Violence, borderlands and belonging:
The matter of Black lives and Others

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Abstract. The word "violence" usually brings to mind a harmful, physical act. This paper explores not only physical violence but also structural violence through colonial systems that has constructed the Other and have kept "them" in a perpetual state of marginalization and unbelonging, Through the concept of dispossession, as outlined by Judith Butler and Athena Athanasiou, this paper will focus on Black lives and turn to refugees and migrants crossing to Europe in the so-called refugee crisis to demonstrate the ways necropolitics and necropower, through dehumanization, disposability and death, uphold sovereignty. Although these populations are seemingly very different, both have been violently displaced through forced migration. Moreover, this paper aims to analyze the violence, which can be extended by the media, that currently affects both groups to show the need for humanizing stories that counter the grand narrative of the Other.

Keywords: Black lives, refugee crisis, state violence

Introduction

To belong, as defined by the OED, is to "have an affinity for a specified place or situation" or to "have the right personal or social qualities to be a member of a particular group." A particular group can be demarcated through cultural, geographic and national borders. In instances where a group is threatened, violence can be used to protect members and keep others out or contained. Belonging to a group can mean acceptance, but it can also be claimed as a method of protection. Yet who dictates the social qualities needed to belong? How are these powers to separate the belonging from the un-belonging obtained? In *Dispossession: The Performative in the Political*, Judith Butler points out that belonging is sometimes supported by the perception of the autochthonous, through belonging by rights of land and earth, and this nationalist logic, for example, emboldens people to tell African-Americans to go back to Africa or to claim immigrants from Africa and the Middle East do not belong in Europe (Butler and Athanasiou 2013: 23). Butler argues that through colonial violence, populations can become simultaneously dispossessed in processes and ideologies that disown and abject through powers of normalization (Butler and Athanasiou 2013: 2), such as one's removal from lands, detention or immobilization in designated areas such as in refugee camps, and through the refusal of entry into European cities with the result that "the targeted population belongs, finally, to no land" (2013: 23-24). Moreover, violent ways of subordinating a group in which people are dehumanized, made precarious, and ultimately deemed disposable, what Achille Mbembé terms as necropower and necropolitics, are not only used as methods of un-belonging but become methods of destroying a population (Mbembé 2003: 40). Through the concepts of dispossession and necropolitics, this paper will explore the Black Lives Matter[i] movement and refugees of the so-called refugee crisis to argue that systemic violence, through intersectionalities of race, gender, and nationality, has continued to reinforce the black/white binary and push these groups to the borderlands, which, according to Gloria Anzaldúa are "physically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy" (Anzaldúa 1999: 19). While these groups are seemingly different, both groups have been displaced through forced migration and dispossession, and marginalized through continual violence. This paper will also contend that to combat this perpetual construction of the Other and maintenance of the status quo, in addition to multiple narratives, a greater context of history and the power structures created during colonization must be considered.

The Matter of Black Lives

Black Lives Matter. Sparked by the despair and outrage over the death of 17-year-old African-American Trayvon Martin, these three seemingly simple words became a social movement that swept across the U.S. and crossed the Atlantic into Europe.[ii] On February 26, 2012, Martin was killed while walking home from a convenience store by neighborhood watchman George Zimmerman, who followed Martin because he was "suspicious" (Botelho 2012: "What happened"). Zimmerman was acquitted using the defense of Florida's "Stand your ground" law, which enables the use of deadly force if a

person "reasonably believes that using or threatening to use such force is necessary to prevent imminent death or great bodily harm to himself or herself or another or to prevent the imminent commission of a forcible felony" (Florida Statute 776.012). His acquittal moved the nation, and with the simple hashtag #BlackLivesMatter, a national conversation soon became a social movement (Chokshi 2016: How #BlackLivesMatter Came"; Stephen 2015: "Social media helps"; Safdar 2016: "Black Lives Matter") and later an official policy agenda ("The Movement for Black Lives").

