"We didn't kill 'em, we didn't cut their head off"

ABU GHRAIB REVISITED

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To overcome extremism, we must also be vigilant in upholding the values our troops defend—because there is no force in the world more powerful than the example of America. That is why I have ordered the closing of the detention center at Guantanamo Bay, and will seek swift and certain justice for captured terrorists—because living our values doesn't make us weaker, it makes us safer and it makes us stronger. And that is why I can stand here tonight and say without exception or equivocation that the United States of America does not torture.

In words and deeds, we are showing the world that a new era of engagement has begun.

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA, *in an address to the United States Congress, February 24, 2009*

Most of us know and fear torture and the culture of terror only through the words of others. Hence my concern is with the mediation of terror through narration, and with the problem of writing effectively against terror.

MICHAEL TAUSSIG, *1987*

INTRODUCTION

President Barack Obama has declared that "America does not torture" and that "a new era of engagement has begun." Abu Ghraib has now been rebuilt, ironically in the image of a model American prison. We are officially in a "post-torture" age, though we should not forget that former President George W. Bush also declared that America does not

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torture. It is significant, too, that President Obama invokes the power of America at the very moment that he announced the end of an era of officially sanctioned torture. More than four years after the Abu Ghraib pictures were first leaked, military trials have come and gone, and most sentences have been served. Significantly, no one above the rank of sergeant has been tried. Rumblings persist, as they did in April of 2009, when memos from the Bush administration authorizing the CIA's use of torture were released. Will the Obama administration charge officials of the Bush administration?[1] Can we be post-torture if there is so little accountability? More important, can we be post torture if we are not post-empire?

How Abu Ghraib is remembered tells us a great deal about the persistence of empire. In this chapter, I examine popular cultural narratives about Abu Ghraib. Although I make passing reference to those narratives that openly endorse what went on at Abu Ghraib, I devote little space to them. Instead, I prefer to examine the responses of those who are critical of what happened at Abu Ghraib. For the most part, critics have focused on the torture policies of the Bush administration, omitting any serious consideration of rank and file torturers. When the latter are considered, it is typically to argue that ordinary people will torture if torture is policy. While it is urgent and necessary to acknowledge the systemic nature of torture at Abu Ghraib, and its basis in official policy, I suggest that the failure to more closely examine the actions of rank and file soldiers, and to insist on a deeper and broader public accountability secures a national innocence for Americans. If Abu Ghraib represents only the problem of a few bad leaders, there need not be any sustained confrontation with the facts of empire, neither then nor now. Most of all, those who were tortured, and the communities to which they belong, have no assurance that the Obama-era denouncement of torture recognizes them as full and valued members of a political and human community. To fully confront what happened at Abu Ghraib, we must consider how political and military leaders, *and* large numbers of American soldiers (not just a few bad apples) came to regard the prisoners at Abu Ghraib as less than human. Further, we need to ask whether public memory of Abu Ghraib suggests condemnation or approval of torture, and whether in fact a new era has begun.

The ghosts of Abu Ghraib return to haunt us in uncanny ways, reminding us that the imprinting of colonial power on their corporeal form was a central way in which the abstract concept of empire was made concrete. Empire, in which a superior civilization defends its values against barbarians by annihilating them, is evident in torture talk, whether pro or con, whenever the idea is invoked that an all-powerful America confronts an especially savage, culturally different enemy from which it must defend itself. Long ago, Michael Taussig pinpointed the racial divide that lies at the heart of this contest, imagined as one of savagery over civility. Writing on colonialism's culture of terror, Taussig ventured that neither the political economy of rubber nor that of labor accounts for the brutalities against the Putumayo Indians of Peru during the rubber boom. Terror—violence that is widespread and systematic—he reminded us, is the mediator of colonial hegemony par excellence, an "inscription of a mythology in the Indian body, an engraving of civilization locked in a struggle with wildness whose model was taken from the colonists' fantasies about Indian cannibalism."[2] Despite a persistent belief that torture is instrumental—designed, that is, to extract life-saving information from an enemy who would not otherwise divulge it—the practice is intrinsically about the staking of identity claims on the bodies of the colonized. Because torture is first and foremost a "memorializing" or imprinting of power on the bodies of the colonized,[3] it has an intimate connection to terror, as Taussig emphasized. Marnia Lazreg explains that for the context of colonial Algeria, torture was "a genuine battle between two embodied realities: in this case, colonial France with its unbounded power and mythologies, and colonized Algeria, with its claim to a full share of humanity. Conversely, the fact of doing torture allows the torturer to voice (albeit freely) *his* identity claims."[4] Torture links the body to the state—individual bodies as well as the military itself. In Algeria, torture "reached deep into the military body which it tied to the political system in a way that supplemented the esprit de corps that normally characterizes the army. Torture was the source of social integration that melded the political and the military, and consumed the structural transformation of the state into a militaristic institution."[5] If the state enjoys its identity through torture, individuals who participate in torture do the same: "Imperial identity is achieved through torture."[6]

In contemporary narratives about torture, the struggle with wildness and the fantasy on which it is based (the imperial identity alluded to by Lazreg) is visible in the idea that a culturally different enemy requires torture. For example, at an academic workshop I attended, a former military interrogator, an anthropologist, a psychologist, and a philosopher each discussed the justification for "new methods of interrogation." We are dealing with a culturally different enemy, several of these academics and military personnel advised. The Arab enemy is more "ideologically driven and more religious."[7] Unlike the cold war, the war on terror and the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan have produced conditions where military interrogators need cultural help. Without it, "the 18 year old interrogator will fail and will be driven to more violent means to obtain information," warned the interrogator. A well-known anthropologist suggested that with a clandestine enemy, standard ways of operating are no longer useful. (The enemy is usually seen as clandestine, as Joshua Dratel points out, but when Communists were viewed as clandestine there was no argument that torture was the only option for confronting the communist threat.)[8] The anthropologist's suggestion was only a hair's breadth away from the logic of torture itself. As Stephen Holmes explained, the logic behind torture is a simple one: "To respond to the savages who want to kill us, we must cast off our Christian-liberal meekness and embrace a 'healthy savagery' of our own. We must confront ruthlessness with ruthlessness. We must pull out all the stops. After victory we will have plenty of time for civility, guilt feelings, and the rule of law."[9] Savagery or wildness, as Taussig reminds us, is the stuff of colonial fantasy.

It is useful to pause here and consider whether Taussig's colonial paradigm may be applied to the contemporary United States. In *Racial Formation in the United States from the 1960s to the 1990s,* Omi and Winant take the position that to consider how race works in the United States, it is not sufficient to apply what they describe as nation-based theory in which race is understood as a territorial phenomenon. According to this theory, European powers divided up the world between them and reinforced colonial domination through a system of racial distinctions. Race secures territory in this account so that the real issue is not race but land. What happens in the United States with regard to race cannot be so easily linked to land.[10] Presumably, then, we would need to be cautious in applying Taussig's insights about colonial violence and terror to the United States today. In particular, it is not easy, Omi and Winant contend, to see the connection between the United States and global patterns based on the legacy of colonialism. Leaving aside for the moment the fact that the United States continues to have a colonial relationship with the peoples who are indigenous to North America, we might consider whether the struggles in which torture has been an issue have the hallmarks of a quintessential colonialism, involving as they do occupation, control of resources, extreme violence, and persistent marking of Muslims as an inferior race. The racial state that Omi and Winant describe, the state centrally implicated in racial definition and management, is as heavily committed to securing territory and resources as it is to the reproduction of a society organized by white supremacy. Such a state engages in forms of violence and terror in much the same way that Taussig describes, and toward the same end: racial rule.

