Poetics of Security

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On October 23, 1983, at around 6:20 A.M., there was a suicide attack against the U.S. Marine battalion in Beirut. A lorry-van loaded with an estimated four thousand pounds of explosives was driven and exploded inside the military headquarters, killing 260 American marines and resulting in the withdrawal of the multinational force from Lebanon. Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the attack. Later, it was revealed that a security camera had captured the truck crashing through the perimeter fence into the entrance lobby. After routine technical treatment, the experts managed to recover, and subsequently released to the media, the face of the driver seconds before he detonated the explosives. The look of that face was very unexpected, and for some deeply shocking. The driver was smiling.[1]

Poetic death, maimed corpses, disabled bodies, a cinematic relic, and a mesmerizing sign were the parting gifts of our brother-in-arms. Mementos of a security mess, loaded with the heavy burden of a tragic event and armed with their own mind-blowing expositions. The driver's haunting smile—no longer his—is ours to interpret. It has already been seen to invoke a variety of conditions: the heroic defiance of extraordinary faith; the blissful martyrdom of the blessed; the irrationalism and fanaticism of Islamic militancy; the psychological state of high narcotic consumption. But as a visual narrative not reduced to self-evident storytelling, it surpasses the conventional dichotomies of us/them, religious/secular, Christian/Islamic, Eastern/Western, rational/irrational, and psychological/praxeological. This snapshot of the other face of incarnated terror, riding unsafely but secure in its mission, captures a picture that remains ever-ambivalent, both sublime and dangerous, beautiful and violent. It is eminently that someone can approach certain death with such serenity and peace of mind; it is alarming that a deadly mission can be discharged with such confidence and detachment. By introducing this other picture I, too, aim to capture and photograph. I am not so much concerned with analyzing the Beirut incident in detail but with rethinking the broader manner in which security is constituted. My target is the dominant story that reduces security to ominology. I seek to illuminate a story of security that is less "evident," not merely commuted into accounts of safety and certitude, or in perfect tune with the presence of protection and of knowledge. In this respect, the security camera's collateral shot shatters, albeit momentarily, the contemporaneous narrative of security, safety, and certitude. It does so in the way the driver's smile in the midst of clear and present danger has been so easily and surely perceived as most untimely.

The time of security has been colonized by a peculiar kind of poetry in contemporary politics: the universal. A few tales massively communicated and reiterated as the single truth are often enough to get political issues securitized.[2] Securitization as discursive practice works by synchronizing security, safety, and certitude. It depicts all three as co-temporal occurrences. To be secure is to be safe is to be certain. To secure is to protect from danger is to know the danger and how to go about doing the protection. This constitutes the security problematic as automatically and exclusively a question of providing safety and producing knowledge.[3] Thus strategists and defense experts are able to continue with their totalizations, identifying threats in uncertainty, and confidently naming the enemy, assuming the endangered, and prescribing the deterrence. Thus also critical security scholars are able to continue their epistemological debates, introducing their ethics, and exposing the statecentric, ethnocentric, phallocentric, and anthropocentric assumptions of conventional works. Put differently, by naturalizing the rime of security as an experience of safety and certitude, many authors authorize, moralize, and empower their security discourse, while others conveniently convert their critique of traditional regimes of power into power-seeking regimes of truth. Needless to say that, within different frames of safety, the work of both critical and traditional scholars can provide rationales that—depending on space, time, and identity
variables--emancipate or furnish protection to groups of people or individuals in need. But we also need to acknowledge that currently (critical) security studies support a booming business, a proliferation of knowledge about security from which many invariably benefit (the author not excluded) and many more still suffer.

This article seeks to develop, through poetic exploration, narratives of security that resist securitization; i.e., narratives that do not offer rhetorical legitimation to different regimes of power or justify the intervention of security experts and practitioners. Developing such narratives is not a purification exercise that seeks to restore a primordial story, or return to an authentic and autonomous time of security. Its purpose is not to reject in an arbitrary and complete manner scholastic forms of knowledge or technical instruments of protection. It is not meant to be a glorification of gnosis or narratology. Rather, I use poetry to point--to point back to some other times; to look at traditions and countertraditions of security; to illustrate how some notions of security have prevailed over others, and how this relatively arbitrary choice has far-reaching consequences for our understanding of security today. In this sense, poetic intervention is political; that is, if we do not reduce the political merely to praxeology--or at least to a praxeology defined in opposition to theory.[4]

Poetry envisions and revisions forms of political life. Yet its closer emphasis on words sometimes illuminates--recalls or reinvents--their narrative construction. That is to say, it can highlight how words are not just narrative material but, as I show below, can themselves have stories to tell. Poetic-word exploration can thus be a means of freeing political narratology from the sentential regime of storytelling, the “tyranny” of grammar and of the full-stop. It can help to expose how the dominant world narratives we are called to accept and act upon are in turn but a collage of word-stories forgotten, interpreted, or synchronized to suit the rhetorical moral of the grand narrative.