Amid the increasing reports of police violence and unfortunate deaths of Black girls, boys, women, and men, Black Lives Matter (BLM) has fought to reify the humanity of the lives of all Black Lives. In their "Herstory," co-founder Alicia Garza writes,

> Black Lives Matter is a unique contribution that goes beyond extrajudicial killings of Black people by police and vigilantes. It goes beyond the narrow nationalism that can be prevalent within some Black communities … Black Lives Matter affirms the lives of Black queer and trans folks, disabled folks, Black-undocumented folks, folks with records, women and all Black lives along the gender spectrum. It centers those that have been marginalized within Black liberation movements. It is a tactic to (re)build the Black liberation movement.
>
> When we say Black Lives Matter, we are talking about the ways in which Black people are deprived of our basic human rights and dignity. It is an acknowledgement [that] Black poverty and genocide is state violence (Garza 2014: "A Herstory").

By calling attention to the underlying structural racism that makes laws, controls court systems, and ultimately governs the daily lives of Black people, Garza raises awareness to the profundity of the power and violence that have commanded Black lives both externally and intra-communally through gender, racial, social and class hierarchies throughout American history.

As in the death of Trayvon Martin, media has contributed to violence through the inclusion of irrelevant background information about the victim, the violence is seemingly justified, as exemplified on CNN.com:

> Martin didn't live in Sanford, a central Florida city of about 53,000 people. Yet by that winter night, he'd been there for seven days, after being suspended for the third time from Dr. Michael M. Krop High School in Miami, in this instance, for 10 days after drug residue was found in his backpack, according to records obtained by the Miami Herald (Botelho 2012: "What happened").

By describing Martin as being outside of his hometown, alluding to multiple school suspensions, and implying Martin is linked to drugs through the drug residue discovered in his backpack, the young victim becomes a wrongdoer and criminality is inferred. Moreover, he is made a trespasser who does not belong in Sanford, while his background and suspicious activity put Trayvon Martin on the path to his death. Furthermore, this suspicion enables the rationalization of Zimmerman's deadly actions as "self defense." In an interview, Judith Butler argues

> Every time a grand jury or a police review board accepts this form of reasoning (that police act in self-defense when there is no gun present), they ratify the idea that blacks are a population against which society must be defended, and that the police defend themselves and (white) society, when they preemptively shoot unarmed black men in public space (Yancy and Butler 2015: "What's Wrong").

In the interview Butler argues the phrase "Black lives matter" states that what *should* be obvious—that a life matters—is apparently not and has not been historically realized (Yancey and Butler 2015: "What's Wrong"). She reminds readers that under slavery, Black lives were deemed barely a fraction of a human life, and with this in mind, today, what justifies violence against Black lives is that these lives are perceived of as a threat (Yancey and Butler 2015: "What's Wrong").

Police violence has been justified through self-defense and the fear of danger, resulting in the rash killings of Black men, women, boys and girls. MappingPoliceViolence.org, based on an effort to record police violence throughout the U.S., has found that Blacks are three times more likely to be killed by police than whites. Moreover, in 2015 police killed 102 Black people. This number is five times more the rate than killings of unarmed whites and likely to be higher due to underreporting. Of the Black people killed, less than 30 percent were armed and suspected of a violent crime. In police violence on Black lives, police hold the power to "define who matters and who does not, who is *disposable* and who is not" (Mbembé 2003: 27, original emphasis; Butler and Athanasiou 2013: 20), what Mbembé describes as sovereignty. In his example, Mbembé refers to Frantz Fanon's spatial reading of the colonized world that is divided and made exclusive. Fanon argues this space is separated in two with the border marked by barracks and police stations, and Mbembé brings this argument into a contemporary space where what he calls necropower operates, controlling death over life (Mbembé 2003: 27; Fanon 2004: 3). Thus, with both Fanon and Mbembé in mind, to avoid the terror and possibly deadly consequences of leaving one's space designated through sovereignty, Black lives must have an inherent knowledge of which spaces are and are not allowed to be entered. Simply by being in the "wrong place," Black lives, considered trespassers, can be lost, and at times, as in the case of Trayvon Martin, among countless others, there is neither consequence nor remorse for the death (Almukhtar 2016: "Driver Aquitted"; Baker and Mueller 2015: "Beyond the Chokehold"; Chiquillo 2016: "Teen Slammed"; Hackman 2015: "She Was Only a Baby"). Fanon argues, "The agent does not alleviate oppression or mask domination. He displays and demonstrates them with the clear conscience of the law enforcers, and brings violence into the homes and minds of the colonized subject" (Fanon 2004: 4). Moreover, as agents of sovereignty do not hide their authority but use violent rationale that continually seeks to demonstrate power over the dispossessed, they continue to assign precariousness and maintain vulnerable states of life in their "proper place" under constant control (Butler and Athanasiou 2013: 20).

