they do not exclusively manifest in forms of hyper-representation.

The Brown-Arab-Muslim-Other

The history of the contemporary terrorism refrain is simultaneously that of the foreign actor, the brown-Arab-Muslim-other. The oft-cited passage from French philosopher Alain Badiou’s *Infinite Thought* illustrates the intimate link between this figure and terrorism:

> When a predicate is attributed to a *formal* substance (as is the case with any derivation of a substantive from a formal adjective) it has no other consistency than that of giving an ostensible content to that form. In “Islamic terrorism,” the predicate “Islamic” has no other function except that of supplying an apparent content to the word “terrorism” which is itself devoid of all content (in this instance, political).

Here, “Islamic” is not only a designation of religiosity, but also a racialized marker of difference. I use this triple-hyphenated term, “brown-Arab-Muslim-other,” to indicate that these identity positions are often conflated and used interchangeably in discourses of threat.

Race or racialization in this context is a formation or process that goes beyond phenotype. Building on the work of Hannah Arendt, sociologist Sherene Razack explains that race thinking is a “structure of thought that divides up the world between the deserving and the undeserving according to descent.” In the war on terror this division is traced and cut along civilizational lines, naturalized by an emphasis on the incommensurable difference between cultures and informed by the binary structures of Orientalist thinking. Following the work of Palestinian American cultural critic Edward Said, the West/Orient dichotomy depicts the latter as a space of oppression, backwardness, irrationality, danger, and extremism, in contrast to Western freedom, forwardness, rationality, stability, and moderation. Racial superiority, when not unabashedly explicit, is certainly inflected in such “culture talk” and is no less evident in liberal discourses that distinguish between “good” and
“bad” Muslims. The result is often framed as regrettable, yet necessary (or even “respectable”) racism.\textsuperscript{25}

The history of terrorism by no means began—and perhaps may not end—with the brown-Arab-Muslim-other. Nevertheless, the development of terrorism \textit{qua} refrain and the marking of Arabs, Muslims, and other brown bodies as undeserving share important landmarks. At a time when terrorism was coming to the fore in foreign policy circles, the brown-Arab-Muslim-other figured prominently in the representation and narrativization of key events: the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, the Oil Embargoes of 1967 and 1973, the Munich massacre of 1972, and the Iranian Revolution in 1979. Within the United States, this link fomented suspicion of Arab and Muslim American communities, transforming invisible minorities into a problem population.\textsuperscript{26} For example, in 1972 President Nixon’s Operation Boulder targeted individuals of “Arabic-speaking descent” for intrusive surveillance and possible detention or deportation under the guise of fears of sabotage. The initiative was largely driven by assumptions regarding the stance of particular communities on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. A similar anxiety emerged a thousandfold in the wake of 9/11.\textsuperscript{27} The intimate cross-stitching of the geographically ever-shifting Middle East and terrorism in US thought is plainly evident in the 1987 Foreign Relations Authorization Act, which introduced a definition of international terrorism into the US Legal Code. The authors of the act made a point of stating, “Middle Eastern terrorism accounted for 60 percent of international terrorism.”\textsuperscript{28}

Islam did not begin to be dogmatically associated with terrorism until the 1980s, a process that was equally serpentine. At a time when America witnessed anti-Semitic violence perpetrated by racist white supremacists, the killing of a prominent Arab American by the Jewish Defense League, and the first fatality of the Unabomber, an FBI report relegated the “Islamic threat” within the United States to a passing mention as “Other” lumped with Anti-Nuclear Activists and United Freedom Fighters.\textsuperscript{29} Moreover, those warring under the banner of Islam in the 1980s, the Mujahideen in Afghanistan, where heavily supported by the United States. Hailed as freedom fighters by President Ronald Reagan, they were positioned as allies of the United States against a godless evil empire. At the same time, in 1984, Benjamin Netanyahu warned the Second International Conference on Terrorism that the threat of terrorism came
not only from Communism but also from Islamic extremism. These contradictory narratives are not unconnected. Financing not only weapons but promotional tours seeking volunteers for the Afghan warfront, the United States was an active agent in aiding the internationalization of religious rhetoric in and for war. Representing a policy of supporting groups who opposed Communism in the Middle East that stems back to the Eisenhower Doctrine of the 1950s, the “Islamic” terror Netanyahu warned of was birthed out of Communist hysteria.31

The end of the Cold War was accompanied by hawkish declarations of a “clash of civilizations.” The resulting shift in bipolar groupings transformed the brown-Arab-Muslim-other from a potential agent of sabotage into an inassimilable presence. The World Trade Center bombing in 1993 was further used to solidify a connection between a civilization/culture and a particular trademark of violence, an association so ingrained that the Oklahoma City bombing was initially reported as being “Middle Eastern” in style, with the suspects described as dark-haired, bearded, and of Mideastern origin.33 In effect, the concept of homegrown in American popular and political discourse was birthed in a fear of the brown-Arab-Muslim-other. The confusion sparked by the revelation that the perpetrators were white is one replayed over and over again, though with different inflections, in cases of homegrown terrorism.