There is an increasing recognition today that to rule the world is to rule over the meaning of words. In the battle over the meaning of security, temporality meets spatiality, and synchronization the politics of inclusion/exclusion. The synchronizing narrative popular in IR texts outlines security as “freedom from danger or risk.” This sets aside or dominates over other narratives, like that of security as “freedom from care,” a narrative close to its Latin etymology se/sine-cura.[5] The four poetic passages chosen in this article are open to readings that, in my view, break the synchronizing story of security, but also retrieve and reorient the “freedom” of security. These poetic passages come from different historical epochs, but are neither typical of security thinking in those epochs nor epically immuned from securitization. I do not consider it an argumentative liability that some of these extracts are part of traditions that have been used to support securitizing agendas. For, to repeat, the question is not the discovery of the poem or the story of security. It is rather a question of utilizing the polysemic character of poetry, realizing the hermeneutical potential of stories that--just like the narration of the Beirut incident--can serve in different contexts, within or outside tradition, as ammunition against securitization. The first extract comes from an ancient Greek fragment by Archilochus, the second from Saint Paul’s Epistles, the third from a Sufi poem by Jalaluldin Rumi, and the fourth from a contemporary poet, Kahlil Gibran.

**The Rise and the Ride**

Remains of the fragmentary verse of Archilochus.

My soul, my soul, overwhelmed by many cares,  
rise up, and cast a chest against them,  
and near your foes be secure:  
neither in victory boast out open  
nor beaten fall in weeping at home,  
take joy in joys,  
and give in not too much to evils:  
knowing what rhythm holds humanity.[6]

Archilochus’s passage provides an early reference to security from the seventh century BCE. This reference comes from a poet who by his own account was a dedicated “servant to the god of fighting” (fr. 1) and by that of others a mercenary.[7] The fighting he prescribes in this poem, however, is of a different type. It is a fight of *thumos* (soul) against *kedesin* (cares). A calling out
to his soul to rise up, mobilize, and resist his cares, to revolt against a condition that constantly
grieves and agitates him, arrests and overpowers him. In other words, the poet seeks to change
his agony into agonism, an agonism for security. As spiritual emancipation from cares, he delivers
an advance photograph of the etymological narrative of securitas.

The Archilochean struggle leading to security next to one's foes (en dokois ekthon plesion
katastatheis asphaleos) is explicitly not a military struggle. It is not a struggle against an external
adversary or with the purpose of defeating an enemy. This struggle is a psychological one: not a
fight to eliminate the danger but of literally facing up to the danger. That is to say, to fight to
reach a mental state where one is secure-in-danger, where one can dwell (katastatheis) next to
one's enemy in security, without surrendering, or dominating, or making friend of the foe. Put
differently, Archilochus's thymic security spiritualizes enmity. It preserves the enemy; it safeguards
danger and risk; for this form of security is in accord, Archilochus says, with our basic humanity,
with the rhythm of life, with the recurring fluctuation of human affairs; that is, with instability,
uncertainty, and mortality.[8] Locating the security condition in thumos is learning to live with
one's own fears, forging a struggle that is primarily internal, personal, and spiritual--not external
and material.

In this respect, two points need to be further explored concerning the etymological and
mythological aspects of asphaleia, the ancient Greek word for security. This word was not a single,
homogeneous term but carried with it at least two additional meanings as shown by its etymology:
(a) rightness, not to err (sphallo) and (b) to remain standing and firm, not to fall (sphallo). That is
to say, asphaleia could also mean certitude and firmness, just like safety and certitude are
currently synonymous with security. Asphaleia was also used sometimes in the sense of safety,
but another word, soteria (etymologically linked to the Latin salus and English safety), was more
generally used.

Archilochus's verse plays with the etymological ramifications of asphaleia. His call to "rise up" is
another way of saying "secure." Here he uses an interesting word for "rise up": anadu(o)---a rising
up as an emergence from the seas. Note that anaduo also means to retreat, to withdraw one's
troops, to avoid military confrontation, and to desert the army. In other words, what leads to
Archilochean security is an act of withdrawal from military service that is also a spiritual
reemergence from the sea. The tragic rhythm that holds humanity figures in sea like tempo,
invoking the liquidity and fluctuation, the instability of the ground upon which humans are called
to stand and secure. Negotiating the sea-element is contrasted to the earthly, firm knowledge
upon which a particular type of nonspiritual security is founded in and as certitude. The rise from
the sea is also a ride into it. The task, as put in another Archilochean fragment (58), requires of
anyone claiming to be a "strategist" (strategos) to fully develop an amphibious nature: "one has to
secure (stand firm) [asphaleos bebekos possi], while his heart sails."

