"We've Tamed the World by Framing It": Islam, 'Justifiable Warfare,' and Situational Responses to the War on Terror in Selected Post-9/11 Novels, Films and Television.

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

at

Rhodes University

by

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December 2016

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Abstract

This thesis explores geopolitically diverse fictional responses to 9/11 and the War on Terror. Drawing on Judith Butler's (2009) notion of the "frames of war," Jacques Derrida's (2005) conception of the 'friend'/'enemy' binary, and Mahmood Mamdani's (2004) critique of the 'good' Muslim, 'bad' Muslim dichotomy (delineated in 2001 by President George W. Bush) I examine how selected examples of contemporary literature, as well as a popular television series, depict the War on Terror; and analyse how these differently situated texts structure their respective depictions of Islam and Muslims. In the first chapter, I focus on how *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), a novel by the Pakistani author, Mohsin Hamid, problematises the 'good' Muslim, 'bad' Muslim binary, and argue that the protagonist's decision to leave the United States in the wake of 9/11 represents an important political comment on global perceptions of American foreign policy and the human cost of millennial capitalism. Chapter 2 is an investigation of two novels: *The Silent Minaret* (2005) and *I See You* (2014), by the South African writer, Ishtiyaq Shukri. By situating his characters in a variety of geopolitical spaces and temporal realities, Shukri encourages the reader to discard the structuring frames of nation, race, and religion, and links the vulnerability and violence implicit in the War on Terror to a longer history of conquest, colonialism, and apartheid. In the process, Shukri illustrates the importance of understanding repressive local contexts as interwoven with global and historical power dynamics. Chapter 3 is a study of the popular American television series, *Homeland* (2011–), created by Alex Gansa and Howard Gordon, and focuses on the manner in which the Central Intelligence Agency's "Overseas Contingency Operations" are portrayed by the show. I argue that *Homeland* initially problematises the 'friend'/'enemy' binary, but subsequently collapses into a narrative in which these two polarities are construed by prevailing American attitudes towards Islam and the notion of the War on Terror as a necessity. This thesis concludes that texts that characterise the War on Terror as a global phenomenon, and situate it within a broad historical discourse, are able to subvert the singularity ascribed to the 9/11 attacks, as well as the epochal connotations of the 'post-9/11' literary genre. I argue that the novels I have chosen scrutinise the ways in which perceptions are framed by dominant forms of media, historiography, and political rhetoric, and not only offer unique insights on the repercussions of the global War on Terror but attempt to conceive of humanity in its totality, and therefore destabilise the ontological and reductive operation of the frame itself.

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Introduction: Narrating, Understanding, and Framing the War on Terror

As the wreckage of the World Trade Centre smouldered in downtown Manhattan on the evening of September 11, 2001, the President of the United States of America, George W. Bush, addressed the American public from the White House:

> Today, our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack in a series of deliberate and deadly terrorist acts [. . .]. A great people has been moved to defend a great nation. Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America. These acts shatter steel, but they cannot dent the steel of American resolve. America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world. And no one will keep that light from shining. Today, our nation saw evil – the very worst of human nature – and we responded with the best of America. [. . .].This is a day when all Americans from every walk of life unite in our resolve for justice and peace. America has stood down enemies before, and we will do so this time. None of us will ever forget this day, yet we go forward to defend freedom and all that is good and just in our world. ("9/11 Address to the Nation")

The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon killed 2,996 people. It was not simply the number of casualties that sent convulsions through the United States but the form of the attacks themselves. Al Qaeda had committed the most destructive act of non-state terrorism in living memory, and they did so with giant flying suicide bombs.[1] W.J.T. Mitchell, in *Cloning Terror* (2011), notes that the attacks represented a "spectacle designed to traumatise a nation" (21), while Jean Baudrillard, in *The Spirit of Terrorism* (2002), asserts that "the whole play of history and power" was "disrupted" by the televised images of al Qaeda's deadly plan coming to fruition (4). Baudrillard goes on to say that the collapse of the World Trade Centre was a moment in which the world's media saw the Twin Towers "responding to the suicide of the suicide-planes with their own suicide" – the perfect embodiment of an "absolute event" (7, 4). While Mitchell and Baudrillard's observations underline the "symbolic violence" of what came to be known as 9/11, the latter suggests that it is important not to permit the perceived "singularity" of the attacks overwhelm one's sensibilities (4, 29). Terrifying as they may have been, they did not occur in an historical vacuum, and cannot be understood without recourse to

[1] W.J.T. Mitchell defines non-state terrorism as a form of "psychological warfare designed to breed anxiety and fear in a population," adding that it is "not a direct military engagement like invasion, siege, or occupation, but the staging of relatively limited acts of violence, usually against symbolic targets, designed to demoralise a population, and incite a reaction (generally an overreaction) by the police and military apparatus of a nation-state" (21).

the history between the United States and the Muslim world.[2] Judith Butler, in *Precarious Life* (2004), remarks: "That US boundaries were breached, that an unbearable vulnerability was exposed, that a terrible toll on human life was taken, were, and are, cause for fear and for mourning," but she adds that the attacks were "also instigations for patient political reflection" (*Precarious* xi). The months after the fall of the Twin Towers held the potential for the United States to scrutinise its position in the global order, and to look to its historical relationship with the Muslim world for answers. According to William Blum, in *America's Deadliest Export* (2013), rather than critically evaluating the context out of which 9/11 arose, however, American mainstream news media outlets[3] – such as CNN and Fox News, as well as print publications such as *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times* – retreated into the assumption that the attacks were the result of "an irrational hatred of the US and its way of life, based on religious and cultural misunderstandings and envy" (316).[4]

The role of the news media in framing the collective American experience of 9/11 cannot be understated. In *Islam through Western Eyes* (2012), Jonathan Lyons provides a comprehensive list of *The New York Times*' front-page articles in the four months after the attacks. Some of these titles include, "'This Is a Religious War,' 'Jihad 101,' 'Barbarians at the Gate,' 'The Force of Islam,' 'Divine Inspiration,'" and, most significantly, "'A Head-on Collision of Alien Cultures'" (12). Thanks to headlines such as these, notes Lyons, "the media [became] the single biggest influence on American's attitudes toward Islam, especially among those with negative opinions towards Muslims" (12).

Stephen Jones and David Clarke observe that attempts by George W. Bush and his country's mass media to ascribe to 9/11 a "certain *otherworldliness*" signified the president's desire to create a narrative that labelled terrorism as antithetical to "any form of negotiation, reason or dialogue" (307, emphasis added). Framing the 'terrorist' in this fashion, as a mindless and "suicidal life form," forecloses instantly any attempts to understand the context of the 9/11 attacks (Mitchell 74). As Blum notes, the news media's "gravest shortcoming is much more their errors of omission than their errors of commission" (Blum, *America's* 276).

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[2] See William Blum's chapter, "A Concise History of US Global Interventions," in *Rogue State* (2014), 162–220.
[3] Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman (2008) describe the mass media as a "propaganda model," noting that the function of this model is to "amuse, entertain, and inform, and to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behaviour that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society" (1). David Demers echoes Chomsky and Herman's claims, and defines "mass media systems theory" as a "theory which posits that mass media are institutions contributing to the maintenance of a community or society, usually in a way that supports the status quo or serves the interests of powerful economic and political elites" (184).
[4] See Blum's chapter, "The Media," in *America's,* 269–84.

In late 2001, Osama bin Laden claimed America had brought 9/11 on itself, and declared that the attacks were a response to the country's military having "spearheaded the Crusade against the Islamic nation [*umma*], sending thousands of troops to the Land of the Two Holy Mosques [Saudi Arabia]" (qtd. in Karen Armstrong, *Fields of Blood* 349). Bin Laden also called the United States' continual support for the state of Israel a form of "hypocrisy," and stated that "Israel for more than 50 years has been pushing U.N. resolutions and rules against the wall with the full support of America" ("Letter to America").[5]

Rather than focusing on the political implications of bin Laden's words – therefore providing a context as to *why* the country had been targeted by al Qaeda – American politicians and mainstream media remained fixated on the violent imagery of the attacks themselves.[6] By having 9/11 "filtered" through channels of mass communication (Mitchell xi), the American public was encouraged to believe that the country was attacked because of its "freedom, its democracy, its wealth" rather than its government's foreign policies in the Middle East and Central Asia (Lynne Cheney qtd. in Blum, *Rogue* xv). Another significant "error of omission" that would have placed the 9/11 attacks in context – had it been publicly acknowledged by Bush and his staff – implicated the American government in providing the material conditions from which many contemporary extremist organisations would evolve at the end of the Cold War (Blum, *America's* 276). Although the history behind the rise of al Qaeda became a topic for public consumption thanks to news outlets such as *The Guardian*,[7] *The Telegraph*,[8] and the *New Yorker*,[9] Noam Chomsky observes that the origins of the group were "barely mentioned" by American politicians in late 2001 (*Imperial Ambitions* 108).

According to Mahmood Mamdani in his book, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim* (2004), al Qaeda was born out of the collapse of the American and Pakistani-sponsored Afghan *mujahedeen*, or "soldiers engaged in jihad," who were trained to fight the Soviet Union

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[5] The entirety of bin Laden's "Letter" is available on *The Guardian*'s website. Despite bin Laden's clear rationale for the 9/11 attacks, one should, of course, recognise that the murder of innocent civilians can, and should, never be condoned.

[6] See *The New York Times*' publication, *Portraits of Grief* (2002), edited by Howell Raines and Janny Scott, which documents the lives of those who died on 9/11. Also see Barry Zwicker, *Towers of Deception: The Media Cover-Up of 9/11* (2006).

[7] See Jason Burke's article, "Frankenstein the CIA Created," *The Guardian* (1999).

[8] See Marcus Warren's article, "We Can Beat Taliban," *The Telegraph* (2001).

[9] See "Tuesday and After" (2001): a collection of articles by writers such as Jonathan Franzen, Susan Sontag, John Updike, and Amitav Ghosh, published in *The New Yorker* in September 2001. These writers account for the horror of 9/11 but also remind readers about the history of American military interference in the Muslim world.

during their 1979–89 occupation of Afghanistan (127).[10] Rather than using his country's established military power to fight the Soviets, the American president at the time, Ronald Reagan, instructed the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to channel funds through the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) in order to train Afghan militants who would fight the Soviet occupiers. This decade-long programme came to be known as Operation Cyclone.[11]

Mamdani posits: "Had the anti-Soviet crusade been organised in a national framework," then "the CIA would have looked for mainly Afghani recruits to wage it. But with the war recast as an international jihad, the CIA looked for volunteers from Muslim populations all over the globe" (131). Although the "$3 billion in covert aid" that the CIA supplied to the *mujahedeen* was designated for its Afghan volunteers, Arab and Pakistani fighters are also known to have benefitted from this funding (141). Among the Arab volunteers were Ayman al-Zawahiri and Osama bin Laden, who would go on to establish al Qaeda in the years leading up to the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. "The real damage the CIA did" during the Afghan War, Mamdani argues, "was the *privatisation* of information about how to produce and spread violence – the formation of private militias – capable of creating terror" (138, emphasis original). In fact, he goes so far as to claim that

> The United States and its allies created, trained, and sustained an infrastructure of terror, international in scope, free of any state control, and wrapped up in the language of religious war. Official America learned to distinguish between two types of terrorism – 'theirs' and 'ours' and cultivated an increasingly benign attitude to ours. But then it turned out that their terrorism was born of ours. (234, emphasis added)

If one considers the implications of these allegations, then 9/11 can be understood as an important lesson in the repercussions of misguided foreign policy. The decision by the CIA to "organise the Afghan jihad as a quasi-private international crusade" had backfired and, while the United States may have defeated the Soviets by proxy in Afghanistan in 1989, the country paid a heavy price for the victory at the dawn of the new millennium (Mamdani 169). Nine days after the 9/11 attacks, George W. Bush declared a "war on terror," claiming that it would

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[10] Mamdani remarks that scholars of Islam differentiate between two broad traditions of jihad: the greater and the lesser jihad. The former "is a struggle against weakness of self; it is about how to live and attain piety in a contaminated world. Inwardly, it is about the effort of each Muslim to become a better human being" (50). The lesser jihad, however, "is about self-preservation and self-defence; directed outwardly, it is the source of Islamic notions of what Christians call 'just war,' rather than 'holy war'" (50).

[11] The lengthy and expensive period of CIA support for the *mujahedeen* is well documented in other sources. See, Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars* (2004); Thomas X. Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone* (2006); Peter Bergen, *The Longest War* (2011); Karen Armstrong, *Fields of Blood* (2014); and Andrew Feinstein, *The Shadow World* (2015).

begin "with al Qaeda" but would "not end until every terrorist group of global reach had been found, stopped and defeated" (qtd. in Ron Suskind 19).

Of course, in order to wage this war, Bush and his cabinet needed to define what kind of individual constituted a 'terrorist.' Former Vice Chairman of the National Intelligence Council, Graham E. Fuller, notes that the definition provided by the United States Department of Defence describes the terrorist as an individual who makes use of "*unlawful violence* or [the] threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear," and whose motives are primarily "political, religious, or ideological" (328, emphasis original). No definition, Fuller observes, "is offered for the term 'unlawful,' but it appears to mean 'not sanctioned by government" (329). In the Department of Defence's definition, then, state-sanctioned violence – as opposed to 'terrorist' violence – exists within the confines of the law, and is therefore valid, necessary, and justifiable.

"Justifiable" was the term used by George Bush when plotting his country's response to 9/11, and the self-confessed "war president" claimed: "History has called us into action; and we're not going to miss this opportunity to make the world more peaceful and more free" (qtd. in Bob Woodward 91, 113). On October 7, 2001, the United States and its allies embarked on the first campaign of the War on Terror: Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, which was premised on removing the Taliban government from power and capturing Osama bin Laden. By the end of the year, the American military had succeeded in temporarily ousting the Taliban, but had failed in its mission to detain or kill bin Laden.

Following the partial success of Operation Enduring Freedom, George Bush, Condoleezza Rice, Colin Powell, Dick Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz, and Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld, began an intricate planning process for the invasion of Iraq. According to Bush, the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, was "teaming up with al Qaeda" to attack the United States and there could be "no doubt" that he "possess[ed] weapons of mass destruction," or WMD (qtd. in Woodward, 178, 164). As some politicians and journalists on both sides of the Atlantic noted prior to the invasion, there was a lack of tangible evidence for these claims. The much-anticipated *Iraq Inquiry* (finally published in 2016) confirms this. Sir John Chilcot, Chairperson of the *Inquiry*, states that the claims made by President George Bush and British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, apropos Saddam Hussein's alleged possession of WMD represented an "intelligence failure," adding that there "continue to be demands for factual evidence of the presence of WMD in Iraq" (77, 130). As for Bush's assertions that Hussein had teamed up with al Qaeda, National Security Advisor to the Bush administration, Brent Scowcroft, wrote in early 2002, "[t]here is scant evidence to tie Saddam to terrorist

organisations, and even less to the September 11 attacks (qtd. in Woodward 159). Nevertheless, in April 2003, the United States – in tandem with the United Kingdom and other member states of the Coalition of the Willing – embarked on Operation Iraqi Freedom.[12] Their goal was to overthrow Saddam Hussein and his Ba'ath party, which they did with surprising ease. What followed the invasion, however, was a brutal and lengthy occupation, lasting from 2003 until 2011, and claiming, according to conservative estimates, approximately 175,000 civilian lives.[13]

The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have contributed to the radical destabilisation of both nations, and have led to the globalised state of terrorism today. As Butler observes: "In pursuing a wayward military solution [to 9/11], the United States perpetrates and displays its own violence, offering a breeding ground for new waves of young Muslims to join terrorist organisations" (*Precarious* 17). The veteran Iraqi-based journalist, Patrick Cockburn, echoes Butler's claims, and states that the rise of the so-called Islamic State "is the outcome of the war in Iraq since the US invasion of 2003 and the war in Syria since 2011" (*The Rise* 8).[14] Butler and Cockburn are not alone in their assertions that the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq fuelled a sharp rise in global terrorism. For instance, Sir John Chilcot notes that the "consequences of the invasion and of the conflict within Iraq which followed are still being felt in Iraq and the wider Middle East" (4). *The Iraq Inquiry* is a scathing indictment on Britain's involvement in the Iraq War, and emphasises that one of the primary reasons for the proliferation of terrorism both within and outside the country stemmed not only from the occupation but from the failure "to plan or prepare for the major reconstruction programme required" to stabilise the country (124). As such, the "serious disorder" that characterised post-occupation Iraq spilled over into a wider context, making the United States and Europe – as well as susceptible countries within the Middle East – targets for terrorism (4).

Under the presidency of Barack Obama, American foreign policy has undergone a number of changes. Notably, the president has instructed staff members at the Pentagon to substitute the phrase "Global War on Terror" with "Overseas Contingency Operations," stating that America's "intelligence and military agencies will not wage war against a tactic (terrorism)

[12] "Coalition of the Willing" was the name given to the nation-states allied with the United States in the Iraq War. See Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack* (2004).

[13] See the *Iraq Body Count* database, which, drawing on nearly 50,000 independent data entries, is a reliable indicator of the number of civilians killed in Iraq between 2001 and 2016.

[14] Throughout this thesis, I shall refer to this organisation as either the Islamic State or "Daesh" – the Arabic acronym for "al-Dawla al-Islamiya al-Iraq al-Sham" ("The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant").

but will instead focus on a specific group of networks" (qtd. in Paul Shinkman).[15] Mitchell cautions that Obama's decision to rename the War on Terror is nothing more than a "bureaucratic obfuscation," as the war can "not be declared over because it is not over, and never can be" (23). Although the "shock and awe" tactics favoured by George W. Bush have been harshly criticised by his successor (Woodward 102), Obama maintains that America's Overseas Contingency Operations represent a "war of necessity, not a war of choice" (qtd. in Blum, *America's* 36).[16]

President Obama's language is camouflaged in the rhetoric of fate and duty, almost as if the United States is waging the War on Terror reluctantly, with a sense of responsibility for the world at large. Rather than interrogating the root causes of anti-American terrorism, Obama claims that, in order to "ensure prosperity here at home and peace abroad," the United States must "maintain the strongest military on the planet" (qtd. in Blum, *America's* 287). The paradox of maintaining peace through military power has been a cornerstone of mainstream American rhetoric about the War on Terror. Terms such as "freedom," "peace," and "democracy" have been vital in creating a certain perception of the War on Terror – that it is not only permissible and justifiable as a result of 9/11, but that it is unavoidable because the enemy (terror) will not subside (Blum, *Rogue* x, vi). In other words, a certain kind of interpretative frame has been imposed around the War on Terror in order to "justify, explain, and narrate it" as it unfolds (Mitchell i).

When I speak of the frame, I am referring to Judith Butler's conception of it in *Frames of War*: *When is Life Grievable?* (2009). According to Butler, the frame is an externally imposed method of governing material perceptions, and it "implicitly guides the [act of] interpretation" when one is presented with an individual, a population, or an event (*Frames* 8). The notion of the frame as a structuring entity does not originate from Butler's work, and is explored in detail by Erving Goffman in his 1974 book-length essay, *Frame Analysis*. Like Butler's theory, Goffman's analysis of "primary frameworks" concludes that they represent a "schemata of interpretation," in that they render a particular scene or individual with meaning (Goffman 20, 21). Another prominent critic apropos the notion of frames and framing is George Lakoff, whose book, *Don't See an Elephant* (2008), quantifies the frame as intrinsic to all instances of perception and comprehension. As Lakoff himself states: "Frames are mental

[15] See Scott Wilson and Al Kamen's article, "Global War on Terror is Given New Name," *The Washington Post* (2009).
[16] See Edward Delman's article, "Obama Promised to End America's Wars – Has He?" *The Atlantic* (2016).

structures that shape the way we see the world," adding that they are formed by the power that language has over human understanding (xv).

For Butler, the frame acts to "delimit the visual field" and create a narrative about "what can be seen and what can be heard," especially during times of war (8, xi). In essence, its function is to generate a certain "version of reality" (xi). The "reality" enclosed in the frame, however, is always open to scrutiny. Butler notes:

> The frame does not simply exhibit reality, but actively participates in a strategy of containment, selectively producing and enforcing what will count as reality. It tries to do this, and its efforts are a powerful wager. Although framing cannot always contain what it seeks to make visible or readable, it remains structured by the aim of instrumentalising certain versions of reality. This means that the frame is always throwing something away, always keeping something out, always de-realising and de-legitimating alternative versions of reality. (*Frames* xiii)

Following 9/11, what Butler calls the "embedded evaluative structure" – or, the politically saturated frames implicit in the composition of the mass media – endeavoured to create a single story about the events of that day (*Frames* 51). This "structure" would choose what to "include in the field of perception," and could therefore delineate what would count as an intelligible narrative (66). By focusing on the event itself rather than on the historical circumstances out of which it had arisen, the official narrative of 9/11 represented one "version of reality" (xi). This narrative omitted crucial information that would have placed the attacks – morally reprehensible as they were – in context.[17] One can think of the frame, therefore, "as both jettisoning and presenting, and as doing both at once, in silence, without any visible sign of its operation" (73). Because it "seeks to contain, convey, and determine what is seen," the power of the frame, Butler suggests, lies in its ability to influence and concretise "broader norms" through its creation of a narrative (10, 63). Thus, Butler notes, "powerful forms of media" are always in a process of interpreting in advance, what one sees, hears, and subsequently thinks (47). The frame of the media therefore comes to function "didactically" (Jones and Clarke 303).

Because the frame operates ontologically, it is the very structure through which subjects are imbued with specific meaning. It works to differentiate the self from the other and, importantly, *creates* this very division itself. The frame therefore becomes a means of delineating and coding who is one's friend and who is one's enemy. For Jacques Derrida, what

[17] British media, according to Brian McNair, was more attentive to the history behind the rise of al Qaeda than most American news outlets. See "UK Media Coverage of 9/11," in *How the World's News Media Reacted to 9/11* (2007), 30–9.

makes the "figure of the enemy" recognisable is a matter of "*practical identification*," and a process of knowing "how to identify" the enemy as such (83, 116, emphasis original). Derrida argues that "an identifiable enemy" is not merely useful, but fundamental to the formation and positioning of the political self (83). The 'enemy' thus becomes a counterpoint to the 'friend,' and the relationship between these two polarities represents "the very concept of the political" (84). Put simply, because the figure of the 'enemy' is able to put the self in question, it becomes – to a degree – an oppositional figure to that of the 'friend.'

Much American news coverage after 9/11, notes Mitchell, "divided the world into good and evil," in which the "iconic figure of the enemy" – Osama bin Laden or Saddam Hussein – became "visible and locatable" (7, 3). These two individuals, I suggest, became what Derrida would call "declared" enemies (61). The "declared" enemy is nothing short of "indispensible," as this figure is vital for those who feel they must "'rise' to the level of their own virtue" (61). Both bin Laden and Hussein were former 'friends' of the United States, but had reneged on their 'friendship' and, in the process, became figures of unimaginable evil – individuals who should be "annihilated, not only driven back" (Derrida 133).[18]

Although "perceptions of history" are shaped habitually by "audio-visual-textual images" transmitted by the world's media, it is important to remember that, while global coverage of 9/11 and the War on Terror lent itself to some nuance and debate, the function of the frame is to manufacture a single narrative out of numerous realities (Mitchell xi). This means that there *are* alternative frames through which to understand phenomena such as 9/11. As Arundhati Roy notes in her 2002 speech, "Come September," "[t]here can never be a single story. There are only ways of seeing" (1).

Madalena Gonzalez and Julien Bringuier suggest that one alternative and accessible means by which to understand the events surrounding 9/11 is through the reading and writing of literature. For Gonzalez and Bringuier, the genre of "post-9/11" fiction is a vital means of responding to the tragedy of 9/11, as its content often explores "the physicality of the event; a physicality that immediately became imagery or mythology, and that must be reshaped into a tangible world again" (229). More important, they argue, is the fact that 'post-9/11' fiction has the ability to reshape "the collective perception" of 9/11, as it wrenches the narrative "from the clutches of an all-powerful media that pretends to have the last word on the subject" (232). How, then, would the world's authors narrate the tragedy of the World Trade Centre attacks?

[18] Bin Laden, as a result of his commitment to ousting the Soviets from Afghanistan, would have been an exceptionally helpful 'friend' to America in the 1980s. Whereas Hussein's "rise to power was largely aided by the United States during the Reagan era and Iraq's catastrophic war with Iran" (Mitchell 89).

Would writers in the United States erect "a wall in time between 'pre-9/11' and 'post-9/11' thinking," or would they acknowledge that this violent event was itself a form of 'blowback' for bygone American foreign policy (Mitchell 162)?[19]

The traumatic effects of 9/11 on the United States' public are apparent in a number of novels written by American authors in the wake of the attacks. For example, Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* (2007) encapsulates the nation's sense of vulnerability by focusing on the incursion of the public sphere into American private life following 9/11. While DeLillo's stark and poetic novel is powerful and unsettling, it nevertheless characterises the United States as nothing more than a victim in the attacks, therefore dislodging the event itself from any kind of historical or political context. Jay McIerney's 2006 work of fiction, *The Good Life*, avoids any literal depiction of the attacks themselves, instead focussing on the national mood in the days surrounding 9/11. Like *Falling Man*, McIerney's novel is premised on the collapse of interpersonal relationships, and more than captures the "indefinite state of emergency" that gripped the United States in the years following the attacks (Mitchell 52). Despite their differences in form and content, both DeLillo and McIerney depict an American public coming to terms with a heightened sense of its own vulnerability after 9/11. This sense of vulnerability was a new phenomenon for many living in the United States, and I argue that it represented a sudden awareness that American life was precarious.

For Butler, "precariousness" is a "shared condition of human life" (*Frames* 13). That is to say that precariousness is a generalised condition of what is living, and that lives "are by their definition precarious" (25). Because lives "can be expunged at will or by accident," acknowledging one's innate precariousness is accompanied by the realisation that "one's life is always in some sense in the hands of the other" (25, 14). Despite the ubiquity of precariousness as a condition of life, there are structuring frames that seek to eschew this fact. Butler notes: "If I identify to a community of belonging on the basis of nation, territory, language, or culture, and if I then base my sense of responsibility on that community, I implicitly hold to the view that I am responsible only for those who are recognisably like me in some way" (36). If one's interpretative frame is structured by nationalism, for example, then a subject who falls outside of the given parameters of the nation-state to which one belongs is perceived not to be as precarious as subjects within the recognisable nationalistic framework.

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[19] "Blowback," according to *The Nation*'s Chalmers Johnson, "is a CIA term [which was] first used in March 1954 in a recently declassified report on the 1953 operation to overthrow the government of Mohammed Mossadegh in Iran" ("Blowback"). Johnson notes that the term is "a metaphor for the unintended consequences of the US government's international activities that have been kept secret from the American people" ("Blowback").

When acts of violence are committed against those with whom one shares a nationality there are – as there were after 9/11 – frequent opportunities for "public grieving" and the memorialisation of the dead (39). Conversely, the deaths of unrecognisable subjects do not cause the same degree of "moral outrage" (41).

The reason I find DeLillo and McIerney's novels – inspired as they may be – unsuitable for a discussion about global literary responses to the War on Terror is because they focus specifically on the effects of 9/11 on Americans, and therefore imply that only American life is precarious. Furthermore, both novels not only neglect the historical context that made 9/11 possible, but they also overlook the overwhelming military response to the attacks. Rather than investigating the War on Terror – which has made life increasingly perilous for those outside the United States – in conjunction with the trauma experienced by Americans on 9/11, DeLillo and McIerney, like the American mass media, turn their attention to the perceived vulnerability of *American* life in the wake of the attacks. Harleen Singh, in "Insurgent Metaphors" (2012), claims that the scope of American post-9/11 literature is, for the most part, too "inward-looking" in its depictions of 9/11 and its aftermath (23). I agree with Singh's observation, and argue that many other cultural products of the post-9/11 United States, such as film and television, also construct their narratives around the notion that American lives are more precarious – and therefore worthy of greater protection – than the lives of non-Americans.

For instance, the plot of the television series, *24* (2001–2010), aired by FOX and created by Joel Surnow and Robert Cochrain, is premised on containing and eliminating numerous 'terrorist' threats facing the United States. Each season of *24* follows Jack Bauer, an American Counter-Terrorist Unit officer who will do virtually anything – including using forms of torture – to keep his country safe. While more ambiguous in its political outlook, Katheryn Bigelow's film *Zero Dark Thirty* (2012) is also about the finding, stopping, and purging of 'terrorist' threats. Bigelow's film looks specifically at how information provided by tortured detainees in CIA 'black sites' lead to Operation Geronimo: the orchestrated death of Osama bin Laden in May 2011. According to Jessica Winter, *Zero Dark Thirty* has "become the most politically divisive" film in recent memory (32). Not only does it contain "brutal scenes" of torture but it "forges false connections between the information gleaned by torture and the eventual discovery of bin Laden's hideout" (32). Bigelow, however, claims her work is "deeply moral," in that it "questions what was done in the name of finding bin Laden" (qtd. in Winter 33). While *24* reflects the supposed innumerability of America's 'enemies,' *Zero Dark Thirty* makes the viewer complicit in the "enhanced interrogation tactics" used by the Central Intelligence

Agency in its pursuit of bin Laden, and therefore postures as a potential critique of the War on Terror itself (Winter 32).

Despite their differing narrative approaches to the War on Terror, *24* and *Zero Dark Thirty* both shed light on the paranoid mindset of the United States after 9/11. In so doing, they render the American homeland – and *only* the American homeland – as susceptible to terrorist attacks. That only a small number of attacks – classified as acts of terror – have occurred in the United States since 2001 appears to corroborate Singh's claim that, following 9/11, "American life has continued at an unabated pace – whereas life in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan has been radically destabilized" ("Insurgent" 23).[20] By emphasising the uncertainty of American life in the twenty-first century, many American literary and filmic responses to the attacks of September 11 provide a singular perspective on what is, in fact, a "world picture" (Mitchell 79). Furthermore, in fixating on the dangers posed exclusively to the United States, these cultural products inevitably occlude the fact that the actions of the American military have – in some parts of the world – made life increasingly precarious for others.

Thus, rather than examining literary responses to 9/11 that treat the attacks as a singular event, this thesis will consider three novels and a television series that are differently situated fictional responses to America's War on Terror following the attack on the Twin Towers. By including Pakistani, South African, and American narratives in my argument, I aim to understand how the War on Terror is perceived in specific local settings – as well as in a global sense – and how the interpretative frame around this war differs with regards to geopolitical context. Furthermore, I will demonstrate how my chosen texts vary in their respective portrayals of Islam and of Muslim characters, and how these portrayals either affirm or problematise the frame imposed on the religion and its followers following 9/11 and the War on Terror.

In Chapter 1, I examine Mohsin Hamid's 2007 novel, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. Hamid's novel ruptures the supposed binary between the geopolitical West and the Islamic world by focusing on a Pakistani protagonist, Changez Khan, whose life as a financial analyst in New York is thrown into uncertainty by 9/11 and its aftermath. As the War on Terror begins in Afghanistan, Changez recognises that his lucrative occupation is helping to reinforce America's economic power, thereby contributing to the country's ability to wage war in the

[20] Under the banner of "terrorist attacks" in the United States, Bobby Ilich includes the Fort Hood Mass Shooting (2009), The Boston Marathon Bombing (2013), the San Bernardino Attacks (2015), and the Orlando Nightclub Shooting (2016). Ilich notes that there have been 37 terrorist attacks in the United States since 2001, with 23 of these claiming 151 lives. See his article, "The United States after 9/11," *IBT* (2016), for information on these specific attacks.

Muslim world. Upon realising that he is "no longer capable of so thorough a self-deception," Changez relinquishes his life in the United States and returns home to his family in Lahore, Pakistan (Hamid, *Reluctant* 100).

Hamid's novel is an important literary interpretation of 9/11 and the War on Terror, as the author takes the reader into the mind of a character familiar with both Pakistan and the United States. The fact that Changez is a "western-educated urbanite," as well as an open critic of the conduct the United States in the aftermath of 9/11 (54), permits Hamid to scrutinise what Mamdani calls "Culture Talk" – a divisive form of rhetoric premised on the simultaneous polarisation and "politicisation of culture" (17, 27). As such, the reader is encouraged to reframe his/her preconceived notions about Islam, Pakistan, and America, and encounters a critique of the United States from a narrative perspective that refutes national absolutism and is transnational, indeed global, in its outlook. In drawing attention to the suffering and fear that the War on Terror has facilitated in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and beyond, I claim that Hamid underscores what Butler calls the "precarity" that characterises life for populations situated around focal points of this global war (*Frames* 25). Like her understandings of the frame and precariousness, Butler's concept of precarity is vital to my argument throughout this thesis.

Although "precariousness and precarity are intersecting concepts," Butler insists that precarity is not a generalised attribute of human life (25). Rather, precarity "designates that *politically induced condition* in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support and become differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death" (25, emphasis added). Unlike precariousness, which is "coextensive with birth itself," precarity is a condition of life asymmetrically *imposed* on individuals and populations through powerful external forces (14). The "differential distribution of precarity" therefore denies the reality that all lives are innately precarious (25). As a result of this denial, those for whom conditions of precarity are normalised are seen as lacking the shared quality of human life, and are therefore considered "ungrievable" if subjected to violence or death (38). An "ungrievable" life, according Butler, "is one that cannot be mourned because it has never lived, that is, it has never counted as a life at all" (38). What Butler describes as the "division of the world into grievable and ungrievable lives" is criticised sharply in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and, in my study of the novel, I will demonstrate that Changez returns to Pakistan to protect those for whom precarity has become increasingly commonplace due to the American military's response to 9/11 (38).

The precarity of life for those affected by the War on Terror is also a central concern of my second chapter, which discusses two novels: *The Silent Minaret* (2006) and *I See You*

(2014) by the South African author, Ishtiyaq Shukri. What makes Shukri's work unique is the perspective from which he writes. As a South African novelist, he comments on the American response to 9/11 from a distance, whilst locating his characters in various geographical and socio-political contexts that are focal points of oppressive global power systems. By varying his characters' geopolitical settings, as well as continually shifting the temporal dimensions of his narratives, Shukri links the struggle of the individual to a global history of continued power disparities – such as South Africa during and after apartheid, the Israeli occupation of Palestine, and the asymmetrical militarism of the War on Terror. Like Hamid, Shukri redraws the American "version of reality" imposed around 9/11 and the War on Terror (Butler, *Frames* xi). He emphasises the precarity of life for Muslims in the world after 9/11 and links the War on Terror to a longer history of colonialism and imperialism.

As I will demonstrate, the respective protagonists of *I See You* and *The Silent Minaret* – Tariq Hassan and Issa Shamsuddin – are concerned with reorienting the frames through which historically "ungrievable" lives are perceived. Issa's focus in his doctoral research on the early European colonisation of South Africa, as well as Tariq's skills as a photojournalist covering conflicts in various parts of the globe, allow both characters to document the precarity of vulnerable populations from around the world and throughout history. It is from Shukri's character, Tariq, that I derive the title of my thesis. Tariq notes that "we've tamed the world by framing it" (*I See You* 175), and I argue that, throughout Shukri's narratives, the reader is encouraged to 'untame' the world by discarding the established frames through which certain populations and individuals are perceived as "ungrievable" (Butler, *Frames* 38).

My research into differently situated responses to the War on Terror would not be complete without including an American interpretation of this war. As such, my third chapter analyses the American television series, *Homeland* (2011–), written by Alex Gansa and Howard Gordon, in order to gauge how the War on Terror is depicted in the world's most popular medium of entertainment. With specific reference to Jacques Derrida's conception of the 'friend' and 'enemy,' I will demonstrate that *Homeland* initially succeeds in blurring the lines between these political polarities by examining the vexed relationship between a CIA case officer, Carrie Mathison, and a United States Marine, Sergeant Nicholas Brody, whom Carrie suspects of having been 'turned' during his eight-year capture in Iraq. As *Homeland* progresses, however, the show's potential critique of the 'friend'/'enemy' binary unravels, and the plot collapses into a more familiar narrative of 'us' and 'them,' in which Muslim characters are portrayed largely as antagonistic to American interests.

As I will argue, in its first season, the series succeeds in contextualising terrorism in both historical and socio-political terms. This focus on the roots of terrorism undermines the misconception – widely circulated during Bush's presidency – that "the more you love freedom, the more likely it is you'll be attacked" (Bush qtd. in Blum, *Rogue* 29). Yet, as *Homeland* continues, it becomes clear that attempts to *understand* terrorism become less important than portrayals of the potential harm that terrorism could have on the United States and its interests. Efforts to problematise the War on Terror itself are weakened by the series' somewhat insular narrative and, by depicting the United States as vulnerable to attack, the show actually contributes to the conception of the War on Terror as a necessity, therefore echoing both Bush and Obama's declarations to this effect. Unlike Shukri and Hamid's novels, the narrative scope of *Homeland* – while more ambitious than a programme like *24* – is linked inextricably to the perceived precarity of American life. As such, the show all too often characterises citizens of the United States as more valuable and more vulnerable than non-Americans.

Each chapter of my thesis not only discusses literary and filmic responses to different aspects of the War on Terror but also examines this war chronologically. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* provides a literary interpretation of 9/11 and the opening stages of Operation Enduring Freedom; *The Silent Minaret* critiques Operation Iraqi Freedom and links the invasion of Iraq, as well as the framing of its media representation, to a longer history of colonial control; *I See You* is focused closely on the relationship between Israel and Palestine after 2007, as well as the wider repercussions of the War on Terror such as the proliferation of private security companies and the governmental censure of journalists; and *Homeland* presents a fictive account of the global operations of the American Central Intelligence Agency in the application of foreign policy since the death of Osama bin Laden. Each chapter therefore serves as a critique of the chosen texts as well as a measure of the political and historical contexts out of which these texts have arisen.

As long as the War on Terror remains a normalised state of international affairs, there will be artists, authors, and creators who, in their own unique ways, will continue to interpret and reinterpret the effects that this conflict has had on both those waging it and those suffering it. Of course, for many populations around the world, the violence of the War on Terror is nothing new. The uncomfortable familiarity of violence in spaces of precarity is a central preoccupation of this thesis, and I hope that my work will act as a caution against the generic and simplistic category of 'post-9/11' in both a literary and historical sense. The notion of a 'post' is ill suited for a conception of the globalised forms of violence executed in the name of

the War on Terror. While America might find itself in a post-9/11 world, the conditions under which many Iraqis, Afghans, Pakistanis, and countless others live are at once eerily familiar and radically different. Sustained conditions of precarity – some as a direct result of America's response to 9/11, others related to semi-dormant conflicts that the War on Terror has reignited – make the category of 'post-9/11,' both in the political and literary sense, seem rather contrived. As such, I would advocate a movement away from the literary genre termed 'post-9/11,' and argue for a gravitation towards an understanding of fictional representations of the War on Terror as inextricable from the global history of which this war is a part.

Chapter 1: Fundamentalism, Finance, and Fractured Identities: Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist.*

Mohsin Hamid's 2007 novel, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, is an insightful literary interpretation of the effects of 9/11 on America, as well as a representation of the impact that the country's politico-military response to the attacks had on nations in the Islamic world and Muslims living in the United States. The novel's plot entails a conversation between the Pakistani narrator-protagonist, Changez Khan, and an unnamed, unvoiced American at a café in Lahore, Pakistan. Changez's exchange with the anonymous American takes the form of what Nath Aldalala'a calls a "confessional dramatic monologue," in which the former enlightens the latter about his past life in the United States (4). Having attended university, worked, and fallen in love in America, the narrator has returned to Pakistan in the aftermath of 9/11 and India's impending invasion of his home nation.

As well as assessing America's emotional, socio-political, and military response to the tragedy of 9/11, Hamid's novel also offers a judgement of the country's dominance of the global free market. The author characterises Changez, in the years prior to 9/11, as a profit-driven analyst at Underwood Samson & Company: a valuation firm based in New York. In essence, Underwood Samson calculates "how much businesses are worth," and advises their clients about where in their business models they should downsize in order to boost profits (Hamid, *Reluctant* 5). The firm's guiding principle: "*Focus on the fundamentals*," encourages employees to maintain a "single-minded attention to financial detail" when determining "an asset's value" (98, emphasis original).

During his time with Underwood Samson, Changez is encouraged to be unfeeling towards those individuals deemed to be surplus to certain companies' operational requirements. Like his mentor, Jim, he learns to be a "shark," of the financial world (Hamid, *Reluctant* 70). While the protagonist fails to recognise the morally questionable nature of his work prior to the attacks on the World Trade Centre, the onset of the War on Terror opens his eyes to America's "project of domination" (126). Once he finally realises that his occupation implicates him in his adopted nation's ability to wage war on a global scale, he rejects the "*fundamentals*" of Underwood Samson, and returns to Pakistan (98, emphasis original).