The politics of disposability comes from histories of liminality that take place along "racial, gendered, economic, colonial, and postcolonial lines" (Butler and Athanasiou 2013: 146-147). As previously mentioned in the Black Lives Matter herstory, Garza takes these intersections into consideration and calls for the rights and dignity of "all Black lives along the gender spectrum" as a way to strengthen and rebuild the Black

liberation movement both from within and externally. This herstory points to the need for a movement that is more inclusive by opening dialog on the intersectionalities of gender, social class, and ability as Black liberation has been criticized in its cis-androcentricity (Hall 2000: 151; Hill Collins 1998: 67; Wicomb 1990: 63-70) while women's liberation has largely ignored people of color (Anzaldúa 1999: 230-231; Carby 2000: 389-403; hooks 2000: 372-388). Thus, BLM not only acknowledges but also insists on placing importance of the intersectionality of identities within the movement, and in this way, she recognizes the borderlands of the movement and pushes back the borders to make an all-encompassing space. Gloria Anzaldúa describes her experience with white feminism and explains, "gender is not the only oppression. There is race, class, religious orientation; there are generational and age kinds of things, all the physical stuff, et cetera … They wanted to apply their notion of feminism across all cultures … I was asked to leave my race at the door" (Anzaldúa 1999: 230-31).

Kimberlé Crenshaw points out, when considering violence against women, race and class are important dimensions (1991: 1242). She contends, "Although racism and sexism readily intersect in the lives of real people, they seldom do in feminist and antiracist practices. And so, when the practices expound identity as woman or person of color as an either/or proposition, they relegate the identity of women of color to a location that resists telling" (1991: 1242.) Violence on Black women in importantly different ways includes lesser media coverage and even the exclusion of their stories. In February 2015, the African American Policy Forum, a think tank of academics, activists, and policy makers created initiatives including the hashtags #BlackGirlsMatter, which focuses on excessive disciplinary actions against young Black girls, and #SayHerName, which highlights issues around brutality and racial violence against Black women. In a report for the SayHerName campaign, Crenshaw and Andrea J Ritchie write, "Black women who are profiled, beaten, sexually assaulted, and killed by law enforcement officials are conspicuously absent ... When their experiences with police violence are distinct—uniquely informed by race, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation—Black women remain invisible" (Crenshaw and Ritchie 2015: 1). The report includes individual cases categorized by "catalysts" to the violence such as "driving while Black," being poor, and being casualties of the war on drugs and, it lays bare the violence women face while they are suffering from mental illnesses, are imprisoned, or are just "collateral damage."

Black Lives Matter and SayHerName quickly became a great presence in social media and in physical demonstrations, heightening the vocalization against police violence on Black bodies. The BLM movement has also become a hot topic in politics, as exemplified by New Jersey Republican governor Chris Christie. In an interview with CBS, he argues, "[Obama] does not support the police, he doesn't back up the police, he justifies Black Lives Matter" (Flores 2015: "Chris Christie"). In this way, Christie constructs the Black Lives Matter Movement as an antithesis to police or "lawfulness." Moreover, he attempts to simplify police violence to the narrative of a "bad cop," or an anomaly, removing accountability. He argues,

> When there are bad cops, they need to be prosecuted, like there are bad lawyers and bad doctors and bad engineers, they all need to be prosecuted when they see something wrong … but our police officers are putting their lives on the line every day, let's back them up so we can