The inassimilable character of the brown-Arab-Muslim-other was only further entrenched by the advent of “New Terrorism” just before the end of the twentieth century. For Walter Laqueur, an American historian of terrorism, the New Terrorism is the result of a shift over time in the motivations of terrorists, from Marx to Muhammad to Armageddon.34 These are, however, not exclusive categories. Rather, in security discourse the movement from one to the next signals an upping of the ante in the clash of civilizations—even if it is a tendency relegated to “bad” Muslims, as a clash within civilization. The antipathy and pathology of the “East” intensifies from a premodern condition and morphs into an antimodern fanaticism that is necessarily millenarian, ringing cries of annihilation. A hallmark of Schmitt’s absolute hostility, annihilation signals a change in the nature of the enemy (into what he calls a foe). In conventional conflict between nation-states, one’s adversary is evil because she is one’s adversary (which manifests
for a variety of political reasons) and is thus targeted for defeat. In the ideological battles of absolute hostility, one’s adversary is an enemy in the first instance because she is evil. Such articulations are evident in contemporary government and terrorist communiqués alike. Thus, one’s adversary must be annihilated rather than defeated, a logic found in the often uttered (though historically disingenuous) statement, “We don’t negotiate with terrorists.” Here, the Double acquires its existentially threatening quality.

The existential threat posed by such an adversary exponentially intensifies when it manifests not only within US borders, but within people and places marked as familiar. When clearly bounded notions are confounded, different ways of making sense of the fanaticism of terrorism arise. In the context of homegrown terrorism, radicalization has most evidently resonated in recent years. Therein, this figure is often positioned as an agent of infiltration. But in other instances it is also invoked in more complex ways that cannot be reduced to the hyper-representation of an other and merges with or is shaped by that which is marked as American or familiar (suggestive of Galli’s “Global War”). In either case, the realities of increased contact and exchange fostered by digital, social, and global media are certainly a key aspect in this regard but do not fully account for the particularity of radicalization discourse in the US context. Enter the third lineage constitutive of a genealogy of homegrown terrorism, clues to which lie in the marking of threat as existential. To speak about threats as existential and necessitating annihilation (whether emanating from all or “bad” Muslims, or a distinct individual/group marked as such via simile) is to depoliticize violence. While undoubtedly deeply tied to the formulation of a civilizational other, the reduction of violence to irrationality and evil is equally tied to the increasing codification and routinization of terrorism in and through the US legal apparatus.

**Political Violence**

The idea that the kernel of hostility lies in inherent cultural or civilizational traits uproots acts of violence from their historical-political contexts. As does the framing of particular modes of violence as wrought exclusively for vengeance, bloodlust, and fanaticism rather than in the
service of resistance or decolonization. The confluence of these notions has ushered in practices marked by the emergency or suspension of law aimed at annihilation: Guantanamo Bay, drone strikes, Abu Ghraib, extrajudicial killing, capture or kill lists, and so on. However, the depoliticization of violence is complex and multivalent. To fully account for how homegrown terrorism is conceptualized, addressed, and managed, other avenues need to be explored.

In sharp contrast to the exceptional bodies confined to the cells of Guantanamo Bay, there are actual terrorists walking the streets of America today. Not the shadowy figures security discourses warn of, but those who have been convicted of terrorism-related crimes, have served jail sentences, and have been ultimately released. This includes Daniel McGowan, a convicted ecoterrorist; Rothschild Augustine, part of a group called the Liberty City Seven, who was caught up a sting operation and sentenced to seven years in prison; and two men from the Virginia Jihad Network, Khwaja Mahmood Hasan and Yong Ki Kwon, whose initial sentences were reduced (and who are now released) after reaching plea agreements and cooperating with prosecutors. Even John Walker Lindh, an American captured fighting alongside the Taliban, has a projected release date of May 2019. These instances point to a need to go beyond narratives of exception to make sense of homegrown terrorism. There has been much debate over whether terrorism ought to be addressed through a war paradigm or as a problem of law enforcement. Critics of the war on terror have placed much focus on the war paradigm and how it has seeped into and/or usurped the law. However, the depoliticization of violence has as much to do with the criminalization of terrorism as it does with the militarization of law.

While much attention has been (rightfully) given to the US PATRIOT Act in this regard, the process began decades earlier and produced a variety of implications. For example, the much-discussed “material support” statutes were amended rather than introduced by the PATRIOT Act; they were drafted in the 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act (section 120005). This occurred two years after the Federal Courts Administration Act inscribed a distinction between domestic and international terrorism into criminal law. What is significant here is that while the previous inscriptions of terrorism into the US Code (in 1978 and 1987) were connected to foreign policy,
the 1992 distinction is placed in Title 18 (chapter 113 B, section 2331), Crimes and Criminal Procedure, a markedly different focus. During the 1990s there were various attempts to further criminalize political violence with a variety of repercussions, some exceptional, others not. For example, the US Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 established a list of “foreign terrorist organizations” and the ability to deport suspected terrorists based on secret information. Others facilitated practices that could hardly be characterized as exceptional. In the wake of the Oklahoma City bombing, the “terrorism enhancement” of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines (section 3A1.4) was enacted, under which a judge may significantly increase the sentence of an individual if his crime is deemed to be terrorism (we see examples of this in Chapters 1 and 3). This is not to suggest that practices that could be characterized as exceptional have been abandoned. While the proposed Enemy Expatriation Act of 2012, which sought to grant the government the ability to strip individuals of their citizenship if convicted of a terrorism-related crime, initially failed—thought to have no chance of surviving a challenge on constitutional grounds—it has reemerged in more recent proposed legislation that I address in Chapter 3. Nevertheless, the point here is that the criminalization of political violence sets up a particular mode of depoliticization that opens the door to discourses of radicalization.