Omi and Winant prefer the concept of racial formation to colonialism in order to highlight "the process through which social, economic and political forces determine the content and importance of racial categories."[11] Although I consider colonialism to be a more useful concept when thinking about racial violence and terror, racial formation is nonetheless useful for reminding us that racial categories are "formed, transformed, destroyed and re-formed"[12] in racial states, a theory that enables us to understand how the category Muslim/Arab becomes a race and the object of racial terror. Although *Racial Formation* was written at a time when Omi and Winant considered Arab an ambivalent racial category,[13] today it is obvious that Muslim/Arab has acquired the features of a full-blown racial category in the United States, a status it has long held in Europe. Regarded as inherently fanatical and prone to violence, the figure of the Muslim/Arab shows that the strictly biological basis of race is accompanied by the notion that "the truth of race lies in the terrain of innate characteristics of which skin color and other physical attributes provide only the most obvious, and in some respect the lost superficial indicators."[14] As I have written elsewhere, values talk is really race thinking, a division of the world into a hierarchy of modern and premodern peoples, the latter inherently so.[15] Although race thinking varies, for Muslims and Arabs, it is underpinned by the idea that modern enlightened, secular peoples must protect themselves from premodern, religious peoples whose loyalty to tribe and community reigns over their commitment to the rule of law. The marking of a group as belonging to the realm of culture and religion, as opposed to the realm of law and reason, has devastating consequences. There is

a disturbing spatializing of morality that occurs in the story of modern versus premodern peoples. We have reason; they do not. We are located in modernity; they are not. Significantly, because *they* have not advanced as we have, it is our moral obligation to correct, discipline, and keep them in line and to defend ourselves against their irrational excesses. In doing all of these things, the West has often denied the benefits of modernity to those it considers to be outside of it. Evicted from the universal, and thus from civilization and progress, the non-West occupies a zone outside the law. Violence may be directed at it with impunity.

The idea of a culturally different enemy first circulated after the release of the photographs of Abu Ghraib. The theory that went furthest in providing an explanation for the practices shown in the photos was the idea that sexualized torture was simply a culturally specific interrogation method. Fitting in nicely with the "clash of civilizations" thesis that had come to dominate Western explanations for conflict between West and non-West,[16] and the Islamic world in particular, pyramids of naked men forced to simulate having sex with each other were to be understood as nothing more than a contemporary form of interrogation. Few in the media questioned the Orientalist underpinnings of this claim. (Unlike us, they are sexually repressed, homophobic, and misogynist and are likely to crack in sexualized situations, particularly those involving women dominating men or those involving sex between men.) No one asked whether such methods would in fact humiliate men of all cultures, both because they are violent and because they target what being a man means within patriarchy.

The "clash of civilizations" approach to torture reinforced the idea of the prisoners' barbarism at the same time that it enabled the West to remain on the moral high ground. First, through the idea of cultural difference, sexualized torture became something more generic—torture for the purpose of obtaining information, something that was not even torture at all. Sexualized torture, then, was simply "to attack the prisoners' identity and values."[17] Believing that the fault had to be traced back to the top, Mark Danner declared the photos "comprehensible" given the cultural characteristics of Arabs *and* the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA's) manual on interrogations. The photos are "staged operas of fabricated shame intended to 'intensify' the prisoners' guilt feelings, increase his anxiety and his urge to cooperate," Danner wrote, quoting parts of the CIA's interrogation policy.[18] The photos were a "shame multiplier,"

according to the Red Cross, since they could be distributed to the prisoners' families and used to further humiliate detainees.[19] Second, through the idea of culturally specific interrogation techniques, Americans were marked as modern people who do not subscribe to puritanical notions of sex or to patriarchal notions of women's role in it. The Iraqis, of course, remained forever confined to the premodern.

The idea of a culturally different, more savage enemy persists in several contemporary journalistic accounts. For instance, Heather Macdonald, a journalist and frequent guest on Fox News, writes, "The Islamist enemy is unlike any the military has encountered in the past."[20] The difference, it turns out, is a cultural one. Islamists don't give up information, don't play by the rules of the Geneva Convention, and are mainly interested in homosexual sex. (Macdonald illustrates in this comment the incoherence of racist positions. If the Iraqis were especially humiliated by the idea of men having sex with men, why would they also be characterized as mainly interested in homosexual sex?) Confronted with such an uncivilized enemy, Americans had no other choice but to turn to various "stress techniques," some of which may have gone too far (Macdonald dislikes the use of dogs and is a little concerned about water boarding). The prisoners who were moved from Camp X-ray to Camp Delta at Guantanamo were really upset only because they could no longer have homosexual sex. Although acknowledging some practices of torture, Macdonald concludes: "We don't gas people like the Nazis did."

One sees only a slightly more restrained culturalist argument from lawyers and policy analysts, many of whom use the culture argument to downgrade what happened at Abu Ghraib from torture to interrogation. For example, Andrew C. McCarthy describes the "mortification" of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib and argues that with a new clandestine and ruthless enemy, America had to legally authorize "a bending of the rules." Dismissing any connection between lawlessness (as in the refusal to grant POW status to detainees) and torture, McCarthy simply agrees with Alan Dershowitz that we should have a system of torture warrants whereby we apply for permission to torture especially high value and presumably especially savage detainees.[21]

In view of the mediation of terror through narration, it is not surprising that news coverage of Abu Ghraib in North America, both then and now, has not typically used the word *torture.* As Timothy M. Jones and Penelope Sheets found, only 19 percent of the American press articles on Abu Ghraib

referred to torture, compared to 81.8 percent of European press articles. Canada and Australia reportage referred to torture 41 percent of the time.[22] American civilians and soldiers are massively opposed to torture, but not to abuse or mortification. Polls indicate that many Americans are in favor of sleep deprivation and other techniques.[23] As I show below, narratives about a few bad leaders effectively limit the extent to which Americans can see themselves as implicated in torture, and by extension in empire.

ANTI-TORTURE NARRATIVES

Many scholars now unambiguously condemn torture and show "the mundane banality with which cruelty and torture became official policy of the United States Department of Defense."[24] Analysts share the conclusion that under President George W. Bush, as David Cole put it, "an amoral, blinkered pragmatism ruled the day."[25] In this apparently post-torture age, where so many announce their objections to torture, the opening words of Taussig's classic book *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man,* in which he reminds us of the mediation of terror through narration, suggest that we should not assume that the narratives that enable torture have in fact all disappeared. How do contemporary narratives about the *wrongness* of torture at Abu Ghraib mediate terror? How do we write effectively against torture? These questions are as pertinent when writing about torture and the Arab/Muslim enemy today as it was for the Putumayo Indians.