Staging the spiritual battle for security in the seas brings it under the rule of Poseidon. In ancient
Greek mythology, Poseidon had the cult title Asphaleios. Whereas many deities were given the
epithet for Savior (Soter, Soteira; e.g., Zeus, Athena, Artemis) only Poseidon was literally "the
Securer." The security regime of Poseidon was neither a deliverance from danger nor that of
certitude. Poseidon was perhaps the most unstable god of the Olympian pantheon. Not only as a
sea-god in charge of an unstable element, but also in his other stabilizing functions as the holder
of the earth (gaieochos; posis das), the god of foundations and constructions (themeliochous,
teichopoios), Poseidon figured in the Greek imaginary as most temperamental, the father of many
dangerous and violent children, like the Laestrygones and the Cyclopes, the cause of earthquakes,
floods, and tempests (the ironic contrast to the etymological ramifications of asphaleia is quite
striking).[9] In fragment 114, Archilochus reproves Poseidonian safety with a clear touch of irony:
"Out of fifty shipwrecked the kindly Poseidon saved only one [sothenena]. "And in fragment 10,
he advises: "let us encrypt the profane gifts of Lord Poseidon." A profane divinity. An insecure
securer. Dark, unstable, and tragic is the mythical archetype of ancient Greek security whose gifts
mortals need to disclose and accept in their mundane ambivalence.[10]

Archilochus's fragment displays security as thymic and Poseidonian. In this sense, security is not a
rescue from danger but freedom from the care of danger; not a given or permanent condition, but
continuous, spiritual, seafaring agon. To emerge secure, one must free oneself and withdraw from
the obsessive mental cares one is commonly submerged to. To remain afloat, one must cast an
airy chest, learn to live with fluctuility and instability, ascend and descend with the sea's tempo,
sail its dangerous rhythm and successive waves, come to terms with the sea's dark unknowns that
are beyond one's control, learn to "stand on the edge between wave and wind" (fr. 43), and be
ready for the trident. In this extreme reversal of ground, nothing is impossible or unexpected. Fragment 74 strikes a resonance of denaturalization: "Let none of you marvel, though you see the beasts of the field exchange pasture with the dolphins of the deep, and the roaring waves of the sea become dearer than the land to such as loved the hill."

Dissociating security from the feeling of certainty, Archilochean poetry strikingly differs from the synchronizing narrative of security and its legitimation of political regimes at the time. (See, for example, in Thucydides where the exalted "common safety" (koine soteria) of the Athenians is opposed to the dishonorable safety-of-servitude (asphalos douleuein) of others, and is rhetorically linked to the tyrannical interests of imperial Athens that can only be guaranteed, according to Pericles, by those who maintain firm views based on knowledge of facts).[11] By contrast, the thymic-Poseidonian security of Archilochus is not something that can be attained or guaranteed through religious or political rituals. Its way cannot be perfectly known or controlled. Archilochus locates security in the unstable ground, the god who more than all others is bound to bring you low as he brings you up. The spiritual struggle for security--learning to live with Poseidon--was marginalized as political discourse, not surprisingly, since it could not empower the dominant regime of power at the time; i.e., the polis. Typically, Poseidon was not a popular poliouchos, the protecting deity of the polis, responsible for its prosperity and permanence. Mythology furnished the Greeks with another justifying narrative. The one famous polis where Poseidon the Asphaleios was the patron god, and that was both a country of abundance and a great power, was none other than Atlantis: a most "secure" polis, risen above the rest, and then totally submerged by Poseidon himself.

The Last Terror

Toward the end of his First Epistle to the Thessalonians (5:1-10), Paul indites:

About the times and the seasons, brothers, there is no need to write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly well that the day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night. When they say peace and security [eirene kai asphaleia; pax et securitas], destruction comes upon them, sudden as the pangs that come on a woman in childbirth; and there will be no escape. But you, brothers, are not in the dark that the day will come upon you like a thief ... we, who belong to the daylight, must keep sober, armed with the breastplate of faith and love, and the hope of salvation [soteria; salus] for a helmet. God has not destined us for retribution, but for the attainment of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that awake or asleep we might live in company with him.[12]

The apostle to the nations employs the "peace and security" phraseology presaging the contemporary terminology and founding principle of the United Nations. However, this phraseology is currently charged in political discourse--occupying diplomatic discussions and legitimating global action--in a manner quite antithetical to the Paulian spirit. The proposition that the Christian discourse of orderly peace with justice deferred is what predominates in the UN system, as opposed to the Islamic discourse more concerned with justice, is certainly interesting but misplaced if unqualified.[13] For, at least with regard to Paul, "peace and security" should not be a guiding principle on how to lead a Christian life.

Paul's Epistle deflates an overrated discourse. His move concerning security is notably unsettling. The Thessalonians are reminded of what they "already know" in the gospel; namely, that they may achieve some security on earth but that this security is a bogus one. What really matters, according to Paul, is not historical but eschatological security--that is, the last security, security at the end of the world, after the Apocalypse that, for the early Christians, was imminent and could come suddenly "as a thief in the night." By saying that destruction will come to those who say "peace and security," Paul explicitly warns that those who are complacent in their historical peace and security are eschatologically insecure. Destruction will come surely like the pains of a woman in labor. Their peace and security, to follow his metaphor, is pregnant with danger. Not only will it not protect them after the Second Coming, but will even give birth to new, eschatological dangers and the possibility of eternal damnation. To that extent, mundane security is not real security. Real security is not of this world. Real security is not daily physical or personal safety but posthumous salvation.

