

Stress Position: The Racialization of Muslims in the War on Terror¹

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"Tell the world the truth.... Please, we are tired. Either you leave us to die in peace – or tell the world the truth... You cannot walk even half a metre without being chained. Is that a human being? That's the treatment of an animal."²

*Guantanamo Bay prisoner,
not charged with any crime.*

"Nothing will be gained by spending our time and energy laying blame for the past."³

President Obama

"...the thing hosts the possibility of violence, of that which threatens to undo, because as a mediator, it necessarily unsettles the limits of justice itself."⁴

*Denise Ferera da Silva,
'Radical Praxis'*

Introduction

The photographs documenting the torture inflicted on the Muslim bodies held in US custody at Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib have produced a searing chronicle of one aspect of the expenditure of Western power in the global War on Terror. Revealing the multifaceted forms of violence involved in this War, these photographs raised important questions about the limits of law, sovereignty and subjectivity within the global order. The US and its allies, including Canada, had earlier announced that the Geneva Conventions were not applicable in this War in their designation of their enemy as 'terrorist' and 'unlawful combatant'. Moreover if the sexual terror and humiliation of the (largely) male black/brown inmates on display in these photographs is indelibly marked in public consciousness, so too is the perpetrators' - men and women - fascination with, and contempt for, the Muslim body. Sovereignty, law, subjectivity have all been deeply effected by this form of warfare and are undergoing major transformation as the War on Terror continues to unfold.

Official responses to the release of the Abu Ghraib photographs ranged from denial that the practices documented amount to torture to claims that such extraordinary measures were warranted by the nature (evil) and culture (fanatic) of the enemy; that even if excessive violence was used in the interrogation of detainees, this was only in the interest of protecting national security; and that such violence was attributable to the few junior officials and prison guards who either misunderstood official orders or were motivated by their personal pathologies and aggressive tendencies.

The historical relationship between colonialism, the modern nation-state, law and violence were either denied or downplayed in such public responses, as was the historical record of US state and vigilante terror, including during racial slavery, genocide of indigenous populations, the Japanese internment, colonization of the Philippines, the Vietnam and Korean wars, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the death squads in Nicaragua and other parts of Central America, among many other instances. For despite liberal democracies taking great

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pride in having done away with excessive state violence, the use of terror and killing has, of course, been an integral feature of the governance practices of modernizing colonial and imperialist regimes as documented by, for example, Frantz Fanon, Marnia Lazreg and Darius Rejali, among many other.⁵

In the War on Terror, torture has been emblematic of the violence, which is becoming institutionalized in the global and national governance of Muslims. Such terror is deployed against Muslim populations in the name of defending Western values and its cultural superiority, as well as in the name of fighting the fanaticism said to be inspired by Islam, particularly its alleged hostility towards gender equity, political democracy and sexual liberation. In other words, race and religion have been crucial factors in the ideological fashioning of this War. As the fanaticism and cultural inferiority of Muslims was explicitly linked to their religious affiliation, Islam and race became deeply enmeshed in the Western treatment of the Muslims they defined as their global enemy.⁶ That the institutionalization of terror in the governance of what is increasingly described as 'the Muslim problem' has elicited little political opposition or moral outrage, particularly from social movements and other communities of colour, is a matter of serious concern that requires urgent scholarly attention.

With this in mind, the questions I engage in this paper include the following: What is the relation of the religious identity of the detainees subjected to torture and death in the War on Terror to their racialization as black and brown bodies? Can religion and race be separated in the War on Terror's marking of Muslim bodies as legitimate target for brutalization and extermination? How can anti-racist and feminist politics challenge the Islamophobic discourse of the War, instead of contributing to its further entrenchment and normalization as has been the case so far? Moreover, how can critical race theory attend to the question of terror in this moment of global crises, to the institutionalization of violence in the practices that write race into the corporeal and extra-corporeal schema?

This paper is organized into three main sections. Beginning with a discussion of the racialization of Muslims in the first section, I then examine some contemporary developments within CRT and their limitations in accounting for the reconfiguration of race and processes of racialization in the following section. Drawing on the contribution of the Black radical tradition in order to theorize the contemporary transformations in race, violence and subjectivity being facilitated by the War, I then outline the main argument that emerges from my research in the final section. I conclude with a brief discussion of some of the political ramifications of the

present reconfiguration of both race and religion.

The argument being advanced here is that the War on Terror is facilitating a fusing of racial difference with that of religious identity (that is, black/brown with Islam) within the Western tradition such that the 'difference' of Muslims is now treated as a quintessential form of racial difference. Processes and relations of racialization are thus being reconstituted, as are forms of subjectivity and the possibilities for community alliances across racial divides. This realignment serves US national security objectives abroad while dividing communities of colour at home.