A recent collection of articles on the torture debate in the United States begins with the observation that Americans have been remarkably "apathetic" about the question of torture in the war on terror. The editor speculates that Americans are not uncaring but simply confused about the issue.[26] A spate of films about torture and other excesses in the war on terror, however, suggests otherwise. Americans *have* engaged in a public discussion of the meaning of Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo, and other sites of torture, and they have mostly done so as critics. Documentaries such as *Standard Operating Procedure* (the focus of this chapter) and *The Ghosts of Abu Ghraib,* as well as books such as Jane Mayer's *The Dark Side,*[27] and Hollywood movies such as *Rendition* have become a genre of sorts, works united by a common criticism of the torture policies of the Bush administration. If the majority of critics of American torture policies of the past decade (most do not spare the time to discuss pre-9/11 American torture) focus on the corruption, immorality, and illegality that characterized the Bush administration, very few consider torture itself: what is torture, who is tortured, and what made it so easy for the regime, ordinary soldiers, and ordinary people to torture or to accept torture as official policy. Although we have all become familiar with the list of torture practices (indeed, on the day that I am writing this, my local newspaper in Toronto included a short news item on CIA torture techniques and the torture memos have just been released),[28] it is as though these acts were not in fact committed by people we can name. Instead, the discussion has largely been an abstract one about policies and immoral leadership. On the rare occasion that the questions "Why was it so easy for American soldiers to be amoral?" and "What enabled torture?" are asked, they are answered with the theory that once you create a torture culture, ordinary people find it easy to torture (Stanley Milgram's Stanford experiments are often cited).[29] Importantly, psychological explanations turn our gaze away from history and context, leaving little chance of exploring what kind of Americans the soldiers imagined themselves to be. "Rumsfeld made them do it" (a reference to Donald Rumsfeld, defense secretary under President George W. Bush) seems to suffice as explanation.[30] Such explanations do not explore torture as the historical identity-making practice Taussig, among others, considers it to be. In fact, they studiously avoid *embodying* torture at all; it thus remains a particular policy or law. We seldom hear the voices of the tortured of Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo, or elsewhere, though the recently available information from interviews of detainees compiled by the International Committee of the Red Cross is one exception that may yet change the direction of public consciousness.[31]

It is said that Americans must now live with the story of torture. As Mark Danner wrote recently after reading the Red Cross interviews, the decision to torture "sits before us, a toxic fact, polluting our political and moral life."[32] To confront this toxic fact requires confronting what torture *is:* a systematic dehumanization of the Other. Both in popular culture and officially, the United States has yet to acknowledge and confront the fact that its soldiers were able to torture with abandon. The rank-and-file soldiers involved in torture at Abu Ghraib appear neither to regret it nor to face social censure for it. The remarkable disavowal that prisoners were *persons* who were tortured and the compulsion to exonerate the rank and file ensure that Americans do not confront the toxic fact of empire. This is

the argument I make in what follows, an argument about the persistence of racial terror in narratives at a moment when America announces itself to be post-torture. Specifically, I suggest that the soldiers at Abu Ghraib have often aroused compassion and understanding. As a culture, North Americans appear to sympathize with many of them, perhaps believing the Milgram experiment to be a good explanation for their behavior. I note here that less good feeling has been accorded the Winter Soldiers, servicemen and -women who protest the war and the terrible things they were required to do in Iraq and Afghanistan.[33] Through the redemption of the rank-and-file soldiers involved in torture and an almost exclusive focus on the legal and political authorization of torture, Americans have successfully stopped torture from penetrating their consciousness. Along with scholars exploring the productive function of apologies, truth and reconciliation commissions, and other national moments in which state violence is confronted, I suggest that an important question to ask about these ostensibly critical narratives of torture is quite simply, How do the stories make us feel?[34] Put another way, what kind of a moral community is created by contemporary critics of torture?

There is something productive about the argument that *only* the leaders are to blame for torture. American innocence is secured through this focus in much the same way that Canadians were able to affirm their innocence in peacekeeping abuses.[35] Both the nation and rank-and-file soldiers, in this telling, become mere dupes of a corrupt leadership. The work of empire can go on apace when we assume that all the bad guys have gone home. What was done to Iraqis disappears into a story of American innocence, a strange time in American history when "our children" as the filmmaker Errol Morris called the rank-and-file soldiers, were coerced into an "animal house on the night shift" at Abu Ghraib, a phrase Morris borrowed from former defense secretary James Schlesinger.[36] Morris is reluctant to call what went on at Abu Ghraib torture, and the soldiers whose faces appear in the famous pictures are never labeled torturers. At worst, the rank-and-file soldiers charged with abuses at Abu Ghraib are fondly referred to in the media as the "seven bad apples," and their activities described as "unseemly."

I rely on the documentary film made by Morris, titled *Standard Operating Procedure,* and the book of the same title that he coauthored with Philip Gourevitch, based on extensive interviews with the soldiers, to illustrate my argument about the "post-torture" recollections of Abu Ghraib.[37]

Sabrina Harman, Megan Ambuhl, Lynndie England, Jeremy Sivits, Javal Davis—five of the seven soldiers charged for their roles in torture at Abu Ghraib—and others have told their stories in two documentaries and a book; two others, Charles Graner and Ivan Frederick, remain incarcerated and inaccessible to the media.[38] Critics have been remarkably unanimous in their responses to *Standard Operating Procedure,* finding the occasional fault (particularly with Morris's decision to re-enact scenes of torture), but agreeing for the most part with the story line that the real culprits are the leaders. Although I rely on the documentary and the book *Standard Operating Procedure,* and critics' responses to them, it is possible to turn to other documentaries and films. The documentary *The Ghosts of Abu Ghraib* by filmmaker Rory Kennedy, which shows fidelity to the argument that the most important conclusion we can come to about Abu Ghraib is that torture was official policy and that rank-and-file soldiers only did what they were ordered to do. Like Morris, Kennedy feels sympathy for her documentary subjects, believing them to be the likable, hapless victims of a corrupt administration. As Kennedy told Amy Goodman in an interview, "And what I found was that they were, in fact, very likeable, and that I could see their humanity in looking at their eyes, and was able to connect with them. And it was very hard to reconcile that experience with the reality of what I was seeing in the photographs and images."[39] For Kennedy, as for so many, it is possible to reconcile the photos with the apparent niceness of the soldiers by focusing on the responsibility of the chain of command and on the idea (citing Stanley Milgram once again) that ordinary people easily commit acts of torture if someone in authority tells them to do so. What enables this exoneration of ordinary torturers? While there are certainly several reasons, I propose that a crucial part of this response originates in the belief that Arabs/Muslims are culturally different, and less than human.

