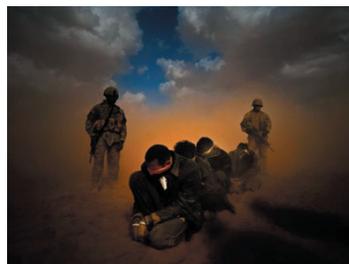
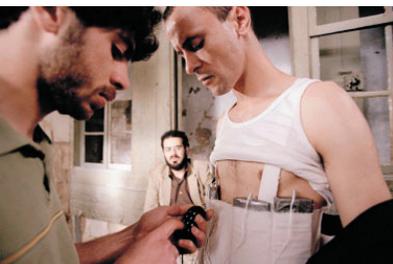


# R.A.C.E. link

SPRING 2008



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## EDITORIAL

Yasmin Jiwani

Welcome to the 2008 issue of RACE-Link. More than a newsletter but not quite a journal, RACE-Link at best constitutes a quasi-journal. In this issue, we continue to plot the lines defining race in its contemporary configurations in the post 9/11 Canadian context.

This issue begins with Sunera Thobani's article 'No Academic Exercise' tracing the highly problematic notion of academic freedom. Thobani calls attention to the lack of such freedom in voicing dissent against the ongoing War on Muslim bodies. She underlines the tenuous position of women of colour in the academy whose grounded knowledge is neither validated nor their critique acknowledged. Sherene Razack takes this theme further, but this time, using Giorgio Agamben's concept of camp, addresses it within the realm of daily life. Muslim bodies, she argues, dwell in a state of camp, regulated by laws that are in themselves exceptions from the state of law. Stripped of any rights and conceived as those without rights, these bodies are "expelled from the political community." From Quebec, Gada Mahrouse traces the continuing saga of an exclusionary politics as it has manifested in the appointment of a blue-ribboned commission on 'reasonable accommodation.' Headed by philosophers Charles Taylor and Gerard Bouchard, the Commission has held numerous hearings around the province. Mahrouse underscores the demonization of Muslim bodies as the inassimilable Others within Quebec's landscape, highlighting how 'tolerance' itself has been articulated as a way of masking racism while maintaining unequal power relations. She notes that critical race analyses of Quebec's racism have often been dismissed by Quebecoise scholars who claim that the province's history of race relations is textured by the minority status of its people vis-à-vis their colonization by the British. Nevertheless, she notes, there are commonalities which need to be attended to if we are to articulate a critique that considers both Quebec's history of oppression and its oppression of Others, both indigenous and immigrant Muslim bodies.

From academic freedom to 'reasonable accommodation', these articles foreground the liberal ethos that underpins and enforces the regimes of normativity identifying and regulating, through criminalization and expulsion, deviant bodies. That these bodies are Muslim bodies is not surprising in light of contemporary political events. This issue concludes with Ezra Winton's compilation of films on terrorism that both document and interrogate the construction of different bodies as terrorists.

This issue would not have been possible without the assistance of Mél Hogan, Ainsley Jenicek, Rawle Agard, Ezra Winton, and the authors who generously submitted their articles. A special thanks to PUBLIC for permitting us to reprint Sherene Razack's article on The Camp.

# NO ACADEMIC EXERCISE:

## THE ASSAULT ON ANTI-RACIST FEMINISM IN THE AGE OF TERROR

Sunera Thobani

### Introduction

Soon after the attacks of September 11 on the United States, U.S. Vice-President's wife Lynne Cheney's organization, the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, released a report, *Defending Civilization: How Our Universities Are Failing America And What Can Be Done About It*<sup>1</sup>, naming one hundred professors in North America as being "anti-American." Along with the invasions and occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq, it quickly became apparent that the 'War on Terror' was also to be waged on University campuses and classrooms. The targeting of particular academics was soon underway, and has continued to gain momentum since that fateful day. Daniel Pipes, who advocates that Muslims in North America be stripped of their citizenship, encourages students to report 'biased' Professors who express pro-Palestinian positions on his website, *Campus Watch*. He has sought to encourage University Administrations to use these reports in the hiring, retention and promotion of faculty. In 2003, David Horowitz launched a broadside against an alleged left-wing takeover of the University.<sup>2</sup> Founding the 'academic freedom campaign', he has developed an *Academic Bill of Rights* to make teachers adopt "a neutral attitude in matters of politics, ideology or religion."<sup>3</sup> The American Association of University Professors defines this *Bill of Rights* as "an attack on the very concept of academic freedom itself."<sup>4</sup>

The academic casualties of the ideological front of the War on Terror continue to grow. Professors at Columbia University's Middle Eastern Studies Department were investigated for allegedly intimidating students who were "pro-Israel." After

a series of incredibly ugly attacks for writing an essay opposing U.S. foreign policy, Professor Ward Churchill has been fired from his tenured position at the University of Colorado. Professor Norman Finklestein has recently been denied tenure for his anti-Zionist politics at DePaul University; the Director of the San Diego Film Festival is under fire for a boycott of Israeli films in the festival; hearings on restricting speech in classrooms have been held in twenty state legislatures in the United States<sup>5</sup>, and unfortunately, the list continues to get longer. The political climate has turned nasty, prompting the American Civil Liberties Union to warn: "A chilling message has gone out across America: Dissent if you must, but proceed at your own risk."<sup>6</sup>

Many supporters of the academics who have come under fire by neo-conservative spokespersons and their organizations have expressed their support in the name of Academic Freedom. Arguing that the University is the proper site for the expression of contentious and controversial viewpoints, they have demanded that those expressing such views be protected.<sup>7</sup> Undoubtedly, supporting these academics is very important, and increasing space for oppositional politics in the university is vital at this historical moment. However, I am going to argue against framing such support in the context of academic freedom.

I made a speech opposing U.S. foreign policy at a national Women's conference in Ottawa a few days before the war on Afghanistan began. The speech, which was a critique of U.S. foreign policy and which sought to mobilize opposition to the War

on Terror, provoked the wrath of many politicians (including the Prime Minister and the BC Premier) and academics across the country, including at the University of British Columbia, where I teach. Public demands were made for firing me from the University, for deporting me from Canada, and newspapers, radio and television programs directed much public anger and hatred my way. The RCMP even announced to the media that I was under investigation for a hate crimes charge, adding fuel to the fire. I received numerous death threats, and for some time, had to move out of my home. An embarrassingly small number of academics, civil liberties groups and journalists spoke out in my defence, and most did so in the context of my right to academic freedom. While I appreciated very much the support of those who publicly defended me, indeed, I remain convinced they helped save my job, the unease I felt at that time continues to remain with me. I am going to argue that for those of us who have been caught in such situations, we have little choice but to bite the hand that feeds us.

In framing my speech as an issue of Academic Freedom, I believe that the political intervention that I sought to make, that is, to break through the war frenzy building in both the U.S. and Canada, and to mobilize the women's movement to oppose the War, was made secondary. More disturbingly, my speech became yet another instance for the defence of liberal ideas of 'freedom', thus strengthening the liberal definition of 'freedom' said to exist in the 'West'. Ironically, those who supported the War argued that it was the protection of these very liberal values that were being fought for in the War. The anti-racist and anti-imperialist politics I was espousing were thus made inconsequential, and defending my right to speak out became yet another occasion to laud the superiority of the civilizational values of the 'West'.

Cloaked in the language of universalism, academic freedom claims to be non-political, available to all academics. But like the liberal ideology it sustains, the construct of academic freedom is deeply political as it seeks to neutralize politics oppositional to liberal regimes. Defining individuals in the academy in the language of abstraction, removing us from the context of class, gender, race, and other social relations, it claims to be blind to these social relations. In this manner, academic freedom helps to reproduce these very relations of power. So today a Lynne Cheney, a David Horowitz, and a Daniel Pipes can speak the same language of defending Academic Freedom as the American Civil Liberties Union, the

Canadian Association of University Teachers, and even the supporters of Ward Churchill and Norman Finkelstein. Political scientists, psychologists, anthropologists, cultural geographers and other academics who work with U.S. forces in the War on Terror are arguing for their freedom to exercise their profession, as are their colleagues who oppose the war and are organizing teach-ins on campuses, critically analyzing the War, U.S. and Canadian foreign policy and their ramifications. How do we deal with these conundrums of academic freedom? Do we defend the 'freedom' of the social scientists working in human terrain teams with U.S. forces in Afghanistan? Psychologists have been involved in the torture of detainees, are we going to defend their academic freedom to do so?

I believe it is imperative that we move beyond the framing of anti-war activism on campuses and schools in the language academic freedom. For if we do not find ways to move beyond this frame, we become trapped in an impossibly liberal politics that remains committed to the containment, and neutralization, of the politics of resistance.