Moreover, I argue that it is the massive deployment of terror by the US-led Western alliance that has produced 'Islam' as a singular enemy of Western (equated with human) civilization, and the believing Muslim as the bearer of this deadly threat. Constituting Islam as a signifier of cultural incommensurability has enabled the militarization and securitization of the global nation-state system, as well as the privatization of many functions of the state (the use of mercenaries, outsourcing support services for the military, subcontracting security, etc). Violence thus remains the critical modality of materializing and institutionalizing the religio-racial logic of power of coloniality and imperialism; that is, to the making of race and post-modern configurations of Western sovereignty and subjectivity.

Racializing Muslims

With the launch of the War on Terror, there has been a major remaking of the meaning of the category 'Muslim'. In the US, Canada, Europe, this category does not function simply to denote a religious identity, but has come to encode racial difference. The most common evidence of this shift is the use of explicit racial categorization by the state in its treatment of Muslims. Security measures, anti-terror laws, immigration policy and deportation, intelligence gathering, policing are all now being conducted through what is referred to as 'racial profiling'. That is, it is those who 'look like Muslims' that are the target of such measures. That the use of such profiling has received widespread public support and juridical sanction reveals how deeply entrenched the racial logic of power remains within Western post/modernity. Previously, Black men were the primary target of racial profiling by the state and nation, particularly in the US, subject to police brutality as well as vigilante violence. Muslims have now been added to their ranks.

Other examples of the racialization of Muslims can be found in the state and public attacks on them following the 9/11 attacks. Sikhs, Hindus, Indigenous people were

attacked in a violent backlash in the streets in the US, Canada, UK and other parts of Europe, their 'racial' status overriding the religious differences between them. Hindu temples, Sikh gurdwaras as well as Muslim mosques were desecrated by individuals and groups, a further reflection of the conflation of religious difference with that of race. In the particular case of Canada, Canadian citizens who travel to US were not previously required to get US visas. With the launch of the War on Terror, however, Canadian citizens with origins in the Middle East, North American, Central and South Asia were now required to apply for US visas before they could travel there. In the UK, a young Brazilian man was stalked and shot by security forces, who claimed to have mistaken him for a 'terrorist'. Described in the media as looking like a 'Paki' (that is, a Pakistani), his killing elicited little public outrage. In the US, the shooting of Sikh worshippers at a gurdwara in Oak Creek was likewise justified by the alibi pervasive in the mainstream media that the killer had mistaken the Sikhs for Muslims. A former Defence Minister from India "who likes to wear a kurta" was strip-searched in Washington by US immigration officials.⁷ As these various examples from across North America and Europe attest, the category 'Muslim' quickly moved from referring to actual Muslims to all those who 'look like Muslims', that is all those who were Black and Brown.

In other examples of such racialization of Muslims at the international level, US and Canadian soldiers are reported to routinely refer to Afghanistan and Iraq as 'Injun country'. In the westward expansion of the early European settlers in North America, 'injuns' was the colloquial reference to Native Americans, infamously mistaken for 'Indians' by Columbus. In another example of the resilience of the racial settler colonial ideology within US culture, the codename given to Usama Bin Laden was Geronimo, the name of a famous Native American leader who fought against the US genocide of his people.

The ideological core of the War on Terror reflects its racial/colonial historical antecedents in another important manner. As mentioned above, Islam and Muslims have been defined as civilizationally and culturally backward – incommensurable with modernity and progress. This casting of Muslims as fanatics, perverse, barbarian and misogynist reproduced the older racial-colonial tropes of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. During those centuries, colonization proceeded on the ideological claim that native populations were backward species and presented a threat to human civilization and its advancement to freedom. Much as in the past when Indigenous peoples were constituted as savages who had to be destroyed in the interests of

civilization, now it is the death and/or destruction of Islam and of the believing Muslim that is considered necessary in the need to protect the interests of global security and human progress. The War on Terror has thus reinvigorated a flailing racialized form of ideology/discourse/practice that was somewhat discredited in the post-Second World War period.

The fusing of the notion of Muslim religio-cultural inferiority with the discourse of racial difference, and the equation of this 'difference' with the 'threat' of Islam, has legitimated the US state's extermination of large numbers of Muslims while substantiating the larger imperialist discourse in what is officially defined as a 'post-racial' Western order.⁸ In such an environment, to neglect the question of religion in studies of race is to persist in a now outdated approach, which, I argue, is inadequate to the task of tracking how processes of racialization are being reformulated in the early twenty-first century. Moreover, ignoring the question of Islam at a moment when this has become the source of inspiration for revolutionary struggles against Western imperialism contributes to the isolation and marginalization of such transformative articulations of Islam and Muslim identity.