The use of the word "fundamentalist" in the title of Hamid's novel is itself provocative, as the term is often misunderstood. According to Mahmood Mamdani, one should question

those who equate "religious fundamentalism" with "'political terrorism'" (37). He goes on to say:

> 'Fundamentalism' as a religious phenomenon has to be distinguished from those political developments that are best described as political Christianity or political Islam. Religious 'fundamentalism' is akin to a *countercultural*, not a political movement. The problem with using the term 'fundamentalism' to describe all such movements is that it tends to equate movements forged in radically different historical and political contexts, and obscures their doctrinal differences, including the place of violence in religious doctrine. (37, emphasis original)

For Mamdani, the contemporary use of the term "fundamentalism" appears misleading, even dangerous in its homogeneity (37). Rather than perceiving "political movements that speak that language of religion" as examples of "Islamic fundamentalism," one should, he claims, understand them as manifestations of "political Islam" (37). Significantly, Mamdani also argues that religious fundamentalism is "not a throwback to a premodern culture but a response to an *enforced* secular modernity," whereas political Islam finds its roots in the "work of non-clerical political intellectuals" (39, 47, emphasis original). Despite their non-clerical stance on religion, these scholars, such as Muhammad Iqbal, argue that Islam itself is representative of a "political identity not in terms of a nation-state, but as a borderless cultural community" (Mamdani 53). For Iqbal, the Islamic community is ideological, political, religious, and above all, non-territorial; and he calls this community the *umma*.[1]

Changez is no doubt "the reluctant fundamentalist" of Hamid's novel and yet, according to the author in his recent book of essays, *Discontent and its Civilisations* (2015), there is "no real evidence that Changez is religious" (185). Hamid observes that his protagonist's beliefs "could quite plausibly be those of a secular humanist," adding that Changez "may well be an agnostic, or even an atheist" (*Discontent* 185).[2] If one assumes Mamdani's line of argument and claims that fundamentalism can only be discussed in relation to religion, then one should ask why it is that Hamid labels his protagonist a fundamentalist.

As a novelist, Hamid operates metaphorically, and teases out and takes advantage of the poetics of language itself. I therefore argue that his use of the word fundamentalist acts as a means of reorienting the scope through which one considers the concept of fundamentalism

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[1]For in-depth accounts of how the *umma* came to be thought of as a form of political, religious, and cultural Islamic nation, see Karen Armstrong, *Islam* (2007) and Reza Aslan, *No God but God* (2011).

[2] The Five Pillars of Islam, or *rukn*, for example, are not the "*fundamentals*" to which Changez adheres (Hamid, *Reluctant* 98, emphasis original). The Five Pillars are what every Muslim should strive to uphold, and they are: almsgiving; the *shahada*, or testimony; prayer five times daily; observing the Ramadan fast; and the pilgrimage, or *hajj*, to Mecca.

as a strictly religious practice. For example, his protagonist's occupation at Underwood Samson is linked intricately to a form of fundamentalism that is not religious but financial. In the months following 9/11, Changez discards the "*fundamentals*" to which he has adhered at Underwood Samson but does not, in the process, become religious (98, emphasis original). So if, in Mamdani's words, religious fundamentalism is a response to an "*enforced* secular modernity" (39, emphasis original), then could other forms of fundamentalism not also arise due to the presence of external pressures over which one has no control?

A series of uncontrollable events prompts Changez to leave the United States, and the protagonist claims that he feels unable to escape the "growing importance of *tribe*" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 117). Does his statement imply that, despite not being a practicing Muslim, he still envisages himself as part of the *umma*? Moreover, whether he does or does not consider himself a part of Islam's "borderless cultural community," what are the secular "*fundamentals*" to which Changez reluctantly adheres upon his permanent return to Pakistan (Mamdani 55; Hamid, *Reluctant* 98, emphasis original)?

In returning to Lahore, Changez reframes his priorities, and recognises that the insecurity of life in the Muslim world has been exacerbated by his contribution to the financial sector of the "American empire" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 152). The nonviolent "*fundamentals*" that he adopts are therefore premised on protecting his family – and other lives in Pakistan – from the power and might of American foreign policy (98, emphasis original). This is not to say that a concern for Pakistani nationalism is at the forefront of the protagonist's mind; as Joseph Darda argues, Changez, upon his return to Pakistan, "considers the lives of others first, as sustained by social and political conditions" (111). It is not, in other words, *because* Pakistan is an Islamic Republic that the protagonist returns to defend it. Instead, he returns because the nation's citizens – and those throughout the Muslim world – find themselves increasingly vulnerable to the actions of the United States in the aftermath of 9/11.

Rather than envisioning himself only as a member of the *umma*, Changez comes to understand that the recognition of how and why precarity enacts itself on fellow human beings represents the most important set of "*fundamentals*" to which one can adhere (98, emphasis original). In contrast to those advocated by Underwood Samson, the "*fundamentals*" towards which Changez gravitates after his experience in America value compassion over capital, goodness over greed, and humanity over hegemony (98, emphasis original). Furthermore, if concern for the whole of humanity lies at the core of his ideology, then it is easy to see why he challenges a nation which alleges to care about the fate of the globe yet feels "justified in bringing so many deaths to Afghanistan and Iraq" during the War on Terror (178). In fact, the

protagonist publicly denounces America's militaristic conduct in Afghanistan and Iraq, and his comments "appear to resonate" with the international media in Pakistan (182). Hamid never discloses whether Changez's nameless American interlocutor is in Lahore – perhaps in the capacity of a CIA officer or FBI agent – to investigate the protagonist's public and "intemperate remarks" about the United States' foreign policy (183). The tension between the narrator-protagonist and the possible American "emissary" will be discussed in the next section of this chapter, but first I will consider the manner in which Hamid positions his narrative in global terms, therefore underlining the ubiquitous financial, military, and political power of the contemporary United States (183).

By situating the overarching narrative in Lahore, Hamid's novel counters the conventional locale of American literary responses to 9/11 and, by emphasising the geopolitical relationship between the United States and Pakistan, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* inverts the "inward-looking" lens of much American 'post-9/11' fiction (Singh, "Insurgent Metaphors" 23). In other words, Hamid has produced a very specific type of response to 9/11 and the War on Terror: one shaped by both familiarity and anger with the United States. Leerom Medovoi claims that Hamid uses Changez's experience in America as the novel's "geopolitical *raison d' etre* and object of its rhetorical design rather than its general cultural ground," as the author focuses his literary lens on the *global* anxieties following the attacks of 9/11 (646, emphasis original). In the process of tracing the intercontinental influence of the War on Terror, Hamid "map[s] a world in which Pakistan orbits around the US in a *larger global system* of wealth, culture, and power," whilst simultaneously drawing the two nations into a mutually distrustful relationship with one another (Medovoi 645, emphasis added).

Changez's address to the American is comprised of recollections of his time spent in Pakistan, the Philippines, Chile, and America, implying that the novel could be interpreted as a "bi-national allegory about the relationship between the US and Pakistan, perhaps even the entire 'third-world'" (Medovoi 646). The inclusion of the spaces of Chile and the Philippines – which Changez visits as part of his work for Underwood Samson – allow Hamid to employ a subtle critique of the ever-expanding millennial capitalist project of the United States, and to demonstrate the ways in which "local experience is linked to global structures of dominance" (Singh, "Insurgent" 29). Notably, Pakistan, Chile, and the Philippines are all locations with a

history of American military intervention and influence.[3] The presence of American interests in all three of these nations is explored throughout the narrative of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, and is made even more explicit by the fact that the nameless American whom Changez is addressing is in Lahore on undisclosed business.

1.1 Mutually Assured Suspicion: The Narrative Framework of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

There are two narrative strands in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. Narrative A entails the interactions in the present between the unnamed American and Changez in Lahore and it encircles narrative B: the story Changez is recounting to the American. In this sense, the protagonist acts as what Abdul Baseer calls a "homodeigetic narrator," in that he is both narrating his story to the American and is a "character in the events recounted" (280). Hamid's finely-crafted chronicle explores the past life that Changez led in the United States while frequently refocusing the story in the present – the Old Anarkali District in Lahore – by making reference to the anonymous American in the second person: a technique that Irene Kacandes calls "narrative apostrophe" (329).

The dual focus in terms of narrative time means that Changez is addressing the stranger from a position and place changed profoundly by the American response to 9/11, and he has the benefit of hindsight when he recounts his initial infatuation, and subsequent disillusionment, with the United States. By making Changez the sole narrative voice in the conversation with the American "you," however, Hamid's novel refuses what Peter Morey calls the "normalising consolation of dialogue" (139). In abstaining from the use of conventional dialogue in narrative A, Hamid inverts the historically asymmetrical relationship between the United States and the Islamic world. The narrator-protagonist's monologue, then, could represent a "restructuring of contemporary political hierarchy [as] the Pakistani speaks and the American is silent" (Singh, "Insurgent" 26). This "restructuring," I suggest, is actually a *reversal* of political voices as, according to Jonathan Lyons, the "West's 'conversation' with

[3] The Philippines, Blum notes, "has long been the most strategic location for US war-making in Asia, the site of several large American military bases, which have been the object of numerous protests by the citizens" (*Rogue* 191). In the case of Chile, it was on September 11, 1973, that a CIA-backed coup overthrew the Marxist government of Salvador Allende, replacing him with General Augusto Pinochet. The tremors of Pinochet's totalitarian regime still haunt the nation today. See Lubna Qureshi's book, *Nixon, Kissinger, and Allende* (2009), for a detailed description of the American government's involvement in the overthrowing of Allende, as well as its overt support for Pinochet's military dictatorship.

Islam has always been a one-sided affair, essentially a dialogue with itself, revealing much about the subject but little or nothing about the object in question" (4).

Hamid silences the American addressee and, by constantly having the protagonist refer to the stranger in the second person, writes the reader into the novel as a "politicised character" (Aldalala'a 3). The author's use of "narrative apostrophe" therefore acts as a means of provoking the reader to respond *as* the American, even though this response "does not occur within the same communicative circuit as the literary message" (Kacandes 332). Given the narrative technique employed in the novel, I agree with Medovoi's assertion that Hamid's work is not "of or by, but rather *for* Americans," in that it attempts to enlighten the Americanised reader as to some of the detrimental effects that the country's actions have had on the globe (646, emphasis original). Not only has the War on Terror contributed to the globalised nature of war today, but it has also fomented the American public's mistrust of Muslims. This nervous sense of suspicion is written powerfully into the nameless American of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and, regardless of the fact that he has no narrative voice, his distrust of Changez, other Muslims in the vicinity, and perhaps even Pakistan itself, is palpable throughout narrative A.

Upon first noticing the American's discomfort, Changez attempts to allay the stranger's fears, asking him not be "frightened" by his "beard," for he is "a lover of America" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 1). The fact that the narrator feels the need to strike an equilibrium between having a traditional Muslim beard and his 'love' for the United States underlines America's historical suspicion of the Islamic world. Changez's reassurances, however, go unnoticed by the foreigner, whose presence remains shrouded in ambiguity.

In the final chapter of the novel, Changez tells the American that upon his permanent return to Lahore he began lecturing at an unnamed university. His new occupation allows him to teach his students about the duplicitous relationship between the United States and Pakistan, and he begins a political campaign premised on a diplomatic and military "disengagement" between the two countries (Hamid, *Reluctant* 178). The protagonist's acts of defiance against American interference in Pakistan, he claims, initially began as demonstrations demanding "greater independence in Pakistan's domestic and international affairs" (179). When the peaceful protests attracted more people, however, they "grew to newsworthy size," and the foreign press in Pakistan labelled the gatherings as "anti-American" (179). As an outspoken critic of the United States, Changez becomes a part of the "war-on-terror" montage, and is "plagued by paranoia" at the thought of being a person of interest to the CIA or FBI (182, 183). Despite his insistence that he is "no ally of killers; [but] simply a university lecturer," his stance

on American foreign policy could render him as a potential threat to the United States (181). Regardless of Changez's assertion that the American "should not imagine that we Pakistanis are all potential terrorists, just as we should not imagine that you Americans are all undercover assassins," his interlocutor's evident unease does not dissipate (183). So restless is the American that the protagonist even compares his behaviour to that of "an animal that has ventured too far from its lair and is now, in unfamiliar territory, uncertain whether it is predator or prey" (31).

This shared suspicion of one another is, at least partially, a result of 9/11 and the way in which the media has influenced American perceptions of the Islamic World and vice-versa. This fractious relationship has an extensive history, but has reached new levels of paranoia since 9/11. Aldalala'a argues that the tone Changez adopts when commenting on the American's apparent unease is a "mixture of an assumed naiveté with worldliness [which] echoes the courtesies of diplomatic rhetoric underpinned with threats of aggression – the hallmarks of international relations" (3). By choosing a wary American as the addressee of Changez's monologue, as well as locating narrative A in Lahore, Hamid provides his reader with a literary example of the suspicion with which the unknown is treated by the United States' public and government, especially in the global political climate after 9/11.

Upon noticing a scar on Changez's forearm, the American's expression is described as taking on a "certain seriousness," and the narrator enquires whether he is "wondering what sort of training camp" could have inflicted this injury (Hamid, *Reluctant* 46). The ominous reference to training camps – synonymous with the Taliban, al-Qaeda, the Islamic State, and many other 'terrorist' organisations –intensifies the distrustful undertones of the meeting between the two characters in narrative A. This potential hostility is heightened by the narrator-protagonist's descriptions of the American's body language and "bearing," and he even claims to see what he believes to be the outline of an "armpit holster" in the stranger's jacket (2, 139). Whether or not the object in question is indeed a weapon adds to the ambiguity of the American's purpose in Lahore, and signals that, even if violence were nothing more than a prospect, Changez, as a Pakistani, would be in the seat of power. If physical conflict is an eventuality, however, Hamid seems to imply that the American will instigate it, as the stranger perhaps believes the protagonist to be what Mamdani – drawing derisively on George W. Bush's essentialist statements about Islam in the aftermath of 9/11 – calls a 'bad' Muslim.

1.2 'Good' Muslim, 'Bad' Muslim: Changez's Impossible Desire for Singularity

Mamdani contends that American views of Muslims tend to fall into one of two distinct camps: 'good' Muslims, or 'bad' Muslims. The former, he argues, are perceived as "modern, secular, and Westernized," whereas the latter are seen as "doctrinal, antimodern, and virulent" (24). After the attacks on the World Trade Centre, President George W. Bush implored the American public to differentiate between "bad Muslims," who were responsible for acts of terrorism, and "good Muslims," who would assist America in their War on Terror (15). As well as reducing a complex, age-old religious identity to a mere adjective imposed by a people outside of the Islamic world itself, Mamdani suggests that this mode of discourse offered a far more sinister interpretation of Islam: "Unless proved to be 'good,' every Muslim was presumed to be 'bad.' All Muslims were now under obligation to prove their credentials by joining a war against the 'bad' Muslims" (15).

The 'good' Muslim – acting in the interests of the United States – can be thought of as what Derrida calls the useful friend, whereas the 'bad' Muslim – capable of horrific deeds of violence – represents the "declared" enemy (23, 61). A 'good' Muslim's "usefulness" to the United States therefore becomes the criteria by which s/he is judged (Derrida 23). It is precisely Changez's usefulness to American finance that frames him as a 'good' Muslim during his work for Underwood Samson, and his thoroughgoing assimilation is marked by his "sophisticated accent" and familiarity with American culture (Hamid, *Reluctant* 8).

One problem with dividing Muslims into the essentialist categories of 'good' and 'bad' is that it inscribes to those individuals a political identity without taking into account the fact these identities are forged across a spectrum of culturally diverse contexts. What Mamdani calls "Culture Talk," is often responsible for the twinning of cultural and political identities, and he proposes that the trouble with Culture Talk is that it "assumes that every culture has a tangible essence that defines it, and it then explains politics as a consequence of that essence" (18). This kind of essentialism is anathema to Mamdani, who notes that "cultural differences need not translate into political differences" (153). Culture Talk assumes that political identities are rigid and unchanging, and implies that these identities are intimately bound up with one's cultural experiences. If this line of reasoning goes unchallenged, then one risks perceiving cultures, as well as the identities they engender, as inflexible monoliths in the context of a continuously changing world. One should not, in other words, arrange for culture a neat frame into which it would not ever be able to fit, and the same is true of most forms of identification.

Stuart Hall, for example, argues that attempting to provide a "stable, unchanging" definition of identity (cultural or otherwise) is deeply problematic, as one's identity is "never complete, always in process and always constituted within, not outside, representation" (222). Modes of representation are therefore crucial to understanding the ways in which certain cultures are perceived and discursively disseminated.

The manner in which Changez is *represented* throughout *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* marks him as a unique character. That the protagonist experiences a shift in his priorities due to his experiences in the United States after 9/11 – as well as a modification of the manner in which he presents himself – echoes Hall's observation that "[f]ar from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, [identities] are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power" (225). Following 9/11, Changez alters his appearance by growing a traditional Islamic beard, which, arguably, represents his longing for a cultural signifier of his nation's religion. His beard, however, is not symbolic of his devotion to Islam, but functions as a means of differentiating himself from the "army of clean-shaven youngsters" at Underwood Samson (Hamid, *Reluctant* 130). If, as Mamdani posits, culture should be thought of "in terms that are both historical and nonterritorial," then one could assume that by growing his beard, Changez is perhaps non-religiously aligning himself with the "borderless" *umma* (27). Considering that he is not religious but "still calls himself a Muslim," it seems important to ask *how* it is that he identifies with the global Islamic community (Hamid, *Discontent* 185).

As I have argued, the "*fundamentals*" that Changez adopts when he returns to Lahore are premised on the recognition of precarity and vulnerability (Hamid, *Reluctant* 98, emphasis added). His assumed secularism does not foreclose his comprehension of the damage that the War on Terror has had on Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, and the *umma* as a whole. Rather than identifying with Muslims on a religious basis, as one might assume a fundamentalist would, I claim that Changez comprehends what it *means* to be a Muslim after 9/11 – culturally misunderstood and precariously positioned. Considering, as Butler does, that "precarity cuts across identity categories as well as multicultural maps" (*Frames* 32), it could be argued that Changez feels it is his duty to protect the *umma* not because the populations who comprise this community are Muslim, but because they are often powerless to protect themselves. Of course, because the United States and the Muslim world appear to be ever more at odds with one another after the attacks on the Twin Towers, Changez's allegiances to the *umma* might signify him as a 'bad' Muslim through American eyes. The protagonist, however, is an example of just how fabricated is George Bush's binary.

Like Mamdani and Hall, Hamid is himself an advocate of "hybridity" as a means of understanding the fluidity of identity politics (*Discontent* xvii). He claims: "Hybrids do more than embody mixtures between groups. Hybrids reveal the boundaries between groups to be false" (*Discontent* xvii).[4] Despite similarities between the author and his protagonist, Hamid insists that Changez "feels the need to be one thing – just Pakistani or just a Muslim. [Whereas] I'm very comfortable as a hybridized mongrel" ("Wisdom").[5] If, as Hamid claims, "hybridity" should be embraced, why would he choose to write about a protagonist who desires singularity?

In the months following 9/11, Changez's need for "a stable *core*" is evident (Hamid, *Reluctant* 148, emphasis original). He feels torn between the United States and Pakistan, and his worries are only worsened by the fact that he does "not know where [he stands] on so many issues of consequence" (148). He even admits to the American that his sense of "identity was so fragile" during his final months in the United States (148). It is precisely because his fractured sense of self so troubles him that he desperately needs to consolidate himself. Attempting to do so, if one follows Hamid's argument, appears to be an almost impossible task and, upon his return to Lahore, Changez admits defeat in his battle for unification. He concedes: "it is impossible to reconstitute ourselves as the autonomous beings we previously imagined ourselves to be. Something of us is now outside, and something of the outside is now within us" (174).

As I will demonstrate, this "something" that Changez accrues during his time in the United States contributes less to his sense of cultural hybridity – as Mamdani, Hall, and Hamid would have it – than it does a form of *assimilation*. This is a position that, as Changez's experiences demonstrate, is demanded of him by mainstream white American culture but is also, paradoxically, made almost impossible for Muslims living in the United States to achieve, particularly in the political climate after 9/11. This is not to say that the protagonist is *not* a cultural hybrid, as his rejection of his position at Underwood Samson does not represent a refusal of America *per se* but rather an attempt to distance himself from the kind of person he *becomes* when working and living there. Once he fully recognises that his assimilation into the United States requires him to foment the already widespread precarity in the world, he instead chooses to identify with those for whom conditions of vulnerability have become routine.

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[4] Readers might find useful Amartya Sen's concept of identity in *Identity and Violence* (2007), in which the author reasons that, far from being rooted in an essentialised notion of oneself, one's identity is, in fact, an incremental process of discovery – shaped by one's social, cultural, familial, and geopolitical surroundings.

[5] Hamid has lived a "global life," in that he was born in Pakistan, but lived much of his life in the global and economic West ("Wisdom"). See *Discontent and its Civilisations* for a fuller picture of the kind of life that Hamid has lived.

Changez realises that he cannot, in good conscience, embody what it supposedly means to be a 'good' Muslim, and his turn towards Pakistan indicates an attempt to exorcise his Americanised self (Hamid, *Reluctant* 98, emphasis added).

The inclusion of Changez's struggle for unity thus acts as a twofold literary device. First, the protagonist's uncertainty represents the inner turmoil that presumably characterises life for many Muslims in America after 9/11, who, like himself, might feel that their loyalties are torn. Second, Hamid shows his reader that singular identities are neither possible nor desirable in the first place. Rather than attempting to distil the intricacy of the self, the author suggests that one should embrace its complexity, and acknowledge that "to be a human being and to be a hybrid being are the same thing" (*Discontent* xviii). Hamid's novel, therefore, is not simply a Pakistani or Muslim response to 9/11. Instead, it is framed by a specific *type* of position – one that has experienced 9/11 and its subsequent War on Terror from both the American and Pakistani perspectives. In other words, the novel is a response of a "mongrelised" identity – an identity that has tried but inevitably failed to singularise itself (Hamid, qtd. in Singh, "Deconstructing Terror" 149).

Changez, of course, is neither a 'good' nor a 'bad' *Muslim*, but the very fact that he opposes the United States' "constant interference in the affairs of others" is more than enough to raise American suspicions (Hamid, *Reluctant* 156). What makes the framing of him as a 'bad' Muslim – at least in the eyes of the nameless American of narrative A – all the more intriguing is that, prior to 9/11, and despite already fractured ties between the United States and the Islamic World, Changez hardly needs to prove himself as a 'good' Muslim. Maintaining this image of himself, however, requires constant vigilance.

1.3 A "Western-Educated Urbanite" or the "Dictator of an Islamic Republic"

As a result of appearing to be a 'good' Muslim – "modern, secular and Westernised" – Changez's initial integration into American society is relatively simple (Mamdani 24). He arrives in the United States with significant knowledge of the nation's cultural dimensions, and graduates from Princeton as a "western-educated urbanite" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 54). During his time at university, Changez's interactions with fellow Princetonians involve conversations about *Star Trek*, *Top Gun*, and other cultural products of the United States, and it bears mentioning that his "Anglicised accent" is nothing but a boon to his ostensibly seamless assimilation into American life (42).

Changez's comfort within elite American society is due to that fact that he comes from a family whose "home sits on an acre of land in [. . .] one of the most expensive districts in [Lahore]," but the narrator admits that the "rupee has declined steadily against the dollar," and that when the time came to send him to college, "the money simply wasn't there" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 9–10). The Khan family's affluence has dwindled through the generations but, as Changez reminds the American, "status, as in any traditional, class-conscious society, declines more slowly than wealth" (10). Changez's drive to succeed in America is influenced partially by his family's flagging financial position in Lahore and their "inability to purchase what [they] previously could" (11). In accepting a position at Ivy League universities, he notes that foreign students, upon graduation, were "expected to contribute [their] talents to [American] society" (4). By the time he leaves Princeton, Changez is ready and willing to fulfil his debt to the United States, and is on the verge of an exclusive internship with Underwood Samson in New York.

Despite being thought of as a 'good' Muslim by his American friends, the protagonist recalls a moment in which his loyalties come under scrutiny. Having been offered a position at Underwood Samson, he and his fellow Princetonians enjoy a summer holiday on the island of Rhodes, in Greece. Changez remembers a particularly tense moment from his vacation:

> We went out for dinner with the group [. . .]. And then [Chuck] went around the table and asked each of us to reveal our dream for what we would most like to be. When my turn came, I said I hoped one day to be the dictator of an Islamic republic with nuclear capability; the others appeared shocked and I was forced to explain that I had been joking. (29)

Through one innocuous comment, Changez very nearly becomes a 'bad' Muslim when viewed through American eyes. What this small but important incident in the novel suggests is that the distrust of Muslims appears to be a prominent view of the American elite well before the fall of the World Trade Centre. If his Princeton compatriots really are his friends then surely they would understand that Changez's attempt at humour is, in fact, a parody of the stereotypical 'bad' Muslim. By insisting that his comment is a joke, the protagonist is forced to restore the partially fractured perception of himself as a 'good' Muslim in the eyes of his fellow students. In the same way that the Muslim can easily transgress the fictitious line between 'good' and the 'bad,' Derrida argues that the 'friend' and the 'enemy' "intersect and ceaselessly change places" (72). What is significant about Changez's brief fluctuation between 'friend' and 'enemy,' in this instance, is how he is made aware that, despite his Ivy league education, his acceptance as an Americanised Muslim will never be final, and that he will need to remain

cautious about the way in which he presents himself so as to not be thought of as a 'bad' Muslim.

Notwithstanding his desire to fit in with his American counterparts, Changez also finds himself condemning their "self-righteousness" when dealing with local Greeks, and wonders "by what quirk of history [his] companions [. . .] were in a position to conduct themselves in the world as if they were its ruling class" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 21). He even admits to thinking of their behaviour as "so devoid of refinement" that they would have been regarded as "upstarts" in Pakistan (21). Thus, well before the event of 9/11, it appears that Changez has some deep misgivings about the sense of entitlement he finds characteristic of so many Americans. Although his distaste at his fellow students' behaviour is palpable during his time in Greece, the protagonist is not beyond assimilating into their selfish ways. On the contrary, the higher he climbs on the ladder of corporate success at Underwood Samson, the more obnoxious and arrogant he becomes. Given the "enormously powerful" position he holds at such an exclusive financial firm, his change in demeanour, while not excusable, is perhaps understandable (67).

One of the benefits of working for Underwood Samson, Changez recalls, was the fact that he could live in New York. The cosmopolitan nature of the city astonishes him, and he recalls that he was "in four and half years, never an American; [but] immediately a New Yorker" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 33). In the years before 9/11, New York represents a space of comfort for him, which is no doubt helped by the fact that "in a subway car, [his] skin would typically fall in the middle of the colour spectrum," and "[o]n street corners, tourists would ask [him] for directions" (33). The protagonist even feels comfortable wearing his "white kurta of delicately worked cotton" on his days off from work (48). Changez feels at "home" in the city, and his status as an Underwood Samson employee situates him in the very epicentre of the United States' financial prowess (32).

In its essence, the protagonist's occupation at Underwood Samson involves the firing of individuals who stand in the way of profit. He and his co-workers are required to calculate their clients' "potential for future growth," and are obliged to determine "how much fat [can] be cut" from a given company (Hamid, *Reluctant* 95). The "*fundamentals*" of Underwood Samson therefore disregard the human needs of a company's workforce in favour of financial accumulation (98, emphasis original). To this effect, Changez concedes: The "compassionate pangs I felt for soon-to-be redundant workers were not overwhelming in their frequency," and he remembers that the degree of commitment required by the job left him with "rather limited time for such *distractions*" (99, emphasis added). The protagonist's involvement in the

capitalist project of the United States means he is actually *encouraged* to ignore the human suffering that underpins his work. As a 'good' Muslim, Changez is required to benefit the American economy rather than trouble himself over the many faceless individuals whose lives he is "overturning" (152). The people whom Underwood Samson advises their clients to retrench are framed as auxiliary, and are seen as obstacles, rather than contributors, to what financial success means in the twenty-first century.

From his studies at Princeton to his employment at Underwood Samson, Changez grasps his "American dream" with both hands (Hamid, *Reluctant* 93). Rather than attempting to hide his "Pakistaniness," he actually enjoys the circumstances in which he finds that he must present himself as a 'good' Muslim in order to be thought of as a 'friend' to Underwood Samson (71). He recalls that being a Pakistani endeared him to his workplace associates: "I was aware of the advantage conferred upon me by my foreignness, and I tried to utilise it" (42). Changez, it appears, is in a unique position at Underwood Samson. Because he is seen as a 'good' Muslim, he is willing to assimilate into American society and promote its economic "*efficiency*" (39, emphasis original). He even imagines that he and his work colleagues, "[s]horn of hair and dressed in *battle fatigues*, would have been virtually indistinguishable" (38, emphasis added). This military metaphor characterises Changez as a soldier in America's economic army, and thus foreshadows his later realisation that his work at Underwood Samson helps facilitate the United States' military dominance over the globe. But, as long as his "*fundamentals*" are financial rather than religious or social, Changez will be read as a 'good' Muslim, and he finds himself at ease within the institutional culture of Underwood Samson (98, emphasis original).

So enamoured is he by his occupation that Changez admits to thinking of himself not "as a Pakistani, but as an Underwood Samson employee," and he concedes to the American that he had been seduced by the "professionalism that underpins your country's success in so many fields" (Hamid *Reluctant* 31, 37). Throughout his employment at Underwood Samson, he is not merely an average apprentice in the realm of corporate America, and he remembers that he "stood out from the pack," as he had "harnessed his desire to succeed" (40). In a matter of months, he becomes, thanks to his "tenacity," a crucial cog in Underwood Samson's financial machine (41).

Changez's steady assimilation into the world of American capital is most notable while he is evaluating cost-cutting options at a record label in Manila with a group of Underwood Samson employees. He remembers that when working in the Philippines he "attempted to act and speak [. . .] more like an American" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 65). He continues:

> The Filipinos we worked with seemed to look up to my American colleagues, accepting them almost instinctively as members of the officer class of global business – and I wanted my share of that respect as well. So I learned to tell executives my father's age, 'I need it *now*;' I learned to cut to the front of lines with an extraterritorial smile; and I learned to answer, when asked where I was from, that I was from New York. (65, emphasis original)

It should be clear that the protagonist's integration into the "officer class of global business" coincides with the steady erosion of the "respectful" behaviour that had once differentiated from his Princeton compatriots (Hamid, *Reluctant* 95, 25). Because he is in a position of control over others' livelihoods, Changez need not bother with simple matters of etiquette and, as he and his Underwood Samson team go about "shaping the future with little regard for the past," the protagonist's "personal efficacy" begins to grow (116). It is while he is working in the Philippines, however, that the September 11 attacks happen. This destructive incident sparks an irreversible rupture in Changez's sense of identification as a New Yorker.

1.4 The "Symbolism" of Atrocity: Changez's Visual Experience of September 11

Two interrelated events contextualise Changez's reaction to 9/11, and both make him question the purpose of his position in the corporate world and American society itself. He tells the American that, while sharing a limousine with a fellow Underwood Samson employee in Manila, he meets the eye of a Filipino jeepney driver,[6] whose "undisguised hostility" was evident in his gaze (Hamid, *Reluctant* 67). Changez recalls that he was shaken by this look, and assumed the Filipino "simply [did] not like Americans," once again identifying himself as a member of the United States' global economic elite (67). If, as the novel suggests, the protagonist is in the process of incorporating himself into capitalist America, then the following interaction between Changez and his Underwood Samson colleague in the limousine is the first example of his compulsion to singularise his sense of self. In other words, the glance that he shares with the Filipino foreshadows his desire to unify his points of identity following the attacks on the World Trade Centre.

As the protagonist glances towards his Underwood Samson associate, he admits that something "rather strange" took place (Hamid, *Reluctant* 67). He recalls:

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[6] Jeepneys are a popular form of transport in the Philippines. They are constructed from the remnants of old United States Military Jeeps left in the country after the Second World War.

> I looked at him – at his fair hair and light eyes and, most of all, his oblivious immersion in the minutiae of our work – and thought, you are so *foreign*. I felt in that moment much closer to the Filipino driver than to him; I felt I was play-acting when in reality I ought to be making my way home, like the people on the street outside.
>
> (67, emphasis original)

Changez's meditations on the stare between himself and the jeepney driver lead Changez to the conclusion that the two of them shared a "sort of Third World sensibility" – a glance of transnational identification in which his loyalties come under scrutiny (67). In identifying with the Filipino and estranging himself from his American colleague, the protagonist's adopted sense of self is revealed to him as just that: a mask of that he must wear in order to be thought of as a 'good' Muslim.

During the days leading up to the 9/11 attacks, Changez's identification with the Filipino plagues his thoughts. He recounts to his American interlocutor in Lahore that, although he was the only non-American in the group, he suspected that his "Pakistaniness was invisible" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 71). Despite his acknowledgment that he is "play-acting," his professional loyalty to the United States makes his response to the 9/11 attacks all the more enigmatic, and he cautions the American that his reaction was far from sympathetic (67).

Like so many people on September 11, 2001, Changez witnesses the attacks on the World Trade Centre through the medium of television. He remembers:

> I turned on the television and saw what at first I took to be a film. But as I continued to watch, I realized that it was not fiction but news. I stared as one – and then the other – of the twin towers of New York's World Trade Centre collapsed. And then, I *smiled*. Yes, despicable as it may sound, my initial reaction was to be remarkably pleased. (72, emphasis original)

Changez admits to feeling a "profound sense of perplexity" at his reaction to the attacks, and he implores the American to believe that he is not "indifferent to the suffering of others" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 73, 72). It is not the slaughter of innocent civilians that triggers his smile, but what the enormity of the footage represents. Changez recalls that he became "caught up in the symbolism of it all" because "someone had so visibly brought America to her knees" (72). The visual frame imposed around the symbolic collapse of the Twin Towers holds Changez in its gaze, and his unusual response to the scenes of destruction raises an important point about the narrative perspective of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. In having Changez respond to the

attacks with a smile, Hamid resists "an *a priori* condemnation of 9/11" because he realises that the attacks themselves may not have been universally condemned (Singh, "Insurgent" 28).

By having Changez react in a manner that undermines what one could assume to be the conventional American response to 9/11, Hamid complicates the notion of allegiance. For, if one considers the position in which Changez finds himself in the United States then his response is curious indeed. Al Qaeda, after all, struck at the very heart of America's economy, destroying the World *Trade* Centre and creating a spectacle designed to "mobilise mass fear" (Mitchell 162).[7] As a self-confessed New Yorker, as well a powerful component of America's global financial reach, Changez is implicated as a symbolic victim of the attacks. His reaction to the destruction of these vivid icons of America's economic supremacy seems to frame him as a 'bad' Muslim, at least from the perspective of the American in narrative A. This negative perception of him is intensified in narrative B when he and his Underwood Samson colleagues leave the Philippines for New York several days after the attacks.

At the airport in Manila, Changez is "escorted by guards into a room" where he is strip-searched and questioned (Hamid, *Reluctant* 74). Following this degrading experience, he flies to New York "uncomfortable in [his] own face," aware that he is "under suspicion" as a result of his ethnicity (74). Singh argues that the clash of identities that Changez experiences when flying back to the United States is a result of his "dual identification" as both "victim and attacker," as he is confused about where and with whom his sympathy and his guilt should be situated ("Insurgent" 27). When he and his Underwood Samson associates land in New York, Changez is "dispatched for a secondary inspection," and is questioned about the "purpose" of his trip to the United States (Hamid, *Reluctant* 75). Despite his insistence that he "live[s]" in the United States, his clearly Muslim name and Pakistani passport are deemed sufficient reason for those at international borders to interrogate his reasons for being in America (75). What makes his temporary detainment all the more humiliating is the fact that he has willingly offered himself up to the forces of corporate America and, not for the last time, is in some sense betrayed by the nation he might have called home.

After the 9/11 attacks, any "advantage" that his "Pakistaniness" conferred upon Changez during his work at Underwood Samson is obsolete, and his ethnicity becomes the primary way in which he is perceived (Hamid, *Reluctant* 42, 71). From his identification with

[7] The 9/11 attacks attempted to destroy symbols of America's economic, military, and political dominance. Blum posits that al-Qaeda's deadly plan would have required two planes for the World Trade Centre, one for the Pentagon, and, he argues, that the plane which crashed in Pennsylvania may well have been on its way to the White House (Blum, *Rogue* xiv).

the jeepney driver in the Philippines to his reaction to 9/11, his desire for assimilation has begun to recede. Yet, despite the growing awareness of his visibility as a Pakistani, Changez continues to pursue the possibility of becoming a New Yorker. But the city in which he felt so comfortable prior to 9/11 is unrecognisable, and has become a site of national "mourning" (78).

1.5 Nostalgia, Self-Righteousness, and New York's New Character

Changez's "uncharitable – indeed, inhumane" – reaction to 9/11 continues to trouble him upon his arrival back in the United States (Hamid, *Reluctant* 79). In spite of his misgivings, he attempts to carry on with his life as he had known it prior to the attacks, and endeavours to make himself appear as a 'good' Muslim in a nation "gripped by a growing self-righteousness and rage" (94).

Mamdani observes that the American mass media's insistence on 9/11's "epochal significance" framed the event itself as something outside of a "historical or political context" (15). Changez alerts the anonymous American to the widespread historical amnesia he perceives in the media's reaction to 9/11, and sarcastically questions the legitimacy of his own story in order to emphasise this point. He says to his interlocutor: "surely it is the *gist* that matters; I am, after all, telling you a history, and in history, as I suspect you – as an American – will agree, it is the thrust of one's narrative that counts, not the accuracy of one's details" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 118, emphasis original). By sardonically questioning the substance of the American version of history, Changez is by no means justifying the attacks on the World Trade Centre. Rather, he is making the American aware that such destruction was not without precedent. He undermines the method by which 9/11 was framed by the American news media, and critiques the fact that it was perceived and depicted as a singular event rather than a catastrophic result of "the manner in which America conduct[s] itself in the world" (156).
While the ruins of the Twin Towers continue to "smoulder" upon his return to New York, Changez attempts to carry on with his life as it had been before 9/11 (Hamid, *Reluctant* 80). The city, however, has changed, and the protagonist observes the "deeply anxious" character of New York's inhabitants (82). His guilt for having smiled at an incident that brought so much suffering to his adopted home troubles him, and he remembers that the "photos, bouquets [and] words of condolence" around the city made him feel a "constant murmur of reproach" (79). "Other reproaches," Changez tells the American, "were far louder" (79). He continues:

> Your country's flag invaded New York after the attacks; it was everywhere. Small flags stuck on toothpicks featured in the shrines; stickers of flags adorned windshields and windows; large flags fluttered from buildings. They all seemed to proclaim: *We are America* – not New York, which in my opinion means something quite different – *the mightiest civilization the world has ever known; you have slighted us; beware our wrath.* Gazing up at the soaring towers of the city, I wondered what manner of host would sally forth from so grand a castle. (79, emphasis original)

The cosmopolitanism that had previously made Changez so comfortable in New York has been replaced by something that instils in the protagonist a great sense of unease: American patriotism. Arundhati Roy notes that the "blizzard of Made-in-China American flags" acted as a focal point around which the nation rallied following 9/11 ("Come"1). The country's public, shaken by the violence of the attacks, needed something pre-existing onto which they could affix their insecurities. Blum explains that "patriotism, like religion, meets people's need for something greater to which their individual lives can be anchored" (*America's* 307). The tangible surge in American patriotism unsettles Changez, and he sees the victimhood that the nation has inscribed upon itself as a "dangerous nostalgia" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 115).[8]

The protagonist's repeated references to this collective sense of American "nostalgia" echo Blum's conception of patriotism as a type of stabiliser, a yearning for a secure and familiar sense of nationhood. Changez even tells the American that he had "always thought of America as a nation that looked forward; [but] for the first time [he] was struck by its determination to look *back*" (Hamid, *Reluctant*, emphasis original 115). In his eyes, the American public seems to be suffering from a crisis of identity – as if they have lost both those who perished in the attacks and their sense of *place* in the world. Butler proposes that the sense of loss felt by Americans in the wake of 9/11 was both physical and ideological. She claims that it was the "loss of the prerogative, only and always, to be the one who transgresses the sovereign boundaries of other states, but never to be in the position of having one's own boundaries transgressed" which so debilitated the American public (*Precarious* 39). The uniqueness of the 9/11 attacks should therefore be understood as both a result of the horrifying spectacle that they provided and the fact that they occurred on American soil – in a country that always seemed to be in absolute control both of its own fate and the fate of other nations.

