OPPOSITION TO ISLAM THROUGH THE LENS OF *FITNA: THE MOVIE*

VISUALIZING UNCERTAINTY:

OPPOSITION TO ISLAM IN THE NETHERLANDS

THROUGH THE LENS OF

FITNA: THE MOVIE

By

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the current socio-political context of the Netherlands through an analysis of *Fitna: The Movie* (2008), the online video produced by right-wing politician Geert Wilders. I frame the field of analysis as an affective economy of uncertainty in the country, manifesting in the increasing visibility of, for instance, anti-Islam sentiment, declarations of national identity crisis, and public figures claiming to speak on behalf of the "real" Dutch, in the public realm.

With photographic footage of Muslims condoning and conducting violence displayed alongside Quranic verses, and a blatant appeal to viewers to "Stop Islamization. Defend our freedom", *Fitna* is both product and visualization of the country's affective economy. To the extent that the conventions and codes of its context shape *Fitna*'s form and content, the movie provides a visualization of uncertainty in the Netherlands.

Fitna constitutes both the target and the lens of this analysis. I refract a close attention to the movie's montage editing, violated/violent images, and use of photographs through the concepts of fear, offense and truth(-telling), respectively. Taking the movie as lens, my analysis elaborates: the experiential dimension of uncertainty, as the disorientation of globalizing modernity; the key figures through which uncertainty circulates, including nation, religion, Islamization and depillarization; and the affect's primary representational mode as truth telling performance.

Rather than explaining (away) opposition to Islam in, or the affective economy of, the Netherlands, this seeks to explore and experiment. I explore the character and mechanics of an affective economy through an experimental methodology centered on a

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single visual object. Given these objectives, the study closes with reflections upon the

potentials and pitfalls of an analysis of *Fitna: The Movie*, with particular respect to

popular narratives recounting the movie's alleged failure.

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CHAPTER ONE

GUT FEELINGS: AN INTRODUCTION

"Wilders and his people, the people like that, they connect with something. It's deep down here, under the stomach… in your gut. There's a feeling there, like being scared. Not fear, really, though… feeling trapped. Like, you don't know what's going on. Deep down: here [gestures to his abdomen]. Wilders, the movie [*Fitna*], they do something evil with it in their second step, manipulate it for power and their own gain. But the first step is real." (Maartin, fieldnotes, February 5, 2012)[1]

The scene: a conversation, an encapsulation of the socio-political landscape of the Netherlands in the present day.

The actors: Maartin, an ethnic Dutch man, a photographer in his late forties who grew up in the south of the country and moved to Amsterdam some twenty years previously. He represents a portion of the country's citizenry increasingly identified and identifying as *autochtonen*, the ethnic, native, "authentic" Dutch coalescing in distinction from the country's *allochthonen* population.[2] And myself, a foreign anthropologist intrigued by the attention which the Netherlands has lately received on an international stage, by the country's emergence at the vanguard of a transnational surge in anti-Islam,

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[1] All names have been changed for confidentiality.
[2] The oppositional and mutually constitutive identities *autochthonen* and *allochthonen* first emerged in official discourse in the 1980s, and has since become normative in the public to reference an "ethnic Dutch" population construed in contrast to those residents of the country of immigrant or non-native descent, with particular reference to Muslims. Chapter three provides a detailed overview of the terms.

anti-immigrant and populist dynamics which juxtapose its reputation as a haven of

tolerance. Maartin has agreed to meet with me to participate in an interview for my

doctoral dissertation, to share his thoughts about attitudes towards Islam in the

Netherlands. [3]

The shot: We meet at the beginning of 2012, in a central Amsterdam

neighbourhood where espresso coffee bars spring up between *halal* butchers and brown

cafés broadcasting the latest football game. We watch the mid-afternoon traffic zip along

outside, a decidedly cosmopolitan scene of urban bustle. Mothers and fathers pick up

children from the nearby crèche; a group of older men stand smoking and drinking coffee;

the automatic doors of the Albert Heijn supermarket open and shut as busy shoppers load

groceries onto their bikes; a growing cluster of people forms at the tram stop. Some are

"visibly Muslim", some are "visibly Dutch", all have the air of busy urban residents

proceeding about their daily business.

The action. The pedestrian mis-en-scene juxtaposes the topics of our conversation:

the widespread declarations of a crisis of national identity; the rising influence of right-

wing populist parties; the tensions and controversies of multicultural life broadcast in

daily media coverage. But the present day Netherlands encompasses many seeming

contradictions, and the integration of cosmopolitan streets and frequent calls to "stop

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[3] My fieldwork in the Netherlands involved both casual conversations and structured interviews with over fifty respondents, including Maartin. His articulation of a collective gut feeling, shared in one of my final interviews, resonated with the comments expressed by many of my interlocutors. I see considerable resonance between Maartin's comments and the accounts from other anthropologists in the country (Duyvendak 2011; Mak 2006; Moors 2009). A further overview of my ethnographic practice is provided in chapter two.

tolerating intolerance" share equal prominence as features of the country's socio-political landscape.

After all, though once dismissed as a fringe extremist, the right-wing politician Geert Wilders who features in Maartin's comments has seen increasing political success in the Netherlands of late. In 2010 his Freedom Party (PVV) became the determining stakeholder in the country's minority government at the same time that its leader stood trial for hatred and discrimination against Muslims. And while the politician's inflammatory statements cannot be taken as directly indicative of widespread sentiment among the Dutch, his success speaks to the increasing visibility, normalization and acceptability of anti-Islam statements, actions, emotions and opinions in the Netherlands.

I ask Maartin about this seeming contradiction, about how he might account for this flipside to the pleasant urban bustle before us. Over and over again in formulating his response, Maartin returns to his articulation of a "collective gut feeling" in the country. This certain something referred to his own body and the atmosphere within the Netherlands, some feeling separate from, but effectively mobilized by, national identity, anti-immigrant, and anti-Islam discourses. Wilders' prominence and the effectiveness of his anti-Islam message, Maartin says, has everything to do with the politician's ability to tap into and articulate this gut feeling. It is a deep sentiment that has something to do with fear, with feeling both trapped within and overwhelmed by systems beyond individual control, and with "not knowing what's going on".

Maartin is not the only one to notice the country's emergent gut feeling, and his comments join increasing reports of *something* changing in the country, the emergence of

a shifting discomfort which has captured the attention of observers both within and

outside of its sphere (cf. Buruma 2006; Duyvendak 2011; Erlanger 2011; Mak 2006;

Sniderman and Hagendoorn 2007; van der Veer 2006). These expressions of

disillusionment pin the perceived failure of multiculturalism on a non-ethnic Dutch

population's unwillingness to integrate into the national social fabric (Duyvendak 2011).

Conflating non-ethnic Dutch, immigrants and Muslims, these discourses intertwine anti-

Islam invective with renegotiations of citizenship, declaring the incompatibility of

"Islamic culture" and "national values".

Felt in the social as much as the individual body, Maartin mentions gut feeling to

characterize the atmosphere in the country. It shapes the country's socio-political

landscape, binding the bodies and identities of its residents, their histories and their

imagined futures, to one another in a sticky affective web. National identity. Pim Fortuyn.

Depillarization. Enlightenment values. European Union. Gay rights. Freedom of speech.

Terrorist. World War Two. Theo van Gogh. *Autochtonen.* The collective gut feeling

which binds them increases in charge as it traffics between these subjects and objects,

drawing (upon) new relations with each movement.

Taking Maartin's comment as a point of departure, this dissertation explores the

country's collective gut feeling. In what follows I seek to identify, contextualize, and

parochialize the character and constitutive elements of this palpable something

characterizing the present day Netherlands. I conduct this exploration through paying

sustained attention to a single object intimately involved in this gut feeling. *Fitna: The*

Movie is an anti-Islam movie created by Wilders, which was released online amidst

considerable public attention in March 2008. An object deeply shaped by the context of its production, the country's gut feeling is inscribed in the movie's formal features and mode of construction, its stylistic devices and visual strategies. I argue that *Fitna* structurally enacts the gut feeling which defines its context, and as such makes visible the character and the constitutive elements of the country's present day socio-political landscape.

My objectives in this project are exploratory and experimental. Exploratory, in the sense that I investigate the complexities of a collective gut feeling for the purposes of thickening and contextualizing its manifold dimensions. Rather than reducing my aims to explanation, I seek here to identify and trace the relations between the figures implicated in a diffuse and amorphous social feeling which involves opposition to Islam among other features. Experimental, in the sense that I do so through analyzing a single object. Taking *Fitna* as both the target and lens of analysis, I integrate close attention to the object with ethnographic fieldwork. Guided by these exploratory and experimental objectives, this project does not explain (away) opposition to Islam, nor the collective gut feeling, in the Netherlands, but rather complicates our understanding of its mechanics and specificities.

Gut Feelings, Affective Economies

During our interview Maartin articulated his opinions about *Fitna* and Wilders through reference to a physical sensation. But his embodied expression also named a collective phenomenon permeating his social world. His frequent resort to gesture and the single phrase "gut feeling", or to simply trailing off midsentence, sighing in frustration and

commenting "you know what I mean?" indicate the difficulties for precisely identifying this diffuse, slippery something.

I unpack this gut feeling in terms of affect, which I define in its broadest sense to encompass registers of social feeling, emotion and experience.[4] I follow Kathleen Stewart's lyrical description in an approach to affects as those,

> "public feelings that begin and end in broad circulation, […] the stuff that
>
> seemingly intimate lives are made of. They give circuits and flows the forms of a
>
> life. They can be experienced as a pleasure and a shock, as an empty pause or a
>
> dragging undertow, as a sensibility that snaps into place or a profound
>
> disorientation. They can be funny, perturbing or traumatic. Rooted not in fixed
>
> conditions of possibility but in the actual lines of potential that a something
>
> coming together calls to mind and sets in motion, they can be seen as both the
>
> pressure points of event or banalities suffered and the trajectories that forces might
>
> take if they were to go unchecked." (Stewart 2007:1-2) [5]

Maartin's gut feeling resonates deeply with Stewart's descriptive definition of affect, something diffuse yet palpable, embodied yet social, easy to identify but difficult to express.

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[4] I depart in this sense from current trends in English cultural analysis which tends to define affect in accord with the cognitive sciences (Labanyi 2010:224). In cognitive theory the term takes on its strictest, most narrow definition as preconscious, precognitive and prelinguistic response to stimulus, understanding affect to precede physical sensation as well as emotion. The approach is effectively articulated in the work of Serena Brennan, who takes affect as that which bridges emotion and physical sensation, and Brian Massumi's definition of affect as intensity, an experience unrelated to content or emotion (Labanyi 2010:224).

[5] Stewart identifies the ordinary affects evoked in her study as indexing the terms of neoliberalism, advanced capitalism and globalization characterizing our "weighted and reeling present", a concern she shares with Sara Ahmed (Ahmed 2004a, 2004b; Stewart 2007:1). Chapter four of this dissertation provides an extended discussion of uncertainty as the experiential dimension of globalizing modernity.

To unpack the character and mechanics of the country's gut feeling, I introduce

Sara Ahmed's (2004a, 2004b) economic model of affect. Like Stewart, Ahmed seeks to

account for affect's social and material, as well as psychic, quality.[6] Ahmed translates a

psychoanalytic theory of affect to the social level, imagining a complex web of subjects

and objects bound through the movement of emotion. The circulation of emotions has a

"rippling effect" as they displace between objects and subjects, moving sideways between

signs, figures and objects, as well as backwards to draw repressed histories into the

present (2004a:120). Ahmed's model integrates a psychoanalytic consideration of

emotional displacement with a theorization of,

> "emotion as economy, as involving relationships of difference and displacement
>
> without positive value. That is, emotions work as a form of capital: affect does not
>
> reside positively in a sign or commodity, but is produced only as an effect of its
>
> circulation… the movement between signs converts into affect" (2004a:120).

The notion of an affective economy proves an effective framework for reckoning

the collective gut feeling in the Netherlands in several related respects. First, the model

envisions a web spun through the circulation and displacement of emotion. It carries a

spatial connotation which allows me to articulate a collective gut feeling in terms of a

field for anthropological exploration.[7] The affective economy which I explore here maps

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[6] The social and collective nature of emotion received early attention in Raymond Williams' theorization of "structures of feeling" which challenges strict distinctions between social and individual, past and present. Williams describes "a kind of feeling and thinking which is indeed social and material, but each in an embryonic phase before it can become fully articulate and defined exchange… social experience *in solution*" which crystallizes in artistic and literary forms (1977:128-135).

[7] As Paul Rabinow and George Marcus (2008) note, contemporary anthropology does not depend on ethnographic description of a geographically determined field but rather formulates a found imaginary through and in which to conduct analysis.

onto, though is not reducible to, the socio-political landscape of the Netherlands in the present day.[8]

Second, Ahmed's model attends to affect's social dimension – the "collective" of Maartin's gut feeling – as the basis for considering how emotions shape and connect the figures caught up within its scope. In my analysis discrete figures, including Maartin, myself, *Fitna*, the Dutch nation(-state), Islam, the country's history of religious organization, past traumas and future anxieties, and countless other objects, subjects, bodies and histories, become implicated in one another through the circulation and displacement of emotion.[9] My exploration of the affective economy articulates these various figures and traces the mechanics of their interrelation.

Third, Ahmed's model accounts for the possibility that individuals implicated within an affective economy may not agree with or about its causes and consequences. That is, the affective economy explored here involves individuals who both do and do not harbour anti-Islam sentiment; who both do and do not support Wilders; who both do and do not identify a collective crisis in national identity. The scope of the affective economy is not marked by ideological or political consensus, nor by shared attitudes towards Islam or the nation. Rather, it is made up through in the underlying sensations animating the relations, scenes, contingencies and emergences that constitute a life, "that catch people up in something that feels like *some*thing" (Stewart 2007:2).

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[8] The following section defines in detail the scope and boundaries of this affective economy *vis- a- vis* the Dutch nation(-state).

[9] See chapter two for an expanded discussion of the place of objects within Ahmed's affective economy.

Uncertainty

But what is this affect, this something that Maartin articulates in vague gestures and unfinished sentences? What is its character and scope? Like fog, the feeling is diffuse but also pervasive. It appears in media, public and official discourses which circulate as rumours of personal insecurity, in worries about the threat of Islam, in fretting over the state of the nation.

Rumour has it, for instance, that nobody cares anymore.[10] That nobody knows what it means to be Dutch. That the nation is experiencing a widespread identity crisis. Rumour has it that multiculturalism has failed. That a generous and well-intentioned cosmopolitanism promoted with the emergence of the modern nation in the 1960s has produced only dispossessed ethnic and religious groups unwilling or unable to conform to national values, and a multiculturalist political elite whose policies disadvantage the autochthonous Dutch.

Rumour has it that this country once known for its ethos of tolerance and freedom must now learn not to tolerate intolerance, must act defensively to protect these freedoms. Rumour has it that nobody feels at home – not minority populations who refuse to assimilate, not autochthonous Dutch who find themselves in an unfamiliar landscape. That you can't say anything anymore. Rumour has it that the lack of identity among the real Dutch links directly to their increasing concessions to those who are not, really. Rumour has it that (Muslim, immigrant) hooligan boys beat up openly gay men; that

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[10] I do not pursue the concept of rumour in this analysis, as doing so would require fieldwork directed particularly to this aim. However, the topic has received considerable attention in scholarship which also refers to themes pertinent to my discussion here, including the relationship between fear and rumour, and the place of rumour in the renegotiation of the sovereign nation-state (see particularly Taussig 1992).

preschool children have difficulties communicating with their teachers whose faces are covered.

No wonder, in this context, Maartin expresses feeling trapped and powerless in an overwhelming and unpredictable system. And no wonder he relates the pervasive, shared, even collective character of his gut feeling to the popular success of Wilders and his anti-Islam platform.

To capture something of the turbulent insecurity, the chronic worry, the unsettling discomfort to which Maartin gestures, I name the affective economy of the Netherlands as one of *uncertainty*. The term evokes not only a feeling but an experience or even cognitive state. This multidimensional connotation of the term enables *uncertainty* to travel across several theoretical domains and popular discourses relevant to this analysis.

The first such domain to which *uncertainty* applies includes descriptions of the current situation in the country provided by my interlocutors. I regularly encountered the term, along with words such as "insecurity", "worry", and feeling "not at home". A second and related domain to which uncertainty applies is anti-Islam discourse which intensifies the registers of uncertainty into the clear affects of fear, disgust, anger and resentment (cf. Buruma 2006; Mak 2006; Moors 2009; van der Veer 2006). And third, *uncertainty* resonates with work by cultural theorists which identifies the increasing extent to which risk; anxiety; and overwhelming disorientation characterize the lived experience of globalizing modernity (cf. Bauman 2006; Beck 1992; Comaroff and Comaroff 2000; Slovic et al. 2004).

Further to its resonance with across relevant popular and scholarly discourses, the term *uncertainty* foregrounds the most significant features of the affective economy at issue in this exploration. With its orientation towards an unpredictable and presumably threatening future, *uncertainty* emphasizes the importance of a temporal disorientation and future insecurity crucial to the affective economy of the Netherlands.[11] And the term evokes, while remaining quite distinct from, those strong emotions associated with political movements opposing Islam. Uncertainty names an affect more chronic, diffuse, and difficult to articulate than fear, hate, or disgust; and it does not require the clear object towards which such affects are directed.[12]

In what follows, I engage a model of affective economy of uncertainty to foreground the mobile, interconnected quality of a collective gut feeling as it circulates through and binds together a constellation of subjects and objects. My task here is not to evaluate the extent to which Maartin's gut feeling fulfills criteria marking it as affect or as uncertainty *per se*, but rather to explore its experiential dimension; the relations created among its constitutive objects, subjects and histories; and the mode through which this circulation occurs. Ultimately, as the framework which I find effective for coming to terms with the present socio-political landscape of the Netherlands, affect and uncertainty serve as points of departure for exploration and experimentation in this dissertation, rather than the conclusions towards which I argue.

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[11] Chapter four unpacks this element of temporal disorientation in relation to the affective economy.
[12] Chapter five details the precise relation between a gut feeling of uncertainty and fears of Islamization in the country, theorizing a process of affective sharpening in which uncertainty finds articulation as the readily perceptible affect of fear, directed at a familiar and identifiable object (Islamization).

The Scope of Uncertainty

This dissertation explores an affective economy which is particular but not exclusive to the Dutch nation-state, and I define its scope according to the country's geopolitical borders. This is not to deny the importance of a global context, which also plays a crucial role in the country's uncertainty: indeed, there are no clear-cut boundaries between an uncertainty peculiar to the Netherlands and a transnational "–scape" of insecurity. I attempt in this analysis to keep the two spheres in tension, to take up the complex relation between national and global context, rather than resorting to a simple explanation that the nation has withered away in the face of globalization, or to a myopic focus on the local. Thus I define the project as an exploration of uncertainty in the Netherlands and seek at every opportunity to address the relevance of a transnational context.

An affective economy is not necessarily bound by the geopolitical borders of the Netherlands, imagined or otherwise. The reach of the uncertainty which I explore in this dissertation encompasses a turbulence identified by some as characteristic of globalizing modernity, while within the nation variances in demographics and region, as well as individual identity and experience, will determine the particular currents of uncertainty as it circulates on the ground. Though I will argue for an attention to its particularities in the context of the Dutch nation-state, uncertainty's scope is at once more expansive and more specific than the boundaries of the Netherlands.

The following chapters identify the particularities of uncertainty in the Netherlands, an affective economy involving local histories and actors, from the continuing relevance of national historical events such as the historical traumas of the

Second World War, to the materialization of *Fitna* as an anti-Islam *movie*, a medium with

dense social precedent in the country. Opposition to Islam in the country, as one figure of

the affective economy, emerges in concert and interconnection with others, notably

nationalist discourse and imaginations of the Dutch nation. Shuttling between these

figures, the circulation of affect causes them to stick to and become implicated in one

another, ultimately generating "relations of resemblance" between them (Ahmed

2004a:120).[13]

The complexities of this affective circulation in the Netherlands has something to

do with the explosion of political success in which flamboyant politician Pim Fortuyn

rose to fame on a populist, anti-immigration ticket, and something to do with the public

shock of his assassination on the eve of national elections in 2002. It has something to do

with the beloved status of bad boy filmmaker Theo van Gogh and his inclination to make

a movie with Ayaan Hirsi Ali, the ex-Muslim Somalian refugee turned parliamentary

representative, depicting the dangers of Islam for women. It has everything to do with van

Gogh's subsequent assassination by Mohammad Bouyeri in 2004 and the waves of fright

and disorientation which followed. And it has something to do with the way that

oppositions to Islam appear preoccupied with the terms of citizenship and belonging. As

these features and figures stick to one another within the affective economy of uncertainty,

anti-Islam and national identity discourses come to appear as one-and-the-same, each

shaped in ongoing affective relation to the other.

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[13] For an expanded discussion of Ahmed's treatment of the binds created by affective circulation and
displacement, see chapter two.

The following preliminary consideration distinguishes between uncertainty, opposition to Islam and the Dutch nation as a means for determining the scope of this project. However, though related, they are neither reducible to nor in complete alignment with one another. Refining the terms of distinction and relation between these features is one of the objectives, rather than the prerequisites, of this project.

Muslims in the Netherlands

The Muslim population of the Netherlands accounts for some six percent of the country's residents, with the most recent estimates placing the population at approximately 907,000 in 2009.[14] Roughly seventy-three percent are of Turkish or Moroccan origin, historically drawn to the Netherlands as guest workers. Muslims tracing a history to Indonesia and Suriname index the country's colonial past: four percent of the Netherlands' Muslims are of Surinamese descent.[15]

Though "immigrant" and "Muslim" are increasingly discrete population categories in the country, presently some forty-five percent of all non-Western immigrants to the Netherlands are Muslim. The 13,000 Muslims of native Dutch origin

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[14] An estimate based on figures published by the country's Central Statistics Bureau (CBS) (Forum 2010:9).

[15] Until 2007 CBS estimated the country's Muslim demographics based on immigration statistics, counting as Muslim any individual with one or more parents from a Muslim nation. Present estimates are now based on questionnaires requesting information about individual religious affiliation. Nonetheless, the previous system combine with the complexities of the country's colonial history to make measuring the number of Muslims of Indonesian descent in the country a difficult task. The population has been established in the country for far longer than the three generations measured by CBS immigration statistics, and are exempt from classification as "non-western" national minorities. The Netherlands is currently home to an estimated 420,000-500,000 Moluccans, but with Protestant Christianity constituting the primary religious affiliation, the figure does not indicate a corresponding Muslim community (Minority Rights Group International 2008). A further consequence of this change in measuring the country's Muslim population means that estimates on demographic trends over time cannot be strictly accurate, as earlier figures overestimated the percentage of Muslims in the country compared to the present system (Forum 2010:10).

include autochthonous Dutch as well as third generation immigrants to the country, who

are not included in the central bureau's definition of migrants (Forum 2010:9).

The country's Muslim population has a younger age structure than the nation as a

whole, with an average age of 25, with a gender distribution of forty-eight percent women

and fifty-two percent men. Nearly 80% of the country's Muslims live in urban centers,

largely concentrated in the Randstad conurbation of Amsterdam, Utrecht, Rotterdam and

the Hague. [16]

Opposition to Islam in the Netherlands

In its recent form the country's anti-Islam political impulses have manifested in affiliation

with an emergent populist movement representing those displeased with a stagnant

political elite out of touch with the day-to-day realities of its citizens.[17] While historically

the Netherlands was a minor player in populist and right-wing politics, since the end of

the 1990s politicians such as Fortuyn have built a platform on accusing the "multicultural

left church" of privileging the status and needs of an immigrant and non-ethnic Dutch

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[16] Given that my task in this analysis is to address opposition to Islam amongst the Netherlands' non-Muslim Dutch population, I refrain here from any comprehensive description of the country's vibrant and heterogeneous Muslim communities. Many anthropologists in the Netherlands provide excellent ethnographic work to this end (cf. Dessing 2001; de Koning 2008; Gazzah 2008; see also Sunier 2010 for a summary of Islam in the Netherlands).

[17] The opposition to Islam expressed by Wilders and Fortuyn cannot be separated from their claim to speak on behalf of an autochthonous population against a political elite (Oudenampsen 2010). Nonetheless, the extent to which anti-Islam sentiment equates to populism is debatable. Wilders' political strategy on the one hand may not be classified as populist, given its failure to adhere to the classical criteria outlined by Paul Taggart (2000). On the other hand, recent political theory has successfully adopted the work of Ernesto Laclau, (2005:32-49). According to Laclau's theory Wilders can be understood to epitomize the populist form, in his symbolic production of a populist subject through the creation of an internal frontier between *Islam* and *Dutch* (Oudenampsen 2010). Furthermore, normative media and public discourse identifies "populist anti-Islam parties", identifying both the distinction between and interrelation of the two agendas.

population over those of the autochthonous Dutch. [18] The slippage identifying this non-ethnic Dutch population as Muslim neatly aligns resistance to the political status quo with the anti-Islam rhetoric of the nation's populist figures.

In concert with these populist impulses, opposition to Islam draws supporters from across the ideological spectrum. Indeed, identifying a typical supporter of anti-Islam political platforms proves a difficult task, both because of the diversity of the demographic to which such platforms appeal, and because of a continuing (if increasingly relaxed) taboo around publicly admitting sympathy for such parties (Pels 2010; Prins 2010; van Bruinessen 2006). In addition to those who perceive immigrants as a threat to their economic or material welfare, and those disillusioned by the current political status quo, opposition to Islam finds sympathy among some members of the progressive left seeking to protect what it frames as the hard-won national values gained in the 1960s: gender equality; sexual freedom; and secularism among them.

The political successes of opposition to Islam in the Netherlands may thus lie in its broad appeal to both the discomfort of the lower classes who feel their employment opportunities threatened by an influx of immigrants, and an elitist disdain for Muslim tradition perceived as at odds with Enlightenment values (Van Bruinessen 2006:4). As such, anti-Islamic sentiments dissociate themselves from overtly racialist discourses, the effect of which is an extension of the reach of xenophobia through the middle classes, advancing the breadth and intensity of their influence (2006:8). Ultimately, the

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[18] Far right-wing parties had little presence in the country's recent history until 1982, when the *Centrumpartij* won one seat in national parliament. The party subsequently lost its seat in 1986, to regain a minor presence with four seats in 1994 (Koopmans and Kriesi 1997:28). Given the marginalization of the right-wing, and the country's modern history of stable political coalitions, Fortuyn's celebrity proved a shocking upset to convention.

combination constructs the presence of Muslims and Islam as a cause for the uncertainty so palpable in the country, particularly at a popular level.[19]

Nationalism and the Global Position of the Netherlands

The affective economy of uncertainty in the Netherlands interrelates opposition to Islam in the country with renegotiations over the place of the nation-state on the global stage. As a small country which has historically perceived itself in cosmopolitan terms and as a leader in transnational consensus, the Netherlands now faces ambivalence regarding its security within such global systems (Buruma 2006; Geschiere 2009; Lechner 2008). A vote against the European Constitution in 2005, for instance, signaled the position of a significant minority of the Dutch public insecure about increasing influence of transnational political structures, in accord with the long time sentiment of the ruling class (Lechner 2008:260). The vote reflected a diffuse discontent amongst the public and boosted renationalization of foreign policy (Lechner 2008:270). The following chapters demonstrate the extent to which the nation perseveres in shaping the affective economy, even if (arguably) at the moment of its greatest uncertainty.

Note that framing an exploration of the affective economy in the borders of the nation-state need not foreclose the relevance of transnational and global identities, institutions and flows and their overlap with local and individual lived experience. Globalization brings about new layerings of identity which overlap local, national, and international frames: rather than replacing the nation-state the two occur in coincidence,

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[19] As epitomized in Scheffer's pronouncement of "Het Multiculturele Drama [The Multicultural Drama]" (2000). For an academic example of this assertion see Sniderman and Hagendoorn (2007).

and even conversation, with one another (Lechner 2008:35, 37). The overlapping terms of national identity, globalization, and the "return of the local" materialize, importantly, in even the terms for negotiating present day belonging: discourses of autochthony which indicate both the perseverance and the vulnerability of the nation-state (Geschiere 2009:21-24).

At issue here are both the position of the Dutch nation-state with respect to others in a global context, and a perceived erosion of personal affiliations to that nation-state given the ascendance of competing forms of identity and loyalty. Ultimately, rather than dismissing its irrelevance in a context of universal insecurity, this dissertation identifies the nation-state as one site in which global modernity is experienced, as well as one of the entities whose specificities constitute and shape this *particular* affective economy.

In similar terms, while opposition to Islam and nationalist political discourses are deeply implicated in one another, opposition to Islam is not bound to the territory of the Dutch nation-state, nor unique to the country's population. Opposition to Islam manisfests globally and in transnational formations (EUMC 2006). It animates the political rhetoric of parties in several nation-states (such as the Front National in France, the Swiss Socialist Party, the Swedish Democrats), and is identifiable in tensions surrounding the visible public presence of Islam throughout Europe and North America (for instance, with legislation banning the *burqa* in process or successful in Belgium, Canada, France, and the Netherlands).

At the same time, in the Netherlands as elsewhere, anti-Islam politics take a particular form shaped by the context of the nation-state. In arguing for attention to the

particularities of opposition to Islam in the Netherlands, Peter van der Veer (2006)

similarly addresses the relevance of the nation as a frame of reference for analyzing this

admittedly transnational phenomenon. He argues:

> "…one must look at broader Dutch cultural transformations in order to understand
>
> recent events in the Netherlands. These transformations, while typically Dutch, do
>
> not necessarily distinguish the Netherlands from the rest of Europe. Similar
>
> processes are recognizable in other European societies, where the arrival of
>
> primarily Muslim immigrants has triggered strong emotional and political
>
> responses… The perceived need for this secularity and unity is embedded in a
>
> society's history and is clearly different in different societies. In the Dutch case, it
>
> is not an elaborated theory of *laicite* that is the foundation of the state as in France;
>
> it is rather the shared and recently developed values of liberty of choice in
>
> consumption that is the ideological basis of Dutch unity. The fact that the clash
>
> with Muslims in European societies commonly centers on the head scarf does not
>
> imply that that issue means the same thing everywhere." (2006:122)

Following van der Veer, I argue that while feelings of uncertainty, and opposition to

Islam, manifest in fields much larger and much smaller than the nation-state, the shape

and character of an uncertain affective economy is heavily informed by the particularities

of the present day Netherlands.

The borders of the affective economy explored in these pages are thus fluid and

porous, overlapping with opposition to Islam and imaginations of the Dutch nation(-state).

To explore the affective economy of the Netherlands, this dissertation engages one

particular object which constitutes both a component and visualization of the affective economy.

Fitna: The Movie as Object of Analysis

In the following chapters I explore the affective economy of uncertainty through a close attention to one of its constitutive figures, taking seriously both the object itself and the events of its public life. As an object in the affective economy, the trajectory of *Fitna*'s public life traces the patterns of circulation and displacement along which uncertainty flows. Further, the conventions and codes of this affective economy shape *Fitna*'s form and content: the manner of the movie's construction, its message and the means through it is conveyed; the supplementary events or figures to which it refers; the bodies of knowledge it takes for granted as well as those it does not. As an object shaped by its context, *Fitna* provides a visualization of uncertainty in the Netherlands, thus proving an effective lens through which to reckon this affective economy.

Composed of pre-existing photographs and video fragments widely circulated online, *Fitna* is a montage of violent images of terrorist attacks, preachers proclaiming the superiority of Islam, and proliferating signs of Islam in the Dutch public realm. Against the crude image of a book, these photographs appear as illustrations on the pages of a Quran, juxtaposed with *suras* appearing to condone and encourage violence. *Fitna* targets Muslim viewers for offense, with the movie's original version including a cartoon associated with the Danish controversies of 2006, as well as a scene suggesting destruction of a Quran.

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Fitna garnered immense attention in the months preceding its release, with tensions running high as media, official and public figures speculated about the movie's potential (violent) repercussions. When Wilders finally released the movie online, unable to find a broadcaster willing to display it on television, *Fitna* was met with a restrained and dismissive reaction from both Muslims and non-Muslims in the Netherlands and abroad. Though perceived as a non-event in its eventual materialization, the movie's public life proved a considerable spectacle in the Netherlands, and the movie continues to be viewed and circulated online as well as screened by Wilders in international and domestic contexts.

Chapter Overview

In exploring an affective economy through the lens of one of its constitutive objects, my objectives in this dissertation are twofold. First, I seek to nuance and thicken an understanding of the affective economy of the Netherlands, and particularly the ways that uncertainty circulates through and builds relations between its constituent elements, including anti-Islam political rhetoric and imaginations of the Dutch nation. Second, I investigate and demonstrate the methodological potential for coming to terms with a field, in this case an affective economy, through close attention to a single object.

To achieve these objectives the following chapters integrate two modes for analyzing *Fitna* and/in the affective economy of the Netherlands. One mode takes *Fitna* as the *target* of analysis to interpret the object on its own terms, not only in its public life but in its features and form *as such*. The second takes *Fitna* as the *lens* of analysis to

interpret the object as freeze frame visualization of its context, considering what the

movie's features reveal of the affective economy of uncertainty which constitutes the

field of this exploration.

The dissertation is composed of two parts. The first, consisting of chapters one

through three, provides a detailed discussion of the object and context of analysis, as well

as providing a detailed articulation of the project's methodology. Following this

introductory chapter which sketches the contours of this project, chapter two provides a

careful consideration of the ontological complexities involved in defining *Fitna* as *an*

object as well as the methodological complexities involved in taking the movie as *the*

object of analysis in this dissertation. The chapter's three phases respectively: describe

Fitna and its public life; define its complex status as object; and outline the

methodological approach to analyzing the movie and the affective economy of the

Netherlands. First, a social biography of *Fitna* and its public life provides a description of

the movie's features, and recounts the complex of events surrounding its release. Second,

a multifaceted definition of *object* accounts for *Fitna*'s multiple dimensions and the

numerous frames through which to approach its interpretation as: event in the public

realm whose social significance exceeds its material form (cultural object); discrete

physical entity materializing and circulating through its social context (material object);

and online video, a moving image whose impact stems from its existence as, and use of,

pictures (visual object). An interpretation of the movie which accounts for these various

dimensions displaces the focus of analysis, moving from considering what people did

with *Fitna* or what it did to them, to considering *Fitna* itself, on its own terms (Mitchell

23

2005:46).[20] Inspired by the methods of cultural and visual analysis forwarded by W.J.T.

Mitchell and Mieke Bal, I outline a method for paying close attention to *Fitna* which

addresses an interaction of form, content and context (Bal 2002:289). The third section of

the chapter incorporates this strategy of close attention into the methodological impulse of

the dissertation as a whole. *Fitna* constitutes both a constituent object within and a

visualization of uncertainty in the Netherlands. Close attention to the movie's features

throws certain salient entities within the affective economy into relief and indicates the

nature of their relation to one another.

Chapter three provides an introduction to the affective economy of the

Netherlands through the identification of its key histories, individuals, events, and

concepts. For instance, the traumas and guilt of the Second World War and the formative

process of depillarization prove salient histories in the present, continually reinvoked and

remembered in contemporary uncertainties. A description of the country's changing

socio-political landscape from the 1970s through to the turn of the century sketches its

demographics; the gradual slide in government policy from integration to assimilation;

and the longtime interrelation of popular resistance to the political status quo through

opposition to immigration, Muslims and Islam. Pim Fortuyn, Theo van Gogh and Ayaan

Hirsi Ali circulate as key figures at the center of a political performance claiming to speak

for the real Dutch population, a discursive genre that finds its amplification in Geert

Wilders. An increasing polarization which draws and reentrenches civilizational

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[20] Of course, no cultural object can be reckoned independently from the interpretive framing provided by viewers (whether that of Dutch viewers, myself as the researchers, or other audiences). I address this conundrum in the dissertation's closing reflections in chapter seven. Here I note the discontinuities between my own interpretation of what *Fitna* reflects of an affective economy of uncertainty, and public perceptions of what the movie did or did not "do" in the country.

boundaries within the nation occurs through the deployment of new identifications and vocabularies, with concepts including *autochthony*, *national identity (crisis)*, *Enlightenment* and *Islamization* prevailing in the public realm. Finally, the culturalization of citizenship identified by social analysts emphasizes that an affective economy is not limited to the realm of mere emotion, but rather impacts the shape and power of the country's institutions, and acts upon the subjectivities and experiences of its residents.

Part two of the dissertation consists of chapters four through seven, in which I put into practice the theory and method articulated in part one. The three chapters at the heart of the dissertation each elaborate upon one particular dimension of the affective economy of uncertainty. Though the study as a whole is encompassed by Ahmed's model of an affective economy for defining the field of analysis, and broadly inspired in its methodological approach to the object by Mitchell and Bal, each of these three chapters draws independently from the theoretical work best suited to that particular analysis and its framing concept. Standing individually as discrete analyses, in their collection the chapters provide a robust interpretation of the affective economy which contextualizes uncertainty's component elements in relation to one another. By refracting close attention through the concepts of fear, offense and truth telling, each chapter illuminates a different element of *Fitna*'s form and content, and throwing into relief the affective economy's particular figures and features.

Chapter four deepens my investigation into the experiential dimension of the affective economy. This chapter theorizes fear as an intensification and explicit articulation of the wider and more diffuse uncertainty in the Netherlands, both of which

feature prominently in *Fitna* and its public life. The chapter takes shape around Ahmed's

theorization of fear as the discomfort experienced in the threatening approach of an object

(Ahmed 2004b:65-67). Close attention to the movie identifies how *Fitna* structurally

enacts these criteria in its disjointed editing strategies and montage format. At the same

time that it fulfills the criteria for fear established by Ahmed, *Fitna*'s formal properties

also suggest a diffuse spatiotemporal disorientation unattached to a particular (feared)

object. I argue that *Fitna* demonstrates a process of *affective sharpening*, in which the

movie's visualization of Islam channels a diffuse and ambiguous uncertainty into

expressions of a clearly perceptible affect of fear.

　　　Identifying affective sharpening as the structural enactment of fear in *Fitna*, the

chapter then applies the model to a consideration of fears of Islamization circulating in

the present affective economy. Drawing from J.W. Duyvendak's (2011) investigation into

sentiments of disorientation and alienation expressed by autochthonous Dutch, I argue

that fears of Islamization mark the intensification and articulation of an amorphous gut

feeling of uncertainty.

　　　Chapter five provides a comprehensive account of key figures in the affective

economy, and traces the terms of their interrelation with one another. The chapter is

guided by a consideration of offense, an important element in the movie's public life

targeting Muslim audiences. Both *Fitna* and its public life are riddled with references to,

as well as themselves constituting, a class of blatantly inflammatory statements, acts, and

images. In the Netherlands and internationally the offense is staged "for its own sake" and

intertwines national and civilizational discourses claiming the patriotic exercise of

freedom (of speech) against the threat of religious intolerance. At issue in the movie's offense is precisely the relation between nation and religion as figures bound by the circulation of uncertainty.

Close attention to the movie here involves an analysis of two particular scenes: a cartoon which provides humiliating caricature of the Prophet, and a brief film segment appearing to depict the mutilation of the Quran. These images offend not only in their intent to insult Muslims, but are themselves acts of offense, damage, punishment or censure conducted against the images of prophet and scripture. In the context of a (post-) Christian country whose national narrative is bound up with a plot of secularization, both prophet and scripture register as images not only Islam but of religion *per se*. To make sense of the movie's offense towards religion, I engage Oskaar Verkaaik's (2003) interrogation of the nation and its religious shadow to trace the sticky binds between the nation and its histories of depillarization and nation formation, and to identify an affective displacement between religion and Islam.

Having identified the experiential dimension of the affective economy as well as its key figures and the terms of their interrelation, chapter six provides an exploration of the *mode* through which uncertainty circulates. The chapter takes issue with a particular style of truth telling common to both *Fitna* and to public and political discourse in the Netherlands. Controversies and tensions about revealing, exposing, and displaying which formed around *Fitna* invoke *truth* as independent and objectively perceptible real, with the performance of its public telling reaffirming the apparent possibility for its accurate and dependable representation.

In shoring up the notion of a real and the possibility of its objective representation, truth telling thus shares the logic of the photographic medium, whose evidentiary force stems from an apparent capacity to accurately and objectively re-present the referent. Drawing from the work of Roland Barthes and Charles Peirce, this chapter's close attention to *Fitna* takes up the movie's use of pre-existing photograph and video footage and its claim to "show… that the Quran is a terrible and fascist book" ("Provocerende film" 2007). As the lens for an analysis of truth telling politics in the Netherlands, *Fitna* foregrounds, and sows the seeds for critiquing, the photographic logic through which uncertainty circulates in the affective economy. Truth telling functions in this context in the manner of photographs, such that the representational power of the medium appears to authenticate the content of the depiction as not only real but also true. A close attention to *Fitna*'s use of pre-existing images thus articulates the photographic aspects of political rhetoric in the Dutch affective economy, and sheds new light on the mechanics and also the potential implications of a political credibility built on claims to expose the truth.

The final chapter provides an opportunity for my reflections upon the analytical and methodological project of this dissertation, which I refract through an interrogation of the movie's perceived failure. Today, although the movie maintains a place in popular consciousness, the widespread perception among residents of the Netherlands that *Fitna* "didn't work" has solidified into normative popular narrative. In fact the extent of the movie's dismissal as ineffective and uninteresting prompted many of my conversants to query, and sometimes to directly challenge, the movie's validity as an object of study.

The movie's failure narrative involves an account of its aesthetic failure, that is, its amateur style and unprofessional technical qualities, as well as its blatantly manipulative rhetorical tactics. Popular accounts relate this aesthetic shortcoming to the movie's political failure to incite violent reactions among Muslim viewers. Rather than undertaking an evaluation of whether the movie did or did not fail, this chapter considers what such a narrative reveals about expectations surrounding the movie. In particular, the expectations that it would incite fear, provoke offense, and tell the truth. I also take up the oft-expressed comments of my interlocutors dismissing the movie as a valid object of analysis because it failed to resonate with residents of the Netherlands as either representative or provocative. In this respect, I argue that the expression accusing the movie of failure due to its "obviousness" provides an insight into its value as a target of analysis. The movie's vulgar aesthetic form renders it a sort of caricature of the current landscape of the Netherlands. As such, though as object *Fitna* may or may not have failed to impact this landscape, the movie constitutes an ideal site in which to identify the dynamics of fear, offense and truth telling in the country, and through which to explore the mechanics and character of its affective economy.

The movie's failure narrative proved a considerable challenge to this project, illuminating several of the fissures which riddle the path of this, or any, analytical endeavour. *Fitna*'s failure marks a gap between what the movie promised and what it failed to do: the space of expectation. It marks a gap between the structural possibilities of fear, offense and truth telling established in the movie's formal features, and the degree to which viewers found the movie frightening, offensive, or accurate: the space of reception.

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Finally, the friction produced between my study of the movie and the insistence of my interlocutors that it could yield nothing of relevance marks a gap between researcher, object, and context: the space of interpretation. This final consideration elaborates upon these gaps to argue that the movie's alleged failure proves a legitimating feature for its validity as an object of analysis. As such the analysis fulfills my objectives to equalize attention to both the field and the object of analysis, and in so doing to theorize uncertainty in the Netherlands through the lens of *Fitna*.

CHAPTER TWO

FITNA: THE MOVIE:

DEFINING AN OBJECT (OF ANALYSIS)

"Wilders' Provocative Film"

(*Telegraaf*, November 28 2007)

The front page headline of the *Telegraaf* would prove the initiating incident in *Fitna*'s public life. Countless further headlines would appear in the *Telegraaf* and other major national newspapers over the following months, eventually spreading to international reports from the *New York Times* to the *Jakarta Post*. All declared an increasing tension in the lead up to the movie's release. Expectations surrounded the movie from the start, imagining the fear and violence it might incite, the truths it was rumoured to reveal.

A robust consideration of *Fitna* as object must expand beyond the physicality of the movie itself to account for a public life initiated in the *Telegraaf* and continuing through months of anticipation and delay; for the movie's online debut on March 27, 2008 and the muted reception from grassroots, political and media players; and for its ongoing reverberations in the public realm over the following years. Accordingly, the social biography of *Fitna* integrates an account of the movie's public life with a description of the movie itself, laying the groundwork for the consideration of *Fitna*'s ontological and methodological status as the *object* which sits at the core of this dissertation.

Social Biography: The Public Life of *Fitna*

Fitna's public life commenced with Wilders' announcement in the *Telegraaf* and rapidly

spread through the country's news outlets ("Provocerende film" 2007). According to

these first newspaper reports of Wilders' imminent and until that moment "secret"

provocation, the movie was to be completed in January for a planned release on public

television, though no broadcaster had yet been secured. Details regarding the movie

remained thin: Wilders revealed only that the Quran figured prominently and that

"something happened with it" in the film, though he would not elaborate. "People will

just have to watch" ("Provocerende film" 2007).

The period between Wilders' announcement and the movie's eventual release

constitutes a crucial stage in its public life. During this time, although the movie remained

materially absent, it achieved a spectacular presence in political discourse, public rumour,

and especially media reporting. Wilders had made his project known to government

officials weeks before the *Telegraaf* article, alerting the National Coordinator for

Terrorism Prevention and speaking with Justice Minister Hirsch Ballin and Interior

Affairs Minister Guusje ter Horst, and then Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Verhagen,

in the days which followed. And in the week prior to the announcement, Ter Horst had

warned the country's mayors of potential tension (Vrijsen 2008). However the movie's

immanent materialization remained publicly unconfirmed until the reports of November

28 brought it into public circulation.[21]

Several actors emerging at the outset of the movie's public life would feature

prominently in the coming months, notably the government (responding to Wilders'

actions in the form of official statements by ministers) and the mass media (in the form of

reporting, commentary and speculation). In the absence of concrete details national

papers resorted to speculating about the movie's content and the reaction which might

follow in its wake ("Kabinet bezorgd" 2007; "Vrees voor film" 2007). Perhaps the

"Koranfilm" would adopt the style of *Submission*, the movie whose production

precipitated filmmaker Theo van Gogh's murder by a radical Muslim. Perhaps it would

depict the Quran being torn, or even burned. Perhaps the film would provoke violent

reactions amongst Muslims angry with the depictions of their holy book. Perhaps.

Hypotheses about a presumed violent reaction to the movie by Muslim

communities both within the Netherlands and abroad proved the dominant theme of

media, official and popular response to Wilders' announcement. Media reports widely

framed official government response to the movie as fear over, and concern with

preventing, such violence ("Provocerende film" 2007; "Zorgen cabinet" 2007). Initial

official response to Wilders' announcement came in the form of comments from Minister

Ballin, calling upon Wilders to balance freedom of speech with a responsibility for

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[21] Several national papers carried stories about the movie after Wilders' statement, but the *Telegraaf* article
is widely cited as the first announcement. While all the major national and regional papers carried a
considerable focus on the events surrounding the movie's anticipated release, *de Volkskrant, Trouw,
Reformatorisch Dagblad* and the *Telegraaf* together accounted for almost half of the articles on the subject
(Nieuwsmonitor 2008a:5).

respect and dialogue, qualifying that "there can be discussion, but with respect for other's

beliefs" ("Kabinet bezorgd" 2007).

While the content of the movie remained unconfirmed, the cabinet acted on a

worst-case scenario basis, emphasizing that it had measures in place in the case of unrest.

Minister Verhagen stressed that Wilders' opinions were not representative of those of the

Dutch government as a whole, and for their part constitutive political parties and

politicians mainly declined comment, on the grounds that they could not take a position

on a movie which did not yet exist.[22] Government officials worried about the possible

repercussions of Wilders' movie to the extent that Verhagen accused Wilders of

provocations which placed his fellow Dutch in danger. Wilders responded he had no such

goal, and that should anyone take offense "that is too bad, but that is not my problem"

("Zorgen kabinet" 2007). A flurry of media reports speculating on the nature of that

danger and reporting that the government had taken precautionary measures

simultaneously confirmed and downplayed the apparent danger.