Critical Race Theory and The Question of Muslims

Critical race scholars writing on the treatment of Muslims in the War on terror have largely focus on the erosion of rights, torture and racial profiling of Muslims, drawing much needed attention to how Muslims are being racialized by way of such practices.⁹ Yet the tendency in this scholarship is to assume that pre-existing processes and categories of racialization are now being extended to explicitly target Muslim communities. With regard to torture of the detainees held in custody at Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo Bay and other sites, these scholars define their treatment as a form of excess violence, deployed either as exception, in conditions of social upheaval or in response to resistance to the racial order. Some scholars have also studied the erosion of the citizenship of Muslims by new immigration and anti-terror laws, including indefinite detention, security certificates and secret trials. The main trend in this scholarship has been to make the case that Muslims are being evicted from the liberal-democratic order of rights and entitlements. Rarely does one find an analysis that takes into account the range of the forms of violence that are to be found at the heart of this War within its global context and situated within the historical context of the relation of such violence to the making of the global colonial-modern order.

The several different traditions within critical race studies have, of course, theorized the concept of race in different ways; all, however, accept the centrality of what Fanon called the corporeal schema in racial classification and in the organization of processes of racialization. Some also seek to unearth how racial designation goes well beyond this corporeality to include, for example, culture, language and performativity as markers of 'race'. Fanon, whose work is considered foundational to critical race studies linked processes of racialization to slavery and colonialism as he challenged the notion that these phenomenon were unrelated to modernity. The colonial order was a racialized order, he argued, demonstrating the numerous ways in which it violated the humanity of colonized peoples. Within this order, the white man was inextricably tied to his Other, the black man, who was constituted as his opposite. The white man constructs his own humanity in relation to the dehumanization that is imposed on the black/colonized man.¹⁰ Race is thus fashioned and policed by the violence of occupation, and it is only through a revolutionary violence that seeks to transcend the colonial order and create a new species of 'man' that racial violence and its forms of dehumanization and alienation can be overcome.¹¹

Colonial violence is thus the terrain within which the body itself is produced as racial and sexual, argued Fanon. During the French occupation of Algeria, the colonial political order ascribed worthlessness to the life of the native, male and female. Race, in this fullness of its epistemic, politico-psychic, corporeal and socio-economic structuration became inseparable from the modernity of the West, its forms of terror becoming 'epidermalized', that is, inscribed onto the body to produce its materiality as a racial/sexual object.¹² Fanon calls this process the 'thingification' of the colonized body.

Fanon's insights have been taken up very unevenly within the field of critical race theory. With the end of World War II, there was a major shift in theoretical approaches to race as the biological determinism of the racial sciences was discredited by the use made of these sciences, particularly eugenics, by Nazism.¹³ Moreover, the struggles of nationalist movements in much of the colonized world during this period resulted in national independence for many third world countries, which further delegitimized the global racial hierarchies instituted by the Euro-American powers in their colonial empires. These changed geopolitical conditions instituted a new form of racialization that highlighted 'cultural' and 'national' difference between populations rather than grading them according to hierarchies of racial superiority. The 'new racism' of the 1950-60s resulted in what has been termed the 'culturalization' of race, so that

the discourse of cultural difference now encoded racial meanings and categorizations.¹⁴

As a field of engaged scholarship, Critical Race Theory (CRT) emerged formally as a critique of the law in the early 1990s, taking off from critical legal studies, which had largely neglected the question of race. CRT highlighted the relation between race and the law with a view to challenge law's involvement in legislating the processes of racialization that uphold the rights of powerful groups within a racialized social order. CRT scholars and other critical theorists within the larger field of race studies subscribed to a social constructionist position, that is, they define race as socially constructed and not a reflection of 'innate' biological characteristics.

Within social science disciplines, in sociology for example, the dominant approach has been to define race as organized through processes of inclusion and exclusion within social structures and institutions (i.e. citizenship, law, economy, education, etc.).¹⁵ Exclusion from these institutions helps produce the inequality of racial minorities, and sociologists have taken up questions about the relation of race to national belonging, superexploitation, discrimination, etc.. Another trend, more recent, has been to re-examine the Western philosophical tradition and its impact on constituting racial difference. So, for example, in his excellent survey of the contemporary field of Critical Race Studies, Barnor-Hesse identifies how modernity's hegemonic concepts such as 'rationality', 'liberalism', 'capitalism', 'secularism' and 'rule of law' are all racially coded. These concepts are central to the social and political thought of Kant, Hegel, Marx, Weber, Foucault and Habermas, yet all neglected the role of race within modernity, and the place of these concepts in producing Western forms of superiority and domination.

Barnor-Hesse summarizes two major trends that dominate critical race/modernity studies: the first addresses "the relation of *modern philosophy and the discourse of race*" and the second focuses on "*historical modernity and the structure of racism*".¹⁶ While the former unearths the racial logic that permeated western philosophy and shaped modernity's scientific and humanist discourses, the latter engages the historical development of socio-economic, political and cultural institutions and the systemic aspects of the modern world system. I situate my analysis of the reconstitution of processes of racialization within the War on Terror at the interstices of these different approaches, for my work advances critical race theory by examining the relation of terror, violence and war, as well as religion, to the 'production' of race in the early twenty-first century.