This longing for an unattainable and mythical past is also implied by Changez's complicated relationship with Erica, a native New Yorker. Hamid, I suggest, includes Erica in

[8] It seems to me that this "nostalgia" is also a yearning for the Cold War mentality of a definite figure of the 'enemy,' which was, by its very political nature, an oppositional subject to that of the free and democratic United States.

the novel as an allegorical representation – (Am)Erica – of his protagonist's initial fondness and subsequent disillusionment with the United States.[9]

1.6 Failing (Am)Erica and the Visible Pakistani

Upon first meeting Erica in Greece (while on holiday with his Princeton friends), Changez describes her as having an uncommon "magnetism" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 22). After the 9/11 attacks, however, Erica, like her nation, disappears into a "powerful nostalgia" (113). Even before 9/11 she is in a fragile emotional state, and is still mourning the death of her long-term boyfriend, Chris, who had died in the year 2000. Erica describes Chris, as indeed she does Changez, as having an "*Old World* appeal" (27). The allegorical connection between (Am)Erica and Chris(t/topher Columbus) is evident throughout *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, and I would posit that Erica's repeated references to her dead lover signify the religious and cultural origins of the modern United States. I would also and suggest that her eventual rejection of Changez highlights the threat that multiculturalism faces on American soil in the future.[10] Before he leaves for Manila, Changez and Erica are relatively close. He even meets her family and spends a considerable portion of his free time attempting, but ultimately failing, to woo her. In the same way that 9/11 catalyses Changez to question his position as a Pakistani in America, the attacks drive Erica into a deep and introverted search for meaning in her life without Chris. The protagonist's attempts at unifying his sense of identity in the wake of 9/11 are therefore metaphorically linked to Erica's longing for stability and unity in her life without Chris.

Changez recalls that the destruction of the World Trade Centre "churned up old thoughts [in Erica's mind] that had settled in the manner of sediment to the bottom of a pond," and he notes that "the waters of her mind were murky with what previously had been ignored" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 83). As Erica retreats further into herself, he wonders just how profoundly

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[9] I feel that now would be a good opportunity to note that Hamid's rather heavy-handed allegorical approach may not sit well with some readers, especially his personification of America as a rudderless and vulnerable young woman.

[10] America's current president, Donald Trump, best embodies the present and future threat to multiculturalism in the United States. Amongst the many inflammatory statements made during his electoral campaign, one of the more polemical was his December 2015 call for a "total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States" (qtd. in Jeremy Diamond). Muslims, in fact, have been a part of America's population for many centuries. This is due to the slave trade from West Africa as well as a large number of Moroccans who immigrated to the United States in the early seventeenth century. See Edward E. Curtis's book, *Muslims in America* (2009), and Jonathan Curiel's *Islam in America* (2015).

his relationship with both the nation and his lover will be affected following the attacks. Despite finding himself compromised and now having to *play* the 'good' Muslim far more consciously, he continues to pursue both Erica and his Underwood Samson career, albeit clad in his "armour of denial" (95). He registers the steady "crumbling of the world around [him] and the impending destruction of [his] personal American dream," but his determination to court Erica remains resolute (93).

After 9/11, the protagonist is not the only Muslim who feels out of place in New York. In the same way that he is subjected to rigorous examinations of his loyalties by those controlling international borders, Muslims within the United States, as a result of their multifaceted ethnicities and religious affiliations, are also being exposed to America's "historical myths of nation" (Aldalala'a 12). Changez tells the American that he ignored the rumours emanating from New York's Muslim community, thinking nothing of the fact that "Pakistani cabdrivers were being beaten to within an inch of their lives" or that "the FBI was raiding mosques, shops and even people's houses" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 94). He refuses to acknowledge that "Muslim men were disappearing, perhaps into shadowy detention centres for questioning or worse," and reasons that these claims are being "exaggerated" (94). In fact, so immersed is Changez in his Underwood Samson role that he believes "such things invariably happened, in America as in all countries, to the hapless poor, not to Princeton graduates earning eighty thousand dollars a year" (94–5). Islamophobia, as it happens, does affect the protagonist on a personal level, leading him to question his belief that he is nestled safely in the upper-echelons of American society. [11]

A few months after 9/11, Changez and several other Underwood Samson employees are evaluating a television cable company in New Jersey. On his way to the parking lot, a man he does not know confronts him. Changez remembers that the man "made a series of unintelligible noises [. . .] and pressed his face alarmingly close to [his own]" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 117). Fearing that the man might be drunk, Changez prepares to defend himself. The aggressive stranger is joined by another man, who diffuses the tense situation; taking his friend by the arm and telling him that it is "not worth it" (117). Having been discouraged by his acquaintance, the instigator settles for a verbal insult, and calls Changez a "'Fucking Arab'" (117). The anger that the protagonist has been suppressing up until this point is finally unleashed and, as the "blood throb[s]" in his temples, he retrieves the tire iron from the boot of

[11] Islamophobia is a complex term. Islam is not a race, but its detractors often frame the religion in ethnic and racial terminology. See Chris Allen's book, *Islamophobia* (2010), for a discussion of the limitations of this term.

his car and squares up to the first man, feeling "fully capable of wielding [the iron] with sufficient violence to shatter the bones of his skull" (118). After a tense moment, the two men depart, leaving Changez "unsteady" (118). Despite having has his fair share of fights on the soccer field during his time at Princeton, he recalls, "this encounter had an intensity that was for me unprecedented," adding that it was "some minutes" before he was able to drive home. (118).

Hamid asserts that Islamophobia "seeks to minimise the importance of the individual and maximise the importance of the group" (*Discontent* 183). In the mind of Changez's unnamed attacker, Arab Muslims were responsible for 9/11. The fact that Changez is a Pakistani, and most likely an ethnic Pashtun, does not matter to his assailant, as the protagonist's somatic Otherness ascribes to him the label of 'Muslim.' Regardless of his ethnicity and nationality, Changez, in the mind of his attacker, is complicit in the atrocity of 9/11.

In the same way that Hamid makes Changez's interlocutor a suspicious American in narrative A, the author includes the parking lot incident as a means of representing a manifestation of American distrust, perhaps even hatred, of any person who displays an ethnic affiliation to Islam in the aftermath of 9/11. It is clear that – just like his Princeton companions' inability to understand Changez's humorous attempt to depict himself as a future despot – distrust and ignorance of the Muslim Other go hand in hand. The protagonist's personal experience of Islamophobia angers him, but it is only once he visits his family back in Lahore that he begins to consider seriously the purpose of his being in New York. Prior to his visit, however, he pursues Erica relentlessly, despite her evident pining for Chris.

On an October evening in 2001, Changez and Erica are drinking champagne in the former's apartment. Erica removes her t-shirt to show him a bruise that she received at tae kwon do practice earlier in the day and, "without thinking," Changez kisses her lips, to which she neither "respond[s]" nor "resist[s]" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 88–9). As his advances increase in intensity, he notes that he "found it difficult to enter her; it was as though she was not aroused" (90). He continues: "She said nothing while I was inside her, but I could see her discomfort, and so I forced myself to stop" (90). This failed attempt at lovemaking is an awkward allegorical device. If Changez's actions are supposed to mimic al Qaeda's very literal penetration of America's airspace in the attacks of 9/11 then Hamid's rather heavy-handed metaphor aligns the protagonist indubitably with the figure of the 'terrorist.' Changez tells the American that Erica's "body had rejected [him]," hinting at the dismissal of Islam in favour of a kind of American exceptionalism (90). Erica's physical denial of anyone who is not Chris –

especially a Muslim – suggests that the way in which this exceptionalism manifests itself is as what Anna Hartnell calls an "isolationist streak that turns its gaze away from the rest of the world" (344).

Despite his rejection by Erica, Changez attempts to sleep with her again, telling the American that he "wanted to hold onto *us*" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 104). The "us" that he wants desperately not to lose is suggestive of both his sense of belonging in the United States, and his dysfunctional relationship with the nostalgia-ridden Erica. In the build up to his second sexual encounter with Erica, he asks her to "pretend" that he is Chris (105). He recalls: "I did not seem to be myself. It was as though we were under a spell, transported to a world where I was Chris and she was with Chris [. . .]. Her body denied mine no longer; I watched her shut eyes, and her shut eyes watched *him*" (105, emphasis original). Clearly, Changez is only recognisable as a lover to Erica by simulating Chris. In a desperate attempt to quite literally *integrate* himself into (Am)Erica, he undermines his own sense of self. He admits: "by taking on the persona of another, I had diminished myself in my own eyes," signalling the continual fracturing of his own identity (106).

Delphine Munos describes Changez's second sexual encounter with Erica as a moment of "un-being" for the protagonist, in which Erica's gaze "reflect[s] back to him only Chris" (403). By mimicking Chris, in other words, Changez is neither himself nor the person he hopes to emulate. The protagonist may be able to pretend, to pose briefly as Erica's dead lover, but he can never fully assimilate into the role that she desires him to fill.[12] Unsurprisingly, Changez describes the post-coital shame he feels as "confusing," as he comes to terms with what he must sacrifice in order to be with Erica. Furthermore, by participating in such an intimate moment with someone so vulnerable, he feels that he has "done Erica some terrible harm" (106).

As Erica's past remembrances draw her deeper into herself, America's "undeniably retro" outlook in the months after 9/11 puts Changez's sense of loyalty to his adopted nation in question (Hamid, *Reluctant* 115). He wonders whether the New York which he feels ought to be "viewed not in Technicolour but in grainy black and white" contains a "part written for someone like" him (115). This increasing uncertainty of his place in New York is matched by his failing relationship with Erica, and he admits that the love between her and Chris was a "religion which would not accept me as a convert" (114). Erica's rejection of Changez is

[12] For an in depth analysis of the symbolic relationship between Erica and Changez and its implications for a racialised reading of Hamid's novel, see Munos's article, "Possessed by Whiteness" (2012).

described deliberately in quasi-religious terms, as it coincides with the seemingly unstoppable cracks developing between the United States and the Islamic world. If Changez is to continue his attempts at courting Erica, then it is clear that he has to shed his 'Muslimness' in order to be recognisable as Chris(tian) – his "dead rival" (106). Regardless of the "*Old World*" similarities between the protagonist and Chris, as well as the former's representation of himself as a 'good' Muslim, Erica cannot accept Changez for who, or what, he is (emphasis original 27).[13]

Despite concerns over his "selfish" behaviour towards Erica, a more urgent matter usurps Changez's deliberations: the first military campaign of the War on Terror, Operation Enduring Freedom (Hamid, *Reluctant* 106). America's politico-military campaign in Afghanistan is a significant event that encourages Changez to distance himself from the "*fundamentals*" of Underwood Samson, and he struggles to reconcile his job in the United States with his growing awareness of the precarity that characterises life on his home continent (98, emphasis original).

1.7 Machines as "Heroes": The War on Terror through Changez's Eyes

The war in Afghanistan, which began on October 7, 2001, was a potent illustration of the lengths to which the American government would go in order to bring al Qaeda – and their Afghan Taliban hosts – to justice. President Bush encouraged his nation's public and armed services to occupy the moral high-ground in a war which would see the United States embark on a "self proclaimed mission to 'spread democracy' globally" (Mamdani 202).

Peter Morey notes that after 9/11 "one particularly persistent myth made itself felt: that of the nation as primary *guardian of life* and property, which would, when necessary, resort to violent measures to safeguard those things" (137, emphasis added). Owing to the fact that the United States felt that it was the gatekeeper of Western democracy, the war in Afghanistan was entrenched in the rhetoric of "humanitarian intervention" (Blum, *America's* 161). Judith Butler takes direct exception to the rhetorical premises on which Operation Enduring Freedom was built, and asserts that, while there are certainly cases in which military intervention is vital, it

[13] Between Changez's resignation from Underwood Samson and his departure from the United States, Erica's "dangerous nostalgia" has reached a climax, and she is admitted into a private clinic in the Hamptons (Hamid, *Reluctant* 93). When Changez attempts to visit her, however, he discovers that she has gone missing, presumed dead. Once again, Hamid uses Erica – and her disappearance – as a means of emphasising the slow but steady decay of Changez's American dream.

would "be a mistake to conflate such an intervention with a global mission" (*Frames* 37). She suggests that the form of "global responsibility" that the United States assumed after 9/11 has been nothing short of "irresponsible, if not openly contradictory" (37). For Changez, such contradictions are deeply personal, as the first phase of the War on Terror places his Pakistani family directly in the firing line of a "nation who cares" (Bush, qtd. in Blum, *America's* 108).

The protagonist recalls: "As I cavorted about with Erica; the mighty host I had expected of [America] was duly raised and dispatched – but homeward, towards my family in Pakistan" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 94). He remembers that the movement of American forces to Pakistan – in order to carry out operations in Afghanistan – did not initially worry him, and he reasoned that his family would be "just fine" (94). Within a matter of weeks, however, he begins to witness the true impact of the global War on Terror, and his naïveté is shattered. He observes the unfolding of the bombing campaign in Afghanistan on the local television news, but prefers "not to watch," telling the American that he found something profoundly distasteful in the "[p]artisan and sports-like coverage given to the mismatch between the American bombers with their twenty-first-century weaponry and the ill-equipped Afghan tribesmen below" (99). His attempts to avoid the media, Changez concedes, were not always successful: "On those rare occasions when I did find myself confronted by such programming – in a bar, say, or at the entrance to the cable company's offices – I was reminded of the film *Terminator*, but with the roles reversed so that the machines were cast as heroes" (99).

Hamid is at pains to point out the pervasiveness of these images of destruction, emphasising the fact that the live-feed of the war was available for the American public to indulge in on a daily basis, as one might with a fictional television programme. The campaign in Afghanistan perturbs Changez, as does its ease of access and commodification.[14] Recalling Roy's assertion that "there are only ways of seeing," then it is clear that the frame through which Operation Enduring Freedom was mandated appears exclusively American (1). In other words, the use of "embedded reporting" permitted the news media to focus specifically on one side of the conflict between America's highly advanced military and their rudimentarily armed Afghan counterparts (Butler, *Frames* 64).

According to Butler, throughout George W. Bush's tenure in the White House, there was "a concerted effort on the part of the state to regulate the visual field" (*Frames* 64). Not only does this mean that the portrayal of Operation Enduring Freedom was restricted to the perspective of the American government and military, but it also indicates the ability of those

[14] This is something on which the series *Homeland* has capitalised – as I shall explore in my third chapter.

control of the media to design a suitable narrative about, as well as a justification for, the war in Afghanistan. One could therefore argue, along with Butler, that if those lives claimed by American weaponry have no meaning *as lives*, then surely their destruction appears as nothing more than a spectacle that plays an auxiliary part in the grand narrative. This narrative, of course, is framed almost exclusively from the perspective of those American forces waging the war itself.

Changez relates his own smiling response to the collapse of the World Trade Centre to the pleasure that he suspects the American stranger must have felt while witnessing his country's retribution for 9/11. The protagonist rhetorically asks: "Surely you cannot be completely innocent of such feelings yourself. Do you feel no joy at the video clips – so prevalent these days – of American munitions laying waste to the structures of your enemies?" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 73). One should remember that the smile Changez adopts during the televised collapse of the Twin Towers stems from the "symbolism" of the atrocity itself (73). From the perspective of the nameless American, however, the United States' actions in Afghanistan might appear as justifiable. As Butler reminds us:

> If just or justified violence is enacted by states, and if unjustifiable violence is enacted by non-state actors or actors opposed to existing states, then we have a way of explaining why we react to certain forms of violence with horror and to other forms with a sense of acceptance, possibly even with righteousness and triumphalism.
>
> (*Frames* 49)

The air of triumphalism which saturates the United States during Operation Enduring Freedom begins to trouble Changez, and he finds himself overcome with resentment at the "the rhetoric emerging from [America] at that moment in history – not just from the government, but from the media and supposed critical journalists as well" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 167). He witnesses on television the behaviour of America's military on the battlefield, and the indiscriminate nature of their campaign leaves him with angry "embers glowing within" (100). The protagonist is astounded at how little value an Afghan life appears to have in the eyes of the United States military, and is taken aback at the asymmetrical nature of the conflict. Bombing and other forms of aerial warfare have been America's *modus operandi* since 1945, and the war in Afghanistan was no different.[15] It is no surprise that Changez describes the "machines [. . .] cast as heroes" in the eyes of the American public since, throughout Operation Enduring

[15] Blum goes so far as to claim that, since the Second World War, the United States only goes to war with a country if "it is virtually defenceless against aerial attack" (*Rogue* 34).

Freedom, drone operators were often awarded the "Distinguished Warfare Medal" as a formal recognition of their contribution to the War on Terror (Hamid, *Reluctant* 99; Darda 107).

Despite the fact that the Taliban and al Qaeda are non-state actors, they were hiding in Afghanistan, a state. And, as President Bush stressed: "If you harbour terrorists, you are terrorists" (qtd. in Blum, *Rogue* 106). Reasoning such as this conflates governments with rogue factions within their sovereign borders, and allows for only a thin margin of distinction between 'terrorists' and the civilians of the war-torn nation of Afghanistan. It is important, here, to remember Changez's experience in the cable company's parking lot, and how his aggressor's homogenous and hateful beliefs about Muslims potentially indicates how some soldiers in the American military might feel about the inhabitants of Afghanistan. Blum raises the crucial point that "out of the tens of thousands of people the United States and its NATO front have killed in Afghanistan, not one has been identified as having had anything to do with the events of September 11, 2001" (*America's* 79). While the validity of this statement is difficult to ascertain, it is a reminder of the frame's power to create and demarcate moral absolutes in the context of military conflict, and how it works to refute the heterogeneity of populations in order to configure them as two polarities: 'friends' or 'enemies.'

Despite Changez's indignation at the violence of which his adopted nation is capable, it is not until he watches American troops preparing for what the media describes as a "daring raid" on a Taliban stronghold that his anger reaches a climax (Hamid, *Reluctant* 100). He tells the American that, upon viewing the televised images of American infantry in Afghanistan, his ire swelled, and he remembers thinking: "Afghanistan was Pakistan's neighbour, our friend, and a fellow Muslim nation besides, and the sight of what I took to be the beginning of its invasion by your countrymen caused me to tremble with fury" (100).

Considering that he makes no claim to be religious himself, it is interesting that Changez points out that Afghanistan, like Pakistan, is a Muslim nation. If, as I have argued, it is not specifically the *umma* with whom Changez identifies, then why does he feel it is necessary to mention that Afghanistan shares the same state religion as Pakistan? The answer lies not in the fact that both countries have a common connection to Islam, but rather that those in the Muslim world represent a particularly precarious demographic following America's response to 9/11. As I posited earlier, the "*fundamentals*" to which Changez adheres following his permanent return to Lahore are based in empathy and a desire to protect the weak from the strong (98, emphasis added). The fact that Pakistan and Afghanistan share the same religion is therefore not what prompts Changez's anger at the latter's invasion. Rather, it is his encounter

– albeit mediated through the frame of his television – with the precarity of Afghan life that instils in him a sense of solidarity.

His growing concern for his family and the steady evaporation of his American dream drive Changez to visit Lahore. The city itself has become a key front for the War on Terror and is situated near the Jammu and Kashmir border – on which India's growing and hostile military forces are stationed (Hamid, *Reluctant* 127).[16] His confrontation with the daily risk and uncertainty of life in Pakistan marks another significant rupture in his belief in the "*fundamentals*" of corporate America, as he witnesses the vulnerable position in which the country's population finds itself (98, emphasis original).

1.8 Lahore: The Reverberations of America's War

Changez recalls the "Americanness" of his own gaze upon returning to Lahore (Hamid, *Reluctant* 124). The "lowliness" of his family's conditions remind him of where he comes from, and he feels both frustrated and humbled (Hamid, *Reluctant* 124). Upon spending more time with his family, he admits that it was not the run-down house which had changed in his absence, but rather himself. The lifestyle he leads in New York has affected him so profoundly that he concedes he was "looking about [. . .] with the eyes of a foreigner, and not just any foreigner, but that particular type of entitled and unsympathetic American" (124).

During his time as an Underwood Samson employee, Changez's frames of perception are informed purely by profit. His return home, however, signals a change in the manner in which he reads the world. He tells his interlocutor that, as he reacquainted himself with Lahore, he began to realise just how "myopic" are the "blinders" imposed around his perceptions by his ingression into the United States (Hamid, *Reluctant* 97, 93). This growing awareness about the limitations of his own interpretative frames prompts him to "exorcise the unwelcome sensibility by which [he] had become possessed" (124). Changez's sense of being "possessed" reminds the reader about the assimilative process through which he has had to go in order to prosper in the United States. If he is to be true to himself, he reasons, he must adopt a "different

[16] Often overlooked by the world's media, the Kashmir region has been the site of devastating violence ever since the British Empire's partition of India and Pakistan in 1947. Karen Armstrong observes that "[t]he brutal process of partition caused the displacement of over seven million people and the death of a million others who were attempting to flee from one state to another to join their co-religionists in the other" (*Fields* 279). Simply put, the majority of Kashmir's residents were Muslim, but the maharaja of the region was Hindu. Britain therefore allocated the land to the new Indian state (279). The 'line of control' drawn out by the British Empire is still the site of bloody disputes between the two nations.

way of *observing*" upon his return to America (124, emphasis original). Witnessing the aura of uncertainty permeating the lives of his family acts as a stark reminder to Changez of the conditions from which he hails, and his misgivings about his purpose in America are only fortified during his short stay in Pakistan.

Throughout his time in Lahore, Changez encounters the double standards of American foreign policy and, as India begins massing troops along the Kashmir border, it becomes clear to him that his adopted nation will not assist in defusing the animosity between Pakistan and its "much larger neighbour to the East" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 128). He recounts that over dinner one night his family agreed: "India would do all it could to harm us, and that despite the assistance we had given America in Afghanistan, America would not fight by our side" (127). The protagonist asks the American to imagine what it might be like "residing within commuting distance of a million or so hostile troops," but then suggests sarcastically that, for the American, it will be difficult to empathise as he comes from a country which has "not fought a war on its own soil in living memory" (127). Both America's action *and* inaction infuriate Changez and, as the threat of an invasion by India becomes an increasing possibility, he admits to feeling overcome by "weakness" and "vulnerability" (128). Wracked with guilt before flying back to the United States, he feels like a "traitor" and a "coward" for leaving his family at a time when they need him most (128). He questions his own motives for returning to America, and asks himself "what sort of man abandons his people in such circumstances" (128).

Upon his arrival back in New York, Changez's guilt slowly begins to ebb and, in a manner similar to way in which the American media soliloquises about the humanitarian deeds its military is performing in Afghanistan, he persuades himself that his work at Underwood Samson is an "endeavour that [will] be of ever-greater importance to humanity" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 97). But Changez's belief in capitalism's philanthropic properties is misguided. As Blum notes: "The more you care about others, the more you're at a disadvantage competing in the capitalist system" (*America's* 257). Changez's complicity in America's ability to wage its War on Terror is not yet fully apparent to him. This realisation occurs only once he is in Chile – in his capacity as an Underwood Samson employee – and it materialises thanks to a man by the name of Juan-Batista, whose influence on the protagonist's divided loyalties will be discussed in the following section.

1.9 "How I *Left* America": Changez the (Ex) Janissary

While visiting his family, Changez decides to grow a beard. Despite his mother's protestations, he refuses to shave prior to his return to New York. As he tells the American, he decides to keep it as "a form of protest," and as a "symbol of [his] identity" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 130). For Changez, the beard acts as a reminder of "the reality [he] had just left behind" in Lahore, and it denotes his growing disillusionment with Underwood Samson and corporate America (130).

Given the "cosmopolitan" nature of New York, Changez does not expect what he regards as the "physical insignificance" of his beard to cause him problems (Hamid, *Reluctant* 130). The protagonist, however, has underestimated the American public's capacity for lashing out at a signifier of its ostensible enemy. When travelling on the subway he is "subjected to verbal abuse by complete strangers" and, even at Underwood Samson, he becomes the "subject of whispers and stares" (130). Changez's presentation of himself therefore ruptures the reading of him as a 'good' Muslim and, because of his ethnicity and nationality, his beard imposes a politically charged frame of recognition around his external appearance. His adoption of a visible symbol of the 'bad' Muslim unnerves some of New York's inhabitants and, in the face of such prejudice, Changez begins to court their rejection actively: "I would find myself walking the streets, flaunting my beard as provocation, craving conflict with anyone foolhardy enough to antagonise me" (167). Despite his non-religious beliefs, the reactions he receives in public lead him to assert him Muslim exterior as a defining feature – a clear contrast to the manner in which his "Pakistaniness" was "cloaked" before 9/11 (71). The "affronts" provided by the American media prompt Changez to invert his previous playing of the 'good' Muslim, and he desires to evoke fear in the citizens of New York by sharing an external cultural signifier with those who were responsible for 9/11 (130).

In spite of knowingly portraying himself as a 'bad' Muslim, Changez is still one of Underwood Samson's most valued employees, and is offered the opportunity of evaluating a book publisher in Valparaiso, Chile.[17] This journey is his final one as an employee of Underwood Samson, and a few well-chosen words from the chief of the publishing company, Juan-Bautista, act as the final nail in the coffin for his waning belief in the "*fundamentals*" of American finance (98, emphasis original).

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[17] Valparaiso, Changez tells the American, "had been in decline for over a century; once a great port fought over by rivals because of its status as the last stop for vessels making their way from the Pacific to the Atlantic, it had been bypassed and rendered peripheral by the Panama Canal" (144). By using Valparaiso as the site in which Changez undergoes his final refutation of Underwood Samson, Hamid offers the reader an example of a previously successful region which has been damaged by the effects of globalisation.

While flying from New York to Santiago, Changez admits that his "thoughts were caught up in the affairs of continents other than the one's below [him]" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 140). He is "moved" by the beauty of Valparaiso, but the picturesque town does little to remedy his troubled state (146). As both the war in Afghanistan and the India/Pakistan standoff intensify, his devotion to his work begins to fade. His non-committal attitude prompts his manager to request he "pull it together" (144), but the "*fundamentals*" of corporate success are becoming more insidious for Changez, and he continues to neglect his duties as he is "clearly on the threshold of great change" (98, 150). The "final catalyst" which concretises Changez's ideological alienation from Underwood Samson takes the form of an informal meeting with Juan-Bautista, who was, the protagonist believes, "gifted with remarkable powers of empathy and had observed [him] in a dilemma" (146).

Over a lunch of wine and sea bass, Juan-Bautista asks Changez if it troubles him to "make [his] living by disrupting the lives of others" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 151). The protagonist defends his company's position and practices, arguing that they do not make the ultimate decision in the hiring or firing of employees. Juan-Bautista nods in contemplation and asks him if he has "ever heard of the janissaries," to which Changez shakes his head (151). The publishing chief enlightens him: "They were Christian boys [. . .] captured by the Ottomans and trained to be soldiers in a Muslim army, at that time the greatest army in the world. They were ferocious and utterly loyal: they had fought to erase their own civilisations, so they had nothing else to turn to" (151). After a pause, Juan-Batista looks the protagonist in the eye and pointedly asks him "how old" he was when he went to America (151). On learning that he only arrived in the United States at the age of eighteen, Juan-Bautista responds: "Ah, much older [. . .] the janissaries were always taken in childhood. It would have been far more difficult to devote themselves to their adopted empire, you see, if they had memories that they could not forget" (151).

Juan-Batista's words plunge Changez into a "deep bout of introspection," and he spends the night "considering what [he] ha[s] become" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 152). His contemplations lead him to a disturbing realisation: "I was a modern-day janissary, a servant of the American empire at a time when it was invading a country with a kinship to mine and was perhaps even colluding to ensure that my own country faced the threat of war" (152). Because "finance [is] a primary means by which the American empire exercise[s] its power," Changez is implicated in spreading precarity throughout Afghanistan and Pakistan, and he remembers thinking: "*Thank you, Juan-Batista* [. . .], *for helping me to push back the veil behind which all this ha*[s] *been concealed*" (156, 157, emphasis original). His conversation with Juan-Batista assists in

cracking the narrow frame of his perspective, and he admits: "I was dazzled and rendered immobile by the sudden *broadening* arc of my vision" (145, emphasis added).

From this point onwards, Changez no longer perceives the world through the constrictive lens of capital, and can scarcely believe that he had "thrown [his] lot in with the men of Underwood Samson, with the officers of the empire" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 97, 152). The fracturing of the frames that governed his dedication to corporate success prompts him to recognise the vulnerability of life for those who are at the mercy of companies like Underwood Samson, and he realises that he is actually "predisposed to feel compassion for those, like Juan-Batista, whose lives the empire thought nothing of overturning for its own gain" (152). As he comprehends the damage that his line of work has wrought on individuals such as Juan-Batista – as well as many faceless and nameless others – he resolves to leave Underwood Samson and the United States behind him.

The news of Changez's impending departure is hardly welcomed by his co-workers, and Jim, his boss, urges him to reconsider his decision. Changez's mind, however, is made up, and he believes that remaining in the United States would make him an "indentured servant whose right to remain was dependent upon the continued benevolence of [his] employer" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 157). In leaving the firm, the protagonist challenges the "benevolence" of Underwood Samson, and he uses the skills that the company taught him to observe the United States with what he calls "an ex-janissary's gaze" (157). Put simply, the "*focus on the fundamentals*" instilled in him by Underwood Samson becomes his formula for scrutinising the character of the United States, and he uses these analytical frames to "consider the *whole* of [American] society" after his departure (98, 157, emphases original). His observations on the childish egoism of the nation he might have called home lead him to a devastating conclusion – one that he has no qualms about sharing with the American stranger:

> As a society, you were unwilling to reflect upon the *shared pain* that united you with those who attacked you. You retreated into myths of your own difference, assumptions of your own superiority. And you acted out these beliefs on the stage of the world, so that the entire planet was rocked by the repercussions of your tantrums, not least my family, now facing war thousands of miles away. (168, emphasis added)

It is not that Changez does not understand the damage inflicted on America's sense of nationhood by 9/11, nor it is simply the fact that the War on Terror jeopardises his family. Rather, he is angered by the nation's inability to acknowledge that the attacks were simply another – albeit iconic and symbolic – example of violence which is routinely enacted around the globe. Keith Spence describes the American response to 9/11 as "direct and paradoxical: a

recognition of shared vulnerability accompanied by the pledge to eradicate it without remainder" (288). Hamid's protagonist has seen the damage of which the United States is capable, and he acknowledges that he has been a proponent of this damage through his contribution to America's financial power. It therefore comes as no surprise that he attempts to shed both the financial frames through which his Underwood Samson self perceives the world and the American sense of identity which characterises his experiences in the country. As Changez returns to Pakistan on a permanent basis, he acknowledges that his "inhabitation" of America did "not entirely cease," and confesses that he remains "emotionally entwined with Erica" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 172). Nevertheless, he maintains that he has made the "right decision" in coming home (172).

Despite the diffusion of animosities between India and Pakistan by the time Changez has settled in Lahore, the War on Terror is only just beginning, and the United States has Saddam Hussein's Iraq firmly in its crosshairs. Once the invasion of Iraq is underway, the protagonist resolves to do all he can to prevent the United States from inflicting further damage on both the *umma* and on all populations for whom precarity is normalised. What he witnesses from coverage of the war in the Levantine state appals him, and he once again berates America's approach to warfare:

> A common strand appeared to unite these conflicts, and that was the advancement of a small coterie's concept of American interests in the guise of the fight against terrorism, which was defined to refer only to the organised and politically motivated killing of civilians by killers *not* wearing the uniforms of soldiers. I recognised that if this was to be the single most important priority of our species, then the lives of those of us who lived in lands in which such killers also lived had no meaning except as collateral damage. (178, emphasis original)

The military campaign in Iraq spurs Changez's resistance against the same nation that brought him the televised "mismatch" of a war in Afghanistan (Hamid, *Reluctant* 99). His reference to the perceived disposability of Muslim lives also echoes his own past attitude toward the "soon-to-be redundant" third-world workers, whose personal lives and losses he had earlier seen as nothing more than "distractions" (99). Evidently, Changez has changed, whereas Hamid makes it seem implausible that the same could ever be said of the American military. The coverage of the Iraq War makes Changez realise that "no country inflicts death so readily upon the inhabitants of other countries, frightens so many people so far away, as America," and he tells his interlocutor that "America had to be stopped in the interests not only of the rest of humanity, but also your own" (182, 168).

Crucially, Changez is concerned about the fate of those living in the Muslim world as well as the impact that the violence of the War on Terror might have on the American public. Despite his open criticism of the conduct of the United States, Changez implores his interlocutor to believe that he is "not at war with America" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 73). He is, after all, "the product of an American university" who lived and worked in the country for nearly five years (73). In fact, he admits that, despite his "not insubstantial financial constraints," he still orders and reads the *Princeton Alumni Weekly* "cover to cover" (174). His newly adopted "*fundamentals*" require him to care about the fate of humanity as a whole and, in a growing atmosphere of global violence, Changez must surely consider the United States as part of humanity (98, emphasis original).

By labelling himself as an "ex-janissary," Changez seems to be implying that his intimate experiences of the actions of the United States, both domestically and abroad, make him better equipped to undermine their efforts to gain influence in his home country Hamid, *Reluctant* 157). In the same way that the "United States created, trained, and sustained an infrastructure of terror" during the Afghan War (Mamdani 234), Underwood Samson has, in a sense, trained and armed Changez in the "*fundamentals*" of the American system, and he uses his knowledge and experience to put the power he once served in question (Hamid, *Reluctant* 98, emphasis original). Unlike those of Osama bin Laden and the *mujahedeen*, however, the "*fundamentals*" to which Changez adheres on his return to Pakistan are avowedly pacifist (98, emphasis original). He becomes a thinker and a teacher. He does use his personal experience as a tool to teach his students about the problems caused by the United States but remains a firm believer in non-violence," asserting that "the spilling of blood is abhorrent" to him (Hamid, *Reluctant* 181).

Conceding that there are a small number of his students who have adopted violence as an act of protest, Changez nevertheless defends his group of "*well-wishers*," who are, for the most part, "bright, idealistic scholars possessed of both civility and ambition" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 181, emphasis original). The attempted assassination of an American aid worker, however, leads to the disappearance of one of the protagonist's students, and he assumes that the boy must have been "whisked away to a secret detention facility, no doubt, in some lawless limbo" (182). It is against this uneasy backdrop that the anonymous American arrives in Pakistan in narrative A, lending credence to the protagonist's concerns that he feels an "intermittent sense that [he is] being observed" (183). Whether or not the American's presence in Lahore is as a result of Changez's antagonistic stance towards the United States is never clarified but, as the protagonist escorts the stranger to his hotel, the latter reaches into his jacket

to retrieve an object that "glint[s] of metal" (184). Changez tells the American that he hopes the object in question is the "the holder of [his] business cards," but one should also consider that it could be firearm (184). The novel ends, then, as it began, on a note of potential violence that is neither manifested nor diffused, unlike the very real War on Terror which continues to this day.

1.10 Reluctant Fundamentalism as an Ethical Position

At its heart, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is a novel premised on coming to terms with one's allegiances in a confusing and destabilising world. The aftermath of 9/11 ruptures Changez's sense of self, and Hamid shows the reader that circumstances – no matter how concrete they may appear – are always subject to change. Changez's attempts at singularity in his points of identification inevitably fail, and he has to concede that he is not *just* a Pakistani, a Muslim, or a conduit for American financial dominance, but all of these things at different times in his life. The fact that he experiences a significant shift in what he considers to be his "*fundamentals*" emphasises the notion that anyone, no matter where they find themselves in the global order, can be forced to reconsider the frames through which they perceive the world (Hamid, *Reluctant* 98, emphasis original).

As well as the realisation that he has been complicit in America's ability to wage war, it is also the protagonist's awareness of the uncertainty that characterises life for those who occupy spaces of unimaginable precarity that drives him back to Pakistan. He seems to be a 'bad' Muslim from the American's perspective but, at the same time, he *cares* more, and is more self-reflexive and aware than during his time as a "janissary" for the United States (Hamid, *Reluctant* 151). Changez is only perceived as a 'bad' Muslim because of his rejection of, and anger at, the United States, yet the non-religious "*fundamentals*" to which he admits being "predisposed" are based in empathy, and force him to acknowledge that the powerful act with impunity upon the powerless (98, 152, emphasis original). In this sense, his humanitarian reasons for leaving America destabilise George W. Bush's binary of the 'good' and 'bad' Muslim. As an individual, Changez is neither a 'good' nor a 'bad' Muslim; neither a 'friend' nor an 'enemy.' He refutes these labels, whilst simultaneously serving as a reminder that essences and absolutes are worthless – even dangerous – in a world in which points of identification are in a constant state of flux.

Chapter 2: "The Age of Interruption": Cracking the Frames of Nation, Race, and Precarity in the Work of Ishtiyaq Shukri

> I've always felt that one eye was focussing on the subject in front of me while the other considers home. So I constantly have a sort of blurring of contexts whereby I imagine superimposing the international context I'm in onto the national context I'm from.
>
> (*I See You* 66)

It takes the onset of the War on Terror for Changez, the protagonist of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, to realise how precarity is differentially distributed by the United States and its allies, and he returns to Pakistan in an act of defiance against those who have the power to decide whether or not a life is "grievable" (Butler, *Frames* 14). For the protagonists of Ishtiyaq Shukri's novels, *The Silent Minaret* (2005) and *I See You* (2014), however, the recognition of precarity is a fundamental aspect of what it means to be human. As I will demonstrate, the South African author's inclusive narrative scope positions his characters in vulnerable and violent locations – both factual and fictional – in order to demonstrate the global reach of the War on Terror. Through the use of interruptive and unconventional novelistic techniques, he constantly shifts the spatial and temporal dimensions of his narratives, and the overall effect of this "blurring of contexts" results in encounters with precarity across numerous historical situations (*I See You* 66).

In *The Silent Minaret*, the reader is required to conduct an investigation into the disappearance of Issa Shamsuddin, a South African PhD student who mysteriously vanishes from London shortly after the 2003 invasion of Iraq. The only information the reader gathers about Issa is through his past interactions with other characters – in London and apartheid South Africa – as well as excerpts of his thesis, which concerns the historical settlement of the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC) at the Cape of Good Hope in the seventeenth century.[1] The motives behind Issa's disappearance are never made apparent in the novel, and Shukri leaves the reader to reach his/her own conclusion about the fate of his enigmatic protagonist. Perhaps he has been forcibly 'disappeared' by the British authorities, or maybe his vanishing is an act of his own volition. Regardless of the verdict one reaches, the unstated

[1] Issa is voiced in italics to emphasise his absence. When quoting him directly, I will not make use of the "emphasis added/original" convention.

causes of Issa's departure stand as a stark contrast to conditions under which Tariq, the South African photojournalist, who is the protagonist of *I See You*, goes missing.

As *I See You* progresses, the reader learns that Tariq is being forcibly detained in an unnamed "Somewhere." His predicament is a result of his attempts to expose the unsavoury connections that South Africa's ruling political party, the African National Congress (ANC), has fostered with a large private security company called ZARCorps.[2] Tariq's investigation into this corrupt relationship uncovers the "deep state" – a term I will qualify shortly – controlling South Africa's government, and he is punished harshly for his transgressions (Shukri, *I See You* vii). Before his capture, he travels the world in an attempt to photograph individuals and populations "made vulnerable by conflict and war" (52). As well as journeying to Afghanistan, Darfur, and Libya, Tariq spends a large portion of his time working in both the Occupied Palestinian Territories and the fictional African nation of Kasalia – the site of a catastrophic civil war.[3]

Judith Butler's concept of the frame is well suited to my discussion of both *The Silent Minaret* and *I See You*, for Shukri's protagonists each question the totalising operation of the frame itself. According to Butler, the ability to "call the frame into question" allows one to "show that the frame never quite contained the scene it was meant to limn" (*Frames* 9). In Issa's case, he reorients the frame of recorded history through the content of his PhD thesis, so that the reader might take into account lives, events, and perspectives that have "gone missing" in the European master narrative (Shukri, *Silent* 164). Although Tariq has a unique talent for photographing the "essence of a thing," his work does not surrender itself to the ontological function of the frame (*I See You* 181). Rather, his photography is an effort to "overcome the uninformed mind," and show the "essence" that he photographs to be vulnerability itself (135). I argue that, in questioning the frames that govern both historical and photographical conventions, Shukri's protagonists force their readers and viewers to recognise and be cognisant of the precarity that characterises the lives of subjects and populations who have been, and continue to be, perceived as "ungrievable" (Butler, *Frames* 24).

Before I begin my analysis of *The Silent Minaret* and *I See You*, I will demonstrate how Butler's notion of the frame complements my examination of Shukri's work. I will then define the concept of the deep state, and explain how this "invisible cabal of deep power"

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[2] It is worth postulating that Shukri has named the company ZARCorps so that it might sound similar to Armscor: a South African parastatal and weapons manufacturer.

[3] The author notes: "So many African countries, including South Africa, manifest the issues of Kasalia, it seemed to me prejudicial to name one – hence the fictional name of Kasalia, which is an amalgam of many African contexts" ("Ten Questions").

acts across space and time – dramatically reducing personal and political freedoms (Shukri, *I See You* 27).

2.1 Shukri's "Trans-Global" Frame and the Global Deep State

Rather than relying on a single narrator, as is the case in Hamid's novel, Shukri's narratives make use of diverse metatextual strategies. Aside from various character interactions, *The Silent Minaret* and *I See You* also contain excerpts from television shows, radio broadcasts, newspaper articles, emails, speeches, novels, interviews, and a doctoral thesis. By the author's own admission, his use of these narrative devices is a means of depicting what he terms the "age of interruption," in which one's attention and loyalties are subject to continuous competition ("Ten Questions"). Shukri reasons that, because "our lives are constantly crisscrossed by different narrative styles," novels with a single plot, a linear narrative and an all-knowing narrator" are inadequate reflections of the "chaotic and disordered" nature of the world ("Ten Questions").