Meanwhile, the voice of Muslims in the country remained considerably muted

relative to the far more prominent and sensational speculation reported (and produced) by

media sources. The *Fitna* controversy proved consistent with the general tendency for

national debates about Islam to exclude Muslims from active participation (van

Bruinessen 2006). Although non-Muslim commentary (from politicians, media and

popular sources) widely predicted Muslim response of anger and violence to the

impending movie, those Muslims whose voices were recorded in popular reports did not

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[22] For instance Famke Halsema, leader of the left wing GroeneLinks (GL), refused to take a position on a "ghost film" which had not yet been viewed ("Vroege ophef" 2007).

register panic. Newspaper *Trouw* reported the day following Wilders' first announcement

that "Muslims shrug shoulders over Wilders' Islam film", with an article citing members

of *Maroc.nl*, the Vote for Dutch Moroccans foundation, and the Rijnmond Foreigner

Platform. All calmly dismissed Wilders' announcement ("Moslims halen" 2007). An

exception to the dismissive response from many Muslims in the country came in

comments by Abdelmaijid Khairoun, Chairman of the Netherlands Muslim Council. Mass

media seized upon and widely circulated Khairoun's comparatively drastic comments that

he feared "allochtone youth in the Netherlands will set cars on fire" ("Nederlandse

Moslim" 2007).

Anticipation

These opening days of *Fitna*'s pubic life set the tone for the commotion which would

build over the following months. In concert with the dramatic increases in media and

government coverage of the issue, public discussion continued to escalate, gaining

dramatically in the second half of January 2008 as the movie's initially named release

date approached.

At this time the sense of anticipation and fear not only intensified but also

expanded its boundaries, as international attention turned towards the country. Local

press coverage correspondingly shifted, replacing earlier concern with potentially violent

reactions from the domestic Muslim communities within the Netherlands to speculations

over Muslim responses to the movie on a global scale. And whereas official response had

initially come from cabinet members speaking in their capacities as party representatives,

Prime Minister Balkenende increasingly appeared as representative of the nation-state *vis-a-vis* a global audience. By the end of January, Balkenende had declared the commotion a substantial crisis ("Balkenende: Crisis" 2008).

Meanwhile, constant media reports on the preparatory and preventative measures underway by the government only contributed to the sense of impending danger, now embodied not in the figure of the rioting local youth but in the political and religious leaders of the Muslim world. The Dutch embassy in Pakistan posted a message about the movie on its website, and instructed ambassadors to report public reaction in their cities. At home, Integration Minister Vogelaar contacted Muslim organizations to request that they phone him before publicly reacting, and State Secretary Ahmed Aboutaleb appealed to Muslims in the Netherlands to "make contact" with fellow Dutch and "stick together"("Moslims, zoek contact" 2008). The Interior Ministry alerted all police, fire, and emergency services that personnel should be prepared to cancel other activities should violence erupt ("Alle hens aan dek" 2008).

Media coverage frantically catalogued the cabinet's move to "pull out all the stops to avoid the Danish cartoon riots" ("Aangifte" 2008). Wilders became the target of large media scrums with reporters requesting information regarding the movie's release. For his part, the politician smugly suggested avoiding panic "before even one minute [of the film] has been seen: watch the film and then judge" ("Wilders "Aangste voor islam" 2008).

Anticipation. Still.

In the last week of January, with the approach of the movie's initial release date, Wilders announced a delay of a further two weeks ("Wilders doet boekje open" 2008). The postponement effectively stoked the fires of speculation and controversy, fed by Wilders' release on his website of a single image, the movie's opening frame depicting an illustration of the Quran and a warning that the movie contained shocking images. Days later, he revealed the movie's title, *Fitna: The Movie*. Wilders translated the term *Fitna*, "which every Muslim knows", into Dutch as *beproeving* (ordeal) and elaborated that the it signified "anything which challenges the faith of Muslims. Uncovered women, alcohol, non-believers…". Wilders noted that he used the term to imply its "mirror image: for me the pernicious challenge is Islam." ("PVV-leider" 2008; "Wilders doet boekje open" 2008) When revealing the title of his movie the politician also provided further hints about *Fitna*'s content, indicating his use of the cartoons which had led to violence in Denmark in 2006, although he would not say in what capacity they appeared in his movie ("Arabische titel" 2008, "Wilders film heet *Fitna*" 2008).

Through February 2008 media coverage closely covered each international development and the response of Dutch officials. Discussions with the European Union and the Arab League during which State Secretary Ahmed Aboutaleb warned that violent reactions to *Fitna* would create "exactly what Wilders wants" received wide coverage in Dutch papers, and prompted an echo of reports on Wilders' angry response ("Aboutaleb veroordeelt" 2008). The Iranian government requested a ban on the movie on the grounds that it violated the rights of Muslims globally ("Iran vraagt verbod" 2008). Egypt's Foreign Minister declared it "regrettable" that European politicians sought to increase

their popularity by attacking the religion of others and Afghanistan witnessed a protest against the Netherlands ("Egypte tegen film" 2008; "Protest Afghanen" 2008). Days later, Pakistan summoned its ambassador to the Netherlands in an official diplomatic protest ("Massale demonstratie" 2008).

In the midst of the speculation around a possible ban, the government continued to distance itself from Wilders, with Prime Minister Balkenende noting a concern for "the reputation of the Netherlands, the [welfare of] businesses, and possible consequences for Dutch living abroad" ("De vraag is waar" 2008; "Kabinet probeert" 2008; "Koran-film eist levens" 2008).[23] Foreign Affairs Minister Verhagen commented that not only the movie but "the image of the Netherlands" was at stake in both the Muslim world (Iran, Sudan, Syria), and "western minded" Muslim countries such as Indonesia, Kuwait, and Jordan ("De vraag is waar" 2008). Verhagen sought solidarity from the European Union in supporting the Dutch government's standpoint towards the film ("Verhagen wil eensluidend geluid" 2008).

At home, the government mobilized concerns for the safety of Dutch businesses and citizens abroad as justification for an attempted ban on the movie' release, citing threat to state security. Rumours about a possible ban began to spread through the media on March 4, 2008 ("Verbieden kan wel" 2008; "Verbod *Fitna*" 2008). As the government breathlessly performed and declared its preparedness for *Fitna*'s release, consequences which remained unknown were taken to be inevitable and imminent. Balkenende observed that the question was not whether, but "where and when the fire would light"

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[23] The only instance of such boycotts that I can locate is a shop in Oman boycotting Dutch and Danish products ("Omaanse winkelketen" 2008).

("De vraag is waar" 2008). Tjibbe Joustra, head of the anti-terrorism department, requested a preview of the movie to determine what security measures might need to be in place surrounding its release: Wilders did not agree with the conditions for the screening.

Meanwhile the details of the movie's broadcast remained unknown. In the first week of March Wilders, still unable to find a television broadcaster for the movie, established www.fitnathemovie.com with an American location as an online broadcast platform ("Aparte website" 2008). Several Islamic countries subsequently attempted to disrupt access to the movie, with Turkey, Thailand and Pakistan blocking *YouTube* access to prevent circulation of "blasphemous" images ("Pakistan vreest" 2008).

The last days of February and early March saw a rush of press coverage declaring that the government was working to convince Wilders not to release his movie. Speculation in the media considered whether and through what means the government might successfully ban the movie's release. While banning *Fitna* as a threat to national security appeared a possibility, the cabinet could not ban a movie based on unseen content ("Verbod *Fitna*" 2008). Though ultimately unsuccessful, the lobby for the movie's censure provided a focus point for public rumour, fueling conversations regarding the acceptable limits and the enforcement of freedom of expression which had figured prominently in popular discussion.

Release

Fitna: The Movie finally appeared online on March 27, 2008 at approximately 19:00. Posted to www.liveleak.com in both an English and a Dutch version, the video garnered 3

million hits within three hours of its release (De Kloet and Chao 2009:79). *LiveLeak* removed the movie the next day, after serious threats to its staff. However, once online the movie circulated widely and *LiveLeak's* removal, while generating its own flurry of commentary in mass media and blogs, did not prevent other sites from hosting the movie. *LiveLeak* itself reposted *Fitna* days later, noting that they had upgraded their security measures to ensure protection for their staff and families (www.liveleak.com 2008).

In addition to the English and Dutch versions, Wilders released an edited version of the movie on Sunday April 6, 2008. Also posted on *LiveLeak*, the second version contained two notable changes responding to legal actions from cartoonist Kurt Westergaard and Dutch-Muslim rapper Saleh Edin. First, the famous cartoon of the Danish controversies had been replaced by an original drawing following artist Kurt Westergaard's objection to unauthorized use of his cartoon. Second, a portrait depicting Saleh Edin and inaccurately labeled as "Mohammad B." in reference to Theo van Gogh's killer, was replaced with an accurate image of Bouyeri. All versions remain in wide circulation on *LiveLeak* but also on *YouTube*, and on an array of other hosting sites and on personal servers.[24]

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[24] For a list of providers hosting the movie as of March 30, 2008 see
http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.com/2008/03/updated-list-of-*Fitna*-download-sites.html (Accessed 23 January 2012).

Fig. 1. Wilders, Geert, *Fitna: The Movie,* 2008. Online Video. Available from: YouTube, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNmXFtZ1Es4 (accessed January 12, 2012).

The shadowed cover of a Quran emerges from the darkness.

The minor chords of Tchaikovsky's "Arabian Dance" overlay the

crackling of a burning fuse.

Fig. 2. Wilders, Geert, *Fitna: The Movie,* 2008. Online Video. Available from: YouTube, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNmXFtZ1Es4 (accessed January 12, 2012).

At a running time of approximately seventeen minutes, *Fitna: The Movie* intersperses pre-existing photographs and video footage culled from the internet and television with graphics, illustrations, text, and depictions of newspaper headlines. Following the initial screen championing the movie's "shocking images", the shimmering title emerges from the darkness alongside the gilded, shadowed cover of a Quran.

The cover opens as a crackling sound interrupts the haunting soundtrack. Illustrations appearing on the book's blank pages reveal the sound as the snapping of a burning fuse, a bomb integrated into the turban of the Prophet Mohammad.[25] The facing page depicts the numbers of a digital clock count down from 14:59.

The time bomb crackles as the clock ticks. The fuse shortens and the book's pages continue to turn, now revealing calligraphic Arabic alongside the translation of a Quranic verse. A voice intones the verse in Arabic and the script fades away, leaving the translated phrase pictured alongside the all too familiar live footage of a plane flying into the Twin Towers; the resulting explosion; the fleeing crowds.

A montage of preexisting footage from attacks in New York, Madrid and London follows. Stock images run alongside recognized media footage of well-known events such as Eugene Armstrong's decapitation.

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[25] The drawing is a reproduction of Westergaard's cartoon. In the later versions of the movie the bomb appears as a globe carried on the back of a "Muslim Atlas".
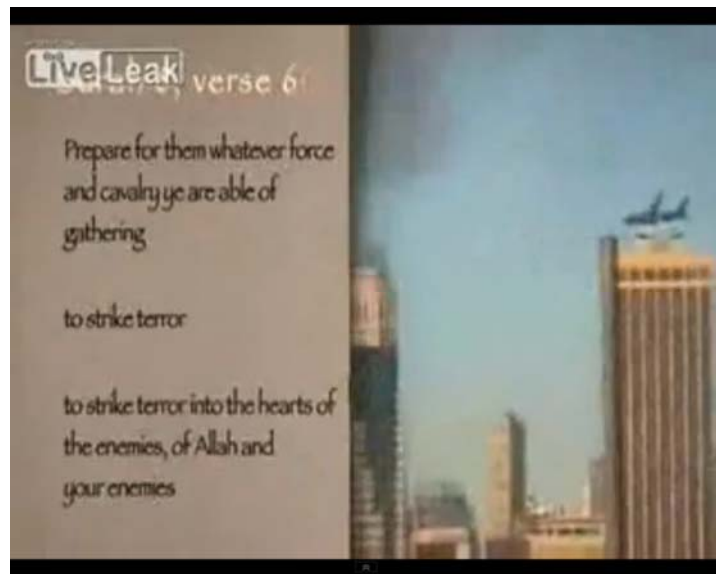
Fig. 3. Wilders, Geert, *Fitna: The Movie,* 2008. Online Video. Available
from: YouTube, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNmXFtZ1Es4
(accessed January 12, 2012).

Periodically, the soundtrack gives way to the explosions, crashes, sirens and
screams which accompany the violent video clips. A recording of a 911 call from the
Twin Towers overlays footage of the burning building, and a woman's frantic cell phone
conversation accompanies images from the Madrid bombings. Front page stories covering
Theo van Gogh's assassination appear with filmed footage of van Gogh, in which he
states his lack of fear of reprisal for making *Submission*.

Preaching men proclaim their hatred of Jews, declaring the greatness of God and
disdain for unbelievers, and calling for Islam to "rule the entire world". A three-year-old
girl in a rose coloured hijab declares that the Quran tells her Jews are "pigs and apes". An
interview on an urban street shows a man stating that, "if someone converts to
Christianity, he deserves the death penalty".

Almost ten minutes into the movie, the focus and content of its visuals shift to imag(in)e "the Netherlands under the spell of Islam". Graphic effects and animations now supplement the pre-existing images. Footage of women in *hijab* walking in public parks and urban streets, and police removing their shoes at the entrance to a mosque forms the background to an animated graph which charts "the number of Muslims in the Netherlands". A postcard fills the screen, a collage of mosques with towering minarets, edged by a decorative scalloped border. White text declares in cheery cursive, *Greetings from the Netherlands!* The accompanying audio track broadcasts Arabic, and subtitles note that the speech (recorded in a Dutch mosque) condones stoning women.

Fig. 4. Wilders, Geert, *Fitna: The Movie,* 2008. Online Video. Available from: YouTube, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNmXFtZ1Es4 (accessed January 12, 2012).

Fig. 5. Wilders, Geert, *Fitna: The Movie,* 2008. Online Video. Available from: YouTube, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNmXFtZ1Es4 (accessed January 12, 2012).

Further photographic montages show hanged and blindfolded corpses, veiled women decapitated and kneeling at gunpoint, and bloodied children held by knife-wielding adults. According to their captions, the photographs depict "the Netherlands of the future?!", the gruesome violence which awaits "Gays", "Women" and "Children".

A significant portion of *Fitna*'s depiction of the threat Islamization poses to the Netherlands consists of a serialization of headlines from Dutch newspapers. During the one and a half minute sequence over twenty-five newspaper headlines appear on the screen in quick succession, each one peeling away to reveal the next: "'Throw Gays From Tall Buildings'"; "Van Gogh murdered after proclamation *fatwa*"; "Explosive increase in honour killings in Amsterdam".

Fig. 6. Wilders, Geert, *Fitna: The Movie,* 2008. Online Video. Available
from: YouTube, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNmXFtZ1Es4
(accessed January 12, 2012).

Fitna's final moments diverge from the montage format, with a filmed scene of an
open Quran, a hand reaching into the frame to grasp and tear the page from the book. The
sound of paper tearing: the screen cuts to black. Printed text emerges against the darkened
screen to declare that "the sound you just heard was a page being removed from the
phonebook." The print continues, white text fading in line-by-line:

> "For it is not up to me, but to Muslims themselves to tear out the hateful verses
>
> from the Quran. Muslims want you to make way for Islam, but Islam does not
>
> makeway for you. The Government insists that you respect Islam, but Islam has
>
> no respect for you. Islam wants to rule, submit, and seeks to destroy our western
>
> civilization. In 1945, Nazism was defeated in Europe. In 1989, communism was
>
> defeated in Europe. Now, the Islamic ideology has to be defeated. Stop
>
> Islamisation. Defend our freedom."

47

Time has run out.

The page turns,

The fuse burns,

the clock ticks:

00:03

00:02

00:01

… a bolt of lightning and the crack of thunder. . .

Fig. 7. Wilders, Geert, *Fitna: The Movie,* 2008. Online Video. Available from: YouTube, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNmXFtZ1Es4 (accessed January 12, 2012).

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Credits role while the image of the book remains, attributing direction and editing to Scarlet Pimpernel. The music which provides the soundtrack and the names of a series of websites, newspapers and broadcast television stations follow, noted for providing the movie's "source material". After listing the movie's official website, it is marked again as a Scarlet Pimpernel production – and in the final seconds appears the acknowledgement, "a film by Geert Wilders".

Nothing Happened.

 "I am on the train between Leiden and Amsterdam when the movie appears on

www.liveleak.com, and news of its release rippled like rumour through the seats; a sense

of curiosity mixed with foreboding. I think, "I wonder what will happen next?""

(fieldnotes, March 30, 2008). As my conversants would later recount with exasperated

conviction and consistency, what happened next was… nothing.

     After months of tense anticipation, relentless government discussion and media

speculation, *Fitna*'s eventual debut in March 2008 proved anticlimactic. The pervasive

perception amongst the Dutch public that *Fitna* "didn't work" and "was just bad", which I

would encounter in countless subsequent conversations, inevitably related directly to the

lack of violent political response from Muslims, either within the Netherlands or

worldwide.

     As portrayed by politicians and media reports, the atmosphere surrounding *Fitna*'s

release was one of restrained calm, characterized by official condemnations of the

movie's anti-Islam message. Attention focused first and foremost upon Dutch Muslim

communities; with no violence or large scale protests to report, statements from

prominent organizations and political figures appeared as public representations of their

response. A statement from Mohammad Rabbae, Chairman of the National Moroccan

Council of the Netherlands, stressing the national loyalties of Dutch Muslims and

appealing to Muslims worldwide not to react with violence, received wide circulation.

"We want to tell our Muslims [sic] brothers and sisters abroad, in the Middle East, in

Pakistan, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia etc., that we as Muslims in the Netherlands are best

positioned to analyze the situation in the Netherlands, and to determine the response to Wilders and others… I am appealing to our brothers and sisters abroad to follow our strategy, not to frustrate our strategy by any violent incidents or an attack to a Dutch embassy… Looking for conflict with the Netherlands is looking for conflict with us" (Mika 2008b).

Mass media reports noted protests internationally upon the movie's release, including in Pakistan, South Africa, India, and Afghanistan (OIC March 2008). While some extreme responses explicitly called for reaction, such as a web post from an al-Qaida affiliate organization, protests remained neither violent nor large scale, with most estimated to involve gatherings in the hundreds (OIC 2008b, Mika 2008a). The monthly bulletin of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference's Islamophobia observatory covered international reaction to the movie both preceding and following its release. The March monthly bulletin recorded fifty-seven articles in association with *Fitna*, thirteen of which pertained to events on the day of its release (OIC 2008a). The April 2008 monthly bulletin included forty-four articles related to *Fitna*, the second of which has the headline, "Subdued reactions to *Fitna*" (OIC 2008b).

Upon *Fitna*'s release the Dutch government immediately released official statements, in addition to comments by prominent politicians. All of these responses received top billing in media coverage. Prime Minister Balkenende's statement on behalf of the Dutch government noted that Wilders released the movie against the appeals of the government. Explicitly rejecting the movie's message, Balkenande stated that "the vast majority of Muslims reject extremism and violence. In fact, the victims are often also

Muslims." The statement further sought to mitigate response from Muslims, noting that

"feeling offended must never be used as an excuse for aggression and threats. The

government is heartened by the initial restrained reactions of Dutch Muslim

organizations… The Dutch government stands for a society in which freedom and respect

go hand in hand…" (Government of Netherlands 2008).

Debate in the Dutch parliament in the days following saw reactions from several

party leaders, all commenting on the movie's attempt to generate fear ("Fel kamerdebate"

2008). Mariette Hamer of the Labour Party (PvDA) condemned the movie's message of

anxiety, the Socialist Party (SP) leader Jan Marijnissen labeled it "paranoid". Liberal

(VVD) leader Mark Rutte accused Wilders of being a political pyromaniac, while

Alexander Pechtold of the D66 party called Wilders "a frightened, frightened man". Thus

the spirit of the government's response which crystallized within the public realm was

that the parliament had distanced themselves from and firmly chastised the PVV leader

for his actions (Nieuwsmonitor 2008a:4).

Comments by international government officials and public figures also circulated

prominently in the aftermath of the movie's release. *Fitna*'s message was widely

condemned by European Union diplomats including Denmark's Foreign Minister

("Denmark criticizes 2008). United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon stated that

"the real fault line is not between Muslim and Western societies, as some would have us

believe, but between small minorities of extremists, on different sides, with a vested

interest in stirring hostility and conflict" (United Nations 2008). The governments of

several Muslim majority countries also responded: the Saudi Arabian embassy in the

Netherlands noted that the film was full of errors and incorrect allegations, which could lead to hate towards Muslims ("Muslim nations" 2008); a spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry called for the cessation of further showings of the "heinous" movie ("Iran condemns" 2008); and Indonesia called the movie an "insult to Islam, hidden under the cover of the freedom of expression" ("Muslim nations" 2008). The Philippine government announced itself in solidarity "with the Islamic world in denouncing the contents" of *Fitna*, while reasserting that violent response would be "unjustified" (OIC 2008b).

On the ground in the Netherlands, popular response to the movie recited a narrative of failed expectations. One of my Dutch colleagues recounted his own experience of *Fitna*'s release, recalling that he was at work in his university office when he heard that the movie had appeared online. The anticipation was so heightened that he had the impression that the news had literally travelled down the hallway as people moved to their offices to check computers. Immediately accessing the movie, he saw that he was among the first viewers; refreshing his screen moments later, the number had already skyrocketed exponentially. But finding the movie online proved only part of the experience of attending *Fitna*'s release. He, and countless others, immediately tuned into various local television stations posted near the parliament in the Hague and in other sites of potential reaction, to track response. Noting the immediate political failure of the movie which was so profound as to border on humorous, he laughed in recalling the hordes of reporters repeatedly checking in over the hours that followed, none of whom had anything to report. His amusement at the movie's apparent "failure" was intensified

by his own assessment of the movie as an object whose greatest impact lay in its absence,

as he was that very evening to deliver a lecture on the topic *Fitna*, the movie which never

arrived (fieldnotes, January 17, 2011).[26]

Screenings

In addition to the movie's continued online presence and circulation, since its release

Fitna has remained in the public realm and garnered further attention through its display

in various settings in international organizations, conferences, and parliaments. Indeed the

movie has garnered as much if not more attention in these subsequent screenings in the

later stages of its public life (De Kloet and Chao 2009).

The European Union deemed the movie unfit to show in Parliament and denied a

planned screening immediately following the movie's release ("*Fitna* banned" 2008).

However Wilders has shown the movie in a variety of institutional settings globally from

organizations to parliament, including in Israel (2009), for the United States Senate

(2009), and for Canada's Zionist association (2010) ("Wilders' *Fitna* toegejuicht" 2008;

"Dutch anti-Muslim politician" 2009; "Wilders gets Canadian support" 2010). The most

visible and controversial screening involved Wilders' quest to show *Fitna* in the British

House of Lords in 2009, at the invitation of Lord Pearson. Although the British

Government announced that Wilders would be denied entry to the country on the grounds

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[26] Of course, an attention to *Fitna*'s political failure as perceived and noted by my conversants in their sense that "nothing happened" may, or may not, align with an evaluation of the movie's impact upon viewers. It is not my intention in this project to evaluate the movie's reception by the worldwide online audience or the reactions from Muslim communities. Such a complex project would need to address the relevance and intersection of the many spheres in which *Fitna* circulated and exercised impact, in terms of domestic and global viewers, ordinary individuals, media, and political agents, Muslims and non-Muslims.

of public security regulation, Wilders flew to the country on February 11, 2009 with a

contingent of journalists. He was denied entry to the country and returned to the

Netherlands without showing the movie. Subsequently, the movie was shown in his

absence, at two screenings (one for the House of Lords, sparsely attended, and a second

for the press). After winning an appeal to the ban against his visiting the country, Wilders

returned to the United Kingdom and successfully showed the movie on March 4, 2010

("Far right Dutch MP" 2010). A considerable amount of media fanfare and protests both

opposing and supporting the screening accompanied his visit.

These screenings constitute an important and distinct phase of the movie's public

life. De Kloet and Chao note the importance of the re-materialization of the movie in this

public display, where Wilders acts as a modern day film courier giving substance to the

digital form in the tangible aspects of its screenings (2009:79). Ultimately the controversy

over the display of the movie in the British parliament brings back into focus the

continuing relevance of particularizing political boundaries between nation-states.

Reverberations

Almost four years after its initial release *Fitna* maintains a semblance of a public life.

Wilders continues to screen the movie in international venues, frequently at the invitation

of interest groups supporting free speech or populist agendas. All versions of the movie

remain available online, and continue to receive comments from viewers.

The movie proved productive in concrete terms, as a series of videos were created

and uploaded to online video cites in response to its release. One major genre of response

came in videos designed to counteract *Fitna*'s impact through jamming, many initiated by

Dutch multimedia platform Mediamatic. In advance of *Fitna*'s release Mediamatic urged

individuals to upload videos of themselves apologizing "for Geert Wilders [sic]

embarrassing behavior" under the title *Fitna* (Van Zoonen et al. 2010a:254). The project's

intention was to prevent those interested in accessing Wilders' movie from finding it

through straightforward keyword searching online.[27]

     Fitna has also enjoyed a renaissance in attention given its implication in two

related recent media events. The first was Wilders' trial for inciting discrimination and

hatred against Muslims, a drawn out controversy stretching from the initial consideration

of charges against him beginning following *Fitna*'s release, and ending only with his

acquittal in October 2011. *Fitna* constituted a key factor in the trial as a primary example

of the hate speech and incitement to discrimination with which Wilders was charged.

     Second, periodic announcements by Wilders that he will produce sequels of

various sorts return attention to the movie. These include Wilders' announcement in April

2009 that he would make a sequel to *Fitna*. He renewed the claim in April 2011,

specifying that *Fitna*'s sequel would target the "sick life" of the Prophet Mohammad

("Wilders announces" 2011). And at the end of 2010 Wilders suggested he would be

writing a book on a similar subject, to accompany the movie. By the end of 2011 the

second movie had not yet materialized, nor had a literary criticism of Mohammad.

However, Wilders' (second) book is currently in press (in English only) in the United

States, and titled *Marked for Death: Islam's War Against the West and Me.*

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[27] For details regarding the project visit Mediamatic's website for the project at
http://www.mediamatic.net/33851/en/*Fitna*-the-movie Accessed January 23, 2012.

These reverberations draw attention back to *Fitna* as well as renewing media attention for Wilders. While internationally the movie and Wilders' antics continue, in the Netherlands the movie has had little staying power. Though certainly not forgotten, aside from casual mentions and references to it with respect to related incidents, the movie has not drawn any fresh public attention of substance in recent years. Nonetheless, the intensity of the spectacle, and the considerable media and official attention surrounding the movie's release, have ensured *Fitna* an ongoing place in the country's memory.

Analyzing the Object: Close Attention to *Fitna*

The following section moves from describing *Fitna*'s properties as object – that is, recounting its features and public life – towards a theoretical consideration of the object as such. Unpacking my definition of *Fitna* as *object,* I articulate my methodological approach to the movie and to an affective economy of uncertainty.

Fitna as Object

For the purposes of this analysis I define *Fitna: The Movie* as an *object*, though certainly it also resembles, in different lights, an *event, image, text* or *thing*. Indeed, my decision to approach *Fitna* as object is founded in my attempt to account for these many valid dimensions of the movie's ontological status. An approach to the movie as object foregrounds its role as *the* object of this analysis, and as *an* object within an affective economy, while also addressing the movie's manifestation as: event in the public realm whose social significance exceeds its material form (as cultural object); discrete entity

materializing and circulating through its social context (a material object); and moving

image whose impact stems from its existence as, and use of, pictures (a visual object).

The approach to *Fitna* outlined here is thus intended to open up rather than to streamline

the complexities of the *object*, seeking to integrate and offset the other potential

approaches to the movie as event, thing, or image.

Rather than indicating confusion with respect to the ontological status of *Fitna*

itself, this heterogeneity gestures to the multiple interpretive frames which might be

engaged to analyze the movie. Although thr complexity raises a host of methodological

challenges, it also thickens an analysis of *Fitna* and the affective economy by throwing

into relief the different elements of the movie and its public life.

Framing *Fitna* as an event emphasizes political performance which the movie

reflects and in which it participates, while framing the movie as material *thing*

foregrounds its circulation as commodity within an affective economy and across a global

mediascape. As the social biography of *Fitna* indicates, considering the movie as event or

as material thing fore- or back- grounds the significance of the movie's impact preceding

its physical materialization, when it constituted an event but not yet a thing. Further

complicating the situation, an emphasis on the visual character of the film medium, not to

mention *Fitna*'s particular construction as montage of graphics, photographs, and video

fragments, foregrounds the importance of the features, the physicality, of the movie *as*

such. Here, analysis of *Fitna* must address the features of the object which contribute to its visual and material form, that is to its features as image and picture.[28]

The complexities beg questions of definition and boundaries. Where does *Fitna* end and begin? What constitutes this object and what marks its limits? The fragmented and serialized manner of the movie's broadcast further confuses its precise definition: *Fitna* includes two official versions, each of which is comprised of both English and Dutch translations. In their online form these movies are further split into a first and second portion to accommodate maximum viewing times on host sites such as *YouTube* and *LiveLeak*. All versions have been posted and reposted across an array of video sharing as well as individual websites.

In this analysis *Fitna: The Movie* refers to the corpus of editions and videos including each of these versions and translations, privileging no version as more authoritative or authentic than another. Though not taking any particular version of *Fitna* as authoritative, this is not to suggest that their differences are insignificant. As the

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[28] From this point, my consideration of *Fitna* as cultural object notably departs from another, also useful framing of the movie as cultural *text*. As Bal notes, *text* is often used in reference to images and films as target of analysis, as a concept which beneficially emphasizes,

> "the idea that images have, or produce meaning, and that they promote such analytical activities as reading… the advantage of speaking of 'visual texts' is that it reminds the analyst that lines, motifs, colours, and surfaces, like words, contribute to the production of meaning; hence, that form and meaning cannot be disentangled. Neither texts nor images yield their meanings immediately. They are not transparent, so that images, like texts, require the labour of meaning." (Bal 2006:26).

I frame *Fitna* as object to emphasize the importance of the visual character in a consideration of the movie *as such*. Nonetheless, I seek to maintain the connotation of *text* to stress the interpretive character of apprehension of pictures as much as of words.

following chapters demonstrate, the differences between versions often provide

illuminative insights into the affective economy.[29]

   And having identified the boundaries which define the limits of the movie, I

further question the tension between its visual and material character. Is *Fitna* a thing? Or

an image? As material object *Fitna* is an online video, its physicality manifesting in its

pixilation on computer monitors and projection onto screens. But this materiality cannot

be separated from its visual character, its status as image. [30] In this respect *Fitna* may be

more specifically defined as *picture*, a categorical subset of the image in its material and

graphic form (and as distinguished from, for instance, perceptual, mental or verbal

imagery) (Mitchell 1984:505). As a picture the movie materializes as the intersection of

image and object, at once a material entity maintaining a presence in its social context and

a form apprehended primarily through vision.[31]

   Ultimately, while the image constitutes a focus of rich metaphysical theorization

in its own right (Bal 2006; Mitchell 1984), I have chosen for the purposes of this analysis

to emphasize *Fitna*'s status as a visual object, rather than privileging the movie as image

rendered in material form. Maintaining an emphasis on the object-ness of this visual

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[29] For instance, chapter five interprets the difference in cartoons displayed in the first and second version of *Fitna* as a means for theorizing the ambivalent relation of nation-state and religion in the affective economy of uncertainty.

[30] While film necessarily invokes a consideration of the image, *Fitna*'s use of pictures as well as of text - in the form of photographed placards and newspapers, subtitles translating and recording speech, and scrolling manifestos - indicates the particular primacy of the visual in this movie.

[31] This tension between the physicality of film as object and the ephemeral and fleeting character of the moving image constitutes a point of considerable attention in film theory.[31] The overlap between material object and visual image has seen some attention in film theory, which, while acknowledging the fleeting quality of the moving image (Mulvey 2006), generally asserts the materiality of the medium (cf. Deleuze [1983], [1985]; Doanne 2002; Marks 2000).

object encompasses the visual dimension of the movie's material form without dismissing the importance of its social life as an object.

Analyzing the Object

My approach to *Fitna* plays the multiple connotations of its definition as *object* off against one another, enabling a fluid consideration of the movie as simultaneously public event, circulated thing, and picture. An appropriate methodological strategy for interpreting the movie must be similarly nuanced and flexible. As demonstrated in the opening pages of this chapter and expanded upon here, anthropology offers the method of social biography (Kopytoff 1986) as an effective means for attending to the public life of the movie. However to fully attend to the object itself, social biography alone does not suffice. As such my analysis also draws from the methodological strategies offered by cultural analysis and visual studies.

Historically, anthropological concern with material objects has developed within the study cultural systems of belief and exchange (cf. Durkheim [1915]; Mauss [1950]) and studies of cultural transmission (Mead [1964]), a trajectory echoing a broader concern with objects as commodity (Marx [1906]) and fetish (Freud [1913]). An attention to material objects in these cases considers how physical things are invested with and come to exert (economic, religious) meaning within a particular social context. This trajectory of inquiry has developed into a subfield of the discipline: studies of the social lives of things consider the ways that objects of all sorts are made and received as meaningful to human subjects (Hoskins 1998; Miller 2009; Turkle 2007).

The method recounting an object's social biography, developed by Arjun Appadurai and Igor Kopytoff (1986) remains an influential strategy for ethnographers seeking to trace how humans find and make meaning in material objects. As practiced at the outset of this chapter in relation to *Fitna*, Kopytoff's social biographical method asks about an object,

> "What, sociologically, are the biographical possibilities inherent in its 'status' and in the period and culture, and how are these possibilities realized? Where does the thing come from and who made it? What has been its career so far, and what do people consider to be an ideal career for such things? What are the recognized 'ages' or periods in the thing's 'life', and what are the cultural markers for them? How does the thing's use change with its age, and what happens to it when it reaches the end of its usefulness?" (Kopytoff 1986:66-67).

Tracing an object's social biography in these terms provides important insight into its circulation and impact within a social sphere, considering its meaning and function within that context. As the opening pages of this chapter demonstrate, the strategy effectively traces the production, movement and impact of an object within its social context.

In this respect the study of *Fitna* may perhaps be situated in relation to ethnographic engagements with media and art. Anthropologies of media tend to interrogate the communicative function of pictures, seeking to discern messages embedded in media forms and to measure the degree of success with which they are transmitted from producer to viewer. Such studies focus on pictures, from posters to schoolbooks to soap operas, to determine their communicative function for actors and

producers (cf. Abu Lughod 1997; Hamilton 2002; Wilk 2002); for shoring up collective

identity (cf. Davila 2002; Mankekar 2002); or for political and social mobilizations

(McLagan 2002). Reception studies consider whether such messages are effectively

conveyed to audiences through images, as well as how and why they may go awry

(Ginsburg et al. 2002:13).

Anthropologies of art approach pictures through questions of meaning, style and

taste (Bourdieu [1984]), seeking to discern the social codes of value embedded within

their visual form (Meyers 2002; Myers 2002). The focus in this trajectory remains on the

social processes through which aesthetic values are contested and reformulated around

and through pictures (Herzfeld 2001:293). On the whole, while anthropologies of art and

media attend to the visual content of art and media objects, they do so with respect to

unearthing the message (emphasizing image as tool of ideology or communication) or

meaning (emphasizing image as a construction of social codes of taste and style) of the

visual form.

With respect to anthropological attention to visual objects, much ethnography

does move beyond a social biography approach to analyze the form of (visual) objects on

their own terms.[32] However, this method remains limited to consideration of the object as

placeholder circulated through social context, an interrogation of the object which

downplays its particular properties and features. Only in very recent formulations have

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[32] Excellent recent examples of ethnography which engages photography and images include: Klima (2002); Morris (2004, 2009); and Myers (2002).

calls for an ontological attention to the object *as such* surfaced within the discipline, in concert with a wider shift towards studies of the material and visual world.[33]

While not negating the validity of these questions, this dissertation seeks to move away from questions of ideology and hermeneutics questioning what a visual object communicates, means, or does.[34] A gradual shift towards an interest in the object as such is part of a large trajectory within the discipline identified by Rabinow and Marcus as a move from an epistemological to an ontological frame of inquiry (2008:39). Rabinow and Marcus locate a disciplinary migration from a geographic parochialism associated with the study of cultures through the study of the construction of the self, a turn to identity which identified a "self of a collective sort" (2008:35). Arguing that the study of subjectivity constitutes merely a "clever substitution for culture itself and [which] allows for the same interpretive devices" (2008:35), they champion a further shift away from the epistemological questions associated with the study of the self, and towards a focus on objects and the ontological issues raised in their study (2008:38-39). It is on the cusp of

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[33] Beyond the scope of anthropology, attention to the cultural and material object is also noted in a cross and interdisciplinary context, with a veritable boom in studies of materiality, objects, and things (Brown 2001; Miller 2009, 1998). With respect to the ascendance of the visual world as target of inquiry, Mitchell identifies a cross-disciplinary and indeed broadly cultural "pictorial turn", a fascination and even anxiety which sees critical attention across the social sciences and humanities moving from textual, linguistic concern towards images and the visual (Mitchell 1994). In the field of cultural analysis, Jaap Kooijman's (2004) reading of Super Bowl performances of the Star Spangled Banner as formative constructions of American national identity engages Barthes' theory of images and resonates closely with my approach for analyzing a visual object.

[34] The disciplinary subfield of visual anthropology, on the other hand, is primarily concerned with techniques of conducting and disseminating field research in visual form. Since the 19th century anthropologists have employed images in ethnographic photographs and film as data gathering tools for collecting and preserving information; visual anthropology emerged to investigate how images might be used in ethnographic practice (Morphy and Banks 1997). While recognizing that visual anthropology has historically concerned itself with anthropological studies *using* visual objects, at issue in this discussion is the analysis *of* a visual object.

this trajectory that I situate this analysis of *Fitna*, as encountered through what I term a mode of close attention.

Close Attention

Shifting my attention away from considerations of what *Fitna* does and means within a social context, I turn to cultural analysis and visual studies for methodological inspiration to interrogate the form of the movie itself. Specifically, I take up Mitchell's (1996, 2005) injunction that analysis move away from interrogating pictures as ideological projections whose meaning and function is to be unearthed. To respond to Mitchell's call, I adapt Bal's (2002) method of *newer close reading* to the interpretation of pictures, a mode of analysis I refer to as *close attention*.

　　　　An interrogation of *Fitna* addressing the picture *as such* rests upon several methodological qualifications. First, approaching the picture or cultural object on its own terms involves bracketing the issue of authorial intent and viewer reception as the primary means for determining its meaning or message. The assertion that objects are to be treated as emanations of their producers has seen considerable deconstruction in philosophical and literary critique (cf. Barthes 1977 [1967]; Derrida 1978 [1967]; [Foucault [1970] 2000). Both Mitchell and Bal vehemently argue that while the interests of the producer may be a relevant consideration in understanding the context of an object's production, intention does not determine the meaning or nature of the object. In distinguishing the desires of the picture, Mitchell writes, analysts must "not confuse the desire of the picture

with the desires of the artist, the beholder, or even the figures in the picture." (2005:46) [35]

Accordingly, I take *Fitna*'s origin as object of Wilders' political display as relevant for

assessing the movie's function within the social context of the Netherlands as well as to

tracing the terms of its circulation and reception. However neither the movie's status as

object nor its message, meaning, and impact can be reduced to an index of Wilders'

intentions.

Similarly, a practice of close attention does not privilege viewer reception as a

means for interpreting the object. This analysis of *Fitna* attends to how the movie

addresses a multidimensional audience, yet does not reduce the object to the terms of its

reception by these audiences.[36] For instance, in its online mediation and instant, global

dissemination, *Fitna* reached (out to) a decidedly global audience. That the movie saw

reactions from members of the public as well as government officials in countries all over

the world reinforces the breadth and variety of a global viewing public as one audience.

At another level, the movie's printed message to "you, the viewer", addresses those

affected by, and responsible for defending "our" freedom from, "Islamization", narrowing

the audience to a presumably western or European public (Appendix 1 Shot 48). And

given its prominence as a product of a national politician and the prevalence of references

which presume familiarity with Dutch cultural references if not the language, the movie

addresses a (non-Muslim) Dutch audience. Finally, the movie addresses (though disavows)

Muslims as its implicit audience, displaying images of a cartoon caricaturing the Prophet

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[35] For an extended defense of anti-intentionalism in cultural analysis see Bal (2006).
[36] Several studies by Liesbeth van Zoonen conduct sophisticated analysis of the movie's reception, which provide useful information in assembling the movie's public life (Van Zoonen et al. 2010b).

Mohammed (Appendix 1 Shots 3, 49) and a hand posed to rip a page from the Quran (Appendix 1 Shot 46-47) for the purposes of provocation. As this brief account demonstrates, displacing attention onto the object as target of analysis considers *Fitna*'s address to these multiple audiences but does not take their reception of the movie as determinative of its character. In sum, the interests and practices of the movie's maker with respect to his creation, and the response of its multiple intended audiences, provides important supplementary information about *Fitna*, but the movie must not be reduced to them.

A final qualification for a practice of close attention to *Fitna* must stress that the method complements but remains distinct from an interrogation of the politics of representation (of Muslims, or Islam). Edward Said's formative theory of *Orientalism* (1978) as well as his analysis of mass media representations of Islam (1981) epitomizes both the potential and the pitfalls of this representational approach.[37] Recent analyses inspired by Said's work identify western representations of Islam as a dimension of

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[37] Said identified the Orient, and its twin, the Occident, as constructed cultural, political and geographical entities which support and reflect one another (1978:5). The Orient is "a discourse produced and existing in uneven exchange with political, cultural and moral power" (1978:12), the creation of a particular (western imperialist) entity enacting modes of authority and discipline, constituted in part by Orientalist texts. Said's methodological project, then, becomes an analysis of Orientalist texts as a means for understanding the workings of power which they reflect and in which they participate. Such a project involves looking not only to the content but the form of texts, because just as conventions, rhetorical styles, and predecessors shape the creativity of an artist, so too do political, institutional and ideological constraints (Said 1978:13). Close readings reveal a set of figures and tropes underpinning a representative discourse peculiar to the western discussion and understanding of Islam and of the Orient (1978:71).

Despite its crucial importance for interrogating representations of Islam and Muslims, Said's theory has faced legitimate critique. Critics take Said to task for perpetuating false binaries and for both essentializing and silencing the voices and actual social practices of the Orient (Poole 2002:29; Varisco 2007:6-8). Recent critiques from anthropology also address Said's failure to recognize the texts he targets as attempts by writers to satirize their own culture using the voice of the Other (Varisco 2007:189).This crucial critique of *Orientalism* points to a wider recognition of the illegitimacy and inaccuracies of categories such as *Islam* and *the West*, and their positioning relative to one another and to equally slippery categories such as *modernity*.

modern political intellectual culture and mode of discourse through which the West gains

sovereignty and hegemony, and which operate through both the form and content of the

orientalist text. Direct application of Said's theoretical and methodological insights has

generated proliferating studies analyzing western representations of Islam and Muslims

by the West.[38]

As a visual depiction of Muslims and Islam produced within a western context,

Fitna invites interpretation as an orientalist text. In resonance with Said's theory, my

analysis of *Fitna* certainly considers the ideological import of the movie within the

context of its production and circulation, including the movie's depiction of *Muslims*,

Islam and *the West* as discrete entities, and the subsequent construction of asymmetrical

and hegemonic power relations between them. Yet in crucial distinction from Said's

methodology, I do not primarily consider how *Fitna* represents Islam or Muslims, rather

approaching the movie as visual object.

These implications which follow from an approach guided by Mitchell and Bal are

ultimately a matter of emphasis rather than exclusion. Issues of production, reception and

representation have a place in a method of close attention to *Fitna*, and particularly with

respect to positioning the movie within the social context of its production and circulation.

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[38] Travel accounts (Kabbani 1994) and the western mass media (Poole 2002) are frequent subjects of this kind of analysis. The most authoritative recent instance of such a study is Elizabeth Poole's authoritative analysis of British daily newspapers, which draws from Said (2002:29) not "to measure the content of media against some kind of actuality but to examine representational frameworks… and therefore knowledge produced about Islam" (2002:31). In a related vein, Jessica Winegar considers post 9/11 American curation of "Islamic art" shows which unwittingly perpetuate Orientalist tropes yoking art to particular discourses of humanity and participating in a larger exhibitionary regime that prescribes models for an ideal Muslim citizen (2008:665, 671).

My close attention to the object on its own terms addresses these considerations without taking them as constitutive of the object.

Close Reading

A methodology of close attention adopts the practice of close reading forwarded by Bal (2002) as a "newer" reworking of literary close reading techniques. Close attention and close reading privileges analysis of the object's formal properties, the strategies and techniques of its construction, and their relation to the both its content and context. As cultural analysis, the practice seeks to relate object and concept, a project which addresses the object as such as well as its context, its form as well as its content. [39]

Like Mitchell, Bal acknowledges that no object holds meaning outside of its reception and interpretation, including interpretation by the analyst, but that this need not necessarily obliterate an attention to that object's formal properties (Bal 2002:8-9). To this end cultural analysis forwards a specific practice for interpreting "what only scholars would keep separate": a cultural object's form, content, and context (2002:289). Bal articulates her method as a reworking of close reading, a form of attention which begins with the text itself, looking *at* rather than through its language to discern "how meaning is produced and conveyed… what sorts of literary and rhetorical strategies and techniques are deployed to achieve what the reader takes to be effects of the work" (Culler 2010:22).

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[39] *Concepts* Bal writes, only work "through a confrontation with, not application to, the cultural objects being examined." It is the goal of cultural analysis to bring both concept and object to light through analyzing their interaction. (Bal 2002:22-55).

Crucial in this respect is a concern with the ways the stylistic aspects of a text function to produce its meaning.[40]

This method for cultural analysis is a reworking of a practice of close reading in that it attends but is not limited to a consideration of the object's formal features. Cultural analysis' formulation of close reading departs from both "old close reading, where the text is alleged to speak for itself; [and] cultural studies where, in contrast, critique is more important than the object". Thus the method of "newer close reading, which is informed by both" (Bal 2002:18).

The intertwined consideration of form, content and context in a practice of "newer close reading" provides a strategy for analyzing *Fitna* within this dissertation. Close attention addresses form, considering *Fitna*'s materialization as an online movie, its deployment of photographs and moving images, illustrations and text. The method further addresses techniques of composition, sound, editing, and light to consider how they are deployed in service of a particular affect and political message. As the following chapters elaborate, the particularly salient visual and formal features which structure *Fitna*'s affective and political content include its use of pre-existing footage, montage format, editing style, and use of text and sound.

As formulated by my readings of Mitchell (2005, 1996) and Bal (2002), *close attention* provides a means for encountering *Fitna* on its own terms, and for taking into full account its many dimensions as an object. Yet in extension of Bal's note that a new close reading incorporates a consideration of the object's context as well as its material

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[40] A concern Culler traces to the work of Roland Barthes (1975b).

form, this project seeks to analyze *Fitna* as a means for coming to terms with the affective

economy in which it circulates.

The Object in/as Affective Economy

As detailed in chapter one, this dissertation takes *Fitna* as an object which both circulates

through and provides a visualization of the "collective gut feeling" that permeates the

present Dutch socio-political landscape. While the preceding section has established the

strategy of close attention as a means for interpreting *Fitna*, I now turn to the broader

methodological framework which situates *Fitna* as an within the country's affective

economy of uncertainty. As a whole, my methodological approach in this dissertation

takes *Fitna* as both the target of analysis (in the form of close attention) and the lens

through which to view and explore the affective economy of the Netherlands.

The Object in an Affective Economy

In taking *Fitna* as a lens through which to explore uncertainty in the Netherlands I return

to Sara Ahmed's model of an affective economy. As an object implicated within the

country's affective web, *Fitna* becomes bound to other key figures and features through

uncertainty's (economic) circulation and (psychoanalytic) displacement.

Ahmed explicitly addresses the relation between object, affect, and affective

economy in arguing that,

> "Affect does not reside in an object or sign, but is an effect of the circulation
>
> between objects and signs […] Some signs, that is, increase in affective value as

an effect of the movement between signs: the more they circulate, the more affective they become, and the more they appear to 'contain' affect. Another way to theorize this process would be to describe 'feelings' *via* an analogy with 'commodity fetishism': feelings appear in objects, or indeed as objects with a life of their own, only by the concealment of how they are shaped by histories, including histories of production (labor and time), as well as circulation and exchange." (2004a:120-121)

In this model the object constitutes a node in the economy through which affect moves. Ahmed further nuances the formulation of objects in relation to affect as those figures implicated in a process of repression, such that an affect is sustained through its displacement between objects. Here, the,

"displacement between objects works to link those objects together… I would suggest that the sideways movement [of affect] between objects, which works to stick objects together as signs of threat, is shaped by multiple histories. The movement between signs does not have its origin in its psyche, but is a trace of how histories remain alive in the present." (2004a:125-126)

As these excerpts indicate, in Ahmed's model, while affect is not a property inherent to objects, they are directly implicated within and constitutive of affective economies. She suggests that it is the movement of affect between these figures which draws upon and creates the relations between them, which may unite or divide.