Historically, every time terrorism entered (or threatened to enter) mainstream political discourse its valence of illegitimacy has been articulated in different ways. But the marking of terrorism as inhuman and barbaric always begins, pace Badiou, with the manner in which it is emptied, or made “devoid of content.” This process is evident in the definition found in the US Legal Code: “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience.” While terrorism is often used interchangeably with or is defined as “political violence,” the two are hardly synonymous. Terrorism transforms the single space that separates the two terms (political violence) into an intractable gap, a distance already signified in the US definition by the insertion of “motivated.” Political, in the context of terrorism, is thus always meant to be understood as being struck through, as political, that is, as fundamentally illegitimate. The obliteration of the political
is completed through the stress placed on noncombatants, those who cannot be rightfully constituted as targets of aggression. The absence of legitimacy leaves in its wake only barbarism, irrationality, and evil.

In a peculiar maneuver, defining terrorism in US law voids the very motive fundamental to distinguishing it from other types of criminal violence, marking the complexity of its operation. Take, for instance, the 2006 Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act, which replaced the 1992 Animal Enterprise Protection Act. The result of a decades-long effort on the part of business lobbies, it is an example of the successful introduction of terrorism into new spaces of activity. The striking through of the political in domestic law opens an aporia in the “incorporeal transformation” of a criminal, arsonist, or vandal into a terrorist. It is the political that differentiates these figures. Yet, when making sense of these crimes the political cannot be given significant weight. The political must be simultaneously invoked and refuted: “These individuals claim to be motivated by the deprivation of the earth, but what is really driving them?” In other words, without a legitimate political lens through which to decipher the motivation to violence and with the stakes becoming increasingly global, a void emerges: how to make sense of incidents in which Americans carry out terroristic violence against America? In effect, the political returns criminal motive to the level of the personal, but not in the same way as it relates to petty crime. The move back to the personal in the context of homegrown terrorism is not marked by a motivation of material gain. What remains is pathological.

Useful here is French philosopher Michel Foucault’s interrogation of how psychiatry came to bear on law in the nineteenth century by addressing crimes that appeared to be “without reason” and “against nature”—two phrases commonly used to describe terrorism. Crimes, in essence, not preceded by a history, disturbance, or sign. The psychologizing of such crimes—like that of a woman who killed and decapitated her neighbor’s daughter, tossing her severed head out a window—.injected into the fabric of society, a “dangerous individual.” This dangerous element is similar to the “enemy of mankind” that emerged alongside and facilitated the terror of the French Revolution. Today, homegrown terrorism is discussed in similar terms. To be clear, my argument is not that homegrown terrorism is a crime without reason, history, or sign. As I show in the following chapters, these are precisely the claims made...
in government discourses. Rather, the history I am outlining illustrates how it has become possible to speak about homegrown terrorism in this way. While certainly not the same as the merging of insanity and criminality in Foucault’s argument, what I argue here is that without the political to explain or make sense of violence, and yet a need to distinguish particular actions from petty crime, violence becomes unintelligible, monstrous, and irrational and a space opens up in which the (pseudo-) psychology of radicalization comes to bear on terrorism.44

Large amounts of government capital and academic effort have been placed into outlining, detailing, and defining the process of radicalization. Faiza Patel, co-director of the Brennan Center’s Liberty and National Security Program, outlines two approaches to radicalization. On one end of the spectrum, proponents of radicalization almost all agree that there is no singular profile of a homegrown terrorist based on categorical schema such as race, ethnicity, class, gender, or religious upbringing. On the other, as political writer Arun Kundnani also illustrates, theories of radicalization are built on the assumption that violence originates from theological ideas.45 In fact, many theories, but not all, do focus solely on jihadist violence.46 Certainly, radicalization and the practices it underwrites are not equally distributed—the Double does not usurp the other, a topic I will return to below. Here, I am interested in the conjunction of the two approaches, and suffice it to say, models of radicalization however unequally deployed do not operate on the logic of the other exclusively. This is not to say that those “less reductive” theories are any less problematic; only that their multiplicity and messiness ought to be addressed. The theories posit a process in which a plethora of cognitive, affective, and experiential factors move someone from an unremarkable state and into one of bloodthirsty violence. These factors are conceptualized as personal, social, economic, and political (or more appropriately political), from one’s views on the war on terror to one’s feelings of social alienation, from one’s familial relations to one’s socioeconomic status. Reflected in the “If You See Something, Say Something” campaign, in which the terrorist is often depicted as white, injected into discourses of terrorism is an idea that the threat America faces is not easily confined to particular categorical molds. Rather, threat is communicated as a distributed potential, as a dangerous element that can be triggered or put into action by the most
ordinary of experiences or constellation of factors—which ultimately helps to strike out any political motive as legitimate. Sounding calls for monitoring, this narrative comes to signify not only “the rare and monstrous figure of the monomaniac . . . [but also] the common everyday figure of the degenerate, of the pervert, of the constitutionally unbalanced, of the immature, etc.” In effect, the figures are merged and the face of the foe is shown to mirror that of the citizen; the Double might materialize in the most ordinary of shapes.