Chaos and disorder are core features of Shukri's writing in both form and content and, for this reason, his narrative techniques work to problematise the ontological frame of the traditional novel itself. It is therefore unsurprising that *The Silent Minaret* and *I See You* refuse to be drawn into a simple 'uninterrupted' setting. Shukri situates his narratives in a variety of spaces, both past and present, and he draws on historical events and individual perspectives to tell his stories. For example, in "A Road Map into Our Past," a chapter in *The Silent Minaret* (91–104), the reader encounters excerpts from the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report*, as well as memories that other characters have of Issa. Throughout this chapter – indeed, throughout the novel as a whole – Shukri alternates between these contrasting modes of narrative expression to blur the boundaries between fact and fiction, and between history and the literary text. The reader is refused the opportunity to differentiate between the two worlds, and is thrust into a narrative in which South Africa's legacy of violence, characters' perceptions of the War on Terror, and the disappearance of Issa are bound intimately together.

Due to the amalgamation of history and fiction that Shukri employs, his work might potentially be read as an example of what Linda Hutcheon calls "historiographic metafiction" (4). This genre "works to situate itself within historical discourse without surrendering its autonomy as fiction" (Hutcheon 4). While the lens of "historiographic metafiction" is a useful means of engaging with Shukri's interweaving of history and fiction, the author's refusal to fit

his narratives into a single time and space means that it might be too prescriptive to draw his work into any single literary category. As Shukri himself asserts, his novels "collapse and blur the boundaries between past and present, so that everything happens at once," and the reader is offered only fragmented depictions of people and places. ("Ten Questions"). Thus, I will argue, his novels may be read in terms of their relationship with Butler's notion of the frame. Shukri's fiction consciously exploits the frame's capacity for "perpetual breakage," and presents an overlapping of distinct historical and geopolitical *situations* in which oppression and violence are commonplace (Butler, *Frames* 10).

Just like Tariq, from whom the epigraph of this chapter is borrowed, Shukri's positioning as a South African writer is fluid. Despite the author's nationality, the geopolitical perspective of his fiction is at once local and global. His work evades restriction by a national perspective, and he writes both as a South African and as a citizen of the world. In this sense, the author's work, according to Jane Poyner, displays a crucial tenet of postcolonial literature, in that it "embed[s] anxieties that profoundly tie the local to the global" (313). However, I would argue that the global outlook of Shukri's narratives makes the genres of 'post-colonialism,' 'post-apartheid' and 'post-9/11' inadequate descriptions of his fiction, as the author takes issue with these particular literary categories and notes that they appear to "organise the world around a single event and imply some kind of resolution, achievement or progress" ("Ten Questions"). For Shukri, the need for literary criticism to define and allocate specific genres seems "deceptive in [its] camouflaging of more complex realities" ("Ten Questions").

According to Ronit Frenkel, Shukri's narratives are saturated with a "transnational South African-produced consciousness" – a way of seeing that considers South Africa's historical and contemporary positioning in the global community ("Reconsidering 15"). To extend Frenkel's observation into the language of Shukri's work itself, I posit that his fiction communicates from a perspective that embodies the "trans-global." The term itself comes from *The Silent Minaret*, and is used by Kagiso – Issa's adopted brother – to describe the unconstrained degree of mobility afforded to an aeroplane at Heathrow International Airport (29). Kagiso explains the movement of the aeroplane as a "forwardbackward thrusting," signifying the aircraft's capability to penetrate the borders of any nation on the globe (29).

Unlike the genres of 'post-apartheid' and 'post-9/11,' the "trans-global" is more a mode of interacting with the world that it is a literary taxonomy. It is concerned not only with the literal crossing of geographical borders but with understanding seemingly disparate historical situations as interrelated and influenced by one another. The "trans-global" requires the reader

to adopt a sense of geopolitical and historical proprioception, and persuades one to recognise the connections between the individual and broader society. Unlike the structuring signifiers of nation, race, and religion – which have often been used to justify violence against those who fall outside of their narrow parameters – my reading of the "trans-global" is that it attempts to eliminate any frame whatsoever. Although it is – as a mode of observing – inseparable from frame itself, the "trans-global" is broad and inclusive, and is a way of reading humanity in its materiality. Like the aeroplane that Kagiso describes, it is an enabler of mobility – a form of historical, geographical, and literary nomadism. It requires the reader to move imaginatively through Shukri's texts, comparing in some detail one context to another, and thus observing patterns and similarities in conditions of precarity across the history of the globe. The "trans-global" is linked to a rejection of the "fabrication" of national identity, as well as the national history around which it is centred (Shukri, *Silent* 64), and ushers in a new and alternative means of recognising our shared humanity: statelessness.

In a stateless world, one has "no flag to wave, no anthem to echo, no eternal enemy against which to perpetually defend, no God-chosen nation for which to die in gory glory" (Shukri, *Silent* 222). Without the frame of nation to govern one's allegiances, one is able, like Tariq and Issa, to recognise that the local and global are intimately bound up with one another, and that precarity stretches beyond the borders of one's own country and out into the ongoing history of the world. Shukri's appeal to statelessness complements the "blurring of contexts" that characterises his fiction and, by drawing together supposedly unrelated situations, he makes the reader aware of the endurance of oppressive political power – regardless of its location (*I See You* 66).

Predominant examples of political discord that the author touches upon are the War on Terror; the ongoing struggle between Palestinians and the Israeli state; the historical establishment of a penal colony at the Cape of Good Hope; and the states of emergency during the 1980s in South Africa. In drawing together these different cases of dispossession and subjugation, Shukri depicts them not as isolated historical epochs but as ideologically refashioned manifestations of political authority and historical prejudice. Only once these situations are read in conjunction with one another might one understand how the "politically induced condition" of precarity has been, and continues to be, unevenly distributed by the historically powerful (Butler, *Frames* 25).

Although *The Silent Minaret* and *I See You* are attentive in their narratives to the authority of the nation-state, Shukri's second novel uses the model of contemporary South Africa to question the degree of power that elected governments have over the running of their

respective countries. In Shukri's estimation, what controls many ostensible democracies is not a visible and accountable government but a shadow state – a "deep state" (*I See You* vii).[4] This 'state,' according to Tariq's wife, Dr Leila Mashal, is the "deep force behind the 'elected' force, the deep power behind the elected power" (32). In a deep state, corporate governance is the status quo and, rather than serving and being accountable to the electorate, the government is manipulated by "private agents [who] are accountable only to shareholders" (30). A deep state does not concern itself with the welfare of a nation's citizens, and it uses "indiscriminate power" to concentrate on the "protection of its own [private] interests" (27). Although the "private force" that influences governmental bodies is something Shukri explores in relation to South Africa, he also characterises the deep state as an historical and transnational force (30). In doing so, he stresses that the ANC is "no nobler than governments the world over who have been left paralysed by the power of profit and held ransom by the profit of privatisation" (32). The deep state at work in South Africa is therefore not the *South African* deep state but the deep state as it has manifested itself *in* South Africa. This distinction is crucial, because it allows the reader to recognise that this form of indiscriminate power is a global phenomenon that, as Shukri seems to indicate, has existed at least since at least the VOC's regime at the Cape of Good Hope.

Both corporate conglomeration and reliance on force characterise the sinister inner workings of the global deep state, and Leila claims that the number of "privatised military and security expertise" in South Africa actually "exceed that of the state by five to one" (Shukri, *I See You* 29). It is significant that Shukri uses the example of a Private Military/Security Contractor (PMC) to emphasise the power and reach of the deep state as, throughout the War on Terror, the United States has often relied on PMCs to carry out operations which could also have been achieved by their military.[5] Much like the fictional ZARCorps, these corporations profit from violence, and are not restrained by governmental policies or the forms of transparency that these policies legally require.

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[4] The "deep state" is not Shukri's term, and is the name given by many journalists and academics to the powerful private interests that have infiltrated democratically elected governments the world over. In the prologue to *I See You*, Shukri quotes Sina Odugbemi, a senior communications official at the World Bank, to define the concept of the deep state (vii). See Peter Dale Scott, *The American Deep State* (2014), and Mike Lofgren, *The Deep State* (2016), for a contextualisation of how the deep state enacts itself in the United States, and how the American model has provided the blueprint for a type of global deep state.

[5] A fitting example of one of these PMCs is the notorious Blackwater – now Academi. This American-owned institution assisted the United States in the War on Terror, mostly in Iraq. For more information on Blackwater, see Peter Singer's book, *Corporate Warriors* (2003), and Jeremy Scahill's book, *Blackwater: The Rise of the World's Most Powerful Mercenary Army* (2007).

For Shukri, as it was for Ruth First, "'Power lies in the hands of those who control the means of violence'" (qtd. in *I See You* 32). So, while state-sanctioned violence is a prominent theme in both of Shukri's novels, the author also draws attention to the sinister forces that act through, above, and beyond governmental channels. Because it hides behind the guise of the nation-state, the deep state is, in effect, able to remove itself from the public frame – making itself all but invisible to those excluded from its inner workings – whilst simultaneously imposing itself through recognisable governmental outlets. Those who threaten to expose or disrupt the ominous alliance between private enterprise and civic society, as Tariq does, are framed as enemies to state interests, and are therefore at risk of being 'disappeared.'

The forced removal of individuals who oppose the deep state's power, Shukri wants the reader to acknowledge, is nothing new. In *The Silent Minaret*, Issa makes it clear that the practice of extrajudicial incarceration is well established, and has been honed throughout history due to its use by various powerful institutions. For example, he sees the VOC's punitive use of the Cape of Good Hope as an historical illustration of deep state activity. In his thesis, Issa claims that, in the latter part of the seventeenth-century, the VOC's

> Company directors decided to import slave labour – already illegal in the Netherlands – to the Cape; in a *global corporation* that was, in effect, 'a state outside the state,' the attainment of economic profit and the power to pursue it, unchecked, superseded any obligation to an already acknowledged and adopted ethical policy.
>
> (69, emphasis added)

An insatiable drive for the "attainment of economic profit" means that anything standing in the way of the deep state is either overlooked or is purposefully silenced. The VOC's power to ignore the illegality of the slave trade, as well as its ability to 'disappear' supposedly threatening individuals – such as Indonesian and Malaysian civilians opposed to the VOC's practices in their respective homelands – exemplifies the punitive and indiscriminate manner in which the deep state conducts itself. It is also crucial to note that the operation of a "state outside the state" is something that has not altered significantly since the VOC's rule at the Cape (Shukri, *Silent* 69). As I shall demonstrate, the infamous American military base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, is a location that Issa sees as being almost identical to the VOC's seventeenth-century penal colony. Frenkel remarks that Shukri uses the colonial history of the Cape "as a microcosm for the continued history of violence and domination that shapes our world" and, in the process, he links "colonial history, apartheid, and the present-day 'war on terror'" together ("Reconsidering" 14). To draw further parallels between the Cape colony and

Guantanamo Bay, it is also important to consider that both house predominantly Muslim prisoners. Moreover, both locations exist as colonies of sorts, therefore enabling them to operate outside the jurisdiction of the state.

Not only does Issa's thesis reveal the ideological influence that the unaccountable actions of the VOC have had on the contemporary state of global power relations, but he also argues that European historiography – supported by conquest and colonialism – is itself a means of removing some lives and populations from the frame of history. As a result, Issa's research aims to uncover knowledge about those who have been erased from recorded history so that his reader might come to understand that there are lives and voices deemed too insignificant to be included in the European master narrative.

2.2 Issa's Challenge to the Metanarrative

In his thesis, Issa attempts to combat the supposedly concrete status of what Kerwin Lee Klein calls the historical "metanarrative" (282). Klein describes this narrative as "[i]nstitutionalised, canonical, and legitimising," and he notes that it is in "a position of intellectual mastery" (282). The power of the metanarrative, he observes, stems from the fact that "it pretends to represent an external object and then pretends *not* to be a narrative" (282, emphasis original). To counter the dominant and totalising frame of the metanarrative, Klein also argues that there is another form of historical narrative: "local narrative," which is "told by the subaltern" and therefore "cannot easily be inserted into a master narrative" (282). In the same way that Butler suggests that the frame of the media interprets in advance whether or not a life may be considered "grievable," the frame of the historical metanarrative governs perceptions about the legitimacy of smaller histories (*Frames* 14). If one controls the recording of the metanarrative, then one is able to decide who – or what – may be included in its formation. Much like a novel, then, an historical narrative both includes and excludes for the sake of its agenda. In its occlusion of 'lesser' histories from its interpretative frame, the metanarrative allocates ontological labels to certain individuals or populations. History therefore represents a means of defining who, or what, is a 'friend' or an 'enemy.' It acts as a dividing line between 'us' and 'our' history, and 'them' and 'theirs.' For the protagonist of *The Silent Minaret*, this divide is deeply problematic.

From an early age, Issa wants to revise the scope of the metanarrative, and his nickname, "dreamer, schemer, history's cleaner," is well-earned (Shukri, *Silent* 26). His high school classmates give him the name after he argues that the role of the so-called Black Watch

proved to be the catalyst for a British victory during the Siege of Mafikeng, in May 1900 (26). The narrator, however, states, "[h]istory was not intended to capture this part of the story," and that "Baden-Powell went to great lengths to omit it from his report and from his diaries" (24). Issa's twelfth-grade teacher, Mr Thompson, dismisses the protagonist's challenge to the recorded narrative as "mere speculation by a new-age bunch of leftists at Wits" (26). The teacher frustrates Issa even more by declaring that "History cannot be re-written [. . .] History *is*, and at St Stephens, we accept only the thorough, rigorous and sanctioned historical version outlined in the syllabus" (26, emphasis original). Issa's disagreements with the authority of St Stephens's colonised curriculum do not pay off and, in his final examinations, he receives five A's and one solitary B – for History, of course.[6]

Mr Thompson's denigration of Issa's historical transgression is not surprising. In fact, Neelika Jayawardane points out that when an effort is made to bring to light forgotten histories and cultures, one is usually met with "boredom and indifference at best, or militant, state-sponsored aggression at worst" ("Disappearing Bodies" 55). Rather than making him despondent, Issa's examination results stimulate his sense of duty to record, and argue for, the lives that are permitted no space in the narrow confines of the dominant historical metanarrative.

One local narrative that Issa uncovers in his PhD research is the VOC's 1694 rendition of Sheik Yusuf (Tjoesoepp) – the "father of Islam in South Africa" – from his native Makassar, Indonesia, to the Cape (Shukri, *Silent* 71).[7] Yusuf, argues Issa, "represented a symbol of resistance to European colonialism" and was the "most influential" exile to the Cape (71, 72). He became a symbol for "Islamic resistance to colonialism and apartheid" and, Issa believes, assisted in framing Islam as "synonymous with the struggle against oppression" (72). Frenkel observes that the "'alternative' history of Islam" that Shukri employs in relation to South Africa is a form of "strategic historic revisionism" ("Local Transnationalisms" 124, 128). She continues: "Faced with the overwhelming demonization of Islam in the West, *The Silent Minaret* can be considered an attempt to associate Islam with the more positive as aspects of its history" (128). I agree with Frenkel's claims, and posit that Shukri's interventionist historiographic approach is precisely the venture of both he and his protagonist: to redraw – or reframe – smaller histories deemed to have no significance in a contemporary metanarrative.

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[6] Historians no longer dispute the role of the Black Watch in the Siege of Mafikeng. See, for example, Peter Warwick's chapter, "Mafikeng and Beyond," in *Black People and the South African War 1899–1902* (1983), 28–46.

[7] For an exemplary reading of how the figure of Sheikh Yusuf encapsulates the VOC's exploitation of the Indian Ocean, see Tina Steiner's article, "The Indian Ocean Travels of Sheikh Yusuf and Imam Ali Ali" (2012).

Bringing to light "whatever shards of [. . .] bastard truth" that the metanarrative has attempted to erase is at the forefront of *The Silent Minaret*'s thematic concerns, and the novel itself is interspersed with numerous examples of marginalised cultures that have fallen victim to the "literal whitewashing of history" (Shukri 64, 65). The author prompts the reader to raise a metaphorical glass in a "toast to all the folks that live in Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq, El Salvador [. . .] to all the folks living on the Pine Ridge reservation under the stone cold gaze of Mount Rushmore" (222–23). Both Shukri and his protagonist write histories of the forgotten, and seek to carve out a place in history for those whose stories have been subsumed by the master narrative.

If one acknowledges that both fiction and historical discourse are forms of narrative, then it might be worth considering that Issa's disappearance from *The Silent Minaret*'s frame implies the ease with which smaller histories can go missing from the metanarrative. Issa, however, is not utterly erased from history, and the reader is permitted to interact with the "shards" that he leaves behind (Shukri, *Silent* 64). In the same way that the protagonist attempts to uncover the smaller histories of the Black Watch and Sheikh Yusuf, the reader is encouraged to follow the traces of Issa that Shukri has intentionally included in *The Silent Minaret*. The protagonist is therefore both inside and outside the novel's narrative frame, and his missing voice claws at the borders that separate the local narrative of what the reader knows of his life from the metanarrative of the novel itself.

Not only does Issa question the limitations of historiography, but he also attempts to demonstrate how past acts of subjugation inform and influence present day forms of violence. "History [. . .] includes the present," Issa wants his reader to understand, and he emphasises that the capacity of the powerful to learn from historical techniques of domination is what allows them to remain in control of both individuals and the metanarrative itself (Shukri, *Silent* 63).[8] As the protagonist claims in the opening sentences of his thesis:

> The history of early European exploration and settlement at the Cape of Good Hope remains universally and eternally pertinent. The procedures of dispossession and domination implemented [t]here in the fifteenth century would be repeated around the globe for the rest of the millennium, and then again at the start of this new millennium. To declare these events over is the recourse of perpetrators, collaborators, benefactors, and perpetuators. (63)

[8] "History therefore includes the present" is a quotation taken from an essay by Erich Auerbach, titled, "Philology and Weltliteratur" (1969). The full quotation reads as follows: "History is the science of reality that affects us most immediately, stirs us most deeply and compels us most forcibly to a consciousness of ourselves. It is the only science in which human beings step before us in their totality. Under the rubric of history one is to understand not only the past, but the progression of events in general; history therefore includes the present" (4–5). This quotation is the epigraph to Issa's PhD thesis.

Just as Shukri's fiction eludes containment by a single geopolitical context, Issa ruptures the epochal frame that governs recorded history. The protagonist's emphasis on the bearing that historical forms of colonial violence have on the present links the VOC's exploitative actions to present day imbalances of political power, such as the War on Terror and the Israeli occupation of Palestine. Where some might see individual, decontextualised situations – uninfluenced by material realities entrenched by history – Issa sees the residue that unaccountable and indiscriminate forms of power instil in the present. I therefore claim that history, for Issa, represents what Achille Mbembe calls a process of intricate "*entanglement*" (*Postcolony* 16, emphasis original). Rather than perceiving historical acts of subjugation in isolation, the reader is encouraged to understand that they represent an "*interlocking* of presents, pasts and futures, [with] each age bearing, altering, and maintaining the previous one" (Mbembe, *Postcolony* 16, emphasis original). By problematising the divide between past and present, Issa, like Tariq in *I See You*, offers the reader a "blurring of contexts" (Shukri, *I See You* 66). This "blurring" seeks to acknowledge the ways in which South Africa's history of oppression is mirrored on a global scale in the twenty-first century.

Issa's thesis scrutinises both the "fallacy of race" and the "synthetic fabrication of [an] inviolate national identity" (Shukri, *Silent* 64). These two concepts, the protagonist stresses, were instrumental in the configuration of South Africa's historically racist policies as well as in the formation of many oppressive contemporary ideologies. Echoing Mbembe's concept of "*interlocking*" situations, David Theo Goldberg asserts that it is the ability of the racially-oppressive state to be "reproduced, extended, and sustained," which allows it to "exist over time" (253). When read in conjunction with Shukri's "blurring of contexts" (Shukri, *I See You* 66), Goldberg's claims highlight the eternal pertinence of South Africa's racially-established apartheid state, and suggest why and how current power structures continue to subjugate, even erase, individuals and histories deemed to be threats to a racially and/or nationally-configured metanarrative. Throughout *The Silent Minaret*, Shukri and his protagonist demonstrate that, in order to comprehend present-day forms of political violence, one should turn to seemingly lesser – yet undeniably vital – historical narratives.

Just like Shukri himself, Issa's frames of perception are both local and global. The protagonist is able to reach out across the void that the metanarrative has formed so that he might redraw the boundaries that separate 'our' history from 'theirs.' Accordingly, it is understanding the *similarities* between people, cultures, and histories which is crucial for Issa's conception of the

world, and his writing obliges one to realise that recorded history need not function in a divisive or absolutist manner.

2.3 "Trans-Cultural Exchange": Frances, Katinka, and Karim

If one understands that the operation of the frame determines how certain populations and individuals have been perceived (or not perceived) throughout history, then, as *The Silent Minaret* progresses, it becomes clear that Issa's refocusing of the frame is also a means of bringing to light *connections* across the gulf of history. Elements of his thesis, for example, examine the fifty years leading up to the first Dutch settlement at the Cape of Good Hope, as well as the VOC's reliance on the indigenous population in order to realise its colonial ambitions. Issa declares that he is interested in the

> Hybrid dynamic, the *complex trans-cultural exchange* and fusion that, though fragile and uneven, nevertheless formed an integral feature of the early settlement and ensured its development; the heterogeneous bartering, which, by the time of the disaster of 1948, had been almost entirely obliterated from memory.
>
> (64, emphasis added)

In the same way that Changez longs for the American public to acknowledge the "shared pain" which unites them with their 9/11 attackers (Hamid 168), Issa aims to convince the West of a *past* that it shares with those who have been historically subjugated by its various empires. Through Issa's interactions with other characters, the reader is presented with a protagonist who has stories to tell, lessons to teach, and frames to disturb. Unlike Changez, who yearns for singularity in his origins and points of identification, Issa "never resorts to identity politics" (Jayawardane, "Forget Maps" 13). In fact, all of the central characters in *The Silent Minaret* exemplify the connections across allegedly distinct cultures, classes, and religions, lending credence to Pallavi Rastogi's claim that the novel "demonstrates the impossibility of constructing absolutist identities" (21). For example, Issa's adopted brother, Kagiso, and his mother Gloria are black, but are offered sanctuary from the apartheid state by Issa's mother, Vasinthe. Katinka, a "left-handed nooi" from Ventersdorp and a friend to Issa and Kagiso, relocates to the Occupied Palestinian Territories to be with her lover, Karim (Shukri, *Silent* 107).

Exposing the "trans-cultural" similarities between seemingly diverse populations is not limited to Issa's work on his thesis, and the protagonist's understanding of history influences the lives of other characters (Shukri, *Silent* 64). The most notable of these characters is Frances, Issa's upstairs neighbour in London. As an Irish-Catholic living in the metropolitan heart of a former global empire, Frances is herself an embodiment of cultural hybridity. Issa – whose name is the Arabic word for "Jesus" – teaches her a great deal about the biases of recorded history, and she uses her newly found knowledge to interrogate the assumed cultural uniqueness of Britain and her Christian faith.

In the first chapter of *The Silent Minaret*, there is a conversation between Frances and her priest, Father Jerome, a Frenchman. Since Issa's vanishing, these regular conversations have become opportunities for Frances to scrutinise the way in which Christianity has endeavoured to distance itself from Islam in both history and practice, especially in the years after 9/11. Upon handing him a quotation from the Qur'an, which praises the historically Christian figure of Mary, Frances asks Father Jerome whether he knew that Mary was considered to be a prominent figure in Islam, and whether he finds it at all "peculiar [. . .] how one religion remembers things another doesn't" (Shukri, *Silent* 16). Father Jerome does not respond and, rather than engaging with her, his mind wanders to his next appointment: "Mrs Anderson on Stroud Green Road" (17). This is precisely the "boredom" or "resistance" with which revisionist accounts of history are usually met, according to Jayawardane ("Disappearing" 55). The priest's indifference does not deter Frances, and she tells him, "Christ's grandfather on earth [. . .] was called Imran" (17). While this revelation makes geographical sense – as Jesus of Nazareth was born in what was, and still is, historic Palestine – the clearly Arab name does not produce a response from Father Jerome, and he ignores these seemingly contentious bits of information in the same way that Mr Thompson, Issa's schoolteacher, refutes the historical validity of the Black Watch.

In overlooking Frances's claims, Father Jerome, a Christian, demonstrates an unshakeable belief in *his* particular version of history, as well as his unwillingness to engage in any counternarrative that might draw Christianity and Islam together. He therefore rejects the "trans-cultural" dimensions of his own religion and, by doing so, shows the reader that the frame enclosing his understanding of history is too narrow, too rigid, to be altered by Frances's discoveries (Shukri, *Silent* 64). His conception of Christianity, it seems, has been

"whitewashed" (65). To him, the religion appears as an exclusively European invention – free of Arabic connotations (65).[9]

Father Jerome's denial of the scriptural and geographical similarities between Islam and Christianity only makes the title of *The Silent Minaret* more appropriate. The minaret in question is attached to the Finsbury Park Mosque in London, across the road from Frances's apartment, and it stands "*silent, like* [a] *blacked out lighthouse*" (Shukri, *Silent* 76). The mosque itself has been "boarded up [. . .]. Shut down, like a shipyard, because of the threat it poses" (79). If one acknowledges that the abandoned mosque and its muted minaret represents what Dubrota Pucherova calls, the "speaking position of Muslims in post-9/11 Britain," then I would argue that Father Jerome and his stoic silence figures as the *listening position* of British Nationalists and Europeans towards Muslims, either at home or abroad (941). The fact that he is a Catholic immigrant from France and, therefore, an embodiment of Britain's own hybrid cultural make-up, does not influence the frame through which he perceives the precarious position of Muslims in Britain. Unlike the Irish Frances, Father Jerome is unable – or simply reluctant – to recognise the similarities between the historical persecution that his own religion suffered and the vulnerability of Muslims living in twenty-first century Britain. Put simply, he does not remember what it was like to be "at the bottom of the pile" and, for this reason, has no qualms with the literal silencing of Muslim places of worship – the removal of them from the frame of cultural and religious significance (Shukri, *Silent* 222).

Frances's desire to eliminate the binary of Islam and Christianity sets her apart from the figure of Father Jerome. As Paul Ricoeur, in *The Reality of the Historical Past* (1984), notes: "when curiosity takes over from sympathy, the foreigner becomes foreign" (20). By familiarising herself with the ostensible foreignness of Islam, and questioning the frame through which the religion is perceived in Europe, Frances opts for "sympathy." Jerome, however, adopts an ideology that fosters not even "curiosity," but ignorance. Thanks to Issa, Frances has come to realise that the *substance* of the two faiths is more alike than either religion would like to admit. That is to say, their Abrahamic roots, dedicated monotheisms, geographical histories, and reliance on scripture, are aligned uncannily.

[9] Father Jerome's inability to accept that Christianity is itself a religion of Mesopotamia, Arabia, and Assyria – founded by a Judean – is emblematic of European attempts to render Christianity unique to Europe. One need only look to the long history of anti-Semitism in Christian Europe to understand that Father Jerome's perspective is informed by an inability to acknowledge the connections between his religion, Islam, and Judaism. For more on the erasure of Jewish proponents in the Christian faith, see William Nicholls's, *Christian Anti-Semitism* (1993), Edward Flannery's *The Anguish of the Jews* (2004), and Karen Armstrong's *Fields of Blood* (2014).

During one of his visits to Frances's flat, Issa gives her a traditional Islamic *tasbeeh* (prayer beads), which a friend of his has brought back from a "pilgrimage" (Shukri, *Silent* 13). Issa would "*never use them*," but Frances treasures this gift, and keeps it in her "satinpouchcottonpocket" alongside her Catholic rosary (13, 15). When the time comes for her to pray, however, she notices that "the two strings of prayer beads always get tangled in [her] pouch [. . .] so that she has to peel the beads apart" (15). She admits that "her gnarled fingers struggle and, when the light is bad, she has to start with the cross to help her identify which of the *almost identical* beads belong to which string" (15, emphasis added). She imagines that the two objects create a "troseberry," a linguistic blending of the two words "tasbeeh" and "rosary," to create a kind of hybrid entity of devotion to both Christianity and Islam – a tribute to the religions' similarities (15).

One cannot help but think that this subtle interweaving of Islamic and Christian iconography is part of what Issa desires for Frances. He has opened her eyes to the undeniable connections that the two religions share and, by acknowledging the "foldedness" of the two faiths, she begins to question the singularity that the European metanarrative has ascribed to Christianity (Frenkel, "Reconsidering" 14). Significantly, Frances requires "the cross" to begin her unpeeling of the beads from one another (Shukri, *Silent* 15). She has quite literally started with the cross as a beacon of spiritual fulfilment in her life but as she slowly blends the two religions into one another – both symbolically and literally – she moves further away from her initial point of recognition. Issa's influence on Frances has allowed her to reorient the frame through which she perceives the world, therefore prompting her to rethink the historically erected binaries between 'them' and us.' He has awakened her conscience to the vulnerable political position in which Islam finds itself after 9/11, and she develops a keener understanding of the religion's inexorable links to her own comprehension of Christianity.

Frances's growing awareness of the parallels between Islam and Christianity coincides with the onset of the War on Terror. As the 2003 invasion of Iraq gets underway, she begins to lose hope that the two religions might ever see eye to eye. She is quick to chastise Britain's readiness for war, and complains to Issa that the public "don't know what war is really like [. . .]. They think it's all fireworks on TV" (Shukri, *Silent* 147). As someone who survived through the Second World War, Frances is well qualified to criticise "how quickly" Britons have forgotten the damage to both individuals and infrastructure wrought by previous wars (147). This is not to say that she actively chooses a 'side' in the conflict so often portrayed as being between East and West, but that she comes to recognise the precarity of the Iraqis and Afghans who are suffering the consequences of 9/11.

Another character who seeks to rework the binaries created by the metanarrative is Katinka du Plessis. She first meets Issa and Kagiso when the brothers are travelling down to Cape Town to celebrate the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990. Katinka had been hitchhiking down to the Cape until someone she describes as a "racist doos" kicked her out of his car (Shukri, *Silent* 106). Issa and Kagiso see Katinka standing on the roadside after this acrimonious exchange, and they offer her a lift. Once in the car, she explains that by journeying to the Cape for such an auspicious occasion, she has abandoned her familial ties. She states that her father's reaction to her departure was aggressive, racist, and final: "You are not my daughter any more. What do you think the people will say? How do you expect me to face them with a daughter who runs after a communist terrorist kaffir" (113). Katinka's decision to reject her Afrikaans family's entrenched belief in the apartheid system is similar to the way in which Frances abandons the comforts of her Christian faith to reach out across the void that the master narrative has fashioned. Unlike Issa's neighbour, however, Katinka does not require the protagonist – to quite the same extent – to reconfigure her framing of the world.

Like Issa, Katinka moves to London. While she is there, she meets Karim, a Palestinian from the West Bank who is seeking asylum in Britain. His appeal for asylum is rejected, and he returns home to his family in Qalqilia, where the West Bank Wall has "separate[ed] their house from their decimated olive-grove, their last remaining trickle of income" (Shukri, *Silent* 185). Rather than mourn the loss of her lover "behind The Wall," Katinka resolves to join Karim in Qalqilia (188). Her remarkable denunciation of her historically and racially allotted position in the world is another example of Shukri's ability to create what Frenkel calls "transnational solidarities" ("Reconsidering" 14). Moreover, one has to consider that Katinka's identification with the Palestinian cause is not reducible simply to her relationship with Karim. In fact, long before she journeys to the West Bank, she thinks of "Afrikaners and Arabs as brethren," as they are "the two tribes it is still acceptable to denigrate and berate" (Shukri, *Silent* 194). Katinka's capacity to recognise the "trans-global" dimensions of precarity is therefore informed by her own experiences in apartheid South Africa, her interactions with Issa, and her love for Karim (29). She is a character who embraces the concept of statelessness, and she *chooses* to occupy a place of precarity with her lover.

Before joining Karim in Palestine, Katinka submerges herself in the world she will soon call home by learning Arabic. As her familiarity with the language grows, the narrator notes her delight: "a veil is being lifted and slowly, a whole world – its symbols, its rules, its logic – is beginning to reveal itself to her, right here, in London. Where once she was blind, she can now do so much more than see. She can read" (Shukri, *Silent* 176). As an Afrikaner living in

London, her perceptual frames are already bifurcated and, by learning Arabic, she adds yet another layer to the manner in which she reads the world. She can think and speak in a language that brings her closer to Karim and his Palestinian family, and her growing awareness of a world previously hidden prompts her to question the legitimacy of national, racial, religious, and cultural signifier.

Katinka's increasing understanding of Arabic coincides with her learning more about the history of the Arab world itself. Her knowledge on the subject is apparent when, at a dinner party in London, a fellow guest declares that "the sum total of Arab contribution to modern culture [. . . is] zero" (Shukri, *Silent* 175). Katinka takes exception to this uninformed statement and tells her interlocutor that the survival of both Plato and Aristotle's work was the result of Arab scholars' translations being "kept safe in the libraries of Baghdad" – a stark contrast to Europeans who "deemed it best to *burn* the thoughts of their Greek forebears" (175, emphasis original). In one deft move, Katinka undoes both the ignorance of her colleague and the assumed scarcity of cultural similarities between the West and the Arab world. Like Issa and Frances, she disposes of the superficial labels of 'us' and 'them,' and her claims emphasise human beings' entangled historical relationship with one another – regardless of nation, race, or religion.

Through the experiences of Frances and Katinka, Shukri alerts the reader to the similarities, exemplified in both religion and knowledge, between Islam and Christianity – even between Britain, South Africa, and the Arab World. These small moments of intercultural connection become beacons of hope in *The Silent Minaret* but, as the invasion of Iraq takes centre-stage, the reader is reminded that, irrespective of how ardently one tries to bring to light histories that challenge or question the metanarrative, these narratives are all too often occluded from its frame.

As well as advocating for connections across disparate cultures and religions, *The Silent Minaret* – as previously mentioned – also fuses together different historical and geopolitical realities. Before I offer an interpretation of Issa's perspective of the Iraq War – and the power of those in control of the war's metanarrative – I feel it necessary to analyse a short chapter of *The Silent Minaret* in which Shukri's "blurring of contexts" is most apparent (*I See You* 66).

Midway through *The Silent Minaret*, in a chapter titled "Finsbury Park Mosque" (170–74), Shukri delicately interweaves two distinct moments from Issa's life. The chapter opens with Frances recalling to Kagiso how she and Issa had seen several police helicopters circling the mosque of the soon-to-be-silent minaret (in Finsbury Park), in the early hours of the January 20, 2003. As Francis and Issa watch, the latter recalls a similar scenario from his days as a

student at the University of the Western Cape, when South African riot police attempted to stymie student protests on "the first day of Ramadan" (171). The helicopters and the heavy police presence surrounding the mosque in London remind him of when "Hollywood Vietnam descend[ed] into view from over the Union building [of the university]" and how, instead of cowering under its imposing presence, he and a comrade ran into the university's buildings (171). Issa and his friend find safety in the building, but the same is not true for the men hiding in the mosque. Frances recalls that, during the raid on the mosque, "the police had shut down the whole area, more than a hundred, hundred and fifty of them [. . .]. And for what? A toy gun and a couple of gas canisters" (174). In her opinion, the actions of the British police made "more enemies" than they had caught, and she claims that the arrested "foreigners" posed little to no threat to the police (174).

For Frenkel, this particular chapter works to connect "different types of political repression," in that it "forms links between apartheid South Africa's attempted suppression of dissent and the precarious position of Muslims in the West post- 9/11" ("Reconsidering" 13). Frenkel's pertinent point about Shukri's emphasis on the similarities between forms of state violence echoes my assertion about the "trans-global" frame of the author's work, and also resonates with Tina Steiner's claim that *The Silent Minaret* "asks the reader to consider the politics of contemporary Britain as a continuation of the politics of the past" (*Silent* 29; "Pockets" 62). By writing these two states of emergency alongside one another, Shukri encourages the reader to rethink the geographical and temporal gulf between acts of government-sanctioned aggression. The author frames contemporary modes of containment and control as ideologically analogous with historical forms of subjugation, and he does so by connecting distinct situations in which supposedly "ungrievable" lives are subjected to oppressive and violent treatment (Butler, *Frames* 24).

Control and containment are also two notions that exemplify the function of the metanarrative. As I mentioned previously, in order for it to be read as the objective and totalising historical account of the past, the metanarrative necessarily occludes or destroys smaller histories. Nowhere is this destruction more evident than during the bombing of Baghdad, as viewed by Issa and Katinka in Café Baghdad, London.

2.4 Watching the War: The Destruction and Detention of the 'Enemy'

Operation Iraqi Freedom is depicted delicately in *The Silent Minaret* and, as is the case in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, the footage of the war is relayed to the reader from the protagonist's point of view as he observes these events on television. In Shukri's novel, the war is projected onto an "enormous screen [. . .] the size of a fucking Piccadilly Circus billboard" in Baghdad Café: a location popular with West London's Muslim population (Shukri, *Silent* 192–93). The screen, as is the case in Hamid's text, operates as the frame through which the actions of the Coalition of the Willing are viewed. It is therefore vital to remember Butler's assertion that the "critical instrumentalisation" of the camera during wartime becomes a means of documenting those populations caught in its gaze as "ungrievable" (*Frames* 10, 24). Moreover, if we recall Butler's claim that George W. Bush's regime attempted to "regulate the visual field," then it is clear that the frame employed by those filming the invasion of Baghdad informs the viewer that *what* is depicted on the screen denotes a target, while it neglects simultaneously to stipulate *who* those individuals really are (*Frames* 64).

In the same way as Changez recounts the "mismatch" between the Afghani tribesmen and the United States military (Hamid, *Reluctant* 99), Shukri's depiction of the bombing of Baghdad emphasises just how asymmetrical the initial phases of the – predominantly aerial – invasion were.[10] The vulnerability of those Iraqis considered to be collateral damage is also recognised by Frances and Katinka and, while the older woman acknowledges that "war is no longer reciprocal," Katinka is the one who actually views the preliminary stages of the invasion with Issa (Shukri, *Silent* 147).

Katinka describes the night of March 20, 2003, to Kagiso. She remembers that Issa convinced her to join him at the café by sending her a text: "*Kids r dying here. Get u gat ova here asap*" (Shukri, *Silent* 192). Unbeknownst to her, it is the last time she will see the protagonist before his disappearance, and she duly makes her way to the café. She recalls:

> Issa wasn't in our usual seat, so I had to search among the dazed observers to find him. It was a strange feeling. The whole room was caught up in the screen – the shock and awe of the bombs, the explosions reverberating around the world, all the way here, into this room. It felt as though I was walking through a war, looking for my friend amongst the dazed and stunned. (192)

[10] Full footage of the "shock and awe" campaign is available on YouTube.com, courtesy of CNN.

The devastation inflicted on the Iraqi capital reaches out through the frame of the screen and holds its stunned audience in rapture. This willingness to watch is in stark contrast to Changez's response to Operation Enduring Freedom, which is characterised by his avoidance of television and other forms of media. Rather than shy away from the violent images, Issa and his café contemporaries are in a sense *living* the war itself. They are so "caught up in the screen" that the footage actively affects them, as if they were on the ground in the besieged city (Shukri, *Silent* 192). Shukri's emphasis on the immediacy of the Iraq invasion is an apt example of a "blurring of contexts," as he collapses the spatial and temporal boundaries that separate the individuals in the café from those in Baghdad. In the process, he turns Café Baghdad, even West London itself, into a warzone. The author's depiction of the invasion is more potent than the one that Hamid offers, as the war's audience quite simply *cannot* look away. They surrender themselves to the frame of the screen and, as the aerial annihilation continues long into the night, the libraries that Katinka pointedly references at the dinner party become some of the first infrastructural casualties in the ancient city (175–76).

Although the libraries and museums in Baghdad were not targeted deliberately, their partial destruction fractured the interwoven history of which both the United States and the Arab world are a part.[11] Ignorant of the fact that many items housed in those buildings contributed to the rise of the West, the allied-Coalition widened the gap between them and their 'enemies,' therefore making it easier to see the damage to Iraqi – yet also global – cultural knowledge as a form of collateral damage. Jayawardane goes so far as to posit that the destruction of shared cultural heritage "allow[s] one to fashion one's enemy into all that is not the 'self,' into the repository of barbarity: something one can justify destroying" ("Disappearing" 51).[12] The destruction of Iraqi infrastructure allowed the Coalition to alienate themselves from their Iraqi counterparts, and thus the bombing formed a corollary to the rhetoric employed by the American mass media during the build-up to Operation Iraqi Freedom.

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[11] See Patrick Martin's article, "The Sacking of Iraq's Museums," *World Socialist Website* (2003). Martin notes that, despite the fact that the Coalition knew the locations of the museums and libraries, bombs, missiles, and rockets still damaged some of these ancient buildings. To add insult to injury, many of the sites that were partially destroyed by the Coalition were looted and burned down by Iraqi arsonists and insurgents during the American occupation. See Nasser Al-Shawi's conference paper, "Burning Libraries in Baghdad" (2008) for details on the specific sites that were targeted during the initial phases of the occupation.