Terror and the Making of Race

In *Performing Race and Torture on the Early Modern Stage*, Ayanna Thompson identifies a 'convergence' of race and torture in the early modern theatrical encounter of English audiences with 'foreigners'. These 17th century plays reveal a "certain concentration of meaning theatrically, semiotically, and historically" which have contributed much to contemporary constructions of both race and torture, she argues.¹⁷ The staging of torture in the theatre "provide[s] the perfect device to interrogate how race developed with contradictory significations in the early modern period: race became both essential and a construction."¹⁸ In other words, the performances Thompson studies reveal the illusory and constructed nature of race. Moreover, by putting the tortured body on display, along with that of the torturer, these productions enabled their audiences – distanced from the torture – to imagine themselves above and beyond race. As such, these "performances of torture have materialized and racialized th[e] construction of [English] nationality"¹⁹ through the "racializing epistemology" of viewing the brutalized body as racialized. Such witnessing enabled audiences to "feel removed from and superior to all of the characters" on display.²⁰ It allowed the "codification, empowerment, and normalization of the white/right gaze of the English audience"²¹, thus aiding the constitution of a form of 'English' subjectivity that was racialized *even as it was* simultaneously nationalized. These staged depictions of torture empowered the 'white/right gaze' to become normalized, and in becoming normative, it became an 'anti-racializing' gaze.²²

The use of torture in England between 1540-1640 has been linked to an emergence of the sense of 'inwardness', explains Thompson, for the use of torture was intended to get to the 'interiority' of criminal and treasonous subjects among the population.²³ As such, torture was seen as effective in bringing to the surface that which was otherwise concealed. However, the staging of torture in the theatre linked the violence to a sense of 'exteriority', by making race 'visible', argues Thompson. As depictions of torture became connected with depictions of race, "the victims' and torturers' roles were rewritten"; the racialized bodies on stage could not be mistaken for a threat internal to the population.²⁴ Instead, these figures (Moors, American Indians, Africans, etc.) were marked as visibly alien to the population so that "[t]hese figures are tortured in part because of the apparent, depictable, and stageable differences of their cultures, religions, and race."²⁵

England was to emerge as "the first country in Europe to become a nation in the modern sense"²⁶ during the

sixteenth century, and the impact of theatre in this process of nation-formation cannot be underestimated. Many of the early modern plays Thompson studies were set in the 'Near East' and North Africa (Persia, Morocco and Algeria), areas under Muslim rule at the time. These plays commonly featured Muslims – Moors and Africans – as the racialized bodies foreign to the English nation-in-the-making.

Thompson likens the early theatrical performances of torture to the Abu Ghraib photographs by highlighting the staged nature of these contemporary performances of racial power. The torture at Abu Ghraib racialized Iraqi bodies as animalistic and sexually deviant, argues Thompson, but this staging of torture also (unwittingly) reveals the constructed nature of such racial inscription. The careful arrangement of bodies in the torture photographs and the presence of the prison guards within the frame draw attention to the power of the white bodies that staged the scenes, in contrast to the stark powerlessness of the tortured body thus held in captivity. Thompson's insightful reading of the photographs draws attention to the role of violence in producing what she calls the normative 'white/right' gaze that comes to fancy itself above and beyond race.

But there is more to be said of this relation of torture to race, for torture not only 'converged' with, or signalled, race in the annals of colonial historiography. Indeed, the spectacularization of torture has *produced* race by constituting the Black/Brown body as that which can be violated as a matter of necessity, that is, as a *matter of ethical principle*. If the fascination (including pleasure and/or horror; attraction and/or revulsion) of viewing the tortured body – primarily Muslim and North African – on the early modern stage can be defined as a 'racializing epistemology', giving substance and materiality to a 'white/right gaze' that produced a collective form of national subjectivity, what impact might such a visual regime of violence have on the body constructed as the deserving recipient of the violence? How might such depictions have shaped the consciousness of those with the ill fortune of 'being' (that is, 'looking') like the Brown/Black body whose 'truth' has to be extracted through torture? For the making of race in the language of torture was not only a phenomenon to be viewed on the stage, this language also functioned as key to the practices of genocide, slavery and colonization that were to materialize the concept of race in the expansion of Western power as a globalizing force.

In *Scenes of Subjection*, Saidiya Hartman discusses the impact of the performances emblematic of white racial power during slavery – namely, the public flogging, the auction block, and the minstrel show – on the making of

Black subjectivity. Analysing the terror that gripped Frederick Douglass when, as a young boy, he witnessed the torture of his Aunt Hester by their slave owner, Hartman argues that it is this 'scene' that "introduced Douglass to slavery".²⁷ Hartman's compelling argument is that in this experience of racial terror, "...Douglass establishes the centrality of violence to the making of the slave and identifies it as an original generative act equivalent to the statement, "I was born".²⁸ Terror is here defined as the condition for the birth of Black subjectivity in the Americas, the subjectivity of the human being turned into racial object, into property.