### **Academic Freedom and Its Discontents**

Academic freedom, we are led to believe, is absolutely vital to the pursuit of knowledge. It protects academics, teachers and students from political interference and punishment. As the pre-eminent site for knowledge production, the academy is said to be particularly susceptible to political interference. Academic freedom thus protects against political repression, and is celebrated as a proud legacy of the European university system, subsequently transported to other Western countries.<sup>8</sup> A recent publication of the Canadian Association of University Teachers on academic freedom and free expression in the media, for example, states: "Universities' lifeblood is academic freedom – the freedom of inquiry and research, freedom of teaching, freedom of expression and dissent, freedom to publish, freedom to express opinions about the institution in which one works. All these freedoms are to be exercised without reference to orthodoxy, conventional wisdom, or fear of repression from the state or any other source. Without these freedoms, universities cannot fulfil their function of discovering knowledge, disseminating that knowledge to their students and society at large, and instilling in their students a mature independence of mind."<sup>9</sup>

Most academics and students of colour

- indeed even white radicals - would find it difficult, if not impossible, to recognize our experiences in this popular narrative of life in the academy. Paul Gilroy, for one example, has linked the employment of Black academics in the University to the 'race' riots of Brixton and other cities in Britain some twenty-five years ago.<sup>10</sup> In his inaugural lecture at the London School of Economics, Gilroy thanked the rioters for their actions, "Those events are responsible for my being in the position to address you here tonight. It was in their aftermath that I became employable as a university teacher and acquired a hold on the professional ladder I had not expected to be able to climb."<sup>11</sup>

For people of colour, in this country as in other Western societies, the doors of the University remained tightly shut until fairly recently. The University could hardly be called the pre-eminent site for the production of knowledge that spoke to our experiences, or that shed light on the violent nature of the social order that was based on racialized forms of enslavement and exploitation. Indeed, it was the pre-eminent site for organizing and legitimizing such violence, through, for one example, the scientific theories of racial hierarchy. For the rare academics of colour who managed to break into the hallowed halls of the University prior to the mid-twentieth century, the hostile environment they encountered made survival difficult, and their scholarship was either reviled or simply ignored. When the doors of the academy were forced open by the anti-racist and feminist movements of the 1960s, the 'free' debates in which we found ourselves enmeshed centred on questions of whether, and how, our presence was to be tolerated.

With the advent of the European version of 'modernity', Europe defined the non-white world as devoid of intellectual life. Indigenous peoples in the Americas and Africans were declared to have had no civilizations or intellectual traditions worth a mention, savagery and violence being their only truly indigenous heritage. The only contribution Arabs and Muslims were said to have made was their preservation of Greek knowledge, they themselves having made no original contributions to this sacrosanct origin of Western knowledge, nor having played any part in its development.<sup>12</sup> The Chinese and Indians were grudgingly admitted to have had some intellectual traditions, but the civilizations that had produced them too ancient, and now too degraded, to warrant too much acclaim.

Although Europe begged, stole and borrowed from the knowledge systems and technological innovations of non-European societies, the efficacy of colonial relations relied upon Europe's subsequent destruction of the intellectual traditions and historical consciousness of colonized peoples.<sup>13</sup> We live with the effects of these relations to date. As Dipesh Chakrabarty notes, "today, the so-called European intellectual tradition is the only one alive in the social science departments of most, if not all, modern universities... Sad though it is, one result of European colonial rule in South Asia is that the intellectual traditions once unbroken and alive in Sanskrit, Persian or Arabic are now only matter of historical research for most - perhaps all - modern social scientists in the region."<sup>14</sup> The breaking of these intellectual traditions led to the suppression of the historical experiences and intellectual legacies of Euro-America's Others. For just one example from South Asia pertinent to the question of 'free' speech, the Emperor Ashoka, in the third century (BCE), was said to be "committed to making sure that public discussion could take place without animosity or violence." He commanded "restraint in regard to speech, so that there should be no extolment of one's own sect or disparagement of other sects on inappropriate occasions, and it should be moderate even on appropriate occasions." Ashoka also commanded that "[O]ther sects should be duly honoured in every way on all occasions," even when there were disagreements.<sup>15</sup>

The current veneration of academic freedom and free speech as originating in Western civilization and in the Western University (with its roots in the German tradition) cannot be separated from what Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o has called the ongoing colonization of the minds of peoples of colour. Even when women of colour have developed our scholarship within the intensely hostile Eurocentric traditions forced upon us, actual engagement with our scholarship and politics by white academics and activists remain extremely rare, most particularly so when they are rooted within the tradition of critical race theory.

As for liberal regime of rights, many scholars have traced how Liberalism defined itself as a universalist ideology committed to the protection of the democratic rights and entitlements of individuals, while having no qualms in simultaneously rationalizing and justifying the colonization of non-European populations. In his excellent study of Liberalism and Empire, Uday Singh Mehta argues that the impulse for imperialism was "internal" to

liberalism.<sup>16</sup> He notes : “...it is liberal and progressive thinkers who, notwithstanding – indeed, on account of – their reforming schemes, endorse the empire as a legitimate form of political and commercial governance; who justify and accept its largely undemocratic and nonrepresentative structure, who invoke as politically relevant categories such as history, ethnicity, civilizational hierarchies, and occasionally race and blood ties; and who fashion arguments for the empire’s at least temporary necessity and foreseeable prolongation.”<sup>17</sup> The parallels between Mehta’s analysis of nineteenth century liberalism and our own experiences in the War on Terror should be obvious, given the contemporary justification offered by supporters of the War where millions of Afghans, Iraqis and other Muslims are under attack in the name of bringing freedom and democracy to their societies.

Liberalism claims a universalism that constitutes the enlightenment subject as innocent of all context, history and power. But in its careful delineations of lines of inclusion, it constitutes people of colour as uncivilized and unworthy populations. This universalizing of the Western subject as the human subject while particularizing all Others in the categories of racial and cultural difference is today used to construct the political demands of people of colour as those of ‘special’ interests. ‘Pandering’ to such claims is defined as a betrayal of universalism, leading to the absurd charges of reverse racism and reverse sexism, also made in the language of academic freedom.

Stanley Fish has persuasively argued that there is no such thing as ‘free speech’. Instead of Academic freedom being against orthodoxy and faith, he claims “it is an orthodoxy and a faith: the orthodoxy is rational deliberation and the faith – somewhat paradoxically – is that through rational deliberation we shall arrive at the truth of whose existence rational deliberation is so sceptical.” Academic freedom “...is open to all points of view only so long as they offer themselves with the reserve and diffidence appropriate to enlightenment decorum and only so long as they offer themselves for correction.”<sup>18</sup> The ejection of radical ideas and radical politics that challenge the “enlightenment decorum” is the historical legacy of the Western University. Those espousing radical politics have to watch what they say, study and teach if they want academic appointments; sessional instructors are taught to be careful not to challenge the faculty in their departments. And as women of colour negotiate our (in)tolerable presence in the University, we are compelled to engage with the

liberal discourse and tone down our politics if we are to even get a foot in the door.

### **The Assault on Anti-Racist Feminism**

The question of gender, long marginalized by policy makers and analysts of globalization, emerged as a major concern with the identifying and rooting out Al-Qaeda and the ‘liberating’ of Afghan women as major objectives in War on Terror. A war driven by the American ambition of increasing its global reach and control over Central Asia and the Middle East, areas of great strategic interest during the Cold War, has been recast as concerned with the goal of liberating Muslim women. Even today, Canadian journalists become very agitated when the reasons for Canada’s participation in the occupation of Afghanistan are questioned. Canadians are there to make sure little girls can go to school, is the narrative that many journalists still insist on upholding, despite the mounting evidence to the contrary.<sup>19</sup>

Representations of people of colour as hyper-traditional, and of Muslim women in particular as uniformly and unrelentingly oppressed, have become widespread in the media, politics and popular culture. Chandra Mohanty famously traced how Third World women were constituted as victims in modern liberal development discourse (1991). Analyzing the first Gulf war and the ‘new’ imperialism, Spivak noted that the “benevolent self-representation of the imperialist as saviour” is a “long-term toxic effect” of imperialism (1992). In her study of the question of ‘forced marriages’ in Europe, Razack traces the prevalence of this ‘toxic effect’ in the ‘culturalization’ of violence against Muslim women, constituting the European subject as ‘civilized’, the Muslim woman as ‘imperilled’ and the Muslim man as ‘dangerous’ (2004). Numerous scholars have pointed out how these discursive practices give rise to the politics of military intervention and surveillance as Western subjects are mobilized to ‘save’ Muslim women from their own communities and societies.

Many anti-war activists have adopted these ‘toxic effects’ and continue to reproduce this discourse in their activism. Nor are people of colour themselves immune from it. But while white men and women have had access to the subject-position of the ‘saviour’, women of colour have had to negotiate such access differently if they want to gain access to the politics of ‘saving’ the Third World. They can only do so through upholding the claims to superiority by Western subjects, and of the concurrent inferiority of

their own cultures, religions and communities. Today, “good” Muslims are more than willing to assume this role, and to use the unprecedented access to political space they have suddenly acquired to deride Islam, Muslim men, and ‘backward’ Muslim women who defend their right to wear the headscarf or the hijab.

As the West resorts once again to drawing upon gender as a significant marker of its difference from Islam, the propaganda value of emphasizing the plight of Afghan women, and thereby shifting the focus from the imperialist designs of the U.S. and Canada to that of oppressive patriarchal societies to mobilize popular support has not been lost on political and media elites. Anti-racist feminism has contested such racialized representations, and today, anti-racist feminists are faced with a barrage of attacks when we speak out against the demonization of Islam and the construction of Muslim men as hyper-misogynist. Anti-war activists have often contributed to this demonization, and I would argue that anti-racist feminism has to be a key part of the politics informing anti-war activism.

### Conclusion

In closing, the questions I want to raise are the following: Can the notion of academic freedom be reconciled with our political responsibilities to end the wars of the U.S. Empire? Are academic freedom and justice, then, ultimately irreconcilable? Despite all the ‘free’ speech that is said to exist in Western societies, why is there so little speech against the War? Why are so few academics in Western societies out on the streets when their states advocate the use of torture and commit war crimes against Muslim populations?