[12] This is something the Islamic State has attempted to do since its rise to prominence in June 2014. Its obliteration of various Shiite shrines, Christian churches, and Jewish iconography suggests the group's hatred for anything that represents the Other. In the Syrian city of Palmyra, for example, the Islamic State has destroyed or severely damaged all six UNESCO Heritage Sites in the region. For more information on the damage wrought to cultural heritage by the Islamic State, See George Richards's article, "The Future of Ancient Sites in the Middle East," *Al Jazeera* (2015).

Before the invasion of Iraq, George W. Bush and his administration made it clear that they believed Saddam Hussein to be leading a regime "that ha[d] something to hide from the civilized world" ("State"). In his now infamous "State of the Union Address" (2002) – in which Bush described Iran, North Korea and Iraq as an "axis of evil" – the American president accused the Iraqi leader both of sponsoring al-Qaeda and of harbouring weapons of mass destruction (WMD). When Bush declared that he would "not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us [presumably the United States and its allies] with the world's most destructive weapons," he deliberately ignored the fact that America is a nation in possession of one of the largest quantities of deadly weapons on the planet ("State").[13] Furthermore, in the minds of many Iraqis, it may well have been the United States, and its superior military arsenal, which represented the greatest threat to the existence of *their* state, indeed, to civilisation itself.

As the bombs rain down on Baghdad, Issa and Katinka "*see the view from underneath*," witnessing what it must be like to be under "*the descending heel of George and Tony's feet*" (Shukri, *Silent* 193). After growing weary of the "shock and awe" footage (Woodward 102), Katinka decides to leave the café. She offers Issa a lift but he declines, preferring to absorb the war a while longer. As she departs, Katinka looks at him and is concerned that, caught between his thesis and the footage of the war, Issa "found it impossible to drag himself from the present and into the past" (Shukri, *Silent* 67). His soon-to-be-abandoned thesis is a painful reminder to the protagonist of the enduring power of imperial violence, and he recalls admitting to his supervisor that a piece of work that "*started off as history now reads like current affairs*" (67). This disturbing realisation prompts him to leave but, as he stands, he is "detained by new footage on the screen – a horrendously maimed boy" – a victim of the Coalition's campaign (67).[14] The appalling image of the damage inflicted upon precarious Iraqi bodies is followed by Issa's encounter with the most significant reminder of the parallels between the VOC's methods of incarceration and those adopted by the United States during their War on Terror.

As the protagonist remains glued to the frame of the screen, he sees "blurred pictures [. . .] of heavily shackled men in orange overalls behind high security fences, their arms chained behind their backs to their feet" (Shukri, *Silent* 68). In this moment, "time buckled, history

[13] The United States and Russia possess ninety-three percent of the world's nuclear weapons. See Eleanor Ross's article, "The Nine Countries that Have Nuclear Weapons," *The Independent* (2016).

[14] The image that Issa sees is possibly the infamous photograph of Ali Ismail Abbas: a twelve-year-old Iraqi civilian on whose house two American Hellfire missiles landed. Abbas lost both of his arms and suffered third-degree burns over large areas of his body. Although the photographer remains unknown, a photograph of Abbas's injuries is available on *The Future of Freedom*'s website.

flipped and the 17th century became indistinguishable from the 21st" (67). The interlocking of the two eras is made more apparent to Issa by the fact that the prisoners' overalls are the same colour as the Dutch Royal Family, the House of Orange (Jayawardane, "Forget Maps" 8). Issa continues to watch as "history [rises] up from the open manuscript on his table and [comes] to hover between him and the images on the screen" (Shukri, *Silent* 68). He is reminded of Sheik Yusuf and the countless other Muslims who were removed, detained, and erased by the VOC.

The use of the Cape penal colony for Muslim dissenters of the past is, for Issa, remarkably similar to the United States' contemporary use of Guantanamo Bay. The American-administered military base has been the subject of much scrutiny yet, at the time of writing, remains open.[15] Many Guantanamo detainees have never received a trial and are not protected by the Geneva Conventions' guidelines as to how prisoners of war should be treated. 'Gitmo' (as it is colloquially called) can be understood as a colony of sorts; and the colony, according to Mbembe, "represents the site where sovereignty consists fundamentally in the exercise of *power outside the law*" ("Necropolitics" 162, emphasis added). With Mbembe's idea in mind, it is clear that from the VOC's illegal use of the Cape to the American government's questionable utilisation of Guantanamo Bay, the West's treatment of 'threatening' Muslim bodies has not substantially changed in the last 300 years.

As Issa pages through his manuscript, he looks up to the screen to see the "ancient city now [lying] decimated, smouldering," and decides to leave the café (Shukri, *Silent* 71). While making his way to the exit, he attempts to make eye contact with the waiter but receives no response, for the Iraqi immigrant, "staring at his ruined home town, does not notice the silent departure" (71).

In the depiction of one "violent night," Shukri alerts the reader to the devastation caused by Operation Iraqi Freedom, whilst simultaneously illustrating the almost identical modes of detainment used by the VOC and the United States (Shukri, *Silent* 72). Those prisoners who Issa sees on the café's television are framed as guilty until proven innocent. They are perceived to be threats to "freedom" – something that America is "honour bound to defend," at least according to a sign hanging on the fence at Guantanamo Bay (61). The irony of this notice should be evident, as it clearly implies freedom for some but not for others. It signifies that freedom is specific to those who are more "grievable," and therefore worthy of more protection, than those who are shackled up in the state-outside-a-state (Butler, *Frames* 14).

[15] See Daniel DePetris's opinion piece, "Why Obama's Plan to Close Guantanamo is All Talk," *Al Jazeera* (2016), as well as James Reinl's article, "Obama Readies for Showdown on Guantanamo Closure," *Al Jazeera* (2016).

Shukri's depiction of the bombing of Baghdad, as well as Issa's viewing of the first inmates to be received at Guantanamo Bay, makes the reader aware of the United States and its allies' double-pronged approach to safeguard themselves. On the one hand, there is the destruction of civilisational and cultural history that provides links between the West and the Islamic world; and on the other, there are documentary and visual frames – provided by forms of media – which furnish those Guantanamo inmates with the near-ontological status of 'terrorists.' During the War on Terror, then, the simultaneous *destruction* and *production* of documentary frames work together to produce a subject who is rendered unequivocally dangerous, and worthy of containment or worse.

2.5 Borders, Control, and "Islands of Interrogation"

Two months after 9/11, Issa returns to South Africa to attend his mother's inaugural lecture for her Emeritus Professorship. When he arrives back in London, however, Border Control Officers at Heathrow International Airport subject him to an interview. Despite his student visa, "*or perhaps because of it*," Issa's luggage is searched, and he is led into a "*small windowless room*" (Shukri, *Silent* 160). Having been in the room for over an hour, he begins to feel "*suspect*," and he writes in his journal, "*I am being observed. I am being described. I am being investigated*" (161). When he is eventually interviewed, he loses his patience. He takes exception to his interrogators' continuous documenting of his every word, and when asked what he is doing in Britain, he defends himself vehemently:

> *I need you to write this: PhD Yes, Big P, small h, stop. Then big D. Because that's what I am doing here. Now let me out of this fucking place before I start reciting my thesis for you to write in that fucking little book of yours. You might find it interesting. Bits of it have to do with islands of interrogation, a little like this one*. (161)

Issa's phrase, "*islands of interrogation*," is a clear reference to his academic work on the VOC's punitive use of the Cape, but it is important to note that the "island" on which the protagonist finds himself is Britain (Shukri, *Silent* 161). He is not on Robben Island or in Guantanamo Bay, but at the border of one of Europe's most culturally diverse cities. Despite the fact that he is permitted to live and study in the United Kingdom, the clearly Muslim name emblazoned in his South African passport renders Issa Shamsuddin a potential threat, at least in the eyes of those at Heathrow Border Control. The protagonist recognises that his interviewers are no more than, "*minion*[s]," who "*have no charge*" over him, and his frustration

with having to verify his otherwise uneventful story is understandable (161). Issa is not the first African Muslim subjected to unjust treatment at the hands of those guarding Britain's borders, and he is certainly not the last. As I will demonstrate shortly, Shukri himself is no stranger to the biased forms of immigration control in practice in the United Kingdom.

The difficulty of life for immigrants is something that Issa recognises throughout his time in London. He sees them, "*absent and preoccupied*" as they wander the streets (Shukri, *Silent* 121). They are the "*invisible*" and "*unwanted*" members of Britain's population, and are frequently reminded so (121). While sitting on "*Derek Lane's bench*" in the "*affluent heart*" of London, Issa observes them as they "*roam the city*" (121). He imagines them thinking: "*How could I have imagined that here, this, would be better* [. . .] *did I leave to live with mocking reflections? Waiting on tables with an apron cut from a graduate's hood; mending shoes* [. . .] *with the skilful hands of a surgeon*" (121). As a doctoral student, Issa is fortunate enough not to be in a position defined by as much precarity as one of "*Europe's untouchables*," but his experience at Heathrow makes him fully conscious of his outsider status (121).

After his release from the airport, Issa makes his way home to his flat. His contact with the security apparatus of Britain's borders has left him feeling "*sick*" and wanting to "*puke*" (Shukri, *Silent* 162). As he begins to stabilise, he turns over the pages of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, thinking to himself: "*Yes. It's me. I am Salahuddin*" (162). Salahuddin (or Saladin) is the name of one of Rushdie's protagonists who is severely beaten by British police, who believe him to be an illegal immigrant. Considering the predicament in which Issa finds himself at Heathrow, his identification with the protagonist of Rushdie's novel is hardly surprising. Just like the historical figure of Sheikh Yusuf, the fictional Issa and Salahuddin are thought of as potential security risks. Because of the visual frames through which they are perceived, all three are forced into the position of the 'enemy.' Their Otherness is a primary fact of their "*enforced*" circumstances (Mamdani 39, emphasis original).

It is notable that Hamid's portrayal of Changez's detentions in both Manila and New York are not as detailed as Shukri's depiction of Issa's experience at Heathrow. Hamid assumes that the specificities of Changez's detainment can be taken for granted, in that one should be familiar with the kinds of questions asked by the "petty sovereigns" of Border Control (Butler, *Precarious* 56). In contrast to Changez's incident, Issa's brief incarceration is highly detailed and explicit, and allows the reader to occupy the confined space with the protagonist. When compared to the experiences of many other individuals who have been on the receiving end of Border Control protocol, Issa gets off lightly, and is eventually permitted to re-enter the United Kingdom. Regrettably, the same cannot be said for his author.

It can be both immensely satisfying and deeply unsettling when life imitates art. On July 15, 2015, the award-winning author, Ishtiyaq Shukri, was deported from the United Kingdom, his home for the last 19 years. His wife is British. His home is in London. He has studied, lectured, and worked in the epicentre of this once-great empire for just under half of his life. In his first essay following his deportation, "Losing London," Shukri meticulously details the processes that led up to his humiliating exile. He recalls that he was detained for "nine hours and then deported, [his] residence stamp of nineteen years cancelled" ("Losing"). Having been outside the United Kingdom between 2012 and mid-2015 – during which time he journeyed to both South Africa and Yemen – the officers at Heathrow Border Control deemed it appropriate to erase the life that he had built in London with one deft motion of a stamp. His wife works for Oxfam in Yemen, the current site of a civil war between Shiite Houthi militias (backed by Iran), the former Sunni government (supported by Saudi Arabia), and al Qaeda operatives waging a low-intensity conflict.[16] Shukri believes the Yemeni entry and exit stamps on his passport played a considerable part in the Border Officials' decision to deport him.

In his essay, Shukri cites the significance of *names* in modes of ethnic and racial profiling practiced at the airports of Europe and America's major cities.[17] As I explained with regards to *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, it is both Changez's Pakistani passport (his alleged origins) and the name inscribed on this document that cause those manning international borders to second-guess the protagonist's intentions, especially in a world reeling from the 9/11 attacks. Similarly, in *The Silent Minaret*, the man next to Issa during his detention at Heathrow assures the protagonist that he and his fellow suspects all have "*such names*" (Shukri 160). Back in the real world, fiction appears to be coming to life, and Shukri concedes that had his name been "John Smith," he would more than likely have been permitted access back into the United Kingdom. Instead, his life in London was "cancelled on the spot" ("Losing").

As argued by Jayawardane, "passports not only record all movements across barriers, but also serve as permanent markers of individual origins, indelibly inking and advertising the body's trajectories for public view" ("Disappearing"55). These documents thus become tools of control to be exercised by the nation-state to whom one is supposedly beholden. To extend Jayawardane's argument in a direction that takes cognisance of the terms deployed by Butler,

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[16] For insight on the nature of the proxy war in Yemen, see Hakim Almasmari's article, "Yemen Conflict Devolves into Proxy War," *The Wall Street Journal* (2015).

[17] Racial profiling is a legitimate protocol of the American Transport Security Administration (TSA), and is endorsed by Barack Obama and his administration. See Brian Stone's article, "Why Racial Profiling at Airports Is Surrender to Terrorism," *The Huffington Post* (2014), as well as Charles Swift's article, "Barack Obama's Trumpesque Policies," *Al Jazeera* (2016).

as well as Derrida, I would suggest that the passport becomes a means of framing an individual subject as either belonging or not belonging; an insider or outsider; a 'friend' or an 'enemy.' Once again, the frame operates to create and sustain a specific ontology of the subject. Shukri's experience at Heathrow underlines how control is maintained over outsiders through the rigorous documentation of individuals by virtue of their citizenship, ethnicity, or religion. That one requires all manner of documents to cross over invisible, manmade borders seems, to the author, counterintuitive to the eternal human tradition of "migration" ("Losing").

One might assume that in the globalised landscape of the twenty-first century, movement across international borders would be untrammelled. Unfortunately, restrictions on freedom of movement have never been more stringent.[18] Mobility – like freedom itself – is afforded to some but not to others, and it appears that only those who are citizens of the world's most powerful states reserve the right to infiltrate international borders virtually at will. Because of his nationality, as well as the assumed political and cultural position that his Muslim name connotes, Ishtiyaq Shukri is understood as a potential threat to be managed and controlled – just like Issa, just like Sheikh Yusuf, and just like those orange-clad figures in the world's most notorious detention centre in Cuba.

The Silent Minaret's narrative closes at a location synonymous with restriction and control: the Wall in the Palestinian West Bank, where Katinka is preparing for her new life in Qalqilia with Karim. It should therefore come as no surprise that the "walled in" setting of the Occupied Palestinian Territories is where Shukri begins his second novel (*Silent* 186). The material conditions for those who occupy this politically fractured region have only worsened since the onset of the War on Terror and, by offering the reader a literary depiction of this embattled land, Shukri provides a glimpse into the "trans-global" and trans-historical dimensions of precarity (*Silent* 29).

2.6 "Beginning Are for Fools": The Ceaseless Cycle of Violence in *I See You*

The critical challenge posed by the multifaceted narrative of *The Silent Minaret* is even more apparent in Shukri's second novel. As I have suggested, Shukri's fiction is interruptive in its format, and the author offers the reader a number of different narrative frames through which

[18] For more information regarding the security protocols instituted at airports following 9/11, see Peter Andreas's article, "Redrawing the Line," *International Security* (2003).

to read his novels' contents. In *I See You*, interactions between characters combine with a diverse range of texts, such as speeches, interviews, emails, journalistic relays, radio programmes, and even an opera. For example, the reader encounters a relay sent from Kasalia to Johannesburg by Tariq on page fifty yet, on the next page, is thrust into a radio broadcast by ANA, the pan-African radio station.

It is fitting that Shukri has chosen a photojournalist as the protagonist of *I See You*, as the novel's staccato-like structure is more akin to a series of snapshots of politically precarious situations than a clearly composed linear narrative. Together with Tariq, the reader witnesses "Afghanistan colliding with Kasalia, Afghanistan and Kasalia crashing into Palestine, Afghanistan and Kasalia and Palestine merging with Darfur" (Shukri, *I See You* 147). These interlocking tableaus are apt illustrations of the interruptive effect of Shukri's work as, throughout *I See You*, the author refuses to allow the reader enough time to focus on any one location. Indeed, it is the level of discomfort and dislocation – of constantly moving from context to context – felt by both the reader and Shukri's characters that represents the author's means of communicating humanity's shared experiences in the twenty-first century; where structures of imperialism, cohered in the fifteenth century, continue in guises bolstered by new forms of technological communication. In the same way that Tariq experiences a "blurring of contexts" when he photographs his subjects, the reader observes, and is made complicit in, the trauma of war and conflict as it resonates around the world (Shukri, *I See You* 66).

A prominent political concern that the disparate locations in *I See You* all share is that freedom – political, economic, and physical – is compromised. Shukri observes that his latest novel is deeply concerned with "apparent freedoms in a world characterised by conflict and war" ("Ten Questions"). The very fact that Tariq is 'disappeared' because of his investigation into South Africa's deep state emphasises just how easily one's freedom is subject to the whims of political authority. As it is for so many South Africans, the protagonist's sense of freedom is an "illusion" which has been "force-fed" to him by the "deeply powerful" (Shukri, *I See You* 24). Because he exercises his democratic rights by demanding accountability from the machinations that underpin South Africa's ostensible democracy, he is framed as a threat to the status quo, and is thus punished by the deep state.

As well as using Tariq's rendition to an undisclosed "Somewhere" to emphasise the dearth of freedom that characterises the operation of the deep state in South Africa, Shukri's depictions of both the fictional Kasalia and the Occupied Palestinian Territories also underline the precarity of political freedom on a global scale. In *I See You*, the most evident barrier to freedom is Israel's Wall in the Occupied West Bank. This is the same structure that, by the end

of *The Silent Minaret*, "surrounds [Karim and Katinka's] town on three sides" (Shukri 185). Before I analyse Shukri's depictions of Palestine, however, I will examine Tariq's focus as an investigative journalist, including how he uses his skills to expose the links between the South African Private Security Contractor, ZARCorps, and the "horror of the civil war in Kasalia" (*I See You* 41). It is, after all, his uncovering of this nefarious relationship that leads to his disappearance.

2.7 Tariq the Framer: Kasalia, ZARCorps, and the Deep State in South Africa

Tariq's photographic talent lies in "his intimate depictions of people made *vulnerable* by conflict and war" (Shukri, *I See You* 52, emphasis added). One should therefore think of Tariq, in the Butlerian sense, as a capturer of precarity. He is not the type of "embedded journalist" to whom Butler takes exception (*Frames* 64), nor is he of the ilk of the "government propagandist" photographers whom Chomsky criticises in *Imperial Ambitions* (34). Rather, Tariq's unique approach to photography is informed by a "subtle agreement between [himself] and his subject" (Shukri, *I See You* 60). This "fine balance," this "consensual" mode of 'capturing' his subjects is what enables the protagonist to frame the human cost of war (60). By humanising his subjects within the frames of his photographs, Tariq forces his viewers to acknowledge, in Butler's terms, those rendered invisible and "ungrievable" within the dominant frame (*Frames* 24). He observes that, if given the choice, his "ideal superpower" would be "to transport people into contexts they wouldn't normally be exposed to, to transfer people into the lives and contexts of others" (Shukri, *I See You* 66).

This sense of transportation is something that Shukri achieves in his fiction. Through his writing, the reader encounters intimate illustrations of lives and histories deemed too insignificant to be included in the frame of the mainstream media. If one acknowledges that it is "only by challenging the dominant media that certain lives may become visible or knowable in their precariousness" (Butler, *Frames* 51), then it becomes clear, as *I See You* progresses, that Tariq's "extraordinary eye for seeing through the surface" is what sets him apart from other photographers (Shukri 181). The protagonist inverts his viewers' frames of recognition to show his subjects for *who* rather than *what* they are. He not only makes his subjects recognisable as innately precarious individuals but, more significantly, shows them to be figures who represent the embodied state of *precarity*. His most famous work is a poignant example of this type of exposure.

The photograph, taken during the spiralling civil war in Kasalia, is described in the following way:

> Deceptive – a girl and a man, silhouetted against a red desert background, hovering above a mirage [. . .] the kind of idealised depiction of rural privation so indulgently romanticised in banal watercolours and sentimental greeting cards. But in this deception lay its command; it seems to be one thing while really it is something else completely, its apparently facile surface lowering your guard, drawing you in, before its gruesome details devour your neutered assumptions and spit them out: the girl, scantily clad, leading the man through a scorched blistering wasteland, the lap of her torn dress stained red, rivulets of coagulated blood encrusted down the inside of her legs, the man's swollen lids pierced through with thorns. (41)

This disturbing photograph wins Tariq the prestigious Platinum Lens photography award, and a Kasalian expat even claims that the picture "did more to stop [the Kasalian war] than the UN did with a hundred toothless resolutions" (Shukri, *I See You* 42). Butler notes, "Photography has a relation to intervention," but concedes it is "not the same as intervening" (*Frames*, 84). The relationship between photography and intervention, as Butler envisions it, is not material, but ideological. To 'intervene' as a war photographer is therefore an act of capturing conditions of precarity and making them accessible to a wide and influential audience. As Tariq notes, the power of Malcolm Browne's "iconic photograph of the Buddhist monk Thich Quang Duc, who set himself alight in protest against the US-backed government of South Vietnam," actually "forced President Kennedy to change American policy in South Vietnam" (Shukri, *I See You* 65).

Like Browne's photograph, Tariq's delicate framing of precarity is manufactured to evoke both an affective and an effective response from its viewers. To this end, one should consider Butler's observation that, in order for a photograph to "communicate effectively," it must have a "transitive function" (*Frames* 68). That is to say that a successful photograph "act[s] on viewers in ways that have a direct bearing on the kinds of judgements those viewers will formulate about the world" (68). With this point in mind, one could argue that what makes Tariq's award-winning photograph so successful is not only its capacity to generate a visceral response from its viewers but, more importantly, its capacity to articulate and impress upon said viewers a specific kind of message about the world. For Tariq, I argue, the message that his photograph imparts is the need to recognise precarity. He aims to convince others that the human suffering that characterises Kasalia demands of them a response – an ideological shift in the manner in which they interpret the world. The protagonist "usurps all the mind-numbing techniques of blinkered portraiture" to present his subjects in their utmost vulnerability and, in

this sense, he more than captures the catastrophic proportions of the Kasalian War (Shukri, *I See You* 42).

Despite its success, this much-celebrated photograph is by no means Tariq's only vivid depiction of lives made exceedingly precarious by war and conflict, and his ability to create an "ambush in a frame" is not limited to his work in Kasalia (Shukri, *I See You* 41). In fact, his ambition to destabilise his viewers' perceptions is evident in both his photography and his research and he, like Issa, is concerned with making visible structures of power that prefer to remain unseen. As such, the metatextual narrative of *I See You* includes many articles written by Tariq about his experiences in spaces of precarity. The protagonist is also interviewed by ANA radio, on a programme called "Your Most Precious Things" (51–71), and he informs listeners about the bloodshed being committed in Kasalia, as well as those who are abetting this violence.

Having spent six months in Kasalia, in a village called Degongu, Tariq has experienced enough of the war to know that "the base instinct in Kasalia is not Kasalian greed, but human greed" (Shukri, *I See You* 63). He describes the conflict zone as "cosmopolitan," in that it has attracted "people from all over the world, whether to fight, or fuel, or profit" (63). The vested interests various parties have in the war are apparent to Tariq, and he claims "one of the most striking features of [the conflict] is the extent of South African involvement in it, especially at the covert level, where crisis is being fuelled for profit" (67). Tariq reasons that South Africa's involvement in Kasalia "has everything to do with the insidious relationship between [its] government and big business, particularly private military and security corporations" (67). In revealing the shadowy links between the ANC, ZARCorps, and the war in Kasalia, he uncovers a component of the deep state that governs South Africa. He debunks the notion that the Kasalian war is a specifically Kasalian problem and, by implicating the private interests of the South African government in the conflict, he draws them into the frame of culpability.

During his time in Kasalia, Tariq discovers that, rather than providing security for those in desperate need of it, ZARCorps is actually fuelling the war in the nation. The corporation is supposed to provide "security for foreign embassies, major financial institutions and mineral and oil fields in almost all of the world's major conflict zones," yet its revenues from the Kasalian conflict are in the region of $300 million (Shukri, *I See You* 142). ZARCorps' involvement in the war, according to the evidence gathered by the protagonist, includes the arming of militias, the inciting of violence, and the controlling of vital resources – most notably the mineral "tantalum" (67). This naturally occurring substance, "used in the manufacture of electronic devices – cellphones, DVD players, and so forth," is the source of profit over which

Kasalian warlords, with the assistance of ZARCorps, have been fighting (62). In making the source of the conflict something that is so ubiquitous in everyday life, Shukri refuses the reader a chance to "dislodge [him/herself] from the tangled mess of implication" (74). Everyone who lives during the technological age, the author seems to be implying, is complicit in the atrocities that plague Kasalia.

Naomi Klein has developed a term for those who profit from crises – manmade or otherwise. Echoing Dwight Eisenhower's 1961 assertion that the United States should prevent itself from acquiring a "military-industrial complex," Klein notes that in an era characterised by globalisation and multinational conglomeration, a new complex has emerged: "disaster capitalism" (50). In this model of profiteering:

> All conflict and disaster-related functions (waging war, securing borders, spying on citizens, rebuilding cities, treating traumatised soldiers) can be performed by corporations at a profit. And this complex is not satisfied merely to feed off the state, the way traditional military contractors do; it aims, ultimately, to *replace core functions of the government* with its own profitable enterprises. (50, emphasis added)

Although Shukri's example of deep state activity takes the form of a Private Security Contractor, Klein's work highlights just how pervasive the privatisation of governmental bodies has become in the years following 9/11.[19] The fictional ZARCorps is an establishment premised on tangibly restructuring the ways in which power is recognised, achieved, and executed in a democratic Republic. It orchestrates violence and political chaos so that the company might boost profits for both itself and its shareholders in the South African government. Just like the non-fictional Blackwater, an institution such as ZARCorps actively diminishes the power of the South African electorate to call into question the steady privatisation of their civic institutions. Tariq's wife, Dr Leila Mashal, observes that the state has "transformed [its] responsibilities into market opportunities from which only a small elite profits" (Shukri, *I See You* 30).

ZARCorps' kidnapping of Tariq has interrupted Leila's life as a doctor and "quiet wife" (Shukri, *I See You* 23). Following his abduction, she decides to use the facts that Tariq has gathered about ZARCorps – as well as the example of his kidnapping itself – as a platform from which to launch her own political campaign against "the most serious threat to [South Africa's] constitutional democracy" – the "secret and unaccountable cabal" of the deep state

[19] For a full account of the manner in which "disaster capitalism" transforms the civil liberties in supposed democracies, see Klein's book, *The Shock Doctrine* (2008).

(23, 24). Leila's campaign is not designed to achieve political victory so much as to make the South African public aware that what happened to Tariq "could happen to anybody" (27). Like her husband, she has come to realise that "there are forces of deep power now at work in [South Africa], manipulating its institutions, its systems and its structures" (27).[20] For Leila and Tariq, the veneer of governmental authority behind which the deep state hides means that the notion of freedom – both economic and political – in contemporary South Africa, remains a "myth" for most of the population (27). Leila even mentions the examples of the ANC spending thirty-billion rand on Arms,[21] as well as twenty-seven-billion rand on hosting the FIFA World Cup,[22] to emphasise her point about the powerlessness of the electorate in a deep state. Those private agents, who, together with the government, spend such profligate sums of money, are not accountable to the public, and the same is true for an institution like ZARCorps.

Prior to Tariq and Leila's damning revelations, ZARCorps' involvement in Kasalia had been excluded from media reports on the civil war. Because the frame works "in silence, without any visible sign of its operation," the power of the deep state lies in its ability to remove itself from view (Butler, *Frames* 73). Tariq and Leila's commitment to exposing the unethical and undemocratic forces that control South Africa's government renders them 'enemies' of the state and, conjunction with the ANC, ZARCorps executes a "meticulously planned" kidnapping of Tariq (Shukri, *I See You* 28). When Leila attempts to reveal ZARCorps' complicity in Tariq's capture, she is placed under house arrest, or "administrative internment" (7). While Leila's fate is certainly not as dire as Tariq's, her arrest illustrates how forcefully the deep state silences its detractors.

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[20] On November 2, 2016, South Africa's Public Protector, Thuli Mandosela, released a report titled "State of Capture," which alleges that the country's president, Jacob Zuma, wilfully broke the Prevention of Corruption Act by allowing private interests undue influence in the selection of cabinet members. See Pierre De Vos's article, "Analysis: Review of State Capture Report," *The Daily Maverick* (2016).

[21] According to Andrew Feinstein, in securing the Arms Deal (finalised in 1999), "about $300 million was paid in commissions and bribes to middlemen, senior politicians, officials, their associates, and the ANC itself" (176). Feinstein continues: "Thabo Mbeki and his inner circle were happy to undermine key institutions of the new-won democracy, including parliament and important components of the judicial system, in order to safeguard the interests of the party and protect its senior leaders" (182). The figure of thirty-billion rand that Shukri provides may be, in fact, a severe underestimation: Feinstein claims that the total cost of the Arms Deal rose to seventy-one-billion rand by 2011. This amount is nearly double the forty-one-billion spent on public housing, and nine times higher than the nine-billion spent on the country's HIV/Aids programme (187).

[22] The FIFA World Cup in South Africa represented a major financial opportunity for South African private security companies. Johan Burger notes that FIFA's budget for the 2010 event was in the region of thirty-six-million dollars (R250 million). For more information, see his article, "A Golden Goal for South Africa," *South African Crime Quarterly* (2007). The South African government's budget for private security was actually a great deal higher than the one outlined by FIFA, and it is estimated that the ANC spent approximately 250-million dollars (R1.5 billion) on private security between June and August 2010. See Christopher McMichael's article, "Hosting the World," *City Journal* (2012).

Unlike his wife, Tariq is not afforded the comforts of house arrest, and his attempt to make visible the deep state costs him his own place within the frame itself. The timeless, ominous "Somewhere" to which Tariq has been removed, much like the space Issa occupies after his sudden disappearance, holds no clues as to where it is located. In contrast to Issa, however, Shukri grants Tariq a narrative voice in the present, and the reader is permitted unmediated access to his thoughts and memories. Another significant difference between Issa and the protagonist of *I See You* is that the reader knows exactly why, and by whom, Tariq has been 'disappeared.'

Following his abduction in Johannesburg, Tariq is "stripped naked with only [a] hood still covering [his] face" (Shukri, *I See You* 172). He is then dressed in "a jumpsuit" and "boarded onto a plane" (172–73). In being forced to don the attire of a captured 'terrorist,' he becomes a faceless and featureless threat, stripped of his individuality – nothing more than a body to be controlled. For this reason, he exemplifies the terrorist automaton; another version of the iconic "bagman" photograph taken from the now infamous Abu Ghraib archive, or any one of the detainees at Guantanamo Bay (Mitchell 101).[23] Rather than mirroring Issa's disappearance, then, Tariq's capture appears to echo the images of the Afghani and Iraqi prisoners that the protagonist of *The Silent Minaret* sees on Café Baghdad's enormous screen. By depicting ZARCorps employing similar rendition techniques to those used by the United States during the War on Terror, Shukri offers the reader yet another example of a "blurring of contexts" (*I See You* 66). In the same way that the Kasalian conflict "mirrors other wars like it," the deep state's means of silencing its critics resonates with modes of control utilised by other historical forces, such as the VOC and the CIA (63).

Although Tariq makes his discoveries about South Africa's deep state while working in Kasalia, he also travels to many other locations to document "the experiences of people displaced by war and conflict" (Shukri, *I See You* 70). Of all the spaces of precarity to which Tariq ventures, the Occupied Palestinian Territories is one that "looms large" in his mind, and his journeys to this region are filled with painful encounters with the oppressive realities that its inhabitants face on a daily basis (70). With this in mind, it is interesting to note that the so-

[23] The "bagman" picture is only one of an estimated 2,100 photographs taken at Abu Ghraib prison during America's occupation of Iraq. While all of the photographs depict Iraqi suspects under extreme physical, mental, and emotional duress at the hands of American military personnel, the iconic "bagman" photograph is perhaps the most unnerving of those images made accessible to the public. The man in question has a hood over his head and is standing on a box, arms outstretched, with electrodes taped onto his palms – almost as if he is preparing to be crucified. For more commentary on how this photograph became a symbol for the American public's resistance to the Iraq War, see Butler, "Sexual Politics, Torture, and Secular Time," in *Frames of War* (2010); W.J.T. Mitchell, *Cloning Terror* (2010); and Mark Danner's book, *Torture and Truth* (2004).

called "Appendix" to the novel is comprised of Tariq's various articles written in Palestine, which I understand to be a final tribute to a location – and a people – suffering under the hardships of occupation (191–99). Before I begin my analysis of Shukri's portrayal of Palestine, it is necessary to provide some context as to how it is that this location has become yet another front for the global War on Terror.

2.8 Our Terrorists and Yours: Israel, Palestine, and the War on Terror

While Shukri's most recent novel only references the War on Terror itself obliquely, the author's preoccupation with precarity is particularly demonstrable in his framing of Palestine. His ability to offer the reader depictions of both local and global concerns is what permits him to comment – as both a South African and a citizen of the world – on issues pertaining to Palestine and beyond. That being said, it is vital to acknowledge how the ongoing politico-military struggle between Israel and Palestine is a focal point not just of Shukri's work but the War on Terror itself.

In his book, *Border Walls*, the political geographer, Reece Jones claims that:

> In the ten months between the 9/11 attacks in the United States and the beginning of the construction of the barrier [the Wall], Israeli leaders repositioned their conflict as not simply a local territorial dispute, but also as a *key front* in the global conflict between evil terrorists and modern, civilized democracies. In this narrative, [Yasser] Arafat is the same as bin Laden, attacks in Israel are the same as attacks in America, and crucially, as a democratic member of the international community, Israel has an obligation to do everything in its power to prevent the spread of terrorism. (77)

Jones's point, in the above passage, is that the state of Israel – at that stage led by Ariel Sharon – inserted itself into the War on Terror by virtue of its close political relationship with the United States. This relationship, according to former American Vice President Joe Biden, "has been and will continue to be, a centrepiece [. . .] of American foreign policy" (qtd. in Josh Ruebner 87). Aligning the United States and Israel in a fight against the threat of global terrorism permitted Sharon and his government to equate acts of Palestinian violence with the actions of which Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda were capable. Three months after 9/11, Sharon even claimed: "America, we [Israel] are with you, because the struggle against terrorism is also our struggle. We have been facing it for many years" (qtd. in Jones 93). In Sharon's reasoning, acts of Palestinian aggression aimed at the state of Israel are no different to the horrendous

attacks of 9/11. This logic both strips Palestinian resistance of its geopolitical context and also allows the Israeli military to frame its conduct in the Occupied Territories as "the actions of a valiant protector of freedom and democracy" amidst a mass of Muslim 'enemies' (Jones 77).

Although there can be no doubt that Palestinian violence is an issue for Israel – and should not be condoned regardless of the precarious situations in which those who commit acts of terror find themselves – it is important to acknowledge its root cause: the ongoing Israeli military occupation of Palestinian land. David Theo Goldberg argues that "the more [state] violence becomes a norm, the readier those within and without the state are loosened, if not licensed, to resort to forms of personalised and anonymous violence" ("Racial States" 249). While Goldberg's emphasis on the "license" afforded to subjugated populations to use violence may be rather too accommodating of such methods of opposition, his claim reflects a political context out of which violence-as-resistance may arise. If one applies Goldberg's argument to the case of the Palestinian people, then it is clear that, rather than treating their resistance as a by-product of an irrational hatred for the state of Israel itself, it should be understood as the result of decades of "colonial subjugation" (Butler, *Parting Ways* 50).

What aids Israel's repression of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories is the material and ideological support that the Israeli military receives from the government of the United States. According to Barack Obama, "Israel's security is sacrosanct. It is non-negotiable," and he even states that the "military and intelligence cooperation [between America and Israel] has never been closer" (qtd. in Ruebner 178). The large Christian-Zionist contingent present in the American Congress makes the sustained Israeli occupation of Palestine a relatively uncomplicated business in the corridors of American political power.[24] So ingrained is the United States' fiscal support for Israel, notes Andrew Feinstein, that the American government provides "Israel with aid, mostly militarily, to the tune of $3bn annually" (374). This figure, he claims, "cover[s] a third of Israel's defence budget" (377).[25]

Israel's prevailing military power is only one manifestation of the Jewish state's infrastructural superiority and, throughout *I See You*, Tariq describes the contrasting fortunes

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[24] "Christian-Zionist" is not a contradiction in terms. It is merely the term used to describe Christians who believe that Israel is the true home of the Jewish people, and should be occupied exclusively by Jews. Zionism reaffirms many American Christians' belief in the Biblical notion that Israel should always be Jewish, and legitimises the religious claims of both the American Christian-Right and the Israeli state. Nevertheless, anti-Semitism in the United States remains a serious social issue, at least according to Ryan King and Melissa Weiner, who note that at least 12 percent of Americans view Jews unfavourably. For more information, see their article, "Group Position, Collective Threat, and American Anti-Semitism," *Social Problems* (2007).

[25] As of 2018, the United States will provide Israel with thirty-eight-billion dollars in military aid over a ten-year period. This is the single largest military deal that the United States has conducted in its history. See Marwan Bishara's article, "Five Reasons Why US-Israel Military Deal Stinks," *Al Jazeera* (2016).

of Palestinians and Israelis in candid terms. The precarity he witnesses in the Occupied Territories lends credence to Butler's assertion that Israel and Palestine cannot be understood as '"two sides' of a conflict" (*Parting Ways* 120), and the protagonist observes first-hand how Palestinians "struggle with catastrophe at almost every turn" (Shukri, *I See You* 8).

2.9 Precarity and Immobility: Those Who Live in the "Shadow of the Wall"

Many of Shukri's depictions of Palestine take the form of Tariq's journalistic relays, which include details from organisations such as the United Nations and War on Want (Shukri, *I See You* 48, 50). This medium of narrative expression makes the reader aware of the enormity of Palestinian suffering, and Tariq utilises facts and figures to emphasise that "Palestinian refugees now constitute the largest and oldest single refugee community in the world" (95). Other than excerpts from Tariq's work, Shukri also employs the protagonist's memories of people and places in Palestine to provide the reader with vignettes of smaller, more personal encounters with the precarity that characterises life in the Occupied Territories. For instance, Tariq's Palestinian acquaintances, such as Yahya, Zach, Marwan, Said, and Fadi, become familiar to the reader. These individuals "have always shape-shifted their way through tragedy," and they, together with Tariq, form a "circle" of friends (80).

Despite the protagonist's desire to document Palestinian life, he finds that its traumatic dimensions actually exceed the limits of his photographic frame. He admits: "My camera can't capture what I see or what I'm told, and the pictures I take during the day only end up in my recycle bin at night" (Shukri, *I See You* 78). Tariq's inability to capture the day-to-day suffering of those in the Occupied Territories may have something to do with the static frame of photography itself, and he notes that "circumstances have become too large to be contained in a single frame, too rapid even to be captured at all" (75). The fact that the photographic frame is necessarily imposed around a context that eludes containment is no doubt an issue for Tariq, but what is not a problem for him is how he *writes* about Palestine and its people. As a journalist, this is something he does in much detail, and many of his articles focus on the impact that Israel's Wall in the West Bank has had on Palestinians' already precarious sense of freedom.

The "anti-terror fence," or what Palestinians call the "Apartheid Wall," currently measures 708 kilometres (Jones 11). It comprises both fences and portable concrete blocks,

and is "eight metres high – or more than double the height of the Berlin Wall" (95).[26] Originally erected as a deterrent to Palestinian terror attacks in Israel, the Wall's endurance as a political boundary has encouraged "the supposedly temporary to manifest increasingly as the potentially permanent" (Shukri, *I See You* 107).

I See You opens with Tariq in Atouf: a fictional village in which "everything is on the brink" as a result of the "enormous abuse and suffering" that has accompanied the construction of the Wall (Shukri 9–10). He tells the reader that this "place of desolate splendour is the setting for a quiet faraway tragedy of termination," as Atouf's residents "are being pried from their ancestral land, livelihood and way of life by organised and sustained Israeli military force" (9). Tariq has come here to document the lives of those who live in this little hamlet "while it is still there" (10). The Wall, he claims, "will stampede everything in its path and places like Atouf will cease to exist" (9). In the guise of this dilapidated village, Tariq views but one example of the Palestinian dispossession that the Wall has abetted, since the latter's function is not merely to keep Israeli settlers safe but also acts as a means by which Israel can capture Palestinian land. In fact, Tariq notes that "[m]ore than 60 per cent of farmland stretching from [Atouf] to the Jordan River has been seized" (9). This "domino process of land confiscation" would not be realisable without the Wall, as its "potentially permanent" boundaries prevent Palestinians from accessing their arable lands, whilst simultaneously making these lands available to Israeli settlers (107, 9). Availability is perhaps too tame a term to use when describing Israeli access to this area, for when Tariq looks past the Wall at Atouf's "confiscated southern slopes" he sees Israel's "grand scheme" for the region (10, 9). On the other side of the Wall, "Israel's project lies in full, lush bloom – vineyards flourishing in settlements irrigated by water redirected from seized Palestinian wells" (10).