> end the *real* violence in this country that's happening in the streets of our
> cities all across this country.
>
> (Flores 2015: "Chris Christie," emphasis added)

Christie not only removes the fault of police but he proclaims the violence against
Black lives is not real, and in effect, he denies the systemic violence that embedded
within law enforcement culture (Anderson 2016: 1-2; Jones-Brown and Maule 2010:
140-173; Bruce-Jones 2017: 25-35). Furthermore, by suggesting that the violence
against Black lives is *un*real, Christie alienates Black lives by denying them the right to
feel safe, the right to be conscious of the violence they experience, and the right to feel
protected by the police as other citizens of the nation are, all of which are forms of
dispossession similar to Marx's concept of alienation, as Athanasiou points out, in the
"[deprivation] of the ability to have control over life" and the denial of the
"consciousness of their subjugation as they are interpellated as subjects of inalienable
freedom" (Butler and Athanasiou 2013: 6).

As a way to combat the ever-present threat of violence, parents instruct their Black
children on what to do *when* approached by police known as "The Talk," exemplified
by author and journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates on the moment his son finds out the killer of
Michael Brown, the 18-year-old who was stopped for "fitting a description" and later
shot by the police officer from inside his car. Brown fled and was later killed; however,
Wilson was not charged, resulting in protests that turned into riots in Ferguson, MO
(Buchanan 2014: "What happened?"). In "Between the World and Me," which was
written as a letter to his son, Coates explains,

> I heard you crying...I didn't hug you, and I didn't comfort you, because I
> thought it would be wrong to comfort you. I did not tell you that it
> would be okay, because I have never believed it would be okay. What I
> told you is what your grandparents tried to tell me: that this is your
> country, that this is your world, that this is your body, and you must find
> some way to live within the all of it. (2015: 11-12)

Coates's decision to not console his son attests to the conditions of necropolitics and
threat in which Black lives must live as, what is described as "non-being" in the logic
of dispossession (Butler and Athanasiou 2013: 19-20), or in Mbembé's terms, a "social
death" by way of removing one from humanity (2003: 21). Coates acknowledges the
forces, or the necropower, that work to take ownership of Black lives and uses history
to explain the constructs that continue to subjugate the Black body, showing the
capacity of un-belonging. He warns and empowers his son through knowledge to resist
comforting narratives that suggest irrepressible justice, and he also reminds his son,
"The enslaved were not bricks in your road, and their lives were not chapters in your
redemptive history. They were people turned to fuel for the American machine"
(Coates 2015: 70). By stressing the humanity of the enslaved people to highlight the
importance of remembering the humans that were terrorized to create America, Coates
emphasizes the repercussions of this systematic subjugation that still echoes today.

The Matter of Other(ed) Lives

Imperialism and colonial occupation led to new technologies and declared new spatial and social relations that helped instill the systematic frameworks of oppression that is modernly practiced today (Mbembé 2003: 25-26). Such practices have included the categorization of people and the segregation of geographical spaces enabling the sovereignty or occupation and marginalization of a population, in what Mbembé describes as "a third zone between subjecthood and objecthood" (2003: 26). In such spaces, necropolitics, as argued in the previous section, sees that the sovereign exercises power over who lives and who dies, who *matters*, and thus asserts who belongs (2003: 26-27). Thus, as people are deemed disposable by sovereignty, their humanity is put into question. They are dispossessed and made precarious, and in instances where the battle is no longer between two nations but between a nation and various groups, as in the case of violence, conflict and war, the civilian population is often made disposable. Mbembé writes, "Increasingly, war is … waged by armed groups acting behind the mask of the state against armed groups that have no state but control very distinct territories; both sides having as their main targets civilian populations that are unarmed or organized into militias" (2003: 34-35).