At this moment when Muslims are threatened with violence for speaking out, and we are being constituted as the ‘enemy’ of Western civilization, what is needed is a radical politics that challenges the fundamental assumptions of liberal and conservative politics. Anti-war and anti-imperialist politics are centrally concerned with questions of power, justice and morality. These politics are committed to the transformation of social relations. Why, then, should we let our politics be domesticated by the mediocrity of liberal values? If we recognize that there is no such thing as a ‘free’ market or ‘free’ trade, why are we seduced with the idea of free speech? In his studies of power within modern societies, Michel Foucault argued that knowledge and power are deeply connected, that knowledge is infused with - and helps reproduce - power. The very idea of ‘free’ speech or

‘free’ knowledge is illusionary.

Much concern is being expressed today by anti-war activists that the War is leading to the erosion of civil liberties, and that national security concerns are trumping rights and freedoms. But from the experience of women of colour, this erosion of civil rights is not an aberration. Rather, it reveals the violence that underpins the liberal social order. The thin veneer of civility and the liberal rights discourse that camouflages the violence for certain sectors of the population for certain periods of time slips rather easily when it meets resistance. We cannot accept being made party to restoring it to a place of hegemony.

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## THE CAMP:

A PLACE WHERE LAW HAS  
DECLARED THAT THE RULE OF LAW  
DOES NOT OPERATE

Sherene Razack

A Muslim man<sup>1</sup> sent his story over the internet recently, one of several that make their way to my e-mail every week. The man, a University professor at an American university, was in the process of throwing out some old poetry manuscripts when he noticed that a young man was watching him. He thought perhaps it was the black flower decals on his car that was attracting attention. Within minutes, however, the bomb squad arrived. The young man had reported to the police that a man of Middle Eastern descent was engaged in suspicious activity. When after considerable negotiations, the matter got sorted out, the university's president would only concede that an honest mistake had been made in the interest of collective security and that race had nothing to do with the incident. The police undertook to instruct the professor that he had an obligation to be more careful about his activities in the current climate. The story bears two hallmarks of our age: the profiling of Muslims and their socially and legally authorized harassment. Perhaps the only thing that makes the story atypical is the fact that the matter ended relatively quickly after several university colleagues intervened.

Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben suggests that a concentration camp is created every time a structure gives rise to a place where the rule of law does not operate. Bodies become camps when they are cast into a state of indeterminacy that is simultaneously inside and outside the law. For such bodies, judicial protection no longer applies as the law itself determines that they are to be deprived of fundamental rights. What happened to the professor

illustrates the beginning of the camp and the important role that race plays in its constitution. The professor was racially profiled as someone engaging in suspicious activity. The profile, however, was only the beginning of his troubles. Marked as a threat, he soon incurred legal and social sanction. In the end, it is he, and not the young man who alerted the police, who is upbraided for what we might now call 'putting out the garbage while Muslim.' If the professor were to be a non-citizen and someone who had gone to Afghanistan or Pakistan in the early nineties or more recently, the profile could easily have led to his incarceration as a terror suspect, an indefinite detention in which he would lose his right to habeas corpus - the right to know of what he is charged why he is being held and what is the evidence against him. All of this would be legal.

I suspect that few Canadians would easily believe that such things happen here. The national security exception permits the detention of non-citizens who are terror suspects without charge, indefinitely, and without the right to see the evidence against them or to have a public trial, has been much strengthened in the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* since the events of 9/11 but its everyday effects remain hidden. It is true that terror suspects incarcerated under security certificates have made headlines. The names of Hassan Almrei, Adil Charkaoui, Mohammed Jaballah, Mahommed Harkat and Mohammed Mahjoub, if not exactly household names, have come to our attention as men who were held in solitary for varying periods and who still do not know what the state's evidence is against them.

I have written of these cases elsewhere but in this article I want to focus on more hidden, and everyday instances of the camp, exposing the minutiae of places where the law had determined that there shall be no law, where due process is suspended and Muslims are expelled from political community. Muslims have become what Hannah Arendt long ago described as a community without the right to have rights, a more serious problem than racial profiling or racial discrimination.

### Deportations

Although their number is hard to determine, there have been a number of deportations of Muslims initially suspected of terrorism but ultimately deported on the basis of minor immigration violations. As one activist group has alleged, the RCMP arrest only the “Muhammeds.”<sup>2</sup> *Project Thread* offers a typical example of the “force of law without law” in the everyday world of Muslims. In the early morning hours of August 14, 2003, the RCMP, dressed in battle fatigues, burst down the doors of several apartments in Toronto and arrested 23 men of Pakistani origin who were students. The drama of the raid, and subsequent revelations that the men were being held on immigration violations and that they were suspected of being an Al Qaeda sleeper cell would have easily convinced Canadians that they had miraculously averted an event similar to the bombing of the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon. News stories referred to “truckloads of evidence” against the men and the details of this evidence strengthened the impression that an imminent danger had been averted. The public learned of “airline schematics” on the wall of one apartment, walks some of the suspects had taken near the Pickering nuclear power plant, and even the piloting of an airplane that had flown over the plant. In the end, while all security allegations were ultimately dismissed, and the evidence of terrorism shown to be without basis, twenty-one of the suspects were deported.<sup>3</sup>

A private citizen who formally complained that the RCMP had abused the rights of the men received a final report from the Commission of Public Complaints Against the RCMP that yielded a description of *Project Thread*, as the operation was called, from the point of view of the government. Inspector Steve Martin, the officer who investigated the private citizen’s complaint, began his report with a brief history of the raid, a history in which the profiling legally and socially authorized after

September 11 led inexorably to the men’s eviction from political community, and for most, to their deportation. Following the events of September 11, 2001, the Canadian government assessed the number of persons living illegally in Canada at approximately 53,000 persons with 29,000 of those living in the Greater Toronto area. Intent on tracking down who, among this illegal group came from countries considered source countries for terrorism against North Americans, the government identified twenty one countries, one of which was Pakistan. As Inspector Martin reported, the “government tasked the immigration investigators from the Canadian Border Services Agencies (previously known as Citizenship and Immigration Canada), assisted by the RCMP, to identify, locate and process these high risk individuals.”<sup>4</sup> Acting on the basis of this imperative, the Border Service Agency and the RCMP responded to a tip that a Toronto area education institution was providing fraudulent documents that enabled immigrants to remain in Canada. A search warrant was obtained and the educational institution’s files were recovered. The files revealed that 420 individuals were suspected of purchasing acceptance letters, transcripts and diplomas for a fee without ever attending classes. Of these, 31 were on a list of illegal immigrants from the Toronto area. The Canadian Border Services Agency issued warrants for the arrest of all 31 under the IRPA Act, arresting 23 persons, 17 by arrest warrant and the other six who lived at the same residences in the raid. Significantly, Inspector Martin maintained that neither the CBSA nor the RCMP provided press releases of its activities and did not comment on subsequent news stories, a position contradicted in news articles that quote the RCMP as continuing to make inquiries into the possible terrorist activities of arrested men.<sup>5</sup>

The suspects were detained on the basis that each had misrepresented details of their status in Canada. The men were charged with falsely claiming to have attended the Ottawa Business College and/or knowing that it was a fraudulent institution. Far more serious, however, under Section 58 (1)(c), the Minister could take the necessary steps to inquire whether the men were inadmissible on the grounds of security. In a four-page summary of its reasons for suspecting that the arrested men fell into the category of inadmissibility on the grounds of security as defined under Section 58(1)(c) of the IRPA, the state offered the profile on which it based the raid. Noting that all members of the group were male and between

the ages of 18 and 33, the men were each alleged to have purported to be students of the Ottawa Business College and to have obtained fraudulent documents from it. Terrorist connections, the government maintained, were suspected since all but one of the group

are from, or have connections to, the Punjab province in Pakistan that is noted for Sunni extremism. Some appear to have attended the same University programs during the same period of time. They share similar educated middle-class backgrounds.<sup>6</sup>

The “Backgrounder” alleged that the students either did not engage in any actual studies in Canada or engaged in them “in a dilatory manner.” If the facts that they may have been poor students and had similar backgrounds do not amount to much, the government offered a portrait of what we know from the security certificate cases as the profile of a sleeper cell. The men travel to other countries while maintaining temporary residence in Canada; they remain linked to each other; “they appear to reside in clusters of 4 or 5 young males and appear to change residences in clusters and/or interchange addresses with other clusters.” Perhaps most damning of all, the investigation concluded

that at all of the associated addresses the residents maintain a minimal standard of living. Generally, the only items reported in the residences are mattresses on the floor and a computer. One cluster left an apartment during the night and discarded all their belongings: mattresses, clothing and computer shells, apparently taking only the computer hard drive upon vacating an apartment.<sup>7</sup>