This radical change of focus should not be construed as a complete abandon of the concerns of historical security. In his Second Epistle, Paul begs the Thessalonians "not to lose their heads"
over the Second Coming (2:2). In another Epistle, he tells the Philippians that what he preaches is also for their security or physical safety (umin de asphales), warning them “against those dogs” (kunas) who insist on trying to circumcise them (peritome) but in truth want to mutilate them (katatome) (3:1-3). In a daring passage, Paul muses how beneficial it will be if those who preach bodily circumcision—as opposed to spiritual circumcision, which is what really opens the way to salvation—go the whole way and castrate themselves (Gal. 5:12).[14] Furthermore, in his First Epistle to Timothy, Paul takes the trouble to divert from his homily on Christian conduct that guide the faithful to salvation in order to strike a note on biological safeguards. He reproaches the bishop of Ephesus for neglecting his own welfare and gives him a piece of therapeutic advice: “Stop drinking only water; in view of your frequent ailments take a little wine to help your digestion.” (5:23)

Paul’s soteriology is terroristic. But his terror is an act of love. Paul terrorizes the faithful in order to save them. He himself is in “great fear and terror” (1 Cor. 2:3) when preaching the gospel, Christians should be in "fear and terror" when receiving it and while working toward their salvation (meta phobou kai tromou ten eauton soterian katergazeste, Phil. 2:12).[15] Terror cultivates the memory of death, the memory of what is to come last and last. It promotes Christian weakness and humility, and thus faith in the power of God rather than human wisdom (1 Cor. 2:5). Paul’s favorite binary is faith over knowledge—his Epistles an ample poetic celebration of the former and shaming of the latter, dissociating the work of salvation from the "chaterous," "contradictory," and "false" gnosis that strays from faith (1 Tim. 6:20-21). Paul goes further. Worldly wisdom has been rendered foolish in the act of crucifixion and resurrection. It is in order to shame worldly wisdom and the power of the strong that the Savior did not come as a conquering messiah, shown apparently incapable of saving himself and scandalously surrendered to a most degrading death (1 Cor. 1:18-24). Like Jesus Christ—the model and medium for the attainment of salvation—Christians must keep their faith in the gospel, the wisdom of the divine "folly," and build their spiritual strength in "weakness." The good message was that the Son of Man conquered through humility and faith the terror of death. The price was that he reinstated the terror of afterlife.

Paul’s eschatology of terror is not just negative, annihilating fear and repression. There is an evangelical side to it; namely, "the hope of salvation." Salvation is played in two parts. The advent of Jesus is the first act of rescue, the message of God's reconciliation with sinful humanity, the display of divine love. Here lies the redemptive power of crucifixion: "For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his son, how much more, now that we have been reconciled, shall we be saved by his life?" (Rom. 5:10). The First Coming establishes a new world order (2 Cor. 15-17). Old history comes to an end, time starts anew. Security is radically reconfigured as the fight and hope of salvation. The fight for salvation is not against human foes but cosmic powers, such as the evil forces of the dark world, the stratagems of demons, rebellious angels, and diabolic thoughts (Eph. 6:12). Paul still employs military metaphors and terminology, but the kind of armor is clearly of a different calibre; i.e., for breastplate, faith and love; for helmet, the hope of salvation. In Ephesians, a more complete armor is displayed: for belt, the Christian truth; for shoes, the gospel of peace; for shield, faith; for sword, the Holy Spirit (6:13-17). The hope of salvation is the end of human life for which there is no certainty or guarantee. Observance of the law cannot deliver it either. "For no human being can be justified in the sight of God by keeping the law: law brings only the consciousness of sin" (Rom. 3:20). No one can give or take salvation but God. Faith that Jesus is Christ and the spiritual unity in the life of Christ, the life of love, is the only vehicle for grace, the only hope of salvation. Soteriology provokes uncertainty, fear, and terror, though at the same time, it could be liberating and securing for the faithful in exposing the insignificance of all other human cares. It can provide historical security as sine cura. Within such personal "carelessness"—which is not selfish indifference—Christian love as caritas for the other is rendered possible, not as duty or vain individual act but as the work of the Holy Spirit.

Though often didactic and canonical, in another sense, Paul's discourse is quite revolutionary and effective in seeking to dissociate salvation from the Judaic regime of power. His acceptance of the authority of the Pax Romana and call to obey one's rulers, perhaps a pragmatic response under the circumstances, could also be explained as a genuine belief that political regimes were irrelevant in either cultivating the way to salvation or providing the spiritual freedom promised in securitas. His exaltation of personal faith over law, his warning against entering the exchange economy of good works and salvation, looks like the church he was trying to build was meant to be more a spiritual state than a power institution. As he says to the faithful: "we have no dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy" (2 Cor. 1:24). No wonder he became the favorite
apostle of apostates and heretics, such as the famous Marcion (who took Paul's writing to its logical conclusion and rejected the Old Testament), and to whom we owe the early collection of Paul's Epistles in the Apostolicon. That Paul was adopted by the church may have more to do with the decision of the early apostles to go fully international, especially after the failed Jewish Revolt (66-73 C.E.) that seriously discredited the Jews in the Roman Empire.[16] It is interesting to note, however, that Paul's Epistles still inspired the Reformation by invigorating resistance against the Roman ecclesiastical regime. Paul's teaching served as the main reference point to Martin Luther's Concerning Christian Liberty, especially his view on salvation through faith and grace rather than law and works that empowered the canon of the Holy See. Thus, for Luther, following Paul, a Christian should be servant to everyone but subject to no one.