The lineages that make up homegrown terrorism’s genealogy are complex lines that contain overlapping and cascading notes. The territorial shifts of the refrain (from international to domestic to homegrown); the changes in security concerns from the Communist to the jihadist and beyond; exceptional and administrative modes of depoliticizing violence—none of these divisions are absolute, and the emergence of one, much like the move from the other to the Double, does not depend on the disappearance of another. Together the lineages constitute a historical triad from which to understand the emergence of the Double in its current forms and inflections. For Sigmund Freud, the Double simultaneously embodies what is “familiar and agreeable and . . . that which is concealed and kept out of sight.” A figure that takes the most ordinary of shapes (the everyday citizen) together with the most existential of threats (the monstrous terrorist), the Double is a dissonant melody, always out of key and in constant motion. The genealogy of homegrown terrorism does not produce the shape of the Double in any deterministic sense. The Double is an amorphous and complex figure. This history simply provides a backdrop from which to begin to theorize and make sense of the ways in which the Double is constructed in contemporary security discourses.

The Double

A cultural-literary motif employed in oral and written traditions across cultures and civilizations, the Double dates back to a twelfth-century BCE ancient Egyptian story, “The Tale of the Two Brothers.” In it doubling is evident not only between the two brothers, but also in the externalization of the younger’s soul, which takes on many changing
forms. Shadows, reflections, and twins—the earliest manifestations of doubling that fascinated humankind—souls, lookalikes (doppelgängers), clones, suspected imposters, complementary characters, and psychological personality splits, these are the many expressions of the Double. Oscillating in and out of fashion, late eighteenth- to early nineteenth-century European literature marks the height of the Double’s popularity. Despite claims of its facile nature and that film had reduced its complexity, the Double has retained its peculiar draw. Notable twentieth- and twenty-first-century writers who employed it include Kafka, Borges, Nabokov, Saramago, Roth, and Pamuk, to name a few. In intellectual circles the Double has been applied to an equally dizzying array of themes: Saussure’s theory of the sign, Christian theology, Hegel’s dialectic, Lacanian psychoanalysis, Derrida’s work on language and representation, posthumanism, literary history, and the relationship of philosophy and literature more generally.

The Double’s seemingly endless iterations and uses present the daunting but necessary task of defining how it will be used throughout this book and how it relates to homegrown terrorism. While the Double’s multiplicity has led some to describe the concept as “embarrassingly vague,” malleability and amorphousness are its essence, its constitutive anxiety found in its shifting and porous boundaries. The blurring of clear boundaries is precisely the core anxiety concerning incidents of Americans taking up arms against their own country and a productive force in strategies of security. Thus, the definition offered here does not reduce the multiplicity of the Double, but retains its core ambiguity. Also, since the nineteenth century—though some trace this back to Descartes’s division of cogito and res extensa—the Double has been a predominantly psychological construct marking opposing tendencies, identity crises, and man’s fundamental incompleteness. While this book is primarily concerned with the Double in a collective context, the psychological inflection remains consequential. Claims that a Double is lurking and loose within the collective are dependent on assertions that the group’s members are not only suspect but also susceptible to crises of identity. With these points in mind, the Double is a trope that blends the familiar and the unfamiliar by placing within the familiar an amorphous sense of otherness, strangeness, and potential danger.
The bright rays fell vividly upon the sleeper, and my eyes, at the same moment, upon his countenance. I looked;—and a numbness, an iciness of feeling instantly pervaded my frame. My breast heaved, my knees tottered, my whole spirit became possessed with an objectless yet intolerable horror. Gasping for breath, I lowered the lamp in still nearer proximity to the face. Were these—these the lineaments of William Wilson? I saw, indeed, that they were his, but I shook as if hit with a fit of the ague in fancying that they were not. What was there about them to confound me in this manner? I gazed;—while my brain reeled with a multitude of incoherent thoughts. Not thus he appeared—assuredly not thus—in the vivacity of his waking hours. The same name! the same contour of person! the same day of arrival at the academy! And then this dogged and meaningless imitation of my gait, my voice, my habits and my manner! Was it, in truth, within the bounds of human possibility, that what I now saw was the result, merely, of the habitual practice of this sarcastic imitation?54

Edgar Allan Poe’s short story “William Wilson,” from which the above passage is quoted, begins with a man who narrates his lifelong entanglement with his Double (who I will also refer to as “Wilson”). The Double’s likeness to the narrator is at first made evident to the reader only through their common name.55 Time and again the Double thwarts the narrator’s mischievous actions. Their story ends with a single-blows murder-suicide in which the narrator kills Wilson, and, through a mirror that subsequently takes Wilson’s place, realizes that he has mortally wounded himself. One of innumerable possible examples, Poe’s story is a richly dense source from which to illustrate my definition and introduce key aspects of the Double. These include the identity markers deployed in conjuring the Double, its tie to media and communication technologies writ broadly, and, ultimately, its function in the context of homegrown terrorism.