The “cluster cell” profile was strengthened by seven “facts,” some of which were received as tips: As part of his rental application, one of the men had used an offer of employment letter from the Global Relief Foundation, a fundraising group that is said to provide financial support to terrorist groups; two apartments had “unexplained fires” and in one of these the fire alarm was disconnected; one of the subjects was involved in an incident where a shotgun was fired in the air; one apartment has “air plane schematics posted on the wall, as well as pictures of guns;” one suspect is a pilot (and an unmotivated student) whose flight plan for training purposes flies over the Pickering

nuclear power plant; two suspects wanted to take a walk on the beach near the power Plant and requested permission to do so. Finally, in a liberal use of scientific language, the government maintained: “It is known that the subjects have associates that have access to nuclear gauges. A nuclear gauge is commonly used in construction. These devices contain a small amount of radioactive material, often cesium-137. Cesium-137 is often considered a likely source for the construction of a dirty bomb. A recent theft of a nuclear gauge in Toronto can be linked to a targeted address.”<sup>8</sup> Armed with this evidence, the “Backgrounder” concluded that the RCMP and immigration officers were in the process of reviewing “three van loads of evidence” and were engaged in preparing “an association link chart” showing that the group could be linked to one another through university programs in Pakistan, residences in Canada, phone calls or positive identification by neighbours, landlords, and associates.<sup>9</sup>

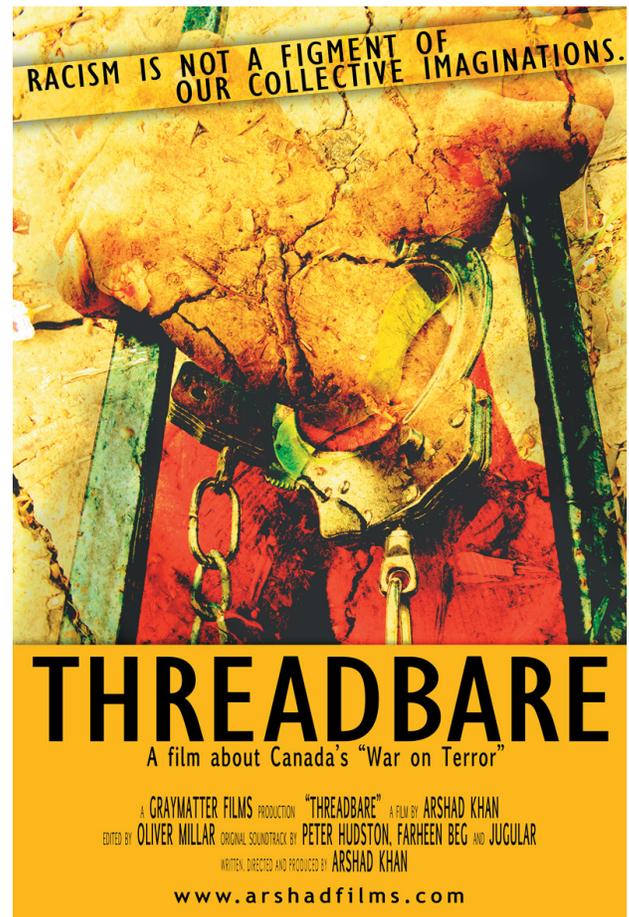
As in security cases, the profile utilized in Project Thread was clearly one that relied on a racial argument – all people from Punjab province are suspect– and on a characterization of “clusters” that quickly trigger racist ideas about foreign bodies who band together in small units and who threaten, as do clusters of cancer cells, the healthy social body. That the men might have simply been poor students unable to afford more luxurious accommodation, and who turned to each other for economic as well as social support, is precluded by their characterization as a collective and abnormal unit. If, as one lawyer speculated of the state’s agents, “what is abnormal for them is regular immigrant life for others,”<sup>10</sup> it is certainly racism that provides strength to the assumption of pathology. The arrested suspects were each asked questions about their religious activities. For example, I.M. was asked how many times he prayed, which mosques he attended, and what “jihad” meant to him. He was also asked whether he was ever a member of a Pakistani intelligence organization (suspected of links to Al Qaeda), whether he knew anyone who approved of the destruction of the World Trade Centre, and whether he himself believed in the violent overthrow of governments.<sup>11</sup> Once in place, the “cluster” characterization, with its potent mix of religion, collective pathology and the prospect of Al Qaeda, lent support to evidence that would otherwise be too weak to stand on its own merits. Allegations against F.K., that he had air plane schematics on his wall turned out to be a picture belonging to the landlord’s son who worked for an airline; a picture

of men with rifles was only a childhood picture of two brothers on a hunting expedition for birds.<sup>12</sup> The substance of the allegations hardly matters, it seems, in the face of the cluster theory.

What made the men's situation particularly perilous was not simply the racist power of the "cluster" theory and its capacity to win support for the state, but crucially, the anomic zone into which non-citizens are plunged once they are profiled. Deportation is only a step away and it can be secured upon the state's evidence that any small immigration violation has taken place. For example, those who had failed to notify immigration of a change in college programme could be held in violation. Without legal representation when they were first questioned, and unable to afford any, many of the men were terrified of their first experience of trouble with the law. They simply admitted to a variety of violations in order to be released and were immediately issued deportation orders. As documents obtained by one of their lawyers later indicated, the deportation orders were especially expedited in the case of Project Thread, perhaps to save the government the embarrassment of acknowledging that the men did not have terrorist connections.<sup>13</sup> Project Threadbare, a coalition of activists that formed within a week of the arrests of the men could do little to stop the flow of events once minor immigration violations were admitted.<sup>14</sup>

The situation in which one of the suspects, I.M. found himself reveals the anomalous legal zone into which non-citizens are plunged when race, immigration and security combine to form a legal and social Black hole from which there is no exit.<sup>15</sup> While most of the men who were held admitted to the fraud allegations in connection with the Ottawa Business College and immediately received deportation orders, I.M. was able to secure a lawyer's advice before he admitted to anything. His case is instructive. He came to Canada legally in 1999 on a visa to study at a legitimate educational institution. He immediately discovered that he had to upgrade his English and write an English language test in order to begin his programme. He changed to a college where he could get the upgrading, interrupted his studies to go to the U.S. to care for a sick father, and then discovered that he had no money left to continue study for the language test at his institution. He then registered at the Ottawa Business College after applying to Immigration for a permit to do so. When he discovered that the College was not really teaching anything, he demanded his money back and was

offered instead a certificate attesting to his English language competence. Although he accepted the certificate in lieu of his money, thereby giving rise to the allegation of fraud, I.M., as his lawyer pointed out, "was also scammed" and was the victim of a fraud by a college that the province itself had failed to regulate, and which to date, it had not charged for its illegal activities. Although the college's director admitted to issuing false letters, he was never charged. The College itself was deregulated after September 11, 2001 but Immigration continued to issue visas for students to



attend the school long after.<sup>16</sup> Another detainee, F. K. was issued a removal order in September 2003, one month after Project Thread. At a hearing to determine whether he could be released from immigration detention (and pending the outcome of a Pre-Removal Risk Assessment), the government argued that he not be released since he had such a strong desire to remain in Canada that he was willing to lie to do so. Such a person would be unlikely to obey a removal order, the government's lawyer argued, in the event that his risk assessment determined that he could be deported. F.K. who did not know of the detention hearing and

so had arranged neither legal counsel nor bail, broke down on the stand when describing the conditions under which he was being detained. Begging the IRB member to let him have the two weeks he needed to complete his diploma at the legitimate institution he was currently attending, and at the very least to send him to an immigration detention centre rather than to a maximum security jail for convicted criminals, F.K. described the humiliation of being suspected of terrorism. In a rare moment in hearings, a member of Project Threadbare, a group formed to support the men arrested as part of Project Thread, spontaneously offered to post bail for F.K. whom he did not know, an offer the government's lawyer disparaged on the ground that it came from a "special interest group."

F.K.'s detention hearing revealed another rare moment when a legal official, in this case the presiding IRB member, suddenly rejected the government's argument that F.K. should not be released. Taking the government to task for quietly dropping its security allegations where F.K. was concerned, but providing no explanation whatsoever of why it had done so, the IRB member then reviewed what the security related evidence had been in F.K.'s case. Unimpressed by the "Backgrounder," and noting its "very suggestive language," Adjudicator Vladimir Tumir considered the government's case to have been a tenuous one from the start. The claim, for instance, that Punjab province was a hotbed of Sunni extremism was never a solid one and evidence from those knowledgeable about Pakistani politics confirmed that the government did not appear to know even the most "elementary" of things. Finding it strange that the owners of the Ottawa Business College were never charged nor was the Immigration Department aware that the college was in fact fraudulent yet it expected immigrants to know this, the board member chose to find F.K. and Project Threadbare highly credible by comparison. Releasing F.K. he declared that while it is clear that one should not lie to immigration officials, people "shouldn't be locked up for lying either."<sup>17</sup>

The decision to release F.K. is one of the very few moments when the government is called to account for the spuriousness of its claims and even here it is able to sidestep the issue by simply making altogether different claims. Although the adjudicator's decision resulted in F.K.'s release from detention, there is no final justice to be had for the men who are branded as potential terrorists. Those who were able to make a refugee claim on the grounds that if they are returned to Pakistan after an allegation of having

terrorist connections they would be persecuted, found that their asylum claims were rejected. The asylum cases of all five Project Thread individuals were heard by the same Immigration and Refugee Board Member, a situation protested by the men's lawyers since the member was able to compare and contrast their claims, while the men themselves were not allowed to hear each other's cases.<sup>18</sup> In each case, the Board member ruled that others who were deported to Pakistan had survived. Relying on press articles from *Toronto Star* reporters Michelle Shepherd and Sonia Verma, which described the harassment and difficult life that faced 'terror suspects' in Pakistan, and ignoring reports by international human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, the IRB ruled that these difficulties did not amount to persecution.