Not only are the inhabitants of Atouf unable to access the lands that they need in order to survive, but they are forced to witness Israel's incremental colonisation of the West Bank. The Wall therefore acts as a border between the soon-to-be-eviscerated Atouf and the Israeli settlement on the hill, as well as a reminder to Palestinians as to who has the real control over this region. As Karim says to Katinka in *The Silent Minaret*, the Wall is there to "make us [Palestinians] feel small" (Shukri 185).

During her time in Palestine, Katinka recognises the segregationist tactics employed by the state of Israel. Although she grew up in apartheid South Africa, she admits to Kagiso that

[26] Jones notes that, "despite the rhetoric of globalization and a borderless world, the 1990s saw almost as much border fencing globally as the previous four decades of the Cold War combined" (6).

life for many in the West Bank is "far more horrendous than anything you've seen in the homelands [of apartheid South Africa]" (Shukri, *Silent* 242). She conveys stories about "kids who have to travel for hours around The Wall to get to school (and who can draw helicopter gun-ships with their eyes closed)," and declares that, in Qalqilia, "death is everywhere; every day an anniversary, every day a future one assured" (240).

The practice of security-through-dispossession is a fact of military occupation, as well as a significant trait of settler-colonialism. Mbembe observes that "*Colonial occupation* itself [is] a matter of seizing, delimiting and asserting control over a physical geographical area – of writing on the ground a new set of social and spatial relations" ("Necropolitics" 164, emphasis original). By asserting control over the region of historic Palestine, successive Israeli governments have embarked on a process of "Israeli reterritorialisation [. . .] through a simultaneous Palestinian deterritorialisation" (Jones 85). "Downsizing the number of Palestinians all over historic Palestine" is, according to Ilan Pappé, still the "Zionist vision," and the Wall represents only one example of this type of "incremental genocide" (*On Palestine* 151, 174).[27]

While the Wall undoubtedly has made many Israelis safer, the underlying cost for everyday Palestinians cannot be overstated.[28] The concept of security used to justify the erection of the Wall is heavily disputed by one of Tariq's subjects, who lives in the village of Zbouba. This location "has no functioning electricity supply and its alternative source of water in the Al-Gard Valley has been polluted by overflowing effluent from a nearby Israeli military camp" (Shukri, *I See You* 194). From his rooftop, Tariq's unnamed subject points to a distant hill on the other side of the Wall: "All the land from here to that hill is ours. But this wall has taken it. I can't go there any more" (93). The same fate that Atouf is suffering has thus already befallen Zbouba and, to make their shared precarity more apparent, Shukri situates both villages in the shadow of Israeli settlements. As Tariq's colleague and he gaze upon the Wall, the former gestures towards the Israeli side of the barrier, and comments: "Their lights are on but here we are in darkness. Our roads are broken from their tanks, but see how their cars fly by on their motorways" (93). Although the precarity of Palestinian life is made tangible by a structure such as the Wall, Tariq's unnamed host in Zbouba also touches on another form of

[27] Mbembe notes that instrumental to Israel's control over Palestinian land are techniques such as "demolishing houses and cities; uprooting olive trees; riddling water tanks with bullets; bombing and jamming electronic communications; digging up roads; destroying electricity transformers; tearing up airport runways; disabling television and radio transmitters; smashing computers; ransacking cultural and politico-bureaucratic symbols of the proto-Palestinian state" ("Necropolitics" 167).

[28] See Dion Nissenbaum's article, "Death Toll of Israeli Citizens Killed by Palestinians Hit a Low in 2006," *McClatchy Newspapers* (2007).

political and economic oppression when he notes that when "Israel makes war – Bush and Blair say nothing" but, if "Palestinians vote," they "get sanctions" (93).

Tariq's acquaintance is referring to the American, Israeli, and European Union sanctions imposed against the Palestinian National Authority (PA) following the 2006 legislative democratic election of Hamas in the Palestinian Parliament. Democracy and the promotion thereof is something that both the United States and Israel consider fundamental to their respective states. In fact, one of the reasons George W. Bush gave for his country's invasion of Iraq was so that its Shiite majority – oppressed under Saddam Hussein's regime – might have the democratic opportunity to elect their next head of state. Even if one ignores the fact that "installing democracy" among a people "over whom [America] has no jurisdiction" is itself an "undemocratic process," it is important to acknowledge that it was not the fact that Palestinians were exercising their voting rights that led to sanctions in 2006 (Butler, *Frames* 36, 37). Rather, according to Chomsky, the problem was that Palestinians "voted the wrong way" (*On Palestine* 159). In other words, rather than voting for Fatah,[29] the party of which present-day PA president, Mahmoud Abbas, is the leader, Palestinians voted in favour of Hamas.

Scholar of the Abrahamic religions, Karen Armstrong, describes Hamas as a "disturbingly nihilistic" manifestation of political Islam, noting that this "violent movement" was "born of oppression" at the hands of the Israeli military occupation (352 *Battle*). The group sees the "Arab-Israeli conflict in religious terms" and some members of its military wing have even "attacked Palestinians whom they judge to be collaborators with Israel" (352). According to Anton La Guardia, "Hamas wants to create an Islamic society," an ambition which differentiates them from the secular-minded Fatah and the former Palestinian Liberation Organisation (281). The extrajudicial murder of non-Muslims – amongst other acts of terror committed in the Occupied Territories, the Gaza Strip, and Israel itself – for which Hamas has claimed responsibility since its inception in 1987 is perhaps more comprehensible given the zealous branch of political Islam to which this organisation adheres.[30] Notwithstanding the fact that Hamas has been designated a "terrorist organisation" by the United States and others, it is significant that they won the 2006 election democratically (Chomsky *On Palestine* 159). What followed their election victory were the aforementioned economic sanctions, as well as a

[29] Founded by Yasser Arafat in 1965.

[30] Hamas has been accused of appalling conduct, such as the use of human shields during wartime and the torture of prisoners. For more detail, see Renee Lewis's article, "Are War Crimes Being Committed in Gaza?" *Al Jazeera America* (2014).

"debilitating battle between Fatah and Hamas" over control of the Gaza Strip (Shukri, *I See You* 194).

During Tariq's travels throughout Palestine, he "*counts the cost*" that the sanctions have entailed for "*ordinary Palestinians already burdened by decades of Israeli military occupation*," and he sees that the sanctions "don't punish Hamas. They punish all the Palestinian people" (Shukri, *I See You* 191, 34, emphasis original). Despite the tragedies that Tariq witnesses in the Occupied Territories, it is his visits to some of the "nineteen officially recognised [refugee] camps in the West Bank, and fifty-nine in haemorrhaging Gaza and the Middle East," which illustrate to him – and the reader – the true extent of Palestinians' suffering (95). If the derelict villages of Atouf and Zbouba are suggestive of the impact that the Wall has had in the West Bank, then Shukri's depictions of these camps stand as a testament to the historical struggle that Palestinians face.

In the same way that the Wall restricts Palestinian mobility in the West Bank, the boundaries around refugee camps are "strictly defined" (Shukri, *I See You* 107). Tariq tells the reader that "while Israeli settlements continue to mushroom and swell illegally across the West Bank, refugee camps, whatever their population increase, are not allowed to expand outwards" (107). Because the borders of the camps cannot be extended, Palestinian refugees "live in concrete labyrinths three storeys high, one for each generation born in exile" (107). "As sanctions claw deeper into empty pockets," Tariq witnesses the extreme precarity of life in various refugee camps but, for the protagonist, one camp stands out from the rest (194).

It is in Al Fara'a refugee camp that Tariq understanding of Palestinian despair is at its most acute. This rural camp, he writes, is "one of Palestine's oldest traumas" and, as is the case in many other camps, "half [of its] population is under eighteen" (Shukri, *I See You* 95, 107). Al Fara'a's age demographic is significant, especially when one considers that children and teenagers are all too often victims of Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) operations in the camp. To emphasise the indiscriminate nature of the IDF's conduct, Tariq cites the death of Mohammad Eshtewi, an eleven-year-old resident of Al Fara'a. Mohammad, Tariq remembers, lost consciousness after being "struck by a tear-gas canister fired from an Israeli tank," after which he needed oxygen to be resuscitated (95). Due to the many "road closures and checkpoints," it takes "one and a half hours to travel seventeen kilometres to Nablus" and, "by the time an ambulance arrived, Mohammad was dead" (95). Just like Tariq's friend Fadi Soboh – killed by Israeli soldiers during a raid on Al Fara'a – Mohammad "died as he was born, a refugee in his own land" (110).

So tight are the restrictions placed on Palestinian mobility that what should be a short drive to save Mohammad's life is made unfeasible, even impossible. In the same way that the Wall controls the movement of those in the Occupied Territories, Palestinian refugees "remain captive, tied to their camps" (108). The "road closures and checkpoints" that Tariq references are additional measures employed by the state of Israel to clamp down on Palestinian mobility and, throughout *I See You*, Shukri and his protagonist describe in intimate detail the damaging effects of these restrictive tactics, with the most striking example taking the shape of an interaction between Tariq and his Palestinian friend, Yahya.

2.10 "The Forbidden Horizon": False Passports and the Limitations of Solidarity

On one of his visits to Ramallah, Tariq and Yahya, an old friend of the protagonist, are driving out of the city to meet a trio of Gazan students who are studying in the West Bank "illegally" (Shukri, *I See You* 73). Suddenly, they encounter a military checkpoint – comprised of heavily armed IDF soldiers and a hovering helicopter – and Tariq instinctively slows down to join the queue of Palestinians waiting to have their papers checked. Yahya, however, encourages Tariq to keep on driving. Despite the protagonist's obvious trepidation, he obeys his friend's command. As they approach the soldiers at the checkpoint, Yahya tells Tariq to "[s]low down [. . .] and flash the headlights once" (75). To Tariq's surprise, the soldiers step aside, and Yahya encourages him to "wave at them" (76). The vehicle is let through the checkpoint without further incident – a stark juxtaposition to the many Palestinians who have been "made to stand by the side of the road [. . .] waiting to have their papers inspected by the soldiers" (75).

Military checkpoints are tools in the "*routinisation*" of restrictive Israeli policies, and it is their "repetition [that] hints at their presumed naturalisation" (Goldberg 245, emphasis original). Because of the ubiquity of checkpoints in the West Bank, "they are taken as a given and therefore (in the collapse of social imperative into the natural) conterminously unalterable" (245). The dehumanising effect that checkpoints have on Palestinians is also referenced in *The Silent Minaret*, when Katinka tells Kagiso the tragic story of her Palestinian neighbour, who "went into labour while waiting at a checkpoint" (Shukri 240). Despite her desperation, the "soldiers wouldn't let her through [and] the baby, a girl, died with her mother by the roadside" (240). That the IDF soldiers at the checkpoint refused to allow someone who – regardless of nationality or religion – was so clearly in distress to receive the care she needed only reinforces

the framing of Palestinian life as "ungrievable" (Butler, *Frames* 24). Katinka's story registers that even a pregnant woman going into labour represents too great a threat to Israeli security to be permitted freedom of movement.

Like Katinka's former neighbour, the Palestinians Tariq and Yahya drive past are unable to move freely. How then, one must wonder, is Yahya able to bypass Israel's security protocols? When asked by Tariq how it is possible that they passed so easily through one of the IDF's notorious checkpoints, Yahya gestures to the front of the rental car and replies, "Israeli plates" (Shukri, *I See You* 76). This rationale incenses Tariq: "Israeli plates? That's your explanation? You are Palestinian. I am South African. But you made us drive past a queue of Palestinians waiting at a checkpoint because we have Israeli plates? Fuck, Yahya. There were women and children back there" (76).

Despite being a Palestinian, Yahya is allowed to pass without hindrance through the checkpoint, simply because Tariq's rental car has the appropriate licence plates – the plates of the 'friend.' The Israeli plates are both indicators and enablers of mobility. They act as Tariq and Yahya's *passport* through territory in which they would otherwise be stopped. As with similar scenarios in *The Silent Minaret* and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, this incident illustrates the importance of *documentation* in ascertaining the threat level of certain groups since 9/11. Unlike Changez, Issa, and Shukri himself however, Tariq and Yahya – at least temporarily – are permitted the freedom of movement that they would otherwise be denied, simply because of the yellow plates on the front of Tariq's motorcar. If Yahya's indifference to those who are waiting on the side of the road for passage through their own land seems peculiar, then the argument he puts forward to Tariq following the protagonist's outburst is truly astonishing.

The two of them are leaning on the bonnet of the car, waiting to meet the Gazan students, and a still-aghast Tariq asks his friend if he believes in solidarity with the Palestinian cause and whether, "togetherness and joining in the reality" is at all on his agenda (Shukri, *I See You* 77). Yahya swings around on the bonnet and points into the distance, saying:

> You see way over there. That's Tel Aviv. [. . .] And over there, that's Jerusalem [. . .] I can't go to either, but you have been to both. You want the real Palestinian experience? You want to demonstrate solidarity? Deny yourself those privileges, then come stand here and look at the forbidden horizon [. . .] surrender your travel documents and go live with them. Don't fucking preach to me about solidarity. I don't have time for this shit. (77–8)

Yahya's outburst underscores the degree to which Palestinians are made to feel unwelcome in both Israel and the Occupied Territories, and his candid exclamation highlights the hypocrisy of Tariq's demand for solidarity. He asks if the protagonist would have felt "nobler for waiting in [the] queue" and if he considers himself "a collaborator for driving through, for taking abusive privileges" (Shukri, *I See You* 77). Yahya even scorns the idea that he has "robbed [Tariq] of a 'real' Palestinian checkpoint experience" (77). The protagonist is dumbfounded by the extent of his friend's willingness to disregard the suffering of his fellow Palestinians, but one has to remember that Tariq, as a South African, is granted a degree of mobility of which Palestinians can only dream.

Despite his best efforts, Tariq cannot comprehend the restriction of movement that Yahya and other Palestinians suffer on a daily basis. While he endeavours to be a capturer of their precarity, Tariq is still an outsider – someone who is *able* to go to Tel Aviv and rent a car with Israeli licence plates. Yahya's rejection of Tariq's insistence on solidarity points to an uncomfortable truth for all those aligned with the Palestinian cause: sympathy and solidarity can only achieve so much. When Tariq's time in Palestine is over, he can go home; he can leave behind the cruelty and begin working on his next project while Yahya and his contemporaries' situation deteriorates. It can therefore hardly be considered surprising that Yahya capitalises on the opportunity afforded to him by Tariq's rental car, as he is temporarily able to remove himself from the ontological frame of the Palestinian, and refigure himself, at least in the perceptions of those operating the checkpoint, as an Israeli. Yahya's yearning for a sense of freedom is so strong that he even admits to Leila that Palestinians often "envy" South Africa's apparent success story (87).

In a conversation that takes place in Egypt, while Tariq is working in Libya, Yahya tells Leila that he "expected Palestine would be free before South Africa" (Shukri, *I See You* 86). When she asks him why, he responds: "Because the "PLO is so much richer than the ANC. Because the PLO funded the ANC [during apartheid]. I suppose with that came the assumption..." (86). Unfortunately, Yahya does not complete his thought, and he leaves Leila in a stunned silence. Yahya's understanding of South Africa's history of apartheid matches his experiences as a Palestinian struggling for his freedom. He sees the settler-colonialist model of apartheid South Africa spanning the globe and enacting itself in historic Palestine. Like Tariq, Yahya also suffers from a "blurring of contexts," in which the transformation that he wishes for Palestine has already been implemented, or so he thinks, in South Africa (66). His reference to the ANC's apathy towards the plight of the Palestinian people criticises the self-absorbed nature of democratic South Africa. The deep state appears to have sapped both the memory

and the humanity from South Africa's elected government and, as Palestinians continue to suffer under conditions worse than those during apartheid, their disappointment in the ANC might seem appropriate.

By virtue of their treatment at the hands of both the Israeli government and fellow Arabs, Palestinians have been conditioned to think of themselves as what Chomsky calls the "unpeople" of the world (*Failed States* 124).[31] The desperation caused by decades of occupation lead to the use of survival tactics, such as Yahya posturing as an Israeli in Tariq's car, as well as to an understanding that Palestinians, no matter where they turn, feel abandoned. Their situation, as it has been throughout history, remains fraught with precarity.

2.11 A Call to the "Trans-Global" Recognition of Precarity

Like *The Silent Minaret*, *I See You* is an exceptionally intricate novel in both form and content, and it should be clear that attempts to offer a critical interpretation of the text might result in confusion and frustration. Shukri's fiction is very much like Tariq's famous photograph: the illusion of one thing leading the reader to investigate deeper, to pull apart the multitudinous layers that make up his novels and emerge with a fuller understanding of what life is like for people strangulated by precarity.

The author repeatedly and intentionally creates ruptures in his narratives in order to draw the reader into a disorderly, fragmented world characterised by violence and power, and the structure of *I See You* actually mirrors the disjointed sense of linearity that Tariq experiences during his incarceration "Somewhere." Similarly, in *The Silent Minaret*, the reader experiences an overlapping of "trans-global" and trans-historical contexts, in which individuals are silenced, oppressed, and removed from the frame of recognition (Shukri 29).

Both novels cover a vast array of locations, people and settings, and are comprised of so many distinct narrative voices that it would be impossible to detail them all in just a few pages. By focusing on the specific examples that I have chosen, I hope to have imparted a better understanding not simply of the novels as a whole, but of their importance as literary responses to the War on Terror. The world since 9/11, in Shukri's estimation, is at once similar and

[31] Shukri pays attention to Muammar Gaddafi's decision to expel at least 30,000 Palestinians from Libya in 1995. When Leila questions Yahya about this in Egypt, she is forced to rethink her assumption that "Arab support for the Palestinians would have been unanimous" (Shukri, *I See You* 166). Once again, Shukri demonstrates that, to outsiders of the Arab world, those who occupy these lands appear to be a homogenous whole, and their individual complexities are not understood.

radically different. While America, Britain, and Israel can claim that they are living in a world in which 9/11 has passed, those smaller lives that haunt the limitations of the metanarrative continue to be on the receiving end of those nations' retribution for the actions of Osama bin Laden and his predominantly Saudi Arabian faction. Both Issa and Tariq recognise the importance of countering dominant perceptions of certain populations who are framed as "ungrievable" (Butler, *Frames* 24). Issa attempts to reorient the frame of history so that he might shed light on connections between disparate cultures that the metanarrative has eliminated, while Tariq's ability to present his viewers with images and words that capture the humanity of vulnerable populations is his method of exposing the asymmetrical distribution of precarity across the globe.

Chapter 3: *Homeland*: Intelligence, Espionage, and Making "Intelligible" the Contemporary War on Terror

While Ishtiyaq Shukri's novels encourage the reader to think beyond simplistic paradigms of identity politics by adopting inclusive frames of recognition, the politicised rhetoric underpinning the War on Terror has, for the most part, focused on differentiating 'us' from 'them' in unambiguous and often deprecating terms. For instance, when President George W. Bush, on September 20, 2001, nine days after al Qaeda's deadly attacks, addressed both houses of Congress and the world declaring: "Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists," he attempted to arrange all the peoples of the globe into a simple binary of friend or foe (qtd. in Blum, *America's* 3). I examined Bush's problematic framing of 'good' versus 'bad' Muslims in my chapter on *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, where realities involved in responding to America's War on Terror are shown to be far more complicated than any simple declaration of allegiance. I now turn to the American television series, *Homeland* (2011–), produced by Showtime, to explore how the binary of 'friend'/'enemy' is represented in one of the world's most popular forms of entertainment.

Inspired by Gideon Raff's Israeli television series, *Prisoners of War* (2010–2012), and created by Alex Gansa and Howard Gordon, *Homeland* (2011–) has run for five seasons – each consisting of twelve episodes – with a sixth season set to air in the United States in January 2017.[1] The show is a fictionalised interpretation of the CIA's role in the War on Terror since both the death of Osama bin Laden and the inception of Barack Obama's presidency.[2] Throughout *Homeland*, viewers encounter – and are asked to scrutinise – the huge degree of influence that the CIA has over American foreign policy. From forced regime change in Iran to drone strikes in Pakistan, the Agency is presented as being intricately involved in the inner workings of American diplomacy and military tactics.

Homeland begins in 2011, eight years after the American invasion, and subsequent occupation, of Iraq. The chief protagonist of the show, a CIA case-officer by the name of Carrie Mathison (Claire Danes), who suffers from a severe bipolar disorder, is told by an Iraqi contact that a captured American Marine has been 'turned' by an al Qaeda leader, Abu Nazir (Navid Negahban). The Marine in question is Sergeant Nicholas Brody (Damian Lewis), who was

[1] "Episode" and "Season" will be capitalised in this chapter only in the case of the possessive. For example, "Season Three of *Homeland*," or, "in its first season."
[2] The American president in *Homeland* is only ever alluded to – he is neither named nor shown.

taken prisoner by al Qaeda during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003. He is held as their prisoner until he converts to Islam and is recruited into their ranks. Brody's return to the United States – under the guise of the long awaited return of a prisoner of war – is marked by Carrie's rising paranoia, and she spends the majority of *Homeland*'s first two seasons attempting to prove Brody's intentions to her superiors, Saul Berenson (Mandy Patinkin) and David Estes (David Harewood).

From the outset, then, *Homeland* asks some pertinent questions about the 'friend'/ 'enemy' binary, as the character of Brody – the American Marine who returns to the United States as a converted Muslim to work for al Qaeda – troubles such categories; mainly due to the personal motivations behind his decisions, which I will discuss in some detail later in the chapter. Unlike *24*, created by Robert Cochrain and Joel Surnow – and for which Gansa and Gordon were writers – the early seasons of *Homeland* attempt to avoid a morally absolutist interpretation of the War on Terror, and seek to question, as Gansa notes in an interview for *The Independent* in 2012, "who the hero or villain might be" in the context of Obama's Overseas Contingency Operations ("Beyond the Call"). Initially, the series succeeds in framing its narrative from the perspective of both those under the employ of the CIA and those who would seek to harm the United States, and asks viewers to consider the personal and political conditions that produce the figure of the 'terrorist.' As the show progresses, however, it becomes apparent that depictions of the CIA *fighting* terrorism are more important – or merely more entertaining – than any attempt to understand terrorism.

The murky waters of counterterrorism make for compelling television – a fact to which *Homeland*'s Emmy Awards (2012, 2013), Golden Globes (2012, 2013), and copious other accolades and nominations attest.[3] There have also been numerous public responses to *Homeland*, and the popularity of the series has been demonstrated by the decision of several newspapers, such as *The Guardian*,[4] *The Wall Street Journal*,[5] and *The New York Times*,[6] to provide their readers with episodic synopses and analyses of the show. Nevertheless, public opinion remains divided on *Homeland*'s plausibility and political insight. *The Guardian*'s Michael Cohen (2013) argues that the show peddles "a dangerous set of lies about terrorism, American omnipotence and the very nature of international politics" ("Bad TV"); whereas Mike Hogan (2015), of *Vanity Fair*, maintains that it would be "a mistake to

[3] For a list of *Homeland*'s extensive awards and nominations, see the *IMBD* website.
[4] See "*Homeland*: Episode by Episode" on *The Guardian*'s website.
[5] See Sarene Leeds: "Homeland: Weekly Nightcaps of the Showtime Espionage Thriller," on *The Wall Street Journal*'s website.
[6] See Sarah Warner: "*Homeland* – Television Recaps," on the *New York Times*' website.

confuse *Homeland* with some kind of journalistic or, god forbid, morally instructive enterprise" ("Why Season Five"). A lack of consensus as to whether or not *Homeland* oversimplifies the War on Terror has not hampered the show's viewership. In fact, so popular has the series become that it has generated its own *Wikia* page, which includes intricate details from characters' back stories, such as their addresses and tertiary education information.[7] The show has even spawned its own series of novels, *Carrie's Run* (2013) and *Saul's Game* (2015), written by Andrew Kaplan.

It is precisely because *Homeland* has generated so much public attention that it is an important inclusion in this thesis. The numerous responses to *Homeland* indicate both its intrinsic entertainment value and its capacity to shape public perceptions on the War on Terror. Gansa states that he and Gordon "try really hard not to be polemic or didactic in any way," that they "choose to ask questions and not answer them" ("The Creators"). So, what are the questions that *Homeland* asks about the War on Terror and, more importantly, how does it *frame* these questions? How far is it willing to go to avoid a simplistic interpretation of the 'friend'/'enemy' binary? Does the show's "paranoid allure," to use the words of *Vanity Fair*'s Richard Lawson (2015), contribute to the public perception of the United States as vulnerable to terrorism? Furthermore, if war is a means of "dividing populations into those who are grievable and those who are not," how does *Homeland* frame the impact of the War on Terror on both Americans waging it and non-Americans caught up in it (Butler, *Frames* 38)?

This chapter attempts to discern the frame of "intelligibility" that the series establishes around the War on Terror (Butler, *Frames* 6), and thus examines whether *Homeland* fulfils its potential as a critique of this war itself. As I will demonstrate, the show's seasons are broken up thematically and geopolitically, and they each depict a certain facet of America's Overseas Contingency Operations. It therefore makes sense to track *Homeland*'s trajectory in a reasonably linear manner. If the series is indeed a representation of how the War on Terror has progressed during Obama's presidency then it is clear that observing its seasonal development is paramount in gauging how its viewers' contemporary perceptions of this war are framed by the show. Before I begin my analysis of Season One and Two, however, I will revisit Derrida's concept of the 'friend' and the 'enemy,' and examine how this binary might be understood in relation to *Homeland*.

[7] Available on the *Wikia Fandom* website.

3.1 The 'Friend' and the 'Enemy': A Matter of Political Perspective

In my introduction, I noted Derrida's conception of the 'enemy' as being crucial in the positioning of the political self. Without the figure of the definite 'enemy,' argues Derrida, one suffers from a "*phobia* [which] projects a mobile multiplicity of potential, interchangeable, metonymic enemies, in secret alliance with one another" (84). Such a description is uncannily apt in relating the unfolding plot of *Homeland* itself. Potential alliances between the various 'enemies' of the United States, no matter how far-fetched some of these possibilities may be in reality, are a recurring feature of the show's depiction of the War on Terror.

In Season Two, for example, Gansa and Gordon go so far as to suggest that al Qaeda and Hezbollah are working *with* one another to attack America. This fictionalised coalition is illogical, fanciful, and offers viewers a misguided understanding of the Middle East and the internal politics of Islam. The concept of the Shiite Hezbollah giving sanctuary or assistance to the Sunni al Qaeda is highly unlikely, as the two organisations regard one another as apostates, and hold differing opinions on America's role in the Middle East. Moreover, the groups are not simply opposed on religious grounds and can also be differentiated by their internal political structures and geographical positions.[8] *Homeland*'s inability to outline distinctions between the two organisations draws them together in one common goal: the destruction of the United States. The religious, political, and practical differences between al Qaeda and Hezbollah are ignored in favour of aligning these two 'bad' Muslim groups together, therefore depicting the United States as threatened by a plethora of "unidentifiable" enemies (Derrida 84). If *Homeland* were to pay attention to the differences between these two groups, then perhaps viewers might develop a keener understanding of the reasons behind their respective qualms with the United States.

The dearth of research into the differences between al Qaeda and Hezbollah is characteristic of *Homeland*'s depiction of its 'bad' Muslim characters, and most of the CIA's 'enemies' in the series lack the dimension, detail, and background accorded to their American counterparts. A notable exception to this rule is the character of Nicholas Brody, who is permitted as much character depth as *Homeland*'s CIA employees, such as Carrie Mathison

[8] For more information on the hostile relationship between al Qaeda and Hezbollah, see Bilal Y. Saab and Bruce O. Reidel's article, "Hezbollah and Al Qaeda," *The New York Times* (2007), as well as Bernard Haykel's "The Enemy of my Enemy is Still My Enemy," *The New York Times* (n.d.). Haykel notes that Hezbollah is more accommodating towards the United States than al Qaeda, and has fought alongside American troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. The two groups also differ in their political ambitions. Al Qaeda is a loosely affiliated network of operatives, whereas Hezbollah is more akin to Hamas, in that it comprises political, military, and civilian wings.

and Saul Berenson, and is furnished with a concrete back story of the eight years leading up to his return to the United States.

In the very first episode of the show, while he is Abu Nazir's prisoner, Brody is moved from his cell into a room in the al Qaeda leader's house. Nazir feeds and clothes him, and requests that he teach English to his son, Issa (Rohan Chand). It is during this time that Brody converts to Islam, and he conducts his prayers under the watchful eye of the bin Ladenesque antagonist. Over time, a bond develops between Brody and Issa and the boy becomes like a son to him. But the child is killed when a drone strike, ordered by the CIA and the American vice president, demolishes a *madrassa*,[9] killing 82 children, Issa included. "And they call us terrorists," observes a devastated Nazir, as he and Brody mourn Issa's death (Jeremy Nachmanoff, "Crossfire" 42:42).[10] It is this incident that truly 'turns' Brody, who decides to seek vengeance for the premature death of his beloved student. He promises Nazir that he will return to the United States and kill those responsible for the strike – Vice President William Walden (Jamie Sheridan) and David Estes, the director of the CIA – with a suicide vest.

The inclusion of Issa's death at the hands of a drone – or, Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) – is a significant aspect of *Homeland*'s plot for a number of reasons. First, it touches on some pertinent truths about the asymmetrical quality of drone warfare, such as the high number of civilian casualties that it produces.[11] Second, by having viewers bear witness to the horror of the strike through Brody's eyes, Gansa and Gordon remove us from the relative comfort of the United States and situate us in a location that is frequently on the receiving end of American military violence – a region in which precarity is commonplace. This positioning allows us to see the War on Terror from the perspective of those who are considered 'enemies' of America. Third, and this is critical, *Homeland* demonstrates that the paramilitary actions of the CIA are *directly responsible* for turning Brody into an 'enemy' of the American government. Before embarking on his suicide mission, he composes a confessional video, in which he accounts, quite deliberately, the motives for his attack:

> People will say I was broken, I was brainwashed. People will say that I was 'turned' into a terrorist, taught to hate my country. I love my country. What I am is a Marine [. . .] and as a Marine, I swore an oath to defend the United States of America against enemies both foreign and domestic. My action this day is against such domestic enemies: the vice president and members of his national security team who I know to be liars and war criminals; responsible for atrocities they were never held accountable

[9] *Madrassa* is an Arabic term for an educational institution – religious or secular.
[10] When citing *Homeland*, my in-text references will appear as such: (Director, "Episode Title" Time of quotation). If the episode has been cited previously, the director's name will be omitted.
[11] See Grégoire Chamayou, *Drone Theory* (2015), 13–16.

> for. This is about justice for 82 children whose deaths were never acknowledged, and whose murder is a stain on the soul of this nation.
>
> (Michael Cuesta "Marine One" 03:45)

For reasons I will clarify in the next section of this chapter, Brody does not succeed in his mission. His statement, however, is a powerful antidote to the conception of the 'terrorist' as an irrational individual whose motives can only be explained in cultural or religious terms. Writing for the popular culture website, *A.V. Club*, Todd van der Werff (2012) agrees that Brody's resentment is understandable, arguing that his "anger at the [American] government's drone programme and believing it abandons what makes [the] nation great is a completely justifiable position ("Review Q&A"). Indeed, in depicting Brody's response and the explanation of his actions as a result of Issa's death, *Homeland* seems to be inviting viewers to acknowledge the deeply personal and political pains that motivate 'terrorists.' As we are prompted at this point to empathise with Brody, Gansa and Gordon provide a compelling counternarrative to Walden's assertion that it "doesn't matter *why* terrorists do what they do" ("Marine One" 34:20, emphasis added). Moreover, in framing the actions of the United States from Brody's perspective, *Homeland* effectively blurs the lines between the 'friend' and the 'enemy.' Assumed 'friends' – the CIA and the American government – are rendered 'enemies' in Brody's eyes, and viewers are encouraged to recognise the damaging effects that the War on Terror has wrought on populations in the Middle East.

As well as underlining the potential repercussions of American foreign policy, Brody's decision to attack the United States also indicates *Homeland*'s ability to play into its viewers' biggest fears. That someone as patriotic as a Marine can be 'turned' – by the actions of his own government no less – is also a reminder that the categories of 'friend' and 'enemy' "intersect and ceaselessly change places" (Derrida 72). Those who were once 'friends' are now 'enemies' – terror could strike at any moment and from the most unlikely of places. No one, not even the CIA, can be considered safe.

Despite the show's reliance on the figure of the 'bad' Muslim as a source of danger to the United States, there are also a number of characters within the CIA and American government whose militaristic and unilateral approaches to the War on Terror *Homeland* encourages viewers to scrutinise. Individuals such as Vice President Walden and CIA Director David Estes are 'friends' to the United States as a result of their commitment to American security, yet are also portrayed as myopic remnants of the Bush administration's "shock and awe" military campaigns (Woodward 102). For example, Estes admits that the CIA is

concerned with gathering crucial intelligence as well as "projecting American power" ("Marine One" 1:06:50). Walden is also framed as an unsympathetic and belligerent character, and his hawkish attitude is best exemplified in his derisive response to Brody's question about the long-term effects of America's support for Israel: "You really give a shit about the Arabs? They yell 'death to America' whatever we do" (Michael Cuesta, "Beirut is Back" 06:22). In the eyes of characters such as Estes and Walden, their 'enemies' are nothing more than obstacles to American hegemony. They see their harsh policies as justifiable, even righteous and, while these characters might occasionally appear as "cartoonishly malevolent," they nevertheless act as reminders to *Homeland*'s viewers that even those who profess to be the most ardent 'friends' to America should not be exempt from criticism (Cohen, "Bad TV").

For Derrida, justice as a pretext for the use of force is nothing more than a political ruse, and he claims that "the conviction of possessing the truth, the good, the just, is what sparks the worst hostilities" (113). *Homeland*'s volatile protagonist, Carrie Mathison, is no stranger to sparking hostilities in her role as a case-officer and, although she acknowledges the "fucked up business" of the CIA, she is – at least initially – uncompromising in her belief that she is fighting for the right reasons (Dan Attias, "Clean Skin" 44:23). Unfortunately, for Carrie, her belief in the virtue of her actions is misguided. Her actions and decisions sometimes have life threatening consequences for other characters, and her superiors often chastise her unorthodox methods of apprehending her targets. Even the morally questionable Estes tells her: "there's no bridge you won't burn, no earth you won't scorch" – succinctly summarising both her tenacity and sheer recklessness ("Crossfire" 19:56).

A method favoured by Carrie in her pursuit of gaining intelligence about her suspects is sexual seduction. She is, for example, so convinced that Brody is working with Nazir that she begins "fucking [him] for information" (Tucker Gates, "Achilles Heel" 42:31). To her disappointment, her tactics yield no tangible results, but she continues to sleep with him despite her suspicions. What Gansa calls Carrie's "doomed romance" with Brody is only one instance of her readiness to exploit her sexuality ("What's Alan").[12] In Season Four, she sleeps with a young Pakistani student, Aayan Ibrahim (Suraj Sharma), in a bid to acquire information about his uncle, a Taliban emir. Carrie's sexual strategies go largely unpunished not because her superiors do not notice her deeds but because she is regarded as an essential asset to the CIA. "Don't think I can't do whatever is required," she tells her supervisors; emphasising that she is

[12] Carrie has sex with Brody (or other characters) in all but a handful of episodes throughout Seasons One and Two, leading me to the conclusion that Gansa and Gordon's depiction of Carrie's frequent use of the bedroom for her intelligence gathering is an exploitation of Clare Danes's sexual appeal in order to garner more viewers.

not above using deceitful and dangerous tactics to keep the United States safe from potential 'terrorists' (Seith Mann, "There's Something Else Going On" 33:57).

Often, certainly in terms of her own self-understanding, Carrie's successful career as a case officer seems intimately bound to her bipolar disorder. She admits: "the meds have saved my life. Literally. But something is lost, too" (Keith Gordon, "Super Powers" 41:53). That Carrie does her best work when she is not on her medication suggests her desire to be unrestrained in her actions, and stresses the extent to which she relies on what Rebecca Nicholson, of *The Guardian* (2012), describes as her "sixth sense" ("Season Two"). Anne T. Donahue, writing for *The Guardian* in 2013, goes further, arguing that *Homeland*'s portrayal of Carrie's bipolar disorder is irresponsible, and teeters "on the edge of mental health shaming" ("'Crazy Carrie'"). The fact that Carrie is in a constant process of trying to give up her medication – which she feels "slows [her] down" – in order to function 'normally' at the CIA makes Donahue's observation difficult to discredit ("Marine One" 22:28).

At times, the series itself seems to suggest that Carrie's condition – in which her suspicions about Brody are dismissed as irrational by her CIA colleagues but are subsequently proved accurate – acts as a powerful analogue to the paranoid character of the United States itself in the wake of the intelligence failures that lead to 9/11. In the same way that the Bush administration was "beyond hell-bent for action" against Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein, Carrie is obsessed with catching America's 'enemies' (Woodward 175). Her unshakeable conviction that her hunches are accurate often drives her to make impulsive decisions that land the CIA in potential trouble. For example, her doubts as to Brody's character lead her to begin an illegal surveillance operation, during which she installs cameras and microphones in his family's home. She does so without consulting Saul or Estes and without attaining a FISA warrant.[13] Of course, because Carrie's misgivings about Brody – and many other suspects – prove to be correct, her employers frequently overlook her methodological transgressions. She is more than fallible; she is dangerous, and yet her actions provide results. Thus, her contribution to the CIA and the safety of the 'homeland' is characterised as an indispensible part of America's counterterrorism strategy. According to her mentor, Saul, she is "the smartest and the dumbest fucking person" that he has ever known, and viewers are encouraged to agree with this sentiment (Michael Cuesta, "The Choice" 33:21). Regardless of the damage she causes in the interim, Carrie is representative of the "useful" 'friend' (Derrida

[13] Federal Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978. The FISA warrant permits governmental agencies to spy on American citizens at the discretion of a High Court judge. See Suskind, "False Positives," 11–41.

23), and an example of the morally misguided but ultimately acceptable face of the War on Terror.

The foil to Carrie's volatility is the character of Saul Berenson: a Jewish CIA veteran who prefers to "figure the problem out, not obliterate it," and who is portrayed as compassionate (especially towards Carrie), even-keeled, and dependable (Guy Ferland, "Broken Hearts" 04:50). Saul is the type of guardian that the American public could only wish for in a post-Bush landscape, and his moral clarity and wisdom persuade *Homeland*'s viewers to take solace in the fact that, although the War on Terror has been raging for over a decade, there are individuals taking charge of it who are measured and level-headed. Saul does not endorse state force to the same degree as someone like Estes, and only resorts to militaristic intervention when necessary.

Rachel Shukert, writing for *The Tablet* in 2015, suggests that Saul represents the "moral centre" of *Homeland*, adding that he is "a force for justice in the middle of a whirl of changing allegiances and double-crosses; always loyal, always searching for the most ethical solution in a world where there are only bad options" ("Loyalties Lie"). Saul's sensible demeanour frames him as the responsible face of the War on Terror – the 'good' cop to Carrie's 'bad' one – and, unlike his protégé, he never jeopardises the safety of the CIA or the 'homeland.' He is portrayed as a virtuous character and, according to Derrida, "friendship based on virtue is, by definition, impeccable" (205). Throughout *Homeland*, the contrasting characters of Saul and Carrie work alongside one another at the CIA. These two 'friends' – one "virtuous," the other, "useful" – are relentless in their fight against America's 'enemies' (Derrida 205, 23). Their 'enemies,' however, are depicted as numerous, cunning, and exceptionally difficult to catch. And sometimes, they are hiding in plain sight.

3.2 Season One and Two: The 'Enemy Within'

Following his return to America, Brody is perceived by the public as more than just a soldier returning from the dangers of occupied Iraq, and the nation's media insists on painting him as a veritable war hero – the ultimate representation of the national 'friend.' The reason he is not seen as an 'enemy' is not merely because of the covert methods he employs to remain hidden as a 'terrorist' but, more significantly, because he lacks what Derrida calls the "*practical identification*" required to gauge who or what is the 'enemy' (116, emphasis original). That is to say that, because Brody's appearance and status make him appear so firmly situated within

the conceptual framework of the American 'friend,' he cannot be perceived as an 'enemy.' He is a white, American Marine, meaning that he destabilises the notion of the "friend or enemy *qua* citizen" (120). Brody's status as a hero is so prevalent within the perception of the American public that he is encouraged by Walden to run for Congress. Getting close to the vice president and his team is part of Brody's plan, and he accepts the offer in order to fulfil his obligations to Issa and Nazir.

Brody's promise to kill the vice president and his staff (not to mention himself) with a suicide vest is an act of appalling violence. *Homeland*, however, appears to ask viewers to consider just how different Nazir's idea of a "justifiable act of retaliation" is to the CIA's drone strike on Issa's *madrassa* (Michael Cuesta, "The Smile" 27:46). Both, the show implies, are morally reprehensible, but the question I would like to ask is, although Brody's attempt at killing Walden is encouraged by Nazir and constitutes a definite political act of personal vengeance, would he still act the way he does if he were not a Muslim? Put simply, is his desire to avenge Issa's death in some violent way related to his conversion to Islam?