Ahmed illustrates the relations of proximity created between objects through the rippling effects of emotion in a close reading of an Aryan pride website. The online text

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claims that it is love for the (threatened) nation which makes white Aryans "look upon a

mixed race couple with a scowl […] and loathing" ; react in anger and repulsion to

"another child molester or rapist sentenced by corrupt courts to a couple of short years in

prison"; and curse "the latest boatload of aliens dumped on our shores" (Ahmed

2004a:117). Here, Ahmed notes, the affective reading of others as hateful aligns subject

and nation, representing "both the rights of the subject and the grounds of the nation as

already under threat. *It is the emotional reading of hate that works to bind the imagined

white subject and nation together.*" (2004a:118, italics in original). This is the binding

force of emotion, and one which also produces a relation of resemblance between those

objects construed as threats to the nation. That is, the proximity of these figures in the

Aryan Nations website's text produces a metonymic slide in which,

> "mixed-race couplings and immigration become readable as (like) forms of rape
>
> or molestation: an invasion of the body of the nation, represented here as the
>
> vulnerable and damaged bodies of woman and child. The slide between figures
>
> constructs a relation of resemblance between the figures: what makes them alike
>
> may be their 'unlikeness' from 'us.' … Importantly, then, hate does not reside in a
>
> given subject or object. Hate is economic; it circulates between signifiers in
>
> relationships of difference and displacement." (2004a:118-119)

Many such ties are operative at a given moment, and affective circulation's

surfacing/binding effects two sides of the same coin: the affective hate of the Aryan case

deeply tied to the production of the nation as object of love bound to and equated with the

white subject (2004a:118).

It is Ahmed's project to advance a theory of affect, not of objects, and her theory thus only attends to objects insofar as they constitute the figures through which affect displaces in backwards and lateral movements. In this dissertation I seek to elaborate upon Ahmed's model by analyzing an affective economy through a close attention to one of its constitutive objects.

I extrapolate from Ahmed's model as summarized here to suggest that tracing the movement of an object through an affective economy illuminates the interconnections between the other entities within its scope, and traces the well-worn paths along which affect travels in its movement of circulation and displacement, the histories and figures to which the object becomes stuck in relations of resemblance. Further, insofar as affect moves through and between objects, it impacts and shapes the nodes through which it passes. Though affect is not a property of objects, in this analysis I consider the ways that an affective economy appears inscribed upon them.

Adapting and extrapolating Ahmed's theorization of the place of objects in an affective economy, I thus situate *Fitna* as an object which contributes to and visualizes the collective "gut feeling" of uncertainty in the Netherlands. My methodological approach takes *Fitna* as the *target* of analysis to interpret the object on its own terms, not only in its public life but in its features and form. Furthermore, I take *Fitna* as the *lens* of analysis to interpret the movie's features as a sort of freeze frame visualization of its context, considering what the object reveals about the affective economy in which it is implicated.

Ethnography of an Affective Economy

This chapter has outlined a methodological strategy for paying close attention to *Fitna* as target and lens of analysis. However one further consideration must be addressed with respect to the study of an affective economy. To this end, the dissertation draws upon ethnographic fieldwork as a means for guiding and informing an analysis of *Fitna*.

This dissertation is informed by over twenty-four months of fieldwork conducted in the Netherlands. The affective economy which I explore here is one in which I have participated for the past five years, one whose uncertain intensification I have witnessed before and during, as well as after, the release of *Fitna*, from my home within the country as well as my home abroad. The close attention to the movie which I offer here is not only coloured but actively guided by my experiences during this time: by my own day-to- day life, impressions gleaned from years of reading the newspaper and watching television, from the content and tenor of countless casual encounters, from collection of rumours and jokes, from the stories of friends and friends of friends. Inevitably the interpretation offered here has been shaped by my own position as researcher. In fact I would argue that it is precisely through lived experience in it – as subject, as node – that one can best come to terms with an affective economy.

In order to account for the degree to which my observations, experiences, and interviews in the Netherlands have guided my interpretation of *Fitna* and the country's affective economy, the following chapters are shot through with accounts of my ethnographic encounters. In addition to the years of participant observation during my immersion in the country's affective economy, my field research has included more than

fifty interviews with experts on Dutch politics and history, with public figures deeply

involved in the debates over Islam and Dutch culture at issue in this dissertation, as well

as with members of the public. The interviews incorporated the voices of men and women

of a broad range of ages, occupations, political convictions and sexual orientations, and

included residents from cities, towns and villages across the country. My interlocutors

included both Muslim and non-Muslims, autochthonous and allochtonous individuals.

Though I made every effort to engage with a wide range of individuals, the small portion

of the population with whom I spoke must not be considered as a representative sample of

all inhabitants of the Netherlands. The accounts presented do not serve as ethnographic

data representing instances of the population as a whole, but rather illustrate the texture of

the country's affective economy and its prominent narratives.[41]

The accounts included in this dissertation are drawn from all of these various

sources, each providing a different form of insight into the country's affective economy.

Maartin's description of a gut feeling, which arose during a structured interview, provides

an insight into one individual's considered explanation for the present atmosphere in the

country.[42] Jiske's comments regarding the truth value of *Fitna*'s photographs, as well as

Jorrit's account for fear of Muslims, arose during casual conversations which developed

into extended impromptu interviews as I explained my academic investment and interest

in the subject.[43] Comments from casual conversations which I did not pursue into

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[41] Given that my purpose is to describe the features of an affective economy most widespread and dominant in current discourse, the encounters that I have selected here represent the normative narratives circulating in the public realm. Nonetheless wherever possible I have noted the many counter-narratives which challenge these normative narratives.
[42] Chapter one describes my encounter with Maartin.
[43] These conversations feature in chapters six and four, respectively.

informal or formal interviews, as well as accounts of conversations which I witnessed but in which I did not partake, include many expressions of (the reasons for) *Fitna*'s failure.[44] These accounts prove valuable for tracking how some topics of discussion trigger or slide into others, or for collecting popular narrative surrounding the movie, precisely because they did not arise in the context of a formal interview. By drawing upon this range of ethnographic encounters I have sought to provide an indication of how not only the formal discussions about Islam, but also the daily experience of life within the Netherlands, has informed my analysis of *Fitna* and the country's affective economy.

My interlocutors, like myself, constitute individuals who are subjects or nodes bound through the movement of circulation and displacement of uncertainty. Their implication as subjects within this affective economy, as my own, is not necessarily indicative of their own political opinions, beliefs or sentiments about Islam.

Uncertainty animates but exceeds anti-Islam discourse, and not every-body implicated in that affective economy participates in political opposition to Islam nor entertains anti-Islam sentiment. The vast majority of my interlocutors were quick to qualify opposition to Islam as indicative of only "just a few of us. A small minority. A very small minority" (Dennis, fieldnotes, April 2, 2012). Anti-Islam sentiment may account for a small group of "Wilders supporters, but what about the rest of us?" (Maartje, fieldnotes, August 29, 2011). In addition to the many Muslims who are also Dutch

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[44] Chapters four and seven contain examples of these accounts.

citizens, many non-Muslim Dutch individuals and organizations in the country

prominently challenge the anti-Islam rhetoric of both official and mass media sources.[45]

Nonetheless, though many do not identify with the aims of anti-Islam politics,

they remain within the scope of a social context characterized by an experience of

uncertainty, figures in a landscape in which the salience of "Muslims" as a category

which conflates with "immigrants" and "non-Dutch", and the prominence of discussions

about what to do about the tensions produced by its presence, may be opposed but not

ignored.

I have chosen to present these interviews as discrete encounters, or as vignettes

which frame and inform the analysis of *Fitna*, to foreground that my purpose in this

dissertation is not to provide a comprehensive ethnographic account of the Netherlands.

As described above, the field of exploration in this dissertation is a web of uncertainty

and the objects and subjects which it implicates. Through fieldwork I participate in and

observe the interaction between subjects, objects and histories as they/we are bound and

divided, implicated and separated through the movement of affect. My ethnographic

observations appear here as narrative fragments, emphasizing their character as brief

encounters between figures caught up in the circulation of uncertainty, interactions which

constitute and shed light upon the affective economy, rather than as data which relates the

definitive beliefs, opinions or feelings of "Muslims", "the Dutch", or any other real-

because-imagined category.

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[45] The Mediamatic campaign provides an example of precisely this resistance. Other organized objection is regularly and prominently raised by, for instance, *Nederlands Bekent Kleur*.

On Failure

In the following chapters I pay close attention to *Fitna* as a means for articulating the

mechanics through which the movie: displays Islamization as a source of fear; conducts

offense against images central to Islam; and claims to tell the truth about the real (violent)

character of Islam. At the same time, the social biography of *Fitna* which opens this

chapter notes that the movie's popular reception in the Netherlands is narrated as a failure

to instill fright, cause offense, or accurately tell the truth.[46]

While at first glance this inconsistency appears to negate the possibility for a

methodology exploring the country's affective economy through the lens of *Fitna*, I

rather suggest that it provides an opportunity for nuancing the terms of my approach. My

effort to shift attention to images themselves as target of analysis involves drawing a

distinction between the movie's structural enactment of certain concepts and the terms of

its reception by an audience. That is, I differentiate between fear, offense and truth telling

as they *appear in* and as they are *caused by* the movie: while the latter complements and

thickens an understanding of *Fitna*, I am primarily concerned in this analysis with the

former.

For instance, *Fitna* failed to generate a widespread response of fear upon release.

The movie's reception indicates its lack of affective impact. And indeed, no cultural

object exists outside of its interpretation, by audience or by analyst. Nonetheless, that the

movie failed to frighten viewers does not does not preclude my observation that *Fitna*

structurally enacts the terms associated with an affect of fear: portraying Islamization as

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[46] Chapter seven provides an extended description of this narrative, as well as problematizing the notion that the movie allegedly "failed" to have an impact.

the immanent approach of a threatening object. That is, while acknowledging the movie's

lack of frightening impact, this dissertation interrogates the mechanics through which the

movie represents, constructs, and expresses fear (as well as offense and truth telling). At

issue is a relation internal to the movie in which the movie's visualization of a fearful

Islamization relates to its formal properties disrupting time and space. This is the relation

which in turn proves helpful for an analysis of the country's affective economy, in which

I identify an analogous relation between fear and spatiotemporal disorientation.

The analyses of offense and truth telling operate according to a similar

methodology. I consider the ways that an offense conducted within *Fitna* itself, violating

images of the Prophet and Quran, enact a dynamic observable in insults towards Islam

staged within the affective economy of uncertainty. And the truth telling claims of the

movie's pre-existing documentary photographs, which appear to objectively and

transparently evidence their subjects, correspond to political performances in which

politicians claim to honestly evidence "what we're really thinking". My concern in these

chapters is not to interrogate whether the movie generates offense or successfully appears

to tell the truth, but to articulate the formal structures through which it visualizes offense

and truth telling, and to apply these mechanics to the context of the affective economy.

Using *Fitna* as lens of analysis involves considering the process in two different arenas –

movie and affective economy – rather than analyzing the effects and affects that the

movie generates within the affective economy. This is my answer to, and extension of,

Mitchell's call to shift the focus of analysis to the image itself, to move from asking what

a visual object such as *Fitna* "does" or "means" to what it (as Mitchell asks) "wants".[47]

Methodological Summary

I do not claim here to represent the voices, nor to provide a comprehensive account of

"Muslims in the Netherlands" nor of "autochthonous Dutch". Rather my interactions with

residents of the Netherlands, both in the lived experience of day-to-day life and in formal

interview settings, guides and supplements the account that I provide of (an object within)

an affective economy of uncertainty. As such, this dissertation conducts a methodological

experiment, in addition to an exploration of uncertainty in the Netherlands.

The primary objective of my methodological approach is to integrate attention to

the object itself with, and as a means for theorizing, its field. To this end, this chapter has

summarized the methods appropriate for approaching *Fitna* in such a project, defining it

as an/the object and describing a method of close attention through which to interpret its

features and public life. Two modes of looking at *Fitna*, as target and lens, define the

analytical strategy through which close attention to the object can be taken as informative

about the affective economy in which it circulates. It is my contention that a close

attention to *Fitna*'s features guided by ethnographic awareness throws certain salient

entities within the affective economy into relief and indicates the nature of their relation

to one another.

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[47] Formulated in terms of desire (as well as lack), *Fitna* might be understood to "want" to frighten, to offend, to tell the truth. This is an intriguing potential for further consideration of the movie, but a consideration of desire does not figure prominently in my analysis.

I pick up the project of methodological experimentation to look through *Fitna* at the concepts of truth, fear and offense in the affective economy of uncertainty. But before turning to an analysis of their interrelation, the following chapter provides a detailed consideration of the key features of this affective economy: the histories, subjects, objects and bodies implicated in the circulation of uncertainty in the Netherlands.

CHAPTER THREE

UNCERTAINTY:

EXPLORING THE AFFECTIVE ECONOMY OF THE NETHERLANDS

It was our conversation about *Fitna* which sparked Maartin's description of a "gut feeling" of uncertainty, which he attributed to himself and to "everyone, the whole country". The collective gut feeling would prove the unifying thread of our conversation, the words and accompanying physical gesture towards his abdomen leading us from topic to topic, from *Fitna* to Wilders to opposition to Islam and back again.

>"*Fitna* is a bad movie, but still, it's about this feeling, this gut feeling".
>
>I asked him to elaborate: what is this feeling? From where does it stem?
>
>"It's feeling trapped in the system – the whole global system, all the countries, no one has freedom or control over anything anymore. It just makes you nervous, insecure, in your gut."
>
>"And Wilders, that's what he connects to? That's why he's popular? What does it have to do with Islam?"
>
>"Look, everybody knows what he's doing. He's manipulating you, he just wants power, but it's like a television commercial: you watch ads for Coke, you know what they're doing. But you still drink it. He's so clear, you know exactly what he is doing, there is no confusion. And people think he's saying what they feel, he's talking about their gut feeling." (Maartin, fieldnotes, February 5, 2012)

The present chapter seeks to sketch the outlines of the affective economy of the Netherlands, this "gut feeling" of uncertainty introduced through Maartin's comments. The overview attends to three overlapping components of the affective economy: its historical development; constitutive elements; and socio-political stakes. The first component of this chapter recounts the recent historical factors which have shaped the present form of the affective economy in the Netherlands, which also accounts for the emergence of this modern nation-state, and opposition to Islam increasingly prevalent within its borders. Spanning from the Second World War to the end of the 20th century, these histories impact upon, but are also constitutive figures in, the affective economy. The chapter's second component takes the form of a directory of those events, individuals, and keywords directly implicated and complicit in the circulation of uncertainty since the beginning of the 21st century. Finally, the chapter's third component engages the scholarly model for a *culturalization of citizenship* to address the socio-political work of gut feelings. Together, the components provide a sketch of the shape of the field at issue in this dissertation.

Histories of the Modern Nation

Popular accounts trace the present uncertain character of the Netherlands through the immigration trends of the 1970s and the country's demographic transformations through the 1980s and 1990s. In so doing these accounts associate a rise in expressions of alienation and insecurity with the country's changing demographics and minority

populations.[48] However, a careful account of the affective economy must begin earlier,

with (remembrances of) the modern nation's formation and its historical influences,

including the Second World War and depillarization. In shaping the terms of the affective

economy, these histories do not remain relegated to the past. Rather, they are themselves

components of the present affective economy, figures through which uncertainty moves

in its patterns of circulation and displacement.

The Birth of the Modern Nation-State

The modern nation-state, as recounted in prevailing public narrative, has its roots in the

1960s. During the decade, a flourishing economy and the coming of age of the baby

boom generation precipitated a revolutionary ethos in the Netherlands, and urgent

resistance to the status quo which sought to free a modern nation from the strictures of its

religious past.

The resulting ethical revolution reformulated national image around a focus on

individual freedom and satisfaction (Lechner 2008:183), celebrated as a liberation from

obstacles to enjoyment (van der Veer 2006:118). In its modern reformulation, the

imagined nation championed individual choice and enjoyment: consumerism, sexual

liberation, relaxed taboos around homosexuality, the liberalization of drug use, and

accepted euthanasia emerged as its key features (Lechner 2008:20; van der Veer 2006).

The newfound emphasis upon individual freedom and personal enjoyment joined

with existing features of a longstanding national self-image. The egalitarian impulse

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[48] For a well-known example of scholarship attributing an increasing sense of insecurity with the increasing presence of Muslims in the country see Sniderman and Hagendoorn (2007).

which fostered the creation of the welfare state in the 1950s, as well as a national image

as a small but cosmopolitan *gidsland*, marked important elements of continuity carried

forward from the pre-1960s nation. The welfare state strengthened during the period, and

indeed remains in many ways the single most important project of the modern nation to

this day (Lechner 2008:203). And the country's longstanding self-image as an egalitarian

and cosmopolitan global player developed into an emphasis on tolerance as a key feature

of the modern nation.[49] The Netherlands born in the 1960s, then, both integrated and

transformed elements of its precursor. In particular, two crucial historical factors directly

shaped the ethos of the 1960s and continue to play a role in national memory, invoked

and implicated in the circulation of affect in the present: the Second World War and

(de)pillarization.

The Continuing Trauma of World War Two

The Second World War played a determinative role in shaping the modern Dutch nation-

state born in the 1960s. During the Nazi occupation from 1940 to 1945, the country saw

seventy-one percent of all Jews deported to death camps – the highest percentage in

Europe outside Poland (Buruma 2006:19). The Dutch did resist the occupation: pogroms

in Amsterdam triggered a nation-wide workers strike in February 1941, and a Dutch

resistance sheltered Jews. Nonetheless, too little was done to help them, and the shame

and guilt of the episode reverberates into the present (Buruma 2006:19). The ongoing

significance of the event resulted in a taboo surrounding public discussion of the events of

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[49] Tolerance continues to be an important concept in national discourse (de Koning 2006; Mepschen et al. 2010; van der Veer 2006).

the war. In fact the silence around Dutch complicities in the events of the Second World War was not broken until the 1960s with the publication of J. Presser's *The Downfall* (1965). The revelation, which implicated the preceding generation in the atrocities which had occurred during the war (Buruma 2006:81), had immediate effects upon a booming youth generation and on the project of nation formation underway at the time. In particular, the importance of tolerance and politically correct thinking in the 1960s stemmed in part from the feelings of guilt and shame experienced by the postwar generation (Buruma 2006:52).

Ian Buruma's account of the country's current climate traces the powerful implications of the Second World War through the 1960s nation formation (and into present day attitudes towards immigration and Islam) as an unfinished trauma.

> "It was as if the postwar generation needed to make up for the failure of their parents. The sons and daughters of those who had been unable to prevent a hundred thousand Jews from being singled out for murder would fight the new dictators… There was something pathetic about this belated show of resistance, but also telling. The nation of Anne Frank had not come to terms with its recent and most dramatic past, not with the German occupation, and not with what happened in Indonesia either" (2006: 83). [50]

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[50] The country's colonial past in both Indonesia and Suriname involves its own brutal history during the same period. Buruma's comment here refers to the coeval traumas associated with colonialism and the Second World War, whose haunting guilt spurred the liberation movements of the 1960s. Moluccan populations who had fought alongside the Dutch against Japanese invasion of Indonesia found themselves without a homeland following the country's independence in 1969. Although temporarily relocated to the Netherlands and promised

> "a swift return to an independent homeland... the poor Moluccans were shunted off to former Nazi concentration camps, such as Westerbork, from where, less than a decade before, almost a hundred

According to Buruma, the 1960s took shape around this collective guilt. A desire to

compensate for the actions of previous generations during colonial rule and the Second

World War combined with the international spirit of youth revolutions to stimulate

political demand for freedom and equality.

   In addition to shaping the ethos of the 1960s, the Second World War continues to

loom large in the contemporary Netherlands, as a key remembered history in the present

affective economy. The trauma of the War continues in its prevalence and influence in

public discourse, particularly with respect to immigration. Conflicting public opinions

refer to the period as both an instance of failure to protect or defend difference, and,

increasingly frequently, as an example of the dangers of tolerating intolerance. The ghosts

of the War appear explicitly in popular expressions of guilt and shame; in valorization of

resistance; in tendencies to divide individuals between those who are good and those bad

(Buruma 2006). Public discussion remains laced with tropes of occupation and betrayal,

and the long established models of persecution and resistance shape accusations against

and justifications for multiculturalism (Buruma 2006:19, 51-53). In fact the impact of this

event remains so prevalent that some scholars trace contemporary fears of immigration

directly to unresolved "inner conflict" in a nation which failed to keep fellow citizens

from being deported and killed (Mak 2006:n.p.).

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    thousand Dutch Jews had been deported… They too, were not expected to stay. By 1975, it was
    clear that independence for the south Moluccans was an illusion, a deceitful promise of a false
    dawn. A new generation had grown up with no hope of returning to life outside the camps. It was
    not a good start to the new age of multiculturalism." (Buruma 2006:13).
The country's colonial past has also, of course, shaped the demographics of its Muslim population. Yet
while the significance of the country's colonial history must be noted, particularly in their association with
the traumas of the Second World War, the events remained comparatively distant in both geographic space
and national memory.

The Ongoing Influences of (De)Pillarization

In addition to the events of the Second World War, the deconstruction of the existing institutional structure of religious pillarization maintains a deeply important position in the present affective economy.[51] The pillar system originated in the early days of the Dutch Republic (1568-1795) when social and political life had taken the form of a highly fragmented and institutionally distinct infrastructure (van der Veer 2006:118). Eventually, the Pacification Act of 1917 formalized the division of the country into four pillars – Catholic, Protestant, Socialist and Liberal – each of which maintained its own political party, newspaper, and educational institutions. The totality of the vertical integration system meant that citizens carried out their daily lives well within the bounds of their particular pillar, and each pillar related to one another through a collaborative process at the elite level, under the umbrella of the nation (Geschiere 2009:158).

During the 1960s this longstanding structure of social organization crumbled under pressures of increasing secularization (Buruma 2006:76). The maturation of the baby boom generation and the sexual revolution, as well as the youth revolts of the 1960s raging throughout Europe, further contributed to the pillars' collapse (van der Veer 2006:118). The dismantling of the country's pillars saw the emergence of many of the key features which continue to shape an imagined national identity: the welfare state instituted a measure of economic and social security for all citizens; government policy championed gender equality and sexual liberation; and discourses of individual choice prevailed in the marketplace, the bedroom, and the public sphere.

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[51] For an authoritative account of the pillar system and its history see Lijphart (1968).

Despite the upheavals of the 1960s the influences of the pillar system persist to this day. The structure of social relations continues in institutional remnants, including major newspapers and universities as well as political parties associated with the pillars in which they originated. Popular conceptual categories based on the system also persist, with Islam commonly (often pejoratively) referred to as the fifth pillar. On the one hand, depillarization is largely remembered as a liberatory movement in which the current nation freed itself from the strictures of the past and particularly of religious organization; on the other, the pillar system's influence remains visible in social mores which demand that members of different social groups keep to their own business (Ghorashi qtd. in Verkaaik 2003:52). Precisely this remnant of the pillar system, the norm of "not probing into the funny businesses of the other" (Ghorashi qtd. in Verkaaik 2003:52), as well as conceptions of Dutch pluralism as a "politics of accommodation" (Lijphart 1968), informed the country's understanding of tolerance and shaped its response to multiculturalism in the 1980s and beyond (Verkaaik 2003:52).

The 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s saw the demographic shifts which produced current multicultural nation-state, and a transformation and renegotiation of the terms of belonging regarding who and what constitutes "the Dutch" which continues today. Indeed the roots of the current affective economy may be identified in the issues and anxieties surrounding immigration and the presence of minority populations which developed during these decades.

The 1970s

 The Netherlands entered the 1970s championing a national image as the secular defender of progressive values, embodied in the social protectionism of the welfare state. The country imagined itself as a new, modern and "freespirited nation that allows for great individual creativity within the constraints set by the common cause" (Lechner 2008:7). Indeed, the 1970s mark both a high point of pride in national identity and the beginning of an increasingly visible public debate about what constitutes that identity (Lechner 2008:11). The decade's ethos was characterized in the slogan of Prime Minister Joop Den Uyl, leader of the left-center PvdA, championing "equal distribution of knowledge, power and income" (Lechner 2008:203). The welfare state that had already flourished in the 1960s as a national project saw further expansion (Lechner 2008:17). The first legalized marijuana cafes opening in Amsterdam and the increasing acceptability of euthanasia only furthered the nation's liberal image (Lechner 2008:20).

The 1970s also mark the period when the Netherlands began to come to terms with its increasingly international demographics, though it would continue to identify as an "emigration" country well into the decade (Geschiere 2009:138; Lechner 2008:152). Though Muslim presence in the Netherlands has a long history, stemming back to preceding century, it was in the economic boom of the 1960s and particularly in the 1970s that immigration led to the establishment of a significant presence of Muslims in the country.[52]

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[52] An 1889 census registers forty-nine "Mohammedans" from Indonesia residing in the Hague, but never more than a few hundred resided in the Netherlands before the Second World War (Forum 2010:8). When Dutch colonization of Indonesia officially concluded, the 1950s saw an increased Muslim population from Indonesia, as well as the first mosque (Forum 2010:8).

The decade saw the peak of an immigration wave bringing non-westerners to the country. Preceding the immigration of guest workers from Turkey and Morocco, the Netherlands experienced significant immigration from 1945-1975 due in no small part to (post)colonial flows of people from Indonesia, New Guinea, Suriname, and the Antilles and Aruba (Eyerman 2008:109). The guest worker population doubled from 50,000 to 100,000 in the first half of the 1970s (Lechner 2008:140), while "in a period of thirty years, from 1945 to 1975, 273,000 more people from Indonesia settled in the Netherlands than left the Netherlands for Indonesia"(Lucassen and Pennix qtd. in Eyerman 2008:109). At the close of the decade some 300,000 Surinamese had repatriated, around ten percent of whom were Muslim (Forum 2010:8).

The guest worker influx primarily resulted from cabinet policy decisions to overcome the need for industrial labourers (Lechner 2008:151). Initially assuming that migrants would not remain in the country beyond the term of their immediate labour employment, the Dutch government structured assimilation policy to emphasize cultural preservation. As Lechner notes, this policy thrust of the 1970s accompanies a "discourse of denial aimed at preserving the nation as it was", and an agreement that the presence of others need not change national self-image (2008:153). The government granted rent subsidies to foreign workers, provided money for schools educating their children, and developed programs supporting language retention (Lechner 2008:152). While often cited as proof of the multicultural intentions of the country, this attitude actually aimed to maintain the culture of origin of immigrants only in order to temporarily facilitate their

participation in Dutch society, while preparing them for their anticipated repatriation (Duyvendak, Hurenkamp and Tonkens 2010:234; Ghorashi 2003; Lechner 2008:151).

The 1980s

The 1980s saw considerable shift in economic and social dimensions reflected in national image and (immigration) policy. The economic situation had begun to decline at the start of the decade, thanks in part to global factors such as the reverberations of the 1973 oil shock, and a more expensive guilder (Lechner 2008:17). Domestic factors, from high taxes to new environmental rules, put pressure on businesses and productivity stagnated. Unemployment began to surface alongside uncertainties around the country's global position. Consequently, although not as overtly neoliberal as their complements in contemporary western nation-states, "reformist governments of the 1980s spurned the legacy of the 1970s to focus on limiting deficits and reviving the economy", including alterations to the welfare state (Lechner 2008:17).

At the same time, guest workers who had arrived in the preceding decades were now joined by their families, even as a move from production to service in the national economy imposed pressures of unemployment (Moors 2009:394). That the guest worker population would be staying in the Netherlands became increasingly recognized in public discourse and policy, and *ethnic minority* emerged as a salient term to identify populations newly conceptualized as a cohesive group (Geschiere 2009; Lechner 2008). With the new salience of ethnic minorities, parliament adopted an overlapping consensus treating communities as cohesive social units and seeking their socioeconomic

emancipation (Lechner 2008:157), treating immigrant diversity as a single challenge to be confronted at once.

Thus by mid-decade, residual policies aiming for identity maintenance among ethnic minorities had faded, rather emphasizing collective socioeconomic integration (Duyvendak 2011; Duyvendak, Pels, Rijkschroeff 2008). Nonetheless throughout this period the Netherlands continued to imagine itself "as a *gidsland*, a guiding country providing a progressive example of the multicultural solution to migration to its international audience" (Geschiere 2009:133).

The decade is remembered in the present as a high period of multiculturalism granting minorities voting rights and attempting to improve economic and employment prospects. Nonetheless, contemporary commentators note the reality was more complex, stressing that the multicultural model stemmed more from the remembered model of pillarization than from purist pluralist integration policies – though now applied to minorities conceptualized in ethnic rather than religious terms (Duyvendak, Pels and Rijkschroeff 2008:235).

The 1990s

For the most part the 1990s saw stable political rule in the country under the purple coalition, which balanced the socialist red of the PvdA with the liberal blue of the CDA. Despite the economic pressures of the decade and the continuing influences of globalization, the welfare state proved resilient, though it survived only with considerable reform. Though maintaining their egalitarian ethos, successive governments continued

with increasingly market oriented reforms and aimed to respond to recent socioeconomic pressures: policy sought to "help workers get back to work, give employers reason to keep them at work, limit the appeal of sickness and disability, get tougher on waste and abuse, leave to the market what the market can do best, and ensure consistent monitoring" (Lechner 2008:193).

The decade witnessed the redefinition of the role of the nation(-state) in response to transnational occurrences. The defeat of communism and fall of the Berlin wall at the end of the preceding decade prompted reconsiderations of the place of the nation-state in a global framework (Moors 2009; Demmers and Mehendale 2010). With the rise of neoliberalism transnationally, the country's national-multinational companies transformed into globalized corporations and the state retreated from the public domain, privatizing the national postal service, railways, and telephone services. While certain segments of the economy prospered under privatization and commercialization, "amid the consumption boom of the 1990s, beggars and the homeless began to show their faces on the streets of the Netherlands. And with them, looming, for the first time in recent memory, the fear of falling" (Demmers and Mehendale 2010:53).

Ultimately, while the 1980s saw the emergence of *ethnic minorities* as a salient category as well as government policies aimed at their socioeconomic liberation, in the 1990s policy shifted towards emphasis upon individual responsibility for integration to the nation. A crucial factor influencing (and influenced by) shifting policy towards immigration in the country was the movement from race to culture as the definitive marker for minorities. Though the conflation of minorities and foreigners was not new to

this decade, the 1990s saw a fundamentally different *form* of a minority targeting emerge. In the 1980s xenophobic repertoires targeted minorities as a threat to the order of the nation formulated in terms of race and racism; in the 1990s migrants were perceived as threatening the nature of the nation, the essence of Dutchness.[53] The shift from racist to culturalist minority targeting is encapsulated in the culturalist defence that, "'people are equal, cultures are not' or 'we are not against Muslims , we are against Islam,'" which continue into present discourse (Demmers and Mehendale 2010:56).[54]

By this time concern with multiculturalism, immigration and ethnic minorities had come to target primarily those Turkish and Moroccan communities stemming from the guest worker migration of earlier decades (Lechner 2008:15). In addition to the (Muslim) Turkish and Moroccan communities, Islam in the Netherlands during the decade also grew through political migration from Muslim majority countries in the Middle East and North Africa (Forum 2010:8). Combined with an international move towards concerns with social cohesion and conceptions favoring the rights of the nation (Lechner 2008:159) and responsibilities of the citizen, immigration policy shifted towards a model of individual integration (Duyvendak, Pels, Rijkschroff 2008:5).

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[53] As my overview of the *culturalization of citizenship* describes later in this chapter.

[54] I flag here the emergence of a culturalist discourse as defining the salient features of the Other in the Netherlands, a move from earlier representations of Otherness founded in race (Demmers and Mehendale 2010) and class (Allievi and van Bruinessen 2006). Currently, minority and anti-Islam discourse has thoroughly culturalized to eclipse race in public discourse, and I focus my analysis on prevalent representations of autochthony and culture with respect to Islam. Although space prevents a thorough discussion of race in the country's history at this juncture, it certainly bears relevance for further considering uncertainty in the country. For instance, as Demmers and Mehendale note, the occlusion of race from minority-targeting discourse avoids the "emotionally charged and messy connotations that associated racism with the Netherlands' traumatic Nazi-occupied past" - a key history figuring in the present affective economy (2010:56).

During the decade, blame for poor socioeconomic conditions among minority populations increasingly fell to accusations of faulty government policies advocating multiculturalism. As such, immigration policy stressing the responsibility of the citizen to integrate into the nation-state developed alongside the public perception that multiculturalist policy encouraged segregation and perpetuated socioeconomic disparity (Duyvendak 2011; Geschierre 2009; Koopmans and Statham 2000; Snijderman and Hagendoorn 2007). At the same time, the decade saw the nascent signs of what would become a purported national identity crisis manifest in preoccupation with Dutch identity in official, academic and artistic discourse (Geschiere 2009:154; Lechner 2008).

The salient perception of an ethnic minority problem, and of ineffective multiculturalist policies, increasingly intertwined with anxieties over identifying and defending the imagined nation. For example, Demmers and Mehendale note that in the middle of the decade minorities emerged as a heated point of contention over ethnos-based politics, turning "the building of mosques, the headscarf, the *burqa* and the handshake into sites of contestation." The development coincided with efforts to reinforce the nation through "massive 'silent marches' and 'popular ceremonies' honouring victims of street crime in what became a national obsession with… 'senseless violence' [which] served as instant satisfiers for the atomized citizen's need to belong" (2010:54).

The increasing burden on the responsibility of the individual to integrate into the nation contributed to an understanding of national belonging in terms of amorphous factors including shared "culture" and "values". The presence of minorities became framed as an issue of integration, but also an issue of determining what constituted that

nation into which minorities were to integrate. As Lechner notes, "in those years, questions about whom to admit, what to demand of newcomers, and how to make the nation hang together triggered intense public debate" (2008:14).

That is, the 1990s saw a move from the perception of ethnic minorities and immigrants as a potential socioeconomic threat to that of a cultural threat to nation and to a (contested, amorphous) "Dutchness" (Demmers and Mehendale 2010:55). Further, the shifts in the political field during this decade included the very early beginnings of populist parties "that considered the way of life of the national majority under threat of Islamisation" (Lechner 2008:395).

Fritz Bolkestein, then leader of Conservative Liberals, foreshadowed these themes in a speech which proved politically influential for years to come. In 1991, Bolkestein addressed the problem of multiculturalism head-on, proclaiming that "the integration of minorities should be handled with guts" (Prins 2002:n.p.). The speech epitomized a perception of ethnic minorities as groups to be assimilated into, rather than supported by, the nation-state. Bolkestein's comment insinuated that encouraging cultural retention among minority communities had led to their segregation, and inaugurated a narrative assigning responsibility for socioeconomic problems to the mismanagement of a multiculturalist government which persists to the present day.

The significance of Bolkestein's comments also mark the transitional historical moment of the 1990s:

> "[In 1991], when Bolkestein first talked about the threat to fundamental values, he
> was a hateful figure to the Left, a fearmonger, even a racist. The main focus of his

attack was the idea of cultural relativism, the common notion among leftists that

immigrants should be allowed to retain their own 'identity' and during the

multicultural age of the 1970s-1980s the debate in which the left was on the side

of universalism and the right 'our culture' and traditions, began to shift– now the

Left stood for culture and 'traditions, that is, those of the immigrants, while the

Right argued for the universal values of the Enlightenment." (Buruma 2006:29-30)

Bolkestein's statements thus signaled and foreshadowed a shifting political ethos before it

had solidified or normalized in the public. By the end of the drama filled decade, he

would become "a hero to many who previously despised him" (Buruma 2006:31).

Bolkestein's prescient comments were complemented by a second formative

publication a decade later, with Paul Scheffer's proclamation of a "Multicultural Drama"

playing out in the country. Scheffer's (2000) publication in the *NRC Handelsblad*

newspaper caused considerable impact at the time of its publication, and continues in its

remembrance as the initial incitement for tensions surrounding immigration and

citizenship, Islam and the nation. His identification of malaise among the political elite

suffering under a cosmopolitan illusion caused such a stir that Parliament devoted an

open debate to the piece– despite not having a legislative agenda– a first in the country's

political history (Lechner 2008:81).

The "Multicultural Drama" (Scheffer 2000) accuses the country's political elites

of dismissing and ignoring the failure of its multicultural policy, preferring instead to

naively assume that successful integration of immigrant communities was simply a matter

of time. According to Scheffer, this faulty logic hinged partly on a historical difference

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from earlier waves of immigration, namely the cultural distinction and relative isolation of a largely Muslim immigrant community. The essay invoked what would become key terms establishing a split between an autochthonous native Dutch population and the *allochtonen* communities stemming from immigrants and their descendants (Lechner 2008:81). Scheffer declared that notions of Dutch culture and identity had become unclear and called for an increasing emphasis on Dutch language, culture and history to solidify Dutch values *vis a vis* the *allochtonen* population and Islam. The essay was widely welcomed by the public "because of the courageous way it challenged the view of the dominant elite which… had stubbornly refused to face the serious problems of a multicultural society" (Prins 2002:n.p.).

  Scheffer's argument perpetuates and illustrates an affective economy characterized by the increasing fusion of the apparent "problems of a multicultural society" with the shortcomings of "the dominant elite", a criticism of the government's (bad) policy (Geschiere 2009:137). This fusion occurs precisely through the traffic of affect between prominent features of the national landscape. Sentiments of resentment and anger, fear and insecurity, slide between targeting the influx of immigrants perceived to generate problems for the national population, and a political elite accused of ignoring the protests and interests of autochthonous Dutch.

  Moving out of the 20th century, then, the interrelations which constitute the present affective economy had already begun to coalesce. The country's developing affective economy of uncertainty emerged from and contained within it three decades of immigration history, as well as the varying policy approaches through which it sought to

manage that immigration, and reflecting shifting social and economic conditions, perceptions of citizenship, and currents on both global and domestic levels.

The Present Affective Economy: A Directory

The events and issues of the 1990s, and particularly the statements by Bolkestein and Scheffer which bracket the decade, shaped the terrain of the present affective economy in the Netherlands, which I trace as emerging at the outset of the 2000s. The events of September 11, 2001 in Manhattan on the international stage, and a series of national upheavals – notably the celebrity and assassinations of Pim Fortuyn (2002) and Theo van Gogh (2004) – mark and inculcate the chronic uncertainty which would characterize the following years. The affect only intensified with the eventual visibility of Wilders and of anti-Islam sentiment, of a political trend identified as populism, and of an increasing *culturalization of citizenship* in the country.

The following section provides a directory identifying the primary figures which make up the present affective economy. Far from discrete, these various constitutive components of the affective economy shape one another, implicated in and linked to one another as well as to the histories outlined in the preceding section.

Pim Fortuyn

The stir initiated by Scheffer's article would elevate the rising star of politician Pim Fortuyn, whose life and death constitute a major feature of recent Dutch history. When this populist politician shot to fame at the beginning of the 2000s as if from nowhere, he

destabilized the longstanding government and surprised a country unaccustomed to such

dramatic politics. Fortuyn's charismatic political style involved bombastically

championing national identity and condemning immigration and multiculturalism in

outrageous public proclamations.[55] The spectacle of his populist performance rendered

him part politician, part celebrity, part beloved national icon. Fortuyn's populist message

and spectacular style mobilized massive and unexpected support: his standing in the polls

suggested he could have become Prime Minister. But in what would become a pivotal

moment in the Netherlands' recent history, Fortuyn was assassinated days before the

parliamentary elections in 2002.

     Fortuyn's rise to fame was as dramatic as his death. Initially an academic, Fortuyn

was a sociology professor in Rotterdam in the early 1990s when he began to dabble in

politics. Originally affiliated with the social democratic PvdA, Fortuyn would later

explain that his move away from an initial allegiance to the party resulted from

disagreement over politics of immigration. As an openly gay man Fortuyn noted that he

had come to feel vulnerable to persecution by immigrant youth, an experience which

shaped his politics. Throughout the 1990s he wrote numerous articles and cultivated a

public image: while his flamboyant homosexuality in some respects marked him as social

deviant (van Bruinessen 2006) or perpetual outsider (Buruma 2006), he also harnessed

and came to stand as figurehead for an emergent folk nationalism (van Bruinessen 2006).

As van der Veer summarizes:

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[55] This account of Fortuyn's celebrity draws from Buruma 2006; Prins 2002; van Bruinessen 2006; van der Veer 2006.

"In the 1990s, Fortuyn railed against politicians of the established parties, who he

claimed had abandoned their voters, did not care about the people, and were

indecisive, uninspiring technocrats. This was evident in the way they dealt with

Muslim immigration in the country; the common people were not protected

against the influx of criminal foreigners who threatened the hard-won freedoms of

the Dutch". (2006:115).

It was not until 2001 that Fortuyn solidified a political position with the Livable

Netherlands (LN) party, which he would leave the following year to form his own, the

List Pim Fortuyn (LPF), in 2002.

Fortuyn cultivated a persona built on public spectacle and constructed a platform

on negatives, arguing "against bureaucracy, leftist *regenten*, and immigration, especially

Muslim immigration" (Buruma 2006:39). The combination proved effective, and his

popularity exploded as his public image as "Our Pim", a national populist "savior" fell

into place (Buruma 2006:45, 58). Fortuyn gained ground as a trickster figure challenging

and mocking the staid political elite, and his newly formed party overturned in city

council elections in Rotterdam, unseating the VVD for the first time since the Second

World War. Although he was not yet even a Member of Parliament, Fortuyn was poised

to triumph in the coming national elections.

On May 6, 2002 Fortuyn was shot by animal rights activist Volkert van der Graaf,

while entering his car in the city of Hilversum.[56] Fortuyn's death constituted the most

high profile political assassination in the country in centuries, causing an extraordinary

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[56] The LPF still stood in the elections and won 26 seats, but without its charismatic leader steadily lost
support, taking no seats in the 2006 elections.

outpouring of grief and anger among a shocked public (Buruma 2006:37-38). Fortuyn had

inspired a fervent devotion and affection among his followers, and his funeral evidenced

the emotive quality of his own political style and the response it provoked. Indeed the

event took on the character of a civic religious ritual, casting the politician as venerated

martyr, so intense was the level of devotion towards this political figure (van Bruinessen

2006).

     Fortuyn's rise to fame and sensational murder; his populism and anti-immigration

invective; the devotion he inspired among supporters; and the public spectacle of his

funeral constitute perhaps the key event of recent Dutch history. As an individual whose

public life and death constitute a crucial figure in an affective economy, Fortuyn's

trajectory also fittingly reflects the broader historical trends of the Dutch national

discourse, evoking intensifying narratives of national identity crisis (Lechner 2008:76).

Theo van Gogh

The only figure whose impact rivals Fortuyn's in recent memory, Theo van Gogh was not

a politician but a national celebrity, an intellectual and filmmaker. As a prominent

filmmaker, van Gogh also maintained a public presence as a writer and interviewer in

various newspaper columns, books, and television shows. His celebrity was based in his

outrageous personality and public style challenging any and all social conventions,

including provocative invective directed against Islam and immigrants. Van Gogh's

(many) other targets included the country's monarchy, Jews and feminists (van

Bruinessen 2006).

Van Gogh was assassinated while biking on the streets of Amsterdam on November 2, 2004, by Mohammad Bouyeri, a Moroccan Dutch man. Bouyeri explained his actions as retaliation for *Submission*, the short movie criticizing Islam which van Gogh had made in collaboration with Ayaan Hirsi Ali. The brutal murder of this controversial but well loved figure further shocked a public already rattled by the death of Fortuyn two years previously: public emotion surrounding van Gogh's funeral turned him, too, into a martyr in a sort of civic religion (van Bruinessen 2006). His murder is remembered as the epitome of incompatibility and conflict between native and immigrant Dutch, between the values of religion and free speech, and between Islam and Enlightenment civilizations, that had been brewing in the country through the 1990s. Present narratives remember the public turmoil surrounding the assassination to both expose and legitimate a festering resentment on the part of the country's native Dutch, a stifled resentment directed against both the cultural other of Muslim minority populations and a political elite disconnected from the popular voice.

As contemporaries, van Gogh and Fortuyn occupied similar space on the public stage, and Fortuyn even appeared on van Gogh's talk show. Though linked by a shared outrageousness, Buruma notes, Van Gogh and Fortuyn also differed in many ways: "if Fortuyn was a preening dandy, Van Gogh made a show of his unwashed, disheveled, over-weight ugliness… Fortuyn aspired to class; Van Gogh played his down." (Buruma 2006:93). Despite their differences, both van Gogh and Fortuyn based their celebrity on a blend of social transgression and populist claims to voice what the public was *really* thinking, and both won not only the support but the affection of many residents. Their

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similar status as well loved cultural icons immortalized in martyrdom contrasts somewhat with their contemporary Ayaan Hirsi Ali, the third prominent individual in an affective economy of uncertainty.

Ayaan Hirsi Ali

Hirsi Ali constitutes a controversial public celebrity of a different sort than Fortuyn and van Gogh, though still a very significant figure in the country's affective economy. The interconnections between the three are considerable; the movie for which van Gogh was murdered was written by Hirsi Ali, and Bouyeri also noted her as a potential target. But her status as a successful immigrant positioned her somewhat differently in the affective economy unfolding in the events of the 2000s.

An immigrant to the Netherlands born in Somalia in 1969, Hirsi Ali worked with determination to integrate in the country, eventually rising to political fame. Ali had arrived in the Netherlands in 1992, where she was granted political asylum, and applied herself to learning Dutch, integrating and working in the country.[57] By 2000, she had obtained an M.Sc. in political science.

As a Somalian woman who fled an arranged marriage in her homeland and opposed female genital cutting having experienced the procedure herself, Hirsi Ali began to build a political persona based on exposing the ills of Islam. According to her own accounts, as a devoted Muslim in her youth and during her early years in the Netherlands, Hirsi Ali became increasingly doubtful of her faith (Hirsi Ali 2007). During her work

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[57]For a brief account of Hirsi Ali's biography see Lechner (2008:16-17). See also Hirsi Ali's own account in *Infidel* (2007).

with Muslim refugees in the Netherlands, particularly among battered wives, she came to view Islam as the source of their despair. Eventually, she would read *The Atheist Manifesto* by the Dutch philosophy professor Herman Philipse, and take up a fight against Islam as "*the* problem" (Buruma 2006:164-165).

In her opposition to Islam Hirsi Ali aligns herself with an Enlightenment ethos, which "strips away culture, and leaves only the human individual" (Hirsi Ali qtd. in Buruma 2006:168). The liberties and freedoms of European civilization, in Hirsi Ali's view, might be expanded to Muslims if they were able to "free themselves intellectually" from the strictures of their faith – a liberation sabotaged "by the Western cultural relativists with their anti-racism offices, who say: 'If you're critical of Islam, you're a racist, or an Islamophobe, or an Enlightenment fundamentalist.'" (Hirsi Ali qtd. in Buruma 2006:168-169). Though initially involved with the country's PvdA, she moved to the liberal VVD in 2002. Hirsi Ali subsequently played a major public role in the political campaign for the 2003 elections, and her celebrity only increased in 2004 when she collaborated with van Gogh to turn her screenplay for *Submission*, a movie detailing her view that Islam oppresses women, into a reality.

Hirsi Ali's identity as an ex-Muslim and a woman only added to her credibility as a "daughter of the Enlightenment", as Christopher Caldwell famously named her (2005). Her struggle against the oppression of Muslim women appeared suitably politically correct and supported by Dutch feminists in all parties, "since she belonged to the attacked community" (van der Veer 2006:121). The dramatic events surrounding Hirsi

Ali foreground the addition of Enlightenment discourse to an opposition to Islam already intertwined with populist resentment.

Submission debuted in August 2004, when Hirsi Ali appeared as a guest and screened the short movie as her selected film clip on the talk show *Zomergasten*. When Mohammad Bouyeri murdered van Gogh in retaliation for the movie, the note which he left pinned to his victim's body explicitly targeted Hirsi Ali. Going into hiding following the murder, Hirsi Ali remained the focus of public controversy. In 2006 the television show *Zembla* claimed to reveal that she had lied on her application for asylum, using her mother's last name and falsifying the details of her potential persecution. The revelation prompted Hirsi Ali's fellow VVD Member of Parliament Rita Verdonk, herself building a platform based on restricting immigration, to nullify Hirsi Ali's asylum application, and consequently her citizenship. A drawn out debacle followed in which Hirsi Ali resigned from parliament, and had her citizenship renounced and then restored; she would eventually move to the United States. A parliamentary non-confidence motion against Verdonk in the wake of the affair failed, but the controversy caused the minority government to fall.