Conflicts in the Middle East and Africa have created spaces that are no longer safely habitable for stark circumstances such as, in many cases, threats of violence, torture and life endangerment. Such precarious conditions have led people to leave their homes for an arduous journey to the unknown. Although a final destination might be an EU country such as Germany, death is a very real possibility. This influx of refugees, migrants, and displaced persons came to be the so-called refugee crisis (European Commission/ECHO 2016 "Refugee Crisis"; Lehne 2015: "The Roots"). As individuals no longer have their safety, living in violent conditions such as the Syrian civil war is a form of dispossession, and leaving one's homeland leads to another form of dispossession; by leaving one's homeland, a person allows him or herself to become dispossessed (Butler and Athanasiou 2013: 2). However, while refugees, migrants, and displaced persons risk their lives—and sometimes the lives of their children, large amounts of money and the possibility of being exploited—their act of leaving is a call for the recognition of their own humanity and the humanity of their families in a search for a better life. Those who embark on this journey perceive the possibility of death is better than staying in their own homes, neighborhoods, lands, and nation. In Mbembé's analysis of necropolitics, death and freedom are hand-in-hand for those enslaved or living under occupation (2003: 38). He argues, "In such circumstances, the discipline of life and the necessities of hardship (trial by death) are marked by excess. What connects terror, death, and freedom is an *ecstatic* notion of temporality and politics…the present itself is but a moment of vision—vision of the freedom not yet to come" (2003: 39, original emphasis), and in such extreme cases, death is the only site where an individual has power over his or her life. Thus, through their act of walking for months through several countries and crossing deadly seas, these displaced persons see that only by leaving, regardless of danger that could also be a freedom, can an end to precariousness be reached.

In 2014, roughly 170,000 refugees and migrants landed in Italy, with the highest numbers from Eritrea, Somalia and Nigeria. In 2015, this shifted and refugees mostly travelled from Syria and Afghanistan to Greece; 90 percent were asylum seekers (UNHCR 2015: 11). From January to March, 479 refugees and migrants died at sea or went missing and this number soared to 1,308 in April alone (UNHCR 2015: 8-9) with one capsized boat taking roughly 800 lives from various nationalities. This was finally

the catalyst to get some aid from the EU, and numbers significantly dropped. The boat was found in June 2016 with about 400-600 bodies still inside (Kingsley 2016: "Italian navy recovers"). The plight of these people was occasionally highlighted in a special report or on the front page of daily newspapers, but many European countries turned the other cheek, and in this way, these lives were disposable. Athanasiou argues, "As long as bodies are deemed disposable, found discarded, and remain uncounted, the notion of disposability will be associated with the concepts and practices of dehumanization and necropower" (Butler and Athanasiou 2013: 147). Butler brings up the important point that "to count" in English means both to matter and to be a calculated number; however, numbers and ordering can prove to be polemic in situations such as in the war in Gaza, where every person in the population is an enemy (2013: 100). Butler questions, "Under what conditions do numbers count, and under what conditions are numbers uncountable?" (2013: 100). In terms of necropolitics, if bodies are deemed disposable, what do these numbers signify? The refusal to aid Italy and share in the acceptance of refugees and migrants into other EU countries led Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi to threaten to issue temporary Schengen Visas. At this time, about 40,000 refugees and migrants on their way to other countries like Germany and Sweden were stuck in Greece and Italy (Kingsley 2015: "This isn't human"). Renzi's strategic threat of legalizing bodies and allowing them to freely enter the EU, a Foucauldian performance of biopower, became a way of dealing with the so-called refugee crisis, and fellow EU states responded (Foucault 2007: 16-17; Butler and Athanasiou 2013: 168).

Rendering these refugees and migrants immobile is a form of detention, and by creating spaces that confine, these groups are dispossessed and forced to remain in physical borderlands. In Calais, thousands of refugees and migrants were stuck at the borders between France and England in makeshift camps. In what came to be known as "the Jungle," the population waited to enter England through the port or Eurotunnel by hiding in trains, trucks, ferries, and cars. British Prime Minister David Cameron described the group as, "a swarm of people coming across the Mediterranean" (Elgot and Taylor 2015: "David Cameron Condemned"), and after international condemnation for his degrading words, Cameron contended that he did not think the use of "swarm" was dehumanizing (Walton and Ross 2015: "David Cameron Insists"). Such Othering language is reminiscent of colonial thought on the native Other as an animal and from a completely different world and species, in what Mbembé calls part of the "credo of power in the colony," where the native belongs to a set of objects that could and would be used according to sovereign will and where the only relationship was one of violence (Mbembé 2001: 26). In this relationship, the colonized's death did not matter but was nothing more than an "inert object" (2001: 26). Thus through such Othering language, especially by a high state official, the lives of those in "the Jungle" were deemed of no more importance than a threat to British society.