The above passage describes the moment in which the narrator first recognizes the face of the Double as an exact likeness of his own. The Double often appears—and is predominantly thought of—as a lookalike.56 This occurs slowly in Poe’s story. The narrator discovers their shared physiognomy gradually over time and only once he examines the sleeping Wilson by candlelight. The closing scene leaves no doubt: “in my death, see by this image, which is thine own, how utterly thou
hast murdered thyself.” Dzhokhar Tsarnaev embodies this realization in the context of homegrown terrorism. But the Double does not solely, or always primarily, manifest in phenotypic duplicates or matching physiognomies. It can appear in vision (not limited to the face or physical body), voice, and manner. In “William Wilson,” before the reader learns of the uncanny similarity between both faces, the narrator indicates not only physical likenesses—height, “general contour of person and outline of feature”—but also similarities in style of dress, gait, and the timbre of voice. Indeed, the conjuring of the Double in cases of homegrown terrorism is not exclusively based on physical markers but, paralleling the racism that pervades the war on terror, is centered on cultural markers as well as behavioral ones. Chapter 3 illustrates how officials and the media communicated a frightening recognition of “something of ourselves” in Anwar al-Awlaki—an American cleric affiliated with al-Qaeda killed in a 2011 drone strike—by highlighting his familiarity and command of American culture evident in the delivery and content of his lectures. In Chapter 1, Nidal Malik Hasan, the Fort Hood shooter, was said to be hiding in plain sight, camouflaged by his US Army fatigues (he was a military psychiatrist). These two cases illustrate how a variety of markers of likeness are invoked even in cases involving physiognomies that, throughout the war on terror, have consistently been made other.

The amalgamation of self and other in one individual, or the splitting of an individual, is often accounted for in media and official discourse through recourse to technologies that facilitate access to that which has been deemed foreign. Paralleling Schmitt’s assertion that developments in technology (including communication technologies) have changed the nature of conflict, the infiltration of America or radicalization of Americans by a malignant otherness is often attributed to communications media, particularly digital media. The Tsarnaev brothers were said to live out their second or shadowy lives on social media. The Fort Dix Five were said to be inspired by the digital output of Anwar al-Awlaki (Chapter 2), who himself continued to exist as a digital doppelgänger after his death in 2011 (Chapter 3). This is by no means a recent development in the Double motif. The ubiquity of the Double in nineteenth-century literature was also closely linked to anxieties concerning new technologies and the novel forms of contact they
facilitated with distant others. In Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, the electric light allows Hyde to roam the streets of London carrying out his vile desires—much like candlelight allows the narrator to finally see his Double in “William Wilson.” In Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, new technologies produce a monstrous Double. Historically and today the Double (re)emerges in and through anxieties concerning the development of a “world of perpetual light.” Chapter 2 illustrates the ways in which a wide variety of media and communications technologies (e.g., books, airplanes, bombs, websites) placed in ubiquitous digital and analog networks (intimately connecting virtual spaces, foreign lands, and the living rooms of ordinary Americans) are implicated in the discourse of the Double and the securitizing practices it facilitates.

Bringing the Double into the context of the collective and, more importantly, the collective at war in its contemporary form begs the question of what exactly the invocation of the Double facilitates. What does framing an enemy as a circulating potential within ubiquitous communication networks and brought to life through experiences and pressures common to everyday life (as per theories of radicalization) do to notions of belonging? What is the utility of constructing a threat “like us” and proclaiming that this “highly energized and potentially dangerous” figure is loose within the collective? An understanding of the function of the Double begins with addressing its status as potentially dangerous.

The simple appearance of one’s likeness, whether in vision, voice, or manner, and however disorienting, does not fully explain the horror of the narrator’s experience in “William Wilson”—tottering knees, lack of breath, and reeling mind. The Double motif is not a priori tied to terror. Not only was the Double once employed for comic effect, but in some of its earlier usages the figure signaled different variants of immortality. In Judaic tradition, the Double’s appearance was considered proof of the soul’s existence and thus man’s immortality. In the burial rights of Roman emperors, the use of and ritual around an effigy of the deceased signaled that “while the king may die, the King never dies.” However, what was once a guardian angel would come to be viewed as a harbinger of death. The presence of one’s Double took on the meaning that one’s
soul had departed the body, signaling one’s ultimate doom; hence, the reference to the Double as “the fetch” in Scottish folklore. In literature, those who come across their Double, like the narrator of “William Wilson,” eventually, and often quickly, meet their demise. Here, the “unfamiliar” is not simply another body or figure, but an otherness sensed in the presence of the familiar, in their conflation. When Freud states that the Double conceals something under the veneer of agreeability, the implication is that what is kept from sight is ominous, disturbing, and dangerous (its potency due to its inseparability from the familiar).