Geert Wilders

On the political scene, Fortuyn's celebrity mobilized a portion of the Dutch public through its nationalist claims to speak for the people against the failings of a staid political elite and system of multiculturalism. The cohort was left behind at his death without viable representation. In his wake, two politicians emerged in an attempt to take

up this cause, both members of the VVD who would leave to found their own in a bid for parliamentary success.

Rita Verdonk appeared in the public eye first, as the VVD's Minister for Immigration from 2003 into 2007, a powerful and prominent cabinet member known for her tough stance on immigration. She tightened controls governing immigration to the country, introducing measures which stressed the cultural integration of newcomers (such as requiring knowledge of the national anthem), and targeted Islam in her rhetoric (even introducing a motion to ban the *burqa* from public spaces (2005)). Verdonk split from the VVD, and in 2007 she founded Proud of the Netherlands (ToN), a more rightist party which emphasized the combination of nationalist pride, resistance to immigration, and populist suspicion of the elite that had characterized Fortuyn's platform. But while initially successful, the party did not maintain momentum and by the 2010 elections retained no seats in parliament. Verdonk retired in 2011.

Verdonk's decline in popularity through the mid-2000s contrasted Wilders' rising influence, as he increasingly appeared on newspaper pages and the evening news making outlandish statements about the dangers of immigration, the fascist nature of the Quran, and the ideological threat of Islam. Like Verdonk, Wilders began his political career in the VVD, following election to the city council of Utrecht in 1997. As Member of Parliament he worked as a speechwriter (including collaboration with Bolkestein). He left the party in 2002, in the midst of disagreement regarding Turkey's membership in the European Union, and served parliament independently before founding his own, more

right-wing, PVV in 2005. During this time Wilders increased in public presence, though

he remained regarded as a marginal figure outrageous in his statements and policies.

The PVV received just shy of six percent of the votes in the 2006 elections,

gaining nine seats (Vossen 2010:23). Throughout this period Wilders' high public profile

and prominence in the media attracted considerable international and domestic attention,

though his party remained relatively small in the government. In 2008 the PVV

superseded Verdonk's ToN as the biggest challenge to the country's established parties,

and by 2009 some polls indicated that it had become the most popular party in the country

(Vossen 2010:23). In the 2009 European elections the party came second behind the CDA

with seventeen percent of votes. And in the 2010 national elections, the PVV won twenty-

four seats, becoming the third largest party in parliament. Although not the ruling party,

Wilders' PVV does currently provide the support which the minority VVD needs to stay

in power, and had considerable influence in shaping the terms and policy of this latest

government, lobbying for bans on the *burqa* and on dual citizenship.

The interaction and (dis)continuities between Fortuyn, van Gogh and Hirsi Ali

demonstrate the multiple and complex ways in which figures in an affective economy

encounter and become bound to one another. In contrast to the celebrity of Fortuyn and

van Gogh speaking the voice of the authentic Dutch against multiculturalism and its

political advocates, Hirsi Ali legitimized public criticism of Islam from her insider status.

Fortuyn's populist political success, van Gogh's assassination by an *allochtonen* Muslim,

and Hirsi Ali's prominent defense of Enlightenment civilization against Islam produced

and encapsulate the shifting political scene of the Netherlands in the 2000s. The three set

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the stage for the emergence of populist politician Geert Wilders, whose political identity

as another key individual in the affective economy would draw from and reinforce the

issues and rhetoric identifiable in these predecessors.

Autochthony

It is not only individual subjects who constitute figures in an affective economy.

Uncertainty moves through and between several key concepts prevalent in public and

official discourse in the Netherlands. Of the several concepts which have surfaced in the

country's changing political landscape to name the groups of a polarizing dichotomy,

autochthony has proven the most salient.[58] Though introduced in the 1970s and 1980s in

the context of policy, *autochthony* and the identifying terms with which it is related,

autochtonen and *allochtonen*, currently prevail across public discourse. Their salience in

the rhetoric of nationalist champions such as Fortuyn has contributed to their emotional

freight, and the terms are now embedded in the country's populist terminology as well as

wider conversation.

　　The concept of autochthony has flourished recently in several contexts worldwide,

though it remains unusual in a European context outside of the Netherlands and

Belgium.[59] As a term related to identity, *autochthonous* carries connotations linking self

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[58] While scholars have introduced other terms for reference to the ethnic Dutch population, including "indigenous" (Prins 2011), the language of autochthony has proven by far the most resonant in public discourse and has seen the most frequent traffic in the affective economy. The following analysis summarizes Geschiere's excellent and authoritative genealogy of the concept (2009). See also Yanow and van der Haar 2007.

[59] The term has a rich history in Francophone Africa as well as in Canada with reference to the Quebecois, though its meaning differs between all three contexts. In Europe, the Italian *Lega Nord* has also adopted it more recently, following its initial emergence Flemish Belgium and the Netherlands (Geschiere 2009).

to soil, defining terms of primordial belonging based on territorial ties. Yet even as it

continues to carry some associations with a land based homeland, local emergence of the

concept in the Netherlands has developed a less direct implication of territorial belonging.

Rather, in its popular usage in the Netherlands *autochthonous* quantifies the (imagined)

population of "authentic" Dutch, defined as native to the country in terms of ethnic or

cultural heritage.

     The category of *autochtonen* appears as the opposing identity to *allochtonen*.

Indeed, *autochtonen* emerged in the public only after the establishment of *allochtonen* as

a designation took hold as an identifier of minority populations within the country

(Geschiere 2009:147). Now prevalent in popular usage, *allochtonen* is also a relatively

recent moniker, which initially appeared not in grassroots usage but in official policy as a

term to refer to immigrants and minority populations, when labels such as *ethnic minority*

became too loaded. Policymakers in the 1980s preferred the designation for its neutral,

scientific aura. In 1989 *allochtonen* officially applied to first, second, and third generation

immigrants and to their children with even one allochthonous grandparent (Geschiere

2009:150). Only infrequently associated with the country's Surinamese minority

populations, as it moved into common usage the increasingly stigmatized term rapidly

came to refer to Muslims (Geschiere 2009:151). Over time the association of Muslims

with *allochtonen* became so strong that its mirror, *autochtonen*, may signify all those

Dutch not identifiably Muslim (Prins 2011).

     With the shifting political and social scene of the 1990s and the formation of a

discourse identifying an authentic Dutch identity *vis-à-vis* that of the *allochtonen*, its

counterpart *autochtonen* entered public use with increasing frequency. Since Fortuyn

popularized its usage, the term has been associated with both the increasing call for

defense of an authentic Dutch cultural heritage, and the accompanying demand that

immigrants "integrate" (Geschiere 2009:18). Geschiere relates the salience of

autochthony, and other forms of belonging, to an era of globalization, as an expression of

the local manifesting in a global context, and as part of a much broader obsession with

questions of who really belongs to a given community (Geschiere 2009:6).

     In its emergence in the struggle over belonging, autochthony displays three

primary characteristics: first, in its ambiguous connection to the local autochthony talk

cannot be considered a mere reaction to globalization but a complex interrelation of

global flow, claims to local nativity, and the tenacity of the nation-state as the context in

which both interact. Struggles over local belonging, Geschiere notes, are closely

intertwined with desires to maintain a presence as global citizens. What is at stake, then,

"is less a defense of the local than efforts to exclude others from access to new circuits of

riches and power" (Geschiere 2009:26). Hence autochthony's second primary

characteristic, its strong segmentary tendency designating in from out, manifesting an

obsession with (re)defining the terms of group purity, marking the criteria for true

belonging, and unmasking fakes threatening the community from within (2009:27).

Finally, autochthony maintains an uneasy relation with history, on the one hand defining

belonging as based in significant part in a shared (essentialized) historical narrative while

on the other hand forgetting the variations, disruptions and heterogeneities that such a

history necessarily involves.

The implications of autochthony discourse in the Netherlands play out in a conceptual split in the notion of citizenship, between those who belong to the nation and its territory as native, authentic, *autochthonen*, and those who remain excluded as *allochtonen*. The term's territorial meaning appears diluted by allowing the possibility for immigrants to join the Dutch community as citizens on the condition of cultural integration; yet the terms of such integration are so high as to prove unattainable. That is, "if even people who have been born on Dutch soil are still to be called *allochtons*, this throws some doubt upon their being 'really' Dutch citizens" (Geschiere 2009:151). The demand for integration and the articulation of an imagined authentic Dutch culture indicated in the concept of autochthony raises the question of what, exactly, that culture incorporates, an issue also addressed by the second key concept that figures in the country's affective economy.

The National Identity (Crisis)

Since the 1990s, accompanying the early emergence of critiques of multicultural politics and populations, the issue of Dutch identity has come to the forefront of public awareness. This awareness includes increasingly frequent discussion regarding what the content of such an identity might involve, laments for the apparent corrosion in national pride, and calls for defensive patriotic renewal among *autochtonen*. The concept incorporates two complementary but seemingly contradictory dimensions – a discourse of national identity crisis and a reassertion of a "new nationalism".

Though at issue since the 1970s, announcements of a nation wide crisis in identity emerged most prominently in the 1990s at the level of media and political discourse, notably in the spectacular rhetoric of figures such as Fortuyn. The notion spread and normalized to the point that it is currently mobilized not only by outlying politicians such as Wilders, but politicians across the board. Prime Minister Balkenende's 2005 plea for "shared pride" in the country indicated the discourse's normative status (Lechner 2008:78). Certainly the notion has gained wide purchase on the ground: it is by now taken for granted that the Dutch identity is in crisis; that people do not have knowledge of national history the way they once did; that the Dutch no longer care or show respect for their nation.

Meanwhile scholars and social commentators go to considerable length to question whether persistent assertions of a national identity crisis circulating hysterically throughout the country actually indicate a decline in national(ist) sentiment (Prins 2010). Indeed alongside declarations of a national identity crisis, some identify the emergence of a new nationalism gaining ground in the country in the past decades, including at the popular level.[60] The flipside of the alleged crisis of national identity, "new nationalism" emerged from the 1990s, particularly with the hysteria surrounding the apparent threat posed by immigration, Islam and multiculturalism in the 2000s (Geschiere 2006:154; Lechner 2009: 21).

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[60] Social analysts suggest that the discrepancy occurs between media and political discourse which declares a national identity crisis, and the situation "on the ground" in which new forms of nationalism prosper (Prins 2010). Of course these spheres are not mutually exclusive but impact directly upon one another, a factor which may account for my observation that the crisis of national identity is increasingly taken for granted at a popular level. Chapter six discusses the character and potential effects of political performances declaring the existence of a national identity in crisis.

The new nationalism, seeking to identify an essence for the "typical Dutch", is not defined by a single consistent narrative (Verkaaik 2010). Rather, new nationalism is distinguished from earlier forms of nationalism in its opposition to an internal Other: Muslims, migrants, *allochtonen*. It thrives in middle class suburbia and inner city neighborhoods among progressives afraid of losing their secular liberties and rural youth competing with migrant teens for jobs and girls (2010:71). New nationalism remains discursively thin but as such conveniently elastic, appealing to those across the political spectrum and from various social backgrounds (Pels 2010; van Bruinessen 2006; Verkaaik 2010). It is for instance identifiable in hype surrounding Princess Maxima's (misconstrued) comment that "the Dutchman does not exist" (van der Stoep 2009), as well as in civic rituals designed to induct new immigrants into "Dutch culture" in all its various imagined forms (Verkaaik 2010).

Analogous to and in conjunction with autochthony, the concept of a national identity (crisis) maintains a historical orientation as a means for producing Dutch identity in the present. Projects of the new nationalism commonly involve attempts to standardize the features of a shared history, including the 2006 formation of a national canon naming the most significant national moments and symbols of the nation. The canon's series of fifty windows – from the old time national heroism personified by William of Orange to the recent trauma of the Second World War embodied in Anne Frank – are intended to inform schoolchildren and national newcomers about the key aspects of history, thus

aiding their integration into Dutch culture and identity.[61] As with the historical import of autochthony talk, new nationalism and declarations of a national identity (crisis) produce the terms of belonging in the present by imagining a Dutch essence which simultaneously stems from, and transcends, history.

The ramifications of such a historical element in current imaginations of national identity are considerable. By demanding shared history as basis for cultural assimilation, the possibility for integration is perpetually withheld from newcomers. The concept of a national identity (crisis), like that of autochthony, thus produces a split among Dutch citizens between those who participate in claims to shared history, identity, or (in the case of autochthony) ethnic ties on the one hand, and those who claim to be members of the country but cannot share in the cultural aspects of citizenship, on the other. These divisions overlap with and incorporate a third concept gaining purchase as a figure in the affective economy through the turn of the century, the civilizational designation in reference to *Enlightenment*.

Enlightenment

Rydgren and Holsteyn note that even viewed "from an international perspective, the extent to which the debate about immigration and integration in the Netherlands has been dominated by [an] Enlightenment framework is remarkable" (qtd. in Akkerman 2005:346). The concept draws a civilizational divide within the nation, between a national/autochthonous population conceptualized as rational, secular, and operating in

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[61] That the Euro is included as one such window as a part of the national canon indicates the country's complex negotiation of its space on the world stage.

defense of individual rights and freedoms on the one hand, and as opposed to the religious, tribal, pre-modern communalism of Islam on the other.[62] In the Netherlands public figures including Bolkestein (in 1991) and Scheffer (in 2000) argue for an incompatibility between "Islam" and "western" values (Lechner 2008). As such, Dutch identity (crisis) and autochthony talk incorporate the concept of *Enlightenment* as a civilizational marker.

Enlightenment discourse in the Netherlands historically emerged as "a revolt against a revolt", a reaction to the tolerance ethos of the 1960s, itself the product of reaction to the horrors of the Second World War (Buruma 2006:34). As a result Enlightenment defenders champion the rebellions of the 1960s for their emphasis on secularism and liberty, but at the same time claim that:

> "tolerance has gone too far for many conservatives. They believe, like some former leftists, that multiculturalism was a mistake; our fundamental values must be reclaimed. Because secularism has gone too far to bring back the authority of the churches, conservatives and neo-conservatives have latched onto the Enlightenment as a badge of cultural identity. The Enlightenment, in other words, has become the name for a new conservative order, and its enemies are the aliens, whose values we can't share" (Buruma 2006:34).

As with autochthony, the term is more than ascription, as politicians as well as members of the public proudly identify as defenders of Enlightenment values. The term also enjoys free circulation in popular discourse: though limited in the past to academic

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[62] Huntington's (1996, 1993) conceptualization of a "clash of civilizations" entered the Dutch lexicon *via* the media in 1995 but did not see wide usage until after the events of September 11, 2001 (Eyerman 2008:102).

contexts, since 2001 the concept has entered public debate on a global scale, which has particularly intensified in the Netherlands (Buruma 2006:29). And as with the terms of national identity, the content of such values remains variable and fluid.

Yet even as the term draws the *West* together in an entity opposing *Islam*, the frame of the nation-state also persists within Enlightenment discourse. Defense of the Enlightenment takes the form of patriotic populism and identifications of essentialized values deemed paradigmatically Dutch (Akkerman 2005:341). Thus the claimed *Enlightenment* identity appears in: its rhetoric celebrating freedoms, tolerance, individual rights, personal enjoyment and capitalist economics (van der Veer 2006); its separation of church and state and rational appeal to scientific reason and political process; and its affiliated economic system. These features combine to form an image of a modern, Enlightenment civilization, formulated within the framework of the nation(-state). In a sense the nation-state itself appropriates the Enlightenment concept by emphasizing it as somehow uniquely Dutch, and through imagining the universal values of the Enlightenment in terms which have particular local resonance.

An important contradiction lies in the apparent national exclusivity of Dutch identity claims to the universal values of the Enlightenment (Buruma 2006:29). Several scholars have pointed to such inconsistencies in this "Enlightenment fundamentalism" (Pels qtd. in de Leeuw and van Wichelen 2005:334). This includes identifying a discontinuity between the historical Enlightenment and its contemporary remembrances. For instance, contemporary Enlightenment discourse champions an increased level of government involvement in the private lives of individuals, manifesting in calls to

regulate the sentiments of loyalty to nation displayed by citizens, or matters of belief and value. Indeed, the foundational importance of a politics of affect and emotion – particularly resentment, fear, anger, and nostalgia – to anti-Islam discourse function in contradiction with the pure reason of Enlightenment ideology as it is understood in the contemporary popular context.

The prevalence of Enlightenment discourses reflect and produce the terms of a civilizational divide which intertwines with the national identity and autochthony rhetoric prevalent in the Netherlands. Common to all is the definition of a fluid and contested yet seemingly essential identity (*autochtonen*, Dutch, western/ Enlightenment) against an Other. The increasing salience of Islamization as that oppositional concept assembling Muslims, immigrants, non-native Dutch constitutes a further important figure in the affective economy of uncertainty.

Islamization

As a crucial figure in an affective economy of uncertainty *Islamization* carries several registers. First, *the Islamization of Muslims* names the process by which Muslims come to identify and be identified with respect to Islam, as Islam comes to form the most salient Other to autochthonous/national/civilizational connotations of Dutch identity. And second, *Islamization* is frequently deployed by opponents of Islam and champions of Dutch or Enlightenment values to name the dangerous "tsunami of immigrants" which they threaten is poised to dilute and eradicate the Netherlands (Oudenampsen 2010:20).

Thus in its first sense *Islamization* indicates a complex and dialogic process through which Muslims in the Netherlands are interpellated as such.

The complexities of such a process intertwine both local and global factors. Local factors influencing the emergence of Islam as an identifying feature for minority communities developed from the 1970s. During this time not only had migrants and their offspring come to be identified first and foremost *via* their religious identity, but social problems, such as low educational achievement or domestic violence, became linked to religious identity (Moors 2009:395). And the religious visibility of mosques and Muslim organizations in the country increased as the families of Turkish and Moroccan guest workers reunited and grew from the 1980s onwards (Allievi and van Bruinessen 2006:1; Peters 2006:3; van Bruinessen 2006:17).

Global trends including the transnational rise of political Islam and internationally prominent terrorist attacks contributed to the increasing visibility of Islam as a cultural identity both among the non-Muslim Dutch population and among Muslims (Allievi and van Bruinessen 2006: 1; Peters 2006:3; van Bruinessen 2006:17). And in a broader historical context, events such as the establishment of the Republic of Iran in 1970 and the Rushdie affair in 1989 (Moors 2009:395) contributed to the *Islamization of Muslims.*[63]

While the notion of a recent clash of civilizations abounds across popular, political and scholarly discourse in the Netherlands as well as internationally, the

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[63] The *Islamization of Muslims* in the Netherlands and internationally, of course, involves the increasing self-identification of Muslims communities as a cohesive identity. Moors notes that many new Muslim citizens raised and educated in the Netherlands started to identify as Muslims in part as an effect of being interpellated as such (2009:395). It is not possible to detail here the many features of the process through which Muslims transnationally have come to identify as a global *ummah*. For an authoritative see Roy (2004).

distinction is problematic at best. Not only has interaction between Islam and the West

occurred over a long history, the increasing presence of Muslim communities in Europe

and North America due to immigration in the second half of the 19th century challenges

the notion that the two entities can be identified, separated and opposed. And as an

increasing portion of the population identifies as both Muslim and western the

distinctions break down even further (Bowen 2004). Oppositions between Islam and the

West, and between Islam and modernity, obscure the ways Islam is both in *and* of the

West (Bowen 2004; Roy 2004; Schmidt 2004), and distinctly modern in its formulation.[64]

The problematics of a clash of civilization model lie not only in the suggestion that *Islam*,

the *West*, and *modernity* are mutually exclusive of one another, but that these entities

themselves constitute monolithic or discrete entities.

　　　To this end anthropologists of Islam have struggled to come to negotiate an

ethnographic approach to a phenomenon which manifests differently in a wide array of

local contexts but remains informed by a set of texts and authoritative discourses which

are distinctly global. Theorists complicate essentialist models of Islam by approaching

Islam as only "islams" (el-Zein 1977), or as a discursive formation (Asad 1986).[65] The

Islamization of Muslims in its first connotation then involves a key term in the affective

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[64] The scholarship to this end is vast; for ethnographic work, see Abu Lughod (1990); Blank (2001); Deeb (2006); Mahmood (2005); Scheid (2008).

[65] Conceptualizations of a reified transnational Islam distinct from its lived manifestation in various historical and geographic settings appear in its academic study, in the representations of western pop-culture, and in some orthodox and normative forms of Islam. Essentialized definitions stress a foundation in scriptural and Prophetic authority as indicative of the authentic or pure form of religion: variations in lived experience thus understood as local superstition or transformation (Asad 1986; Lukens Bull 1999; Roy 2004). They are particularly visible in forms of orthodox Islam emerging in Europe and North America which work to incorporate a multicultural Muslim population into a single neo-ethnic form of Islam (Roy 2004).

economy of uncertainty which directly implicates the formation of subjects and bodies within that sphere, whether of Muslims or non-Muslims.

The second salient meaning of *Islamization*, prevalent in popular discourse rather that scholarly analysis, also speaks to the formation of the Muslim and Dutch bodies as apparently mutually exclusive subjects in an affective economy, now as the name for that which threatens the nation. *Islamization*'s emergence as a figure in the affective economy intensifies the clash of civilizations model to position Islam in opposition to autochthonous Dutch. Appearing with the suffix *–ation*, Islam appears as the threatening force waging a conquering, overwhelming siege threatening to eradicate and dilute a native population. The opposition, threat, and alienation such Islamization inevitably connotes appears in popular, media, and political discourses. Fortuyn's (1997) book adopted the term in its title, *The Islamization of our Culture: Dutch Identity as Foundation.*[66] Duyvendak identifies the trend, for instance in comments from left-center PvdA Member of Parliament Mariette Hamer that:

> "Integration causes pain… For a large number of Dutchmen, confrontation with other cultures, customs and beliefs is an uncomfortable everyday reality… Concerns over changes in society are reinforced by radical Muslims committing terrorist acts in the name of Islam…. This was all directed against our open, Western society, against everything we stand for." (qtd. in Duyvendak 2011:97).

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[66] *Tegen de Islamisering van onze cultuur: Nederlandse identiteit als fundament.* The book received relatively little attention upon publication, but enjoyed popularity in a second edition printed after 2001 (Eyerman 2008:103).

Hamer's sentiments encapsulate the threat associated with Islamization in current discourse, opposed as it is to an essentialized autochthonous national identity, portrayed as an expanding threat imposing incompatible values, causing alienation and even inflicting pain upon the national public.

Freedom

The complex interaction of Islamization, Enlightenment, autochthony, and national identity discourses as figures within an affective economy is illustrated in the particular connotations and circulation of a concept of *freedom* in the Netherlands. Within the context of the national narrative detailing an emergence of a modern nation liberated from the strictures of the religious pillar system, freedom constitutes the keyword for values associated with an Enlightenment ethos. In particular notions of free speech, sexual freedom, and individual choice become the key signifiers of, on the one hand, uniquely national values which constitute the basis for national identity and, on the other, those universal civilizational necessities which divide the Enlightened world from its unfortunate Others.

Demmers and Mehendale note that since the 1990s Dutch identity politics has coded North African and particularly Moroccan culture as clashing with Enlightenment ideals due to an "incapacity to deal with 'freedom'" in Muslim culture rendering them "uncivil, unintegrated, citizens [who] threatened the 'hard won' freedoms of the 'real' Dutch – secularism, individualism, homosexuality and even pornography juxtaposed against Muslim immigrant's unfreedoms on these same terrains" (2010:56).

The value of free speech plays directly into the performative aspect of nationalist public figures, whether in the taboo-breaking grandstanding of politician Fortuyn or the artistic genre of abusive criticism recently epitomized by van Gogh. Locally associated with the freedom to offend as a means for resisting the political elite and asserting the rights of the ethnic majority against minority communities, the concept of free speech has also been at the forefront of the cartoon controversies in Denmark (2005-2006) and elsewhere. It maintains particular salience in debates over Islam and immigration, as a value marking the opposition of secularism and religion.[67]

In even the briefest overview the interactions and interrelations between these key figures in the affective economy of the Netherlands begins to emerge. The oppositions and dichotomies established in discourses of *autochthony*, *national identity*, *Enlightenment* and *Islamization* play into the political performances of individuals from Pim Fortuyn to Geert Wilders, public figures who themselves draw upon and re-entrench historical narratives about the formation of the modern Dutch nation. The interaction between these and many other histories, bodies, subjects and objects within the affective

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[67] Another key dimension of freedom discourses in the Netherlands centers on homosexual rights and freedoms of sexual orientation. While gay rights or queer discourses increasingly animate anti-Islam rhetoric globally (Butler 2008; Puar 2007), Enlightenment discourses in the Netherlands foreground the value particularly. In practice the discursive interrelation of national identity, opposition to Islam, and homosexual freedom is relatively recent: Pim Fortuyn (homo)sexualized discourses of Dutchness versus Muslim alterity only in the early 2000s, in his public image as a man whose flamboyant homosexuality rendered him emblematic of Dutch freedom and the target of "backward" Muslims (van der Veer 2006). Though homosexuality is far from universally accepted in the country in practice, public assertions supporting freedom of sexuality have emerged as a key signal of "Dutch values" and set important standards for belonging in the nation (Mepschen et al. 2010:970). The importance of this "Enlightenment value" takes on a national(ist) flavour in the context of a narratives citing the progressive acceptance of homosexuality initiated in the rapid secularization of (de)pillarization and the formation of the modern nation in the 1960s. Thus in the present day assertions of accepting homosexuality appear as the epitome of Dutch tolerance and emblematic of civilizational Dutch values (Mepschen et al. 2010:967). Here the historical importance (or more accurately, the current remembrance of a historical importance) of gender equality and homosexual emancipation foreground sexual liberty as the perceived frontier of Enlightenment/ Islam civilizational divide.

economy generate and are increasingly linked together through the circulation and displacement of affect, the intensifying charge of uncertainty.

The Culturalization of Citizenship

An exploration of a collective gut feeling of uncertainty does not dismiss the complex set of power relations as (mere) emotion. Rather, at stake in the affective economy of uncertainty, and in the increasing implication of the particular histories, individuals, and concepts outlined here, are issues of sovereignty and citizenship which bear upon the institutional, social and political systems of the Netherlands as well as upon the day- to-day lives of its residents. Lived experience, feeling, socio-political factors and power dynamics are not separate from but reinforce one another.

The socio-political ramifications of the affective economy briefly sketched in this overview, as well as the intersection between emotion and politics more generally in the Netherlands, can be characterized in a process of *culturalization of citizenship*. The process involves increasing emphasis upon elements of sentiment and emotion, and perceptions of shared culture and history, as determinative of membership to the national body (cf. Duyvendak 2011:101; Geschiere 2009:157-158; Moors 2009:395). As such it contrasts the historical emergence of the nation-state in the vacillation between state sovereignty and its social contracts with citizens on the one hand, and an imagined community rooted in fellow feelings of belonging established by shared national ethnic identity or shared past on the other (Moors 2009:394-395). *Culturalization of citizenship*, then, refers to the process by which emotion, sentiment, and culture are increasingly

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perceived as determinative elements of national belonging, a "search for a more pregnant

formulation of the cultural consensus that forms the basis of citizenship and must be

subscribed to by new citizens as part of proof of integration" (Geschiere 2009:24-25).

The explicit culturalization of citizenship has appeared only relatively recently in

the Netherlands, in concert with the ongoing tension between globalizing and localizing

forces which also shaped the discourse of autochthony and national identity (crisis). On

an official level, this culturalization materialized most prominently in the early 2000s,

following the pattern of increasing demand for integration as immigration policy

throughout the 1990s. By 2002, the Dutch center right government explicitly emphasized

fundamental norms and values as constitutive of a Dutch culture which itself formed a

necessary basis for citizenship and belonging within the Dutch nation (Lechner 2008:263).

Indeed, the *autochtonen* / *allochtonen* terminology which references shared

territory and ethnic identity is itself refracted through discourses of cultural belonging to

the nation-state, that is through issues of citizenship (Geschiere 2009:24-25). The result is

a slippage between nation and nation-state, of the terms through which citizens belong,

and the process through which they are (unable) to integrate into it. All involve the

production of a native (autochthonous, Dutch) culture perceived as threatened by factors

at once a part of the national group and yet not integrated within it (*Islamization*). This

split citizenship model separates *autochtonen* from *allochtonen*, the real Dutch sharing

history, value and national sentiment from those only nominally or partially belonging to

the nation.

A further characteristic of the culturalization of citizenship is an emphasis upon emotion as determinative of politics (Ahmed 2004a, 2004b; Asad 2006; Harding and Pribam 2009). Such emphasis appears, for instance, in the importance of sentiment animating debates over the acceptability of Muslim women wearing headscarves in public, which index a formulation of citizenship based in sentiment, as well as on the perceived agreement, consensus or shared values of members of the nation-state (Asad 2006).[68] The prevalence of emotion and sentiment in debates over veiling is identifiable in comments of some Dutch individuals who note a sense of "disgust" and discomfort upon viewing Muslim women in *hijab* (Moors 2009). Their emotions play directly into a culturalized model of citizenship in which the "nation appears as an imagined community of people who do not need to know each other but share feelings of national belonging, often grounded in myths of origin and a shared past" (Moors 2009:394). Feelings of discomfort, then, take on connotations of citizenship when associated with a lack of shared history or culture, and consequently of sentimental attachment to the nation.

A particularly salient instance of the emotionalization of politics materializes in expressions of (not) "feeling at home" which surface as articulations of national belonging in the country (Duyvendak 2011). The sentiment contains a doubled expectation, that newcomers to the nation must feel at home in it in order to participate as citizens, and second, that those identified as native citizens have the right to feel at home in their nation. Hence, an expectation that citizens feel at home produces a notion of

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[68] In recent debates in France, this emotion factored into the perception that *feelings* of religious affiliation interfered with those of national loyalty among citizens, while the investigating national commission itself sought particularly to discern (and ascribe) the psychological states and emotional motivations of headscarf-wearing women (Asad 2006).

nation defined in cultural terms, as that which must be guarded against and protected from threat (Duyvendak 2011:92-103).

The conflation of national identity and belonging in the terms of "feeling at home" is far from limited to public perception, and includes media discourse as well as explicit rhetoric on the part of politicians instructing both native and recent Dutch in how to feel (at home) (Duyvendak 2011:94-102). Targeting an autochthonous Dutch audience, for instance, VVD Member of Parliament Jacques Niederer commented in parliament that "to have Dutch nationality is more than having a Dutch passport. It is an expression of feeling at home in Dutch society, in her democratic legal order, her values, norms and mentality. You must, in other words, fully focus on Dutch society" (qtd. in Duyvendak 2011:94). Similarly, prominent CDA representative and cabinet minister Maxime Verhagen commented in parliament in 2000 that "It is necessary to feel Dutch" (qtd. in Duyvendak 2011:94).

A culturalization of citizenship model ultimately foregrounds the interrelation of "feeling" a part of the nation with imagined "national culture" comprised of shared history and values. Language plays a key role in this conceptualization of the essential cultural norms and values which constitute such a "Dutch culture", but so does the glorification of "values" including democratic government, constitutional rights, gender equality, sexual freedom and the importance of Dutch national history (Verkaaik 2010:69). As such, a culturalized understanding of citizenship presumes that a sense of national identity, based in shared (knowledge of) Dutch history and shared key values,

both facilitates integration and is a necessary component of citizenship (Geschiere 2009:167; Lechner 2008:79).

The *culturalization of citizenship* has very real implications for those excluded from its terms, those expected to integrate into the majority community as citizens. Official policy increasingly stresses the need for a strong(er) national Dutch identity as a necessary component in the integration of immigrants on the basis of fellow feeling (Duyvendak 2011; Moors 2009; Verkaaik 2010). A model of citizenship demanding particular emotion and sentiment, feelings of loyalty and demonstrations of cultural homogeneity as measures of integration into the nation pressures minority populations to demonstrate feelings of loyalty to the nation and its imagined values as proof of citizenship (Duyvendak 2011:103; Moors 2009:395).

Uncertainty, as Maartin's gut feeling suggests, impacts and indexes an individual psychic state as well as a collective sentiment. But as even a brief consideration of processes of the culturalization of citizenship in the Netherlands indicates, negotiations of belonging and citizenship as well as the sovereignty of the nation are also at stake in the affective economy. This chapter has provided an overview of the key features of this economy. The remainder of this dissertation explores the connectivities between them in order to provide a thicker, more nuanced account of the process of culturalization of citizenship. I argue that it is the accelerating circulation and displacement of uncertainty which binds historical depillarization to present day Islamization; shared land to shared past; the assassination of a populist politician by an animal rights activists to that of a

filmmaker at the hands of a radical Muslim. By attending to the particular context of the

Netherlands and its affective economy of uncertainty, to the histories, individuals and

keywords which have gained resonance within that context, this analysis both provides

insight into the mechanics through which affect exercises socio-political impact and also

parochializes and denaturalizes the normative interrelation of opposition to Islam,

national(ist) sentiment, and affective uncertainty.

PART TWO

CHAPTER FOUR

FEAR:

THE EXPERIENTIAL DIMENSION OF UNCERTAINTY

"Politicians aren't saying what people really feel; that they are afraid. Everyone is afraid, and afraid to say what they really think. Homos can't be visible because Muslims beat up gay people. Everyone is afraid of Muslims and afraid to say something about it" (Jorrit, fieldnotes, April 13, 2009)

Jorrit and Olivier, brothers in their mid-thirties who have relocated from the north of the Netherlands, are describing to me in a matter of fact tone what they see as the current state of their country. It is a sunny spring afternoon and we are seated alongside one of Amsterdam's canals on a bustling terrace. Jorrit, a banker, does most of the talking, with occasional comments from his brother, who works delivering pharmaceuticals to local drugstores. From the very outset of our conversation Jorrit has framed his comments in reference to a "fear of Muslims" he perceives as prevalent amongst the country's public as well as its politicians.

Certainly, expressions of fear are normative in the country's popular discourse: countless newspaper articles publish surveys and studies declaring that women and homosexuals in the country fear persecution from Muslims, or that autochthones are afraid to have their children educated in schools with high rates of Muslim enrolment.

Politicians lament that citizens have been made to feel afraid in their own country, while citizens accuse politicians of being too afraid to name or solve a widespread fear of Islam.

In their most prominent articulation by my conversants, expressions of fear identify threat in terms which conflate Islam and immigration, Muslims and *allochtonen*, into an amorphous threat held responsible for an array of social ills perceived as coincident with multiculturalism. These prominent articulations, as in the matter-of-fact statement provided by Jorrit and many of my conversants, illustrate the taken-for-granted nature of fear of Islam in the Netherlands, the widely stated presumption that "everyone is afraid of Muslims".

Yet despite the normative tone with which these fears are expressed, on closer inspection a much more varied and complex affect emerges, one not wholly accounted for in the polls, the official proclamations, the public rumours of Islamophobia.[69] It is a confusing scene. On the one hand, Jorrit and Olivier voice a normative claim taken for granted in public knowledge, that "everyone is afraid of Muslims". Yet on the other hand they do so in a busy public context with nothing in their manner indicating a sense of discomfort or threat, and within earshot of several Muslim individuals. But it is not simply a case of misrepresentation, either: in particular moments a collective affect of

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[69] *Islamophobia* occurs commonly in popular discourse and is the subject of many studies and surveys. Given the problematic nature of the term for collapsing indicators such as discrimination, fear, and integration I do not engage it here except for in flagging its salience in the country (see Cesari 2006). For the sake of consistency in this chapter I consider *fear of Islamization*, following *Fitna*'s identification of the object of fear. Public discourse and my informants engaged equally the terms "Muslims" and "Islam" and "Islamization". I do not mean to equate the three terms but to signal their interchangeability in current popular discourse, another contributing factor to the confusion and complexity of fear within an affective economy of uncertainty.

fear, and indeed fright, does materialize in very identifiable form in the public realm, and quite clearly associated with Islam.

With respect to fear in the country's public realm, Ian Buruma (2006) provides an excellent account of the extreme tensions which followed van Gogh's murder in 2004. At the time public anxiety peaked and something about the country came to feel, as he describes, unhinged – even hysterical. Yet the brief period of affective intensity shifted in the immediate aftermath of the murder, dulling the feverish quality of collective fright to a guarded nervousness perpetuated and amplified by the popular media's constant proclamations of fear. Buruma notes the discontinuity between a lived discomfort on the ground and media and official sources who reported escalating fright. In fact "the constant chatter of politicians, newspaper columnists, television pundits, headline writers, and editorialists in the popular press produced a feverish atmosphere" in their declaration that "the country was burning… [But] the civil war that some feared, the pogroms on Muslim areas, the retaliations by newly recruited *jihadis*, none of this actually happened. Most people kept their cool" (Buruma 2006:7).

This chapter seeks to nuance and unpack the complexities of an affective economy of uncertainty in which "everyone is afraid of Muslims". The position of fear within the affective economy of uncertainty, it seems, involves multiple factors. The confusion stems in part from a gap between the expressions of widespread fear and the (lack of) its lived experience, and in part from a tendency to identify a range of experience from fright to chronic worry as fear. My close attention to *Fitna* distinguishes (acute) fear from

uncertainty, and explores the relation and interplay of the two. This analysis of *Fitna*

yields three insights into the dynamics of fear of Islamization in the country:

First, the movie makes visible a distinction between acute *fear*, that is the intense

discomfort experienced with the approach of a threatening object, and *uncertainty*, that is

a sense of instability associated with spatial and temporal disorientation. While the

explicit visual framework and content of the movie fulfill the structural criteria for fear,

visualizing Islamization as approaching object of threat, the movie's formal features – its

editing techniques, narrative structure and use of sound – index a sense of spatial and

temporal disorientation. *Fitna* demonstrates the relation between disorientation and fear

as one of *affective sharpening,* a process in which an amorphous and diffuse sense of

disorientation is visualized in the identifiable and perceptible terms of fear.

Second, *Fitna*'s process of affective sharpening provides a departure point for

considering the connections between (a gut feeling of) disorientation and fear (of

Islamization) in the Netherlands. The second component of the chapter thus identifies

fears of Islamization in the affective economy as an affectively sharpened articulation of

uncertainty, one which gives a clear experiential dimension and easily identifiable object

to the otherwise amorphous, diffuse and intangible "gut feeling". Considered with respect

to Ahmed's model, this observation identifies fears of Islamization as one feature of the

wider affective economy. As uncertainty accelerates in its circulation, its affective charge

intensifies, increasingly investing Islamization with the effect of fear. As such, my

articulation of affective sharpening poses a challenge to popular perceptions that fears of

Islamization as result from the (threatening) presence of Muslims. Rather, my

interpretation subverts the causal dynamic to theorize fear of Islamization as in fact the biproduct, rather than the sole cause, of the country's gut feeling of uncertainty.

To what, then, might this uncertainty be attributed, if not to the threat of Islamization? The third and final section of this chapter returns to a close attention to *Fitna* to consider what the movie's spatial and temporal disorientation might reveal about the character and causes of the country's affective economy. To this end I argue that the experiential dimension of uncertainty as spatial and temporal disorientation identifiable in *Fitna*'s formal features aligns directly with the insecure turbulence that social theorists have diagnosed as a symptom of globalizing modernity. This final component of the chapter triangulates theories of globalizing modernity, the insights of social scientists studying the Netherlands, and my own fieldwork to briefly identify the factors which contribute to the country's collective uncertainty.

Finally, though globalizing modernity encompasses a much broader scope than the field at issue in this dissertation, I close with the suggestion that *Fitna*'s disorientation indicates the ongoing importance and relevance of the nation(-state) as a contributing element within the Netherlands' affective economy.

Visualizing Islamization, Visualizing Fear

Fear figures prominently in *Fitna*, both in the trajectory of its public life, and in the message and formal features of the movie itself. Within the context of its production, the months of anticipation which preceded *Fitna*'s released positioned the movie as a threatening object, as a danger whose imminent materialization would trigger violence

and harm. And the movie itself, in its message claiming the violence of the Quran, and dangers of Islamization, as well as in its gory images of corpses, death, and destruction, seeks to instill fear in its audience.[70]

Fear

In common parlance *fear* refers to a range of emotional experience from anxiety to acute fright. Clinical and sociocultural approaches to fear provide a somewhat more rigid definition, however, describing an affect which takes the body as expression of distress, an experience of pre-conscious intensity which precedes even sensation and emotion (Labanyi 2010:224).

As one member of a set of anywhere from two to eighteen such affects (Ortony and Turner 1990:315), fear is defined as the intense discomfort experienced in relation to perceived, imminent danger (Ahmed 2004b:65-66).[71] The determinants for the affect involve establishing a particular relation, a positioning of the threatened, fearing subject with respect to an object of danger situated in a just-out-of-reach space and time. Temporality is at the heart of the affect and plays a key role in determining its formal criteria. Fear is triggered through the motion of the threatening object towards the fearing subject, experienced as a "drawing near" such that "the object that we fear is not simply before us, or in front of us, but impresses upon us in the present, as an anticipated pain in the future" (Ahmed 2004b:65). At once physiological and psychological, individual and

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[70] Although Wilders claims that the intent of his movie is purely informational, the intent of the creator can be distinguished from the features and aims of the movie itself (see chapter two). The movie was widely received in the public as an (unsuccessful) exercise in generating fear, whether through its depictions of threat and gore or through the retaliatory violence which it was expected to provoke.

[71] Chapter one provides a further discussion of affect and emotion.

relational, fear is the felt experience of anticipated physical harm (2004b:65). According to this definition, fear is defined through a set of formal criteria which include, first, the (perceived) presence of a threatening object, and second, a distinctive temporal mode positioning that object in motion towards the subject in the near future.

Fitna directly fulfills these structural criteria for fear through its visualization of Islamization and its gruesome and destructive consequences. The movie clearly and uambiguously depicts Islamization as a threatening, approaching danger. The movie's images signal threat with physical and urban obliteration depicted in numerous graphic photographs of corpses, terrorist attacks, mutilated bodies, even executions.[72] Shockingly graphic, the images appear alongside those showing placards declaring, "Islam will dominate the world!" while in video footage bearded men passionately proclaim that "Islam is a religion that wants to rule the world!" (Appendix 1 Shot 32).

The gruesome situations depicted in these images are positioned in an approaching, immanent future, with shimmering letters captioning images of minarets on skylines and corpses on streets labelling "The Netherlands of the Future?!" (Appendix 1 Shot 42-44). The temporal positioning is further emphasized in the movie's framing images, a burning fuse next to a ticking clock (Appendix 1 Shot 3, 49). In this frame a cartoon illustration of a bearded figure with a turban time bomb is animated to show the shortening fuse, accompanied by a crackling audio track. Alongside the figure a digital clock counts down: 15:00, 14:59, 14:58. At the move's close the clock reappears and

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[72] See Appendix 1 Shots 6, 7, 42-44.

counts down to 00:00 – a fast cut to a black screen is shot through with a split second image of a lightning bolt streaking across the sky (Appendix 1 Shot 50).

The images of ticking clock and burning fuse provide a temporal frame and pacing for the rest of the movie's material. Yet they do not mark date or hour, only counting down, tracking the passing of time. Visualizing the draining away of the time that remains, the device equally signals the approach of the future as it presses upon the present moment. In other words the time bomb and the clock frame the depicted violence of the movie's photographs in terms identified as an affect of fear, positioning Islamization as in motion towards the viewer in space and time.

An important distinction stands here between the movie's visualization of a threatening object in terms which fulfill the structural criteria for fear, and the (arguable lack of) fright reported by viewers. In my articulation of affective sharpening, and in accord with a project paying close attention to the movie itself, I argue that *Fitna* visualizes an amorphous spatial and temporal disruption in terms of a threatening, approaching object. However in its public life, the popular narrative surrounding *Fitna* accuses the movie of *failing* to frighten. In other words, *Fitna* visualizes Islamization in a manner which fulfills the structural criteria for fear, although the movie itself does not necessarily instill fear in viewers.

Disorientation

Alongside *Fitna*'s explicit depiction of Islamizaton as a threatening and approaching object, which establishes the structural conditions for fear, the movie's formal features

imply not the threat of a particular approaching object but the eerie disorientation, confusion and insecurity of spatial and temporal rupture. Unlike the fear of Islamization, no clear object emerges towards which the disorientation is directed. A close attention identifies the affect in several of the movie's formal features including its (lack of) narrative frame; disintegration of borderlines; and visual motifs of infiltration.

Fitna's disorientation emerges in its narrative (un)structure, which indicates a breakdown of temporal continuity. Even as it depicts Islamization as a violent threat looming in the near future, *Fitna* shuns a narrative progression from past through present to future. The movie disrupts any sense of time as a linear, forward movement through history, rather providing montages of images, sounds, and text, loosely grouped under thematic headings. There is no suggestion of a storyline running through the movie, no developing plot or omniscient narrator guiding the progress of a narrative. The movie simply bombards the viewer with a series of sights and sounds: the sole gesture towards structure lies in the bracketing image of the ticking clock and the burning fuse. This lack of a single narrative plotline confuses any temporal continuity.

The movie actively confounds distinction between past, present and future in several further respects. For instance, one sequence depicts a series of images of newspaper headlines shown in succession (Appendix 1 Shot 45). Torn from their accompanying articles, the headlines flash up on the screen, one after the other. Black font on white newsprint, the familiar cursive scrawl of *de Telegraaf* giving way to the block lettering of weekend tabloids. They are alarming, brief, and declarative statements: "Jihad lessons in elementary school". "Girls still genitally mutilated". "Quran license to

kill". By definition these headlines, and all of the pre-existing photographic images in the movie, are remnants from and depictions of a past moment. Yet their declarative phrasing appears as comment upon the present, while in the context of its political appeal *Fitna* deploys them as warnings for the future.

The movie's disruption of temporal continuity involves not only its visual material but also its audio track, and the relation between sound and image. In structure, the audio component of the movie reinforces the imagistic component – a montage of found material arranged in a manner suggesting disorientation and disjuncture. Speech functions here not as a driving narrative or caption but rather as additional pre-existing material incorporated into the montage sequences. Variously Arabic, English, and Dutch, alternately screamed, spoken, and sung, this speech is not necessarily comprehensible and serves no informative purposes (scrolling text and subtitles on the screen fulfill this purpose). Rather the audio acts as a soundtrack provided for aural impact.

In sound as in image, the movie disrupts the temporal structure and visualizes the present silenced in a future haunted by voices from the past. The voices featured in *Fitna* are, almost exclusively, those of Muslims, while non-Muslims remain mute throughout.[73] However there are important exceptions to this silence: the audio track features the voices of several non-Muslims whose relevance to the movie lies in their death. The panicked voice of a woman in the Twin Towers cries that she is going to die (Appendix 1 Shot 6). Immediately following, a victim of the London bombings yells for help (Appendix 1 Shot

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[73] Wilders, too, although shown several times in both footage and newspaper photographs, remains voiceless. His final narrative manifesto is not spoken but written: text scrolling across a silent, black backdrop (Appendix 1 Shot 48).

7). Later, Theo van Gogh proclaims his lack of fear of Muslim reprisal: "that bullet will not come for me" (Appendix 1 Shot 19). *Fitna* gives voice to (only) dead non-Muslims, spectral presences whose voices reverberate from the past into this timeless future.

Without a plot to carry the viewer through a linear narrative, there is no sense of progression from moment to moment, and both the visual montage and the audio track work to further fragment a linear, progressive relation between past/present/future. The movie's (un)structure thus disrupts progressive notions of time as a forward marching journey through linear history.

The second site of disorientation in *Fitna* is spatial, encompassing the transgression and dissolution of borders. The movie's stylistic device blurring the borderlines of its constituent images suggests disintegration and instability. Most of these photographs and video clips appear with their edges dissolving into the border of the screen or surrounding images, while the transition between constituent photographs in long fades furthers the visual disintegration. Often, images directly overlay one another, with their boundaries bleeding together, as with footage of an imam preaching behind a podium superimposed upon images of explosions in Madrid (Appendix 1 Shot 7). The bearded man's photographed figure floats along the top of the screen, its edges blurring into the colourful panic beneath. The eerie quality of such dreamlike frames suggests disintegration and the montage format furthers the effect, jumping from one place and time to another, and from one media to another, in a form of spatial disorientation. These disintegrating edges, borders, and distinctions visually indicate spatial instability.