Deportation for immigration violations becomes something much more perilous when it is connected to suspected involvement in terrorism. Although the security allegations quietly disappeared against all the suspects, they have not been formally dropped and the men have yet to receive apologies or to be publicly cleared. On the contrary, documents obtained through freedom of information requests revealed that the then Minister of Immigration, Judy Sgro was advised by her office to refuse to meet with Project Threadbare, the activists supporting the men, because the government was still investigating the students and was talking to foreign agencies such as Homeland Security and other governments about it.<sup>19</sup> These actions contradict the assessment that the men faced no risk upon their return home since they do not carry the status of 'alleged terrorist.' As their lawyers argued, upon return, their situation is a perilous one given the Pakistani state's cooperation with American authorities, and the Canadian state's cooperation with American authorities, in handing over terror suspects to be tortured. Pakistani families seeking to find out what happened to their sons who had "disappeared" find that under oath even government officials admit to having no knowledge of where suspects are taken or held or what happens to them in detention.<sup>20</sup> Amnesty International has documented "the stigma of being an international terrorist," a stigma that has had disastrous consequences for detainees released from Guantanamo Bay. Several have been re-arrested and tortured in their home countries and they and their families have been subjected to constant harassment and surveillance.<sup>21</sup>

The dimensions of a "securitized" world

in which secret prisons exist, information is shared across borders and no government can be easily called to account, is one that has not made an impression on Canadian courts. Federal Court Justice Dawson, for example, called upon to consider a judicial review of the IRB decision that one of Project Thread's men would not face persecution upon his return to Pakistan could accept that the IRB appeared to have incorrectly inferred that Pakistan was simply the kind of place where bribes had to be paid to police. She concluded, however, that such a state of affairs did not amount to persecution.<sup>22</sup>

Pursuing data about the extent to which Muslims and Arabs and those associated (culturally, politically or racially) with, or mistaken for, them is an enormous task. Surprisingly few empirical studies exist concerning the status of Muslims/Arabs in Canada and their experiences of racism. Among Muslims, Arabs and other racialized peoples, stories of racial profiling and experiences of discrimination abound, as the above studies indicate. For example, many racialized peoples have "airport stories" where they describe routinely being detained and interrogated.<sup>23</sup> It is, however, when reports of these practices indicate a legal incapacity that they might be taken as signposts to the camp. For example, in one story told to the author, a Canadian graduate student (whose parents are of Pakistani origin), was prevented from boarding a plane after airline officials noticed that her name appeared on a no-fly list. The student has the name of a known terrorist and it is perhaps this that has earned her a red flag. Significantly, airline officials could not say what the trouble was and the student has no recourse available to her to clear her name.<sup>24</sup> The data banks and sharing of information authorized by the *Anti-Terrorism Act* arranges what Anthony Farley has described for Black bodies as the "tryst" in which an official encounters a Muslim or Arab-looking person in the game of racial humiliation and white pleasure.<sup>25</sup> These are not stories of racial profiling alone, but more specifically, stories of a legally authorized tryst. In the post 9/11 period, we may well have come to the sinister moment so clearly identified by Hannah Arendt of Eichmann,<sup>26</sup> when individuals need not feel racial animus in order to send Arabs and Muslims to their doom.

Interviews conducted with lawyers whose client base includes many Muslims and Arabs reveal the contours of the tryst between law and Muslim and Arab experiences.<sup>27</sup> Lawyers described several practices of security officials that left their clients in a

grey zone of surveillance and suspicion from which there was no easy exit. Some of these practices have diminished since the days immediately following 9/11, while others have remained or intensified. The practices described in the CAIR-CAN study, for example, of CSIS agents showing up at workplaces, failing to inform people that they had the right to have a lawyer present or actively discouraging them from having one, using improper business cards with fake names, and so on, seem to have diminished. The difficulty that individuals have in clearing their name remains.

The central feature of how the securitized world is lived is that the smallest events can be transformed into something that places an individual in the category of suspected terrorist, a category from which there seems to be no exit. As one Muslim lawyer ruefully commented of CSIS, recalling a client he considered to be a simple, unsophisticated but deeply religious man, "Their reading of people seems so wrong." In this case, a Palestinian man went to the Middle East to get married but the arrangements fell apart when he arrived, ironically because the bride to be became suspicious of what the quality of her life would be in Canada. Trying a second time to get married, the client set about videotaping key landmarks<sup>28</sup> in Toronto to convey to his future wife the great city that awaited her. (He believed that photographs were un-Islamic while videotapes were not.) When his client fell under suspicion from CSIS, the Anti-Terror Task Force and the RCMP for his videotaping, the lawyer discovered that CSIS was also concerned that his client had once sought computer help from a fellow student who was his senior, someone who was recently killed in Iraq and whom they suspected of terrorism. Together the two events brought the man under suspicion, something which he tried desperately to resolve. He wrote a 29 page letter to CAIR-CAN. Paranoid and sickened, he drove all the way to Ottawa seeking their help. He offered to do a lie detector test but was then advised by the person administering the test that he should call a lawyer, someone who ultimately advised him not to do the test. Frantic about not being able to fly anywhere outside Canada, and needing to fly to the United States to take an exam, the client sought more legal help. Although in a meeting CSIS reassured the man's lawyer that they had no real concerns left about his client, they nevertheless maintained that they could not offer any guarantees about his safety were he to fly to the United States or anywhere else. You

simply shouldn't fly, CSIS suggested.<sup>29</sup>

The securitized world is one in which Muslims can find themselves at risk and unprotected, with little recourse and often no guarantee that their lives will be forever shadowed. A student who finds his security clearance for a job is held up may find, as one man did, that a company with whom he once worked passed on information to CSIS that his computer searches were suspicious. Advised to simply admit he did the searches and all would be well, the student maintained his innocence, noting that the computer was one used by a number of people and that he did not do the searches. Ultimately cleared, the man has no way of knowing if these allegations will continue to dog him.<sup>30</sup>

Computer stories emerged in several cases. A Pakistani computer science student found himself charged with threatening to kill a city official, a threat apparently delivered by e-mail from a non-secure student computer room and under the student's e-mail address. In actions reminiscent of Project Thread, the RCMP descended on the student's home and seized every item in his room, thereby claiming that "truckloads" of evidence existed. Although the language of the e-mail seemed highly inconsistent with the student's familiarity with English, and there was little additional evidence, the student was nevertheless pressured to enter a guilty plea, something his lawyer rejected. Apart from the heavy handedness of the police (in whose view the Pakistani student simply fit the profile) and the Crown, as well as the pre-hearing judge, the student's lawyer comments on the ease with which such allegations can now stick unless they are vigorously contested, something that depends on the inclinations of counsel available. In this example, criminal charges are at issue, rather than those of terrorism, but in the view of some of the lawyers interviewed whose clients are Muslim, the profiling of Muslims as terrorists both influences the laying of a criminal charge in the first place and affects its outcome.<sup>31</sup>

The journey into a place where there is the force of law without law, a place I have been calling the camp, often begins legally with extremely small infractions. In 1997, J, a Canadian of Pakistani origin, was preparing his application package to Cornell University's engineering programme.<sup>32</sup> Included in the package were his grades as submitted by his high school counsellor whom J describes as being against his decision to apply to American universities. Finding that the grade sheet did not come with a reference

guide on how to understand the marking scheme, J provided one himself but did so as though it came from the counsellor. Four years later, in November of 2001, only three weeks away from graduation, J received a visit from the FBI, a U.S. marshal and two members of Cornell's security. He was taken to a police station and questioned about people he knew and about money in his bank account, particularly a \$5000 deposit J made as a temporary deposit on behalf of his fraternity. Once the line of questioning over alleged terrorist connections was finished, J was charged with "mail fraud," that is, having submitted a fraudulent application to Cornell through the mail. Because J had obtained both scholarships and loans from Cornell, it was also alleged that the purpose of the fraud was to obtain money from Cornell. He was charged with 13 counts of fraud, one for each semester that he had obtained money from Cornell.

At the arrest scene, one of the arresting officers took his money, and another crumpled a prayer he had in his wallet. At the jail, an officer spit on the sandwich he was given to eat, and they uttered a number of racial slurs. The fact that he drove an Audi (leased for him by his parents) was also the source of negative comments. J was advised by a lawyer to enter a guilty plea or else bail would be set at a million dollars. At his sentencing hearing, a probation officer reported that J had bought a gun, incorrect information that actually applied to someone else altogether. Evidence introduced to show that J was in fact conning people, included the fact that he had once bought 4 laptops on E-Bay and resold them for a profit. In April 2002, J was sentenced to ten months. The prosecutor, having advised his parents to pay Cornell and all would be well, reneged on an agreement to ask for no further jail time. Upon receiving payment, Cornell released J's transcripts but included a page of notes about the fraud conviction. J now has a criminal record. J served his time in several jails, spending two months of his time in solitary confinement and enduring both physical and emotional abuse for which he has received trauma counselling. He was deported to Canada shortly after serving his time. He finished his degree through another institution and has since gone on to do graduate work. The Cornell episode pursues him, however, since North American companies are particularly interested in the Cornell grades, which come with notice of his conviction for fraud. Attempts to complain to Cornell about the note have failed as have complaints to the campus newspaper that printed false information about his arrest and conviction. His

parents have also complained to the U.S. Department of Justice, citing post 9/11 bias against Muslims, again to no avail.