Terrified at the spectacle of the "horrible exhibition" witnessed by Douglass, this primal scene convinced him that he, too, was marked for such brutalization.²⁹ Describing his condition as that of one "doomed to be a witness and a participant", Douglass explained how it was this experience that determined him to escape this fate and to dedicate himself to the abolishment of slavery.³⁰ But it is significant that this is a subjectivity that, while understanding the language of violence that shapes its existence, also determines to escape from such violence. Such "communally witnessed violence" is repeatedly recounted in slave narratives and has become a "text" that is "carried in African-American flesh", argues Alexander.³¹

Both Hartmann and Spillers have argued that the rape of the female slave, that is, her sexual terror, constituted her body as Black, as female, that is, as property to be possessed. And more important, this condition of racial terror was upheld in law, normalized and deemed morally acceptable.³² JanMohamed also concurs that racial terror against Black men was so pervasive that it gave rise to a subjectivity that can be understood to be that of the 'death-bound subject'. The constant threat of racial terror in Black men's lives meant that violence could erupt at any given moment, such that the knowledge and experience of such terror, in, for example, the practice of lynching, meant that Black men lived with this threat as ever present in their daily lives.³³

Linking contemporary representations of Black men in American art with the historical images of tortured Black bodies that "traumatize" and teach Black people "...a sorry lesson of their continual, physical vulnerability...", Alexander has highlighted how such witnessing underscores a "bottom line blackness", it is a stark reminder of Black peoples' own perilous status which constitutes them as a community.³⁴ The threat of such violence serves to suppress the internal differences that may exist within the community, for it is in the brutalization of the Black body that the Black community comes to recognize itself as potential target of such terror.

If Thompson describes the viewing of torture on the medieval stage as a 'racializing' and 'nationalizing' epistemology, Alexander has defined this epistemology as critical also in the "formation of the enslaved" as individuals and as members of a collectively brutalized community.³⁵ Like Thompson and Hartman, Alexander points out that witnessing such violence consolidates the social bonds among white spectators as a community, one that comes together in the knowledge of its power to inflict such violence with legal and moral impunity. Gathering in large numbers in the festival-like environments they created for the lynching of Black men, women and children, white men and women, along with their children, families and friends, participated in these articulations of their shared racial power.³⁶ These scholars record how schools allowed white children to attend these spectacles, special trains were scheduled to transport the crowds, newspapers announced timings and locations, following up with detailed descriptions of the torture for those who may have missed attending them in person. Photographers captured the trophy images of the terror, turning these into postcards that were printed, sold and consumed within white communities. Politicians and community leaders acquired cultural and political capital by organizing and promoting these events, and so on. The staging of racial violence thus became an important site of the consolidation of white social life.

In discussing the racial terror that organized slavery in the US, my intention is not to draw equivalence between the black slave experience and that of the Abu Ghraib detainees. Rather, I seek to understand how the effects of the knowledge/consumption of public depictions of torture impact the constitution of race and aid the consolidation of a kind of whiteness that is highly narcissistic, so that the witnessing of the infliction of terror gives rise not to indignation or outrage, but to claims of innocence. A surprising example of this phenomenon in the War on Terror is the feminist claim that the participation of white women in the infliction of torture at Abu Ghraib was a betrayal of feminism and of the feminists who championed the advancement of women in all spheres of socio-economic and political life, including in the military.³⁷ Another peculiar example came in the wake of the publication of the Abu Ghraib photographs, which led members of the US Congress to hold hearings on these revelations of the torture. The hearings were televised on CNN and other news networks. Confronted with the graphic images of sexual violence against the male Muslim bodies, prominent members of Congress, reporters and political commentators repeatedly claimed that the very holding of the hearings was proof of the superior nature of

Western culture, a demonstration of the 'open' and 'democratic' values of American society. In this manner, the hearings were transformed into yet another occasion for the lauding of Western superiority, the torture depicted in the photographs further feeding the phantasy of the cultural superiority of the very nation in whose name the torture was being perpetrated. In a truly perverse manner, claims of American (and Western) 'goodness' became buttressed, rather than eroded, by such a framing of the torture.

Violence, in the various manifestations discussed in this paper, ruptures the very being of the hated racial object, reducing her to a 'thing' within the social order. Iraqi men and women who survived imprisonment at Abu Ghraib and other US prisons have described being treated like animals, dogs, rats and pigs, forced to bark and wear leashes, by US and coalition forces.³⁸ While the photographs of the torture and murder of Muslim men were leaked and circulated around the world, photographs of the torture and rape of Iraqi women were considered too incendiary for release by the Obama Administration, well after the torture at Abu Ghraib became common knowledge.

Racial terror remains a constant feature in the inscription of the racial text of modernity onto bodies thus marked, with Muslims being targeted for such violence at a global level. The threat of such terror as constant, in the form of torture, rape, murder, and psychic disintegration, can therefore be considered as foundationally ongoing to/in the processes that shape the relation that has come to assume the name 'race'. The War on Terror's reconfiguration of these processes and relations of racialization are evident in the manner the category 'Islam' functions to legitimize the institutionalization of the surveillance, incarceration and even murder of Muslims by states and their nationals, in the US and the UK, among many other countries. These forms of racial profiling have both juridical approval and widespread public support, they are considered a matter of necessity.