Paul helped to introduce a new vocabulary of faith for dealing with the problem of salvation individually and without resort to "the safety" of the established regimes of power. Note how this vocabulary--subsequently as part of a more general Christian doctrine of obedience--was rhetorically employed and modified in a way that did legitimate regimes of power. Two examples may suffice. First, for the Byzantine chronicler Procopius, writing five centuries later, the term asphaleia, though historical, is theologically informed and not antithetical to but a mimesis of the sacred order. In Buildings, Procopius offers a panegyric of security, specifically commending Emperor Justinian for securing the empire through construction works, like the fortification of frontiers, the building of walls, castles, and irrigation systems. This security is the result of the continuous inspiration and guidance that God provides to his vice-regent on earth. It is maintained through the emperor's religious work that glorified and pleased God. For example, in the account of the building of Hagia Sophia, Procopius informs the reader how after failures from able architects, the emperor managed to secure the arches of the great church (en to bebaio tes asphaleias esterichtai) through a divine disclosure of the architectonic formula.[17] The continuous favor of God is secured in turn by giving the church back to him (the mosaic of Justinian literally handing over the church to God can still be seen today in Hagia Sophia). In short, the methods of security of the Byzantine sovereign are legitimated in having direct access to the ultimate sovereign. Historical security becomes the everyday concern of the kingdom of heaven.

Second, in the case of Thomas Hobbes, the security that is contractually and technically provided by the sovereign can be explained better as a secularization of Christian salvation than as securitas. Significantly, this is not the Paulian salvation that is possible outside the discipline of law. The famous Hobbesian theme--no security outside the state--paradigmatically follows the medieval motto of extra ecclesia nulla salus (no salvation outside the church). From the introduction of the Leviathan, we find out that the "business" of the state is "salus populi," which Hobbes brackets in translation as "(the peoples' safety)." No business for the church without salvation; no business for the state without security/safety. However, Hobbes is also highly interested in salvation per se, and especially in bringing it outside the ecclesiastical regime of power.[18] He is highly critical of how the church has become an autonomous political and militant regime, challenging temporal sovereignty by annexing the kingdom of God. Hobbes's determination to reclaim salvation from the church literally brings the kingdom of heaven down to earth:

On one side, by kingdom, which is an estate ordained by men for their perpetual security against enemies and want, it seemeth that this salvation should be on earth. For by salvation is set forth unto us, a glorious reign of our king, by conquest; not a safety by escape: and therefore there where we look for salvation, we must look also for triumph; and before triumph, for victory; and before victory, for battle; which cannot well be supposed, shall be in heaven.[19]

Hobbes's neomessianic discourse reveals its temporal mask. Unlike Paul, Hobbes explicitly identifies the enemies of the kingdom of God not as cosmic entities but as earthly ones.[20] Going a full circle, salvation becomes retemporalized security, in the image and character of historical safety. After the day of judgment, the Christian sovereign will succeed earthly sovereigns to establish the kingdom of God on earth with its capital Jerusalem, a new state that will proceed in full Hobbesian vein to guarantee "perpetual security against enemies and want."

**Surrender and Self-Annihilation**

A passage from Jalaluldin Rumi's Mathnawi (1,2959-73), "the Persian Koran."
The Prophet said to Ali: "O Ali, you are the Lion of God, you are a valiant knight, but do not rely upon your courage: come into the shade of the Palm-tree of hope. Come into the shade (protection) \[sae\] of the Sage whom none can waylay.

His shade on the earth is like Mount Qaf, his spirit is like the Simurgh that soars aloft. Though I should sing his praises until the Resurrection, do not look for any end to them.

The Divine Sun has veiled Himself in Man: apprehend this mystery, and God knows best what is the truth.

O Ali, above all works of devotion in the Way is the shadow (protection) \[sae\] of God's Servant. When others take refuge in some act of devotion and discover some means of deliverance, Go you, take refuge in the shadow of the Sage against the enemy within you."

Having been accepted by the Pir, surrender [taslim] yourself to him: submit, like Moses, to the authority of Khizir.

Whatever your Khizir may do, bear it patiently, lest he say, "Begone, here we part."

Though he scuttle the boat, be dumb! Though he kill a child, do not tear your hair!

God has described his hand as His own, for He said, "The Hand of God is over their hands." This "Hand of God" slays his disciple, then brings him to life everlasting.