The story of racism that J experienced includes aspects of what many Muslims describe as their everyday experience of racism. For example, the Cornell investigator made a number of comments about deporting him to Pakistan (not to Canada where he is a permanent resident) where the U.S. would bomb him anyway. His comments, added to those about immigrants unjustly reaping the rewards of the U.S. education system, speak to the place Muslim and immigrant bodies have in the Western imaginary. As the only Pakistani Muslim graduating from Cornell's engineering program that year, and as someone who was a student activist in Pakistani and Muslim organizations, as well as in a fraternity, J had enough of a profile to come under scrutiny. As we see with security cases, the profile, authorized by the hunt for terrorists, joins with racism to place J. in circumstances that arguably far exceed what might have come his way for having inserted a guide to his school's grading system. Others, guilty of actually forging grades and reference letters, have simply been expelled.

The treatment that J experienced at the hands of Cornell University, its security, Justice officials and other legal representatives, suggests that one important consequence of legally authorized profiling is the social authority to be violent. Similar incidents to J's are surfacing and it is likely that they are more common than is evident from this preliminary inquiry. The Office of the Inspector General of the United States Justice Department has documented abuses such as those reported by J. including long detention times for minor violations, the denial of due process rights, abusive detention conditions, and the physical and verbal abuse of detainees.<sup>33</sup> There is little doubt that the vast majority of those detained are of Muslim, Arab or South Asian origin. In Canada, the *Toronto Star* reported a class action suit launched by a group that includes Canadians of Muslim/South Asian and Arab origins against senior U.S. officials. One defendant, Akhil Sachdeva, a Canadian citizen of Indian origin, has described treatment very similar to J's. The lawsuit, undertaken by the New York-based Center for Constitutional Rights, alleges that 2000 men, mostly Muslims from the Middle East or South Asia, were picked up on minor administrative visas or passport violations and illegally detained.<sup>34</sup>

Drawing on Muneer Ahmed, Leti Volpp has suggested that the explicit profiling by the American

government authorizes violent hate attacks. Individuals who have killed, harassed and abused Muslims or Muslim looking individuals believe that it is their patriotic duty to do so.<sup>35</sup> In his article entitled "A Rage Shared by Law," Ahmad argues that hate crimes against Muslims and Arabs are normalized to the extent that they are considered crimes of passion, reasonable in light of the provocation of the events of 9/11. Unlike other hate crimes, those against Muslims and Arabs do not give rise to condemnation. Instead, the perpetrators are widely believed to be simply protecting their own national community.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, as Ghassan Hage discusses for the Australian context, citizens defined as normative, against foreigners, experience their own belonging as requiring them to be managers of public space, pulling the veils off the heads of Muslim women and engaging a number of violent acts in the interests of preserving national space for its authentic citizens.<sup>37</sup> Such acts reach their pinnacle when the state itself assists in the transportation of its Muslims and Arabs to places where they are tortured, when in fact, as Ahmad puts it, the law shares the rage against Muslims and Arabs.<sup>38</sup>

In her discussion of racial profiling, Reem Bahdi considers that a topography of racial profiling in Canada consists of three areas: measures of heightened surveillance aimed at Muslims and Arabs, for example no fly lists where those with Muslim names are targeted; measures aimed at specific Arabs and Muslims identified as terrorists, for example the freezing of assets of those dealing with organizations considered to have terrorist associations; and finally, neutral measures such as the sharing of information across borders that have a disproportionate impact on Muslims and Arabs.<sup>39</sup> Racial profiling on all of these levels becomes something more than a process of special scrutiny when individuals who are profiled find themselves ushered into a state of exception, a place in law where they do not enjoy full rights. The phrase so confidently uttered in court by CSIS, "your client has a profile" becomes a fact with devastating consequences when individuals are denied due process. From the seemingly innocuous problem of not being able to clear one's name from a no fly list, to the far greater one of being "rendered" to Syria on grounds of suspicion, the profile too easily becomes hard evidence when it operates in places of law without law.

Race thinking structures what happens in places of law without law. Where fundamental rights

are denied, where, for instance an individual does not have the right to know of what he is accused and the standard of proof is low, race, which already makes the suspension in rights acceptable, sneaks in again to do the work of convincing us who is and is not a threat to national security. Annexing itself to long standing racial ideas, the violent Arab, the fanatical Muslim, race thinking, a dividing of the world between the civilized and the barbarian, easily fills the gap between the profile and the proof. The mark of the barbarian, the racialized foreigner of the non-West, is one that migrates. While it fixes most easily on refugees and immigrants, those already legally imagined as on the borders of citizenship, it can also affix itself to citizens, as Maher Arar found. Its flexibility is boundless, moving from Tamils to Muslims, but always invoking ideas of racial descent through the notion of a civilization that must defend itself from foreign Others. A long established orientalism, the notion that the West is reason and law, the East is irrationality and culture, provides content to the figure of the barbarian today.

The West has derived its identity as “civilized” through believing that we live under the rule of law. Yet it is precisely through law that violence against “foreigners”, Muslims and Arabs is authorized. It is through law that such individuals are detained, deported, “rendered” to their countries of origin where they are tortured, or cast into a state of permanent suspicion. Race accustoms us to the force of law without law, reconciling any anxieties we might have about dispensing with the fundamental rights we would otherwise consider to be the mark of our civilization. What is particularly insidious about the melding of race and bureaucracy is that the violence loses its blood red colour and shows itself only as a fidelity to legal rules, law that declares a suspension of law in the interests of national security. We imagine that people are “security risks” who are simply deported and not persons who “disappear.” There are ‘truckloads of evidence,’ pages of legal decisions, long hours of cross-examination, and appeals to precedent surrounding our actions. Law enforcement officers, legally authorized to focus on the profile of an ‘Islamic terrorist’ ask what appear to be straightforward questions about how many times a day a suspect prays. In the end, we become convinced that the violence through which the nation is organized is not violence but the rituals of law and bureaucracy. It is this fiction that we must address.

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# “REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION” IN QUEBEC:

## A GOOD-FAITH EFFORT OR INSIDIOUS STATE RACISM?

Gada Mahrouse



In February 2007, as a response to “public discontent” Quebec Premier Jean Charest announced the establishment of a Consultation Commission which invited Quebecers to submit briefs and express their viewpoints on “accommodation practices related to cultural differences”. The Commission’s mandate, broadly defined, called for “a review of interculturalism, immigration, secularism and the Quebec identity.”<sup>1</sup>

For those of us with antiracist commitments and who work with interlocking, critical race frameworks, this Commission has been a disconcerting Pandora’s box. It is a fraught site which well illustrates the challenges we face in showing the insidious ways racialized inequalities are perpetuated. While it smacks of more governmental regulation that very pointedly targets Muslims and/or Arabs, *naming* what is happening in Quebec as a form of racism has not been easy. The difficulty arises from several interrelated tensions arising from the elusive features of racist expression. This article explores a few of these tensions, and how they have narrowed the conceptual parameters of this debate.

One overriding tension for those from Anglophone and Allophone communities is that we are told that we do not understand the particularities of Quebec history and its struggle for national identity. An appreciation of the history of Anglo-hegemony in Canada, the reasoning goes, would

reveal why the integration and assimilation model of *interculturalism* is necessary in Quebec, in contrast with *multiculturalism* policies which are perceived to be more generous. That given its particular history as a minority culture under siege, Quebec simply cannot afford to be too tolerant, lest it be swallowed up by Anglophones and immigrants. In other words, that unlike other parts of Canada, Quebec’s exclusionary measures are vital. The point is not to wrongly imply that Quebecers are more racist or less tolerant than people in the rest of Canada, but that implicit in this reasoning is that its particular history renders the situation in Quebec as exceptional and therefore less open to criticism.

Attempts to generalize about the complex history of Quebec national identity *are* doomed to be over simplistic. Nevertheless, this notion of exceptionality warrants further examination. There are indeed some particularities that distinguish Quebec’s history from other white settler nations. Namely, that Quebecers have had to struggle with discrimination in Canada where Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture continues to be hegemonic. In many respects, however, Quebec is not so different. For one thing, state practices that disenfranchise some groups of people are *invariably* justified through notions of threat to culture/national identity. Furthermore, as in other white settler societies, Quebec was founded on the theft of aboriginal lands, and descendants of European

settlers in Quebec remain politically dominant over indigenous peoples and non-white immigrant groups.<sup>2</sup> So, while it is important to understand the ways linguistic rights have been repressed, a framing of Quebec as unique and exceptional not only lends itself to erasures, but effectively works to stifle, if not silence, antiracist critiques. As it stands, the parameters of the debate are such that two possible positions exist: one can either be sympathetic to the preservation of francophone rights and culture, *or* be complicit in its repression. A more nuanced critique, one that can appreciate both the desire to subvert Anglo-hegemony, and point out the racist exclusions that are justified in the name of protecting national identity, has rarely been articulated in this debate.

Another tension pertains to the emphasis on religion in the reasonable accommodation debates. In the minds of many Quebecers, this Commission is primarily a review of secularism. This view is not surprising given that the figure of the veiled Muslim woman, who epitomizes oppressive religious practices, has been so central from the outset. Her emergence as a tremendous threat to Quebec identity can be traced back to the small town of Hérouxville's adoption of a code of conduct for immigrants in January 2007. Hérouxville's now infamous list of rules, supposedly designed to help guide new immigrants, banned female circumcision, stoning, and immolation – practices all clearly associated with perceptions of barbaric practices against Muslim women by Muslim men.