While some formal properties of the movie depict the dissolution and blurring of boundaries, others imply their transgression. Boundary transgression is particularly stark in the movie's recurring visual motif of infiltration, contamination and overwhelming proliferation, which occurs in the content of pre-existing photographic images depicting threatening Islamization. These images depict the danger as the visible presence of Islam infiltrating and overwhelming public space: women in headscarves shop or push prams; a local tram runs smoothly along the countryside with a minaret on the horizon; uniformed Dutch police calmly enter a mosque, pausing to remove their shoes (Appendix 1 Shot 37).

It should be noted that the motif of infiltration in which signs of Islam appear to invade western publics relies on shared and normative codes constructing these categories and their terms of interaction. This includes visual signs understood to connote Islam (primarily minarets and veils) as well as those connoting western public spheres (such as red double decker buses or canal houses (Appendix 1 Shots 9, 37)).[74] For instance, a sequence of photographs depicting housing blocks whose facades are dotted with satellite dishes depends for comprehension upon local discourses: given the presence of such objects in homes seeking reception from countries abroad, urban areas with concentrated *allochtonen* and immigrant populations are referred to as "dish cities" and constitute a common symbol associated with both immigration and Islam (Appendix 1 Shot 37). In *Fitna*, the satellite dish regularly appears alongside the headscarf and the minaret as a visible marker of Islam in(vading) the national public. The connotive process is dialectic,

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[74] Barthes considers connotation as a key feature of visual signs such as photographs. Particularly salient to this analysis is his articulation of the photographic paradox, in which the connoted meaning of a photograph derives from an apparently denotative image which is a "message without a code" (1977:19-20), which is explored further in chapter six.

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and links between veil, minaret, and satellite dish which connote Islamization depend on local knowledge associating the symbols. But the connections are also formally established through the movie's display of photographs, creating an association of one to another through proximity and repetition (for another example see Ahmed 2004a:123).[75]

The motif of infiltration appearing throughout the movie incorporates a related depiction of overwhelming proliferation, often achieved through sheer visual quantity – depictions of a building facade with satellite dishes on every window sill, a street crowded with people, preachers whose congregations fill mosques to capacity (Appendix 1 Shots 12, 32). Further, these images are themselves arranged in a montage, bombarding the viewer with a stream of images, another form of overwhelming proliferation. Finally, the movie supplements photographic images of Muslims with explicit textual and other visual cues suggesting urgency and increase. An animated graphic depiction of "The Number of Muslims in the Netherlands" suggests increase and proliferation, overlays video footage of veiled women in public spaces (Appendix 1 Shot 37), its white indicator bar shooting up, and then off, the charts.

The motif of rapid and uncontrolled proliferation, and the infiltration of signs coded as (dangerous) difference, indicates a transgression of boundaries which complements the formal property depicting their dissolution. Both index a spatial instability akin to the temporal disruption of the movie's narrative (un)structure. Alongside and quite distinct from its depiction of a feared object approaching in the near

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[75] Of course, the depiction also depends on the association of visible signs of Islam as different from that which defines the collective- that is, it presumes both distinction and incompatibility between that which is coded as "Islam" and that coded as "western".

future, *Fitna*'s formal properties also index disorientation and instability, the confusion of past, present, and future, the transgression and then dissolution of boundaries.

Affective Sharpening

The spatiotemporal disorientation indexed in *Fitna*'s formal features thus manifests in distinction from the movie's structural enactment of fear, which visualizes Islamization as a threatening, approaching object. Though distinct, disorientation and fear relate to one another in the movie through a process of *affective sharpening*. I develop the term to suggest that *Fitna*'s visualization of Islamization transforms the diffuse disorientation into the unambiguously identifiable affect of fear. Put differently, *Fitna sharpens* latent disorientation into fear by visualizing Islamization in terms of the structural criteria for fear, giving it temporal direction (as approaching threat) and identifiable object (Islamization).

An argument for *affective sharpening* as the relation between fear of Islamization and uncertainty resonates with Ahmed's economic model of affect. Ahmed states that affect is not a *property of* objects but comes to *stick to* them through its increasing circulation and displacement (Ahmed 2004b:66-67). *Affective sharpening* speaks to this accelerating circulation of uncertainty, an intensification ultimately expressed in fear of Islamization. The circulation intensifies uncertainty into fear, and the object, Islamization, increasingly appears invested with the property of fear. The snowballing effect of affective accumulation in an economic model thus sees uncertainty increasingly sharpened into fear, as Islamization becomes ever stickier, incorporating and

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interconnecting with more and more subjects and objects implicated in the web of uncertainty.

I argue that the affective sharpening identifiable in *Fitna* is also at work in the affective economy as a whole. Note, though, that my application of *affective sharpening* to the socio-political landscape of the Netherlands distinguishes between an analysis of how fear is structured within *Fitna*, and *Fitna*'s (lack of) fearful impact within the public realm.[76] I am not arguing that *Fitna*'s visualization of Islamization necessarily instills fear amongst viewers, but that the form through which Islamization appears as object of threat approaching in the near future fulfills the structural criteria for this affect. Thus it is the mechanics for channeling disorientation into fear which I identify in both the movie and the country's affective economy. The following section identifies an analogous process of affective sharpening in the relation between the country's gut feeling of uncertainty and expressions of anti-Islam sentiment.

Uncertainty, Globalizing Modernity, and the Nation

As lens for exploring the country's affective economy, *Fitna* demonstrates a process by which an intangible and latent gut feeling of uncertainty sharpens into fear of Islamization. Translating the process affective sharpening to the contemporary Dutch landscape suggests that fears of Islamization emerge as articulations of a latent sense of uncertainty pervasive in the public realm.

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[76] I explain this qualification in detail in chapter two.

Globalizing Modernity

A considerable body of social scientific and cultural theory has emerged to account for the experiences of the post-industrial, neo-liberal nation-states (particularly in the global west) of the modern era, produced by a worldwide acceleration, circulation and interconnection of people, ideas and goods, identified as globalization. Commentators identify affects such as nervousness, risk, uncertainty and insecurity as the hallmarks of life in globalizing modernity. Their theory speaks directly to the correspondence between a spatial and temporal disorientation modeled in *Fitna* and the collective gut feeling of the Netherlands.

In experiential terms, in a "world whose tensed mobility allows of no rest", disorientation, instability and paradox are the hallmarks of a modern western condition identified by Michael Taussig (1992:10). The ordered disorder and unfocused discombobulation of the *Nervous System*, pervasive yet inarticulate liquid fear (Bauman 2006), the insecurity of risk society (Beck 1992) and the freewheeling, magical paradox of postmillennial capitalism (Comaroff and Comaroff 2000) all gesture to the instability and contradiction of globalizing modernity, simultaneously hidden and visible, known and unknown, a disorder executed with alarming order. The freewheeling discombobulation of globalizing modernity closely matches the temporal breakdown, the transgression and eventual decay of physical boundaries, visualized in *Fitna*.

Rather than positing disorientation (and uncertainty) as the result of an increased presence of Islam or immigrants within the nation, theorizations of a globalizing modernity locate the affect in the renegotiation of identity and belonging, a redefinition in

the relation between individual and collective and between various social entities within

and across communities. The emergence of insecurity appears in concert with changing

capitalist labour and economic relations, the rapid global spread of people, ideas and

goods, and an increase in expressions of isolation and insecurity within the collective.

Beck's (1992) modern risk society and Bauman's liquid modernity take

uncertainty as the product of an industrial modernity in which "we have lost our illusions

but not our fears" (Bauman 2006:94). Aware of new risks in this modern age, removed

from their mooring in natural factors (Beck 1992:56) and mystified in the domain of

scientific and expert knowledge, we are expected to defend ourselves without support

(Bauman 2006, 2008). According to these theorizations of risk and liquid modernity, this

new consciousness cannot be managed using the tool(s) of the industrial system, and the

result of the disjuncture is pervasive insecurity. Bauman in particular relates a pervasive

uncertainty to workings of power such that "the flipside of the 'liquid modern'

domination-through-uncertainty is the state of ambient insecurity and fear" (2008:112).

The model proves valid in the case of the Netherlands, where social commentary

locates widespread and diffuse uncertainty as the experiential terms of the renegotiation

of the relation between individual and collective. Social historians Frank Lechner and

Geert Mak treat modernity's disorientation as the product of several factors, and not the

result of any one particular threat. Lechner's (2008) exploration of the current Dutch

context explicitly describes uncertainty as the result of a nation negotiating the fallout of

globalization.[77] Mak (2006) takes up the problem of the pervasive fear in the country as a

byproduct of four particular factors, each an aspect of globalizing and modernizing

practices. In his view, the current atmosphere of fear articulates an experience of

turbulence related to the shift from religious to secular communities; processes of

urbanization; the erosion of social security systems; and immigration.

For example one concrete instance of such turbulence Mak identifies is the

deterioration of a social security system in relation to insecure economic prospects, which

has generated tangible uncertainty in the country. The issue of economic insecurity and

decreasing social services,

> "exists everywhere in Western Europe and, from time to time, flares up like a wild
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> fire…. Citizens – used to the safety of their unemployment, invalidity, sickness
>
> and old age benefits – feel this insecurity. Thus, more and more Europeans – and
>
> this is particularly true for the Netherlands – are falling prey to what Barbara
>
> Ehrenreich once poignantly described as 'the fear of falling', the permanent fear
>
> of the middle classes of losing the status they have worked for so hard, with a
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> good home and a secure future. Significant in this respect is the electoral situation
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> around Amsterdam. Where did most Pim Fortuyn supporters live in the

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[77] Lechner's book traces the Dutch nation-state's negotiations of globalization, beginning with the merchant explorations of the seventeenth century, when the Netherlands profited from global connections to the extent of hegemony in international trade. Lechner stresses following Arjun Appadurai (1996) that globalization involves a variety of processes which impact differently in different times and places; broadly speaking, globalization involves expansion of links across larger distances, different flows in transnational movement of people, goods and ideas in within global "-scapes" (Lechner 2008:39). Indicators of the process globally include increases "in distance of traveled by dietary staples, in trade as a proportion of gross domestic product, in immigrants as a proportion of total population, in state ties to international organizations, and so on" (2008:39). The Netherlands has experienced considerable shifts in its financescape, ethnoscape and mediascape since the end of the Second World War, the latest wave of which particularly involves reformulations of the nation-state.

Amsterdam area? Not in the problematic old neighbourhoods, but in the neat

suburb of Almere, where a middle class with two incomes can barely pay the

mortgage. They are, indeed, full of the fear of falling'." (2006:n.p.)

In accord with the literature exploring the experiential dimension of globalizing

modernity, the observations of social commentators in the Netherlands connect a context

of uncertainty to a host of insecurities developing from renegotiations between individual

and collective in the modern era. In this sense, uncertainty expressed in an affectively

sharpened form as fear of Islamization, stems not (only) from the presence of immigrants

or the perceived threat of Islam in the country but from a host of insecurities inherent to

the present age, which may be accounted for as the accumulation of the many features of

globalizing modernity.

My ethnographic observations bear out precisely this relation, as I commonly

found that in casual public discourse statements of fear of Islamization tended to arise in

expressions of worry and disorientation, rather than fright. One such instance occurred in

the course of a casual conversation about the global spread of Islamophobia and the

proposal to build a mosque on the site of the Twin Towers. My conversant expressed her

own understanding of fear of Islam while wringing her hands nervously. "I don't know. I

think there's something to it, you know. My parents, my aunt, they go out of their homes

and they don't know where they are anymore. I like mixing, but I get it, they're worried"

(Janneke, fieldnotes, September 11, 2010).

In her nervous gestures and hesitancy speaking, Janneke conveyed a sense of

uncertainty (much more than fright or threat) which she articulated in terms of

understanding fears of Islamization. That her comment equally notes that her family is "worried", that they experience a feeling of disorientation within their homes and communities, further suggests the relation between uncertainty and fear.

This conversation did not occur as a structured interview in which my interlocutor anticipated a discussion about Islam or Muslims in the country, but rather took the form of a casual encounter, within a small group of acquaintances. What I noted at the time was the conversational slide between worry and fear of Islamization. This same relation, articulated with a slightly different dynamic, often appeared during my casual encounters in the Netherlands. That is, whereas the encounter above notes how an explicit articulation of fear of Islamization prompted my interlocutor to display signs of insecurity and worry, in other instances I participated in or witnessed conversations dealing with worries over financial stability, personal safety, or collective identity which slid easily into expressions of fear of Islamization.

For instance, at the height of public fanfare surrounding the economic crisis in 2010, which amplified financial anxieties amongst all segments of the population (in the Netherlands and globally), I spoke with several university students poised to graduate in the field of financial management. Early in the conversation, one cited the threat of an increased Muslim and *allochtonen* population as competition for jobs – both his own potential career, and then more generally, worrying that less educated Dutch citizens facing hardship from the crisis would be squeezed from the market. He supported Wilders, he said, though his parents did not. His anxiety and his genuine worry about his financial future appeared clear in his tone, as he asserted that his "generation had a financial crisis

to deal with, and faced real economic worries, and my parents' generation didn't" (Robert, fieldnotes, May 30, 2010). Notable in this instance, and in many of my interactions, was the shift through which a conversation about the insecurities of a global economy and the stresses facing newcomers easily and rapidly slid into discussion over the worrying presence of Islam in the country.

A similar slippage occurred in a conversation during a cab ride in the city of Almere, a bedroom community of Amsterdam. I chatted with the driver, commenting on how much the city infrastructure was growing as we passed through rows of new apartment buildings. He furrowed his brow and his tone turned anxious: "everything is changing". He paused and shook his head before continuing. "The whole country has changed, since Muslims arrived… People don't have pride or care anymore – Queen's Day is just for partying, everyone goes in the streets and gets drunk, instead of being proud of their country." Surprised at the turn of conversation, I asked whether he felt that Dutch people didn't care anymore because there were so many immigrants, or that immigrants didn't care about this country? "Both. And Christian heritage is disappearing too." His tone turned from lament to defense, "I don't have a problem with minarets on the skyline, but it doesn't look Dutch" (fieldnotes, June 7, 2011).

In each of these cases a sense of worry and expressions of fear of Islamization arise in close proximity within a single conversation, such that one instigates or calls forth the other: conversation about Islamophobia triggering visible worry, though not fright; and expressions of all manners of collective and personal anxiety generating expressions of fear of Islamization.

The expressions of insecurity I noted in my own interactions correspond to the alienation and disorientation which characterize opposition to (Muslim) immigration observed by other analysts in the Netherlands. For instance, in an analysis of the public controversy culminating in a proposition to ban face veiling tabled in parliament in 2005, Moors (2009) identifies the tendency to site the "security threat" of the practice as rationale for its prohibition. And Duyvendak (2011) notes that while through the end of the 20th century feelings of alienation were primarily associated with immigrants, after Fortuyn's murder in 2002 public discourse turned expressions of alienation to the native Dutch, who lamented no longer feeling at home in their own neighbourhoods and country. These sentiments address disorientation in terms of opposition between native born, modern, Western, Dutch and Muslims coming "from a different culture" (Duyvendak 2011:94-102). The proximity Duyvendak notes between a pervasive sense of not feeling at home and opposition to the presence of Muslims and Islam aligns closely with my own observations. In both, a host of worries and a diffuse sense of insecurity find articulation in the language of fear of Islamization.

A triangulation of a close attention to *Fitna*, theorizations of global modernity, and fieldwork observation points to the correspondence between disorientation, uncertainty, and fear of Islamization. Affective sharpening occurs in both the movie and the Netherlands, transforming disorientation and uncertainty into the unambiguous and easily identifiable form of fear.

Precarious Nation

I have suggested here that the uncertain affective economy of the Netherlands aligns

directly with the conditions of globalizing modernity. The uncertain gut feeling may be

attributed to a wide range of factors associated with the post-industrial neo-liberal context,

in which goods, people and ideas are circulate with increasing speed and range. Accounts

from social scientists in the Netherlands as well as the comments provided by my

interlocutors indicate the breadth of latent insecurities which contribute to an affect of

uncertainty, whether in terms of financial, physical, or social risk.

The renegotiation of the position of the individual within the collective plays a

particularly important role in the experience of globalizing modernity, and it is within this

context that a close attention to *Fitna* foregrounds the crucial relevance of the nation-state

to the current affective economy. The movie's affective spatial and temporal

disorientation indicates a slide between the precarious position of the individual and that

of the nation in globalizing modernity. Their relation speaks to the relevance of the nation

as object in the uncertain affective economy and the means through which it then sticks to

both Dutch citizen-subjects and to Islamization.

Fitna's spatial dissolution and border transgression suggest the breach and

collapse of territorial boundaries. In direct reference to the borders of the nation, one

scene depicts a postcard collaging photographs of several mosques within the boundaries

of a single rectangular frame, stamped with cursive text reading "Greetings from the

Netherlands" (Appendix 1 Shot 40). Supplemented with text invoking the nation, and in

apparent juxtaposition with the foreign appearance of the mosques, the photographs

overlap and infringe upon one another within the frame of the postcard. The spatial

transgression of constituent photographs formally invokes the implied disjunction

between mosque and nation. Furthermore, the movie as a whole stages a similar visual

transgression, such that the montage format and visual dissolution of boundaries indexes

the insecurity and dissolution of the boundaries of the nation itself.

      The movie's temporal disorientation also implicates the nation as a precarious

subject in globalizing modernity. Conceptualizations of flattened, homogenized,

simultaneous space-time underlie imaginations of the nation (Andersen 1991) and modern

nationalisms in particular operate on narratives of the linear, progressive historical

progress of the nation (Chakrabarty 2000). Yet *Fitna*'s narrative (un)structure eschews

linear continuity linking past, present, future in coherent progression. As such the movie's

temporal disorientation implies not only the threatened instability of linear time, but also

the fragmentation of a nation imagined through history.

      In its disruption of temporal continuity, the movie indexes uncertainties

surrounding belonging which are also identifiable in the country's current obsession with

national history. In the Netherlands, both nationalism and autochthony discourses

determine belonging in terms of the formulation that "we were here first" (Duyvendak

2011:110). This conception of belonging draws directly from the spatial ("here") and

temporal ("first") frames which the movie destabilizes. The preoccupation with national

belonging and/as national history further manifests in recent efforts to define and shore up

the terms of a shared national past, such as the formulation of a national canon and an

emphasis on historical knowledge as the basis for integration of new citizens.

Appadurai (2006) argues for a relation of displacement between the precarious position of the nation-state on a global stage and fears of minorities within the nation. The presence of the foreigner within comes to symbolize the increasingly rapid and widespread circulation of people, commodities and ideas in the turbulent era of globalization. The result is a perceived threat to citizens' belonging to the nation. According to this theory of the "fear of small numbers", it is the marginalization of the nation-state itself within the context of globalization which triggers fears of and opposition towards foreign and minority populations (Appadurai 2006:33).

Uncertainty in globalizing modernity thus interrelates the renegotiated belonging of citizens to the nation with insecurities over the place of the nation-state in the global context. For its part, *Fitna*'s motif of overwhelming proliferation correspondingly visualizes this uncertainty with the position of the nation globally. *Fitna* frequently includes images of Muslims brandishing swords and other signs which connote foreignness in the imagined temporal/historical as well as spatial/geographic nation. In this sense the movie visualizes a conceptualization of Islam as "alien", out of place and time with respect, and posing a direct threat, to the nation.[78] Through depicting Muslims and immigrants as foreign and multiplying, *Fitna* depicts the proliferation of minority populations as a form of contamination of the national public realm.

Certainly, the nation figured prominently in many discussions of fear of Islam or insecurity more generally which I witnessed during my fieldwork. My conversation with Jorrit and Olivier exemplified the most frequent themes of fear of Islam in the

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[78] Johannes Fabian (1983) provides a useful discussion of the representation of Otherness (including that of the ethnographic subject) as foreign in both time and space in his articulation of the "denial of coevalness".

Netherlands: the perception of insecurity figured with respect to a threatened nation. The

problem with Muslims, according to Jorrit, is:

> "they come into someone else's space and don't follow the rules, and they demand
>
> accommodations… They just keep to themselves in the west and the east [of the
>
> city] in their dish areas, they sit and watch Arabic – not Dutch! – television, they
>
> don't work, and take our money. They come here but we are supposed to make
>
> adjustments for them. Look at Rasmussen at NATO: twenty countries [sic],
>
> nineteen of them are fine with it, and one makes all these demands, making us
>
> bow to the Muslims!" (Jorrit, fieldnotes, April 13, 2009). [79]

The comments raise many of the key themes elaborated in relation to what makes Islam

threatening to Jorrit: a sense of resentment that a constituent he deems foreign would

demand his concession. His comments indicate not so much fright from Islam but the

uncertainty of an insecure individual ("they" come into "someone else's space") which

slides into expressions of the insecurity of national sovereignty (the relative power of the

Netherlands and Turkey in NATO). Jorrit, and many of my interlocutors, perceive

Muslim immigrants as threatening to their personal wellbeing in the form of

socioeconomic security, by taking money and welfare services. But more than this,

Jorrit's comments condemn Muslims as threatening for refusing to concern themselves

with the nation in favour of attachment to foreign countries – at least in terms of their

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[79] The comment references the appointment of Anders Fogh Rasmussed as secretary-general of NATO; Turkey had objected to the appointment given Rasmussen's role as Prime Minister of Denmark during the cartoon controversies of 2006.

television preferences – while on the global scene the nation is potentially overruled by a Muslim majority country.

The position of the Dutch nation with respect to others in a global context, but also the potential erosion of the nation itself with the ascendance of transnational organizations, institutions and identities are thus at issue in expressions of uncertainty in the Netherlands. Triangulating *Fitna*'s disorientation with the observations of social scientists and the comments of my interlocutors has suggested that the precarity and uncertainty of the individual may be related to the perceived insecurity of the nation-state. Ultimately, identifying a correlation between belonging *to* and *of* the nation with the insecurity of the individual in globalizing modernity thickens an understanding of the relation between fear of Islamization and the experiential disorientation of uncertainty.

Conclusions

An exploration of fear within *Fitna* proves fruitful for coming to terms with the experiential quality of the affective economy at issue in this dissertation, as well as for locating the (inter)relations between a collective gut feeling of uncertainty and the frequent expressions of fear of Islamization which circulate in popular discourse. By drawing a distinction between the movie's depiction of Islamization as an object of threat approaching in the near future, and the disorientation indexed in the movie's formal features, I have suggested that the chronic uncertainty in the Netherlands today is related to but distinct from fears of Islamization. The two relate in a process of affective sharpening through which this amorphous uncertainty sharpens into an identifiable affect

of fear, visualized with Islamization as its object. *Fitna* thus exposes fears of Islamization as affectively sharpened expressions, rather than causes, of a collective gut feeling of uncertainty.

What produces uncertainty if not the threat of Islamization? Here, *Fitna*'s impact of amorphous disorientation aligns strikingly with descriptions of the experiences of globalizing modernity, indexing the experiential dimension of the country's affective economy. The movie's disruption of temporal continuity, dissolution of borderlines, and depictions of overwhelming proliferation visualize the turbulent and ultimately disorienting experience of globalizing modernity. *Fitna* articulates and sharpens the disorientation expressed by the Dutch who no longer feel at home, and the uncertainty of those who describe a diffuse, deep, in the gut insecurity. The complex interrelation of personal uncertainties in the renegotiation of belonging, including the perceived financial, physical and social insecurity, contributes to the affect's circulation.

These particular forms of spatial and temporal disorientation identifiable in *Fitna* particularly foreground the relevance of the nation-state as a figure within the affective economy of uncertainty. The movie illuminates the relevance of comments among my interlocutors in which personal insecurities come to stick to the precarious position of the nation-state itself. The insecurities of the individual and the insecurities of the nation overlap in the experiential disorientation of globalizing modernity, a collective gut feeling of uncertainty that finds articulation as fears of Islamization.

CHAPTER FIVE

OFFENSE:

THE STICKY BINDS OF NATION, RELIGION, HISTORY, AND ISLAM

"The Dutch Public Prosecution Service is of the opinion that statements made by Mr. Wilders in the *Volkskrant* of August 2007 and his film *Fitna* are not punishable… The fact that statements are hurtful and offensive to a large number of Muslims does not necessarily mean that such statements are punishable. It is true that some statements insult Muslims, but these were made in the context of public debate, which means that the statements are no longer of a punishable nature… In addition, by means of the relevant statements and the film, Mr. Wilders criticizes Islam. Criticism of religion is not covered by the prohibition of discrimination, unless this criticism includes insulting conclusions about the adherents of the religion concerned. The Public Prosecution Service is of the opinion that neither the film *Fitna* nor Mr. Wilders' statements include such insulting conclusions." (Amsterdam Openbare Ministerie 2008)

The Amsterdam Public Prosecution received sufficient complaints upon *Fitna*'s release to prompt an announcement regarding their decision not to prosecute Wilders for his inflammatory movie. Although in the immediate aftermath of its release the public prosecution declined to charge Wilders, the movie played a crucial role in his eventual trial for inciting hatred and discrimination on the basis of race and religion. In addition to *Fitna*, the charges addressed public statements in which Wilders compared the Quran to

Mein Kampf, insinuated the violent nature of Moroccan youths, and referred to a "tsunami of immigration" which had given rise to the country's Muslim communities.[80] At the heart of the trial and the accusations of incitements to hatred lies the issue of offense. Debates about the harm, violence, and damage potentially wrought by offensive images, words, and pictures are at stake in *Fitna*, in Wilders' inflammatory statements, and even in the prosecution's initial reluctance to instigate a trial.[81]

Of course, public offenses against Islam are not unique to the Netherlands. The Dutch prosecutor's statement resonates with an earlier instance of offense, the Danish cartoon affair (2006) which triggered violent response from Muslim communities around the world.[82] *Fitna* circulates in the context established by the cartoon affair as well as other international incidents of offense that the movie takes as explicit as well as implicit precedent.

As political theatre at the national level the inflammatory, excessive, and over-the-top offenses for which Wilders faced charges constitute extreme, but not exceptional, cases of insult and derision. In addition to Wilders, other members of his PVV receive regular media attention for offensive comments which at times surpass even the party's limits for acceptable insult. In 2011, Sam van Rooy was suspended from the PVV for referring in an online video clip to women in *burqas* as "scum", and in 2012 Cos Bosman

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[80] As the above excerpt indicates, the public prosecution initially declined to charge Wilders, but was forced to do so after a successful appeal by a conglomeration of mosque, religious, and social justice organizations in the country. Throughout the process of the high profile trial, which began in January 2010 and was repeatedly stalled by escapades regarding the suitability of witnesses and the alleged bias of judges, the prosecution advocated for an acquittal. In January 2011 Wilders was found not guilty on all charges.
[81] In the case of Wilders' political theatre, participants and observers framed the issue in terms of freedom, juxtaposing rights to free speech and rights to freedom from religious discrimination. Chapter three considers in some depth the connotations of *freedom* within the affective economy.
[82] The motivations behind such responses are widely variant and complex, and beyond the scope of the current project (cf. Mahmood, 2009:342; Mamdani 2006; Yilmaz 2011).

expelled after it was publicly revealed he had referred to a Turkish member of the PvdA as "a piece of sicked-up *halal* meat made from a Turkish pig" ("Wilders Aide Suspended" 2011; "PVV Councillor Thrown Out" 2012).

And offenses targeting Muslims and Islam appear well beyond the media seeking antics of the PVV. Theo van Gogh and Pim Fortuyn built public celebrity on the basis of their offensive statements about Islam – with van Gogh favouring reference to Muslims as "goat fuckers" and Fortuyn relating his escapades with young Moroccan boys with relish (van der Veer 2006).

Indeed, offensive statements about Islam and Muslims have become increasingly normalized and even celebrated in some streams of popular discourse. Frequently occurring in debates over issues of immigration, autochthony, and national identity, these offenses do not directly address Muslims but rather take the form of matter of fact statements about Islam.[83]

Though Wilders was ultimately acquitted on the charge of discrimination and inciting hatred, this chapter nonetheless situates *Fitna* as an instance of offense staged against Islam. At issue here are the movie's display of a series of provocative images; its insulting association between the Quran and violence; and its inclusion of two *offending*

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[83] My consideration of staged offenses which do not directly address Muslims does not suggest that Muslims do not also face direct discrimination or insult in the Netherlands. Recent research, for instance, tracks the increasing trend of mosque violation in the form of desecration and graffiti (van der Valk 2012). And following Wilders' acquittal, a spokesman for the Moroccans of the Netherlands Association expressed fears that the verdict would further encourage insult to Muslims, noting that already in the Netherlands, "You see that people feel more and more supported in saying that minorities are good for nothing." ("Dutch Populist" 2012).

images seemingly designed to offend Muslims, a cartoon of the Prophet and a scene in which a hand appears to tear a page from the Quran.

With respect to the two offending images included in the movie, *Fitna*'s original version reproduces the most well-known of the Danish cartoons, a caricature of the Prophet with his turban depicted as a bomb, created by Kurt Westergaard (Appendix 1 shots 3, 49). The image appears twice, in both the opening and closing sequences of the movie. Animated to spark the turban bomb's fizzing fuse, the cartoon appears alongside a digital timer counting down from 15:00 minutes. In the closing sequence the cartoon reappears as the clock expires, with an apocalyptic thunderclap and bolt of lightning splitting the screen. Westergaard's cartoon does not appear in the movie's second version, as the artist objected to the unauthorized reproduction of his image. Subsequent versions of *Fitna* replace the cartoon with a second caricature which bears considerable similarity to Westergaard's in form and content: a similar figure stands with a bomb on his shoulders. The replacement cartoon alludes to Westergaard's image of Mohammad and maintains the motif of the bomb with a lit fuse, while introducing an ambiguity to the identity of the cartoon's subject, in referring to the mythical figure of Atlas who carries the globe on his back.

Second, *Fitna* displays a brief film clip as offending image (Appendix 1 shots 46-47). The close-up shot of an opened Quran shows a hand moving into the frame and grasping the corner of a page, making a movement as though to pull it from the book. The sound of paper tearing follows, though the screen cuts to black. After a brief pause a caption appears on the screen to declare, "the sound you heard was a page being removed

from the phone book". The sentence gives way to the movie's scrolling manifesto calling

upon viewers to "Stop Islamization. Defend our freedom." (Appendix 1 Shots 46-48).

These two images, cartoon and Quran scene, maintain the movie's key motifs

while also distinguishing themselves from the bulk of its constituent material. In form,

both are distinct from the rest of *Fitna*'s imagery: the cartoon image differs from the

majority of the movie's photographic and film images; and though camera produced, the

Quran scene is the only video footage in the movie which is not an obvious remediation

of pre-existing mass media material. The notable formal distinctions distinguish these

offending images from the movie's visual content as a whole, setting them apart from the

flow of montaged and reproduced mass media images.

At the same time that these images are distinguished from the majority of the

movie's visual material in their form, in content they resonate with *Fitna*'s key motifs.

Both the original and the replacement cartoons produce a stereotypical figure, a depiction

of Mohammad as a mad mullah, stripped of all specifying detail and reduced, literally, to

caricature. The Quran scene similarly concentrates one of the movie's key themes,

positioning the religious scripture as the cause of violence through both its materiality and

its meaning. The cartoon and Quran scene thus stand out from the movie's constituent

material, while also reasserting the movie's main offensive themes.

To come to terms with these two scenes and with the place of offense targetting

Islam in the country, I mobilize Mitchell's (2005) typology of *offending images.* Mitchell

defines offending images as both those which offend viewers, here particularly in the

mode of insult and injury, as well as those images to which offense is directed, here

through mutilation (tearing) and humiliation (caricature). This second connotation of offending images stems from the popular presupposition that a figural image "is transparently and immediately linked to what it represents. Whatever is done to the image is [therefore] somehow done to what it stands for... [and further presupposes] that the image possesses a kind of vital, living character that makes it capable of feeling what is done to it." (2005:127). Offending images thus include those which offend their audience and those which are themselves offended.

Fitna's cartoon and Quran scene constitute offending images in both registers of the term. The images may offend viewers, in this case targeting (though disavowing) a Muslim audience through insult and injury. At the same time, the vital images of Islam, the Prophet and Quran, are themselves offended through humiliation and physical desecration.

This chapter offers an interpretation of the movie's cartoon and Quran scene which exposes something of the affective economy of uncertainty in the Netherlands. Through a close attention to these images and their relation to the context of the movie's production, I trace the circulation and displacement of uncertainty as it binds and divides the various figures within the country's affective economy. Ultimately, the chapter demonstrates that *Fitna*'s offending images visualize the patterns of displacement and circulation through which uncertainty moves in the affective economy, exposing the ties which bind nation and history, religion and Islam.

The chapter proceeds through two considerations of *Fitna*, in accord with Mitchell's dual sense of offending images. First, close attention to *Fitna* addresses the

movie as an object of offense targeting an audience, a weapon aimed at Muslims. The movie stages offense in its insulting message, which associates Islam with violent destruction, and in its stereotypical depictions of Muslims as uncivilized, backward, and contaminant outsiders in a western nation. Further to insult, *Fitna*'s cartoon and Quran scene constitute pictures designed to offend through injury. Both *Fitna*'s insult and injury resonate with the trajectory of the movie's public life, speaking to its central role in a *ritual provocation* courting reactionary violence from Muslims as a means for justifying retaliatory defensive measures. In tracking these various modes of offense towards Muslims, the first component of this chapter demonstrates the immediate interplay between several figures in the affective economy of uncertainty, including the movie as offending object, the Muslim target audience, and the threatened nation, as well as the recent history of other ritual provocations.

The second component of the chapter considers the movie's cartoon and Quran scene as enactments of censure, violence or prohibition conducted *against* offending images. While the preceding consideration of these pictures as instruments of ritual provocation suggests the injury they (presume to) cause to a Muslim audience, I here interrogate what it is about the Prophet and Quran that provokes their violent censure in the movie. I argue that in a post-Christian country with a secular self-image, (images of) Islam provoke offensive treatment in part due to their sticky relation to the nation's religious history. To do so I integrate the notion of affective circulation and displacement advanced by Ahmed with Oskaar Verkaaik's (2003) identification of religion as the

repressed but present "shadow side" of the modern Dutch nation-state.[84] The structural

enactment of offense to Islam in *Fitna*, I argue, exposes a complex web of interrelation

between a nation and its histories, between religion, nation, and Islam.

The chapter closes with a brief consideration of the tensions created by a

tightening in the country's affective binds; while increasingly implicated in one another,

the relation between nation and religion remains one of unresolved ambivalence. In this

sense *Fitna*'s cartoon and Quran scene, which threaten an offense that may ultimately go

unfulfilled, foreground the extent to which relations between nation and religion within

the country's affective economy themselves remain uncertain.

Fitna's Images as Weapons of Offense

A close attention to *Fitna* identifies two modes of such offense which target Muslims:

insult and injury. Both modes are directed towards, though ultimately disavow, a Muslim

audience. And both are enacted through the movie's visual features, including the explicit

content of its two key offending images and its inflammatory message, as well as through

formal strategies, including repetitious editing and visual association. Furthermore, a

consideration of the two modes of offense – insult and injury – conducted by the movie

itself resonates with the role that *Fitna* played in the public realm as an instrument of

(attempted) ritual provocation.

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[84] Ahmed describes affective displacement through the example of Freud's Little Hans analogy (2004b 125). Further, According to Ahmed's non-locative model, emotions do not reside positively in objects or subjects but displaces and circulates between them. Emotions bind those objects and histories through which they,

"move sideways (through 'sticky' associations between signs, figures, and objects) as well as backward (repression always leaves its trace in the present – hence 'what sticks' is also bound up with the 'absent presence of historicity') [to produce a] rippling effect" (Ahmed 2004a:120).

Insult

Fitna provides an insulting vision of Islam, presenting the religion as a fearful and threatening cause of death and destruction, and providing a stereotypical and cliché depiction of Muslims as uncivilized terrorists. This insulting mode of offense appears in the movie's repetitive imagery, which produces the stereotype of the mad mullah, as well as in the visual association of gory photographs with illustrations of the Quran to imply the inherent violence of Islam.

      Fitna presents an explicitly insulting caricature of Muslim authority, (re)producing the stereotypical charismatic religious leader set on world domination, his dictates presumed determinative of Muslim behaviour. Montages display numerous pictures of bearded men behind desks and pulpits enthusiastically condoning violence.[85] With a realist documentary aesthetic, each depicts a single man speaking from a position of authority in relation to a gathered audience, and expressing violent sentiment. Taken singly, the fragments display a considerable variety: the men speak Arabic, Persian, and English, displaying a range of emotion from calm didacticism to ecstatic enthusiasm. They differ in age, race, dress, and general comportment. The remediated film footage is variously colour or black and white exposure, at times stamped with an identifying broadcast logo. But the repetition of the images in montage form downplays this heterogeneity and rather produces an apparent similarity between the depicted subjects, ultimately generating the stereotypical figure of the mad mullah.

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[85] See Appendix 1 shots 7, 8, 12, 15, 23, 28, 32, 39, and 41.

The generation of the stock figure through the repetition of similar images constitutes a formal feature of stereotype, a process of constant reassertion of that which appears taken for granted (Bhabha 1994:95). Through repetition, for instance, the distinguishing specificities identifiable in *Fitna*'s filmed footage of Abdul Raman Saleem speaking in a UK mosque dissolve, blended into and over a series of similar images depicting similar preachers. The cumulative effect of *Fitna*'s visual repetition is the generation of a single stereotype amalgamating what is reasserted across the collected images, and dismissing as insignificant those elements which do not perpetuate the pattern, in this case which do not contribute to the figure of the mad mullah (Ahmed 2004b:64; Amossy and Heidingsfeld 1984:693). The offensive cliché insults in both its reduction of diverse individuals to caricature, and in its portrayal of (all) Muslim clerics as hysterical, violent war mongers whose invectives the faithful will necessarily obey.

Further, in addition to the offensive caricature of Muslim authority, *Fitna*'s central message asserts the inherent violence of the Quran, and by extension, Islam. The movie conveys the message through a visual frame which takes an illustration of the Quran as the backdrop against which the pre-existing images of violence and destruction screen.[86] Reinforcing the link between Quran and violence produced in visual association, the movie's eerie soundtrack includes Arabic recitations of the *suras* accompanying the threatening photographs. In this manner *Fitna* conveys its assertion of Islam's inherent violence, an offense which, like the movie's caricature of the mad mullah, seeks to insult Muslims.

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[86] The movie in its entirety demonstrates this feature. See Appendix 1 Shot 5 for a representative scene.

Injury: Images Offending Islam

In addition to its insulting portrayal of Muslims (particularly Muslim authority) and Islam

(in the form of the Quran) as irrational and violent, *Fitna*'s cartoon and Quran scene

constitute two particularly offending images which target a Muslim audience for *injury*.

Mitchell observes the vital quality of images, a seeming live-ness through which

pictures appear capable of receiving or feeling harm (2005:127). The corollary to the

seeming vitality of pictures further suggests that offending an image offends what it

depicts (2005:127). In this regard Saba Mahmood's (2009) rendering of the Danish

cartoon affair proves applicable to both the remediation of the Danish cartoon in *Fitna*

and to the movie's second offending image, the scene depicting a hand poised to tear the

Quran.

According to Mahmood, the insulting caricatures depicting the Prophet

Mohammad constituted a form of violence which *injured* both the (image of the) Prophet

and, subsequently, Muslim viewers. Mahmood offers a reading of the cartoon as an iconic

image depicting the Prophet, and thus enacting the form of relationality which binds the

subject in assimilative terms to an object or an imaginary (2009:845). Taking seriously

the lived experiences of many faithful Muslims, Mahmood identifies an analogous

assimilative relation between believers and Mohammad: for (some) Muslims the

Prophet's example, injunction, and behaviour "are lived not as commandments but as

virtues; one wants to ingest, as it were, the Prophet's persona" (2009:847). Thus it is not

compulsion of law but cultivated ethical capacities which bind an individual to the

Prophet. The sense of moral injury expressed by Muslims in response to the cartoons

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emanates from this intimate, assimilative relationship: the images do not (only) break a law but wound a structure of affect (2009:849).

Mahmood thus argues against understanding the offense in terms of blasphemy, as the insulting portrayal of a beloved figure and the blatant transgression of religious law regarding depiction. Rather, her consideration of the vital quality of the cartoon as icon sees the offense conducted against the picture as equivalent to the same offense conducted to the Prophet, and consequently to the faithful subject standing in an assimilative relation to both. The offense towards the Prophet conducted in humiliating caricature is thus felt as injury.

At issue in *Fitna*'s offending images is the injury they direct towards the Prophet and Quran, perhaps the two most significant symbols for Islam. Of course the precise theological formulations of the Prophet and Quran, and their relative authority for guiding the belief and practice of Muslims, are as many and varied as the forms of Islam (or the multitudes of islams).[87] Nonetheless, even in accounting for the varieties of heterogeneous lived practice and faith of Muslims, normative conceptualizations of Islam (both etic and emic) posit the Prophet and Quran as images of a transnational and ahistorical religion. This is the case with respect to those "outside" the discursive tradition, particularly including both academic and popular perceptions which define the religion through its text and charismatic founder. The signs are also crucial to practitioners "within" the discursive tradition, and indeed recent decades have witnessed the

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[87] Considerable anthropological attention details the heterogeneous terms in which practitioners engage the Prophet and Quran (cf. el Zein 1977; Lambek 1990; Lukens Bull 1999).

emergence of a global *ummah* structured upon the universal validity of the Prophet and Quran across all cultural contexts (Roy 2004).[88]

Applying Mahmood's insights to *Fitna*, the depiction of Mohammad reproduced and alluded to in the movie appears as an act of humiliating caricature which wounds the image, the Prophet, and the faithful Muslim viewer. And Mahmood's observations hold for the movie's second offending image, which physically destroys or injures the Quran, the sacred scripture considered to materialize the verbatim word of God.

Fitna offends Muslims through several channels, through injury to the crucial signs of Islam and consequent injury to faithful viewers as well as through insulting message and stereotype. Furthermore, considering the offense with respect to the movie's public life thickens an understanding of the implications and expectations animating the offense staged through and against these images.

Ritual Provocation

Turning from a consideration of the movie's visual content to the terms of its public life exposes *Fitna* as a representative instance of those *ritual provocations* increasingly prominent in western nations, seeking to offend Muslims as a means for courting reactive violence and justifying defensive measures. Insofar as offending images materialize as acts of insult and injury directed at Islam, they circulate and operate within a distinctly transnational arena. Engaging Gaborieu's theorization of relations between Hindu and Muslim communities in a South Asian context, Martijn de Koning (2011a,b:n.p.)

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[88]The Netherlands has seen its own emergence of rhetoric surrounding a "pure" Islam (de Koning 2008).

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identifies *Fitna* as one of many instances of *ritual provocation* which have achieved high

profile within western Europe since 1989, when international uproar and tension

surrounded the publication of Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*. Other recent examples of

offense to Islam which suit de Koning's model include, in 2010 alone: election

advertisements by the Swedish Democrats which depict a menacing woman in a *burqa* in

a heated race against an elderly woman; the campaign posters supporting a ban on

minarets in Switzerland which depict a woman in *niqab* as threatening and minarets as

missiles piercing the Swiss flag; and a video game by an Austrian candidate for regional

office in which participants destroy minarets and mosques.[89]

In each of these cases, producers justify their offences as a necessary exertion of

the right to free speech in the face of censorship and fear. While offense against Islam and

its retaliatory effects may emerge as large-scale public events or spectacle, and are

identifiable as ritual, they are often initiated through a particular image, whether

appearing in discursive, literary, or visual form. Throughout Europe, instances of offense

targetting Islam act as ritual provocations which: generate media and public attention;

cast Muslims as reactive and Islam as inherently violent; and legitimize defensive

measures claiming to protect the offending party.

Rituals of provocation stage offense as a codified procedure, in which one

community conducts the deliberate disrespect, desecration, blasphemy, or violation of

another's sacred or symbolically charged spaces, times, or objects as a means for

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[89] The prevalence of such images has created a body of dangerous images including both those designed to provoke non-Muslim fear and those designed to provoke Muslim offense. While a theorization of this corpus of dangerous images is beyond the scope of the present analysis it indicates fruitful irections for future research.

provoking retaliation (Gaborieu qtd. in de Koning 2011a:n.p.). Ritual provocation

involves first selecting and then effectively desecrating the key symbols representing a

community for the purpose of generating violent reaction. In this case, should Muslims

respond to the ritual provocation, the reaction appears to confirm representations of

Muslims as violent, irrational and slave to the image (Quran) or discursive formation

(Islam). Further, such ritual provocation, when prompting reaction, then functions to

legitimate (preemptive) defensive or retaliatory measures on the part of the offending

party. On the other hand, should a ritual provocation proceed with minimal reaction, it

nonetheless subordinates its implicit target community through humiliation, in the manner

of (ritualized) racial insult and verbal abuse (Guimareaes qtd. in de Koning 2011:n.p.). As

ritual provocation, offense against Islam seeks violence, and further instructs the public to

expect such reaction thus to legitimizing preemptory defensive measures.

A close attention to *Fitna* as instance of ritual provocation addresses the

increasing visibility of these events on the transnational stage, and foregrounds the form

that they take in their implicit address of a Muslim audience. *Fitna* itself makes reference

to two preceding ritual provocations, firmly locating itself within both the transnational

and national context of offenses against Islam.

As described in preceding pages, a cartoon instigating the Danish cartoon affair

features prominently in the movie, its inclusion underscored in several mass media news

records among the movie's constitutive images. The event occurred in Denmark in 2005-

2006, when the *Jyllands Posten* newspaper published twelve cartoons depicting the

Prophet Mohammad after soliciting illustrations from forty-two artists. The newspaper

justified its project as an exercise of free speech, a challenge to "self censorship"

emerging from taboos of political correctness and fears of Muslim reprisal. Danish

Muslims protested the offensive images, and when the country's Prime Minister refused

to meet with delegates of Muslim countries to discuss the issue, violent protest spread

internationally. Reactive counter-publication responding to the violence saw the cartoons

republished in a rash of newspapers, journals and websites: in the five months following

the *Jyllands-Posten* release, the cartoons appeared in over 143 publications in fifty-six

countries (Larsen & Seidenfaden qtd. in Yilmaz 2011:6). In addition to the international

controversy and violence, the escapade spawned a publicity boom, ranging from

enormous media coverage to official and public commentary to an ever-increasing body

of academic work analyzing the affair.

And at the domestic level, the movie references the national narratives which have

already developed around *Submission* by Hirsi Ali and van Gogh.[90] Van Gogh's murder

figures prominently in *Fitna*'s inclusion of newspaper front pages and headlines

describing the event, as well as in a brief clip from a radio interview in which he

dismisses potential violent repercussions for his movie (Appendix 1 Shots 19-22).

Submission, which *Fitna* takes as its precedent, aims to display the dangers that Islam

causes to women, and includes a number of controversial and offensive images including

projecting verses from the Quran onto an apparently naked woman's body. As

provocation *Submission* succeeded: Theo van Gogh was assassinated by Mohammad

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[90] I locate this ritual provocation as domestic to signal the overlapping national context of the Netherlands. To be sure, both *Submission* and *Fitna* sought a wider audience and impact than that of the domestic national context.

Bouyeri, who left no doubt as to the motivation for his crime in a note pinned to the filmmaker's body explaining his act as retaliation to *Submission*. The murder shocked the Dutch public and became the basis for spectacle which drew incredible attention to Hirsi Ali, and precipitated commentary in the form of media coverage, as well as public, official, and academic discourse.

Fitna's intertextual references, then, indicate the effective capacity for ritual provocations to generate violence on local and international stages, displaying the spectacles of the Danish cartoon controversies and *Submission*. Further, in its intertextual reference to these preceding events the movie participates in and demonstrates the ways that such ritual provocations can feed off one another through invoking both local and global histories in complex patterns of transnational flow. Though the cartoons and *Submission* did appear as the objects at the center of self-conscious performances of defiant offense, the violent response in both cases shocked due to their unexpected, unanticipated, or merely underestimated, character. *Fitna*'s effect as dangerous object, however, depended upon its relation to these predecessors and the presumption that such violence would follow its offense. Anticipation of offense here slides into anticipation of violence, interlacing the movie's status as object of offense and object of fear.