Throughout Season One and Two of *Homeland*, viewers are frequently reminded that Brody is both a Muslim and an American. He takes great care to hide his conversion from his wife, Jessica (Morena Baccarin), and uses his garage to conduct his morning and evening *salat*. As he steps into the garage, ominous, oriental music lilts its way into the score. When Brody begins his prayers, there is a flashback to him walking out of his cell in Iraq. As the Brody of the past stumbles forward, he turns to see his al Qaeda guards at their morning *salat*. Prayer therefore represents a sense of emancipation for Brody, as his ability to leave his cell is entangled with his witnessing of his captors' commitment to Islam. The feeling of freedom that Brody associates with Islam gives him strength. As a result of the promise he made to Nazir, this prayer-induced fortitude is exactly what he needs whenever he has doubts over his decision to avenge Issa's death. Prayer and violence are therefore bound up with one another in *Homeland*'s depiction of Islam. Being a Muslim, the series seems to suggest, makes it easier to prepare for both murder and death.

When Jessica learns from her daughter, Dana (Morgan Saylor), that Brody has been praying in the garage, she is incensed, and angrily confronts her husband. She claims that she thought he had put all this "crazy stuff" behind him, and throws his Qur'an on the floor, shouting: "These are the people who tortured you. These are the people who, if they found out Dana [. . . was] having sex, they would stone her to death in a soccer stadium" ("The Smile" 36:53). For Jessica, Islam signifies nothing more than antediluvian cruelty. She fails to separate the religion itself from those who abuse and strain it to its limits, and asserts that she married

a "US Marine," meaning that, in her eyes, Brody's beliefs are incompatible with his career in the American military and "cannot happen" to their marriage (37:47). That Brody can be both an American and a Muslim is unthinkable for Jessica, and I argue that her reaction is *Homeland*'s method of commenting on a specific type of American: one who is blinded by "Culture Talk" and cannot conceptualise Islam as anything more than a political marker of identity which, at its heart, is premised on violence (Mamdani 17).[14] For Jessica, Brody's new faith symbolises a disavowal of the United States, and she sees her husband ideologically siding with the 'enemy.'

Despite the mental and spiritual resilience that his conversion to Islam instils in him, Brody fails in his attempt to kill Walden. Carrie's suspicions drive her to confront Dana and convince Brody's daughter to call and persuade her father not to follow through with his plan. After a few excruciating minutes of internal conflict between his duty to Nazir and Issa and his love for Dana, Brody does not execute the meticulously designed attack.

Brody's decision not to detonate his vest is a crucial moment in *Homeland*, as it undermines the show's potential to adequately frame the repercussions of the War on Terror. The scene becomes saturated with an unwelcome didacticism and sentimentality, and seems to suggest that the desire to commit an act of terrorism can be overcome by something as simple as love for one's family. Rather than having Brody go through with his plan – therefore fulfilling the show's early promise of depicting the devastating consequences of American foreign policy – *Homeland*'s narrative collapses into an unspectacular and predictable homily about the primacy of family. This narrative is dangerous because it undercuts the political dimensions of terrorism by implying that suicide bombers who *do* detonate their vests have nothing to lose by taking both their own lives and the lives of others. In other words, Brody's inability to detonate his vest propagates the opinion that successful suicide attacks are only successful because the perpetrators lack emotional depth and are capable solely of irrational violence.

Understanding the suicide bomber as unreasonable and exclusively volatile, claims Talal Asad, has been at the heart of American and European discourse on suicide terrorism (40). This discourse, according to the author, works to frame the bomber as "alienated – that is, as not being properly integrated into Western civilisation" (41). As a Marine, Brody is a product of "Western civilisation," perhaps indicating another reason as to why he cannot go

[14] See Mamdani's chapter, "Culture Talk," for an analysis of the harmful ideological effects of perceiving culture and politics as bound up in single monolithic entity, 17–62.

through with his plan. He is not, to use Asad's term, "alienated" enough to kill his fellow citizens, and therefore fails as a would-be suicide bomber (41).

Only once Saul intercepts a micro-disk of Brody's confession do any of Carrie's fellow officers believe what seem, to them, her far-fetched accusations about the former Marine. Once in CIA custody, Brody confesses to his intentions. Carrie, Saul, and Estes assure him that his secret will be kept safe. His status as a 'friend' to Nazir means that Brody now represents an exceptionally useful asset to the CIA and so, instead of handing him over to the FBI, Carrie and her team plan to use Brody to assist them in their fight against Nazir. Not for the first time does the character of Brody demonstrate how fluid the margins are between the 'enemy' and the 'friend,' and his ingression into the machinations of the CIA aligns him with the very institution responsible for Issa's death.

Brody's failure to fulfil his obligations to Issa prompts Nazir to make his way to the United States, where he kidnaps Carrie in a bid to force Brody to act. Although a team of CIA contractors eventually kills him, Nazir does coerce Brody to deactivate Walden's pacemaker remotely, killing the vice president in the process. Nazir's presence on American soil affirms the climate of insecurity in which *Homeland* operates. The al Qaeda leader asserts his refusal to "run, hide, and wait for death like a cowering animal, like bin Laden," preferring to seek his revenge proactively (Dan Attias "Two Hats" 17:11). In distancing Nazir from his real-world predecessor, *Homeland* presents its viewers with a unique brand of 'enemy' mastermind: one who can covertly enter the United States, kidnap a CIA officer, and plan the assassination of the vice president. "Invisibility," notes Mitchell, is the "chief characteristic of terrorism," adding that "its ability to pass through all systems of surveillance without detection" is what makes terrorism so menacing (84). Nazir's entry in the United States reiterates the unpredictability of this invisible threat, and validates Carrie's paranoid mindset by framing her homeland as a country with permeable borders through which undetectable 'enemies' can slip.

3.3 Fictionalising Tragedy: The Lasting Legacy of 9/11

In the final episode of Season Two, "The Choice," a massive explosion – emanating from Brody's car – rips through the CIA headquarters at Langley, killing 219 people. Brody convinces Carrie that he is not responsible for the attack, but al Qaeda nevertheless release his confession – meant for his attack on Walden – to the news media. That Brody has nothing to do with the bombing at Langley is now irrelevant. Because, in the eyes of the public and

intelligence services, he has shifted from 'friend' to 'enemy' he has no choice but to flee the United States.

The attack on Langley, referred to in the show as "12/12," is *Homeland*'s most spectacular depiction of violence committed against American targets (Lesli Linka Glatter, "Tin Man is Down" 15:11). Not only does 12/12 act as an "intentional echo of 9/11" but, significantly, it becomes memorialised in the same manner (Hogan, "Finale Recap"). If, as I proposed in my first chapter, the attacks on Word Trade Centre and the Pentagon symbolised a violent challenge to America's economic and military dominance over the globe, then *Homeland*'s representation of this tragedy on American soil takes the symbolism further to suggest the possibility of an attack on the centre of American intelligence. 12/12 represents a worst-case scenario in which no one, least of all the CIA, is safe and, as the very organisation in charge of stopping attacks of this nature, the Agency's efficacy is brought into serious doubt. How can the CIA be trusted, *Homeland* asks, if they cannot prevent attacks such as this? How can they be tasked with winning the War on Terror if they cannot keep Brody – a self-confessed 'terrorist' – in their clutches? The shortcomings of the CIA are laid bare by Gansa and Gordon and, as a tattered American flag ripples in the wind outside a ruined Langley, Carrie bemoans the fact that she has failed in her task of "making sure we don't get hit again" (Michael Cuesta, "Pilot" 54:40).

While al Qaeda release Brody's confession and a statement claiming responsibility for the Langley bombing, we soon discover that the main culprit behind 12/12 is none other than one of the nation-states that made up George W. Bush's original "axis of evil": the Islamic Republic of Iran ("State"). Rather than casting the perpetrator of 12/12 as a non-state group, Gansa and Gordon have chosen a familiar 'enemy' to fill the role of the aggressor.[15] The nation-state of Iran has long been regarded by many Americans as an "existential threat to Israel" and, therefore, to the United States (Blum, *America's* 96). I argue that, in the same way that Tony Blair and George Bush manufactured an image of Iraq as an imminent threat to British and American safety in order to justify the invasion and occupation of the country, *Homeland* imposes a frame around Iran that classifies the nation as an immediate danger to America.[16] In reality, "Iran is not any kind of military threat" to the United States, yet the series appears to

[15] For a considerable contextualization of Iran and America's strained political relationship see Barbara Slavin's *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies* (2007), as well as Sayed Hossein Mousavian and Shahir Shahidsaless's, *Iran and the United States* (2015).

[16] See Sir John Chilcot's *Report on the Iraq Enquiry* (2016), which underlines the erroneous reasons given by both Blair and Bush for the invasion and occupation of Iraq.

insist on the notion that anyone, non-state or otherwise, can be configured as an 'enemy' in the War on Terror (Blum, *America's* 105).

For a series which began by problematising an absolutist interpretation of the concepts of 'friend' and 'enemy,' *Homeland*'s depiction of Iran as an undeniable 'enemy' of America from the outset of Season Three undoes the careful work that Gansa and Gordon achieved throughout the first two seasons. The creators, it seems, have fallen into a narrative that, according to *The Washington Post*'s Laura Durkay (2014), is premised on "mashing together every manifestation of political Islam, Arabs, Muslims and the whole Middle East into a Frankenstein-monster global terrorist threat that simply doesn't exist" ("Most Bigoted"). Durkay's observation echoes the thoughts of Jack Shaheen, author of *Reel Bad Arabs* (2009), who notes that Hollywood and American television's often deprecating depiction of Muslims usually includes "the fictional setting [of] Arab Land," which is always hostile to outsiders (2). As *Homeland*'s biased and one-dimensional depiction of the Muslim world demonstrates, Shaheen's position remains pertinent. Furthermore, the idea that the Iranian regime would join forces with a non-state group like al Qaeda foments the notion of America as vulnerable to a multitude of threats. Thus, as mentioned earlier, Derrida's description of the imagining of a mass of 'enemies' as a "*phobia*" appears to be a perfectly apt description of the manner in which *Homeland* groups together those who are hostile to American interests (84). The manufacturing of innumerable enemies leads the show's creators to align Iran (not to mention Hezbollah) with al Qaeda, meaning that the series offers an erroneous understanding of the internal politics of Islam, as well as a deeply problematic reading of complexities of allegiance in the Middle East itself.[17]

Before I begin my analysis of Season Three, I should point out that *Homeland*'s potential to frame the War on Terror through the eyes of America's 'enemies' is significantly weakened by the disappearance of Brody. Although he does play a key role towards the end of Season Three, the former Marine is no longer the same man who put on the suicide vest in Season One. The removal of his unique perspective from *Homeland*'s narrative restricts the creators' attempts to offer viewers a fuller picture of the War on Terror and, as a result, Season Three struggles to balance its sympathies between the CIA and their 'bad Muslim counterparts.

[17] The Iranian regime is the main source of funding for Hezbollah. See Mamdani, 171–72.

3.4 Season Three: A Familiar and Necessary 'Enemy'

With the CIA's reputation in tatters – and the main suspect of 12/12 having disappeared – Season Three opens with a series of public investigations aimed at clarifying how the CIA could have allowed an attack on the scale of 12/12 to occur on American soil, let alone at Langley itself. These hearings are chaired by the new director of the CIA, Senator Andrew Lockhart (played by the playwright Tracy Letts), who claims that the Agency has been "driven into the fucking ground by poor decision-making and god-awful leadership" (Lesli Linka Glatter, "Still Positive" 05:38). While the Brody narrative takes an unusual turn with him rearing his wanted head in Karakas, Venezuela, *Homeland*'s initial focus in Season Three appears to be on the status of the CIA, as well as its response to those accountable for 12/12.[18] Season Three also introduces an important 'good' Muslim character: the Iranian refugee, Fara Sherazi (Nazanin Boniadi), who is recruited by Saul to track the finances that made the attack of 12/12 possible.

Former White House journalist, Ron Suskind, claims that financial intelligence, or "*finint*," is a "means of identifying the players, the place, and, possibly, the intent" of terrorist attacks. He adds that that *finint* is often more accurate that *humint* (human intelligence) or *sigint* (signals intelligence) because it goes after suspects who fund acts of terror rather than only those who commit them (114). During her time at Langley, Fara's dedication to *finint* earns her many admirers in the CIA, and her commitment to the safety of the United States frames her undoubtedly as a 'good' Muslim. Like all 'good' Muslims, however, she has to prove herself to her American employers.

Fara first appears in the second episode of Season Three, "Uh… Oh… Ah" (Lesli Linka Glatter) and, as she walks through the security checkpoint at Langley, other Agency employees are disturbed by her observation of *hijab*. When she meets Saul in a situation-room, he looks at her attire and shakes his head in disbelief: "You wearing that thing on your head: It's one big 'fuck you' to the people who would have been your co-workers [. . .]. So if you need to

[18] It is interesting to consider that Venezuela is another nation that could be framed as an 'enemy' state from the perspective of the United States. Blum notes that Hugo Chavez's "ideological crime" of being a socialist – combined with Venezuela's oil-rich economy and independence from Washington – earmarked him as threat the United States hegemonic ambitions in Central and South America during the Cold War (*America's* 173).

wear it, if you really need to, which is your right, you better be the best analyst we've ever seen" (15:23).

Saul's comments to the Agency's latest employee raise a number of important points about the 'good' Muslim, 'bad' Muslim binary. First, the notion that Fara's external display of her devotion to her religion acts as an affront to those who died on 12/12 only strengthens the parallel that *Homeland* draws between Islam and acts of terrorism, and implies that Fara is insensitive to the trauma and loss that the CIA – indeed, America as a whole – has experienced. Second, Saul makes it clear that it is Fara's "right" to don the headscarf, as the United States is a nation in which freedom of religion occupies a primary place in the country's constitution. His emphasis on American rights is significant, as he is perhaps differentiating the majority of Muslim countries, and their strict religious legislation, from American values. Last, by virtue of Fara being both a Muslim and a CIA analyst, Saul requires her not to be a mere 'good' Muslim but, in fact, to be the "best" Muslim. This is something she can do by joining the CIA's Overseas Contingency Operations ("Uh... Oh... Ah" 15:30).

In the same way that Brody chooses the path of the 'good' Muslim after his arrest, Fara commits herself to the protection of the United States by virtue of her position at the CIA. As a result of Brody being an American character, however, he is granted a complex back story – in clear contrast to the Iranian Fara. She eagerly takes on the role of the 'good' Muslim, yet her reasons for doing so are unclear, and remain so throughout *Homeland*'s duration. Of course, the fact that she is Iranian only reinforces the notion of her as a 'friend' to the CIA, for if she is willing to fight with the United States against the country of her birth then surely she is on the 'right side' of the War on Terror.

Fara is also similar to the protagonist of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, in that she, like Changez, realises the challenges involved in proving oneself a 'good' Muslim in the United States after 9/11 and *Homeland*'s fictional echo of this attack in 12/12. Their respective occupations are premised on benefitting America but, while Changez eventually realises that his occupation facilitates conditions of precarity in the Muslim world, Fara remains resolute in her choice to be a "useful" 'friend' to her adopted nation (Derrida 23). As a CIA analyst, her inherent value as a 'friend' is measured solely by her ability to assist the Agency in gathering financial intelligence about potential threats. Her friendship is therefore dependant on her ability to allocate enmity to others.

Writing for *NY Daily News*, Ethan Sacks (2013) notes that Fara is a "rare positive Muslim figure on a show where most Islamic characters are moustache-twirling bad guys" ("Episode Four Recap"). While Sacks makes a credible point, it is important to remember that

the only reason Fara is portrayed as a "positive Muslim figure" is because she supports the War on Terror. An anonymous Iranian blogger writing for the popular culture website, *Complex* (2013), observes that Fara is "supposed to tap into the complexities of the Iranian-American diaspora" but ends up looking like a "two-dimensional poster girl for ideal immigrant behaviour" ("Notes from Iran"). It is difficult to disagree with this remark and I argue that, rather than problematising the 'good' Muslim, 'bad' Muslim dichotomy, Fara's character actually reinforces this binary by being a role model for just how 'good' a 'good' Muslim should be.

Another important detail to consider is that Saul's inflammatory outburst regarding Fara's headscarf is in no way framed as Islamophobic, racist, or demeaning. Because he represents, in the words of *Jacobin* writers Deepa Kumar and Arun Kundnani (2013), *Homeland*'s "bearer of moral wisdom," there is no suggestion that his anger at Fara's outward display of her commitment to Islam is unjustified ("Imagination"). In fact, despite bringing her close to tears, Saul does no apologise for his hurtful and degrading remarks, and he instructs her to begin working right away.

Fara's dedication to *finint* leads the Agency to the conclusion that Maijid Javadi (Shaun Toub), a Deputy Chief of Iran's Ministry of Intelligence, funded the attack on Langley. In a complex but factually improbable plan, Saul manages to lure Javadi to the United States. Before he is arrested and taken to Langley, however, the Iranian visits his ex-wife in the in the Washington D.C. area, where he brutally murders both her and his daughter in-law.

For a show that attempts to erect a plausible frame around the action of the War on Terror, *Homeland*'s third season might seem too far-fetched. "Who on earth would have approved this mess [the Javadi operation] in the first place, in real life?" asks *The Atlantic*'s Richard Lawson (2013) – a question that resonates with other reviewers ("Real Problem"). That Javadi, an experienced intelligence officer, could be lured to the United States under false pretences is evidence that the series, according to *Pajiba*'s Dustin Rowles (2013), appears to have "stretched its storyline beyond credulity" ("Absurdity"). *The New York Post*'s Robert Rorke (2013), admits to nearly abandoning the series mid-season, noting that it had transformed itself from a "critical darling" to a show "impossible to take seriously" ("Take Seriously"). Rorke continues: "If *Homeland* was just another cheesy network show written by a bunch of LA hacks who don't care what they throw against the wall, fans and critics wouldn't feel so let down. But *Homeland* was supposed to be different, and it was. It was great. No more" ("Take Seriously"). The responses of these reviewers echo my earlier assessment of *Homeland*'s failure to live up to its early potential, and where Season Three falls explicitly short is its

inability to imbue its 'bad' Muslim characters with any nuance or complexity. Javadi is the perfect embodiment of this failure.

Javadi justifies his grisly murder of his ex-wife because she committed an act of infidelity by fleeing to America from post-revolutionary Iran. He even goes so far as to confess to Saul that he wanted to "stone her" but did not have adequate time (Carl Franklin "Gerontion" 13:32). Javadi's long-held grudge against his ex-wife is violently resolved, and *Homeland* makes it impossible to read his character as anything other than a brutally 'bad' Muslim. He has, in the words of Scott Collura (2013), who writes for the media company *IGN*, been "written into a corner" by Gansa and Gordon ("'Still Positive' Review"). Although Javadi shares a nationality with the character of Fara, the two could not be more dissimilar. Given that they are the only recurring Iranian characters in *Homeland*'s plot, viewers could be forgiven for accusing the creators of not offering any depictions of Iranians who do *not* fall into the distinct polarities of the 'good' or 'bad' Muslim.

Having incarcerated Javadi at Langley, Saul tells him that he wants to 'play' him back into Tehran in order to kill the Iranian Chief of Intelligence, General Danesh Akbari (Houshang Touzie). The general's murder, reasons Saul, will necessitate a regime change: a *modus operandi* that has historically been "normal policy" for the United States, at least according to Noam Chomsky (*Imperial* 44).[19] White House journalist, Bob Woodward, echoes Chomsky's claims, and asserts that regime change is a "baseline policy" for the CIA (10). Despite the disastrous consequences that have resulted from the CIA's historical role in destabilising or removing various regimes – Saddam Hussein's Iraq and Salvador Allende's Chile, for example – *Homeland* acknowledges that this is a strategy fundamental to the purpose of the Agency.

In having Javadi side with the CIA, *Homeland* appears to disseminate a narrative that rests on a dangerous premise: as long as the former 'enemy' acts in the interests of the 'friend,' their past transgressions are deemed insignificant. This amnesiac approach to counterterrorism is problematic, as it requires one to operate under the assumption that the 'friend,' once befriended, will remain friendly. Under Saul, Javadi has been coerced into resembling a "useful" 'friend' (Derrida 23), and his adjustment of allegiance is made even more significant by the fact that he will be joined in Iran by another figure who is no stranger to the labile positions of the 'friend' and 'enemy': the disgraced Nicholas Brody.

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[19] In *Rogue State* (161–220), Blum provides a comprehensive list of countries whose governments have been subjected to infiltration or outright intervention at the hands of the CIA since the end of the Second World War. Countries such as Iraq (1991–2003); Libya (2011); Afghanistan (1979–92 and 2001); Panama (1989); Somalia (1993); Columbia (1990–2015); Venezuela (2001–2004); Chile (1973); and Nicaragua (1979–1990) are only some examples.

3.5 Imagining Iran: *Homeland* Creates its Own Realities

Back in the United States from Karakas, Brody begins training with a team of Marines in an undisclosed location. This training, reasons Saul, will prepare him to cross the Iraq border into Iran, where he will seek asylum and then team up with Javadi to kill General Akbari. When he arrives in Tehran, Iran's capital, Brody is met with wild celebrations from the Iranian public, and thousands of civilians gather in the streets to welcome him. By portraying his reception in this manner, *Homeland* seems to suggest that the Iranian public are not only familiar with a known 'terrorist' but actually celebrate the arrival of America's most-wanted man – someone whom they view as responsible for 12/12. Of course, the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence knows that Javadi was behind the Langley attack, but it is the perception of Brody in the eyes of Iranian civilians that draws a picture of a county that endorses acts of terror aimed at the United States, and who, like Javadi, are capable of holding a hateful – perhaps even violent – grudge.

Homeland's depiction of Tehran frames the city's inhabitants as a veritable sea of anti-American 'bad' Muslims, and it does so with only partial recourse to a long history of American interference in Iranian politics. There is no mention, for example, of the 1953 coup – organised by the CIA – in which Muhammad Mosaddegh, Iran's secular prime minister, was overthrown. Mosaddegh was replaced with the American and British-backed Muhammad Reza Pahlavi, who ruled as Iran's shah for twenty-five years, until a revolution in 1979 saw the nation become an Islamic Republic (Armstrong, *Fields* 288–89). Without acknowledging the considerable impact that American foreign policy has had on Iran, *Homeland* offers an imbalanced interpretation of both the country itself and why some of its inhabitants might be hostile towards the United States. It is important, here, to remember the character of Fara, and her positioning as both an Iranian and a 'good' Muslim. Although she is included in the show to provide a semblance of balance to *Homeland*'s otherwise negative depiction of Iranians, it should be evident that her character alone does not absolve the framing of this particular country's inhabitants as irrationally hostile to the United States.

Renowned Middle East expert, Fawaz Gerges (2013), claims that *Homeland*'s rendering of Iran's capital city is "not only harmful and insidious," but actually has the potential to "create and enforce hostilities between Americans and Iranians" (qtd. in L.A. Ross). Gerges continues: "the portrayal of Iran and Iranians as terrorists, as violent, as scheming, really enforces Iranians' image of the United States as a hostile nation, as a nation that cannot be trusted" (qtd. in L.A. Ross). Ironically, then, *Homeland*'s attempts to portray Iranians as

innately untrustworthy has a detrimental effect on the image of the United States and, in the process, unintentionally frames Americans as 'enemies' through Iranian eyes.

Brody's status as a hero in Iran grants him a meeting with his target: the Iranian Chief of Intelligence, General Akbari. Once in the general's office, Brody follows through with the mission to assassinate him. He is then arrested and sentenced to death by public hanging: a traumatic scene to which Carrie bears witness in Episode Twelve, "The Star." Notably, Brody's gruesome death takes place in front of a colossal portrait of the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

Khomeini led the rebellion against the American-backed shah in 1979, and his subsequent reign as supreme religious leader of Iran brought with it "a new development on the world scene" (Mamdani 122). Post-1979 Iran, in the eyes of American politicians, was exceptionally threatening, for not only did Khomeini install "an Islamist regime," but he was "determined to act independently of all foreign influences, particularly the United States" (122). He also called the America "the Great Satan" after President Jimmy Carter extended his country's hospitality to the recently deposed shah (121). The turning point for American/Iranian relations came in November 1979, when a group of Khomeini's supporters infiltrated the American Embassy in Tehran, taking fifty-two Americans hostage for 444 days.[20] Memories of the hostage crisis, notes Karen Armstrong, still "sends a shiver through Western society" (*Islam* 149).

Homeland's utilisation of Khomeini's instantly recognisable face – liberally plastered on almost every surface in the show's version of Tehran – is a significant aspect of Season Three, and is designed to act as a symbolic trigger for American viewers in the series' depiction of Iran as a country. As was the case with the iconographic depictions of Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein in the years following 9/11, Khomeini's face acts as a visual signifier of an American 'enemy': something to be freely associated with evil. Moreover, that the death of a former Marine takes place in front of this image suggests that Iranian animosity towards the United States has not been relegated to the past. *Homeland* neither completely ignores nor fully engages with the history between the United States and Iran. Rather, Gansa and Gordon appear content to languish in the long shadow left by Khomeini's regime without also acknowledging that his reign arose in direct response to the rule of the American-backed shah. As such, the series creates its own semi-historical reality, in which fractious American/Iranian relations are

[20] See Mamdani for a detailed discussion of what came to be known as "The Iranian Hostage Crisis," 120–23.

framed as a result of the 1979 revolution rather than of the substantial history of American attempts to influence Iranian governance.

The death of Akbari by Brody's hand, and the subsequent rise of Javadi to the general's position, ushers in an Iranian revolution that stands diametrically opposed to the one of 1979. Rather than Iran retreating into itself and withdrawing from diplomatic relations with the United States, Javadi's covert role as a CIA asset allows him to fulfil the promises that he made to Saul, and he opens up the proverbial "black box" of Iran to American influence ("Still Positive" 36:14).

In reality, relations between Iran and the international community have normalised in recent times, but not as the result of a CIA-backed coup. In 2015, international diplomacy won an important victory when the permanent member states of the United Nations Security Council (P5+1) reached an historical Nuclear Deal with the Iranian government.[21] The deal requires that Iran drastically reduce its nuclear enrichment programme in exchange for the lifting of United Nations sanctions, which have been crippling the country for over a decade.[22] In the long term, the deal will bring relief to a country that has been suffering for an extensive period but, in the case of *Homeland*, Iranian benefits from rejuvenated international relations are far from the mind of the CIA. Instead, Gansa and Gordon focus on the benefits that renewed American/Iranian relations will have on the Agency.

Javadi's placement on the upper rung of the Ministry is depicted as serving only one purpose: American interests. The man who murdered his own wife – not to mention planned and funded 12/12 – suddenly becomes more than a "useful" 'friend' to the CIA and the American government (Derrida 23), and is portrayed as an indispensable tool in the Agency's imperial ambitions. Despite the fact that, in reality, forced regime change seldom works so smoothly, Saul's plan is a great success – for America. That the CIA has covertly enabled a mass murderer to occupy the most influential job in the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence is ignored by Gansa and Gordon, therefore validating, perhaps even romanticising, Saul's irresponsible operation. With regime change in Iran, the ghosts of 12/12 seem to have dissipated, and all at the CIA congratulate Saul and Carrie. The only person who appears to receive no recognition is the man who made the operation possible: Nicholas Brody.

Carrie's attempt to persuade the new CIA director, Andrew Lockhart, that Brody deserves a formal recognition of his sacrifice is ignored. He is, after all, still perceived as a

[21] For more information regarding the Nuclear Deal see Richard Javad Heydarian's article, "Iran Nuclear Deal is a Triumph of Diplomacy," *Al Jazeera* (2015).
[22] See Kasra Naji's article, "Iran Nuclear Deal: Five Effects of Lifting Sanctions," *BBC* (2016).

'terrorist' in the United States, and will always be remembered as the man responsible – in the public eye – for the carnage of 12/12. To Carrie, however, Brody is more than a national hero, more than simply a 'friend.' She, like Javadi recognises that "no one is just one thing," and believes that Brody's chequered past should not stand in the way of the CIA recognising his crucial role in the Agency's reputational rehabilitation following the damage of 12/12 ("The Star" 25:12).

Despite the clear distress that Brody's death causes Carrie, some viewers found themselves relieved when the character was killed off. *Vanity Fair*'s Mike Hogan (2015) asserts that he "practically applauded" when Brody was "strung up" in Tehran, noting that the long-winded relationship between Brody and Carrie detracted from *Homeland*'s ability to become a "high-class spy thriller" ("Why Season Five"). Gansa (2013) reasons that Brody's "shelf-life had expired," adding that he and Gordon felt that the series needed a "reboot" in order to keep viewers engrossed ("Why Brody"). While the relationship between Carrie and Brody did limit *Homeland*'s engagement with the substance of the War on Terror by focusing much of the narrative on their volatile romantic affair, the former Marine represents a unique example in the series of the fluidity of the 'friend'/'enemy' binary. His removal from *Homeland*'s plot closes the only portal through which viewers can access the mind of the supposed terrorist, meaning the show's narrative – in Seasons Four and Five – is framed almost exclusively from the perspective of the CIA and its employees.

There is precious little time for Carrie to mourn the loss of Brody at the end of Season Three. For while relations between America and Iran begin to stabilise, another familiar 'enemy' awakens` in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan. Season Four of *Homeland* begins in the same location where the War on Terror started in 2001, and Carrie takes up a position on the CIA's drone programme in Kabul, Afghanistan.

3.6 Season Four: The Failing Status of the War on Terror

By setting Season Four in Pakistan and Afghanistan, *Homeland*'s creators present a fictionalised account of how the War on Terror is progressing – 14 years since its inception – in the region in which it all began. Because the landscape of the Afghan/Pakistani border is similar to parts of South Africa's Western Cape, Gansa and Gordon opted to shoot Season Four in South Africa. As a South African viewer, seeing the country's Department of Arts and Culture emblem in *Homeland*'s credits is rather disconcerting, as one cannot help but feel

complicit in fuelling the narrative about the War on Terror that the series is disseminating globally. Moreover, that this season was filmed a continent away from the setting of its contents points to an underlying problem of *Homeland*'s narrative – its lack of realistic engagement with the Muslim world.

The geopolitical setting of Season Four is a significant aspect of *Homeland*'s overall narrative trajectory because it calls attention to just how ineffective the War on Terror has been in both Afghanistan and Pakistan.[23] Saul comments on the short-sightedness of his government's approaches to fighting the Taliban in Afghanistan in the first place: "Our planning cycles rarely look more than twelve months ahead. So it hasn't been a fourteen-year war we have been waging, but a one-year war waged fourteen times" (Lesli Linka Glatter, "The Drone Queen" 11:35). The American Ambassador to Pakistan, Martha Boyd (Laila Robins), echoes Saul's indictment on America's capacity to rid the world of terrorism:

> I saw the kill-list after 9/11. You know how many names were on it? Seven, including bin Laden and al Zawahiri. You know how many names are on it today? Over two thousand. It's Alice in fucking Wonderland. You don't even have to be a terrorist anymore apparently; you just have to look like one. ("The Drone Queen" 14:31)

Despite its sarcastic tone, Boyd's statement underlines some significant problems of the War on Terror – problems that *Homeland* does well to encapsulate in its narrative. She queries the efficacy of America's current approach to fighting the War on Terror, and notes that the growth in animosity toward the United States stems directly from the country's actions in Pakistan and Afghanistan after 9/11. Ironically, her role as an Ambassador requires her to present her country in a positive light, yet she has no qualms about criticising American foreign policy. Both Boyd and Saul's comments present viewers with a degree of self-reflexivity and, for a brief moment, *Homeland* appears to revive the promise it held in Seasons One and Two. Although Season Four does offer some criticism about the manner in which the United States has conducted itself on the global stage since 9/11, it does so through the perspective of American characters. Viewers are not afforded an opportunity to observe the actions of the CIA from Pakistani or Afghan positions and, for this reason, *Homeland*'s critique of the War on Terror – at least in Season Four – fails to provide a balanced interpretation of this conflict.

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[23] Since 2014, the Taliban – who were ostensibly defeated by the American military in 2001 – have been nothing short of resurgent. According to the United Nations, the group currently holds more territory in Afghanistan that it did after Operation Enduring Freedom, with nearly half of the country's districts under their control. See Rod Nordland and Joseph Goldstein's article, "Afghan Taliban's Reach Is Widest Since 2001, U.N. Says," *The New York Times* (2015).

Because Season Four situates viewers in a location which is considered a frontline in the global War on Terror, we are able to acknowledge the military means by which this war is being waged. The most ubiquitous instrument in the America's counter-insurgency arsenal is the drone, or UAV – the use of which has become commonplace during Barack Obama's presidency. Mohsin Hamid notes, "The tempo of US drone strikes in Pakistan today remains considerably higher than it was under President Bush" (*Discontent* 166).[24] This increase in attacks is despite the fact that "the elimination of high-value targets – al Qaeda or 'militant' leaders – has been exceedingly rare, fewer than fifty people, or about two percent of all drone deaths" (166). As viewers witnessed in Season One, drone warfare is far from discriminatory, and Season Four has much to say about the both the efficacy and the damage of airstrikes – unmanned or otherwise.

3.7 "The Drone Queen": How Much Is a Pakistani Life Worth?

Episode One of Season Four, "The Drone Queen," opens with Carrie in a situation-room in the American Embassy in Kabul. She is hunting down a Pakistani Taliban leader by the name of Haissam Haqqani,[25] who has been on her kill-list for quite some time.[26] The intelligence with which Carrie has been provided suggests that Haqqani is hiding in a farmhouse in the Pakistani Tribal Areas. Viewers see the farmhouse from the perspective of the Predator drone circling above it and the target is framed by both the drone itself and the screen on which Carrie and her team are watching. In the same way that both Changez and Issa Shamsuddin witness the War on Terror through the frame of television, so too does Carrie. In the case of *Homeland*, however, the protagonist is in control of the frame – she makes the decision about what will be considered the designated parameters of action.

Rather than using the Predator drone's hellfire missiles, Carrie commands the pilot of an F-16 fighter jet to fly over and deliver the strike. Neither the viewer, nor the characters in

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[24] Chamayou explains that, in Pakistan, Libya, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, "the number of patrols by American armed drones increased by 1,200 percent between 2004 and 2012" (13). He also notes that, in the United States Air Force, "more drone operators are trained than all the pilots of fighter planes and bombers put together" (13).

[25] The real-life Haqqani Network, led by Jalaluddin Haqqani, is a clear inspiration for this 'bad' Muslim character and his organisation. For information on the Haqqani Network's rise to power in Afghanistan, see Vahid Brown and Don Rassler's book, *Fountainhead of Jihad* (2013).

[26] Every week, Barack Obama and his staff hold a meeting which has come to be known as "Terror Tuesday." At this meeting, Obama updates his "kill-list": a list of individuals to be targeted by drones in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia, Iraq, Syria and Libya. See John Whitehead's article, "Terror Tuesdays, Kill Lists and Drones," *The Huffington Post* (2012).

the room hear the jet fly over, but both see the devastation that its air-to-ground missiles cause. The farmhouse is obliterated; its occupants all but annihilated, and this destruction prompts wild celebrations from Carrie and her team. As the celebrations continue, a member of staff presents Carrie with a birthday cake with the words, "The Drone Queen" emblazoned on its icing. The commemoration of Carrie's birth in front of a massive screen showing images of death and destruction creates a disturbing visual juxtaposition – one that ought to make viewers uncomfortable. Remembering Butler's assertion that those who "represent a threat to life" do not "appear as lives" (*Frames* 42), it is clear that Carrie's ability to oscillate between taking and celebrating life represents a comment about drone warfare itself, and how detached from the effects of their actions those who operate UAV's are required to be.

Despite the seemingly successful strike on the farmhouse, the celebrations by Carrie and her team do not last long, for the intelligence given to Carrie about Haqqani's location is incorrect. Rather than the farmhouse containing the wanted man and his band of Taliban followers, it is being used for a wedding of one of his relatives. Carrie has murdered forty people who, from an American perspective, happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. What makes the deaths of these innocent Pakistanis even more unsettling is the reaction from Carrie and her embassy team. When she sees on the news that the target was, in fact, a wedding party, she argues that Pakistanis "pull this shit all the time. If it wasn't a wedding they'd say it was a mosque [. . .] or an orphanage, or a mosque for orphans" ("The Drone Queen" 21:30).

Carrie's remarks raise an interesting point about how "grievability" is recognised and how civilian deaths are all too often considered insignificant in the eyes of the CIA (Butler, *Frames* 2). When Carrie claims that Pakistanis "pull this shit all the time," she denies that there are worthy lives that have been destroyed by her actions ("The Drone Queen" 21:30). By virtue of her being the "Drone Queen," she has the benefit of not actually entering into a situation in which *combat* occurs, and the fact that her targets are no more than figures on a screen, or numbers on a list, means that collateral damage, in almost any guise, is both an acceptable and necessary element of what it means to play her part in America's Overseas Contingency Operations. The military clout afforded to drone operators is something that Grégoire Chamayou explores in his book, *Drone Theory* (2015), and he claims that for nations or agencies utilising UAV's rather than troops, "warfare, from being possibly asymmetrical, becomes absolutely unilateral. What could still claim to be combat is converted into a campaign of what is, quite simply, slaughter" (13). Of course, Carrie does not see what she does as "slaughter," and this attitude is a reminder to *Homeland*'s viewers that, throughout the War on

Terror, the American government has given "all kinds of reasons for its killings whilst at the same time refusing to call those killings 'killings' at all" (Butler, *Frames* 47).

Carrie's reaction to the news that she has killed so many civilians emphasises the failure of the CIA to acknowledge its complicity in the suffering and death of others. Gansa and Gordon frame her arrogance and belligerence as a hindrance in the War on Terror effort, and they offer a clear criticism of the misguided nature of the CIA's drone programme. Viewers are therefore invited into a situation from which we can evaluate the consequences (or lack thereof) of American military power, and how this power has been executed during the Obama presidency.

The CIA's lack of accountability for its actions is evident not only in Carrie's response to the news of her ill-executed strike. In fact, the individual who gave her the intelligence suggesting that Haqqani was in the farmhouse, the Islamabad station chief, Sandy Bachman (Corey Stoll), goes so far as to blame the victims of the airstrike: "Haqqani was a legitimate target. Everyone in that farmhouse had to know what he was: a marked man [. . .]. He put their lives at risk, not us" ("The Drone Queen" 15:54). Bachman's claim appears to endorse the notion that individuals who are related to Taliban members should be considered 'bad' Muslims, and are therefore not to be mourned when their lives are lost. For Bachman, the notion that the CIA should be accountable for the deaths of those civilians is absurd. This is because his perspective is framed by the idea that the United States has the *right* to commit acts of wartime violence in a sovereign nation with which they are not at war. In his view, the death of those civilians is not the fault of the CIA, but of Haqqani's relatives, for they are fraternising not with a father, uncle, or husband, but a 'terrorist.'

Bachman's response to the death of Pakistani civilians is shown to be everything that is wrong with American foreign policy, and Gansa and Gordon utilise the character's superciliousness to pose a thinly veiled condemnation of the CIA's drone programme. Like the Bush-era hangovers of Estes and Walden, Bachman's attitude suggests the misplaced need for the United States to project its power at any cost, even if it requires the eradication of non-combatants. *Homeland* appears to be asking viewers to consider not merely the damage that the War on Terror has wrought but also the arrogance of the CIA in waging it. Both Carrie and Bachman's claims are illustrative of how precarity is unevenly distributed, and *Homeland* challenges the frame through which collateral damage is reported and responded to.[27]

[27] Many media outlets in the United States are reluctant to report on deaths caused by drone strikes in Pakistan. Chamayou admits that "[e]xact figures are very hard to establish, but in Pakistan alone estimates of the number of deaths between 2004 and 2012 vary from 2,640 to 3,474 (13).

As punishment for her strike on the farmhouse, Carrie is sent back to the United States, but quickly persuades Lockhart to give her Bachman's job of Islamabad station chief. Carrie's arrival in Pakistan's capital coincides with a unique development in *Homeland*'s plot, for viewers are soon introduced to another intelligence Agency: the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). Through various interactions between the CIA and the ISI, *Homeland*'s viewers encounter the complexity of international relations, as well as the difficulty of diplomacy between nation-states. The relationship between the ISI and the CIA is far from straightforward and, by characterising many of the ISI's employees as 'bad' Muslims, *Homeland* depicts the United States as isolated from its 'friends' and vulnerable to its 'enemies.'