More than 137,000 refugees and migrants crossed the Mediterranean in the first half of 2015 (UHCR 2015: 2-3) and continued on through Serbia and Hungary, the latter of which enforced a billboard campaign against immigration (Thorpe 2015: "Hungary's poster war"). The situation and numbers escalated, and Hungary put up four-meter high, razor-wire fences along the borders of Serbia and Croatia, and threatened to do the same in Romania. Using Othering language and fear tactics, the campaign presented refugees and migrants as a threat to Hungarian jobs and livelihood. Moreover, on September 15, 2015 the Hungarian government passed a law that treated anyone

illegally entering its borders as a criminal. The following day 367 people were taken into custody: 51 are being prosecuted for illegally entering and 316 for damaging the fence (Squires 2016: "Hungary says migrant influx"). The new law did not distinguish juveniles as in normal procedures and put defendants under house arrest in a refugee camp. Once a refugee was arrested, he or she could not apply for asylum and did not receive the charges or judgment in his or her mother tongue, and in some cases, he or she might not even receive the documents as they might be delivered to the defense lawyer (Budapest Sentinal Staff 2015: "Lawyers rule of law"). Thus, not only was the erecting of the fence and criminalization of refugees received as a way of protecting Hungarian society but also a very direct way of denying life. Yet people crossed the razor-wire-lined border, and in doing so, the refugees and migrants performed acts of resistance in what Butler and Athanasiou describe as becoming present (2013: 14). Athanasiou explains,

> In becoming present to one another, as an occasion of being both bound up with subjugation and responsive and receptive to others, we may be positioned within and against the authoritative order of presence that produces and constrains the intelligibility of human or non-human presence … if we reinstate presence in a different or catachrestic way, we might put our social existence at risk…but we might also start to performatively displace and reconfigure the contours of what matters, appears, and can be assumed as one's own intelligible presence.
>
> (2013: 15)

Refugees and migrants finally entering Austria and Germany were met with big signs welcoming refugees in a stark contrast to Hungary. Volunteers, organizations, and companies worked together to bring hot food and cold water to train stations. Big tents, community centers, and school gyms were set up with cots and blankets, giving refugees and migrants temporary places to sleep while they waited to be registered. In the meantime, disagreements within the EU over a quota system continued. Slowly the influx of refugees became too large for Germany and Sweden to bear, and borders were temporarily closed and the excitement and acceptance of refugees began to die down.

In January 2016, after a string of thefts, violence and sexual assaults reportedly by men mostly of Arab and North African descent (Smale 2015: "18 Asylum Seekers") on the night of New Year's Eve in Cologne, 1,700 from anti-Islam group PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West) and AfD (Alternative für Deutschland) demonstrated against Islam and refugees. Holding signs stating "RAPEfugees not welcome" and "Integrate barbarity?" the groups protested against immigration and Merkel's "open-door" policy claiming that refugees and Islam would ruin Germany and that protecting women was their right and duty. As Anne McClintock argues, family is an important motif of nation, with women symbolizing the land, markers of national borders, producers and bearers of tradition, among other representations, that must be preserved for the sake of the nation (McClintock 2010: 89-92). By using the woman as a marker of the nation and some "thing" that must be protected, women's bodies are transformed into tools of the nation, with patriarchy in control. In this way, women belong, as objects, to the discourse of national race, which in effect, must be protected from the Others. However, it was not only rightwing groups such as PEGIDA and AfD that promoted such Othering and scare tactics. Reporting on these assaults in Cologne for *The New York Times*, Alison Smale writes

> It was not clear exactly when the migrants who may have been involved
> arrived in Germany. But the disclosure added to worries over
> acculturating hundreds of thousands of people from conservative
> Muslim societies—many of them young men—who have little
> experience with open European mores, particularly regarding women
> (Smale 2015: "18 Asylum Seekers").