Second, as a representative instance *Fitna* demonstrates the tendency for ritual provocation to both address and disavow a Muslim target (audience). *Fitna* only implicitly addresses a Muslim audience, explicitly claiming rather to inform non-Muslims about the true dangers of Islam, or to conduct offense for its own sake in the name of free

expression.[91] Yet *Fitna*'s role as evidence against Wilders in charges of offending Islam,

as well as widespread public fears about potential reaction from Muslims, suggest that the

movie targets Muslims.

In form *Fitna* explicitly addresses itself to a non-Muslim audience, as for instance

the scrolling manifesto at the end of the movie addresses "you, the viewer" as

distinguished through opposition to Islam and Islamization. In effect, by only implicitly

addressing Muslims, the movie's offending images seek to provoke violence while

abdicating responsibility for that violence. Similarly, in his public rhetoric Wilders'

practices of offense take Islam as their target, even as he explicitly denies seeking to

offend Muslims.[92] Wilders frequently states that his movie and comments are directed

towards informing non-Muslims, rather than provoking Muslims. The movie

demonstrates the tendency of offense of Islam to masquerade as free speech and as

informative warning to the non-Muslim public, denying but not diminishing its

provocative aims.

Further to the violence they seek to generate and legitimize, such offenses towards

Islam shape public debate according to normative distinctions opposing West and Islam,

free speech and religion. These categories are reinforced in both public and scholarly

discourse generated by spectacular events surrounding provocation, which also draw

attention to the political agents responsible for their production (Yilmaz 2011). In

concrete political terms, mobilizing the presumptions of a normative secularism and

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[91] See chapter six for an elaboration on the notion of offensive expression as a form of truth telling.
[92] A comment Wilders would make consistently, beginning with the announcement of *Fitna* months before
its public release ("Zorgen Kabinet" 2007).

perpetuating a perceived civilizational clash between Islam and West, offending images

thus work on behalf of their producer to cast these political entrepreneurs as defenders of

free speech and Enlightenment values against a backwards and essentialized Islam

(Yilmaz 2011).

Ultimately, *Fitna*'s images foreground the political effects and implications of

ritual provocations seeking to offend Islam. The movie structurally enacts how offenses

staged against Islam court violent spectacle, ultimately drawing attention to political

entrepreneurs and legitimizing pre-emptive discipline against Muslims. Further, staging

offense against Islam produces and re-entrenches normative assumptions about the very

nature of an alleged civilizational impasse between Islam and the west. Considered in

terms of offense caused to Muslims, *Fitna*'s inflammatory images insult, injure, and

provoke Muslim response as a means for producing (reactive) and justifying (defensive)

violence.

Fitna's Images as Target of Offense

A close attention to *Fitna* which takes Mitchell's definitions of offending images into

account shifts the target of interpretation to consider offense conducted against images.

This section asks, what about the Prophet and Quran provoke offensive action? I argue

that in the context of the post-Christian Dutch nation-state and its secular self-image,

prophet and scripture appear not only as signs of Islam, but invoke national religious

histories to which they are related by the sticky binds of affect. It is in their guise as signs

of Islam and of religion as such that Mohammad and Quran become the targets for

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violence. In conversation with Verkaaik's (2003) identification of the unresolved relation between the Dutch nation and its religious shadow, I argue that *Fitna*'s offending images visualize the dynamics of a complex relation between nation, religion, and history. Ultimately, these figures and their interrelation constitute the affective economy of uncertainty at issue in this dissertation.

Visualizing Religion

In the context of the contemporary Dutch nation-state, *Fitna*'s cartoon and Quran scene appear as signs of Islam, but also signify religion *per se*. The movie's offense against prophet and scripture targets *religion* as formulated in the secularizing projects of modern nation-states, as well as in the popular formulations of religion circulating in post-Christian publics.

  One indication that the Prophet and Quran appear as images of more-than-Islam lies in the contrast between these images and the salient signs connoting Islam in a popular public context. While certainly prominent, Mohammad and Quran are not the most contentious or widely circulated visible signs of Islam in the Dutch public sphere. As elsewhere in Europe, in the Netherlands it is sartorial signs (notably the *burqa* and the *hijab*) and the visible presence of mosques in the form of minarets, which attract the most attention and generate the most discourse as salient markers of Islam. Further, images associated with immigrant and *allochtonen* communities also circulate widely as signs of Islam, in its popularly-termed "cultural" rather than "religious" connotations. But again, these signs do not include the Prophet or Quran. Rather, images of satellites receiving

foreign broadcasts signify the presence of Muslims in urban dish cities, or the threatening figure of the young Moroccan hooligan symbolizes fears of political terror intertwined with incidents of petty street crime.

Fitna makes liberal use of those familiar images of Islam and immigration through the display of pre-existing photographs; scenes of Muslim women in *hijab* strolling through public parks; postcards depicting minarets; found footage of satellite dishes being installed on housing facades; and the police sketch of hooligan-terrorist Mohammad Bouyeri (Appendix 1 Shots 37, 40, 10). Yet though they form the vast majority of the movie's photographic material displayed as evidence of the distasteful and dangerous spread of Islam in the country, the movie target these images for offensive violence. And the two images which are targeted for offense (the Prophet and Quran), are not those most commonly associated with Islam in popular discourse.

Certainly, the movie's cartoon singles out for offense an image of Islam which may be considered indicative of the "backwards" or ignorant sensibility by Muslims who "exhibit an improper reading practice, collapsing the necessary distinction between the subject (the divine status attributed to Muhammed) with the object (pictorial depictions of Muhammad)… a product of a fundamental confusion about the materiality of a particular semiotic form" (Mahmood 2009:845). Yet in addition to this dynamic, in presenting images of Mohammad and Quran as particularly deserving of offence, the movie enacts a sticky relation between Islam and religion as such, enabling an affective slide which displaces an affective relation between the Dutch nation(-state) and its religious history onto Islam.

I suggest that in the context of a nation constituted by both a secularizing project and a post-Christian religious public realm, prophet and scripture connote not only Islam but also the class of religion *per se*. *Hijab* and minaret appear in *Fitna* as markers of Islam, and associated with other signs marking so-called cultural difference (satellite dish, hooligan). Mohammad and Quran, however, as avatars of prophet and scripture, also signify a category of *religion as such* of which Islam appears as but one particular variant, and which constitutes one half of a complex relation between the nation(-state) and its shadow (Verkaaik 2003).

That signs of prophet and scripture stand as symbols of religion as such stems from several structural conditions of the context of the modern Netherlands. The first is the resonance which prophet and scripture hold as the signs of religion, popularly conceptualized as a discrete cultural phenomenon. The notion of religion as a discrete aspect of human experience and cultural product emerged during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the crucible of empire, with missionary and imperial projects increasingly dedicated to understanding and categorizing the ritual practices of colonial others. From the work to systematize, hierarchize, and hegemonize beliefs and practices of the colonial others emerged the concept of *religion* as a cultural product (Smith 1998). The Christian conception of religion emphasizing belief instituted a hierarchical structure for distinguishing between religion [practiced by colonizers] and superstition or magic [practiced by the encountered and colonized].[93] The remnants of this perception remain to this day in the tendency to name features such as belief, scripture, and a charismatic

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[93] Islam, as a monotheistic, scripturally based religion, was regarded by colonizers as more legitimate than polytheistic traditions such as Hinduism, though still uncivilized and inferior to the Christian ideal.

founding figure as its identifying features. *Fitna*'s offending images target precisely the

primary signs historically engaged as the criteria which defined Christianity and thus

religion, as distinguished in colonial discourse from mere superstition or magic.[94]

The resonance is particularly notable when taking into account the recent history

of the Netherlands and its character as a (post-) Christian nation. One of the seats of the

Protestant Revolution (waged in part over struggles about the authority of scripture and

priest), the nation's current secular self-image develops from a long religious history.

Historically, the emergence of a nation-state in which primary identification lay with the

Dutch nation involved the traumatic deconstruction of the pillar system both

institutionally and in daily life. National origin narratives conceive of religion as the

outdated, petty bourgeois and oppressive history from which the current nation has

sprung. Dominant narratives locate the historical emergence of the current nation-state

and the genesis of Dutch values as the liberating triumph of a modern, secular and

tolerant nation-state over an antiquated system of religiously based identification.

The terms of national identity in the Netherlands are thus further bound up in

constructions of religion and secularism. Talal Asad and Mahmood seek to counter

normative definitions of secularism as the byproduct of the European Wars of Religion

and an attempt to define a political ethic divorced from religious sensibility manifesting

in as the removal of religion from the public sphere to the realm of private belief.[95]

Against this normative definition, they assert that both the "religious and the secular are

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[94] Considerable debate remains around the ontological status of religion as a cultural system. For the classic debate on the topic see Geertz (1973) and Asad (1986, 2003).

[95] Charles Taylor's (1998) dominant account of secularism has been effectively challenged by both Asad (2003) and Mahmood (2009).

not so much immutable essences or opposed ideologies as they are concepts that gain a particular salience with the emergence of the modern state and attendant politics – concepts that are, furthermore, interdependent and necessarily linked in their mutual transformation and historical emergence" (Mahmood 2009:836).

Far from straightforward "liberation" to secular sphere, the modern era's primacy of a secular national identity emerges from this remembered deconstruction of, and continually defines itself in distinction from, the pre-national pillarized past.[96] Pillarization and religion remain haunting features of the national landscape – indeed on the level of lived experience, in the deconstruction of its religious pillars the Dutch nation-state encouraged terms of belonging privileging national over religious identity. These new definitions of belonging and citizenship suppressed the intensities of communal affiliation to religious identity and one's pillar. Consequently, in the modern nation religious loyalties and identifications were not necessarily eradicated but suppressed. Religion, then, has not disappeared or given way to a neutral secular sphere but remains potentially meaningful, and as such may appear to pose threat to the sovereignty of the modern nation-state.

The post-Christian, post-pillar narrative of national identity conceptualizes religion in terms which resonate with a Christian framework involving a charismatic founder (Jesus Christ) and scriptural foundation (the Bible). With respect to *Fitna*, the cartoon depiction of Mohammad resonates with Christian conceptualizations defining religion through a charismatic male founder, while the Quran stands as a particularly

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[96] The following sections provide an expanded discussion of secularism and the secular.

familiar and evocative sign of religion consistently (mis)represented in popular

understanding as somehow religiously equivalent to the Bible.[97]

Arguing that images of prophet and scripture resonate as signs of religion *per se*

does not suggest that either epistemologically speaking or in public perception, Islam and

Christianity are identical, nor that the status of concepts such as scripture comparable.[98]

To say nothing of the variations within these two vast traditions, the status of signs such

as prophet and scripture vary widely between them.[99] My analysis rather concerns the

resonance that images of prophet and scripture find with conceptualizations of religion

circulating in the Netherlands. This resonance, as well as the continuity I have noted with

religion as conceived in projects of secularization, suggests that *Fitna* selects for violent

retribution those signs which resonate not only as representations of Islam but also as

signs of religion *per se*.

Affective Binds: Nation, Religion, Histories

I have argued that *Fitna*'s offense targets images of Islam which also signify religion as

such within a post-Christian nation with a secular self-image. Taking these observations

as a point of departure, I suggest that the movie's offense towards images of Islam and

religion thus structurally enact (and perpetuate) the sticky binds at work in the country's

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[97] For instance, a recent translation of the Bible into the vernacular Dutch street slang immediately raised the question of whether a comparable translation of the Quran would follow. The tension and misapprehension of equitability between the books is perhaps illustrated in the puzzlement Muslim youths quoted expressed regarding the acceptability of translation, "The Bible is your holy book, how can you tamper with that?" ("Bible Translated" 2011).

[98] Pointing to the salience which signs of prophet and scripture enjoy as markers of religion within a (post-) Christian Dutch public does not suggest that the Dutch mistake Islam for Christianity, but rather identifies the tendency for signs of religion to emerge in accord with Christian norms.

[99] For instance, vast differences exist in popular understanding of scripture and holy books between European Muslims and Christians (Vassenden and Andersson 2010).

affective economy, wherein a relation between nation and religion displaces onto a relation between nation and Islam. *Fitna* thus visualizes the constitutive elements of the country's affective economy, including the deeply implicated histories of depillarization and narratives of (secular) nation formation.

The relations established between these features of the affective economy is helpfully articulated in Verkaaik's (2003) identification of an unresolved relation between the Dutch nation and its religious "shadow", a tension drawing from and reproducing ambivalent remembrances of depillarization and nation formation. This psychoanalytic perspective takes religion as the repressed yet inescapable complement to the modern Dutch nation-state. In Verkaaik's analysis, at issue is not (only) a normative secular narrative rejecting religion as product of an archaic past, but the trauma of the particular history of (de)pillarization and birth of the modern nation-state, a history which lingers in national origin narratives and self-image to this day. Deeper and more complex than a simple rejection of public religion within a purportedly pure secular realm, the dynamic between the nation and religion enacts the subterranean affects which accompanied and maintain the present modern nation-state. Following Verkaaik, I argue that the resemblance between Islam and religion as such structurally enacted within *Fitna* applies within the country's affective economy. In this context *Fitna* suggests that the repressive relation between nation and religion displaces onto, and is triggered by, visualizations of Islam.[100]

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[100] Verkaaik himself argues that tensions surrounding Islam in the country are products of a displaced relation between nation and its religious shadow. I introduce to his analysis the terms of *affective economy*, elaborating the crucial role of affective circulation interrelating Islam, religion and nation.

Verkaaik's assertion complements Ahmed's economic model of affect, as both foreground a movement of (affective) displacement which binds together, and substitutes, its constitutive elements. Just as Verkaaik notes the ongoing tension and unresolved repression of religion by the nation, *nation* and *religion* materialize as the figures through which uncertainty circulates, particularly shaped by and continually drawing forth histories of depillarization and nation formation.

Ahmed's economic model identifies an affective circulation in which emotions "move sideways (through 'sticky' associations between signs, figures, and objects) as well as backward (repression always leaves its trace in the present – hence 'what sticks' is also bound up with the 'absent presence of historicity') [to produce a] rippling effect" (Ahmed 2004a:120). Affective circulation implicates and (re-)invokes histories of depillarization and nation formation, just as Verkaaik's psychoanalytic approach foregrounds the mechanics of displacement through which Islam comes to resonate as a particular target of offense within the Dutch context.

When combined, the resonance between these two approaches suggests a sideways displacement of uncertainty within the affective economy of the Netherlands, binding but also dividing nation, religion and Islam. In *Fitna* and in the affective economy of the Netherlands uncertainty sticks religion to Islam, such that the complicated relation of repression between the nation-state and its religious shadow comes to implicate Islam.

Several analysts of the current Dutch context have identified a similar relationship of displacement at work in resistance to the presence of Muslims and Islam as a reaction

by those in the country and in Europe who "had painfully wrested themselves free from the strictures of their own religions. Such narratives locate Muslims as "newcomers injecting society with religion once again." (Buruma 2006:69). Fortuyn's rhetoric and popularity materialized the position of Dutch across the political spectrum, for whom "the religious zeal of immigrants was a mirror image of what they themselves once had been" (Buruma 2006:69). And as van de Veer succinctly summarizes, Islam may "remind the Dutch too much of what they have recently left behind" (2006:119). Social commentary and even popular sentiment, then, identifies the displacement at work in a move between religion and Islam, the interrelation of opposition between nation(-state) and religion.

The offending images in *Fitna* thus visualize a constellation of figures – nation, religion, and the histories of depillarization and modern national formation – which are implicated and interrelated with one another within the country's affective economy. The circulation of uncertainty also drags forth histories which remain salient in the present: in this case, remembrances of nation formation and depillarization. Uncertainty jumps between religion *per se* and Islam in the contemporary socio-political landscape of the Netherlands, as perceived insecurities of and in the nation displace onto religion *per se* *via* histories of depillarization and nation formation, from religion to Islam and Muslims.

Affective circulation wears increasingly deep paths between these figures, intensifying in emotive charge and suturing the histories, bodies, objects and subjects in its web ever more closely to one another. Ultimately, offenses staged against Islam in the present context may not only target Muslims as ritual provocation but symptomatize

relations between nation, religion, and the histories maintained through the circulation of affect.

Ambivalence

Fitna, I have shown, visualizes how the displacement and circulation of uncertainty binds and interrelates figures within the Netherlands' affective economy. Yet in the end, the movie's offense against prophet and scripture remains ambivalent, even unfulfilled.

In the case of the Quran scene, film footage shows a hand poised to rip a page from the Quran; but at the last moment before paper tears, the screen cuts to black. The destruction, if it occurs, is not visible. The soundtrack records the tearing of paper, but after a brief pause a caption in white typeface assures viewers that only a phone book was damaged. The sequence thus maintains an uncertainty about the status of the Quran and an ambivalence regarding whether or not it was ripped. The movie provides no visual indication of the outcome: the soundtrack confirms that pages were ripped; the text asserts that they were not; and no visual record exists of either claim.

In the case of the cartoon, the uncertainty occurs between the first and second versions of the movie and image. *Fitna*'s original version reproduces Westergaard's cartoon, a depiction of Mohammad identifiable from earlier high profile spectacle. Subsequent versions of *Fitna* replace Westergaard's image with a second cartoon created particularly for the movie and attributed to "Scarlet Pimpernel".[101] Here the identity of the figure humiliated in caricature remains unclear. The figure in the second cartoon appears

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[101] *Fitna*'s credits also list Scarlet Pimpernel (Appendix 1 Shot 53).

according to the stereotypical features of the mad mullah upon which the Mohammad

cartoon also draws and which is reinforced in the bulk of the movie's found material. The

figure is also a male in turban and beard, now dressed in green, with a bloodied and

curved sword at his belt. The motif of the bomb is continuous between the caricatures,

now in the shape of a globe on shoulders instead of hidden in a turban.

In its form as a caricature the image resembles and refers to Westergaard's,

recalling both the "Mohammad" and "cartoon" of its popular moniker. Yet at the same

time that it replicates the offensive insinuations of the image it replaces, this second

cartoon features a figure whose identity is uncertain, visually referencing both

Mohammad and the mythical Atlas who carried the globe on his shoulders. The image's

title "Muslim Atlas" underscores this interpretation. Ultimately, the second cartoon stops

short of unambiguous caricature of Mohammad. As such both of *Fitna*'s offending

images, the cartoon and the Quran scene, display an uncertainty in the execution of the

offense they threaten.

The unresolved character of the movie's offense fulfills a series of functions: in

pragmatic terms the movie (and its maker) evades responsibility for unambiguously

committing offense against Muslims; and the dramatic tension is heightened in the

appearance of a threat to offend more than through the foreclosure of a completed action.

With respect to the concerns introduced by an affective economic model, I argue that the

ultimate ambivalence of the movie's offense also visualizes the tension produced through

the tightening binds between nation and religion.

　　Fitna's ambivalent violence has several other ramifications for offending Islam in the current Dutch nation-state. First, in the present public sphere explicit offenses to Islam are staged as insult carried out in the name of free speech, framed as opposing and mutually exclusive from the freedom of religion (Mahmood 2009; Yilmaz 2011). In this context the ambivalence of the movie's offending images further the movie's explicit offense, visualizing precisely this dichotomy between freedom of speech and freedom of religion as articulated by public figures such as Wilders. A major component of Wilders' populist political platform is his claim to censure by both Muslims and the Dutch political elite. In the ambiguity of their offense the images in Wilders' movie perform the restrictions of multiculturalism against which he rails. The images visualize this perceived silencing of autochthonous Dutch unable to say what they really think, the cohort Wilders claims to represent. Here, then, the movie's reluctance to execute unambiguous offense mirrors the rhetoric, and shores up the aims, of the political movements with which it is associated.

　　Second, with respect to the movie as an instance of *ritual provocation*, in addition to heightening the tension and potential threat of the offending images, their uncertain offense reinforces their effectiveness. In their incomplete or uncertain execution the images produce a heightened sense of threat around their offense: they do not depict an empty threat of offense, but rather the viewer is unable to determine whether or not they execute the apparent caricature and mutilation. The cartoon caricature may-or-may-not insult; the Quran may-or-may-not tear. This uncertainty leaves open the potential offensive act, heightening the images' fearful or threatening affect. It is precisely the

potential "passing by" of an object of threat, the open possibility that it may or may not

arrive, which generates fear (in Ahmed 2004b:65). The ambivalence of the movie's

offense then may heighten its effect, to the extent that the most effective threat is that

which is unfulfilled or delayed.

Third, the uncertainty of their offense provides a means for abdicating the images

of responsibility for any violent repercussions. The images in *Fitna* failed to instigate

widespread violence, but according to de Koning's model based on preceding instances,

should such a reaction have resulted from the movie's release the images may ultimately

have been absolved from blame.[102] As representative example of ritual provocation,

Fitna's ambivalent offending images demonstrate the means through which offensive

rhetoric may-or-may-not offend, an image which increases their capacity to act as

offensive instigations for violence as well as their capacity to deny such offense.

Conclusions

Fitna's cartoon and Quran scene function as offending images in multiple respects.

Taking seriously Mitchell's assertion that we relate to images, and particularly pictures,

as vital signs, as agents capable of inflicting and suffering injury, the images of the movie

both offend and are offended. By offending the image of Mohammad and the Quran the

movie's images appear as aggression against the key symbols of Islam; at the same time

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[102] Buruma notes a similar mechanism at work with respect to offensive statements and irony in the Netherlands. A great deal of Dutch humour depends on irony, as Theo van Gogh demonstrated, writes Buruma,

> "But there is a less positive side to this tradition. Irony can be a healthy antidote to dogmatism, but also an escape from blame. Outrageous or offensive statements are often followed by protestations that they were meant in jest, but only once their poisoned darts have hit their marks. Irony is a great license for irresponsibility." (2006:112).

insofar as prophet and scripture resonate in the current depillarized (secularized, post-Christian) context, the cartoon and Quran scene violate signs of religion as such.

Considering the movie as lens of analysis, the ambivalence of *Fitna*'s offending images suggests an unresolved and similarly ambivalent relation between nation and shadow. Verkaaik notes that as the Dutch nation's significant other religion may constitute what the nation suppresses, its pre-national past as well what seeks to supersede: "but that does not mean it […goes] away. It finds refuge in our shadow, where it sticks with us and grows like mould in dark places. It continues to influence our behavior, but since we do not face and recognize it, we cannot effectively deal with it." (2003:46). The continuing tension between modern Dutch nation and religion is one of complex ambivalence. The ongoing uncertainty, and the unresolved quality of this relation speaks to a consideration of nation, religion, and Islam as constitutive figures of the affective economy which draw from and reinforce histories of depillarization and nation formation. The ripple effect of uncertainty in its displacement between the figures in the affective economy binds them in an ongoing relation to one another.

Fitna thus visualizes the figures within an affective economy, as well as the patterns of displacement and uncertainty through which uncertainty binds them to one another. The interrelation of religion and nation with histories of depillarization and nation formation, bound together through the sideways and backwards slide of uncertainty, materialize alongside an affective displacement which substitutes Islam for religion *per se* in a post-Christian, putatively secular nation-state.

This analysis has suggested that Islam may emerge as a flashpoint in the country's negotiation of national identity and belonging precisely because of its sticky relation to religion as such within the affective economy. *Fitna* enacts a continued interaction and strengthening relation of resemblance between debates over national belonging and oppositions to Islam, which are implicated within and yet in tension with one another in an affective economy. Remembrances of and nostalgia for a previous national glory constitute crucial features of this affective economy, and speak to the influence which the histories of nation formation and depillarization exercise in present determinations of citizenship and belonging.

CHAPTER SIX

TRUTH TELLING:

THE PHOTOGRAPHIC MODE OF UNCERTAINTY

At the new home of a friend in Amsterdam, I am painting the dining room wall and chatting with a woman in her mid-thirties, who works for an international social development agency. Like our mutual friend, Jiske is autochthonous Dutch, very well informed about Islam and the multiculturalism debates raging in her country, and committed to causes of social justice. The afternoon's conversation focuses on current events: the recent national elections and formation of a minority government supported by the PVV, and Wilders' trial for incitement of discrimination against Muslims.

Jiske vehemently opposes what she sees as an increasingly rightist government, a sentiment which she frames, as many do, with reference to Wilders' extreme example. As we paint, she expresses her opposition to the politician's stance on Islam and immigration as well as to his blatant pandering to media attention. At the same time she acknowledges that his claims to expose the truth – about Islam and about the opinions of the autochthonous Dutch – earn him considerable credibility even among those who disagree with his policy.

As Jiske articulates, she does not agree with Wilders' political platform but understands that "people support him, because at least he is honest". For example, she says, take his movie: "the thing about *Fitna* is that at least it isn't propaganda. I might not

agree with the message behind it – and I don't – but the pictures are true… At least it is

all documents; it's made from real pictures." (Jiske, fieldnotes, November 27, 2010).

Jiske's comment that although one may disagree with the movie's message "the

pictures are true" is far from remarkable in the popular discourse surrounding Wilders

and his movie. Her comments index a slippage between exposure, truth and transparency

exploited by current political discourse as well as the photographic medium, and which

conflates the actual and the authentic under the banner of the (represented) real. This

chapter turns to *Fitna* to explore the mechanics and implications of truth telling exposure

in the affective economy of the Netherlands.

Truth telling constitutes the mode through which uncertainty is articulated (and

circulated) through the affective economy, particularly with respect to the prominence of

anti-Islam political discourse. After all, it is in the guise of truth telling that Wilders

attains what Maartin cites as the politician's crucial ability to tap into a collective gut

feeling of uncertainty (see chapter one). In claiming to articulate the anxieties of an

authentic population and to courageously expose Islamization as their threatening cause,

truth telling draws upon and produces key features of the affective economy, including

autochthony, national identity (crisis), and Islamization discourses. *Fitna* exposes the

mechanics of interrelation between anti-Islam and autochthony discourses in the affective

economy, and the further entanglement of histories surrounding representation, visuality

and the photographic image in the Netherlands.

While particularly associated with the anti-Islam and national identity discourses

of public figures such as Wilders and his predecessors Pim Fortuyn, Theo van Gogh and

Hirsi Ali, acts of truth telling exposure maintain widespread purchase in the country. Truth telling claims appear in the speech of political representatives and public figures across the Netherlands, resonating with a broad range of audiences. During the 2010 election campaign I spoke with many individuals who supported social democrat and PvdA leader Job Cohen for the same apparently simple reason: that "he (alone) tells the truth" (fieldnotes, June 6, 2010). And not all those associated with a practice of exposing the truth are right-wing, nor politicians: Theo van Gogh was widely regarded as an intellectual and artist of the left rather than as a right-wing or populist figure. Thus a claim to expose the truth has become a common strategy for legitimizing public credibility, whether in terms of obtaining authority as a political representative or in personal reputation as public figure. Wilders' antics claiming to represent what is actual but not (yet) visible provide an extreme, intensified example of such truth telling exposures.

Truth telling claims to publicly represent, express or expose what is otherwise dismissed, private or hidden: the ignored autochthonous Dutch, the taboo personal opinion, the violence of Islam. Yet this claim to expose the truth presupposes both a stable real and an objective truth which might be objectively measured, understood, and evidenced through visualization as representation. The mode of truth telling thus sutures the means of representation (in transparent exposure) to the factual accuracy of the referent (its truth) and furthermore to its ontological existence (the real).

An investigation of the style as well as the underlying assumptions which undergird truth telling exposure thus achieves two aims, describing the mode through

which uncertainty circulates in an affective economy and laying bare its deepest mechanics: this is where notions of the actual, the true, the visible, and the represented blur into one another; and where exposure, representation, and honesty as the mode of their visualization intersect.

My analysis of truth telling as a mode of affective circulation identifies a resonance between the claim to expose the real through its representation and the evidential claims of the photographic medium. Roland Barthes and Charles Peirce theorize that the evidential force of the photograph derives from a perceived relationship between the medium's representational and authenticating capacity. And it is through photography, the authoritative tracing of light on chemical plate, that *Fitna* seeks to achieve its desire to expose the truth, deploying pre-existing photographic images as the means for legitimizing its documentary identification and truth telling claim. This interrelation between representation, authentication, and truth telling is at issue in both *Fitna's* deployment of photographs and in the salience of truth telling within the Dutch context.

The chapter proceeds through three phases. The first takes *Fitna* as target of analysis. Close attention to the movie suggests that the movie shores up its documentary claim to expose the truth about Islamization through the display of pre-existing photographic and video footage. In light of theorizations by Barthes and Peirce, this section interrogates the movie's deployment of photographic images and its appropriation of their evidential force as a means for exposing the truth. Ultimately, *Fitna* demonstrates an understanding of truth telling as (photographic) exposure, such that a representation

claiming verisimilitude and apparent objectivity both illustrates and evidences the apparent truth of its referent.

The second portion of the chapter takes *Fitna* as a lens through which to interrogate the practice of exposing the truth as the mode of uncertainty's affective circulation. A shared logic is identifiable between the movie's desire to expose the truth and the claims to honestly "bring out into the open" the opinions of the autochthonous Dutch. These claims gain prominence from their origin in the new realist political style of the 1990s and into the 2000s in affiliation with an intensifying autochthony discourse, to the current claims of politicians such as Wilders to speak for a silenced autochthonous public. Analyzing new (and hyper) realist practice through *Fitna* foregrounds its photographic aspect and suggests that it too operates according to a (photographic) logic of truth telling exposure.

Finally, the third section of the chapter considers the implications which follow from understanding truth telling discourses as photographic. Applied to the performance of truth telling enacted by public figures, *Fitna's* use of photographs suggests that more is at stake in assertions of honesty than personal credibility and the reputation of individual political representatives. Two related implications follow. First, the evidential force of the photographic image not only illustrates but appears to authenticate its referent. As such, truth telling discourses claiming to represent an autochthonous public work to authenticate the named (id)entity as real. *Fitna* reveals that the photographic truth telling claims of prevailing anti-Islam and national identity discourse not only structure truth telling as a process of exposing the real, but work to produce that real through its

authentication. Second, the evidential force of the photograph implies a claim that *whatever* the image depicts is real; a totalizing claim which finds its analogue in the suggestion that what(ever) is revealed in a transparent manner must be true. The implications for public figures who legitimate their inflammatory and provocative statements as simple expressions of truthful exposure to perform a slippage between "saying what I want", "telling the truth", and exposing an actual or authentic real.

Showing the Real

In its claim to expose the truth *Fitna* appears as a documentary, a term which Wilders has used to describe the movie in media interviews, public statements and in the court case for discrimination against Muslims in which the movie was implicated. In publicity surrounding the movie Wilders repeatedly stated that his aim was to "expose the real nature of the Koran" (CNN Interview 2008), and "show… that the Quran is a terrible and fascist book" ("Provocerende film" 2007). And the identification has proven to have some resonance beyond the comments of the movie's creator: *Fitna*'s listing on the IMDb cites it as a documentary, an indication of its popular public identity; the moniker circulates along with the movie itself, reposted on numerous personal blogs and websites advertising it as a "documentary about Islam". During the course of my work in the Netherlands, many of my conversants referred to *Fitna* as a documentary, particularly those who sympathized with Wilders' political stance and the movie's message.[103]

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[103] Those who opposed his message were more apt to refer to the movie as *propaganda*. However in both cases, discussants described the movie in terms of factual and truth telling terms: the difference lay not in whether or not the movie "tells the truth", but in the perceived degree to which its display accurately "shows how it really is".

In its guise as documentary the movie claims to show the real, the "recorded visible" (Cowie 2007:87), and it is in precisely this link between showing and knowing, representation and evidence, that *Fitna*'s formal and artistic strategies illuminate something of the context of the movie's production, and the mechanics of a political strategy gaining prominence in the affective economy of uncertainty. The documentary genre is characterized by the assertive stance claiming privileged access to and capacity to record the real (Plantinga qtd. in Hight and Roscoe 2002:40). Conventional definitions distinguish the form as an authoritative record of the visible, as opposed to mechanical images produced for artistic ends – such as the fictional narratives of mass cinema (Cowie 1997:54). That is, while fiction also engages the visual as a means for depicting *a* world, documentary claims to show *the* world. And as such, "at the heart of the documentary is less a story… than an argument about the historical world" (Nichols 1991:109-111). In this distinction, documentary film's authority to show the real relies upon and reproduces distinctions between factual / imaginary, and between real/illusion, reality/fantasy, true/false, narrative/non-narrative, actuality/constructed and actors/non actors (Cowie 1997:54, 2007:87).[104]

Fitna's documentary claim proves a crucial legitimating factor for its defensive political argument. The efficacy of the final scrolling manifesto which appeals to viewers to "Defend our freedom" rests on the movie's claim to tell the truth about Islamization.

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[104] Despite this normative definition of documentary, the distinction between art and objective record, fiction and non-fiction, truth and falsity has remained troubled from the start. Theorization of the documentary genre among scholars and filmmakers has addressed this tension from the genre's inception, in debating to what extent the form provides not a mere reproduction of reality but the "creative treatment of actuality". (Grierson qtd. in Cowie 2007:93).

This is the argumentative aspect of *Fitna*'s documentary claim: the movie legitimizes its

political appeal through appearing to tell the truth about Islamization.

At issue in this analysis, then, are the mechanics through which *Fitna* puports to

expose the truth. What are the techniques and devices through which the movie claims to

tell the truth about Islamization? What assumptions does it operate upon, and what does it

take for granted? Close attention to *Fitna* locates the movie's documentary claim in its

display of mass media photographs and video images. Presenting photographic depictions

of violence condoned or committed by Muslims, *Fitna* appears to tell the truth by

drawing from the evidential force of the photographic medium.

The Evidential Force of Photographs

Fitna's strategies of display foreground the photographic character of its constituent

images, and consequently emphasize the medium's evidential force: a strategy which

ultimately undergirds its documentary claim to tell the truth about Islamization. That is,

by legitimating its documentary claims through the apparent capacity of the photographic

image to show the real, *Fitna* demonstrates an understanding of truth telling as a form of

exposure.

The majority of *Fitna*'s visual material originated as television broadcasts,

newspapers, and amateur videos, stored in online archives or circulated on *YouTube*.

Within this visual frame, the pre-existing photographic images appear as the record of a

violent Islam, evidencing the threat of Islamization which the movie claims to show.

Theorizations of photography have long wrestled with the medium's apparent capacity to show the real, a capacity deriving from the verisimilitude and purported objectivity of the mechanically produced image. Photographic and filmic images claim a privileged status as representations which simultaneously illustrate and evidence the referents they depict. [105]

This chapter engages a flexible notion of the *photographic* with respect to the movie's visual material, including both still and moving images associated with the camera in its various guises, and encompassing film, digital, and video recordings. The term here refers to a common understanding of the medium as distinct from those means of representation which are produced without mechanical or technical apparatus, or which appear artistic. *Photographic* emphasizes the distinctions between these pictures and those images produced by non-mechanical means, without a necessary referent and perhaps without claim to verisimilitude (such as cartoons and hand-drawn illustrations) as well as that which is mechanically generated but non-representative (for instance, animated graphs).

The claimed rationality and objectivity of the photographic image involves its production by camera. Pictures produced by the camera are colloquially distinguished in their capacity for verisimilitude in representation, achieving a high degree of realism in

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[105] As discussed in chapters two and seven, the extent to which the movie's (and its constituent photographs') evidentiary claim to tell the truth is accepted by its audience is negligable. This analysis refers to *Fitna*'s structural enactment of truth telling, as distinct from the evaluating its reception as true. At issue here are the formal conventions of truth telling observable in both the movie's use of photographic images as evidence and in new realist political performances of honesty. As the final components of this chapter suggest, it is precisely the failure of the photographic medium to "actually" evidence the truth as it appears to do which provides the impetus for a critique of new realist performances in the current Dutch landscape.

image production. While highly accurate realism may certainly be achieved in non-camera based image creation, the documentary realism associated with camera-produced pictures invokes logic, objectivity and empiricism, acting as "a buttress for rationality" (Nicholls 1991:167).

But not all pictures produced by cameras manifest a realist aesthetic, nor a documentary aim: indeed the problematic distinction between art and documentary photography arises along this contested faultline.[106] Further, not all images striving for documentary realism and objectivity succeed; technological failure, or the depiction of unlikely or discordant elements may threaten the apparent objective realism of the camera-produced image (Pazderic 2009). And the ever increasing awareness of the potential for manipulation in staging scenes for a camera (choices of lighting, posture, setting) as well as the potential for (digital) manipulation of the image itself threaten the authority of the camera and its images (Gunning 2007). Finally, to the extent that some pictures may attain a level of evidential force, the relation between camera, evidence and objectivity is itself constructed and thus particular. The evidential authority of photographs coincides with a historical perception of camera as instrument associated with other scientific apparatus such as the barometer and the thermometer (Hight and Roscoe 2002:9). Ultimately, "what [historically] gave photography its power to evoke a truth was not only the privilege attached to mechanical means in industrial societies, but also its mobilization within the emerging apparatuses of a new and more penetrating form of the state [in the second half of the 19 century]" (Tagg 1988:61).

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[106] This problematic divide manifests both in photography and in documentary film (Cowie 1997).

The evidential force of images produced by camera, then, is an apparent and not

an inherent, capacity of the medium (Mitchell 2005:274). Nonetheless, even as the

technological developments of film and photography allow the production of images

which appear photographic but do not bear a direct indexical relationship to their

referents, something about photographs – and other mechanically produced images which

resemble photographs – continues to *appear* as objective records of events and as

unmediated evidence of the real (Sturken 2009:17). The photographic medium epitomizes

and exploits the authority of visual truth, an understanding of the world in which seeing is

not only believing but knowing.

According to Barthes, the mythical power of the photographic image lies in its

apparently direct transmission of reality and in the privileged connection between referent

and representation. First, the photograph maintains a privileged relation to that which it

depicts: the photograph itself is necessarily "that to which the referent adheres" (1980:3-6)

and there can be no photographic representation without a referent. Second, the

verisimilitude enabled through the medium produces an image which, while not itself

reality, appears as its "perfect analogon and it is exactly this analogical perfection which,

to common sense, defines the photograph… it is a message without a code" (1977:17).

The relationship between referent and photographic representation appears privileged

compared to that of other referential arts: the photograph seems able to depict without

transforming the necessary referent, enabling its appearance as a purely denotative,

innocent and objective representation.

Peirce's semiotic approach articulates the photograph's dual status as both an icon and an index of the referent. As index, photographs are created through the inscription of light on the surface of film; they are caused by and constitute traces, measurements, evidence, of the referent. At the same time, photographs not only measure the instant of their production, but show that to which they refer (Cowie 2007:90-91). A photograph appears as both icon and index: and the capacity to depict a referent to which they necessarily bear a causal connection produces the evidential force of the medium.

In their mythical capacity for authentication identified by Barthes, in their status as icon and index identified by Peirce, photographs appear to provide an immediate and unmediated access to their depicted referents, seemingly eradicating complications of translation and connotation, and enabling immediate and universal apprehension.[107] The privileged relation between referent and representation and the evidential force of the associated (photographic) image forms the legitimating feature of *Fitna*'s claim to tell the truth about the threat of Islamization.

Fitna's Photographs

Fitna frames its constituent images in a manner which foregrounds their photographic character, emphasizing their mythical capacity to show the real. The photographic images appear in stark distinction from the movie's non-photographic material which includes text, hand drawn illustrations, animated graphics, and computer generated images. Although the movie's still images and video footage exhibit a wide variety of styles in

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[107] Barthes 1977. Recent scholarship addresses photographic immediacy and untranslatability with respect to American politics (Morris 2004).

terms of colour, film quality, focal length, lighting, and camera angle, they are marked in the realist aesthetic which shores up their evidential force. These photographic images consistently conform to the aesthetics of documentary photography, which stress the medium's function as record; photographs whose appearance as aesthetic or artistic images may override their documentary function are not included (Cowie 2007). The movie deploys photographs according to the truth telling ideal as theorized by Barthes and Peirce, combining a verisimilitude akin to that perceived by the human perspective, with an emphasis on the scientific objectivity of the camera (Snyder and Allen 1975:149).

The shaking, jostled camera and extremely poor digital resolution, for instance, of footage from bombings in the Madrid metro, renders the depiction of smoke and cowering figures which accompanies the sound of explosion almost unidentifiable (Appendix 1 Shot 7). The footage epitomizes the evidential force of the medium, stressing "the supposed similarity between the camera and the eye as optical systems". As such the footage appears to show us "(or ought to show us) 'what we would have seen if we had been there ourselves'" (Snyder and Allen 1975: 149). The on-the-ground, first person perspective and shaky camera work appears to place the viewer immediately in the surrounding images and to reproduce the experience of having-been-there as poor digital resolution effects the visual confusion of smoke and chaos. This video fragment thus depicts the scene as perceived by the human eye, shaky, jostled, a confused and subjective impression of colours and movement: its realism stems from an experiential immediacy.

Other fragments in *Fitna* conform to a model of realism which emphasizes the mechanical connections between what is seen as a photograph and what was in front of the camera, so that the photograph appears as objective scientific evidence of the referent. This is particularly the case with numerous instances of televised news footage in which professional camera work captures Muslim men professing violent sentiments in press conferences, presentations, and sermons (Appendix 1 Shot 32). Here, footage does not engage the first person perspective but rather appears as an omniscient overview. In this sense the evidential force of the footage takes on the aesthetic of detached, objective and automated surveillance, stressing the technological authority of the camera as mechanical recorder and witness.

Fitna's constituent images, then, foreground conventions which stress their photographic capacity and power for representation. The images selected for inclusion in the movie display a marked realism emphasizing the photographic capacity for verisimilitude in representation and for depicting its referents as a form of message without a code. Further, the style of the pre-existing images emphasizes the apparent objectivity and scientific accuracy enabled in a mechanically reproduced medium, amplifying their evidential force. By amplifying the aspects of the photographs which contribute to their perceived evidential force, *Fitna* draws upon the capacity of its constituent images to show the real to support its documentary identification and thus to tell the truth.

Of course, the movie's documentary claim to show the real, like the evidential claim of the photographic medium to which it is related, is not necessarily indicative of its

public reception. Even as popular narrative refers to the movie as a documentary, the

narrative which recounts the movie's failure notes that it does not successfully reveal the

"real" truth of Islamization. What I address in this analysis is the extent to which the

movie structures it political appeal (to "Stop Islamization. Defend our freedom")

according to the criteria and claim of the documentary genre and the photographic

medium. The movie deploys the images in a manner which seeks to exploit their

evidential force. That the audience may not be convinced of the objective documentary or

truth telling capacity of its constituent images speaks to the differentiation between truth

telling as structurally enacted within *Fitna*, and the movie's impact as an accurate

representation of the real.[108]

Ambivalent Representation and Contested Truth

The controversy which surrounded the (mis)identification of a portrait included in the

movie illustrates the degree to which photographic exposure, telling the truth, and

showing the real are implicated in *Fitna*. Several contestations over copyright and

accuracy issues had developed immediately upon *Fitna*'s release, ultimately prompting

the creation of a second amended version. Contestation around the accuracy and

appropriate display of pre-existing material in the movie referred to illustrations (a reprint

of the cartoon associated with the Danish cartoon affair of 2006 (Appendix 1 Sot 2, 49));

audio clips (a radio interview with Theo van Gogh replayed over photographic footage

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[108] For an elaboration of this distinction as it applies to *Fitna* with respect to fear, offense and truth telling see chapter two. As the final component of this chapter demonstrates, the critique of photography's claim to show the real, and the skeptical reception of the movie's accuracy by its audience, provides the grounds for interrogating the truth telling performances which figure prominently in an affective economy of uncertainty.

(Appendix 1 Shot 19)); and a portrait labeled as 'Mohammad B.' (Appendix 1 Shot 20).

Notably, the movie's constituent realist, documentary style photographic images faced no refutations with respect to their truthfulness.

The contested portrait depicts the face of a man of North African descent rendered in the style of a police line-up mugshot, bearing a caption which indicates its subject to be Mohammad Bouyeri, Theo van Gogh's assassin. Yet after the movie's release the portrait was rather identified as Dutch Moroccan rapper Saleh Edin, shot as the cover of his latest album (with the intentional reference to portraits of Bouyeri). Wilders subsequently released a new version of *Fitna* replacing the original portrait with an accurate image.

Placed alongside the movie's pre-existing mass media fragments, the contested portrait is remarkable for the ambivalence of its photographic character. Though the portrait of Bouyeri/Saleh Edin is a photograph, when rendered in *Fitna* the picture lacks the medium's characteristic verisimilitude and resembles more clearly a detailed (hand) drawing. Ultimately the error was solved by substituting an image accurately depicting the subject, so that the relationship between the referent and representation remained intact. With respect to the evidential force of photographs in *Fitna*, the portrait constitutes an instance of instability of both the image's photographic character (is this a photograph or a drawing?) and the accuracy with which it tells the truth about its depicted referent (is this Bouyeri or Edin?).

The contested portrait provides an instructive limit case for a consideration of the photograph's power for representation and authentication in *Fitna*. It is striking that the image in the movie whose truth value is most contested is precisely that whose

photographic status is the least evident. Indeed, the picture's lack of totalizing

verisimilitude compromised its purported photographic truth from the outset, as the

presence of an internal caption labeling the subject indicates the necessity for a textual

(re)affirmation of the referent's identity.[109]

At the same time, the portrait maintains considerable resemblance to a photograph.

As such the photograph remains responsible for showing the true referent as labeled: new

versions of the movie had to correct the photographic error, substituting an accurate

portrait of Bouyeri. The portrait indicates the degree to which *Fitna*'s truth telling claims

invoke the authority of its constituent photographic images.

Ultimately, *Fitna* builds its claim to tell the truth upon the apparent capacity for its

constituent photographs to depict the referent with total verisimilitude and the objectivity

of mechanical reproduction; to show the real. As such, the movie demonstrates a

conception of truth telling as analogous to (photographic) exposure. Intertwining the real,

the truth, and the visual record, *Fitna* not only uses pre-existing images to show a threat

upon whose reality rests the movie's political appeal to "defend our freedom", but usurps

the evidential force of the photographic medium to legitimize this appeal. Consequently,

the movie's defensive political argument is based not on the content of its constituent

images but on the documentary authority claimed by the photographic medium.

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[109] The caption also serves to identify Bouyeri to an international audience not familiar with the assassination. However, moments later realist, photographic footage of his victim Theo van Gogh goes unlabeled.

Exposure and/as Truth: *Fitna* in Context

Insofar as *Fitna* appears as documentary, it engages in truth telling as a process of (photographic) exposure, showing what is real in an authoritative form. Analyzing the means through which *Fitna* claims to document (that is, to record and to evidence) the threat of Islam opens the space to identify, parochialize, and critique the mechanics and assumptions at work in a process of truth telling prevalent in the context of the movie's production. The following section considers the (photographic) resonance between truth telling in *Fitna* and in the affective economy of uncertainty. *Fitna*'s deployment of photographic images mirrors a slippage between honesty and truth which has a rich precedent in current and historical Dutch political discourse, and which is particularly associated with the increasing prevalence and interrelation of anti-Islam and national identity discourses. Both operate as a form of (photographic) exposure claiming to authoritatively, transparently expose the truth of a referent, describing the mode through which uncertainty circulates in the country's affective economy.

New Realism

Baukje Prins (2002) identifies a *new realist* genre of political discourse which emerged in the 1990s and valorizing the act of frank individual expression and radical free speech as the means for "bringing out into the open" the hidden and silenced voice of a legitimate Dutch polity. [110] Prins' observations of new realism trace the development of truth telling

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[110] This model is thoughtfully articulated by Baukje Prins (2002, 2004) , from which this summary draws heavily. While I hope to demonstrate the theoretical potential of an analysis of the formal (dis)continuities between anti-Islam populism and new realism, this is not to say that anti-Islam populism is the inevitable

in the Dutch socio-political landscape, and provide my point of departure for considering

the practice of (photographic) exposure which it shares with *Fitna*.

According to Prins' (2002) typology, four properties distinguish the new realist

public figure. First, the new realist presents her or himself as a taboo-breaking leader who

dares to face facts and speak frankly about the truths covered up by dominant discourse.

Second, the new realist speaks these truths on behalf of the autochthonous population.

Third, the new realist's emphasis on truth telling is appropriated as a characteristic of

national identity, with an equation of being "frank, straightforward and realistic" with

"being Dutch" (2002:n.p.). Finally, new realist discourse sets itself against the left,

characterized in the form of a "progressive elite that dominates the public realm with its

politically correct sensibilities" (2002:n.p.). Truth telling plays a key role in the new

realist genre, as it is the action through which a hidden, suppressed or ignored real is

brought to light in the public. This truth telling appears as a form of (photographic)

exposure which simultaneously illustrates and evidences the real referent it claims to

represent.