The Double, pace Freud, is underwritten by the logics of not only splitting and duplication, but also doubt and duplicity, giving the many forms of likeness embodied in the Double a peculiar valence. The Double is no mere facsimile. In the pangs of discovering the Double’s face, the narrator refers to Wilson’s gait, voice, habits, and manner as “sarcastic imitation.” However, he otherwise admits that through these, Wilson presents an “exquisite portraiture . . . [that] could not justly be termed a mere caricature.” Moreover, in the climactic finale in which a mirror appears in place of Wilson, the narrator utters in response to the image in it, “Thus it appeared, I say, but was not.” Here, the narrator communicates the ambivalence of the Double motif and how it works precisely to put into doubt any clear distinction between one and one’s double. Doubt and duplicity are also evident in the multitude of terms the narrator employs to describe Wilson: brother, namesake, twin, companion, imposter, and antagonist.

In a collective context, particularly that of homegrown terrorism, the effect of the Double translates into an inability to tell friend from foe: “the phenomenological problem posed by [doubles such as Stevenson’s] Hyde is that his deformity is unnamable. The monster cannot be expressly distinguished from normal forms,” only intensifying the existential threat the figure presents. The Double populates and generates what Schmitt calls “wider spaces of insecurity, fear, and general mistrust.” Like the narrator’s unease about when and where Wilson might turn up—doubly reflected in the narrator’s claim that their shared name is so unremarkable and ordinary that it is the “common property of the mob”—the discourse of the Double injects a similar anxiety into contemporary America. Family, friends, and neighbors of Americans
who are charged with terrorism-related offenses or attempt to join ISIS exclaim in surprise at the revelation—“If he's a terrorist, he's the nicest terrorist I ever met in my life!”68

The Double unsettles and prevents closure: “what captures and entraps—what seems inescapable—is none other than an ever changing tendency to shift and defer, ad infinitum.”69 What this entails is, again, best illustrated in contrast to the functionality of the other. The other establishes clear boundaries and sutures a collective’s identity. It circulates within what Foucault calls relations of disciplinary power. Discipline is a modality of power that lets “nothing escape,” utilizing strategies of enclosure, confinement, and observation that materialize in a variety of spaces: the prison, the clinic, the asylum.70 All of these disciplinary spaces divide the normal from the abnormal and structure what is permitted and what is prohibited. The present-day use of communication management units (which place extreme limits on contact with the outside world) in federal prisons, Guantanamo Bay, and various other black sites in which many brown, Arab, and Muslim men (marked as other) are held without charge or chance of release is a poignant reminder of the continuing relevance of disciplinary power, however modified by the logic of the exception.

The Double, on the other hand, could be said to simultaneously underwrite and exceed what Foucault terms biopolitical strategies of management that operate through a calculus of ratios and probabilities and in which pathologies are immanent rather than confined. Taking into account a whole constellation of variables, this modality of power is visible in theories of radicalization that, rather than always employing clear categorizations (though many do), consider a broad and ever-expanding list of cognitive, affective, and experiential variables in calculating what may take an American outside an acceptable curve of normality.71 In search of and in anticipation of the dangerous individual, this logic of security “works on the future” and focuses on the uncertain and “tries to prevent [violence, crime, terror, etc.] in advance”—an urgency fed by the political costs of a terrorist attack occurring on one’s watch.72 The anticipatory calculus of uncovering an enemy that might materialize in the people and places one would least expect is an intrusive one. In “William Wilson,” the true horror of the Double is uncovered only
through covert action, penetrating the only private space Wilson has in the school—his bedroom. The narrator’s discovery of the Double (in the sense that they share a physiognomy) occurs by casting a secretive light into a private space. In the context of homegrown terrorism, this practice takes two interrelated forms: first, sweeping modes of surveillance that penetrate into the most intimate dimensions of everyday life, such as the NSA’s PRISM; second, the use of informants. Government informants, however, do much more than monitor and surveil; their function exceeds the biopolitical. Unlike discipline, which lets nothing escape, Foucault asserts biopower “lets things happen.” The Double requires that this be taken further and facilitates strategies that “make things happen”—it is a preemptory and “incitatory” figure. Informants explicitly aid in the “radicalization” and mobilization of US residents and citizens, the practices and consequences of which are examined in Chapters 2 and 3. The informant is himself a double—the inversion of the enemy-Double—illustrating just how the figure and discourse of the Double is not simply a threat to be confined, but a construct that is part and parcel of contemporary modalities of conflict.

If the Double marks the abandonment of the form of “originary [external] difference intrinsic to the Western logos,” it does so in a temporary and oscillating manner and works in conjunction with other strategies. Importantly, the Double does not negate the consequentiality of the other. The racism, violence, and discrimination faced by American Muslim and Arab communities serve as constant reminders. The move from the other to the Double, much like that of discipline to biopower and conventional to absolute hostility, is only a shift “in emphasis” (much like the imbricated histories that make up the genealogy of homegrown terrorism). Moreover, forms of hostility overlap and biopolitical modalities embed themselves within the strategies of disciplinary power. The Double and other are contrapuntal figures and their relational trajectories play out side by side, intertwine, merge, and separate in complex ways. Indeed, the securitizing notion that titles this book could be written as “homegrown” to illustrate that it marks not simply the combination of foreign seed and native soil but an attempt to keep them separate through their conjunction. This relation is staged in popular fictional portrayals. In the widely popular series Homeland,
the homegrown terrorist is a white Marine named Nicholas Brody who returns home after eight years in captivity. Yet, Brody’s crisis of identity and involvement in a terror plot are closely tied to Abu Nazir, a prototypical bin Laden figure (i.e., bearded, turbaned, Arab, and Muslim), with whom he developed a complex relationship through the latter’s son (who was killed in a US drone strike). The program, in which a military hero “turns,” plays out America’s contemporary fears of homegrown terrorism. It is a phenomenon also visible in the before-and-after images that accompany news accounts of Americans who have tried to join ISIS.

