



Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times (Next Wave: New Directions in Women's Studies)

By Jasbir Puar

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In this pathbreaking work, Jasbir K. Puar argues that configurations of sexuality, race, gender, nation, class, and ethnicity are realigning in relation to contemporary forces of securitization, counterterrorism, and nationalism. She examines how liberal politics incorporate certain queer subjects into the fold of the nation-state, through developments including the legal recognition inherent in the overturning of anti-sodomy laws and the proliferation of more mainstream representation. These incorporations have shifted many queers from their construction as figures of death (via the AIDS epidemic) to subjects tied to ideas of life and productivity (gay marriage and reproductive kinship). Puar contends, however, that this tenuous inclusion of some queer subjects depends on the production of populations of Orientalized terrorist bodies. Heteronormative ideologies that the U.S. nation-state has long relied on are now accompanied by homonormative ideologies that replicate narrow racial, class, gender, and national ideals. These “homonationalisms” are deployed to distinguish upright “properly hetero,” and now “properly homo,” U.S. patriots from perversely sexualized and racialized terrorist look-a-likes—especially Sikhs, Muslims, and Arabs—who are cordoned off for detention and deportation.

Puar combines transnational feminist and queer theory, Foucauldian biopolitics, Deleuzian philosophy, and technoscience criticism, and draws from an extraordinary range of sources, including governmental texts, legal decisions, films, television, ethnographic data, queer media, and activist organizing materials and manifestos. Looking at various cultural events and phenomena, she highlights troublesome links between terrorism and sexuality: in feminist and queer responses to the Abu Ghraib photographs, in the triumphal responses to the Supreme Court’s *Lawrence* decision repealing anti-sodomy laws, in the measures Sikh Americans and South Asian diasporic queers take to avoid being profiled as terrorists, and in what Puar argues is a growing Islamophobia within global queer organizing.

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Editorial Review

Review

“Jasbir Puar’s *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* is a refreshing and much-needed addition to this recent queer scholarship. . . . Her argument is essential for critics looking for a way to better understand the linkages between sexuality and antiterrorism.” - Robert Diaz, *Criticism*

“Jasbir Puar’s *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* is a powerful, energetic, and highly insightful read. The book absorbs a surprising amount of intellectual, political, and emotional labour. . . . [R]eaders can have that rare and golden experience of emerging from these pages transformed. Indeed, the demands that Puar places on her reader are substantial, but the rewards well worth it. Cutting, courageous, and prescient, *Terrorist Assemblages* is well worth the read.” - Deborah Cowen, *Antipode*

“A profound and challenging book that should be read widely and repeatedly, Puar’s latest work contains revelations about contemporary power that offer avenues for transforming academic knowledge and our own subjectivities.” - Liz Philipose, *Signs*

“*Terrorist Assemblages* is brilliant, hyperkinetic, and perhaps, most of all, ferocious. It is ferocious in its analysis and critique not only of networks of control over and unrelenting superpanopticism of queer, racialized bodies but also of queer, feminist, and critical race theory and activism.” - Victor Roman Mendoza, *Journal of Asian American Studies*

“[*Terrorist Assemblages*] makes an original and important contribution to feminist scholarship.” - Alyson M. Cole, *Women’s Review of Books*

“By articulating terrorism, patriotism, and U.S. exceptionalism not only to race but also to homophobia, heteronormativity, and queerness, *Terrorist Assemblages* offers a trenchant critique of contemporary bio- as well as geopolitics. As an author on a hotly debated topic, Jasbir Puar is as gracious about acknowledging other authors’ contributions as she is unyielding in her interrogations of secular-liberalist epistemic conventions. This is a smart, admirably researched, and courageous book.”—Rey Chow, author of *Sentimental Fabulations, Contemporary Chinese Films: Attachment in the Age of Global Visibility*

“I could not stop reading this outraged, meticulous, passionate, and brilliantly-visioned book. Jasbir K. Puar’s analysis of the neoliberal, imperial, sexual, and racist present reaches into the U.S. academy and multiple transnational publics and is critical of them all, even when she has solidarity with them. It’s been a long time since I read something so smart and so thorough in its storytelling.”—Lauren Berlant, author of *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship*

"In this powerful book, Jasbir K. Puar offers a stunning critique of 'homonational' politics. She rethinks intersections as assemblages, as networks of affect, intensity, and movement. The very rigor of her critique suggests an unflinching optimism about what is possible for queer politics."—Sara Ahmed, author of *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*

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From the Back Cover

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About the Author

Jasbir K. Puar is Associate Professor of Women's and Gender Studies at Rutgers University.

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