Smale's patronizing narrative of the event displaces the assaults and a culture of
violence against women as part of Muslim culture, and she continues by mentioning the
"challenge of assimilation." In this way Smale presents Muslim culture as misogynistic
while reinforcing anti-immigration notions through fear for European safety. Reporting
such as Smale's helps shape public discourse on refugees and migrants and an entire
religion, and it reiterates the repeated fear of threat to the sanctity of white womanhood
(Crenshaw 1991: 1266). The events on the night of New Year's Eve in Cologne also
motivated Alice Schwarzer, a prominent German feminist, to comment that those
involved in the attacks were "Young men of Arab or North African descent [that were]
playing war in the middle of Cologne" and described their night as a "gang-bang
party," attributing sexual violence in Germany as a problem that originated outside and
arrived with immigration" (Spiegel Staff 2016: "How New Year's Eve"). Her
comments were not only racist and xenophobic but, in the name of "protecting
women," she employed patriarchal narratives using women's bodies to fuel anti-
immigrant sentiment. Schwarz has also suggested people from "Islamic cultural
groups," including existing immigrants and incoming refugees, migrants, and displaced
persons, ought to be taught gender equality (Hoffman and Pfister 2016: "A Feminist
View"), and in this way, Schwarz presents a monolithic threat, feeding the justification
of xenophobic sentiment perpetuating racist ideologies and calls for a protection of
national culture and white space.[iii] In this way the intersections of patriarchy, racism,
misogyny, and colonialism work together and dispossess not only the refugees and
migrants but also the very European women that are claimed to be protected.

In an understanding of national identities where whites are the most valuable and have
the most power such as in the U.S., England, and Germany, non-white groups
attempting to enter pose a threat to the nation in degradation of racial and blood purity.
Patricia Hill Collins connects the notion of blood ties and race in the U.S. with the view
of race as family, which was based on scientific and lawful classifications (Hill Collins
1998: 70). Using the logic of race as an indicator of common bloodline, Hill Collins ties
this logic to an understanding of ethnic nationalism where the group shares common
cultural expressions (1998: 70). Therefore when media outlets illustrate refugees as a
great Muslim danger, the threat is not only on white women, as they represent the
protectors of blood purity, white family, and a white nation but Muslims—and non-
white Others—are also a threat to white spaces and, in effect, whiteness. Therefore all
groups that do not have family blood ties, meaning they are not from white countries,
are considered less-worthy to immigrate and become naturalized citizens (1998: 70),
resulting in a diminished acceptability of people of color to belong in such countries.

The notion of blood ties and race sometimes can prove to play a stronger role than
citizenship. In France, Prime Minister Manuel Valls has promoted the consequence of
stripping citizens with dual nationality of their French citizenship if convicted of
terrorism, despite the fact that the Paris November attackers[iv] were mostly French

citizens *without* dual nationality (Nossiter 2015: "French proposal"). Such alarming notions not only further stimulate feelings of fear and being under threat, but they also send the message to non-white Europeans and those with dual nationality that they are still "the Others," and their belonging is, paradoxically, circumstantial. Furthermore, while the proposal was eventually abandoned, it helped create the false notion that that French nationals, or nationals of any "Western" country could be terrorists.

This circumstantial belonging can also be exemplified by the comments of Angela Merkel, who in 2010 claimed that the notion of living in a multicultural society "had absolutely failed" (Evans 2010: "Merkel Says"). To a group of CDU Party youth, she said,

> We are a country, which at the beginning of the 1960s actually brought guest workers to Germany. Now they live with us, and we kidded ourselves for a while saying that they won't stay and they'll disappear again one day. That's not the reality. This multicultural approach, saying that we simply live side-by-side, and are happy about each other, this approach has utterly failed.
>
> (Evans 2010: "Merkel Says")