Drawing a link between the torture at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay with the other forms of terror that are endemic to the War, including the invasion of Afghanistan; the 'shock and awe' bombing of Baghdad and other Iraqi cities; the deportation, rendition, rape, targeted assassination, collective punishment and drone attacks on Muslims around the world, reveals how central terrorizing Muslims (both civilians and non-civilians) has become in this expanding War. So, for example, early in the invasion of Afghanistan, a container in which close to five hundred Taliban fighters had been incarcerated was played with bullets from the outside by fighters

from the Northern Alliance as US occupation forces stood by and watched. Many of those trapped inside the container who escaped the bullets suffocated to death. For another example, the bombing of Baghdad was carefully designed to maximize what was termed the 'shock and awe' effect on the Iraqi population. The spectacularization of such instances of terror, staged for maximum effect and covered in primetime media broadcasts, were soon followed by the collective punishment of the population in the face of the growing strength of the Iraqi insurgency, as was the case in Fallujah. The countless injured, dead and displaced point to the worthlessness of the lives of Muslims in the calculations of the Western alliance. It is the deployment of such terror that has led to the creation of the figure of the Muslim as a global threat. When taken into account in a holistic and historically contextualized manner, such widespread use of the multifaceted forms of terror, in addition to the attacks and killings of individual Muslims that remain ongoing and under-reported within Western countries, reveals that such terror enables the reconfiguration of forms of Western identity - as innocent, vulnerable and endangered - in the contemporary attempts at stabilization and defence of Western sovereignty as mapped out globally.

Muslims around the world understand at a visceral level they are subject to the constant threat of such violence in their daily life, and many have come together to defend their communities, families and themselves from such brutality. Unfortunately, they receive little understanding or support from secularist anti-imperialist and anti-globalization movements.

Yet for many among the Afghan and Iraqi men and women who were the victims of torture in the War on Terror, their identity as Muslim was as critical as their racialized dehumanization as animals and sexual perverts in shaping their experience of the violence. Detainees have described in some detail the explicitly racial nature of their experience and identified the role of white men and women (and even one Black man) in the infliction of the torture.³⁹ These detainees also repeatedly underscored the point that the practices to which they were subjected were violations alien to their beliefs as Muslims.

'We are human too', is the refrain one hears again and again from detainees, as from Palestinians, Iraqis and Afghans who confront the violence that shapes their lives. This experience of terror has given rise to a 'new' form of Muslim subjectivity that experiences its religious identity as also explicitly racial, with this nexus transforming Muslims into transnational objects of/for violence. Such violence might erupt at any moment, and if and when it does, it is a violence that many recognize will be

legitimized and justified as socially necessary.

Whereas the rise of the OPEC crises, the rise of the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the Iranian revolution with its hostage crisis had earlier contributed to the racialization of Arabs and Muslims in particular kinds of ways, the threats they were seen to represent were localized to particular (national) contexts in the mid-twentieth century. It is with the War on Terror that one sees the wholesale racialization of Muslims around the world as a *unitary* threat inherently prone to violence and fanaticism, liable to attack at any unforeseen moment at any location in the world. Understanding such a construct of the Muslim requires a retheorization of race, of its imbrication with religious affiliation and its co-constitutive relation with terror.

How can the 'racializing' epistemology and the 'white/right' gaze defined by Thompson, and the 'scenes' of subjection analyzed by Hartman, help shed light on the religio-race nexus that I am attempting to trace in this paper? How do the fascinations that have been found to be critical to the social and collective bonds crystallized among Western subjects through the infliction of racial terror intersect with their publicly articulated fears regarding Islam as the source of terror and the believing Muslim as the perpetrator of such terror in the early twenty-first century?

In this making of Muslims as embodiment of global terror, and in the reconfiguration of Islam as source of fanaticism, one discerns a rearticulation of the concept of the West as cohesive and unitary, culturally and civilizationally superior, even if politically somewhat inept sometimes. The anti-colonial, anti-imperialist and indigenous movements of the twentieth century had shattered such claims by exposing the violence that underpinned Western global domination, and the civil rights and anti-racist movements had likewise exposed the racism that resided at the core of the Western nation-state system. Many of these nation-states had turned to multiculturalism in the 1970s and 1980s in response to the successes of these anti-racist challenges to white supremacy. As a strategy of governance, multiculturalism shifted the focus of anti-racist struggles away from the sphere of the economy, law and politics to promoting cultural pluralism and tolerance, thereby leaving intact the basic structure of white superiority that shaped the post-World War II global order.⁴⁰ The War on Terror, following the bitter culture wars of the 1990s, has served as the occasion to dislodge multicultural recognition of the racial Other in the aggressive and militarized reassertions of Western superiority now spreading across the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia.