POST-TORTURE: "I DON'T KNOW WHAT I COULD HAVE DONE DIFFERENT"

By way of moral contrast, let us consider some altogether different narratives about Iraq. In March 2008, hundreds of veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan gathered in Maryland to give their eyewitness accounts of the occupations of both countries. The veterans modeled their testimony

after the Winter Soldier hearings organized by Vietnam Veterans Against the War in 1971. As Amy Goodman reported on *Democracy Now,* "The war veterans spoke of free-fire zones, the shootings and beatings of innocent civilians, racism at the highest levels of the military, and the torturing of prisoners."[40] Most major news outlets did not cover the Winter Soldier event. Goodman, via *Democracy Now,* broadcast the hearings, in which soldiers tearfully described in detail (often illustrating with pictures of themselves) the acts of violence they perpetrated upon Iraqi and Afghan people. In one such account, Jon Michael Turner stripped his medals and ribbons from his chest and ended his testimony as follows: "I just want to say that I am sorry for the hate and destruction I have inflicted on innocent people, and I'm sorry for the hate and destruction that others have inflicted on innocent people. . . . I am sorry for the things I did. I am no longer the monster that I once was."[41] Carl Rippberger, commenting on a slide of himself in Iraq, said: "I am extremely shameful of it. I'm showing it in hopes that none of you people that have never been involved ever let this happen to you. Don't ever let your government do this to you. It's me. I'm holding a dead body, smiling. Everyone in our platoon took two bodies, put them on the back ramp, drove them through a village for show, and dumped them off at the edge the village."[42]

As these excerpts reveal, the Winter Soldiers acknowledge personal responsibility for their actions in Iraq and Afghanistan, even as they believe that they were a part of a systematic campaign of violence orchestrated from the top. Their stories confirm that a pattern of terror begins with individual soldiers who are asked to do, and who do, unspeakable things. Some find the courage to say no on the spot; most do not. But in the case of the Winter Soldiers, all now believe that what they were asked to do, and what they did, was wrong. Their testimony is intended to rectify these wrongs by allowing them to take personal responsibility and speak out against practices of torture and terror and against war and occupation. This response is not one that has occurred to the majority of the soldiers at Abu Ghraib, and it is not one that Morris or Gourevitch ever consider possible. "I'm sorry" has not been uttered by any of the torturers, nor have any of those who condemn torture uttered these words. Of course, the politics of apologies are well-known productive acts. As Richard Weisman discussed (drawing also on others' work), expressions of remorse have to include an unconditional acknowledgement of responsibility, sincere self-condemnation and, most crucially, an awareness that the victim has suffered.[43] Without these components, we are not being invited into a moral community in which torture is wrong. If no one thinks that the acts of torture at Abu Ghraib were really wrong or regrettable, then are Muslims/Arabs full members of the human and political community?

In *Standard Operating Procedure,* Morris intersperses vivid reenactments of torture, the Abu Ghraib photographs, and interviews with the soldiers, the last often shot close up so that their faces fill the entire screen. The viewer has a sense of being face to face with torture and literally present with both torturer and tortured. The tortured, of course, do not speak; their bodies are meant only to contrast with the calm and reasonable voices of the soldiers who give us their accounts of what they did in Abu Ghraib prison. There remains a voyeuristic gaze throughout as we are invited to consume pyramids of naked prisoners. As Lazreg wrote about France, as the former colonial power in Algeria, the "cumulative effect of this speaking and writing about the war [of independence in Algeria] has resulted in a trivialization of the significance of torture as glossy pictures turn war into *an orgiastic intellectual entertainment.*"[44] Similarly, documentaries such as *Standard Operating Procedure* offer vivid descriptions and images of torture that serve to normalize these forms of torture.

The documentary begins by informing us that American soldiers were so depressed and so low when they got to Abu Ghraib that they felt "already dead." In the book, Gourevitch and Morris make sure their readers understand that Abu Ghraib was an intolerable place that was constantly under mortar fire (although in 2003, no American soldier was killed because of this). A combat unit, the 372nd Regiment, made up of reservists, finds out that instead of going home, its members will be posted to guard duty at Abu Ghraib, something for which they are not trained. We are coached to understand that—untrained, alienated, stressed, frustrated, and overcome by the climate—normal, wholesome American soldiers, each with his or her own dreams, soon fall apart in the hell that was Abu Ghraib. The film and the book both begin with this equivalent to the journey into the heart of Africa of Marlow, Joseph Conrad's European character in the novel *Heart of Darkness* who travels by river into the dangerous jungle, encountering savageries along the way that reveal the darkness that lies within man.

As I have shown elsewhere, in the case of the violence of Western peacekeepers toward the populations they supposedly go to help, the savagery of the racial Other, and the savagery of the place of the racial Other, becomes

the reason why violence is authorized against them. As Hugh Ridley memorably explained in recalling the themes of colonial novels and the mindset of the masculine subjects who inhabit these fictional colonial worlds, "In Africa, who can be a saint?"[45] The civilized man "loses it" in Africa on account of the dust and heat, as the Canadian government concluded in its inquiry into the violence of Canadian peacekeepers toward Somalis. In Africa, the soldier feels compelled to engage in violence *anticipating* the savagery of the racial Other and the hardships of the land. It is this narrative line, a combination of "Rumsfeld made me do it" and "In Iraq, who could be a saint?" that runs through the accounts of the Abu Ghraib soldiers, an account very much fostered by Morris and carefully installed in the film and book.

What stands out the most about the narratives the Abu Ghraib soldiers offer to the cameras is the almost complete absence of moral conflict. The soldiers do not believe that they *personally* did anything wrong. Instead, we see subjects intent on presenting themselves as victims. Presumably asked by Morris (who does not appear) how they feel now, the soldiers display no shame, little interest in the impact of their actions, and an intense self-absorption. Sabrina Harmon appears puzzled by the question about what she could have done differently. She replies, "I don't know what I could have done different," and as an afterthought adds: "I wouldn't have joined the military. It's just not worth it." In the interview quoted in the book, she expands on what she means: "You always feel guilty thinking you could have changed something—or, I guess, dereliction of duty for not reporting something that went on, even though people did know. I guess you could have went [*sic*] to somebody else. So I accept the dereliction of duty charge. Personally I accept that one. It would be nice just to put everything behind me. It sucks, but it's a learning experience, I guess. It helps you grow, getting screwed over. I don't know."[46] The spark of remorse that leads Harmon to accept the dereliction of duty charge for not reporting the abuse is quickly put out by the predominant feeling of "getting screwed over."

Similarly, although he felt sorry for a prisoner who died in a bombing just as he was being released, Javal Davis remains most rueful about the loss of his dreams. Davis offers the camera his final thought: "A big chunk of my life is gone. I can never get it back." Jeremy Sivits is sorry that he couldn't make his family proud. Megan Graner simply concludes, "Life's not fair, that's for sure," and if we are in any doubt about whose life is not fair, it is quickly put to rest when, reflecting on her own life, she declares, "I've always known that." Lynndie England announces that she wouldn't change a thing because she got a son out of it. For her, regret centers on Charles Graner. Believing herself to have been victimized by Graner, England has drawn one predominant lesson from Abu Ghraib: "Learn from your mistakes. I learned from mine. It's like I don't need a man to survive. Forget 'em. . . . It's just being young and naïve."[47]

Although self-pity runs like a stream through these narratives, the soldiers are clearly not sorry for what they did to Iraqis. Their recollections reveal that little about the situation troubled them in the first place, other than their own personal discomfort, the discomfort of being in a savage place at a savage time. They work hard to make a moral distinction between humiliation and torture, believing nonetheless in their absolute right to engage in the former.