3.8 Diplomacy, Demagoguery, and Death

Throughout Season Four of *Homeland*, the ISI are portrayed in a less than flattering manner. While there are legitimate reasons for believing that this organisation – much like any civilian intelligence agency – has factions within it that are corrupt, the manner in which the ISI is framed implies that there are elements within this institution that are deeply hostile to the interests of the United States.[28] In reality, America's historical relationship with the ISI is as resilient as it is duplicitous. The ISI initially rose to prominence during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, and the CIA used them as a channel through which they could supply weapons to the Afghan *mujahedeen* (Cockburn, *The Rise* 100). Since 1990, however, ISI support for non-state extremist groups that arose out of the Soviet withdrawal has not wavered, and Cockburn notes that there is clear evidence of the ISI sponsoring the Taliban (58).[29]

Given the controversial status of the ISI as an American ally, it can therefore come as no surprise that *Homeland* portrays this organisation as innately untrustworthy. Although Gansa and Gordon are astute to characterise the CIA as an institution that is not above reproach, their illustration of the ISI is as unambiguous as it is deprecating. An apt depiction of the ISI's perfidious behaviour is when Saul – having been in Islamabad to deliver a shipment of weapon materiel – is kidnapped by an ISI agent, Farhad Ghazi (Tamer Burjaq), and delivered to Haqqani's hiding place in the Tribal Areas. Saul's kidnapping is not the only example of the

[28] See Mohsin Hamid's chapter, "Why They Get Pakistan Wrong," *Discontent and Its Civilisations*, 137–51.
[29] For more information on the relationship between the CIA and the ISI, see Mamdani's chapter, "Afghanistan: The High Point of the Cold War," 119–77.

way in which the ISI is characterised as being in alliance with the Taliban and/or impinging on American interests in Pakistan. One significant 'bad' Muslim of Season Four is Tasneem Qureshi (Nimrat Kaur), an ISI official, who endeavours to destabilise any foothold America attempts to gain in Pakistan. Tasneem is a key player in the kidnapping of Saul, and she manages to persuade Martha Boyd's husband, Dennis (Mark Moses), to pass on embassy secrets to her so that she might use them to harm Americans working in Pakistan. Qureshi even manages to coerce Dennis into switching out Carrie's lithium medication for potent hallucinogenics, which causes Carrie untold misery throughout Season Four.

Following the capture of Saul, Lockhart makes his way to Islamabad to negotiate the former director's release. Lockhart's comments to the ISI's officials are inflammatory and insensitive, and he accuses them of aiding Haqqani's capture of Saul, as well as undermining American interests in the region. In fact, Lockhart claims that it is "no secret that there are elements within [Pakistan's] intelligence services and armed forces which are sympathetic to Mr Haqqani [. . .] just as they were to Osama bin Laden" (Carl Franklin, "Redux"13:56). His assertion is not without context, for we must remember that when bin Laden was found in 2011, his compound in Abbottabad was suspiciously close to the Pakistani Military Academy.[30] The distrust that the United States has of the ISI is therefore understandable. What Director Lockhart fails to realise, however, is that the fictional Haqqani, just like the real bin Laden, is a hero of the Afghan war. By virtue of him being part of the *mujahedeen* that drove the Soviet Union out of Afghanistan, he is revered by many – from Kabul to Islamabad.

Remembering Javadi's assertion in Season Three that "no one is just one thing," it should be clear that, in the eyes of the United States, Haqqani is an 'enemy' ("The Star" 25:12). To millions of Afghans and Pakistanis, however, he is a figure of heroic resistance – someone who refuses to let his country be occupied and controlled by outside forces, be they Soviet or American. Former CIA employee-turned-author, Graham E. Fuller, notes that the epithet of "'one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter,'" while facile, "is also very close to the truth" (336). In the context of *Homeland*, the phrase appears perfectly applicable to a character such as Haqqani. As a former member of the *mujahedeen*, the CIA would have endorsed him during the Afghan War, making him an exceptionally "useful" 'friend' to America in the last decade of the Cold War (Derrida 23).

[30] According to Mohsin Hamid, "[h]unting down a wanted terrorist in Abbottabad is, in American or British terms, like hunting [a terrorist] down near West Point or Sandhurst" (*Discontent* 132).

Lockhart's aggressive demagoguery continues, and he tells General Bunran Latif (Art Malik) that the "double-dealing [Pakistan] has been engaged in for decades [is] unacceptable" ("Redux" 14:11). The irony of this statement should be evident, as the CIA, even within the fictionalised confines of *Homeland*, is an institution that appears to feel no shame for the double-dealings resulting from its multidirectional allegiances. Not so long ago, Estes, Saul, and Carrie were sending a self-confessed al Qaeda operative, Nicholas Brody, out into the world to do the Agency's work. Lockhart eventually gives the ISI an ultimatum: "either Saul Berenson gets returned to [the American] embassy quickly and quietly, or [the United States will] put Pakistan's $2 billion a-year aid package under immediate review" (14:22). Director Lockhart's ludicrous demands place the responsibility of Saul's capture firmly on the shoulders of the ISI and, while there are individuals within its apparatus that are accountable for the kidnapping, Lockhart's elevated position allows him to hold the entire nation of Pakistan to ransom over the life of one man. By forcing the hand of General Latif, Lockhart projects his power as an American and, more specifically, an American who represents the hard-hitting and self-aggrandising nature of the Bush-era doctrine.

Mike Hogan (2014), of *Vanity Fair*, notes that, because Lockhart is a former Senator, "he understands the art of negotiating by being a huge asshole" ("The One"). While colloquially put, Hogan's point is clear: Lockhart is a stereotype of the hawkish belligerents who dominated the War on Terror in its initial phases, such as Paul Wolfowitz and Dick Cheney.[31] By making Lockhart the director of the CIA, *Homeland* presents us with the idea that American diplomatic efforts during Obama's presidency have not altered significantly from the days of George W. Bush. Furthermore, the fact that Lockhart's unilateral approach to negotiation overrides any suggestions made by Martha Boyd and other American Embassy officials appears to be Gansa and Gordon's way of criticising the degree of influence that the CIA has over sensitive diplomatic issues.

Lockhart gets his way and, having liaised with the ISI, Haqqani agrees to return Saul in exchange for six of his Taliban operatives. On the way back to the embassy, however, the CIA convoy is attacked by a horde of Taliban fighters in the centre of Islamabad. Carrie calls for backup, leaving the embassy vulnerable to attack. This has been part of Tasneem and Haqqani's plan all along. Of all the secrets that Dennis Boyd has passed onto Tasneem, the most

[31] Woodward describes Wolfowitz as the "intellectual godfather and fiercest advocate for toppling Saddam Hussein" (21). Cheney, Woodward claims, "harboured a deep sense of unfinished business about Iraq" following the first Gulf War, and was responsible for selling the American public the notion that Iraq "was the primary national security threat for America in the decades if not the generations to come" after 9/11 (9, 132).

significant is information regarding a hidden entrance into the American Embassy. Using this entrance, Haqqani and his Taliban manage to get into the building itself.

As they proceed through the embassy, killing on sight, viewers are reminded of the Iranian hostage crisis of 1979, as well as the September 11, 2012 attack on an American diplomatic compound in Benghazi, Libya.[32] In the same way that 12/12 (the bombing of Langley in Season Two) has a figurative relationship with the non-fictional 9/11, *Homeland*'s portrayal of a vicious assault on an American Embassy attempts to convince viewers that an attack of this nature is not beyond the realms of possibility. Some, however, think that Gansa and Gordon's depiction of the embassy invasion is too fanciful, with Josh Modell (2014), who writes for *A.V. Club*, stating: "It's not bad enough that Haqqani looks like a right-wing cartoonist's vision of a terrorist, but is it even remotely plausible that he would plan this kind of attack" ("Something Else")? While this particular scene reminds us of *Homeland*'s penchant for the spectacular, it is also important to remember a crucial tenet on which the show's narrative rests: the United States, even its embassies situated on the soil of other nations, is, and always will be, susceptible to acts of terror. The fact that Haqqani's Taliban has been brutalising many Pakistani citizens during its reign is ignored in favour of showing just how deadly this organisation is to Americans.

What is significant about the assault on the embassy is that it would not have been possible without Dennis and Tasneem's relationship. The manner in which she bullies him to do her bidding seems to characterise her, even more so than Haqqani, as Season Four's ultimate 'bad' Muslim. The fact that she is a high-level member of the ISI in alliance with wanted terrorists blurs the boundaries between who can and cannot be considered a 'friend' to America. No one, *Homeland* implies, can be trusted in the War on Terror – not the CIA, not the ISI, and certainly not the Taliban.

The assault on the embassy, and the death of forty Americans, marks a turning point for Pakistani/American relations in *Homeland*, and the United States severs all diplomatic ties with Pakistan. Their War on Terror in this part of the world, it seems, is over. As was the case with the aftermath of 12/12, the CIA seeks to establish how an attack of such magnitude could occur. The series of investigations that follow the attack take place back in the United States, but without *Homeland*'s chief protagonist. Carrie has become disillusioned with the CIA and

[32] On the eleventh anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, Ansar al-Sharia – a Libyan militant group – carried out a series of attacks on an American diplomatic compound, killing two Foreign Service employees. The following day, a CIA annexe was assaulted by the same group, leading to the death of two military contractors. See Fred Burton and Samuel Katz's book, *Under Fire* (2014), as well as Anup Kaphle's article, "Timeline: How the Benghazi Attacks Played Out," *The Washington Post* (2014).

she admits to Saul that "there are only wrong choices," and that "nothing good can happen in this fucked up world" that the CIA have helped to create (Alex Graves, "Halfway to a Donut" 44:54). Her final modicum of introspection characterises her as someone who has matured as an individual throughout Season Four, especially if we compare her admission to Saul with her earlier claims regarding the deaths of those in the farmhouse.

Alternatively, one could argue that Carrie's decision to leave the CIA is a clear weakness in *Homeland*'s plot. One could make such a case not simply because Carrie resigns *per se*, but because of what motivates her to do so. It seems highly implausible that, having worked for the CIA for so long, she is only *now* realising the true consequences of her job. Her actions have caused so much harm and killed so many people that Gansa and Gordon's attempt to portray her as naïve seems misplaced, if not plainly contradictory. Carrie's decision to leave the CIA also brings us back to the question of the frame, and how it works to include and occlude.

Viewers only see portions of the actual damage that Carrie does, such as the airstrike on the farmhouse, but we witness – in intimate detail – the psychological effects that her job has on *her*. We cannot perceive her actions, or the actions of any other CIA employee, as outsiders to the American frame that *Homeland* imposes around Season Four. Although there is room in this frame for criticism of the CIA and the United States, such as Saul and Martha's comments about the efficacy of the War on Terror, *Homeland*'s fourth instalment ultimately fails to provide viewers with an alternative lens through which to view the actions of its characters. The death of Brody marks the end of *Homeland*'s ability to situate viewers in a position sympathetic to America's 'enemies' and, while Season Four began – as did the series as a whole – with the promise of problematising the manner in which the War on Terror is read, it ends with a portrayal of America's perceived precarity: the foundation on which the War on Terror was built.

Carrie's decision to abandon her position at the CIA is easier said than done, and as Season Five begins, we see a protagonist who is still determined to fight terrorism, but who also has no desire to continue with the organisation that has facilitated so much death and destruction in pursuit of its 'enemies.'

3.9 Season Five: "Speaking Truth to Power" in a Risky Take on the War on Terror

Homeland's fifth season is set predominantly in Berlin, amidst the growing refugee crisis brought on by the raging war in Syria. The notion of the 'homeland' has been extended to encompass not merely the United States, but Western Europe as a whole. In fact, the CIA is working in conjunction with the German Federal Intelligence Service (BND), to bypass the German privacy law preventing the surveillance of its citizens. Governmental surveillance, as well as those who oppose it, is therefore a significant aspect of this season. Rather than relying on a fictionalised, "structuring" 'enemy' to guide the CIA's actions (Derrida 84), Season Five's antagonists are drawn from the numerous political actors involved in the Syrian War – the Islamic State, Bashar al Assad's Syrian regime, and Russia. *Homeland*'s concern with the Islamic State is not merely the mayhem the group is wreaking in its attempts to establish a caliphate in the Middle East but its ideological influence on European Muslims. As for Assad's regime and Russia, the latter is supporting the former in the Syrian War – both in reality and in *Homeland* itself – and is undermining American interests in the Middle East.

Remembering Gansa's claim that he and Gordon attempt to ask rather than answer questions, I would suggest that Season Five does not completely fulfil this promise ("The Creators"). The show treads a fine line in fictionalising a war that, for many, is no fiction at all and, by offering viewers a semi-fabricated account of both the war in Syria and the Islamic State's attempts to infiltrate Europe, *Homeland* appears to be playing out its own fantasy as to how the CIA *should* be dealing with these very real problems. For example, in Episode Four, "Why is this Night Different" (John Coles), Saul – with the help of an old friend in Mossad – attempts to facilitate yet *another* regime change, this time in Syria. The Russians thwart his plan, but the message from *Homeland* is clear: Assad's regime must be overthrown. Gansa notes that, as the show's creators, he and Gordon "occupy a strange place right now as one of the few ongoing serialized dramas that are commenting on these things happening in the world" (qtd. in Jurgensen). The pair acknowledges that some viewers might find Season Five objectionable, but they also recognise that their thinly-veiled division between fiction and reality allows them to create television that will "get people to sit up and start talking" about the contemporary War on Terror ("Carrie's Fate"). Apart from offering insight into the danger that the Islamic State poses to Europe, the latest season of *Homeland* is unique for another

reason: the voices of dissent that were raised in Season Four seem more prominent in Season Five.

Characters who speak out against the conduct of the CIA and BND represent a growing public consciousness about the detrimental effects of the War on Terror. One of the war's biggest critics is Allison Carr (Miranda Otto) – the chief of the CIA's Berlin station. In a flashback to 2004, when she was working as the chief of the Baghdad station during Operation Iraqi Freedom, she rhetorically asks Carrie: "What don't they get in Washington? [. . .]. "You can't shove democracy down people's throats" (Michael Offer, "Better Call Saul" 15:58). Allison's valid questioning of one of the stated reasons for the invasion of Iraq echoes Martha Boyd's comments about the execution of the War on Terror in Season Four, and both characters indicate the atmosphere of cynicism within the CIA itself. Carrie's German employer, the philanthro-capitalist Otto Düring (Sebastian Koch), is another character who opposes the manner in which America has conducted itself since 9/11. He tells Saul, in no uncertain terms, that "nothing has made the world a more dangerous place in the last fifteen years than the foreign policy of the United States" ("Super Powers" 08:16). Laura Sutton (Sarah Sokolovic), an American journalist who works with Carrie at the Düring Foundation, argues that the actions of the American government throughout the War on Terror have only exacerbated the threat of global terrorism. Like Otto, she believes in "speaking truth to power" (Lesli Linka Glatter, "A False Glimmer" 45:08), and critiques the nation that has continuously "suspend[ed] *habeus corpus*, resort[ed] to torture, extrajudicial killings, and the wholesale surveillance of its own citizens" (Seith Mann, "Our Man in Damascus" 33:10).[33]

While Otto and Laura's claims may indeed be valid, their attitudes raise a number of crucial questions. Are these voices of dissent – characters who desire to see the United States take responsibility for the damage it has done in the name of the War on Terror – strategically placed throughout Season Five as a reminder to viewers that, although their ethical stances might be correct, their solutions for dealing with the problem of terrorism are even less effective than those of the United States? Are their liberal-minded ideals too utopian, and unrealistic? In the case of Laura Sutton, *Homeland* appears to be unambiguous in its answers to these questions.

That Laura is referred to in the German media as a "dissident journalist" is telling, for it implies that she is at odds with the government and, therefore, the BND and CIA ("A False

[33] "Speaking Truth to Power" is the title of a chapter in Edward. W. Said's, *Representations of the Intellectual* (1993). In my research, I have yet to come across a critic or reviewer who acknowledges this fact.

Glimmer" 46:01). Because she asks significant questions about the conduct of these two agencies throughout the War on Terror – such as the necessity of their surveillance networks and tendency to spy on to Muslim citizens – the label of "dissident" is a means of dismissing and delegitimizing her complaints ("A False Glimmer" 46:01). Laura, however, is no typical investigative journalist, and is considered a threat to German and American security by virtue of her connections to a Turkish hacker, Numan (Atheer Adel). Numan has in his possession 1,800 classified documents that he inadvertently hacks from the CIA's Berlin station, and he reaches out to Laura to publish them. She accepts but her plans are foiled by the BND, who give her an ultimatum: either she can relinquish the documents and Numan will be deported to Turkey, or she can make them public and be extradited to America, where she will be arrested for violating the Espionage Act. Laura chooses the first option, and her decision is crucial moment in the context of *Homeland*'s portrayal of a so-called "dissident" character ("A False Glimmer 46:01).

By letting Numan take the fall for her, *Homeland* frames Laura as lacking conviction. She is not willing to sacrifice herself for what she believes in, unlike those at the CIA or BND, whose jobs, as *Homeland* shows, are sometimes a matter of life and death. Laura, the show seems to suggest, is more concerned about the *image* of herself as a journalist-activist than she is about following through with her vociferous rhetoric. She wants to be a whistleblower like Edward Snowden – reviled by the Right and praised by many on the Left – but without suffering the consequences of her actions.[34] Her one-dimensional character smacks of unprofessionalism and selfishness and, by implicating herself in Numan's deportation, she is revealed as nothing more than a hypocrite.

Spy historian and intelligence expert, Vince Houghton (2015) – who is often consulted by *The Wall Street Journal* apropos *Homeland*'s believability – calls Laura a "caricature of a journalist," adding that one would very rarely "find someone like Laura in the real world" (qtd. in Leeds "Season Five Episode Two"). *Indiewire*'s Ben Travers (2015) finds her a "frustratingly stupid individual," and he notes with disdain her "blindingly subjective viewpoints on everything" ("Review: Episode Four"). It is difficult to disagree with either Travers or Houghton, as Laura – whose willingness to question the actions of unaccountable

[34] Former National Security Agency employee, Edward Snowden, has become a divisive figure in global politics. In 2015, he leaked close to 10,000 classified CIA and NSA documents – many of which detail the American government's pervasive surveillance of its own citizens – to two journalists in Hong Kong. He then fled to Moscow, where he was granted political asylum for a three-year period. Snowden is wanted in the United States for theft of government property and violating the Espionage Act. See Glenn Greenwald's book, *No Place to Hide* (2014) and Luke Harding's *The Snowden Files* (2014) for background on Snowden's life and a discussion of the lack of governmental transparency in the technological age.

and powerful institutions should be commended – ends up looking naïve, illogical, and eventually fails to make any tangible difference. If Laura represents *Homeland*'s effort to give voice to those who see the War on Terror as a threat to civil liberties in America and Europe, then the viability of this position is swiftly foreclosed by her unreasonable and infantile qualities. Her journalistic activism is portrayed more as a hindrance than a help. Making a difference in the War on Terror, the show implies, is not achieved through the subversion of governmental or intelligence agencies. Rather, as has been the case throughout the series, unilateralism, military might, and extrajudicial surveillance operations are perfectly adequate approaches to fighting terrorism.

Compare, for example, Otto and Laura's critiques to the one made by Peter Quinn (Rupert Friend), a CIA paramilitary officer who has just returned from a two-month tour in al Raqqa Province – the Islamic State stronghold in Syria. Quinn tells a room full of American joint-chiefs of staff that the United States lacks strategy in its fight against Islamic State:

> They [Islamic State] have a strategy. They're gathering right now in Raqqa by the tens of thousands; hidden in the civilian population, cleaning their weapons, and they know exactly why they're there [. . .]. They call it the end times. What do you think the beheadings are about? Crucifixions, the revival of slavery, you think they make this shit up? It's all in the book, their fucking book, the only book they ever read. They read it all the time, they never stop. They are there for one reason and one reason only: to die for the caliphate, and usher in a world without infidels [. . .]. That's their strategy, and it's been like that since the seventh century. So do you really think a few Special Forces teams are going to put a dent in that?
>
> (Lesli Linka Glatter, "Separation Anxiety" 11:54)

When asked what his solution to the dominance of Daesh would be, Quinn tells the joint-chiefs that he would place "200,000 American troops on the ground, indefinitely, to provide security and support for an equal number of doctors and elementary school teachers" (13:10). Having learned their lesson from the disastrous occupation of Iraq, the joint-chiefs reject Quinn's proposition. He then declares that if they are unwilling to sacrifice American lives to protect those who have been living under Islamic States rule for nearly two years, the United States should "hit reset" (13:48). When asked exactly what he means by that, Quinn looks at the joint-chiefs and tells them to "pound Raqqa into a parking lot" (13:54).

Quinn's prescient speech about the danger that the Islamic State poses appears to fall on deaf ears. His suggestion of implementing an occupation in Syria and Iraq is rejected outright, and Gansa and Gordon subtly remind viewers of the horrors that befell American

soldiers – let alone innocent Iraqis – during the previous occupation of Iraq. The Department of Defence, *Homeland* implies, is so fearful of putting American lives at risk that they are unwilling to take advice from a man who has been on the ground in Syria for two years. Rather than taking responsibility for the fact that the eight-year occupation of Iraq contributed to the rise of the Islamic State,[35] the joint-chiefs appear to be content in continuing with their ineffective and damaging policies.[36] Killing targets from a distance, therefore rendering the "subject's own destructiveness *righteous* and its own destructibility *unthinkable*" (Butler, Frames 47, emphasis original) – that appears to be *Homeland*'s interpretation of America's approach to fighting the Islamic State. The stubbornness of the joint-chiefs echoes Saul's assertion that the War on Terror has been a "one year war waged fourteen times," and they serve to remind viewers that American foreign policy is characterised by a lack of imagination and political will ("The Drone Queen 11:35).

Despite the significance of the Syrian War to Season Five as a whole, *Homeland*'s focus on the Islamic State is the potential danger that its European cells pose to Germany. Astrid (Nina Hoss), a BND officer in Berlin, even goes so far as to tell Laura: "700 German citizens have gone to Syria to fight for the Islamic State. It's not what they're doing over there that scares us; it's what happens when they come back" (Lesli Linka Glatter, "The Tradition of Hospitality" 23:43).

3.10 The Islamic State: A New Type of Terror?

Jessica Goldstein (2015), who writes for *Esquire*, remarks that the inclusion of the Islamic State in Season Five feels "a little too possible for comfort" ("Biggest Fears"). *Variety*'s Debra Birnbaum (2015) also feels that "fiction is edging ever closer to reality" in the *Homeland* latest season, making the show "frighteningly timely" ("Frightening Reality"). The sense of unease that accompanies Season Five is something that Lesli Linka Glatter (2015), one of *Homeland*'s directors, acknowledges: "It's a bit intense that so much of the story we created has been playing out in some form in real life" ("Emotional and Potent"). Although Glatter claims that Gansa, Gordon, and the show's writers and directors are in the business of entertainment, their

[35] See Cockburn, *The Rise of the Islamic State* (2015), and *The Age of Jihad* (2016), as well as Fawaz Gerges's, *ISIS: A History* (2016).
[36] See Mohsin Hamid's "Why Drones Don't Help," in *Discontent and its Civilisations* (165–177).

focus on the Islamic State allows them to mesh their storytelling with the real world in order to create the "biggest nightmare" imaginable ("Emotional and Potent").

Nightmarish indeed are the designs of Daesh in *Homeland*'s fifth season. In Episode Nine, "The Litnov Ruse" (Tucker Gates), Quinn is kidnapped by an Islamic State cell comprised of German Muslims. The cell has somehow managed to obtain a large cylinder of sarin gas, and they decide to test it on Quinn. Intelligence expert, Vince Houghton, notes, "the idea that some guy is creating sarin gas in an abandoned building in Berlin or outside Berlin somewhere – it's kind of crazy. It's ridiculous" (qtd. in Leeds, "Season Five Episode Nine"). While Houghton's statement is difficult to dispute, I maintain that a central principle of *Homeland* is to play into its viewers' deepest fears, no matter how improbable they may seem. The Islamic State cell film the gassing of Quinn, and the images of the deadly nerve agent infiltrating his body are screened by broadcasters around the world. Bibi Hamed (Rene Ifrah), the leader of the group then declares that the jihadists "give the U.N. Security Council 24 hours to recognise the legitimacy of [the] Islamic State," or else a major European city will be attacked with the sarin (Dan Attias, "New Normal" 20:07).

As has so frequently been the case in *Homeland*, the threat of terror attack on American or European soil is steeped in paranoia. Unlike the fictional 12/12, however, there *have* been recent attacks on major European cities for which the Islamic State have claimed responsibility. In fact, on November 13, 2015, five days after Episode Six, "Parabiosis," aired, Islamic State operatives unleashed a series of coordinated and deadly attacks on the streets of Paris, leaving 130 dead and hundreds wounded. Gansa wishes that the series had not "hewed so closely to the facts of Paris, but at the same time claims that he and Gordon "did make a few minor adjustments" in order to include a reference to the attacks (qtd. in Goldstein; "Real-Life"). So, when Allison tells her team, in Episode Ten, "New Normal," that "no one wants to see another Paris," viewers are immediately reminded that Season Five of *Homeland* exists in the present, and provides a narrative which, for some, is more than semi-fictional (25:17). Furthermore, by singling out Paris as the apex of the Islamic State's violence, Alison inevitably excludes the carnage that this organisation is wreaking in Muslim majority countries – such as Turkey, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon – from her rhetoric. According to a United Nations report issued in 2014, the Islamic State killed 9,347 Iraqis during its rise to dominance in that same year.[37] The fact that the majority of Daesh's victims are Arab Muslims is ignored in *Homeland*'s depiction of

[37] See the United Nations' "Report on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflicts in Iraq, 6 July–10 September 2014" (2014).

the group. Just like the Taliban of Season Four, the Islamic State appears to be to be an exceptionally deadly organisation – but only to Americans and Europeans.

In the final episode of Season Five, "A False Glimmer" (Lesli Linka Glatter), Bibi and his cell attempt to release their supply of sarin into a train tunnel at Berlin's Hauptbahnhof (central train station). The plot is foiled by Carrie, who, despite no longer being attached to the CIA, begs Saul to let her help. Carrie is not alone in her mission, and is joined by Bibi's cousin, Qasim (Alireza Bayram), who has been having doubts about the attack and does not believe that "terror is the by-product of a caliphate" ("The Litnov Ruse 24:08). Carrie gives her gun to Qasim and instructs him to shoot Bibi. "I can't kill him, he's my cousin," Qasim responds, and he instead tries to talk Bibi out of the attack ("A False Glimmer" 04:23). His plan fails, and he is killed in the ensuing gun battle between Carrie and Bibi.

Carrie's assumption that Qasim would so readily kill his cousin is a significant moment in *Homeland*, and it raises pertinent questions about the frame through which the action of Season Five is structured. Killing Bibi, in Carrie's mind, is a simple ethical decision – a choice that she knows is right. Of course, as a former intelligence officer, taking another's life is something with which she has a great deal of experience. That is not to say that she enjoys killing, as her decision to leave the CIA indicates, but that, when required, she will not hesitate to shoot. What is perturbing is her presupposition that Qasim feels the same way. Carrie attempts to reason with him: "There are hundreds of people on the platform up there, thousands in the station," but he refuses to resort to violence ("A False Glimmer" 04:30). Framing her argument in such a manner – as the death of one versus the death of many – leaves viewers with almost no choice but to side with the protagonist. Although both Carrie and Qasim want to stop the attack, only her method is successful. As Qasim's failed attempt to change Bibi's mind shows, the 'bad' Muslim does not respond to reason or dialogue and must therefore be killed.

Price Peterson (2015), who writes for the popular culture website, *Vulture*, claims: "It's not for nothing that in a season of *Homeland* where yet another Muslim extremist is the Big Bad, a conscientious Muslim extremist ends up saving the day" ("Easy Tears"). If we follow Peterson's argument correctly, then it should be clear that Qasim's importance to Season Five is not measured by what he actually does, but by what his actions represent. Gansa states that he and Gordon attempt to "show that Muslims in Europe are not speaking with one voice," yet by characterising Qasim as an antagonist to Bibi, the creators once again present us with only two strict polarities: the 'good' Muslim and the 'bad' Muslim ("Real-Life"). Qasim's decision to stop the attack means that he makes a seemingly instant switch from 'enemy' to 'friend,'

and his rejection of violence portrays him as an example of how European Muslims *should* conduct themselves when presented with the chance of joining a group like the Islamic State. Like the Iranian Fara Sherazi – the CIA analyst from Season Three – Qasim represents not merely the 'good' Muslim, but the 'best' Muslim, as he is willing to fight against his religiously-aligned kin in order to protect the Western world. Although it might be difficult not to see Qasim's actions as valiant, his decision does make one wonder if *Homeland* is not being rather too prescriptive in its characterisation of the 'good' Muslim.

Season Five of *Homeland* hinges on so many aspects of the contemporary War on Terror that it would be impossible to detail them all in this chapter. I have not paid much attention, for example, to the role that agents from both Russia and Israel play. Nor have I focused enough on Carrie's attempts at atonement for her past transgressions. I chose to focus specifically on how Gansa and Gordon attempt to include voices of dissent in their narrative, and how these voices fail in the face of state power. I have also analysed the significance of the Islamic State, as *Homeland* draws away from fictionalised, quasi-bin Laden figures, and focuses on a very real, 'enemy.' As fictively rendered as the show's Daesh operatives might be, *Homeland* is nevertheless creating its own realities where, perhaps, it ought not to.

3.11 The Threat of Terrorism Marches On

When the first episode ("Separation Anxiety") of *Homeland*'s Season Five was being shot, a trio by the name of the Arabian Street Artists was hired to lend the set a sense of authenticity.[38] They were tasked with spraying Arabic graffiti on the walls of what was supposed to be a refugee camp in southern Lebanon, but the artists decided to use this opportunity to air their thoughts on *Homeland*'s depiction of the Middle East. The Arabic script they sprayed on the walls included phrases such as: "*Homeland* is racist," "The show does not represent the views of the artists," and, most significantly, "*Homeland* is not a TV series." The fact that not one member of *Homeland*'s crew could identify a problem with the graffiti speaks volumes about the intentions of an American show attempting to frame the War on Terror from the perspective of both those waging it and those suffering it.

[38] For an interview with the artists, as well as a video detailing the graffiti in its entirety, see "*Homeland* is not a series," on the *Field of Vision* website (2015).

Although *Homeland* tries to disturb its own American frame, these disturbances are seldom consistent, and the potential to present a balanced interpretation of the War on Terror that is carefully written into the show's first season fails to materialise in later instalments. Barring the example of Nicholas Brody, *Homeland*'s narrative often ignores the root causes of terrorism, and focuses more on how terrorism is *fought* rather than why is exists in the first place. The CIA does not only target individuals but, more importantly, attempts to "kill an idea" ("Marine One" 1:11:40). This "idea" – 'terrorism' – cannot be defeated through the violence that *Homeland*'s CIA endorses, but Gansa and Gordon seem to offer no tangible alternative to the ceaseless cycle of war.

The series all too often disregards the complex political and socio-economic realities of the Middle East in favour of depicting a homogenous and threatening Muslim world. Those who occupy this world are, more often than not, nameless and featureless 'enemies.' Some of *Homeland*'s 'bad' Muslims, however, are exceptionally important to the CIA. Not only because they provide a pretext for the continuation of the War on Terror but because they can be turned into 'friends' to aid the American cause. It is this "spiralled hyperbole" of friendship and enmity (Derrida 72), that *Homeland* attempt to frame and the series makes it clear that loyalties and allegiances are fleeting.

When queried about the direction that *Homeland*'s sixth season would take, Alex Gansa responded: "the threat of terrorism not only in Europe but here in the United States seems to be growing and it seems to have captured people's attention in a significant way, and I imagine that will be reflected in next season's story" ("Real-Life"). Tellingly, Season Six of *Homeland* is set amidst a presidential election in the United States. If, as Gansa suggests, the season is focused on the threat that America faces from terrorism, then it seems important to ask how this thematic premise is any different to *Homeland*'s previous five seasons. American paranoia and vulnerability have dominated the show's overarching narrative and, while there are brief illustrations of how the United States is partially responsible for the proliferation of precarity in the Muslim world, these moments are of little consequence in *Homeland*'s ultimately unbalanced configuration of the War on Terror.

Conclusion: Have We "Tamed the World By Framing It?"

The attacks on the World Trade Centre on September 11, 2001, seemed, to some, a singular occurrence. Jean Baudrillard describes 9/11 as "the 'mother' of all events," adding that the images of the "suicidal" collapse of the Twin Towers had a profound "symbolic impact" on viewers the world over (5, 8). While individuals such as Baudrillard acknowledge the spectacular dimensions of the 9/11 attacks without overlooking their politico-historical context, the American president at the time, George W. Bush, claimed to be "amazed that there's such a misunderstanding of what our country is about that people would hate us" (qtd. in Blum, *America's* 30). Although political figures and the mainstream media have imposed their own particular frames of "intelligibility" around 9/11, this thesis has demonstrated that literature and television represent alternative means of engaging with both 9/11 itself and America's response to these attacks: the War on Terror (Butler, *Frames* 6). Selecting texts from contrasting geopolitical contexts has allowed me to identify the War on Terror as a global phenomenon, and to underline the importance of understanding this war – as well as 9/11 – as coextensive with the historical context that preceded it. As Baudrillard notes, one cannot ignore the "deep-seated complicity" of the United States in having "fomented all [the] violence that is endemic throughout the world" (6, 5).

Comparing American to non-American sources has permitted me to gauge how Islam has been portrayed and discursively disseminated in the fictional landscape since 9/11, and I have demonstrated that George W. Bush's binary of 'good' Muslim, 'bad' Muslim – despite its flaws, biases, and lack of nuance – remains an interpretative framework for many, although not all, American perceptions about who constitutes a 'friend' or 'enemy.' The structure of this thesis has followed the trajectory of the War on Terror, beginning with Hamid's depiction of the World Trade Centre attacks and ending with *Homeland*'s fictional depiction of America's contemporary Overseas Contingency Operations. Configuring my thesis in such a manner has allowed me to investigate my chosen texts individually and in relation to one another, whilst simultaneously tracing the development of the War on Terror since its inception.

In my first chapter, I examined Mohsin Hamid's novel, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, with the aim of understanding how the United States, 9/11, and the War on Terror are perceived through the eyes of a Pakistani who gives up on his "American dream" (93). With close reference to Mahmood Mamdani's *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*, I demonstrated that Hamid's novel underlines the problematic perception of Muslims in the United States, and subverts the

reader's assumptions about fundamentalism as a strictly religious term. As such, I argued that the author aligns Changez's occupation as a financial fundamentalist with the America's capacity to wage war and dominate the global free market. Because he is both a Pakistani and a "useful" 'friend' to Underwood Samson (Derrida 23), Changez's allegiances to his adopted nation are tested by the repercussions of 9/11. His unorthodox reaction to the televised images of the attacks sparks an irreversible rupture in his belief in the "*fundamentals*" of American finance, as does his viewing of the military "mismatch" of Operation Enduring Freedom. (Hamid, *Reluctant* 98, emphasis original).

As the War on Terror places Changez's family – indeed, the whole of Pakistan – directly in danger, he returns to his home to protect those who are adversely affected by the "differential distribution of precarity" (Butler, *Frames* 25). The removal of his "blinders" permits him to reconfigure his priorities, and he eventually realises that his occupation at Underwood Samson implicates him in America's "project of domination" (Hamid, *Reluctant* 93, 126). In returning to Lahore, he does not resort to religious fundamentalism – as the title of the novel might suggest – but adopts a more humane and important set of "*fundamentals*": the ethical need to protect those who cannot protect themselves from the power of the American "empire" (152, 98, emphasis added).

The recognition of precarity is a crucial aspect of my second chapter, which considered Ishtiyaq Shukri's novels, *The Silent Minaret* and *I See You*, as unique and timely literary responses to the War on Terror. Following on from Ronit Frenkel's observation that Shukri's work should be read as the product of a "transnational South African-produced consciousness," I argued that the author's narrative perspective is "trans-global" in its outlook ("Reconsidering" 15; Shukri, *Silent* 29). The "trans-global" is an inclusive frame through which to understand the world, and requires an awareness of the positioning of the individual in relation to the collective (29). Shukri's narratives are at once local and global and, by drawing together multiple historical moments and geopolitical settings, he links the War on Terror to a long history of human violence – a history in which certain populations have been, and continue to be, subjected to condition of precarity. As a result of its broad historical scope, Shukri's fiction refuses the notion of a 'post' – be it postcolonial, post-9/11, or post-apartheid – for many populations around the world, and the author demonstrates that the "*entanglement*" of the past and the present inevitably results in an interconnected global system of power and violence (Mbembe, *Postcolony* 16, emphasis original).

The multiple temporalities, spaces, and literary texts that the author employs create a "blurring of contexts," and he transports the reader between and across circumstances in which precarity

and vulnerability are commonplace (*I See You* 66). This "blurring of contexts," however, is not only a means of understanding violence (66). It is also Shukri's means of appealing to his reader to recognise the similarities between diverse peoples and histories – to see oneself as woven inescapably into the fabric of a "trans-global" community (*Silent* 29). I therefore claim that Shukri's novels urge the reader to discard the structuring frames of nation, religion, and culture in favour of a more comprehensive manner of reading the world. Then, and only then, can one apprehend the precariousness that is intrinsic to humanity.

The frame of nation is inseparable from the contents of my third chapter, in which I analysed Alex Gansa and Howard Gordon's award-winning American television series, *Homeland*. What makes this series an important inclusion in this thesis is that it attempts to present a semi-fictional account of how the War on Terror has been fought during Barack Obama's presidency, and therefore provides the viewer with a contemporary interpretation of the shape of America's post-Bush foreign policy. Initially, *Homeland* asks some pertinent questions about the dichotomy of the 'friend' and the 'enemy' by allowing the viewer access to the perspectives of both CIA employees and their (predominantly Muslim) targets. Following the death of Nicholas Brody, however, the series struggles to break away from the narrative positions of characters under employ by the CIA, and stumbles in its attempts to offer a full and unbiased picture of the War on Terror.

Although *Homeland* does invite the viewer to scrutinise the conduct of the CIA, Gansa and Gordon consistently frame the deeds of America's antagonists as potentially more damaging to human life than the conduct of the Agency. Furthermore, the show often fails to provide the viewer with the necessary historical context out of which the War on Terror has arisen. Barring the examples of Brody and Nazir, no mention is made of *why* it is that some individuals seek to harm the United States – meaning that the show's 'bad' Muslims are all too often portrayed as irrational and one-dimensional. There are, in fact, no Muslim characters who do *not* fit into the 'good' or 'bad' binary that *Homeland* adopts, and the series struggles to provide a truly nuanced interpretation of Islam and its followers. Despite its creators' claims that they seek to ask rather than answer questions, *Homeland* all too often collapses into a narrow and didactic narrative that inadvertently frames American lives as somehow more vulnerable – and therefore more worthy of protection – than the lives of non-Americans (Gansa, "The Creators"). Organisations such as the Taliban and the Islamic State are certainly dangerous to Americans and Europeans, but *Homeland* prefers to ignore the fact that these groups pose a far greater threat to the populations who have the misfortune of living in the regions they control. While Shukri and Hamid successfully call the function of the frame into

question, *Homeland* – despite its initial premise of complicating the perspective through which the War on Terror is structured – cannot help but organise its narrative around the concerns of the CIA and its employees, therefore jettisoning attempts to read, interpret, and understand the full impact of this war on people outside the United States and Europe. Furthermore, by exploiting the viewer's memories of 9/11 through the depiction of acts of terror committed against American subjects, the series appears to linger in the past despite its attempts to portray the present.

Before I conclude, I should concede that this thesis is by no means a comprehensive study of fictional responses to 9/11 and the War on Terror. Both my chosen texts and the field itself deserve more attention, especially given the perennial state of war that has engulfed the Middle East since Operation Iraqi Freedom. My research represents only a glimpse into an array of creative and challenging interpretations of the shape of the world since 9/11, and there are numerous other artists, writers, and directors whose work could, and should, be considered for future research. Regarding the novels with which I engaged, much has been left unsaid. There are other critical angles from which to study these texts, one of these being an examination into how they provide access to an embodied experience of precarity. Understanding the manner in which Hamid and Shukri frame the *affective* repercussions of the War on Terror would signal new and important research on the work of authors whose perspectives are vital literary interventions in the twenty-first century. In the "age of interruption," fiction plays an important role (Shukri "Ten Questions"). It demands that the reader remain thoughtful and open to different ways of seeing and understanding the world, especially at a time when so many "ungrievable" lives are occluded from the frame of relevance (Butler, *Frames* 24).

So, have we "tamed the world by framing it?" (Shukri, *I See You* 175). Yes and no. The frame remains omnipresent in all instances of perception, but it need not be static and inflexible. It is, according to Butler, subject to "perpetual breakage," and is always open to scrutiny and subversion (*Frames* 10). In this thesis, I have demonstrated that fiction often attempts to undo the manner in which dominant forms of media and political power organise our experiences, and I have shown that the taming of the world results in simplistic and damaging readings of humanity. It should not, as it does for Changez, take a catastrophic event like the War on Terror for one to realise just how manufactured and illusory are the frames that govern our judgements. Rather than dividing the world along the binaries of 'good' and 'bad'; 'friend' and 'enemy,' we should, like Shukri's protagonists, understand that the recognition of precarity represents an attempt to read the world in its fullness, in its totality. Is this request too utopian, too naive?

Perhaps; but as long as the asymmetrical allocation of precarity remains a tactic manipulated by the powerful to minimise their own precariousness, it is vital that one continues to engage with narrative and visual frames that call this power into question.

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