Here, assertions that contemporary security positions the citizen as simultaneously suspect and spy must be tempered by the fact that this position is not equally distributed. That is, some are more suspect than others (Brody’s radicalization is tied to, though not strictly at the hands of, the prototypical other). And while there have been recent cases of informant-led operations preventing violence against Muslim Americans, the rhetoric (and effort) of government officials illustrates that the practice is largely focused on America’s mosques. Moreover, the invocation of the Double is (an attempt at the) postracial in that it facilitates the distancing, at least rhetorically (through representations of terror via the white body), of the official government position from strategies of profiling, even as government agencies undertake such measures. Last, the brown-Arab-Muslim-other is irrevocably tied to the development and conjuring of the Double in contemporary security discourse (Chapter 1 dives deeper into the complex work carried out in marking an influence for political violence as “foreign”). Together, the Double and the other create a productive tension of deferral and closure, disruption and suture. The two figures are deeply imbricated, and the Double is often a figure deployed strategically to uncover the potential other hiding within the populace. Nevertheless, the distinction between the other and the Double is crucial because, as I have outlined here, the Double exhibits significantly different forms of representation, fulfills a unique function, and signals distinctive relations of enmity and power. While the Double is by no means an equal opportunity concept, always inflected with the identity of whomever it is placed over, it captures the ambivalent play of otherness and likeness in discourses that warn of a threat that can mutate and materialize, a phenomenon somewhere in between infiltration and emergence, in the homeland.
Chapter Overview

The remainder of the book takes its cue from the genealogy presented here. I have attempted, however briefly, to retrace how the purview of counterterrorism in the United States has been (re)defined over time (historically) in a way that affects its spatiality and how the Double reemerges in discourses of security in this context. The following chapters are organized along these dimensions of homegrown terrorism/counterterrorism: definitional, historical, and spatial. These are not the only possible gateways for thinking through homegrown terrorism and counterterrorism, but they are tied to significant questions or problems concerning these phenomena. Discuss terrorism long enough and questions about its definition will arise. A constant issue in security, academic, and popular circles, the addition of “homegrown” into the mix only further complicates the matter. Also, terrorism is often invoked in an ahistorical tonality or has a way of obscuring important pasts. Thus, a history of anxieties of infiltration holds promise for making sense of the phenomena under the umbrella of terrorism in a more critical light. Last, in the late war on terror, anxieties concerning the collapse of spatial divides are increasingly visible in, for example, the construction of border walls. Yet, boundary making in this environment is not limited to the border. Rather, it permeates social, cultural, and political relations, and, thus, examining the spaces of counterterrorism within (rather than at) US borders is a crucial aspect of understanding homegrown terrorism.

The three dimensions of homegrown (counter)terrorism that structure this book reveal more than just insights to the questions or anxieties from which they emerge. Each provides an entry point into further developing the figure of the Double and its place in security discourse. It is a potential I exploit by pairing the definitional, historical, and spatial with issues of identity, media, and citizenship, respectively. Certainly, these issues and the dimensions to which they are tied are intricately cross-stitched and overlapping; thus, the chapters are meant to be iterative in that respect. In other words, the pairings (definitional/identity, historical/media, spatial/citizenship) are intervals that cadence and cascade, and it is from the subsequent intersections and interstices that the Double emerges in all its complexity. The book is replete with doubles:
shadows, split personalities, clones, imposters, and doppelgängers. The Double as a heuristic construct here is not intended to reduce these manifestations into mere synonyms or different representations of a unified phenomenon. Rather, the Double ties these together in shifting ways that reveal the intricacies of today’s anxieties, discourses of security, and modalities of conflict as well as how they come to bear on articulations and experiences of citizenship.

Chapter 1, “Identity and Incidence: Defining Terror,” is concerned not with the formulation of a universally accepted definition of terrorism but with examining how three very different men and their violent acts were coded as terrorist: Daniel McGowan (ecoterrorist), Wade Michael Page (domestic terrorist), and Nidal Malik Hasan (homegrown terrorist). The chapter is structured along two definitional axes. The first is nominal (and suggestively ordinal) and examines the way identity constructs are deployed in efforts to mark an actor and his action as an existential threat, as “foreign.” It is a maneuver performed through the super- or sub-imposition of the brown-Arab-Muslim-other atop or beneath the familiar—be they the white faces of environmentalists and racists or a US military uniform. For a threat to be existential it must also be reoccurring and persistent. Thus, the second axis is temporal and examines how each actor/action was constituted as an incidence rather than a mere incident. In this effort, I detail how each man was paired with a past doppelgänger—McGowan/Kaczynski (the Unabomber), Page/McVeigh (who carried out the Oklahoma City bombing), Hasan/al-Hazmi (one of the 9/11 hijackers)—and characterized as a rematerialization of a ghost that promises subsequent, cyclical, and perhaps even more destructive returns. Together, the two axes illustrate the complex interplay of constructs of familiarity and difference as well as temporality in recoding violence as terror. Therein, I illustrate how the Double, a figure positioned in the past and future, but never present—one deployed strategically by various actors—is the operational figure of anticipatory or preemptive politics, the failure of which only reinforces its necessity.