Prins notes several events marking the development of new realism and its

implication of anti-Islam and national identity discourse in recent Dutch history. The

political genre made its public debut in association with the emerging salience of the

national minorities debate. Bolkestein's speech in 1991, announcing that "the integration

of minorities should be handled with guts" (Prins 2002:n.p.), both brought issues of

immigration and integration to the fore and inaugurated the new realist style in addressing

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extension of new realism, nor that new realism can be retroactively identified as a version of anti-Islam
populism.

the minority issue by prescribing the suitable style of response ("with guts"). The statement marks the emergence of a particular new realist political form suited to the changing content of public political discourse, and only intensified in Scheffer's subsequent "Multicultural Drama" (2000) (Buruma 2006:29; Prins 2002:n.p.).

In 2001, statements by Imam Khalil el Moumni referring to homosexuality as a contagious disease, and his subsequent court case for discrimination, brought Scheffer's multicultural drama and new realism into the realm of public performance. Journalist Herman Vuisje praised the widespread public condemnation of el-Moumni's comments as "'a milestone in frankness': unlike ten years ago when political correctness still prevailed, the Dutch 'are no longer afraid to say what they think, and people are once again prepared to act.' (Wagendorp 2001)" (Prins 2002:n.p.). Rendered in new realist terms, condemnation of el-Moumni appears not only as the critique of or objection to the Imam's comments, but also as the courageous honesty of autochthonous Dutch. The new realist courage here appears to expose the truth by speaking against the Imam, the national and religious minorities he is presumed to represent, and the multicultural political elite that protects him.

Indeed, Vuisje's prescient comment regarding opposition to el-Moumni would come to define the terms of discourse surrounding the problem of minority populations and political representation in the following decades. In Bolkestein's comments, in Scheffer's article, and in the coverage of the el Moumni case, new realists claim the willingness – and moreover courage – to expose the way it really is and to bring out into the public realm sentiments otherwise blunted and silenced by political correctness.

Truth Telling Public Figures

By 2000 the practice of truth telling had escalated to the point that, "frankness was no longer practiced for the sake of truth but for its own sake" (Prins 2002:n.p.). This marks the transformation from new realist political mode to hyperrealism, in which truth telling as the preferred mode of political discourse transforms through an intensified emphasis on style. Hyperrealism shifted emphasis from *truth* telling to truth *telling*, privileging the performance of honesty and transparent representation of personal opinion as the basis for claiming political legitimacy. [111]

The figures whose public personae are so deeply implicated in the shifting political landscape of the 1990s and 2000s also epitomize the hyperrealist truth telling form. Prins primarily builds her theorization of hyperrealism with reference to Fortuyn. Her work predates the public visibility of van Gogh and Hirsi Ali, but I argue that these figures equally shape and illustrate an increasing prevalence of truth telling and/as performative exposure.

Indeed, I argue that the (dis)continuities between Fortuyn, van Gogh, and Hirsi Ali, indicate distinct modes of truth telling as exposure at work in the Dutch landscape: truth telling as representing the real people; truth telling as the freedom of expressing

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[111] Honesty figures prominently in public and political discourse, as part of a discursive performance in which figures claim to bring out into the open what they really feel. Of course the extent to which these expressions manifest the individuals' "true feelings" is both impossible to substantiate and outside the scope of this analysis. What is at issue in the prevalence of honesty as a key term in political performance is its claim to *transparency*. I argue that it is precisely the claim for representation to provide objective and immediate access to the real which political performances of honest truth telling share with the photographic medium.

what one really thinks; and truth telling as revealing the way it really is.[112] These modes

interrelate and intensify towards throughout the decade, as particularly evidenced in the

public image cultivated by Wilders. In their various ways, all perform the slippage

between the true and the real that is at the heart of claims to (photographic) exposure.

Fortuyn mobilized a dormant portion of the voting public by claiming to speak on

its behalf, and thus he claimed to expose the real in two ways. First, and most

significantly, Fortuyn claimed to represent the autochthonous Dutch as a real – that is,

both actual and authentic – constituency. Forwarding himself as the representation of a

silenced polity, the politician then claimed to express their political sentiment in

opposition to both the dominant political leadership and the presence of Muslims and

other minorities. Fortuyn's slogan in which he promised to "say as I do and do as I say"

illustrates how his political credibility built from a claim to honesty, one which extended

to his own appearance as reliable representation of the real, (silenced) autochthonous

population.

As Prins notes, Fortuyn famously appeared on the cover of magazine *De Jong*

gagged with his necktie and captioned with the heading, 'Are you allowed to say

everything you think?: Dutch taboos'" (De Jong qtd. in Prins 2002:n.p.). In continuance

with the new realist discourse of the minority debate, the multicultural drama and the el

Moumni controversy, Fortuyn's hyperrealism involved a claim to bring out into the

public domain what had previously remained stifled and silenced. Coupled with the claim

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[112] This is a question of emphasis, not mutual exclusion; each public figure draws upon all of these aspects.
I distinguish them here as a means for articulating the various dimensions of a truth telling style which
coexist and interrelate.

that he would "say what we're all thinking", Fortuyn's public image engaged a formal claim about the accuracy and transparency of his representational capacity to, above all else, represent the real: the "we" of the autochthonous population.

Theo van Gogh also cultivated a public image based on the flagrant performance of truth telling. Van Gogh's case illustrates the element of offense and provocation through radical self-expression as a form of truth telling. Buruma traces van Gogh's offensive style through a heritage of earlier artists who operated through a tradition of "abusive criticism" beginning in early 20th century writing (2006:97).

Both van Gogh and Fortuyn engaged in truth telling as the performative exposure of the real, an exposure in which provocative comments against Muslims and Islam featured prominently. However the two figures foreground different dimensions of truth telling. Van Gogh cultivated a mode of truth telling as personal exposure through radical self expression, targeting any and all subjects he deemed taboo. Fortuyn's exposure involved a representational political claim. For van Gogh the truth telling performance involved straightforward provocation under the banner of radical self expression, exposing the real of offensive personal opinion. Note here that in both cases the real connotes both the actual (that which exists for certain) and the genuine (that which is not false or fake). The truth telling of Fortuyn and van Gogh provide particularly clear illustrations of the slide between the real and the true as it occurs in claims to show or expose, whether in reference to the autochthonous Dutch or to personal opinion.

Finally, Hirsi Ali forms a third key truth telling figure, as a woman exposing the real character of Islam, and particularly the ways it endangers Muslim women. Hirsi Ali

troubles the figure of the new realist, typically a man who resembles as well as represents the autochthonous population on whose behalf he speaks. As a hyperrealist, Hirsi Ali's ambivalent identity provides her a powerful position as a proud Dutch citizen denouncing Islam with an insider's authority (see de Leeuw and van Wichelen 2005). This doubled position as both one of the Dutch and a former Muslim shored up her personal truth telling with the credibility of exposing the real Islam.[113]

This element of Hirsi Ali's hyperrealist truth telling materializes in *Submission*. The movie is made "to work as a form of 'shock therapy' where the shock denotes a confession of the 'naked truth' which should open our eyes" (de Leeuw and van Michelin 2005:335). As such, the truth telling claim to make public the otherwise hidden or silenced appears in *Submission's* aim to "visually 'open up' the Islamic 'ghetto' by unveiling and testifying to the internal [gender and sexual] violence of Muslim communities" (2005:329). Truth telling for Hirsi Ali then involved a form of saying and showing the real Islam as experienced from the inside. In the case of *Submission's* imagery of nude female bodies inscribed with Quranic verses, this is an exposure which literally bares the naked truth.

The divergences and continuities between Fortuyn, van Gogh and Hirsi Ali foreground the overlapping dimensions of truth telling, all of which involve the performance of exposure, of showing the real. Towards the second half of the 2000s,

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[113] As de Leeuw and van Wichelen insightfully note, at the same time that this doubled identity legitimizes the content of Hirsi Ali's message on behalf of "the Dutch", it dismisses entirely the voices of the young Muslim women that she "is actually representing" in her public presence; indeed "one of the reasons why especially young Muslim women feel provoked by Hirsi Ali is because she not only presents herself as an expert on religious matters but also because she deprives them of their own identities" (2005:331).

these various dimensions of truth telling both intensified and amalgamated, materializing

most recently in Wilders' public image.

Wilders mimics Fortuyn in claiming truth telling as a basis for political

legitimacy, and in claiming to expose the sentiments of the real Dutch. Like Fortuyn,

Wilders frames his politics as the representation of a hidden and disgruntled

autochthonous population, exposing their reality in resistance to multicultural society and

powerful ruling elite. Wilders' incorporation of this legitimizing claim is neatly summed

up in his own statement that, "Because we speak the truth voters have given my party…

the power to influence the political decision process." (Wilders 2010).

Wilders consistently makes provocative statements for the apparently pure

purpose of exercising his free expression, his intention to "say what I want" despite an

attempted silencing from Islam and from the political multicultural elite. The implication

is that free (provocative) expression involves a form of honesty, of transparently

revealing personal opinion, which legitimates its practice and provides the speaker with

credibility. As such Wilders' claims that his provocative statements are not meant as

offense but rather are simple statements of truth or individual expression.

Indeed, Wilders' trial (and acquittal) for discrimination and inciting hatred due to

statements about Islam provided an element in his appearance as courageous truth teller

defending the right to free expression of his opinions. As he describes, "I have been

brought to court because of my opinions on Islam and because I have voiced these

opinions in speeches, articles and in my documentary film *Fitna*" (Wilders 2010). Thus

his response to accusations of intentionally provoking discord and hatred: "well this is not

my aim, but I give you an honest answer about what I believe" (Wilders "Interview, Fox News" 2008).[114] Wilders' realism involves and intensifies van Gogh's practice of offensive speech as an exercise in free expression, in which "saying what I want" becomes an act of truth telling exposure.

This crucial element further blurs the line in truth telling realism between Fortuyn's claim to say "what we are all thinking" and, as Wilders is fond of claiming, saying "what I want". In this second aspect of truth telling Wilders draws from the provocative styling of van Gogh. In combination with the populist claim to speak for the people, Wilders' accumulates and intensifies these two forms of truth telling so that the practice of self-expression appears as a means for representing the voice of a silenced populist public.

Finally, like Hirsi Ali, Wilders' statements appear not merely to express what he wants, but also to factually reveal the true nature of Islam. Indeed Wilders is quite explicit about the evidential intention of his anti-Islam statements; I have already indicated his common reference to *Fitna* as intended to "expose the real nature of the Koran" (CNN Interview 2008), as indicated in his comments with respect to *Fitna* and its stated purpose "showing that the Quran is a terrible and fascist book" ("Provocerende film" 2007). In this case the aspect of honest exposure blatantly blurs the line between assertions of personal opinion and assertions of (dubious) facticity. The slide between *transparency*, *reality* and *truth* peaks in Wilders' performative honesty, such that his opinion in this slippage appears as the exposure of fact.

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[114] Despite this assertion, his language suggests otherwise, as he for instance consistently uses the offensive term *hoofdookje* to refer to *hijab* when calling for a ban on their public appearance (Prins 2010).

Thus Wilders' public image aggregates and intensifies the various truth telling tactics of Fortuyn, van Gogh and Hirsi Ali. In this process the performance of exposure erases the boundaries between the different shades of truth telling so that "saying what I want" – the honest but offensive airing of opinions about Islam – appears as a representation of the autochthonous Dutch, an exposure and proof of the civilizational difference of Islam and its threat to national identity; and a political exercise in free expression opposing multiculturalist hegemony.

Considered in relation to this context, then, *Fitna* demonstrates an understanding of telling the truth as (photographic) exposure, showing the real through bringing it to light. In both cases, the truth is that which is produced through the public display of the real, as exposed through an authoritative medium, whether the honest speech of a public representative or the mechanical reproduction of the camera. And the honest public performance of public figures such as Fortuyn, Hirsi Ali, and Wilders is mirrored in *Fitna*'s engagement with photographic images and their evidential force.

The Implications of Photographic Truth Telling

Several implications follow from *Fitna*'s use of pre-existing photographs and its construction of truth telling as a process of photographic exposure. At the heart of *Fitna*'s documentary claim is a conception that (photographic) exposure, claiming to show the real, authenticates the truth of the referent. The movie's use of pre-existing photographs on the basis of their evidential force depends upon this understanding.

Slippage between showing the real and telling the truth forms the key issues at the

heart of the theorizations by Barthes and Peirce, who note that the privileged connection

between referent and representation means that by *showing* the referent, the photograph

appears to authenticate its existence. As such the photograph appears as incontrovertible

"objective and innocent" evidence of the "having been there" of the camera and its

referent (Barthes 1977:43-44). [115] This is the doubled edge of evidential force. The

photograph strives to work in two directions to claim, first, that the photograph shows the

truth through a trustworthy depiction of the real, and second, that as a result what the

photograph shows must be real.

Authenticating the Referent

At stake in both *Fitna*'s claim to show the real through documentary photographs and in

the public performance of telling the truth is the evidential force of exposure and the

capacity for a representation to evidence the real. *Fitna* exposes how claims to tell the

truth in speaking for an authentic (id)entity work in terms of photographic exposure to

authenticate as much as to represent their referent. Through photographic truth telling

political figures such as Fortuyn and Wilders claim to speak for an autochthonous

population. Explicit claims to honesty by these public figures works not (only) to

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[115] Alternate interpretations critique the totalizing representative capacity of photography as the medium's weakness relative to memory (Kracauer 1995). And as Cowie notes, despite normative conceptualizations of photographs as evidence, what the indexical relation guarantees is not the reality of the referent, of our world of objects, people, and actions"- but merely "the action of light reflected" (2007:91).

legitimize the individual as political representative/representation, but to confirm the true

existence of the constituents they claim to represent.[116]

Truth telling discourse consistently claiming to represent a disgruntled and

dismissed population thus acts to authenticate the very notion of autochthony and national

identity. This is not to suggest that representation of the autochthonous Dutch creates

people who somehow are autochthonous Dutch, just as a photograph does not physically

create its referent. Rather, the representation of the (threatened) autochthonous Dutch

referent through authoritative truth telling discourse enables the saliency of the identity,

appears to evidence its existence as a cohesive entity, and moreover asserts the oppression

of this autochthonous identity at the hands of a disinterested political elite and a

dangerous (Muslim) other as truth. The (photographic) exposure of autochthony and

national identity discourse thus produces autochthonous Dutch as both real and true – that

is an actual, existing, and moreover genuine – (id)entity.

Put differently, assertions of honest truth telling may be considered to authorize

the truth of a referent whose existence or precise nature is actually dubious. Despite

common sense perception, the evidential force of the photograph is (only) mythical, and

representational fidelity does not necessarily correspond to truth value (Tagg 1982).[117]

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[116] This observation opens a possible alternative or expansion for theorizations of hyperrealist discourse. Prins terms the intensification of new realism *hyperrealism* [sic] to signal its extreme concern with superficial form for its own sake. Viewing the political style of Fortuyn as hyperrealist draws important attention to the ways that his political rhetoric justifies a political agenda through the form of its expression, and which elevates telling the truth to a form of public performance privileging form over its content. However, the term suggests a discourse which denies or dismisses the importance of the real or the truth it claims to reveal. Rather, I suggest that truth telling public figures privilege the form and style of their political argumentation precisely as a means for reasserting the existence of, and ultimately asserting the power to produce as true referents they claim to represent.

[117] The criticism effectively applies to political representation, which unlike photography (and despite claims to the contrary) engages a much looser association between representation and its claimed referent.

This is particularly relevant considering that while the photographic medium shares with truth telling discourses the claim to transparent representation and a performance of public exposure, truth telling public figures do not require a referent in the same way.

This photographic model for truth telling speaks to recent widespread proclamations of a national identity crisis concentrated in, but not limited to, the populist claim to represent the authentic Dutch. As noted in chapter three, analysts observe that the considerable attention that declarations of the crisis receive work to *produce* rather than to *reflect* both the terms of national identity and the crisis itself (Prins 2010). Considered in photographic terms, the representational power of truth telling public figures authenticate and interpellate a national autochthonous identity, as well as validating the apparent truth of its crisis.

Producing Truth

Fitna's deployment of photographs as evidence suggests that there is more at stake in truth telling discourses than a validation of the speaker as an accurate representation of the entity upon whose behalf they speak. Rather, truth telling exposure functions photographically, mobilizing the representational power of the medium to authenticate the depicted referents as real and true. Thus, one implication of photographic truth telling is an authentication of the referent: the performance of new realist public figures claiming to tell the truth on behalf of an autochthonous population do not represent so much as authenticate and interpellate their referents. The second implication occurs in an exaggeration of the photographic claim to show the real: if the evidential force of

photographs implies that they tell the truth, the images also suggest that in so doing, what(ever) they tell must be true.

Not (only) the photographic images in *Fitna* but the means through which they are assembled and mobilized in service of the movie's larger political appeal to "Stop Islamization. Defend our freedom" speak to the potential exaggeration of the photographic medium's truth telling claim. The movie exaggerates the evidential force of its constituent images into a totalizing suggestion that anything an image depicts is true. In the case of truth telling in the Dutch context, this totalizing expansion and its consequences might be identified in the case of inflammatory statements regarding Islam, representations of personal opinion which come to appear as true statements of fact. In this respect truth telling discourses share with the evidential force of the photograph an implication that the representation by a truth telling individual or images authorizes what(ever) it exposes to be true.

The exaggeration is at work in the movie's selection and arrangement of photographic images of the newspaper headlines which form a key element of its truth telling claim and especially its defensive political argument. In accordance with themes of the movie's visual content as a whole, the headlines trumpet instances of violence associated with Muslims and lament the incursion of Islam into various aspects of the public sphere (Appendix 1 Shot 45). One provocative headline which addresses both of these themes announces, "Girls still genitally mutilated in Amsterdam", signaling both the religion's apparent gender based violence and its continuing presence in the city. This photographic rendering of the newspaper, as with all of the headlines depicted in the

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movie, doubly engages the apparent truth telling capacity of its medium to authorize the depicted content as true. In this instance the totalizing evidential authority of the photographic medium authenticates both the depicted newspaper – the referent – and its assertion regarding continued genital mutilation in Amsterdam.

The connoted facticity of the headline depends upon representational power, first of the newspaper as a truth telling medium, and then redoubled and extended in its photographic depiction.[118] While the newspaper itself as trustworthy record of fact is a necessary component in the authorization of the truth of increasing genital mutilation within the movie, it is particularly the *photographic* truth telling claim which is at issue here. *Fitna* could have made this factual claim through a graphic aid – as it does with the animated graph charting the increase in the country's Muslim population – an approach which still would have presented the information through the authority of a scientific appearance. But visualized as a photographed headline, the assertion is doubly authorized through the authority of the media and the evidential force of the photograph. Another possible alternative would have depicted the words of the headline as plain text on the screen, with a citation of date and newspaper name providing the evidence proving at least the existence of the headline. But the fragments of newspaper pages depicted in the photographs lack clear date and location, and in many cases do not even indicate which newspaper carried the headline. These identifying details, which would otherwise authorize the newspaper's apparent facticity, are apparently not necessary for validating the statement regarding genital mutilation as true fact. Rather the authority of the

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[118] Of course, when framed in terms of reception the newspaper – like photographs - is not necessarily accepted as authoritative. See chapter two for a discussion of the place of reception in this analysis.

photographic medium itself as evidencing the existence of the newspaper suffices for authenticating the headline, and its message, as true.

In this instance the headline's assertion appears authorized as true due to the photographic medium in which it is depicted, despite the gap between the referent (the newspaper headline) and the message ultimately authorized as true (genital mutilation). The slippage between the power of representation and the power of authentication with respect to the photographic medium in this case has reached the point of totalization. The mythical evidential force of the photographic images in *Fitna* authorize as true the existence of the referent they depict as well as any other claims associated with them.

This same mechanism is at work in the movie as a whole. *Fitna*'s deployment of photographs operate on the basis that, because the photographic medium evidences the true occurrence of a violent action imaged in a mass media fragment, it also legitimizes the suggestion that that action proves the violence of Islam. Even further, it is the same authority of the photographic medium which the movie deploys to authorize assertions regarding the threat Islam poses to the Netherlands. The evidential force of the photographic medium expands here so that the medium's representational power authenticates the having-been-there of the referent, the association of that referent with a connoted meaning regarding the violence of Islam, and the further mobilization of that meaning in service of a political appeal to "defend our freedom" from the threat of Islamization.

Fitna exposes the potential for the power of the photograph to authenticate the existence of its referent to become a totalizing claim about the truth of its content. In the

greater context of public discourse this process is at work in the honest claims of Dutch

public figures whose performance of truth telling appears to authorize what(ever) they say

as true. The implication is that truth telling discourses function to confirm any honest

expression of personal experience or opinion as not only a true representation but as *the*

real – here, the truth about Islam and its threat to freedom. The totalizing authorization of

truth enabled by photographic arguments of evidential force produces a slippage between

transparent expressions of personal opinion, accurate representation of an authentic Dutch

constituency, and exposure of the real violence of Islam.

Wilders' extremism provides an instructive case, in his intensification of offensive

speech, of "saying what I want" as truth telling free expression. He builds legitimacy on

his claim to honesty, to the idea that what he says is indicative of what he thinks; that he

says what he wants; and that the public articulation and materialization of his politics

matches his private opinion. At the same time, Wilders' truth telling conflates a dual

function of provocative self expression and revealing the real Islam, claiming "to expose

the real nature of the Koran" (Wilders "CNN Interview" 2008). Wilders' recent trial –

and acquittal – for discrimination and inciting hatred due to statements about Islam

provides a platform from which he can maintain his appearance as courageous truth teller

who defends the right to free expression through its practice by telling the truth about his

own opinions. As he describes, "I have been brought to court because of my opinions on

Islam and because I have voiced these opinions in speeches, articles and in my

documentary film *Fitna*" (Wilders 2010).

As *Fitna* indicates, these expressions of personal opinion about Islam framed as (photographic) exposure appear to authorize these assertions as truth. Thus in extreme versions of truth telling the mode of discourse erases the boundaries between the different shades of truth telling so that "saying what I want" – the honest but offensive airing of opinions about Islam – further appears as a representation of the real Dutch, an exposure and proof of the true nature of Islam; and a political exercise in free expression opposing multiculturalist hegemony. Ultimately, an assertion of evidential force is at stake in the (photographic) exposure of truth telling. This evidential force works to authenticate the autochthonous referent which national(ist) politicians claim to represent as real and true. And in its most exaggerated form, the evidential force implies that in (photographic) exposure, not only is the truth revealed, but whatever is exposed must be true.

Conclusions

In closing, I return to Jiske's comments which opened this chapter: her notion that though she might disagree with Wilders and his politics she appreciates his honesty; her assertion that though she abhors its message *Fitna*'s real photographs tell the truth. The proximity of these comments in our conversation is indicative of a resonance between *Fitna*'s claim to show the real and the truth telling so prevalent in the current Dutch context. In seeking to visually evidence the threat Islam poses to the Netherlands, *Fitna* enacts the marked concern with exposing the truth that also manifests in many aspects of public, and particularly anti-Islam and autochthony, discourse. Given the continuance, this chapter's

close reading of *Fitna* posits truth telling as the mode through which uncertainty circulates in the country.

In their truth telling performances public figures such as Fortuyn and Wilders constitute figures within an affective economy of uncertainty, claiming to articulate the anxieties of an authentic population and to courageously expose Islamization as their threatening cause. An exploration of truth telling practices thus traces the interrelation between claims to show how it really is, and the (re)production of the crucial figures in the affective economy – autochthony, national identity crisis, and Islamization. Such an exploration lays bare the mechanics of affective circulation which undergird the construction of *autochthonous Dutch* as a discrete entity, and denaturalizes its interrelation with a particular Other (Islamization) and a nationalist political project. Further, identifying truth telling as a mode for affective circulation indicates the broader constellation of elements which figure into the current affective economy, notably assumptions and attitudes that link scientific objectivity, truth and evidence to the mechanically (re)produced picture and an association of visuality and understanding which claims that to show is to know.

Fitna demonstrates a conception of truth telling as a process of (photographic) exposure, rendering the real in visual terms which carry evidential force. The strategy materializes and renders visible the truth telling claims of anti-Islam and autochthony discourses, in which prominent figures engage in the public performance of exposure seeks to bring the actual but invisible real (Islam, Dutch) to light. Identifying the photographic character of current anti-Islam and national identity discourse reveals what

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is at stake in political claims to expose the truth. Just as the photographic image appears to authenticate its referent, truth telling discourses work to authenticate the entities they claim to represent. And further, the evidential force of the photograph implies a claim that whatever the image depicts is real; a totalizing claim which finds its analogue in the suggestion that what(ever) is revealed in the form of transparent representation must (therefore) be true.

Fitna's deployment of photographs as evidence suggests that there is more at stake in truth telling discourses than a validation of the speaker as an accurate representation of the entity upon whose behalf they speak. Rather, truth telling functions in the manner of photographs in which the representational power of the medium appears to authenticate the content of the depiction as true. In photographic terms, the representational power of truth telling public figures authenticate and produce as true the existence of the entities they claim to represent and to expose. Such discourse works to authenticate an autochthonous Dutch identity reified as a political constituency, and to legitimize as true whatever is exposed under a claim to tell the truth. A consideration of *Fitna*'s purported desire to expose the truth thus articulates the photographic aspects of anti-Islam and autochthony discourses in the Netherlands and sheds new light on the mechanics and also the potential implications of a political credibility built on claims to expose the truth.

CHAPTER SEVEN

FAILURE:

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

"It didn't work."

"It's so bad!"

"I could have made that myself."

"I feel completely screwed…"

"It's so silly."

"That isn't what we're like, you know."

"If it wasn't so damn sad it would be funny."

"What a joke!"

"You shouldn't study *Fitna*. Nobody believes it."

"Nobody takes that movie seriously."

"That's just nonsense."

"No one cares."

"It's so *obvious*."

Reflections on the Study of a (Failed?) Object

As even this brief selection of statements illustrates, in the immediate aftermath of *Fitna*'s

release, the heightened anticipation and anxiety which had built up in the Netherlands in

the preceding months gave way to a deflated dismissal, the shoulder-shrugging sense that

despite great expectations, the movie had failed. Today, although *Fitna* maintains a place in popular consciousness, the widespread perception among residents of the Netherlands that *Fitna didn't work* has solidified into normative popular narrative. The degree to which the movie has been dismissed as ineffective and uninteresting remains so salient as to have prompted many of my conversants to query – sometimes to directly challenge – the movie's validity as an object of study.

Though superficially straightforward, in the immediate skip from a condemnation that *Fitna* is "bad" and "didn't work" to dismissal of its importance, impact or analytical value, a popular narrative of *failure* incorporates a constellation of heterogeneous assumptions and expressions. At times the movie's failure is articulated as the silliness, obviousness, or inaccuracy of its rhetoric and aesthetics; at others, as the lack of violent response from Muslims, and the lack of fearful response from non-Muslims. The narrative of the movie's failure catalogues expectations disappointed, as *Fitna*'s failure is cast as its falling flat, the resonance it does not find and the chords it does not strike.

My interlocutors' accounts of *Fitna*'s failure proved the greatest theoretical and methodological challenge for this project. It is through the narrative of failure that the subjects at the heart of this analysis – residents of the Netherlands who live within and shape the affective economy, who support opposition to Islam or who actively oppose it, who made and watched and talked about *Fitna* – speak back to my interpretations. Their voices confronted me directly with the risks and challenges of exploring a collective gut feeling; of seeking the codes to a community in a movie which does not resonate as representing them. These narratives challenged me to ask, what value is there in the study

something that doesn't matter, an object that doesn't work and doesn't even look good? Worse, what can any object possibly reveal about the gut feelings of those who fail to find resonance with, or see themselves reflected in, that object?

These issues have remained at the forefront of my mind throughout the process of researching and writing this dissertation. Over the past four years I have persevered in my interpretation of *Fitna* and, through it, of the current socio-political landscape of the Netherlands, all the while haunted by the voices of my interlocutors: *but the movie didn't work*. The challenge has shaped each step of my research, analysis, and writing, influencing my most superficial considerations of the movie's unsophisticated style to the foundational issues at the heart of my methodological analysis. Ultimately, thinking through these challenges has convinced me that though I take seriously the words of my interlocutors, it is precisely *Fitna*'s perception as a failed object which amplifies its effectiveness – both in its work in the Dutch socio-political landscape, and as the object of this analysis.

I take this final chapter as an opportunity to unpack the complex of issues raised in the notion of the movie's failure: to interrogate the movie's successes and failures as articulated by a popular Dutch public; to illustrate the theoretical potential of *failure* as conceptualized in relation to expectation; and to reflect upon the methodological challenges and advantages of studying this particular "failed" object. I conclude by reasserting that, as the preceding chapters have demonstrated, the integration of close attention to the movie itself and its situation within the context of ethnographic fieldwork

can and does effectively nuance an understanding of *Fitna*, of opposition to Islam, and of a collective gut feeling of uncertainty in the Netherlands today.

Fitna's Failure?

I begin this exploration by unpacking the narrative which so challenged my analytical project, articulating some of the manifold dimensions encompassed in the notion of *Fitna*'s failure. The following summary lays the groundwork for interrogating whether or on what grounds it may indeed have failed, and what the perceptions of the movie's shortcomings indicate about the context of its production, particularly with respect to the framing concepts of fear, offense and truth telling which have shaped this dissertation.

Public response to *Fitna* in the immediate aftermath of its release took on a distinctly disappointed tone. The commonly expressed notion that "nothing happened" foregrounds a sense of the movie as failing to live up to the expectations, elaborated in comments that "it didn't work" or was "just bad". The *Reformatisch Dagblad* commented bitterly the day following *Fitna*'s release,

> "After weeks of anticipation, citizens and politicians finally find out what [it is] they have been waiting for for so long. The phantom film is not an April Fool's prank. Who is this man who has held the Netherlands and the rest of the world hostage for months on end?" (qtd. in Nieuwsmonitor 2008a:4).

And an individual posting a review of the movie through the blog of news site *nu.nl* very much characterized public discourse:

"Cliché, whining violins, amateur fade outs that any idiot with a Windows MovieMaker could make himself, and in between, captions in a standard Word font. No, *Fitna* does not set its sights on the Best Short Documentary Oscar. I feel completely screwed by Wilders." ("PiBu Review"2008).

These selections illustrate the sense of disappointment surrounding *Fitna*'s anticlimactic release, the gap between what the movie was perceived to have promised and what it did not deliver. Ultimately at issue in evaluative accounts of the movie declaring its failure are the expectations circulating in advance of its release. Laments for what the movie is-not-and-did-not, reveals what it was expected to-be-and-to-do.

Aesthetic and Political Failure

I will return to these expectations to consider what such anticipation and disappointment may have effectively achieved for the movie's political aims. But first I point out an important conflation that they foreground within the failure narrative, which attributes *Fitna*'s political failure to its aesthetic failure. That is, comments registering disappointment see *Fitna*'s failure to incite violent reaction as a function of the movie itself, attributing muted public response to its elementary rhetoric and technical lack of sophistication.

The popular account of *Fitna*'s failure typically includes the statement that "it [the movie] didn't work" and "it's so bad" within the same breath. One of my respondents derisively referred to the movie as "Wilders' PowerPoint presentation", while during another conversation my interlocutor scoffed at the mention of *Fitna*, saying, "who cares?

It's so bad. I could have made that!" (fieldnotes, May 12, 2010). These comments and many similar conversations evaluate the movie's lack of technical sophistication as an aesthetic fault, which is then directly conflated with a perceived lack of political impact.

The perception of *Fitna*'s aesthetic failure is rooted in the movie's distinctly amateur aesthetic, produced through several stylistic elements.[119] In formal terms, the movie's use of pre-existing footage and the editing style with which they are assembled display a marked lack of technical or artistic sophistication. The use of familiar images, or images deemed easily accessible online, and lack of original footage produces the sense that since "anyone" could access the found material, "anyone" could have made the movie. Similarly, the manner of assembling pre-existing material is assembled bears the "obvious" marks of video image, presentation, or even word processing software. Techniques such as fading in and out between images, the effect of a newspaper page appearing to peel away from a page, and the shimmering font of the headings resonated with viewers as the simplistic and cliché features of amateur video editing.

And the movie's amateur quality is further heightened through its debut and (primary) transmission as an online video. On *LiveLeak*, the movie appeared as a part of an archive of countless homemade videos. While publishing in this format enabled an immediate and global circulation for the movie, avoided issues of censorship, and bested the refusal of Dutch networks to broadcast the movie, it sacrificed *Fitna*'s legitimacy of appearing on television or in a theatre.

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[119] An alternative interpretation of the movie's amateur aesthetic composition, which I did not encounter in any of my conversations about *Fitna*, might be that the movie's lack of sophistication signaled an aesthetic in line with the populist ethos of its maker and the claim to speak for the people through a markedly homemade, amateur style.

My interlocutors derided or dismissed the movie's argument based on its simplicity and structure of its visual features and message. More than simply noting disinterest, the proximity of expressions that *Fitna* "didn't work", that "nobody cares" to expressions such as "it's so bad" and "anyone could have done that" indicate a conflation between perceptions of the movie's aesthetic and political failure.

Failed Expectations

With respect to the popular narrative of *Fitna*, I seek not to evaluate the accuracy of a perception that the movie failed. Rather I am interested in attending to articulations of *Fitna*'s shortcomings for what they expose about the expectations that it disappointed. I argue that the various criteria according to which *Fitna* fails as a political object, are those ends it was expected to achieve. Accounts of *Fitna*'s failed expectations note that despite considerable anticipatory anxiety, the movie did not prove frightening; that despite its apparent relation to the Danish cartoon affair and *Submission*, it did not offend Muslims; that despite its documentary claim, it did not accurately expose any truths about Islam. These expectations, then, correspond to the concepts structuring this project, and prompt a final consideration of the movie's relation to fear, offense, and truth telling.

Fear and Failure

With respect to the movie's failed expectation to invoke fear, in addition to my interlocutors who dismiss the movie as "silly" and "not scary at all", van Zoonen et al. (2010b) have produced sophisticated audience reception studies which indicate that *Fitna*

does not effectively create an impact of fright. The researchers showed *Fitna* in various

versions to groups of respondents for the purposes of measuring their fear responses to its

images and message, determining the extent to which the movie's provocation of fear

mobilized public sentiment against Islamization. The study notes that the movie was

ultimately ineffective in this respect, and that watching the movie in its unedited and

complete form did not necessarily generate fear or intensify anti-Islam sentiment among

viewers (van Zoonen et al. 2010b).

However, while the movie may have failed to generate fear through the display of

gory photographs juxtaposed with Quranic *suras*, in its public life as a whole the movie

was extremely effective at generating fear, and (as argued in chapter four) at channeling a

sense of diffuse uncertainty into an identifiable and perceptive fear of Islamization. As an

as-yet-unseen-but-anxiously-anticipated-object of threat, the movie in its social trajectory

worked to amplify fear in the Dutch affective economy.

Indeed, in some respect it is precisely because the movie effectively operated as

feared object in its approach that it failed to generate fear in its eventual materialization.

Fear is the drawing near of a threatening object, the affect generated in the tension of its

possible passing (by); subsequently "fear is bound up with the loss of the object, as such"

(Ahmed 2004b:67). This passing (by) of the object of fear effects not a loss of fear but a

loss of the object which intensifies the affect; fear remains as residue, even as the object

passes (Ahmed 2004b:65-67).

Fitna produced considerable anticipatory impact of fear through the potential of

its passing (by). When it then proved to pass (by) without effect, the object was then

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"lost". Framed in reference to Ahmed's (2004a) theorization of fear, though the movie may have (and to some extent must have) passed by as object of fear, the affect itself remained in intensified circulation, and as such remained available for effecting political mobilization. That the movie itself did not generate fear, and that the failure narrative records the sense of unfulfilled expectation, only confirms the degree of its affective success. In the case of *Fitna* fear equates with expectation: the greater the anticipation and eventual disappointment of the movie itself, the greater the affective impact it achieved as an object of fear which passed by.

Offense and Failure

The most explicit articulation of unfulfilled expectation in *Fitna*'s failure narrative lies in the lack of violent reaction from Muslim communities upon its release. As chapter five details, in the context of ritual provocation including the Danish cartoons and *Submission*, this promise was one of widespread, and violent, reaction. The lead-up to the movie's release was characterized by considerable media, official and popular hype speculating upon the scale and character of violence which the movie would provoke, and hypothesizing what visual means it would engage to do so.

Yet when the movie debuted, Muslim individuals, community leaders, and the officials of Muslim majority countries condemned the movie for its portrayal of Islam and themselves noted the movie's poor aesthetic qualities and obvious rhetoric. The movie was seen to fail as it did not result in violence, as its public life diverged from the

trajectory established by preceding incidents of dangerous images such as the *Satanic Verses*, Danish cartoons, or *Submission*.

However though the movie did not instigate violence, this is not to say that it did not offend Muslims, nor that it did not provoke reaction from either Muslims or non-Muslims. Indeed the movie saw considerable response, both immediately and in the days and months following its release. This includes protests and public demonstrations which, while peaceful and numbering participants in the hundreds, constitute a widespread response. And after months of enormous press coverage, the release saw the third and highest spike in media coverage domestically and internationally, considerably greater than any coverage in advance of its materialization (Nieuwsmonitor 2008a, b).

The movie also saw online response much of which registered a considerable offense which viewers – both Muslim and non-Muslim (and both Dutch and non-Dutch) – had taken to the movie. As van Zoonen et al. report, even narrowing the terms of an analysis to a manageable time limit of the four months following the movie's release, more than 775 videos were uploaded to *YouTube* in response (2010a:253). Their popularity varied, with an average of 24,000 views per video; in total over 10 million viewers watched one or more of the videos (2010a:254).[120]

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[120] The Mediamatic project which solicited "sorry" videos from concerned citizens join other *YouTube* posters who sought to jam access to Wilders' movie by displaying alternative material under the same title. Those apologizing and protesting acted to counter what they saw as an offensive message about Islam as well as an offensive demonstration of the national image. Other videos registered objection and offense through cut-and-paste style montages which criticized Wilders and his movie by re-editing pre-existing footage from *Fitna* and elsewhere. They range in severity from ridicule (editing the movie so it appears to refer to Smurfs) to outright attack (comparing Wilders to Hitler) (2010a:257). Of particular note is *Tegenfilm*, produced by Ersin Kiris and Vincent van der Lem for *Multiculturele Televisie Nederland* (MTNL), a Dutch production company specializing in multicultural programming. The movie lasts approximately half an hour and provides an ironic view of the Islamization of the Netherlands, explaining Wilders' political views as a result of an insecure personal past. As a full length, formal response to *Fitna*

This notion that the movie "didn't work" because it was not met with widespread violence can serve to nuance the concept of *ritual provocation*: *Fitna* illustrates and achieves a transformation of the term. In the wake of the surprising and shocking violence provoked by *Submission* and the Danish cartoon affair, a pattern of provocation through the violation of religious freedom on the grounds of freedom of speech has emerged and become normalized in the public realm. Given the popular familiarity of the model, *Fitna*'s effectiveness as ritual provocation occurred through reference to previous provocations and anticipatory fears, rather than through the surprise of retaliation which so effectively marked the preceding instances. The movie's own intertextual reference to these earlier provocations doubly suggests the effect that comes from simple reminder of their premise, and that the new spectacle of anticipation and fear replaces the spectacle of violence animating ritual provocation.

Further, the narrative of the movie's failure as an inability to produce violence presumes that because the movie's release was not met with extensive reaction it did not offend, thus suggesting that Muslims are incapable of seeing the movie without being offended, and further incapable of being offended by the movie and not reacting violently to it. As such the popular narrative endows *Fitna*, as the object of offense, with an agency siphoned from the Muslim individuals who refused to respond with violence. By attributing *Fitna*'s failure to its amateur aesthetic and unsophisticated argumentation, the public narrative assigns all agency to the movie, presuming that objects (and images)

Tegenfilm has become the most well-known and widely recognized reaction to the movie produced at the popular level.

have some sort of "mastery over the beholder" (Mitchell 1996:97).[121] While exaggerating

the power of the image or object, such an assumption also denies the agency of Muslim

viewers and communities who choose not to engage in violent response to the movie.

Expectations that an offensive movie, given sufficient aesthetic and rhetorical skill, would

necessarily provoke violent response among offended viewers suggests that Muslims are

themselves incapable of determining reactions to offense, a presumption which further

illustrates and entrenches the civilizational divides achieved in a ritual provocation.

      Thus while the lack of violent reaction proved the key feature motivating the

failure narrative that developed around the movie, on closer inspection the movie did see

some response, but not on the scale of violent spectacle established as its expectation.

What the centrality of this dimension of failure exposes is not the extreme degree to

which the movie failed but the extreme degree to which it succeeded at establishing an

expectation of reactionary violence in the lead up to its release, and its neutral reception

with little significant spectacle staged in either support or opposition.

Truth Telling and Failure

Fitna saw immediate and widespread condemnation of the truth content of its displayed

message and images, recounted as failure of its documentary claim to credibly tell the

truth about Islamization. The failures and inaccuracies of the movie were detailed and

numerous, ranging from superficial (i.e. erroneous captions misidentifying the subjects of

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[121] Mitchell (1996) explores this assumption to considerable effect, noting that despite a popular and scholarly perception that images have power to instill and further dominant and hegemonic ideology, we are perhaps better to consider the *impotence* of images.

portraits, the use of copyrighted images without permission) to profound (i.e. debatable and controversial translations of Quranic *suras*).

An open letter from six prominent scholars of Islam and the Quran in the Netherlands, written as contribution during Wilders' trial (2010), explicitly challenges the movie's factual claims and summarizes many of the inaccuracies pointed out in the aftermath of the movie's release (Otto et al. 2010). In this formal response to Wilders and his movie scholars provide direct quotations from the Quran which contradict its alleged violent character, and take issue with both the selection and the translation of the Quranic text featured in the movie. The letter juxtaposes the Quranic verses as appearing in translation in *Fitna*, and as contextualized and translated in their expert work.[122]

The open letter registers a criticism of the movie's accuracy from experts in the Netherlands, but a similar sentiment also appeared on a popular level, and within both a domestic and global framework. Mihelj et al. (2011) note that the main content in online movie responses to *Fitna* produced by Muslims took issue with the movie's ontological claims, describing the movie as factually inaccurate and manipulative. Contesting the truth claims about an inherent violence of the Quran, then, took the form of providing alternate meanings and contexts for the verses quoted in the movie. One important aspect of the movie's rhetorical failure thus lies in the selective and reductive use of Quranic

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[122] For instance, *Fitna* presents *sura* 47 verse 7 as "Therefore when ye meet the unbelievers, / smite at their necks and when ye have caused a bloodbath among them/ bind a bond firmly on them". The letter criticizes the selective use of the verse which accounts for only half of the complete sentence. The meaning of the translation is considerably affected in the omission, as demonstrated in the alternate translation provided for the complete sentence, reading "when you meet infidels in battle you kill them, but when you gain control you keep and bind them, and so that later you may free them, as a favour or to recoup the costs of war". Further, the letter notes, *Fitna*'s portrayal of the Quran fails to include those verses which rather condemn violence or support compromise and peace building, citing as examples *sura* 2 verse 84 "You shall not shed one another's blood" and *sura* 10 verse 25 "God calls people to the house of peace." (Otto et al. 2010).

suras, undermining the credibility of its evidence, as a means for countering its assertion that Islam is inherently violent.

The perception of *Fitna*'s failure to tell the truth thus condemns the movie's failure to effectively make an argument for the inherent violence of Islam. The narrative of *Fitna*'s factual or rhetorical failures shows the degree to which it was expected to tell the truth, and particularly the degree to which it was expected to tell the truth about Islam. However, as chapter six explores in depth, I argue that the documentary claim functions not to record or evidence Islamization but to further a political performance of truth telling which constructs, through claiming to show the real, the terms of an autochthonous national identity. Thus that the movie's reception involved (negative) evaluation of its truth telling claim with respect to Islam indicates the degree to which the other functions of truth telling performances (such as authenticating notions of Dutchness) may remain unrecognized and unquestioned.

From this alternate interpretation of the movie's public life, *Fitna* decidedly did not fail. *Fitna* remains an object involved in Wilders' truth telling performance to "say what I want" and expose "what we really feel", furthering his political celebrity and claim to speak for the real Dutch. *Fitna* garnered an incredible amount of attention for its maker, and it is through the performance of withholding and revealing the movie that Wilders made his political name. The screening circuit in global venues which continues to this day promote the maker and further his now international celebrity, all of which strengthen his political career. Perhaps the only aspect of Wilders' public performance of truth telling which has proved more successful at generating interest and attention than *Fitna*

has been his trial – but even this was instigated in part by the movie. In hindsight, years

after its release *Fitna* is revealed to have "worked" in a way that subsequent antics from

the politician have not; his 2012 publicity tour promoting his book *Marked for Death:*

Islam's War Against the West and Me has been briefly noted in mass media but largely

ignored in popular discourse.

I have argued that truth telling performances work to create truth through claiming

to expose it: *Fitna* certainly did not fail in its exposure, and in fact the movie's success

exposed Wilders to media stardom. The expectations of accuracy and their

disappointment in the movie then indicate that to considerable extent truth telling

performances are taken as such in the Dutch public realm. Though they may be

condemned as inaccurate, they remain evaluated based on the accuracy of the truth (about

Islam) they claim to reveal, obscuring their function authenticating Dutch identity. By

providing a platform for the politician to disseminate his truth telling performances, as a

material object which visualized a claim to tell the truth about what "we are all thinking"

the movie actively contributed to the authentication of the political constituency for

whom the politician claims to speak. The movie promotes and participates in the truth

telling performances which claim to show the real (autochthonous) Dutch and their real

(actual) opinions regarding Islamization.

Despite the claims that "no one cares" about *Fitna*, the failure narrative itself

indicates the heightened expectations of fear, offense, and truth with which it is

associated. Close consideration of these expectations indicates that in many respects the

movie in fact effectively operated in each of these respects: producing anticipatory fear as

the object which passes (by), transforming the terms but maintaining the effects of ritual provocation, reaffirming the performances of radical truth telling even while riddled with inaccuracies.

Rather than identifying the movie's shortcomings, the failure narrative foregrounds the extreme character of the expectations preceding its release. Given such anticipation, when the movie ultimately met with a largely dismissive, uninterested reception, the neutrality registered as spectacular failure. This is the heart of the failure narrative to which I now turn, the notion that "no one cares" about the movie, that it completely failed to either provoke or resonate with its audience.

Fitna's Obviousness and the Failure to Resonate

My interlocutors' assertions that *Fitna* failed to resonate or represent, that it did not speak to or for them, proved most challenging to my methodological project. The nature of *Fitna*'s failure was its neutral lack of impact, the sense of disappointed or unfulfilled expectations arising in expressions that the movie simply did not matter, that, in the end, "no one cares". I have argued in the preceding section that the movie did indeed produce reaction and have political effect, but nonetheless the widespread perception among residents of the Netherlands is one in which residents failed to find themselves moved by the movie: not shocked, swayed, provoked, convinced, frightened or informed. Or at least not to a degree which would live up to expectations.

Such failure indeed poses a challenge to a research project which identifies in an object the codes and constructs of the cultural context in which it circulates. When my

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respondents repeatedly questioned the worth of studying *Fitna* because "no one cares", because "it's so obvious", because "it didn't work", their expressions raised a valid opposition. That is, if the movie, as they suggest, neither provoked nor resonated with residents of the Netherlands, what could it possibly indicate about the quality of their collective gut feeling? What business do I have seeking the clues to an affective economy in an object that doesn't matter?

The danger of any cultural analysis, and particularly that interpreting non- human objects and amorphous gut feelings, is that it may silence the voices of the individuals whose experience is at issue. I appreciate that my respondents speak back to my project, which interprets the current state their country through an object in which they do not recognize themselves. However there are many ways to take seriously the perspectives and words of my interlocutors, and I would argue that in paying close attention to their accounts of *Fitna*'s failure the validation for its potential as an object of research can be found.

At issue here is the connection between the perception that "no one cares" about the movie, and particularly the attribution of the failure to its particular stylistic, formal and rhetorical construction, a fault often named as the movie's "obviousness". The intersection of the two indicates why a movie which fails to resonate with many residents of the Netherlands nonetheless constitutes an effective means for articulating and interrogating the country's collective gut feeling of uncertainty.