Soon after the Commission was underway, the provincial advisory group, the *Conseil du statut de la femme du Québec*,<sup>3</sup> successfully lobbied for amending the Quebec Charter to ensure that the freedom of religion cannot override gender equality – a recommendation that not only clearly assumes that the religious practices of immigrant (read: Muslim) communities undermine the equality of women but one that entrenches the bounds of the debate as being about gender rights versus religious rights, further obfuscating its racialized underpinnings. Lawyers from the Canadian Jewish Congress (a community in Quebec also impacted by such legislation) who studied the *Conseil's* proposal found that amending the Quebec Charter to include such a clause will do little to improve the situation of women.<sup>4</sup> In other words, that Canadian and Quebec law already operate within limits, which reject any customs that violate Canadian laws, and thus there is no need for the new legislation. For the sake of argument then, if

a woman was stoned or mutilated in Hérouxville, for example, there are laws already in place to protect her and punish her assailant.<sup>5</sup> Of course, when it comes to violence against women of all forms, laws are not always effective, but, sadly this is true across the board and thereby calls into question the desire to *specifically* protect Muslim women.

If this Commission was, as Charest declares, borne out of concern about misperceptions of immigrant communities, one would think that in response to Hérouxville's code of conduct and to the *Conseil's* proposal, he would have sought to defuse tensions by reminding everyone that gender equality is protected under the Charter. Instead, in calling for this Commission to measure the tolerance of Quebecers over such practices, the state strongly reinforced the popular notion that unless “we” are careful, we'll soon be overrun by unassimilable Muslims and their uncivilized practices. Writing about Muslims in the post 9/11 West, Sherene Razack (2008) explains that, despite the fact that in Canada the threat of masses of Muslims does not hold up statistically,<sup>6</sup> appeals to secularism nevertheless succeed at creating moral panic.<sup>7</sup> More importantly, such appeals establish legitimate grounds for the surveillance and regulation of Muslim populations. Thus “secularism” in this context is a code word for “non-Muslim” and serves to separate the modern from the pre-modern, a process that is deeply embedded in the “clash of civilizations” rhetoric that has regained momentum in recent years. The material results of such thinking is that even for those who spend their entire lives in Quebec, political rights will increasingly come to depend on certain conditions. Concretely, the legislation proposed by the *Conseil du statut de la femme* will exclude women who wear a *hijab* from certain jobs, thereby limiting their economic security. Moreover, since as Razack's work illustrates, the figure of the imperiled Muslim woman, depends upon its counterpart: the dangerous Muslim man, one can see how calls for secularism will increasingly lead to more heightened security measures and surveillance.<sup>8</sup>

A third tension comes from the contention that given the spirit of open dialogue and democratic process, this consultation can only be good, and that it must be given a fair chance. Premised on the view that beneath the intolerance is ignorance (as opposed to relations of domination and subordination), the “problem” of integration is seen to be remedied through dialogue. Presented by the state as a participatory democratic forum for Quebecers to

raise their concerns, and with repeated assertions of a commitment to an open process and inclusive dialogue, all manner of opinions and viewpoints, even blatantly racist ones, were welcomed in the hearings.

Muslim immigrant activist groups in Montreal debated the political implications of whether or not to participate, and the double-bind it posed. For some, being invited to participate into “civil” discussion that suggests they will be listened to was optimistically seen as an opportunity to shift public perceptions. For those who were reticent to legitimate the process by participating, there were concerns about reinforcing the idea that Muslims are not capable of civil dialogue, which in turn feeds the stereotype that Muslims are irrational and undemocratic.

Once the hearings began, it became evident that participants from minority communities were expected to play a very particular role. Against the backdrop of Quebecers lamenting the loss of the mythical days when Quebec identity was untainted by the threat of “cultural differences,” members of immigrant communities were expected to soothe such fears by defensively justify their presence, and asserting their civility. This was made clear in an editorial in the *Montreal Gazette* (September 8, 2007) which called the Commission “a good-faith effort” and called upon minority groups to “defuse the angst” of the majority.

Analysing a federal consultative process on immigration and the future of the nation that took place in Canada in 1994 (the *Immigration Policy Review*) Sunera Thobani examines similar state processes that have encouraged “open” and “honest” dialogue.<sup>9</sup> Then (as now) the story behind the consultation was that the nation’s heritage and culture was being eroded by the growing diversity of immigrants and by the promotion of their cultures. Where the two consultations differ is in the point of anxiety they focus on. While the focus in the Quebec consultations is the Muslim immigrant, most of the issues raised in the 1994 Policy Review focussed on the economic burden associated with the costs of immigration, not coincidentally, at a time when Canada’s economy was weak. Thus, while the idea of threat coming from certain communities persists, the current socio-political and economic landscape has merely shifted the nature of the threat from economic burden to religion. Most significant of the obvious parallels between the two, is how the findings will be used. Thobani’s study indicates that one of the consequences

of the *Immigration Policy Review* was government cuts to social programs based on the claim that it was acting “on the wishes expressed by Canadians during the consultations.” This earlier consultation therefore clearly foreshadows the legislation that has already been put forth (and will likely continue) in Quebec in response to the “concerns” of Quebecers articulated in the hearings.

This exploration of a few of the tensions raised by the Commission shows that it has not only perpetuated forms of racist expression that prompted the process in the first place, it also generated and enabled more insidious forms of racist expressions and exclusions. More importantly, it reinstates ideas about assimilation that were popular in the 1950s and 60s in North America. The revival of discourses of assimilation and tolerance (a trend taking place around the Western world) elide the advances made by critical antiracist interventions, which have since insisted upon transnational, historical, and interlocking examinations of how Eurocentrism (or whiteness) is continually reasserted, how colonial violence is reproduced through state institutions, and how white women continue to be at the forefront of civilizing missions.

Thus, for those of us who study and teach about trends in racism, the final report of this Commission, though significant, is in fact of less importance than the process of the Commission itself. Even the best-case scenario, that the report will be sympathetic to immigrants and call for more tolerance – a seemingly positive outcome – is cause for concern, signifying a huge step backwards. Such an outcome will merely reflect countless examples of how politicians often issue calls for “tolerance” as a means of countering racism in ways that do little to change power relations. As Ghassan Hage reminds us, we need to ask what it means to *practice* tolerance.<sup>10</sup> In his formulation, practices considered racist and practices considered tolerant in fact exist on the same continuum – in other words, they are two sides of the same coin. While one is obviously better than the other, what is really important, Hage points out, is that those who practice tolerance share the same imaginary position of power as those who are racist. Both see the nation as theirs. Thus, when we call upon people to be tolerant, at the same time we confirm their position of power.

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**(Endnotes)**

1 See: <http://www.accommodements.qc.ca/commission/mandat-en.html>

2 In the 1970s there was a desire to distance themselves from “French Canadian” identity which was associated with Anglo rule. See: Satzewich and Liodakis (2007) *Race’ and Ethnicity in Canada: A Critical Introduction*, Oxford University Press.

3 Bill 63 was tabled by Christine St.Pierre, the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women in December 2007. It is important to recall that in Quebec, francophone feminism is tied to establishing a sovereign Quebec state. For more on this, see: Stasiulis, D. K. (1999). Relational Positionalities of Nationalisms, Racisms, and Feminisms. In *Between Woman and Nation: Nationalisms, Transnational Feminisms, and the State*. C. Kaplan, N. Alarcon, and M. Moallem, eds., Durham and London: Duke University Press, pp. 183-212.

4 Arnold, J. (2008, February 21). No reason to change Quebec charter, CJC says. Retrieved on March 21, 2008 from: [http://www.cjnews.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=14084&Itemid=86](http://www.cjnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=14084&Itemid=86)

5 The oft-cited example of female circumcision is outlawed in Canada because it seen to be a practice that violates human rights and core Canadian values.

6 A study on possible population change commissioned by Canadian Heritage projected that by 2017 less than 5% of the total population will be Muslims.

7 Razack, S. (2008). *Casting out: The eviction of Muslims from Western law and politics*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

8 A third allegorical figure which dominates the contemporary social-political landscape, according to Razack, is “the civilized European”.

9 Thobani, S. (2007). *Exalted Subjects: Studies in the making of race and nation in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

10 Hage, G. (2000). *White Nation: Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society*. New York: Routledge.



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Mary E. Patillo. University of Chicago Press, 2007.

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**Casting Out: The Eviction of Muslims from Western Law and Politics**  
Sherene H. Razack. University of Toronto Press, 2008.

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Robert Young. Routledge, 2008.

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Edited by David S. Goldstein and Audrey B. Thacker. University of Washington Press, 2007.

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Edited by Caroline B. Brettell. Lexington Books, 2007.

**Cosmopolitanism**  
Kwame Appiah. WW Norton, 2007.

**Critical Race Theory: Cases, Materials, and Problems, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.**  
Dorothy A. Brown. Thomson/West, 2007.

**Criminalizing Race, Criminalizing Poverty**  
Wendy Chan and Kiran Mirchandani. Fernwood Publishing, 2007.

**Daily Struggles: The Deepening Racialization and Feminization of Poverty in Canada**

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Canadian Scholars' Press, 2008.

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**CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT**

The 8th Annual Critical Race Conference will be held at Ryerson University this year during the second week of November.

A Call for Papers will be distributed through various listserves including the RACE listserve accessible to all RACE members.