The celebrated Sufi of Konya opens his poem with a prophetic call to Ali. Rumi has Mohammed instruct Ali (his gifted son-in-law and controversial third imam) to seek out the protection of the Sage. Ali certainly lacks neither courage in the physical sense nor wisdom in religious terms. He is well known in the Islamic tradition as the Lion of God. He is a valiant knight, ready for jihad, the holy battle. But this courage, the prophet maintains, will not be enough, or better it will not be reliable for the spiritual struggle ahead, the greater jihad. For Ali is subverted from within. He incorporates an internal enemy, the most personal of foes--himself. Protection is thus necessary and must come from outside. It cannot be furnished by traditional regimes of power, as Rumi warns in another poem: "O Kings, we have killed our outer enemies but the inner enemy, which is worse than the outer one, is still living. To slay this enemy is not the work of reason and intelligence: the inward lion is not subdued by the hare" (1 Math. 1373-74). Protection from the enemy within requires the shade of the Sage, the Mevlana, the spiritual guide.

Shade offers a powerful image of protection for Near and Middle Eastern people. It is a place of everyday rescue. The shade of the palm tree is the longed-for safety to desert and nomadic existence. It provides a form of historical security closely linked to the life of Mohammed and the early beginnings of Islam. But it is also a Koranic image of salvation: "On the day of Resurrection, I will call out, 'Where are those who love one another through my divine glory alone and for the sake of my glory alone? Today I am offering them refuge and sweet refreshment under my shade, for this is the day on which there is no shade but my shade.'"[22] There are different kinds of shade as there are different types of security. The shade of the spiritual guide is both historical and transcendental, an all-encompassing one akin to the shade of Mount Qaf, the inaccessible holy mountain of Islamic cosmology encircling the earth. Moving from shade to shadow (sae means both in Farsi), Ali is asked not merely to come under but obediently follow the Sage, to become his shadow, and thus also the shadow of God's servant. Note that this prophetic advice is an autobiographical parallel to Rumi's spiritual life, his mystical awakening when he came across his Sage, Shams of Tabriz. Shams had a profound impact on Rumi, who abandoned his prestigious scholarly life and became his passionate follower. Shams, which literally means sun, was the spiritual fire, the divine love that both burned and liberated Rumi as his poetry passionately recites over and over again.[23] Rumi's sagely protection has been peculiarly heliocentric as personification and recurring metaphor for enlightenment. Rumi's shade is the sun. It protects by melting the seeker.
Rumi's protecting shade reverses the norms of formal religion. It concerns not a simple question of safety or salvation. Others seek a safe, ordinary life or salvation through religious work, and there is no suggestion by Rumi (unlike Paul) that their devotion will prove dangerous or bear no eschatological fruit. These others, however, do not partake in the Sufi way, they cannot apprehend the mystery that "the Divine Sun has veiled Himself in Man." They do not tear off the sensory curtains to behold the truth of creation. They separate themselves from God, and thus do not do justice to their divine nature. This is where the ultimate insecurity lies. For "Hell exists due to separation and the old man trembles so much because of separation" (3 Math. 3694). Those who are not Sufis do not cross over to fully embrace God, body and soul. They do not dance with the Beloved but remain in constant fear of God and life.

For Rumi, the one who is on the Sufi way rejects and seeks to overcome the Man-God separation, strives to unite with the divine in the actual moment and not in some distant afterlife. Such unity is not easy. It comes after surrendering (taslim) to the Sage. Muslim, Islam, and taslim have the same etymological root, and thus the latter strikes an explicit religious resonance to being a Muslim, a Submitter, and to Islam that literally means Surrender (to God). To be on the Sufi way is to surrender, to burn under the shade/shadow of the enlightened one who already travels on the way.

Rumi gives another reference from the Koran, this time relating to Moses and Khizr, or Al-Khadir, the Sage to whom Moses fully submitted after God reprehended him for his vanity, in displaying to others his knowledge and wisdom.[24] To stay with Khizr, Moses has to bear with that which is constantly beyond his own knowledge. Personal understanding cannot be trusted. Human knowledge veils the path of life. Rumi employs the same Koranic images to make the point of complete and unconditional surrender. The Sage's action can be shocking: the sinking of the boat of life, the killing of a child. But even after the most terrible acts one should not withdraw submission to the Sage, one should not say I have understood, because that is exactly when one does not understand. Divine reason rules. The hand of God is over the Sage's hand and God knows best what is the truth. To believe in God is to sacrifice human certitude when it is most obvious.

It will of course be easy to read Rumi simplistically as legitimizing thoughtless violence or blind obedience to such behavior. However, this is to read him out of context. His extreme examples seek to show that nonduality is not an easy option. One has to constantly experience not only the joy but also the pain of divine force. To be with God is to reach such a state of passionate detachment. The complete surrender to God through the Sage subverts the provisional arrangement of the ego, moves the disciple away from the realm of knowledge and into that of faith.