"No One Cares"

One notable feature of the movie's failure narrative is the disinterested tone with which my interlocutors condemned the movie. *Fitna* failed in its neutrality: it simply fell flat. Just as Muslim individuals did not react to the movie with extreme demonstrations of violence, offense, or anger, neither did (non-Muslim) Dutch individuals. And in their comments rather than appearing angry or hurt, the vast majority of my conversants simply dismissed the movie – indeed, as one woman told me offhandedly, "if it wasn't so damn sad it would be funny" (fieldnotes, December 15, 2010). While many expressed distaste for the movie and protested that "we're not like that", the movie did not fail to the point of generating widespread reaction from residents of the Netherlands.

Relatively mild protest and an influx of *YouTube* videos disagreeing with the movie do register protest, but the response falls short of indexing a deeply wounded or infuriated public. In short, the failure narrative around the movie notes that the public did not agree with the movie: but then, neither did they *disagree* with it to a significant degree. This suggests that there is something about *Fitna* which, if it does not speak to or about residents of the Netherlands, does not speak against them.

In this decidedly neutral form of failure *Fitna is* the status quo; neither to be agreed with or against, but simply somewhat invisible in its mundane familiarity. The movie registers only in the extreme extent to which it manifests this familiarity, the vulgar and overblown visualization of the boring, the already accepted, the obvious.

"It's so Obvious"

It is *Fitna*'s obviousness which links its amateur aesthetic to it political message, as the movie visualizes and exacerbates the familiar status quo to the "almost funny" point of caricature. As I have described in noting the popular conflation of *Fitna*'s political and aesthetic failure, the transparency of the movie's production and the lack of professional sophistication in its aesthetic is perceived to parallel a blatantly subjective rhetorical argument, such that viewers are painfully aware of the movie's attempts at manipulation in service of a (biased) political message.

On the level of argumentation the movie's problematic obviousness registers in Van Zoonen's reception studies (2010b), which suggest that the movie's obviousness involves not only familiar stylistic and visual techniques, but also a rhetorical strategy that is itself taken for granted. The researchers hypothesize that it is precisely this blatant polemic aim of the movie, made apparent in its cognitive cues, which cause viewers to feel that they are being manipulated and to consequently dismiss or disagree with the movie's message. The amateur style then, is perceived to produce and reflect a subjective and biased rhetorical structure, one lacking the apparent scientific objectivity associated with expert knowledge and legitimate argumentation. The result is that *Fitna* is condemned for being too obvious about the means through which it seeks to fear, offend and tell the truth.

And in popular narrative this rhetorical weakness conflates entirely with the obviousness of its stylistic and aesthetic devices. To viewers exposed to European and North American popular cinematic traditions, the movie's popular stylistic techniques

appeared obvious, outdated and overdone. A case in point is the *nu.nl* commenter's

criticism of the movie's soundtrack, which employs the minor chords of classical pieces

Arabian Dance by Tchaikovsky, and Grieg's *Aayse's Death* to signal mystery and tension,

as "clichéd violins". Similarly, the condemnation implied in dismissive comments that "I

could have made that" take the home made quality of the movie as damning because it

simply rehearses what is already evident, known, and indeed "obvious" to viewers.

     Far from failing to communicate to or about its viewers, popular narratives

condemn *Fitna* for failing because it is *too* understandable; the movie is taken for granted

and neutrally dismissed because it is nothing new, because it shows what has already

been seen and in a manner that is all too familiar. This includes its stylistic features such

as the movie's visual arrangement, use of photographs, soundtrack, etc. But it also

includes its project and message: the anti-Islam debates, the opposition of nation and

Islamization. Both in form and content the movie is condemned for too completely and

too excessively representing what everyone already knows.[123]

     Here, then, *Fitna*'s failure rather marks a form of dubious success: the movie

visualizes the codes and connotations of the context of its production so successfully that

they register as overly obvious caricatures amongst the audience. This obviousness

condemns the movie to impotence and political, rhetorical and aesthetic failure, but also

renders *Fitna* a very fruitful object of analysis.

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[123] This is not to suggest that the country's residents simply accept the movie's anti-Islam message, but rather that the anti-Islam message which it promotes is accepted as yawn-inducingly familiar. In this respect the movie's obviousness foregrounds comments from my interlocutors noting that *Fitna* "preaches to the choir", telling those who agree what they already know, and introducing no new terms of objection for those who disagree.

These features through which the movie seeks to expose, fear and offend visualize to the point of caricature – and thus render available for theorization – the means through which these same processes operate within the Netherlands. The formal strategies that the movie mobilizes in service of these desires, the knowledge it presumes, the histories upon which it draws, the means through which it seeks to resonate with and reflect the emotions of its audience, all constitute the visual traces of the affective economy, a gut feeling of uncertainty visualized and overblown to the point of "obviousness". As this dissertation has demonstrated, as an illustration of the obvious and the taken for granted, the movie constitutes an ideal object of analysis, an object in and through which to view that which it caricatures.

Concluding Reflections

Ultimately, the considerable challenge that the movie's perceived failure posed to my project has yielded the most rewarding insights, illuminating the many fissures which riddle this or any analytical endeavour. *Fitna*'s failure marks the gap between what the movie promised and what it failed to do: the space of expectation. It marks a gap between the structural possibilities of fear, offense and truth telling established in the movie's formal features, and the degree to which viewers found the movie frightening, offensive, or accurate: the space of reception. Perhaps most importantly, the friction produced between my study of the movie and the insistence of my interlocutors that it could yield nothing of relevance marked the gap between researcher, object, and context: the space of interpretation. The movie's alleged failure, then, has proven not only a legitimating

feature for its validity as an object of analysis, but furthered the methodological

considerations at the core of this dissertation.

As noted at the outset to this dissertation, my objectives in the preceding chapters

have been twofold: the *exploration* of a gut feeling of uncertainty in the Netherlands,

conducted as a methodological *experimentation* applying close attention to an object as a

means for theorizing the affective economy of which it is constitutive. Through the

process I have gained considerable insight into the methodological project, thickening my

understanding of object, context, and the relationship of one to the other and to myself as

researcher. And with respect to the case of uncertainty in the Netherlands the exploration

of an affective economy has not only nuanced my understanding of a collective gut

feeling, but has parochialized through contextualizing the opposition to Islam

increasingly prevalent in the country today.

Experimentation: Methodological Reflections

With respect to the methodological experimentation conducted in these pages, a close

attention to *Fitna* has demonstrated the analytical potential which lies in exploring an

affective economy by taking one of its objects as both target and lens of analysis. It is

through privileging analysis of *Fitna* itself that this analysis has spun out the multiple

dimensions and possible frames of the "object of analysis", considering *Fitna* as at once

visual, performative and material object, and as object of fear, offense and exposure. I

have engaged a method of close attention developed in response to Mitchell's and Bal's

attempt to shift the target of analysis towards the object itself, addressing the object's

social trajectory and function within its context but also its formal properties, the stylistic features and artistic devices which it deploys. The insights into uncertainty in the Netherlands that I have presented here stem from precisely this shift in analytical focus, considering not (only) how and whether the movie operated as object of fear, offense and truth telling exposure, but how *Fitna* itself attempted in its "obvious" manner to construct these effects in its form.

And it is through attention to the object itself, integrated with the voices of my interlocutors and my own experiences as participant figure, that I have explored the affective economy of uncertainty identified from the outset of this project. The preceding chapters have described something of its experiential dimension, as the discombobulating spatial and temporal disorientation of globalizing modernity; of the key figures through which it passes and which are subsequently bound to and divided from one another in a movement of displacement – nation and religion, Islamization and depillarization; and of the representational mode through which this uncertain circulation occurs, in truth telling performances which produce the real they claim to transparently reveal. Such an exploration extends and nuances Ahmed's observation that emotions are not inherent to but rather implicate the objects through which they circulate. Rather than dismissing these objects, this project has turned to close scrutiny of one of them, to unpack, explore, and theorize the affective web in which it is caught.

Exploration: Uncertainty and Opposition to Islam in the Netherlands

For the sake of clarity I have asserted in these pages that *Fitna* constitutes the object of this study and the uncertainty of the Netherlands its field. But of course such distinctions are ultimately moot, as both *Fitna* and the affective economy capture my attention and focus as researcher, and as I have argued here both produce, reflect and constitute one another. The "object" at the core of this analysis proves a manifold entity.

Opposition to Islam constitutes another unspoken object of this dissertation, deeply related but ultimately not identical to either the movie or the affective economy. Anti-Islam sentiment and politics within the Netherlands have proven a cross-cutting theme throughout these pages, as a motivating feature of the movie and an increasingly salient aspect of the affective economy. Indeed, I began this project with the intention of focusing on the phenomenon, realizing once in the field and engaged in research that to come to terms with opposition to Islam in the Netherlands is to consider its complex, and particular, history, location, and terms of reference within the country's affective economy as a whole. Thus an exploration of uncertainty in the Netherlands itself theorizes opposition to Islam in the local context, situating it as a phenomenon particular but not exclusive to the Netherlands. One objective animating my analysis has been to understand the relation between opposition to Islam and the broader affective economy, and it is to this relation that I turn as a means for concluding and summarizing this dissertation's exploration of uncertainty in the Netherlands.

My analysis commenced in the second chapter with a social biography of one object deeply embedded within and attempting to further opposition to Islam within the

country. As the object of a truth telling display performed by a staunchly anti-Islam

politician, as an instance of provocative offense aimed at Muslims in the form of

inflammatory images and messages, in the propagandistic flavor which aims to frighten

viewers with visions of a threatening future, the movie is itself an instance of the

intersection between opposition to Islam and uncertainty in the present landscape.

In the third chapter, an overview of the primary historical influences, current

public figures, and key terms of the affective economy illustrated the extent to which

opposition to Islam features as one of its key elements. The internal frontier established in

prevailing language about *autochthony*, *national identity (crisis)* and *Enlightenment* in

opposition to *Islamization* point to the issue of belonging at the heart of uncertainty. By

engaging *Fitna* as a lens for analysis this dissertation explored the nuances of this relation,

refracting the discussion through the key themes of fear, offense and truth telling.

An exploration of the dynamics of fear located opposition to Islam as one

particularly salient, particularly "sharpened" aspect of an affective economy of

uncertainty, as described in chapter four. The spatial and temporal disorientation indexing

the experiential dimension of uncertainty finds its visualization in *Fitna* in easily

identifiable and perceptible terms as a fear of Islamization. I have argued that this same

process of affective sharpening links a diffuse sense of uncertainty to the familiar,

understandable, visualizable and articulable form of fear of Islamization. That uncertainty

takes the shape of spatial and temporal disorientation suggests that rather than resulting

from a "tsunami of immigrants", fears of Islamization are rooted in the turbulent

renegotiations of individual and collective relations in globalizing modernity. Ultimately

at stake in the experiential dimension of uncertainty, and in its affectively sharpened

manifestation as fear of Islamization, then, are the terms of belonging through which

citizens relate to the nation(-state).

My interrogation of offense sheds some light on the ongoing interrelation of

opposition to Islam and the nation, positioning these two figures within the affective

economy alongside other key histories, subjects, and objects. In chapter five I

interrogated *Fitna*'s offending images which violate Mohammad and Quran, prophet and

scripture. These offending images suggest why Islamization emerges as a particular target

of offense in the country, given its affective ties to religion as such, and its implication in

the complex relation between the modern secular nation and its religious shadow. That is,

the movie indicates the precise interaction between a national narrative which glorifies

the emergence of a secular, free nation liberated from a history of religious pillarization,

and the opposition to Islam with which it is associated. Nation; opposition to Islam;

depillarization; secularism: these key figures of the affective economy are increasingly

bound to one another, and increasingly bestowed with affective charge, as uncertainty

circulates among them.

Finally, as the sixth chapter described, both uncertainty and opposition to Islam

take form and circulate through truth telling discourses. The features of the affective

economy explored in preceding chapters: the sense of disorientation and alienation; the

insecurities of global modernity; the entanglement of national, ethnic and civilizational

divides drawn in autochthonous identification; and the ambiguous animosities between

modern nation and religious history, intersect and intensify in the political performances

of anti-Islam populist figures such as Wilders. *Fitna* brings to light the (photographic)

logic which underlies truth telling anti-Islam political performances. Performances which

tell the truth about Islam, or portend to show the real Islam, further operate to visualize

and shore up autochthonous Dutch identity, to authenticate both the actuality and

authenticity of "the real Dutch" through its authoritative representation. Truth telling then

constitutes the mode in which uncertainty circulates and foregrounds the implications of

opposition to Islam in the Netherlands. Ultimately my analysis of *Fitna*'s photographs

unpacked the implications of anti-Islam discourse for its public proponents, articulating

the identities produced in truth telling performances.

This final chapter considers the public narrative of *Fitna*'s failure which proclaims

the movie's inability to produce fear, offense, or truth, dismissing it on the basis of

obvious, amateur qualities and its failure to resonate with viewers. The narrative

challenged my theoretical and methodological project from the start and forced a

consideration of the issues of expectation, perception and interpretation at each step along

the way. I hope that at the conclusion of the project I have successfully balanced the

voices of my interlocutors with my own interpretation, and have demonstrated that

despite its perceived failures the movie constitutes a fruitful tool for theorizing what

Maartin identified as the collective gut feeling.

This dissertation pays close attention to just one object within the affective

economy of uncertainty, the collective gut feeling, as a means for unraveling its many

intricacies and complexities. Through the lens of *Fitna*, I have articulated something of

the experiential dimension, constitutive elements, and representational mode of

uncertainty in the Netherlands. I have traced the local histories, affects, and traumas which contribute to the experiential dimension of globalizing modernity in this particular, local landscape. And I have considered how the (imagined) modern nation itself is ultimately at stake in these processes.

This is not to deny but to parochialize the experience of opposition to Islam, to reveal the local and normative and very much constructed character of those identities and divisions presented as primordial, such as *autochthonous*, *Islamization*, and *Enlightenment*. As a whole, my analysis of uncertainty through the lens of *Fitna* challenges conventional perspectives which identify resistance to Islam in the Netherlands as reaction to the hidden threat which Islam poses to the nation(-state), the product of the country's failed multiculturalism, or the uprising of the autochthonous population against the "tsunami' of immigrants" allegedly unwilling or unable to integrate into Dutch culture. I suggest that opposition to Islam, considered in relation to uncertainty, is rather that affect which articulates a diffuse disorientation of globalizing modernity, a target for the displaced insecurities of the nation (and its histories) to which it is inseparably bound, a mode through which new terms of belonging and identity are produced.

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APPENDIX ONE

SHOT LIST:

FITNA: THE MOVIE[124]

Legend:

Duration indicates approximate length in seconds of each segment

Graphic Text indicates print appearing in pre-existing photographs as well as text added within the movie

Subheading and caption indicates text added to movie to label pre-existing images

Subtitle indicates text provided to translate audio or print speech

* Indicates differences between movie's original version and second release.

Shot 1	Duration: < 5 (approximate length in seconds)
Visual Description	Preliminary Screen: Black screen with white text
Text (English)	Warning: This film contains very shocking images. (Title Text)
Text (Dutch)	WAARSCHUWING: Deze film bevat zeer schokende beelden. (Title text)
Audio	Soundtrack (unless otherwise noted, soundtrack is comprised of instrumental selections from Grieg, *Aase's Death* and Tchaikovsky, *Arabian Dance*)

Shot 2	Duration: 10
Visual Description	Title screen: Fade in to image of gilded Quran cover
Text (English)	*Fitna* (Graphic Text)
Text (Dutch)	*Fitna* (Graphic text)
Audio	Sound effect of striking match and crackling fuse Soundtrack

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[124] This list has been derived from the following versions of *Fitna* available on *YouTube*: English Version:
Part 1: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNmXFtZ1Es4
Part 2: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DwwsnAr3rY8&feature=fvwrel
Dutch Version
Part 1: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eK3tQHr_jac
Part 2: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O1JmCxMkvV0&feature=related

Shot 3	Duration: 12
Visual Description	Open book: Left page: cartoon of turbaned man and bomb* Right page: digital timer counting down from 15:00
Text (English)	15:00 14:59 14:58 14:57 14:56 14:55 14:54 14:53 14:52 14:51
Text (Dutch)	15:00 14:59 14:58 14:57 14:56 14:55 14:54 14:53 14:52 14:51
Audio	Sound effect of crackling fuse Soundtrack

Shot 4	Duration: 10
Visual Description	Transition shot: Page turns Shimmering text provides title of Quranic *sura*
Text (English)	QURAN Surah 8, verse 60 (Graphic Text)
Text (Dutch)	KORAN Soera 8, vers 60 (Graphic text)
Audio	Soundtrack

Shot 5	Duration: 30
Visual Description	Open book: Left page: English/Dutch translation of *sura* appears line by line through shot. Right page: Illustration of Arabic calligraphy of *sura* gives way to footage of 9/11, view of skyline as plane approaches the smoking towers
Text (English)	Prepare for them whatever force and cavalry ye are able of gathering to strike terror to strike terror into the hearts of the enemies, of Allah and your enemies. (Graphic text)
Text (Dutch)	Maak voorbereiding tegen hen met wat gij kunt aan kracht en paardenvolk om darmee te terroriseren te terroriseren Allah's vijand en uw vijand (Graphic text)
Audio	Arabic *sura* recitation

Shot 6	Duration: 35
Visual Description	Video montage of 9/11 attack: -Plane impacting building and resulting explosion -On the ground, handheld footage of panicking crowds and running from smoke clouds -Close shot depicting side of building and bodies falling, with black and white photograph portrait of a woman superimposed Fade to black as voice over concludes
Text (English)	"Hold on for one second please." "I'm going to die right? No no no no!" " "Yes, I'm going to die." "Ma'am, ma'am, say your prayers." "I'm going to die." "You've got to think positive. Because you've got to help get you off that floor." "I'm going to die." "Stay calm, stay calm." "Please God." "You're doing good." "It's so hot, I'm burning up." (Subtitle)
Text (Dutch)	"Blijf aan de lijn" "Ik ga dood, hè? Ja, ik ga dood." "Doe 'n gebed, mevrouw." "Ik ga dood." "Blifj positief. We moeten u daar weg krijgen." "Ik ga dood." "Blijf rustig, blijf rustig." "O, God." "U doet het heel goed." "Het is zo heet. Ik verbrand gewoon." (Subtitle)
Audio	Soundtrack and recorded audio

Shot 7	Duration: 15
Visual Description	Video montage of Madrid bombings, 11 March 2004: Grainy, hand held footage shot at eye level of people crouching in foreground, explosions and bright fire and smoke takes over the screen Superimposed video fragment shows man with beard and turban, speaking into a microphone
Text (English)	"Montse, I'm at Atocha station and a bomb went off in the train." "Help, help." Preacher: "What makes Allah happy? Allah is happy when non-Muslims get killed." (Subtitle)
Text (Dutch)	"Montse, ik ben op station Atocha en er is een bom afgegaan in de trein." "Help, help." Preacher: "Wat makt Allah blij?" "Allah is blij als niet-moslims worden gedood." (Subtitle)
Audio	Loud explosions Recorded audio Soundtrack

Shot 8	Duration: 15
Visual Description	Photograph and video montage: -Man speaking into microphone -Man praying Presented with blurred edges as illustrations on pages of book
Text (English)	Annihilate the infidels and the polytheists. Your (Allah's) enemies and the enemies of the religion. Allah, count them and kill them to the last one, and don't leave even one. (Subtitle)
Text (Dutch)	Vernietig de ongeloveigen en de polytheisten Uw (Allah's) vijanden en de vijanden van de religie. Allah, tel ze en dood ze tot de laatst aan toe. En laat er niet één over. (Subtitle)
Audio	Soundtrack and recorded audio

Shot 9	Duration: 30
Visual Description	Photograph montage: Fragments displayed against backdrop of page, blurred around edges, fading from one into the next, with camera panning and zooming to give sense of movement Reproduced from mass media sources. -Overhead shot of bodies lying in street -Close up of injured man with bloodied face in a crowd -Train carriage wrecked by explosion -Street scene of emergency workers standing over dead bodies -Close up of two mutilated bodies -Rows of bloodied corpses
Text (English)	
Text (Dutch)	
Audio	Soundtrack

Shot 10	Duration: 10
Visual Description	Transition shot: Page turns Shimmering text provides title of Quranic *sura*
Text (English)	QURAN Surah 4, verse 56 (Graphic text)
Text (Dutch)	KORAN Soera 4, vers 56 (Graphic text)
Audio	Soundtrack

Shot 11	Duration: 20
Visual Description	Open book: Left page: English/Dutch translation of *sura* appears line by line through shot Right page: Illustration of Arabic calligraphy of *sura*
Text (English)	Those who have disbelieved our signs, we shall roast them in fire whenever their skins are cooked to a turn, we shall substitute new skins for them that they many feel the punishment: verily Allah is sublime and wise. (Graphic text)
Text (Dutch)	Zij die ongelovig zijn in onze tekenen zullen wij in een vuur laten braden en telens als hun huid gaar gebakken is vervangen wij die door andere huid opdat zij de bestraffing proeven, Allah is machtig en wijs. (Graphic text)
Audio	Arabic *sura* recitation

Shot 12	Duration: 35
Visual Description	Video fragment: Black and white footage Man preaching loudly in front of microphones Adorned in black cloak, dramatically pulls a sword from its sheath and screams violently Cut to footage of cheering and chanting crowds All footage against backdrop of book page, with blurred borders
Text (English)	"If Allah permits us, oh Nation of Mohammed, Even the stone will say, 'Oh Muslim, A Jew is hiding behind me, come and cut off his head. And we shall cut off his head! By Allah, we shall cut it off! Oh Jews! Allahu Akbar! (Allah is great!) Jihad for the sake of Allah! Jihad for the sake of Allah! Victory to Allah! Allahu Akbar! (Allah is great!)" (Subtitle)
Text (Dutch)	"Als Allah het ons toestaat, oh natie van Mohammed, zelfs een steen zal zeggen, oh moslim een jood verschuilt zich achter mij, kom en snij zijn hoof af. En we zullen zijn hoofd afsnijden! Bij Allah, we zullen het afsnijden! Oh joden! Allah akbar! (Allah is groot!) Jihad omwille van Allah! Jihad omwille van Allah! Overwinning aan Allah! Allah akbar! (Allah is groot!)" (Subtitle)
Audio	Soundtrack and recorded audio

Shot 13	Duration: 30
Visual Description	Television interview fragment: Professional documentary camera work Close range footage of a young girl being interviewed by a woman (not pictured) The girl, wearing a light pink *hijab*, fidgets innocently while answering the questions quietly Fragment is framed against backdrop of page
Text (English)	"What is your name?" "Basmallah" "Basmallah, how old are you?" "Three and a half." "Are you a Muslim?" "Yes" "Basmallah, are you familiar with the Jews?" "Yes" "Because they are what?" "They're apes and pigs." "Because they are apes and pigs?" "Who said they are so?" "Allah." "Where did he say this?" "In the Koran." (Subtitle)
Text (Dutch)	"Wat is je naam?" "Basmallah" "Basmallah hoe oud ben je?" "Drie en een half." "Ben je moslim?" "Ja" "Basmallah, weet je wie de joden zijn?" "Ja" "Wie zijn zij dan?" "Zij zijn apen en zwijnen." "Zij zijn apen en zwijnen?" "Wie zegt dat dan?" "Allah" "Waar heeft hij dat gezegd?" "In de koran" (Subtitle)
Audio	Soundtrack and recorded audio

Shot 14	Duration: 20
Visual Description	Photograph and video montage: -Battered, partially dismembered, bloody bodies being dragged through crowded streets -Close up and overhead views of a double decker bus destroyed by bombing, with emergency official surrounding wreckage -Destroyed carriage of a metro train
Text (English)	
Text (Dutch)	
Audio	Soundtrack

Shot 15	Duration: 5
Visual Description	Video fragment: Man speaking to a large male audience listening attentively Obscured logo in the upper corner reveals its source from *Media Watch* archives
Text (English)	"The Jews are Jews. They are the ones who must be butchered and killed." (Subtitle)
Text (Dutch)	"De joden zijn joden. Zij zijn degenen die afgeslacht en gedood moeten worden." (Subtitle)
Audio	Soundtrack and recorded audio

Shot 16	Duration: 25
Visual Description	Photograph and video montage: -Child soldiers carrying guns and dressed in fatigues march in alignment -Close range photographs depict women in black *burqas* carrying hand written placards (depicting February 2006 protests against Danish Mohammad cartoons in London) -Rows of Hezbollah fighters salute
Text (English)	BE PREPARED FOR THE REAL HOLOCAUST! GOD BLESS HITLER (Photographed text on placard)
Text (Dutch)	Wees voorbered op de echte holocaust God zegene Hitler (Subtitle)
Audio	Soundtrack

Shot 17	Duration: 5
Visual Description	Transition shot: Page turns, shimmering text provides title of Quranic *sura*
Text (English)	QURAN Surah 47, verse 4 (Graphic Text)
Text (Dutch)	KORAN Soera 47, vers 4 (Graphic Text)
Audio	Soundtrack

Shot 18	Duration: 10
Visual Description	Open book: Left page: English/Dutch translation of *sura* appears line by line through shot. Right page: Illustration of Arabic calligraphy of *sura*
Text (English)	Therefore, when ye meet the unbelievers, smite at their necks and when ye have caused a bloodbath among them bind a bond firmly on them (Graphic text)
Text (Dutch)	Wanneer gij dus een ontmoeting hebt met hen die ongelovig zijn houwt dan in op de nekken on wanneer gij onder hen een bloedbad hebt aangericht bind hen dan in boeien (Graphic text)
Audio	Arabic *sura* recitation

Shot 19	Duration: 20
Visual Description	Video fragment: Television footage of Theo van Gogh (unidentified)walking on street Eventually superimposed with photograph of front page of *De Telegraaf* declaring his murder
Text (English)	"Don't you think that someday there will be an idiot who wants to kill you?" "No, I can't imagine that" "You believe in the goodness of man?" "No, not in the goodness of man, but in my own arrogance… And has so much effect [sic], that bullet will not come for me." (Subtitle) *Slaughtered* (Subtitle translating photographed newspaper headline)
Text (Dutch)	AFGESLACHT (Photographed text of newspaper headline)
Audio	Soundtrack and recorded radio interview fragment

Shot 20	Duration: 15
Visual Description	Portrait* Mug shot style portrait framed as illustration on page of Quran
Text (English)	Mohammed B. (Graphic text) "If I had the opportunity to get out of prison. and I had the opportunity to do it again, what I did on November 2nd, Allah, I would have done exactly the same" (Subtitle)
Text (Dutch)	Mohammed B. (Graphic text)
Audio	Soundtrack and recorded fragment from Mohammad B.'s court testimony

Shot 21	Duration: 10
Visual Description	Video montage: -Protests, framed against backdrop of book page -On the ground amateur footage of crowd, jostling protestors with placards
Text (English)	JIHAD AGAINST EUROPEAN CRUSADERS (Photographed text on placard) "Take lesson of Theo van Gogh! Take lessons from the examples that you can see! For you will pay with your blood!" (Subtitle)
Text (Dutch)	JIHAD AGAINST EUROPEAN INVADERS (Photographed text on placard) "Leer van Theo van Gogh! Leer van de voorbeelden die jullie kunnen zien! Want jullie zullen betalen met jullie bloed!" (Subtitle)
Audio	Soundtrack and recorded audio

Shot 22	Duration: 10
Visual Description	Photograph montage: -Man holding Quran and knife -Fists grasping bloodied knives raised in the air -Photographs of *De Telegraaf* front page declaring the "hitlist" of Mohammed B.
Text (English)	"HITLIST" (Subtitle translating newspaper headline)
Text (Dutch)	Hirsi Ali en Wilders ondergedoken DODENLIJST Doelwitten in brief van Mohammed B. (Photographed text in newspaper headline)
Audio	Soundtrack

Shot 23	Duration: 10
Visual Description	Video fragment: Professional footage of man speaking to camera from desk on platform Audience unseen Logo identifies source of footage as Iqraa TV Saudi Arabia
Text (English)	"Houses and young men must be sacrificed. Throats must be slit and skulls must be shattered. This is the path to victory." (Subtitle)
Text (Dutch)	"Huizen en jonge mannen moeten opgeofferd worden Kelen moeten worden doorgesneden en schedels moeten worden verbrijzeld. Dit is de weg naar de overwinning." (Subtitle)
Audio	Soundtrack and recorded audio

Shot 24	Duration: 20
Visual Description	Video fragment: Handheld amateur video footage of beheading (Eugene Armstrong, unidentified in movie) Blindfolded man kneeling facing the camera in front of five armed militants as they read statement (not translated), take knife to his throat. The video clip, framed against movie's backdrop of a page, goes blank briefly Audio continues, with screams Image reappears with close up as the decapitated head is held aloft
Text (English)	
Text (Dutch)	
Audio	Soundtrack and recorded audio

Shot 25	Duration: 5
Visual Description	Transition shot: Page turns Shimmering text provides title of Quranic *sura*
Text (English)	QURAN Surah 4, verse 89 (Graphic Text)
Text (Dutch)	KORAN Soera 4, vers 89 (Graphic text)
Audio	Soundtrack

Shot 26	Duration: 25
Visual Description	Open book: Left page: English/Dutch translation of *sura* appears line by line through shot Right page: Illustration of Arabic calligraphy of *sura*
Text (English)	They but wish that ye should reject faith as they do, and thus be on the same footing as they, so take not friends from their ranks until they flee in the way of Allah But if they turn renegades, seize them and kill them wherever ye find them and take no friends or helpers from their ranks. (Graphic text)
Text (Dutch)	Zij zouden graag willen dat jullie ongelovigwerden, zoals zij dat zijn, dan zouden jullie gelijk zijn neemt van hen dus niemand als medestander zolang zij niet uitwijken op Allah's weg als zij zich afkeren, grijpt hen dan en doodt hen waar jullie hen vinden neemt van hen niemand als medestander of als helper. (Graphic text)
Audio	Arabic *sura* recitation

Shot 27	Duration: 10
Visual Description	Television interview fragment: Group of men on street corner, interviewed by unidentified and unpictured questioner Fragment appears as illustration on page of book and camera zooms in as fragment enlarges across screen.
Text (English)	"Islam is a sacred religion. The best religion there is. If someone converts to Christianity, he deserves the death penalty." (Subtitle)
Text (Dutch)	"De islam is een heilig geloof. Het beste geloof dat er is. Als iemand zichbekeert tot 't christendom, verdient hij de doodstraf." (Subtitle)
Audio	Recorded audio

Shot 28	Duration: 10
Visual Description	Video fragment: Man preaching in English to unpictured audience Professional camera work. Fades to television footage of individuals destroying a building.
Text (English)	"Islam is (more) superior than the Jews, than the Christians than the Buddhists, than the Hindus. The only (law) Allah accepts is Islam." "And whoever seeks any other (law) apart from Islam, will never be accepted." (Subtitles)
Text (Dutch)	"De islam is superieur aan de joden, de christenen. De enige wet die Allah erkent is de islam" (Subtitle of audio track) Kerken ontheiligd door moslims (Caption) "En wie iets anders dan de islam nastreeft, zal nooit geaccepteerd worden." (Subtitles)
Audio	Recorded audio

Shot 29	Duration: 10
Visual Description	Newspaper headline montage: Animated to peel away to reveal each subsequent headline
Text (English)	Ex-muslim Jami assaulted Death to Rushdie Death threats to Hirsi Ali too (Subtitles)
Text (Dutch)	Ex-moslim Jami gemolesteerd Opnieuw derigt islamitische heksenjacht "Dood aan Rushdie" Brief op lichaam van Theo van Gogh openbaar gemaakt Ook Hirsi Ali met dood bedreigd (Photographed text)
Audio	Soundtrack

Shot 30	Duration: 5
Visual Description	Transition shot: Page turns Shimmering text provides title of Quranic *sura*
Text (English)	QURAN Surah 8, verse 39 (Graphic Text)
Text (Dutch)	KORAN Soera 8, vers 39 (Graphic Text)
Audio	Soundtrack

Shot 31	Duration: 10
Visual Description	Open book: Left page: English/Dutch translation of *sura* appears line by line through shot. Right page: Illustration of Arabic calligraphy of *sura*
Text (English)	Fight them until there is no dissension and the religion is entirely Allah's (Graphic Text)
Text (Dutch)	Voer oorlog tegen hen totdat er geen verzoeking meer is en de godsdienst geheel aan Allah toebehoort (Graphic Text)
Audio	Arabic *sura* recitation

Shot 32	Duration: 55
Visual Description	Video montage: -Rebroadcast televised press conference with caption identifying "Mahmoud Ahmadinejad PRESIDENT IRAN -Press footage of 5 unidentified preachers -Interspersed with bird's eye view shots of attentive audience
Text (English)	"Islam is a religion that wants to rule the world. It has done so before and eventually will rule it again. The message of the (Islamic) Revolution is global, and is not restricted to a specific place or time. Have no doubt… Allah willing, islam will conquer what? It will conquer all the mountain tops of the world." "We have ruled the world before and by Allah, the day will come when we will rule the entire world again! The day will come when we will rule America. The day will come when we will rule Britain and the entire world!" "Allah commanded us to spread this religion worldwide." "You will take over the USA! You will take over the UK! You will take over Europe! You will defeat them all! You will get victory! You will take over Egypt! We trust in Allah!"(Subtitles)
Text (Dutch)	"De islam is een religie die de wereld wil behersen. Dat heeft ze al eerder gedaan en zal dat uiteindelijk weer doen De boodcschap van de Islamitische revolutie is wereldomvattend en is niet beperkt tot een bepaalde tijd of plaats, Twifel niet... als Allah het wil, zal de islam wat veroveren? Het zal alle bergtoppen van de wereld veroveren." "Wij hebben de wereld eerder geregerd. En bij Allah, de dag zal komen dat wij opnieuw de hele wereld zullen regeren! De dag zal komen dat wij over Amerika heersen! De dag zal komen dat wij over Groot- Brittannie en de hele wereld heersen!" "Allah heeft ons bevolen deze religie wereldwijd te verspreiden." "Gij zult de Verenigde Staten overnemen! Gij zult het Verenigd Koninkrijk overnemen! Giz zult Europa overnmen! Gij zult hen allemaal verslaan! Gij zult de overwinning behalen! Gij zult Egypte overnemen! Wij vertrouwen op Allah!" (Subtitles)
Audio	Soundtrack and recorded audio

Shot 33	Duration: 25
Visual Description	Photograph and video montage: Mass media produced, handheld/ on the ground quality images -All fragments focusing on single figures within the crowds of protestors: -Woman in *burqa* amongst others in similar attire -Young men in hooded sweatshirts with their hands cupped to their mouths as they shout -Figure with face is obscured by a *kafiya* -Each carries a placard with English text -Placard is the only clearly visible element of the pictures Edges of each picture dissolve into the surrounding backdrop of the page
Text (English)	ISLAM WILL DOMINATE THE WORLD FREEDOM GO TO HELL ISLAM WILL DOMINATE THE WORLD FREEDOM GO TO HELL (Photographed text on placard)
Text (Dutch)	De islam zal de wereld overheersen Naar de hel met vrijheid De islam zal de wereld overheersen Naar de hel met vrijheid (Subtitle translating photographed placard text)
Audio	Soundtrack

Shot 34	Duration: 15
Visual Description	Subtitle screen: Shimmering text across the screen gives way to montage Blank background fades into video fragments -Dark clouds in a storm at night, with minarets on the horizon -Tram moving through the foreground and into the horizon, where white minarets appear
Text (English)	The Netherlands under the spell of islam (Heading)
Text (Dutch)	Nederland in de ban van de islam (Heading)
Audio	Soundtrack, amplified volume and intensity

Shot 35	Duration: 5
Visual Description	Video fragment and voiceover: Fade into image of mosque set against blue sky, with flags flapping outside.
Text (English)	"The mosque will be part of the system of the government of Holland" (Subtitle)
Text (Dutch)	"De moskee wordt onderdeel van het Nederlandse overheidssysteem" (Subtitle)
Audio	Recorded voiceover (English)

Shot 36	Duration: 5
Visual Description	Photograph and video montage: Footage of a woman in a black *burqa* pushing a child in a stroller Overlaid with an opaque photograph of a Dutch newspaper headline
Text (English)	Cabinet: no ban on *burqa* (subtitle translation of newspaper headline)
Text (Dutch)	Kabinet: geen boerkaverbod (Graphic text in photograph of newspaper headline)
Audio	Soundtrack

Shot 37	Duration: 35
Visual Description	Video montage with graphic overlay: Images from previous frame blends into images of women in headscarves walking on a street Footage forms backdrop to animated graph charting "Number of Muslims in the Netherlands" -Women in headscarves walking in public spaces -Housing facades with satellite dishes being installed -Dutch uniformed police officers pausing to remove their shoes at mosque.
Text (English)	"Number of Muslims in the Netherlands" (Graph title) Rising indicator bar: 54 in 1909 1399 in 1960 458,000 in 1990 944,000 in 2004 (Graph data) "Number of Muslims in Europe" (Graph title) Indicator bar shoots off the top of the frame 54,000,000 in 2007 (Graph data)
Text (Dutch)	"Aantal moslims in Nederland " (Graph title) Rising indicator bar: 54 in 1909 1399 in 1960 458,000 in 1990 944,000 in 2004 (Graph data) "Aantal moslims in Europa " (Graph title)
Audio	Soundtrack

Shot 38	Duration: 10
Visual Description	Television interview fragment: Close up of the profile of a young man speaking to an unpictured interviewer Edges of frame heavily distorted and blurred.
Text (English)	"If my mother or my sister have sex with someone else … then I will kill them too." "Then you will commit an honor killing?" "Absolutely" (Subtitles)
Text (Dutch)	"Als mijn zus of m'n moeder seks hebben met een ander dan vermoord ik ze ook." "Dan pleeg je eerwraak?" "Absoluut" (Subtitles)
Audio	Soundtrack and recorded audio

Shot 39	Duration: 10
Visual Description	Television interview fragment: Close up shot of man (unidentified, but recognizable as Sheik Fawaz Jneid, imam in Den Haag)
Text (English)	"In the Netherlands, for example, one is allowed to commit adultery or to be gay. But I don't feel called upon to be a party to that, because islam considers something like that a crime" (Subtitle)
Text (Dutch)	"Je mag in Nederland bijvoorbeeld overspelig zijn of homo. Maar ik voel me niet geroepen om daaraan mee te doen, want de islam vindt zoiets een misdaad." (Subtitle)
Audio	Soundtrack and recorded audio

Shot 40	Duration: 15
Visual Description	Postcard Collage: Graphic of a postcard emerges overlapping with preceding video fragment The sequence animates five photographs of mosques into a collage, appearing as the constitutive images of a postcard, with a white border and message scrawled atop the front.
Text (English)	Greetings from the Netherlands (Subtitle translating postcard)
Text (Dutch)	Groeten uit Nederland (Graphic text on postcard)
Audio	Soundtrack and recorded audio

Shot 41	Duration: 25
Visual Description	Audio fragment collage: The postcard montage shrinks and is overlaid with a montage of audio fragments, spoken in Arabic.
Text (English)	Spoken in a Dutch Mosque (Caption) "They should denounce political parties and worldly concepts like liberalism, democracy, socialism and everything associated with it and originated from the human brain" (Subtitle) Spoken in El Tawheed mosque (Caption) "If the married man, Allah forbid, commits adultery, or the married woman commits adultery then she will be stoned." (Subtitle)
Text (Dutch)	Uitgesproken in Nederlanse moskee (Caption) "Ze moetn politieke partijen afzweren en het wereldse gedachtegoed zoals liberalilsme, democratie, socialisme en alles wat emaar riekt en aan 't menselijk brein is onsproten." (Subtitle) Uitgesproken in Moskee El Tawheed (Caption) "Als de gehuwde man, Allah behoede, overspel pleegt, of de gehuwde vrouw overspel pleegt dan wordt zij gestenigd." (Subtitle)
Audio	Soundtrack and recorded audio

Shot 42	Duration: 10
Visual Description	Photograph montage: "The Netherlands of the future?!"- Gays Fades between 4 colour, documentary style photographs, which show the hanging of two men: -The men are masked, depicted in close range photograph -Close up photograph of blindfolded men with hooded figures in background -Long distance shot of bodies shown hanging from the gallows
Text (English)	The Netherlands of the future?! (Subheading, glittering, prominent font); Gays (caption across bottom of screen)
Text (Dutch)	Nederland in de toekomst?! (Subheading, glittering, prominent font); Homo's (caption across bottom of screen)
Audio	Soundtrack, amplified volume and intensity

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Shot 43	Duration: 10
Visual Description	Continued montage: "The Netherlands of the future?!" - Children Sequence of 4 photographs depict children smeared with what appears to be blood: -Young boy carries a sword or long knife, the with blood on the blade and his face, as he looks beyond the frame of the photo -Photograph of a man holding a baby while touching the edge of a blade to the child's head -Close range photograph of the same baby, covered in bright fluid and staring into the camera -Photograph depicting a woman in a headscarf smiling as she holds a knife over the face of a young boy, his head bandaged and a his face covered in blood.
Text (English)	The Netherlands of the future?! (Subheading, glittering, prominent font); Children (caption across bottom of screen)
Text (Dutch)	Nederland in de toekomst?! (Subheading, glittering, prominent font); Kinderen (caption across bottom of screen)
Audio	Soundtrack, amplified volume and intensity

Shot 44	Duration: 10
Visual Description	Continued montage: "The Netherlands of the future?!" – Women Sequence of 5 photographs and one video fragment: -Colour photograph showing a woman's body is cropped and blurred so that only her torso, dress drawn up to reveal her naked abdomen and distended stomach, her legs bound together with green tape, and the surround pool of blood, are visible in the frame -Black and white photograph shows a grainy close up of a woman's face as she cries out in apparent pain -A bright, sticky pool of blood fills the frame, showing only a foot in the uppercorner of the image, the rest of the leg and body beyond the scope of the photograph -Photograph of the decapitated head of a woman, wrapped in a yellow *hijab*, blends into the sandy stones on which it rests -Woman in a black headscarf is blindfolded -Video fragment shot from the perspective of a stadium spectator, a woman in a billowing blue *burqa* kneels in front of a firing squad
Text (English)	The Netherlands of the future?! (Subheading, glittering, prominent font); Women (caption across bottom of screen)
Text (Dutch)	Nederland in de toekomst?! (Subheading, glittering, prominent font); Vrouwen (caption across bottom of screen)
Audio	Soundtrack, amplified volume and intensity

Shot 45	Duration: 90
Visual Description	Newspaper headline montage: Cropped to remove the title of newspapers, and such that the body of article is obscured or difficult to read, so that only headlines are easily visible Each appears on screen and then peels away with a special effect to reveal the subsequent photographed headline Photographs show headlines in their original language with subtitles translating
Text (English)	Islamists seek take-over Laakkwartier with Madrid in terror web Sudanese demand execution British 'miss teddy bear' Threesome suspected of planning attack Hell will break loose What you need is a heavy bomb attack We do not agree with freedom of speech, because we denounce democracy Islam is our alternative Explosive increase honor killings in Amsterdam School closes on muslim holidays Jihad lessons in elementary school Free trip to Mecca through islamic school Ankara wants Turkish in classrooms here Foreign imams allowed in more quickly Van Gogh's murderer Mohammed B.: "My successors are ready" Van Gogh murdered after proclamation fatwa Almost half of young Moroccans anti-western Mosques under the spell of radical muslim group Suicide commando in the Netherlands Hamas gathers in Rotterdam Moroccans throw gay in water Imams don't like gays 'Imam legalizes violence against gays' 'Throw gays from tall buildings' Mosque: turning the Netherlands into a muslim state Girls still genitally mutilated 'Muslims hinder doctors taking care of women' Halal-fund: investment for muslims Al-Qaeda proclaims death penalty Jihad against Wilders Quran license to kill (Subtitles translating newspaper headlines)
Text (Dutch)	Islamisten uit op machtsovername: Politiek gedreven oslims krijgen steeds meer invloed in Europa Laakkwartier met Madrid in terreurweb Sudanezen eisen executie Britse 'juffrouw teddybeer' Drietal verdacht van planaanslag 'De HEL al LOSBARSTEN' 'Wat jullie nodig hebben is een zware bomaanslag' 'Wij zijn het niet eens met de vrijheid van meningsuiting, want we verwerpen de democratie' "Ons alternatief is de islam." Explosieve toename eerwraak Amsterdam School gaat dicht op feestdagen moslims AIVD-onderzoek: Jihad-les op basisschool Minister doet aangifte van Rotterdamse wantoestanden Gratis naar Mekka via isalmschool Ankara wil heir Turks in de klas Donner versoepelt regels Buitenlandse imams mogen sneller land in Moordenaar Van Gogh voorspelt terreuracties Mohammed B.: Mijn opvolgers staan klaar Van Gogh vermoord na afkondiging fatwa Bijna helft jonge Marokkanen antiwesters

	Moskeeen in ban van radical moslimgroep
	Zelfmoord-commando's in Nederland
	Hamas bijeen in Rotterdam
	Alexander moet uren zwemmen Marokkanen gooien homo in het water
	Imams houden niet van homo's
	'Imam legaliseert geweld tegen homo's'
	'Gooi homo's van hoge gebouwen'
	Moskee: Nederland moslimstaat maken
	Nog steeds meisjes besneden 'Overheid moet daar veel meer achteraan zitten en artsen vervolgen die dat doen'
	'Moslims hinderen artsen bij zorg voor vrouwen'
	Halalfonds: beleggen voor moslims Nieuw op Amsterdamse beurs
	De Telegraaf Al Qaeda vaardigt doodstraf uit JIHAD TEGEN WILDERS
	'KORAN JACHTKTE' Arabist Hans Jansen: "Je beledigt islam al als je geen moslim wordt" (Graphic text of photographed newspaper headlines)
Audio	Soundtrack

Shot 46	Duration: 20
Visual Description	Video Sequence: Slow fade to the opened pages of a Quran, as the camera pans out -A hand reaches into the frame and grasps the upper corner of the right hand page -Cut to black just as the gestures to tear the page
Text (English)	
Text (Dutch)	
Audio	Sound effect of tearing paper after the cut to black Soundtrack

Shot 47	Duration: 5
Visual Description	Fade in of message addressing viewers White text on black screen
Text (English)	The sound you heard was a page being ripped from the phonebook (Graphic text)
Text (Dutch)	Het geluid dat u hoorde was een pagina uit het telefoonboek (Graphic text)
Audio	Soundtrack

Shot 48	Duration: 40

Visual Description	Textual manifesto: Scrolling white text moves from bottom to top of black screen
Text (English)	For it is not up to me, but to Muslims themselves to tear out the hateful verses from the Quran. Muslims want you to make way for Islam, but Islam does not make way for you. The Government insists that you respect Islam, but Islam has no respect for you. Islam wants to rule, submit, and seeks to destroy our western civilization. In 1945, Nazism was defeated in Europe. In 1989, communism was defeated in Europe. Now, the Islamic ideology has to be defeated. Stop Islamisation. Defend our freedom
Text (Dutch)	Want het is nien aan mij, maar aan moslims zelf om de haatdragende verzen uit de koran te scheuren. Moslims willen dat u ruimte geeft aan de islam, maar de islam biedt geen ruimte aan u. van de overheid moet u respect hebben voor de islam, maar de islam heeft geen enkel respect voor u. De islam wil overheersen, onderwerpen en is uit op de vernietiging van onze Westerse beschaving. In 1945 werd in Europa het nazisme overwonnen. In 1989 word in Europa het communisme overwonnen. Nu moet de islamitische ideologie worden overwonnen. Stop de Islamizering Verdedig onze vrijheid.
Audio	Soundtrack

Shot 49	Duration: 10
Visual Description	Open book: Pages of the book turn to reveal replication of opening scene (shot 3) Left page: cartoon illustration of the bearded man and the bomb* Zoom-in to focus on the burning fuse Right page: digital clock reappears
Text (English)	00:03 00:02 00:01 00:00 (Graphic text)
Text (Dutch)	00:03 00:02 00:01 00:00 (Graphic text)
Audio	Sound effect of hissing and crackling of burning fuse Soundtrack

Shot 50	Duration: <5

Visual Description	Explosion/Lightening: Sudden flash Video footage of a lightning bolt crossing sky for brief instant Fast cut to black screen
Text (English)	
Text (Dutch)	
Audio	Sound effect of explosion/ thunder

Shot 51	Duration: 25
Visual Description	Closing scene: Replication of title screen (shot 2) Title '*FITNA*' again fades in from darkness alongside cover of book Transforming into FIN
Text (English)	*FITNA*…. FIN (Graphic Text)
Text (Dutch)	*FITNA*…. FIN (Graphic Text)
Audio	Soundtrack