The journey into the heart of darkness, where torture is transformed into humiliation, is a gendered one. Both the book and the film begin with the story of Sabrina Harman as the epitome of feminine innocence defiled. Harman's soft girlish voice reads from her letters to her wife, Kelly.[48] Faithful to the storyline of someone who descends into hell, Harmon writes of the first time that she saw a prisoner with underwear on his head, stripped naked and handcuffed to the rails with his arms extended over his head in the Palestinian position, used by the Israeli army for the extreme discomfort in which it places the prisoner. Like most soldiers, Harman understood that the prisoner, a taxi driver, was most likely innocent, something that did not stop her from engaging in humiliation and torture. She recalls for Kelly that at first she found the prisoner's situation funny and initially laughed when someone "poked his dick." Editorializing quickly, Harman writes, "Then it hit me that this was molestation." Molestation, but not torture. Claiming that she knew that much that went on was wrong, she says she nonetheless participated and took pictures, apparently believing that the photos would later serve as proof. At no time does it occur to Harman to try to stop the practices or even to complain about them. If she gives a thumbs-up or gleefully smiles for the camera, Harmon suggests that this is simply what she always did in front of a camera.

Gourevitch and Morris sympathetically portray the young girl who dreamed of becoming a forensic photographer. In Harman's letters, the story of taking pictures for the purpose of documenting an abuse is undermined by her recounting of the casual details of life at Abu Ghraib where

"we stripped prisoners and laughed at them; we degraded them but we didn't hit them." These casually inserted details of her direct participation in torture, practices that she clearly does not consider to be torture, take second place next to the accounts Harman gives of her kindness. She writes of the young boy who was covered in ants and whom she tried to help, and of the general whose eyebrows were shaved and whom she tried to console for this humiliation. On camera she comments on the famous photograph of the prisoner who was made to believe that the electrodes attached to him were live wires and that he would be electrocuted if he fell off the box: "It would have been meaner if the electrodes were hooked up." Gilligan, as this prisoner was nicknamed, was never physically touched, Harman insists, puzzled by those who saw the photo and thought that it was torture.

The contrived and contradictory nature of Harman's recollections give Gourevitch and Morris pause, and they notice that she is working hard to construct herself as innocent: "By the end of her outpourings she repositioned herself as an outsider at Abu Ghraib, an observer and recorder, shaking her head, and in this way she came clean with her wife. In this way she preserved her sense of innocence."[49] Noting that Harman "imagined herself as producing an exposé, but she did not pretend to be a whistle-blower-in-waiting," they can make no further sense of her performance and instead accept her explanations. When she acknowledges that the grin and the thumbs-up she offered to the camera in most of the photos "look bad" and suggests that this was simply how she always posed for photos, there is little in the book or the film to indicate that this might not be true. Harmon's narrative is indeed full of contradictions. Documenting abuse, yet giving an un-self-conscious account of her own involvement in various torture events, her account nonetheless makes clear that "she was as forgiving of her buddies as of herself."[50]

There is a strange structure to the soldiers' narratives of "the first time I saw abuse." It is the naked detainees wearing women's panties that shock, but not the repeated violence. Although initially sure that what they were seeing was wrong, they soon participate in acts of abuse and describe their participation in various contradictory ways: the leaders made me do it; others did far worse; I just followed orders; the prisoners were ordinary innocent people; the prisoners were people who had happily blown us up; the prisoners had information that would save lives; the prisoners didn't have information; and so on. No soldier takes responsibility for acts of humiliation and torture. If it is ever acknowledged that most of the people in Abu Ghraib were simply ordinary people, this does not give anyone pause to acknowledge that what they did was wrong.

Javal Davis knew from his first encounter with naked prisoners wearing women's pink panties over their heads that "something's not right here." Describing his initial attempt to complain, he notes that the chain of command simply abandoned the rank and file, confirming that however the soldiers felt, they had to do the bidding of Military Intelligence. By his own and others' accounts, he grew numb but participated nevertheless, often with enthusiasm. He acknowledges that in and around Abu Ghraib, soldiers in his unit would simply sweep up every single male "from kids to the local baker" and then set about humiliating them. He soon determined what worked best in destabilizing the prisoners: playing rap music and country music loudly and without cease. In his view what he participated in was not torture but humiliation. "We don't have photos of torture," he states, even though he believes that torture happened all the time. The real torturers, he implies, got off. Megan Ambuhl also insists that the photographs don't show torture and goes further by maintaining that they in fact make things look worse than they were. "We softened them up," Ampuhl casually explains. "We would burn them with a cigarette. We'd just do what they [Military Intelligence] wanted us to do. It didn't seem weird; it was saving lives." Other soldiers calmly describe their own role in water torture.

The soldiers speak casually of the horrors they were involved in, lamenting that the incidents for which they have been condemned were far more innocent than others they knew about. They tell of prisoners whom they were "humiliating" who were already dead; of being asked to help out and doing so in order to be "nice." Sabrina Harmon draws diagrams in her letters home of how dogs are used on prisoners. Others announce their belief that most prisoners were ordinary, innocent people, yet they recall soaking sandbags in hot sauce to be placed over a prisoner's head because "these guys have info." They were able to participate in the brutal beatings of prisoners and maintain at the same time that the most that ever happened was "a really, really bad case of humiliation." As "helpers," Anthony Diaz and Jeffery Frost describe the order to tie a prisoner in a higher-stress position. They find out after some time that the prisoner

they were allegedly softening up was already dead. "It kinda felt bad. I know I am not part of this but . . . ," offers Diaz in the film, illustrating the acknowledgement of violence and the disavowal of his participation in it in one breath. Although what felt bad was realizing the prisoner was dead, it apparently did not feel bad to spend days tying prisoners up in intolerable stress positions, stripping them naked, and turning on the showers for water torture. The mundane work of torture elicits little moral conflict. Indeed, it is work that is never named as torture.

The soldiers are not only forgiving of themselves and of each other for engaging in torture, but absorbed in the tragedy of what happened to *them*. Lynndie England, whom Gourevitch and Morris describe as a girl who once looked like a boy and who enlisted at seventeen in order to attend college and lift herself out of a life working at a chicken-processing plant, is dismissive of the public, which saw her holding the leash on a prisoner and called it abuse. "It was no big deal," she observes, explaining that Charles Graner asked her to hold the leash for the photo. Maintaining throughout that all she did was what she was told to do, England presents herself as a woman victimized by a man. "I'm in the brig because of a man," she states flatly to the camera, explaining that women in the army either had to prove their equality to men or be controlled by them. A man's place, the army also turned out to be a place where "people wanted to mess with the prisoners." Offering no comment on this state of affairs, England remains unrepentant as she describes her involvement in the scenes of sexual torture: "We didn't kill 'em, we didn't cut their head off." Unconsciously comparing herself to the barbaric enemy who kills and cuts off heads, England secures for herself a higher place on the scale of civilization.

If the soldiers seem unmoved by their acts of torture, those who bring us their story share this indifference to what was done to Iraqi bodies. Although Gourevitch and Morris write passionately that "the stain is ours," the stain is only torture as policy and the crimes of the upper levels.[51] Of the soldiers they conclude: "Even as they sank into a routine of depravity, they showed by their picture taking that they did not accept it as normal. They never fully got with the program. Is it not to their credit that they were profoundly demoralized by their service in the netherworld?"[52] Inexperienced, untrained, under attack, and under orders to do wrong, the low-ranking reservist military police who implemented the nefarious policy of the war on terror on the MI block of Abu Ghraib knew that what they were doing was immoral, and they knew that if it wasn't illegal, it ought to be. They knew that they had the right, and that it was their duty, to disobey an unlawful order and to report it to their immediate superior; and if that failed—or if that superior was the source of the order—to keep reporting it on up the chain of command until they found satisfaction.[53] If they had the right to refuse to commit acts of torture, and given that this was surely their duty, why didn't they do so, and what do we think about them not having done so? These questions are answered in the film: they didn't do so because it was hard to do so and we should forgive them.