In this context, the incorporation of Huntington's thesis of the 'clash of civilizations' as the ideological lynchpin of the War on Terror can be considered a reinscription of the discourse of religious difference in the racial dialectic, furthering a racialization of Islam and of Muslims that has moved well beyond the corporeal schema, although it has certainly incorporated it. Moreover, the institutionalization of Islam/ism as signifier of terror shattered the pre-9/11 anti-racist alliances among people of colour by isolating Muslims as civilizationally and culturally incommensurable. The rearticulation of Huntington's thesis in the form of the 'clash of fundamentalisms' by the left and the 'clash of patriarchies' by feminists and anti-war activists has only served to further the Islamophobic discourse of the War and its racialization of Muslims.

Conclusion: The Consequences of Racializing Islam

I have discussed above the myriad ways in which Islam and Muslims have been constituted as a global threat to the security of nations by the expenditure of Western violence. As terrorist threat and irrational fanatic, the believing Muslim is now widely accepted to present an immediate and deadly, local and global threat to Western nation-states and their civilized values, a construct that anti-racist movements have done little to challenge.

Chief among the consequences of the racialization has been the institutionalization of the far-reaching violence, death and destruction that shapes the lives of Muslim communities within the international order. Anti-racist movements have remained largely silent about this violence, as they have been about the participation of (non-Muslim) Black and other people of colour in the War. Few outside Muslim communities have challenged the Islamophobia that is becoming deeply entrenched within the state apparatus. Another consequence of such rewriting of the religio-racial difference is the political and social isolation of Muslim communities from other communities of colour. Yet another consequence is that such isolation, which identifies Muslims as a threat to national security, has opened up the possibility for other communities of colour to claim proximity to the West by way of likewise demonizing and shunning Muslims. The absolute lack of public debate within non-Muslim Black and other people of colour communities within Western societies about their own collusion with, and support for the invasions and occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq is yet another worrying outcome.⁴¹

The War on Terror has also accomplished a reiteration of the historical racial-gender discourse that isolated

particular forms of what are called misogynist 'cultural crimes' that were previously attributable to 'uncivilized' colonized populations. Now, these cultural crimes are mainly attributed to Muslims, including most prominently, 'honour-killing'. This reiteration conveniently forgets how the earlier constructs of 'dowry-deaths', 'forced marriages', 'sati' and suchlike targeting other communities of colour worked in similar fashion to justify colonial domination. In the West, such 'cultural' crimes have been used repeatedly against racialized communities to curtail their migration and access to citizenship. In the case of the Black community, the myth of the Black male rapist justified the lynching of Black men, often on false charges of sexual harassment made by white women.⁴²

Finally, among the consequences of the contemporary re-inscriptions of religio-racial difference discussed in this paper is the deepening of the integration of non-Muslim communities of colour into the reproduction of imperialist relations and the securing of Western power with its restabilization of whiteness. As these communities cultivate their own relations of antipathy towards Islam and Muslims as the 'real' bearers of racial barbarism, they are able to gain proximity to whiteness by defining their own cultures as 'civilized' for adhering to Western values and its promise of 'freedom'. The War on Terror and its demonization of Islam has made for strange bedfellows indeed.