“Informants and Other Media: Networking the Double” places contemporary fears of radicalization in a productive comparison with Cold War fears of infiltration. By focusing on media, writ broadly, I show how these anxieties are both, at their base and despite their differences, fears
of connectivity. Furthermore, they are made sense of—and simultaneously exacerbated and alleviated—through the lens of conspiracy. Thus, Chapter 2 is situated in two courtrooms over sixty years apart: the 1949 Foley Square trial in which eleven leaders of the Communist Party of the United States of America were found guilty of conspiring to teach and advocate the violent overthrow of the US government; and the 2008 trial of the Fort Dix Five, New Jersey men convicted of conspiring to kill US military personnel. I remap how an old surveillance medium, the paid informant, fostered, facilitated, and elicited social, technological, and ideological links between those accused and broader enemy networks (Communism and global jihad, respectively) in a manner that made conspiracy legible to publics and juries. Here, the Double is found in the network; neither here nor there, but always circulating. As such, the Double is epistemologically inseparable from the media implicated in the enemy network by the informant—books, videos, etc.—and the informant himself (as a surveillance technology). Here connectivity is simultaneously ill and remedy and the informant is a securitizing-Double, the enemy-Double’s inverse, a conspiratorial figure that exploits connectivity in an effort to make conspiracy charges, a legal mechanism of counterterrorism, stick.

Counterterrorism materializes in more than just America’s courtrooms. Chapter 3, “Opacity and Transparency in Counterterrorism: Belonging and Citizenship Post-9/11” examines two spaces integral to the production of counterterrorism spectacles: namely, the office of executive decision making and the US prison system, both largely kept from public view. The play of opacity and transparency in counterterrorism, inextricably linked to the spatial collapse of conflict, is visible in the two cases that inform this chapter: the placement of Anwar al-Awlaki on the infamous “capture or kill” list and the entrapment of four African American ex-convicts in a 2009 sting operation (the Newburgh Four). Both cases involve individuals readily made other, and yet what made their respective death and imprisonments so urgent was, I argue, their Americanness: al-Awlaki’s cultural familiarity and American accent and the Newburgh Four’s emergence from a quintessential American space—the prison. From there I examine the interplay of what is seen and left out of sight in counterterrorism, the articulations of belonging it fosters, and the already-existing second-class experiences of
citizenship it exacerbates. The communication of the US drone program vis-à-vis hunting al-Awlaki as an open secret, a play of opacity/transparency, illustrates the fluid positioning of citizens as simultaneously spy and suspect. The resulting peculiar articulation of belonging—laughter, in the face of the drone strike that takes the life of a fellow citizen—illustrates the unequal distribution of this dual position. I develop this further through the Newburgh Four by illustrating how the largely unseen machinations of mass incarceration are integral to the production of the “successful” counterterror sting, which in turn only further oils the cogs of mass incarceration.

The book concludes by returning to the image with which it began, perhaps the most visible manifestation of the discourse of the Double in the context of homegrown terrorism. At the time of writing, the Boston Marathon bombing carried out by the Tsarnaev brothers is the only successful post-9/11 improvised explosive attack carried out on US soil by self-proclaimed jihadists. A metaphorical return to the originary Tale of the Two Brothers, the Tsarnaev case acts as a crescendo in which the themes of this book tie together. The case illustrates the failure of anticipatory politics, the complex interplay of articulations of otherness and likeness, and the consequences of the Double for thinking about belonging. Moreover, the Double manifests therein in digital media, in psychological splits, and as doppelgänger on the cover of *Rolling Stone*.

Above the cacophony of ball bearings, lost limbs, shootouts, messages scribbled in blood, and “fan-girls,” a single note resounded with a peculiar resonance. The younger Tsarnaev’s appearance in a space thought to be reserved for America’s idols (though this is a historically inaccurate portrayal of *Rolling Stone*) was interpreted as an indication that the terrorist had been absorbed into the popular imagination beyond a nameless figure, an other marked for an unremarkable death in a high-budget Hollywood production. To conclude the book, I address the question of whether the image of the Double is in fact an enemy image or one of a different type and modality. From the Tsarnaev cover and its various appropriations I move to examining the double images (before and after) that structure how sense has been made of Americans who have tried to join ISIS. These images and their juxtaposition powerfully illustrate “homegrown” security discourse and the consequences of the Double’s
appearance on the scene of security. The strategic constructions of difference and likeness in threat itself, rather than in a clear us/other dichotomy, mark the usurpation of that binary. It is replaced by another nonbinary pairing—other-Double—that oscillates between deferral and closure, disruption and suture, engendering a cyclical movement, an ever-repeating coda that works to continuously defer the end of the war on terror.