Merkel's rejection of the possibility of living happily together with guest workers is in complete contrast with the portrayal of "Mama Merkel" for the welcoming of Syrian refugees, who are patronizingly likened to poor children by mainstream media. While Merkel opened the borders, she has admitted to a lack of "order" and "control," and was worried about losing German's "societal center" that "makes Germany so strong" (Spiegel Staff 2015: "The Lonely Chancellor"). Furthermore, to combat the criticism and the poor election results that resulted in AfD wins in Berlin in September 2016, Merkel has worked toward integration policies that require German language acquisition and entry into the labor market. Included in these policies are courses that would include topics to reinforce social values such as gender equality (Delcker 2016: "Angela Merkel to Refugees"). When considering those who live in precarious circumstances and are categorized based on race, gender, sexuality and these representations, Athanasiou questions the act of judging and sanctioning through migration policies (Butler and Athanasiou 2013: 165). She gives the example of the misuse of power when Dutch immigration required immigrants and asylum seekers to view videos of topless women swimming and gay men kissing as a way to evaluate the capacity to integrate (2013: 166). Such events not only use naked women and gay men as tools of European openness but they also dispossess these people and movements from their continuing struggles (2013: 166). Moreover, if an integration policy includes courses on gender equality, or other values of Germany society that make it so strong, is it inferred that there is gender equality in Germany? If so, what ruler is used to mark gender equality? Returning to the events on the night of New Year's Eve in Cologne, Schwarzer's comments also sparked a feminist debate. Schwarzer was criticized for suggesting gender violence did not exist before immigration but was imported (Hoffman and Pfister 2016: "A Feminist View"). In an interview with Schwarzer for Der Spiegel, Anne Wizoreck contends Schwarzer's view of Muslims wrongly displaces the focus of the issue of sexualized violence regardless of the perpetrator and calls for a debate on integration rather than exclusion (Hoffman and Pfister 2016: "A Feminist View"). The construction of refugees and migrants as sexual predators and integration policies that aim to "correct" behavior, as previously argued, reiterates a fear of the

Other that threatens European values, and it is this message that is repeated by governments and instilled in the minds of many European citizens.

Conclusion

My aim has been to analyze ways in which oppressive colonial systems are foundations of dispossession and how, through violence, dehumanization, and disposability, they affect belonging. I have attempted to show that through nationalisms, necropower and necropolitics, sovereignty continues to construct, impose, and enforce systems that maintain the subordination of the marginalized and destroy populations. I have chosen seemingly distinct populations: Black lives on the one hand and refugees, migrants, and displaced peoples from the Middle East and Africa, part of the so-called "refugee crisis," on the other to show how both these populations are dispossessed through intersectionalities of race, gender, and nationality. While the violence of forced migrations has caused these populations to become dispossessed, these populations have performed acts of resistance, calling for their humanity and dignity and for the end of their precariousness. Moreover, as media can act as tools of the sovereign, we must look for the lesser-told stories of the borderlands, of the precarious, and all stories, as most of us have been taught only the single story, which was to be accepted without question. And what is wrong with this single story? Nigerian author Chimamanda Adichie summed it up beautifully in her 2009 TED Talk "The danger of a single story:"

> The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.
>
> Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity.

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[i] Keeping with the Black Lives Matter movement, this paper will retain their capitalization of "Black" in discussing the violence that affects the everyday lives of African-Americans.

[ii] While Black Lives Matters has moved across the globe (Hassan 2016: "How the Black Lives Matter"; Winsor 2016: "Black Lives Matter"; Armitage 2016: "2016 was the Year"), this paper will focus on events in the U.S.

[iii] Refusing the quota is a way of protecting national culture and space. Slovakia completely rejected the quota system, while Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Romania voted against it. On November 16, 2015, the Hungarian Parliament voted to challenge the mandatory quotas. The bill cites that the quota system "would increase crime, spread terror and endanger Hungarian culture" (Zalan 2015: "Hungary to challenge").

[iv] For an interesting analysis on necropolitics in the *logic of martyrdom* and *logic of survival*, including the figure of the suicide bomber, see Mbembé's section "On Motion and Metal" (2003: 35-39).