NOTES

1. Stress position refers to the technique of torture perfected by the US during the period 1960-1990s. The torture victim is placed in a position in which their own body inflicts the pain, causing guilt and making them identify with the torturer as a father figure. The merits of using this particular technique in the War on Terror were discussed in the White House, according to Alfred McCoy and Mark Danner.
2. Shaker Aamer, British Resident and prisoner at Guantanamo Bay, not charged with any criminal offence. Norton-Taylor, R. (November 18, 2013). Last British Resident in Guantanamo Bay: we are treated like animals. *The Guardian*. DOI: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/18/guantanamo-bay-british-resident> Accessed November 19, 2013.
3. President Obama's statement upon the release of the Torture Memos of the Bush Administration. Quoted in McCoy, A. (June 7, 2009) 'Back to the Future in Torture Policy', TomDispatch.com. Doi: www.tomdispatch.com/post/175080/alfred_mccoy_back_to_the_future_in_torture_policy.
4. Denise Ferreira da Silva, 'Radical Praxis', Perera, S. and S. Razack (eds.), (2014). *At the Limits of Justice*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
5. Fanon, Frantz (1959). *A Dying Colonialism*; See also writings by Marnia Lazreg, Darius Rejali, and others.
6. Pugliese, Joseph (2013). *State Violence and Execution of Law: Biopolitical Ceasurae of Torture, Black Sites, Drones*. London: Routledge. Quote on p. 57.
7. See *The Guardian*. (2004, July 12) 'Indian Minister strip-searched in US'. Doi: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/jul/12/india.usa>
8. Goldberg, D. T. (2001). *The Racial State*. London: Wiley-Blackwell.
9. See, for example, Razack, S. *Casting Out*; Sheth, F. *Race and Philosophy*; Kumar, D. *Islamophobia*.
10. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*.
11. Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism, The Wretched of the Earth*.
12. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks, The Wretched of the Earth*.
13. Beck, L. and J. Solomos (1996). *Theories of Race and Racism: A Reader*. London: Routledge.
14. See Barker, Martin; Gilroy, Paul (1980). *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*; Thobani, S. (2007). *Exalted Subjects: Studies in the Making of Race and Nation in Canada*.
15. Silva, D. F. (2008). *Toward a Global Idea of Race*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
16. Barnor-Hesse (2007). 'Racialized modernity: An analytics of white mythologies', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. Vol. 30, No. 4. 643-663. Quote on p. 644.
17. Thompson, A. (2008). *Performing Race and Torture on the Early Modern Stage*. New York: Routledge. Quote on pg. 5.
18. Thompson (2008:3).
19. Thompson (2008: 7).
20. Thompson (2008:40).
21. Thompson (2008:4).
22. Thompson (2008:20).
23. Thompson (2008:4).
24. Thompson (2008:4-5).
25. Thompson (2008:5).
26. Loomba, Ania (2002). *Shakespeare, Race and Colonialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 9.
27. Hartman, Saidiya (1997). *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*. New York: Oxford University Press. Quote on p. 3.
28. Hartman (1997:3).
29. Hartman (1997:3).
30. Alexander, Elizabeth (1994). "'Can you be Black and look at this?': Reading the Rodney King Video(s)", in Golden, Thelma (ed.) *Black Male: Representations of Masculinity in Contemporary American Art*. New York: Whitney Museum of American Art. 91-110. Quote on p. 96.
31. Frederick Douglass, quoted in Alexander (1994:96).
32. Alexander (1994:96).
33. Hartmann, *Scenes of Subjection*.
34. JanMohamed, A. (2005). *The Death Bound Subject: Richard Wright's Archaeology of Death (Post-Contemporary Reflections)*. Durham: Duke University Press.
35. Alexander (1994:95).
36. Hartman (1997:3).
37. Alexander (1994).
38. For a collection of writings by feminists on the torture at Abu Ghraib, see *Not One of the Guys*.
39. Pugliese, see especially Chapter Three: 'Biopolitical hierarchies of life'. (2013: 89-126).
40. Thompson (2008:124-125).
41. See Bannerji, H. (2000). *The Dark Side of the Nation*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press; and Thobani, S. (2007) *Exalted*

Subjects: Studies in the Making of Race and Nation in Canada.
Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

42. There have, of course, been some exceptions in some people of colour communities in terms of showing solidarity with Muslims. So, for example, in the US, the Japanese-American community have supported Muslims by drawing on their own experience of the Internment. Likewise, progressive Jewish activists have supported Muslims in, for example, Tennessee, in their attempts to build a mosque in 2014. Some immigrants'

rights groups in Canada, like No One Is Illegal, have also helped support the campaigns of Muslims who have been held under the new anti-terrorism laws, as have civil rights groups in the UK. My point is rather that within the mainstream of people of colour communities in these countries, one finds little debate or support for the rights of Muslims or for opposition to the Islamophobia that has now become widely pervasive.

43. See Davis, A., *Woman, Race and Class*.

SHAKESPEARE AND THE ART OF LIVING

ed. by SHORMISHTHA PANJA

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Questions of truth, untruth, representation and deception were pivotal to sixteenth and seventeenth century thought. Be it Machiavelli, More or Montaigne, writers and philosophers struggled with questions of lying and truth-telling, and how truth is constructed and performed. But what view did Shakespeare subscribe to? What notions of falsehood, and, axiomatically, of truth, emerge from a reading of his works? This collection of essays from scholars such as Stuart Sillars, Coppélia Kahn, Supriya Chaudhuri, Bijoy Boruah, R. W. Desai, Gert Hofmann and Shormishtha Panja explores the many facets of lies, deception, truth and half-truth that feature so prominently in well-known plays such as *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Twelfth Night* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and in Shakespeare's Sonnets and poems. From philosophy to physiognomy, from fictionality to reality, the essays are as varied as revealing. While the book explores the subversive potential of speech in the context of gender and class in *Othello*, there is also an analysis of *The Phoenix* and *The Turtle*, one of 'Shakespeare's' lesser-known works. From examining visages of truth and deception in *Hamlet*, drawing on early modern discourses of face-reading, to reading Shakespeare in light of Nietzschean truth and falsehood and theories of mimesis and verisimilitude these essays analyse how complex and textured 'Shakespeare's' engagement with lying is. In addition, the essayists pull into their orbit writers as varied as Plato, St. Augustine, Erasmus, Castiglione, and Franz Kafka. Enlightening for the student and scholar alike, *Shakespeare and the Art of Lying* examines 'Shakespeare's' words from a hitherto unexplored angle, and raises new questions about the art of representation and dissimulation, and the rhetorical practices of truth and falsehood.

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