Unity with the divine is secured through self-annihilation, where the newly initiated mystic effaces the ego, dies-to-self (fana) in order to live-in-God (baqa). Fana is the condition of being without ego or self, that ecstatic moment when one is completely overtaken by God. Baqa is mystical rebirth, everyday resurrection, subsistence, and survival. It is within this context that the hand of God slays the disciple. The disciple becomes the prey of God, who kills the ego or false identity so that the mystic is flooded with divine life. But fana and baqa are not unbroken ecstasy, mental redefinition, or loss of conscious thought. Instead, in Rumi's terms, "Define and narrow me, you starve yourself of yourself. Nail me down in a box of cold words, that box is your coffin. I do not know who I am. I am in astounding lucid confusion."[25] The Sufi is reborn an all-encompassing being, a greater self, one with God and faith: "I am dead to the soul, I am living through the Soul of souls. Inasmuch as I am dead to senses of man, God has become my hearing, perception, and sight. Since I am not I, in the presence of this breath if anyone breathes (a word) he is an infidel" (1 Math. 3124-26). The acts of the believer even when they may turn physically against one can never be insecure for they are the acts of God and restore life-in-God.

Rumi radicalizes security as self-annihilation. He does so by radicalizing in turn the Muslim understanding of faith as security. For significantly, the word used in the Koran for believer, mu'min, is etymologically connected to certainty, assurance, and also to security, emniyet. However, in Rumi, security as radical faith downgrades human certitudes and safeties as defined through both mundane and eschatological dangers. The Sage cultivates faith, puts the Sufi on the way, but does not determine the subsequent manifold ways the Sufi may choose to unite with the divine.
The Sufi faith is not the vanity of defending a particular religion. Nor is it the certainty of the philosopher's opinion. For Rumi both these are the opposite of faith; they constitute clear signs of infidelity.[26] The infidel is the one who stumbles around the earth, walks on a path, but does not know the terminus: the overcoming of the self.[27] The believer on the other hand is a mirror, "his face is safe from dust and dirt" (2 Math. 30). God's creations are reflected in him, but never dwell in his soul permanently. The believer incorporates the creator without identifying with the created. He bears inside him the boundless but remains empty of idols. Being free from the spell of forms, the Sufi is also free from the care of protecting, maintaining, or restoring them.

The Mist of Security

In The Garden of the Prophet, the Lebanese poet Kahlil Gibran devises a final inspirational homily.

O Mist, my sister, my sister Mist,
I am one with you now.
No longer am I a self.
The walls have fallen,
And the chains have broken;
I rise to you, a mist,
And together we shall float upon the sea until life's second
day,
When dawn shall lay you, dewdrops in a garden,
And me a babe upon the breast of a woman.[28]

Secure, free from care, just like an infant on its mother's breast, defenseless and unknowing. Almustafa, the prophet, is now liberated from the walls of mental confinement, the chains of attachment. United with his "deathless," "winged sister" Mist, he is finally "at peace" (64,66).

Mist as the prophet earlier told his disciples is an image of freedom: "If you would freedom, you must needs turn to mist" (4). It is not just any freedom, but "our greater freedom" (5). Turning to mist is not naive nostalgia of infancy, but an esoteric return, a rest upon the body of a woman-earth, a passionate reunion with what is close and always there but from which one is egotistically separated. The prophet no longer a self is now "A desire throbbing and aimless even as [Mist's] desire, A thought not yet gathered, even as [Mist's] thought" (65). Mist features as the "careless" ecstatic moment of disseminating desire and incomplete thought. It provides a shelter that is no shelter, the shelter that saves one from shelters. One returns to it as "a word not yet uttered" (64).

I turn to Gibran's mist not to propose a culminating metaphor of security but to register an internarrative sign of it pointing back to the poetic exploration undertaken. For current purposes, it recollects our poetic journey, the rise and the ride into the sea, the second day of life to come, the overcoming of the self. Turning to mist, Almustafa says, "is the law of mariners and the sea" (4). Mist is an ocean of little seas and, like the sea, "formless." It clouds the known, blurs the sight of the familiar, hides danger. To rise into the mist is "to learn of the beginning," to be initiated into that which gives what there is (4). To be one with mist, for Gibran, too, is to float upon the sea, ride upon the groundless until death and beyond, until life's second day. Unity with mist provides an image of greater freedom, the mystical overcoming of the self, a security outside self-centered care.

Mist then as our greater, formless, multi-versal security. It will be wrong, I think, to quickly reject it as poetic or mystical idealism, or to simplistically endorse it as something that can be handed over by gurus or gnosis. It seems to be less of the order of knowledge and more a matter of experience. Greater freedom/security has its moments of calling, both in silence and in logos, and humans can appropriate or develop by themselves multiple paths, diverse ways of inviting or extending those moments. Sometimes it could even come uncalled for, accidentally and effortlessly. In that moment of calling, not temporally predetermined, smaller security concerns get desecuritized; i.e., in the light of selfless consciousness they are no longer concerns.

Uniting with mist is to learn to live with higher vibrations that desynchronize security from safety and certitude. In this respect, our poetic exploration above made some moves that problematize security's contemporaneous narrative. Its aim has been to cast doubt on three related-
foundational stories about security. First, that security is something achieved through more safety and protection, through the constant accumulation of political insurance. Second, that security should involve primarily a "practical," external, material, and technical dimension—and not a spiritual one that is the critical task of deconditioning. Third, that security can be attained through a regime of power/knowledge and, consequently, that it should be the special preserve of it.