The film and the book are both assembled to minimize the complicity of the lower ranks. Tim Dugan, a civilian interrogator, explains to us at the start of the film that the rank-and-file soldiers were a "bunch of unprofessional schmucks that didn't know their damn jobs, all thrown together, mixed up with a big-ass stick." By the end of the film, he no longer holds this view, and we can guess that he now believes that torture was policy. Brent Pack, lead forensic examiner of the computer crime unit of the U.S. Army, who analyzed the thousands of photographs, lends the full weight of his science to the diagnosis: the pictures depict several events of what was often "standard operating procedure." He classifies the acts of torture and humiliation, clarifying that physical injury amounts to a criminal act and that sexual humiliation is dereliction of duty, but that most other practices are simply standard operating procedure. Agreeing with the other experts interviewed that the soldiers were mostly people in the wrong place at the wrong time, Pack feels sorriest for England. Lynndie was "just in love." If the photos tell us anything, he implies, it is the story of a woman in love. Neither Lynndie England nor Sabrina Harman who writes so lovingly to her wife, are presented as torturers. Although we are given little information on the two men serving the longest sentences (Charles Graner and Ivan Frederick), their stories, too, are ultimately presented as those of victims. Their country betrayed them, we are led to believe.

Perhaps the end point of the equivocation about the rank-and-file soldiers is best revealed in the many interviews Morris has given (some with Gourevitch) in which he explains what most concerned him about Abu Ghraib. Professing himself to be most interested in the role of the photos, Morris wonders about what they reveal and what they conceal. Often turning to Sabrina Harman as an example, he notes that it is tempting to conclude from the thumbs-up and the smiles in the photo of herself with the dead, tortured Iraqi prisoner that she participated in his death

or at least approved of it. The smile is an uneasy one, Morris suggests, and Harman's crime is nothing compared to the soldiers who actually murdered the prisoner. In this moment, we are invited to forget that while Harman did not murder prisoners, she did participate directly in moments of torture. Challenging his audience to answer the question, Did Sabrina Harman commit a crime? Morris clearly thinks the answer is no. Admitting that she may not be "lily white" or "uncompromised," we are invited to consider that she is not the culprit.[54] In the end, although he wished to interrogate complicity at the bottom rather than the top, and imagined himself making a film that did more than focus on the chain of command, we arrive in the same place. At no point does it really seize Morris's attention that American soldiers such as Sabrina Harman *tortured* Iraqis. The unchallenged assumption throughout, shared by Morris, Gourevitch, and their subjects, is the idea that there is a valid reason for treating Iraqis as they were treated in Abu Ghraib prison by the rank-and-file soldiers, even if things did go a little wrong.

THE REVIEWERS: "FRIGHTENED, DISORIENTED MEN AND WOMEN"

Despite the obviousness of some of the film's plot devices, it is surprising that reviewers find so little to critique in the work of Morris and Gourevitch. In a review of the book and the film published in the *New York Review of Books,* Ian Buruma begins, as so many reviewers do, by reminding us of Susan Sontag's argument that the torture photographs "were typical expressions of a brutalized popular American culture," but he adds approvingly that Morris's documentary "complicates matters."[55] The complication is that the pictures don't tell the whole story and may "even conceal more than they reveal." What they conceal is torture as policy and the practice of using untrained soldiers, among them those with a "bad boy" reputation such as Charles Graner. Of the other soldiers who participated, Buruma has only kind things to say. Harman, in particular, draws his sympathy, as Morris intended. She is the person about whom her colleagues say that she wouldn't hurt a fly. We are reminded of her dream to become a forensic photographer. For Buruma, Harman is simply telling the truth when she says that she took pictures to document abuses. She committed no crime, he insists, since the real crime lies in those who tortured a prisoner to death. England was simply in love and did whatever her man told her to do. The photos, Buruma concludes, were "fun and games" compared to the darker secret they hid. The worst condemnation that Buruma musters is that everyone probably got a little "erotic frisson" from his or her participation in these acts. He recalls that Sontag may have been right about the pornographic nature of the encounter. Yet lying at the heart of pornography and the Abu Ghraib encounter is the capacity to objectify and dehumanize, something that contemporary Abu Ghraib commentators such as Buruma seem not to notice. Not surprisingly, any comparison between the soldiers of Abu Ghraib and the Nazis is rejected outright, although it is interesting that reviewers such as Buruma feel compelled to deny the similarity.

Buruma's response is a typical one. The Canadian reviewer Peter Goddard also agrees that Lynndie England was merely goofing around for her boyfriend when she took part in the photo of "Gus," the name given to the prisoner on a leash: "The picture isn't about Gus being dominated by England. It's about England being dominated by Graner."[56] Apparently buying England's gender defense that she wasn't humiliating prisoners but was just trying to please Charles Graner, Goddard is able to sidestep the fact that a prisoner was still in the end being humiliated by jailors who had considerable power over him. Graner's interest in documenting the terrible conditions of his job, Harman's wish to use photos to deflect her own humiliation at being a spectator at a demeaning ritual—both are accepted at face value. Goddard concludes: "The theatricality of the Abu Ghraib photos only adds to the shock of what was really happening there. It's as if Graner and the rest of the picture-takers understood implicitly that they were in that awful place to play a role in this war fantasy. So they did just that, with great big smiles on their faces."[57]

One is struck by the extent to which reviewers are forgiving of the soldiers. They emphasize their "uncertainty and confusion" as well as their "posing and posturing." As Michael S. Roth, president of Wesleyan University, writes, "through the soldiers we are able to grasp the 'slapdash ineptitude' and the incoherence of the war itself."[58] Michael Chaiken, in his review, takes Morris to task for "the heavy-handed reliance on re-creations to shock the audience into recognizing the magnitude of the horrors being recounted."[59] Chaiken's argument is that the re-creations

"divert attention from that for which there is no substitute: the faces of those frightened, disoriented men and women tearfully coming to terms with historical forces of which they too are hapless victims." Bemoaning that we suffer a failure of empathy and imagination when we are overly exposed to images of horror (as Susan Sontag argued), these writers leave little doubt about whom our sympathy should be for—the soldiers, not their Iraqi victims.

As many reviewers agree, Morris asks us to think about the relationship between the photos and truth. As Cynthia Fuchs put it, "The movie is more deliberately and (for lack of a better term) more poetically invested in how the crimes were defined by the images."[60] Noticing Lynndie England's "oddly detached" stance, Fuchs explains that the problem was that she was a woman in a man's world, and she reminds us that England's "seeming lack of a perspective becomes a perspective." Again, however, the lack of perspective that is so remarkable is simply evidence of the degree to which these practices were policy. The pictures assembled into a timeline by Pack don't tell us about the "stunning policy-making that determined that sequence." For Fuchs as for all the other reviewers, the real story lies elsewhere. It does not lie with the strange detachment that England and others exhibit to this day, except in so far as the detachment confirms that they, too, were merely hapless victims of a corrupt leadership. A reviewer for the World Socialist Web Site, Joanne Laurier, is the only one to suggest that Morris seems to display "an unwillingness to see how far things have gone," a reluctance, that is, to acknowledge that America "terrorized and intimidated an entire population."[61] But how terror and intimidation is performed by individuals who continue to feel blameless and who are apparently without remorse is not a question any reviewer has pursued. Instead, they have sought redemption for the rank and file, and, by extension, for all Americans.

