

Power, Surveillance, and Empire

Madiha Tahir:

“Hi-tech Surveillance, Lo-Tech Terror, and the Visual Politics of the Drone”

Abstract: Over the last two decades, the ‘war on terror’ has shifted and reshaped the terms of political terror in Pakistan. Surveillance is widespread, and in certain parts of the country, populations survive and endure cultures of terror. This talk examines these conditions on the ground because, I argue, they provide a critically different analytics of drone surveillance. By engaging with the sites and spaces where bodies are disappeared, disfigured, and dismembered--rendered *na maloom* (unknown), as we say--by multiple actors, this talk centers the experiences of marginalized populations rather than the self-descriptions of American military workers in order to account for the visual politics of the drone.

Madiha Tahir is completing her doctoral dissertation on autonomous warfare and the war on terror at Columbia University. She is the director of *Wounds of Waziristan*, a short documentary film on Pakistani survivors of drone attacks. She is also the co-founder of the e-zine [Tanqeed](#), with Mahvish Ahmad, and the co-editor of *Dispatches from Pakistan*, a volume of essays in a series on timely issues spearheaded by Vijay Prashad. Tahir has worked as a freelance journalist, and her reported work has appeared in several media outlets including Al-Jazeera, Vice, Foreign Affairs, Caravan, Democracy Now!, PRI and BBC’s “The World”, and elsewhere. She is currently working on a second documentary on a Pakistani anti-war resistance movement with filmmaker, Saad Khan.

Simone Browne: “On the Surveillance of Black Life: Histories and Present”

Abstract: This discussion situates blackness as an absented presence in the field of surveillance studies, and questions how a realization of the conditions of blackness—the historical, the present, and the historical present— can help social theorists understand our contemporary conditions of surveillance.)

Simone Browne is Associate Professor in the Department of African and African Diaspora Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. She teaches and researches surveillance studies, digital media and black diaspora studies. Simone is also a member of Deep Lab, a feminist collaborative composed of artists, engineers, writers, and theorists. For 2018-2019 she is a Visiting Presidential Fellow at Yale University where she will teach as well as conduct new research on electronic waste to ask questions about the ecology of surveillance technologies.