Furthermore, this problematization has tried to render visible that—more than international and more than narrational—security is internarrational. Security discourse finds itself in-between narratives, here seeking to differentiate or judge the truths of official and subaltern security stories, there trying to mediate or interrogate rival security metaphors. To that extent, a political narrative can be seen to gain prominence not only by marginalizing contesting narratives from public space, or simply by covering the fact that it is a heterology—that is, not self-sustained but the result of impacts with enabling oppositions. A political narrative gains prominence—significantly, and this may be the most politically subtle way—by erasing the fact that the words it is using, as translated across ages and languages, are in and of themselves narratives, and as such become a frontier for the clash of narratives. [29]

As suggested, the narrative of security as freedom from care, a narrative that happens to be etymologically close to the word in English, has been systematically erased from conventional IR works and security analysis. This narrative has been retrieved with different intensity from the poetic extracts discussed, in turn putting into perspective the uses of safety and certitude. For Archilochus, the spiritual struggle for security is explicitly concerned with freedom from overwhelming cares. For Paul, the hope of salvation seeks to liberate the faithful from the terror of death and mundane human cares, even from eschatological cares if one acts spiritually and not by constant reference to law and good works. For Rumi, an all-embracing faith and surrender to the protection of divine fire is the means of emancipation from an egotistical and false identity. For Gibran, our greater freedom outside self-centered care is our greater security.

But our predicament remains: to be primarily martyrs of smaller security, troubled by dangers, fears, and uncertainties, bearing witness to security’s different forms and manifestations throughout history and around the globe. Stories of security are used, again and again, in order to justify or explain our actions as well as to legitimate, deconstruct, and reconstruct regimes of power. Like the early Romans—who came up with not one but many stories of security—we buy and celebrate the fables of authors, legislators, and interpreters. [30] There is a certain joy in listening to stories. But what is joy on closer reflection than our hidden sorrow unmasked. [31] Perhaps we listen, read, and believe security stories only to alleviate a deeper pain . . . managing somehow to live meaningfully, more comfortably, and even with a smile, within our boundaries of violence.

Notes
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1. There was a simultaneous attack against the French battalion; fifty-eight soldiers were killed. For summaries of the events, see Keesing’s 30 (January 1984): 32646-47; and Robert Fisk, Pity the Nation: Lebanon at War (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 511-520.


3. By contrast, see for example a 1641 definition that recalls that "the way to be safe is never to be secure." The Oxford Universal Dictionary Illustrated (1968).


9. For a summary of Poseidon's deeds, see "Poseidon" in Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth, eds., The Oxford Classical Dictionary (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). An interesting contrast to Poseidon is Athena, the goddess of wisdom and of safety (Soteira), of armies (Agetratos, Dorutharses, Adamatos), and of victory (Nikephoros), and also of peace (Eirenophoros). She was the protector of fighters (Promachos), and of the greatest Greek heroes such as Perseas, Heracles, Achilles, Agamemnon, and Odysseus. She was also generally associated with military technology and methodology, giving, for example, Heracles his arms, and Odysseus the idea of the Trojan horse. But she was opposed to the other god of war, bloodthirsty Ares, thus punishing those who committed war atrocities. On the legendary contest of Poseidon and Athena for the possession of Athens, see Herodotus, Histories, 8:55, and Augustine, City of God, 18:9.

10. On the tragic condition of asphaleia through a reading of Oedipus' Turranos, see Dillon, note 5.

11. Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War, 2: 61-64.


13. For this proposition, see Ali A. Mazrui, Cultural Forces in World Politics (J. Carrey, 1990), pp. 21-24.


15. On congratulating the Corinthians for receiving the gospel from Titus "in fear and terror," see 2 Cor. 7:15.


18. See parts 3 and 4 of the Leviathan, esp. chapter 43, "Of what is Necessary for a Man's Redemption into the Kingdom of Heaven."


21. I use the 3-vol. edition and translation of Reynold A. Nicolson, The Mathnawi (Cambridge: Trustees of the E.J.W. Gibb Memorial, 1977), but I have sometimes modified the translations; Nicolson also modifies translation in his selection Rumi: Poet and Mystic (Oxford: OneWorld, 1995). I would like to acknowledge the invaluable help of Farid Mihraberi, who patiently retranslated, word for word, the relevant poems. Responsibility for the final version as well as for the interpretation remains mine.


23. See Harvey, note 22, pp. 1-35.

24. See, the Koran, 18: 60-80.

25. Quoted from Harvey, note 23, p. 139.


27. Ibid., 3: 4027-4028, 4032.


29. I have raised this issue with respect to theory and diplomacy in On the Way to Diplomacy (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1996). It is again a main problematic in my States of Representation (forthcoming).
30. I have in mind Numa, the scholar and peace-loving first legislator of Rome but also legitimator of Roman conquests who used to tell the Romans incredible fables. See Plutarch, Parallel Lives, "Numa."


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