CONCLUSION: EMBODYING EMPIRE

Torture has what we might regard as an almost built-in connection to race. Quite simply, torture is permissible against those we have evicted from personhood, even as torture itself guarantees this outcome. Nothing committed against *homo sacer* can be regarded as a crime, commented Giorgio Agamben, if the law has determined that the rule of law does not apply.[62] Torture's connection to two levels of humanity can thus be located in law. Whether "enemy combatants" or inhabitants of a refugee camp, the legal distinction that marks who enjoys the rule of law and who does not often thinly disguises the fact that the camp's inmates are *already* regarded as a lower form of humanity. Lazreg commented concerning Algeria that the French classified Algerians as "French Muslims" and as "protected subjects," the latter an especially ironic moniker given that those in this category were marked as outside the law's protection.[63] The Bush administration produced Muslims/Arabs in a state of exception in which the rule of law could be suspended in their case.

Drawing on Elaine Scarry's argument that torture is work mediated by the labor of "civilization," Lazreg notes that "torture finds justification in the alleged barbarity of the enemy."[64] In Algeria the French would often set up torture centers in old wine storehouses. Prisoners would often die from the sulfuric gases from the remnants of fermented alcohol, but there was the added bonus of "simply allowing alcohol, the object of a Muslim taboo, to work its invisible magic on the Muslim body."[65] We should not, therefore, be surprised that torture talk and culture talk merge so often. Cultural difference, the enemy's "innate barbarism," is an important element in the eviction of the tortured from the rule of law, and thus from humanity. The bikini panties wrapped so diligently around the heads of the prisoners tortured at Abu Ghraib present a lesson intended more for the torturer than for the tortured, reaffirming the former's cultural superiority and the latter's lower form of humanity.

Post-torture discussions create community as much as torture itself does, continuing racial terror through narrative. In these narratives, torture is not torture at all but interrogation methods gone awry or soldiers carried away as if at a frat party. Culture talk, or in its absence simply an outright dehumanization of Iraqis, undoubtedly helps Americans become reconciled to having tortured. President Obama's statement that Americans don't torture and President Bush's justification for torture may in the end come to mean the same thing when we consider that not only have officials evaded prosecution for their role in torture, but those of the lower ranks who have been charged remain for the most part unrepentant and socially embraced. Their refusal to take responsibility and the public forgiveness of their acts remind those of us who share color, religion, or region with the tortured that our lives are similarly valued. The femininity of the torturers, so celebrated by filmmakers and reviewers alike, strikes terror in the

hearts of anyone who watches and waits for an acknowledgement of the violence done to Iraqis.

POSTSCRIPT: "I WANT YOU TO FEEL THAT IRAQI LIFE IS PRECIOUS"

Iraqis have certainly understood the meaning of American actions. I began this chapter with a story of cultural difference, and I would like to end with another. On May 4, 2008, an intriguing story appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*: "Blackwater Shooting Highlights a U.S., Iraq Culture Clash."[66] Blackwater workers killed seventeen Iraqis, including the son of an Iraqi man, Abdul Razzaq, in what the Iraqis called a massacre and Blackwater described as a situation that arose because their workers feared for their lives. U.S. officials were investigating the shooting, but in the meantime they attempted to provide monetary compensation to Mr. Razzaq, who refused it. The reporters offered their analysis of this strange impasse:

> Far from bringing justice and closure, the investigations underline the frictions between Americans and Iraqis that have plagued the five-year U.S. presence. The shooting and its aftermath show the deep disconnect between the American legal process and the traditional culture of Iraq, between the courtroom and the tribal *diwan.* U.S. officials painstakingly examine evidence and laws while attempting to satisfy victims' claims through cash compensation. But traditional Arab society values honor and decorum above all. If a man kills or badly injures someone in an accident, both families convene a tribal summit. The perpetrator admits responsibility, commiserates with the victim, pays medical expenses and other compensation, all over glasses of tea in a tribal tent. "Our system is so different from theirs," said David Mack, a former U.S. diplomat who has served in American embassies in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates. "An honor settlement has to be both financial and it has to have the right symbolism. We would never accept their way of doing things, and they don't accept ours." Framed as a culture clash, the article ends with the voice of another victim, Baraa Sadoon Ismail, 29, a father of two who was severely injured in the gunfire who is reported as "miffed" when asked whether he planned to seek compensation. "I want you to feel that Iraqi life is precious," explained Haitham Rubaie, a physician who lost his physician wife and medical student son and who rebuffed efforts at compensation (offered in the form of a donation to an orphanage). "No amount of money", he added "will sweep this under the rug."

It seems certain that the United States really will never accept this way of doing things, this quaint cultural way of acknowledging that Iraqi life is precious and that fathers whose wives and children have been blown to bits require a meaningful apology. Our system is indeed different from theirs. We are, I suggest, neither post torture nor post empire. Here, cultural explanations reveal the perniciousness of Western refusal to grant that Iraqi life is precious.

Framing the issue as a culture clash, the article ends with the voice of another victim, Baraa Sadoon Ismail, a twenty-nine-year-old father of two who was severely injured in the gunfire and who was reported as having been "miffed" when asked whether he planned to seek compensation. "I want you to feel that Iraqi life is precious," explained Haitham Rubaie, a physician who lost his physician wife and medical student son and who also rebuffed efforts at compensation (offered in the form of a donation to an orphanage). "No amount of money," he added, "will sweep this under the rug." It seems certain that the United States will never really accept this way of doing things, this quaint cultural way of acknowledging that Iraqi life is precious and that fathers whose wives and children have been blown to bits require a meaningful apology. Our system is indeed different from theirs. We are, I suggest, neither post-torture nor post-empire. Here, cultural explanations reveal the perniciousness of Western refusal to grant that Iraqi life is precious.

NOTES

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Epigraphs: President Barack Obama, State of the Union Address, February 24, 2009. My thanks to Carmela Murdocca for the suggestion about the meaning of Obama's declaration and for the idea of a "post-torture" era. Taussig 1987, 3.

1. Associated Press, "Obama Open to Charging Officials over CIA Interrogations," *Toronto Star,* April 22, 2009.

2. Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man,* 27.

3. Achille Mbembe, "Aesthetics of Superfluity," *Public Culture* 16, no. 3 (2004): 373–405.

4. Marnia Lazreg, *Torture and the Twilight of Empire: From Algiers to Baghdad* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008) 7.

5. Ibid., 121.

6. Ibid., 184.

7. I offer this example from my own experience, but prefer that the workshop and its participants remain anonymous.

8. Joshua Dratel, "The Curious Debate," in *The Torture Debate in America,* ed. Karen J. Greenberg (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 113.

9. Stephen Holmes, "Is Defiance of Law a Proof of Success? Magical Thinking in the War on Terror," in *The Torture Debate in America,* ed. Karen J. Greenberg (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 127.

10. Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States from the 1960s to the 1990s,* 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 1994), 53.

11. Ibid., 61.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid., 145.

14. Ibid., 59.

15. The following two pages are excerpted from my book *Casting Out: The Eviction of Muslims from Western law and Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 65–66.

16. See Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Touchstone Press, 1997).

17. John Gray, "Power and Vainglory," in *Abu Ghraib: The Politics of Torture,* ed. Meron Benvenisti and Barbara Ehrenreich (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2004), 50.

18. Mark Danner, "The Logic of Torture," in Benvenisti and Ehrenreich, *Abu Ghraib,* 31.

19. Ibid., 32.

20. Heather Macdonald, "How to Interrogate Terrorists," in Greenberg, *The Torture Debate in America,* 86.

21. Andrew C. McCarthy, "Thinking about the Unthinkable," in Greenberg, *The Torture Debate in America,* 96.

22. Timothy M. Jones and Penelope Sheets, "Torture in the Eye of the Beholder: Social Identity, News Coverage, and Abu Ghraib," *Political Communication* 26, no. 3 (2009): 278–295.

23. Darius Rejali, Paul Gronke, et al., "U.S. Public Opinion on Torture, 2001–2009," http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=7819652.

24. David Cole, "What to Do about the Torturers?" *New York Review of Books* 57, no. 1 (January 15, 2009): 20.

25. Ibid., 22.

26. Karen J. Greenberg, "Introduction: The Rule of Law Finds Its Golem; Judicial Torture Then and Now," in Greenberg, *The Torture Debate in America,* 1.

27. Jane Mayer, *The Dark Side: The Inside Story of How the War on Terror Turned into a War on American Ideals* (New York: Doubleday, 2008).

28. Michelle Shepherd, "Document Lays Bare CIA Torture Techniques," *Toronto Star,* April 8, 2009.

29. Milgram conducted a series of experiments to study obedience. Subjects were invited to administer electric shocks to a victim. As the experiment progressed, subjects were asked to administer more intense shocks. Milgram examined when subjects refused the orders. More than half of his subjects continued to obey orders until the end even though they exhibited considerable emotional strain while doing so.

30. See, for example, the contributions in Greenberg, *The Torture Debate in America.*

31. Mark Danner, "US Torture: Voices from the Black Sites," *New York Review of Books* 56, no. 6 (April 9, 2009), http://www.nybooks.com/articles/22530 (accessed January 25, 2011).

32. Ibid.

33. Veterans of the conflict in Iraq adopted the term *Winter Soldier* from Vietnam Veterans Against the War, which sponsored a media event called the Winter Soldier Investigation from January 31, 1971, to February 2, 1971, to publicize the war crimes of the United States Armed Forces in Vietnam. See Andrew E. Hunt, *The Turning: A History of Vietnam Veterans Against the War* (New York: New York University Press), 1999; Richard Stacewicz, *Winter Soldiers: An Oral History of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War* (New York: Twayne), 1997.

34. Richard Weisman asked this question in "Showing Remorse at the TRC: Towards a Constitutive Approach to Reparative Discourse," *Windsor Yearbook of Access to Justice* 24 (2006): 221–239.

35. Sherene Razack, *Dark Threats and White Knights: The Somalia Affair, Peacekeeping and the New Imperialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004).

36. "Errol Morris" (video interview), *The New Yorker,* October 5, 2007. www.newyorker.com/online/video/festival/2007/MorrisGourevitch (accessed January 25, 2012).

37. Errol Morris, *Standard Operating Procedure* (Participant Productions and Sony Pictures Classics, 2008), video; Philip Gourevitch and Errol Morris, *Standard Operating Procedure* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008).

38. Joanne Laurier, "Standard Operating Procedure: Images from a Neocolonial War," *World Socialist Website,* June 17, 2008, http://www.wsws.org/articles/2008/jun2008/sop-j17.shtml (accessed January 25, 2012).

39. Amy Goodman, "'The Ghosts of Abu Ghraib'—Doc Traces Path to Torture of Prisoners at Infamous Iraqi Prison," *Democracy Now,* March 21, 2007, http://www.democracynow.org/2007/3/21/the_ghosts_of_abu_ghraib_doc (accessed January 25, 2012).

40. Amy Goodman, "Winter Soldier: US Vets, Active-Duty Soldiers from Iraq and Afghanistan Testify about the Horrors of War," *Democracy Now,* March 17, 2008, http://www.democracynow.org/2008/3/17winter_soldier_us_vets_active_duty (accessed January 25, 2012).

41. Ibid.

42. Amy Goodman, "Winter Soldier: Hundreds of Veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan Gather to Testify in Echo of 1971 Vietnam Hearings," *Democracy Now,* March 14, 2009, http://www.democracynow.org/2008/3/14/hundreds_of_veterans_of_iraq_and.

43. Weisman, "Showing Remorse at the TRC."

44. Lazreg, *Torture and the Twilight of Empire,* 2 (emphasis added).

45. See Razack, *Dark Threats and White Knights,* 58. "In Africa, who can be a saint?" is my paraphrase of Ridley in *Images of Imperial Rule* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), 71, 104.

46. Gourevitch and Morris, *Standard Operating Procedure,* 273.

47. Ibid., 277.

48. The lesbian relationship is casually inserted and unremarked upon in the story, implying that we are watching a film and reading a book made by progressive people. Unlike the Fox News commentators for whom the label *homosexual* for Arabs marks Arab barbarism, the mark of lesbianism in the soldiers places Americans in modernity.

49. Gourevitch and Morris, *Standard Operating Procedure,* 112.

50. Ibid., 117.

51. Ibid., 160.

52. Ibid., 164.

53. Ibid.

54. Errol Morris, quoted in Omar P. L. Moore, "In American Torture and Terror, Errol Morris Finds Shades of Black, White and Gray," *The Popcorn Reel,* March 1, 2008, http://www.popcornreel.com/htm/errolmorris.htm (accessed January 25, 2012).

55. Ian Buruma, "Ghosts," review of *Standard Operating Procedure,* by Philip Gourevitch and Errol Morris, *New York Review of Books,* June 26, 2008, 6–10.

56. Peter Goddard, "Images of Abu Ghraib," *Toronto Star,* June 1, 2008.

57. Ibid.

58. Michael S. Roth, "Framed," review of *Standard Operating Procedure,* by Philip Gourevitch and Errol Morris, *Los Angeles Times,* May 25, 2008, http://articles.latimes.com/2008/may/25/books/bk-roth25 (accessed January 25, 2012).

59. Michael Chaiken, review of *Standard Operating Procedure,* by Philip Gourevitch and Errol Morris, *Film Society of Lincoln Center,* May 8, 2008, http://www.filmlinc.com/film-comment/article/standard-operating-procedure-review (accessed February 22, 2012).

60. Cynthia Fuchs, "Fraction of a Second," review of *Standard Operating Procedure,* by Philip Gourevitch and Errol Morris, *Pop Matters,* May 2, 2008, http://www.popmatters.com/pm/review/58148/standard-operating-procedure (accessed January 25, 2012).

61. Laurier, "Standard Operating Procedure."

62. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life,* trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 3.

63. Lasreg, *Torture and the Twilight of Empire,* 4.

64. Ibid., 3.

65. Ibid., 118.

66. Borzou Daragahi and Raheem Salman, "Grieving Iraqis Want Honor First, Not Money," *Los Angeles Times,* May 4, 2008, http://articles.latimes.com/2008/may/04/world/fg-blackwater4 (accessed February 22, 2012).