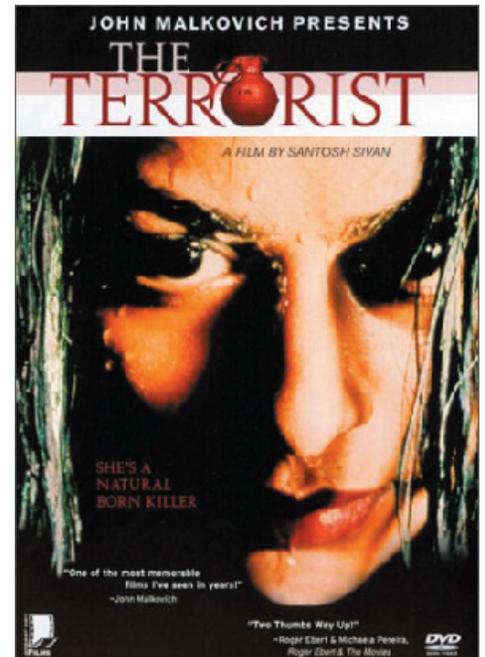
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THROUGH THE LENS:  
FILMS ON TERRORISM

Ezra Winton

Choosing films to represent the theme “terrorism” is indeed a difficult task when one considers the many forms of terrorism that exist in the world. Whether one is discussing state-sponsored terrorism (*HIROSHIMA MON AMOUR*, *THE ROAD TO ABU GHRAIB*), media terrorism (*OUTFOXED*, *WAR MADE EASY*), economic terrorism (*LIFE AND DEBT*, *SURPLUS: TERRORIZED INTO BEING CONSUMERS*), cultural terrorism (*500 YEARS LATER*) or terrorism as rhetorical strategy (*YOUR MOMMY KIILLS ANIMALS*), there are several dozen films to draw on from every film genre and category. For the purpose of this collection, I have – at the request of the editor – focused on contemporary cinema texts (with one or two exceptions) that critically engage and thus problematize the term/concept/political deployment of “terrorism” within the context of the so-called Global War on Terror and the increasingly mediated, imbalanced and polarized processes and effects of globalization.

Complicated representations of female agents of violence that break the woman/victim or woman/monster moulds are not forthcoming, but there has been a small sample of noble attempts, including the first four films on this list.



**THE TERRORIST**

*Santosh Sivan / 1999 / India / 95min / Tamil with English s.t.*

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0169302>

From Linda Linguvic: This is a starkly sad and beautiful film... It was shot in 17 days on locations in Kerala and Madras with a cast made up entirely of nonprofessional actors on a small budget. The theme, however, is large.

The lead character, Malli, exquisitely played by Ayesha Dharkar, is a 19-year old woman who lives in a terrorist camp, fighting for her unnamed country. Her eyes are large and her expressions innocent and strong and even though we see her actively participating in an execution, she wins the audience’s heart immediately.

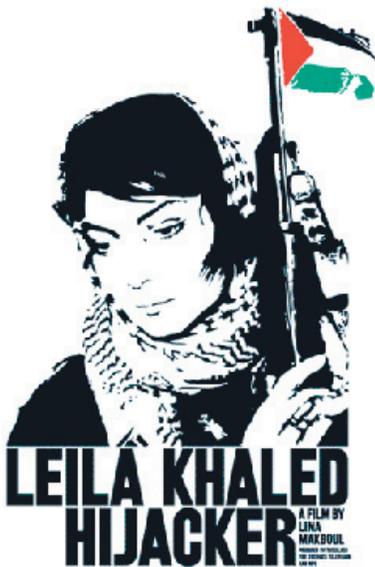
She is honored by being chosen to become a suicide bomber. A very

important person will come to the town, she will put a garland around his neck, and blow him and herself up by pushing a button which will ignite the bombs strapped to her body. But will she really do it?

[T]he beauty of the film lies not as much in the actual story, but in the director's ability to put a human face on terrorism. The mood is somber, the cinematography beautiful and the emotions of the individuals caught up in the drama are captured well.

**LEILA KHALED:  
HIJACKER**

Lina Makboul / Sweden/Jordan /  
2005 / 58 min  
[http://www.wmm.com/  
filmcatalog/pages/c694.shtml](http://www.wmm.com/filmcatalog/pages/c694.shtml)



In 1969 Palestinian Leila Khaled made history by becoming the first woman to hijack an airplane. As a Palestinian child growing up in Sweden, filmmaker Lina Makboul admired Khaled for her bold actions; as an adult, she

began asking complex questions about the legacy created by her childhood hero. This fascinating documentary is at once a portrait of Khaled, an exploration of the filmmaker's own understanding of her Palestinian identity, and a complicated examination of the nebulous dichotomy between "terrorist" and "freedom fighter."

**MY DAUGHTER THE  
TERRORIST**

Beate Arnestad / Norway /  
2006 / 60min  
<http://www.cinemapolitica.org/films/195>



What makes anyone want to blow themselves up for a cause? In this intimate and personal portrait we join two young female elite soldiers trained for the ultimate mission. We share their childhood experiences, their dreams and their families' loss. Left behind are the mothers.

Dharsika and Puhallchudar belong to the last batch of the Black Tigers, and are now equipped for the last mission: strapping an American-made Claymore mine to their bodies, able to blow themselves and everything within 100 feet to pieces. We first meet them at an optimistic time: The peace talks are making progress, and the Black Tigers are officially decommissioned. The girls are

serving as ordinary soldiers...

This moving documentary is about political identity, about armed struggle, and about friendship.

**MY TERRORIST**

Yulie Cohen Gerstel / Israel /  
2002 / 58 min  
[http://www.wmm.com/  
filmcatalog/pages/c610.shtml](http://www.wmm.com/filmcatalog/pages/c610.shtml)



In 1978, filmmaker Yulie Cohen-Gerstel was wounded in a terrorist attack by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. A stewardess for the Israeli airline El Al, she was attacked along with other crewmembers when getting off the bus to the hotel in London. In a remarkable twist of faith, twenty-three years later Gerstel began questioning the causes of violence between Israelis and Palestinians and started to consider helping release the man who almost killed her, Fahad Mihyi.

**USA VS AL-ARIAN**

Line Halvorsen / Norway /  
2007 / 90 min  
<http://www.usamotalarian.no/>

The film portrays an American Muslim family facing charges of terrorism through the trial of Sami Al-Arian. Activist and pro-



Palestinian Professor Sami Al-Arian was charged with terrorism and was held in prison without trial for two-and-a-half years. "USA vs Al-Arian" is an intimate family portrait that documents the strain brought on by Al-Arian's trial, a battle waged both in court and in the media.

**STATE OF FEAR: THE TRUTH ABOUT TERRORISM**

*Pamela Yates / Peru / 2006 / 94 min*  
<http://www.newday.com/films/StateofFear.html>  
<http://www.filmforum.org/films/state.html>

From Paul Theroux: "State of Fear is a brilliant and moving film, which is both a portrait of Peru and a chronicle of terror and response - fanaticism, bravery,



heroism, abject fear and the way everyone is affected by such events. It is what Orwell called the aim of great art, which was both imaginative in craftsmanship and politically committed at its heart."



**BEFORE NINE**

*Hana Abdul / Canada / 2006 / 27min*  
<http://www.cinemapolitica.org/films/194>

Before Nine is a short fiction that explores issues of identity among new immigrants to Canada who are subject to racism, alienation and gentrification. It is also a story about friendship and the ways in which sexual and ethnic differences can serve to bind people together in hostile environments - such can be the Canadian urban landscape. Part of the narrative turns on the interactions between the principal characters and local chauvinist youth. The two young women are harassed and abused while being identified as "terrorist" based on ethnicity.

**AVENGE BUT ONE OF MY TWO EYES**

*Avi Mugarbi / Israel/France / 2005 / 90min*  
<http://www.cinemapolitica.org/films/217>



Mograbi argues that contemporary Israeli society is in so much denial of their own history, that the vilification of Palestinians who are forced to use suicide bombing as a tactic against illegal Israeli occupation, is not only hypocritical but myopic. By building off of two seminal historical stories of Jewish suicide-murders, Mograbi complicates the notion of the Palestinian "terrorist" while renovating Jewish history so that understanding of the cultural similarities used by oppressed people may bring the Middle East closer to peace.

**PARADISE NOW**

*Hany Abu-Assad / Palestine / France / Germany / Netherlands / Israel / 2005 / 90min*  
<http://wip.warnerbros.com/paradisenow/>

From Wikipedia: Paradise Now follows Palestinian childhood friends Said and Khaled who live in Nablus and have been recruited for suicide attacks in Tel Aviv. It focuses on what would be their last days together...

Hany Abu-Assad and co-writer Bero Beyer started working on the script in 1999, but it took them five years to get the story before cameras. The original script was about one man searching for his friend, who is a suicide bomber, but it evolved into a story of two



friends, Said and Khaled. The filmmakers faced great difficulties making the film on location. A land mine exploded 300 meters away from the set. Whilst filming in Nablus, Israeli helicopter gunships launched a missile attack on a car near the film's set one day, prompting six crew members to abandon the production for good. Paradise Now's location manager was kidnapped by a Palestinian faction during the shoot and was not released until Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's office intervened. In an interview with the Telegraph, Hany Abu-Assad said, "if I could go back in time, I wouldn't do it again. It's not worth endangering your life for a movie."

**YOUR MOMMY KILLS ANIMALS**

Curt Johnson / USA / 2007 / 105min  
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0952693/combined>

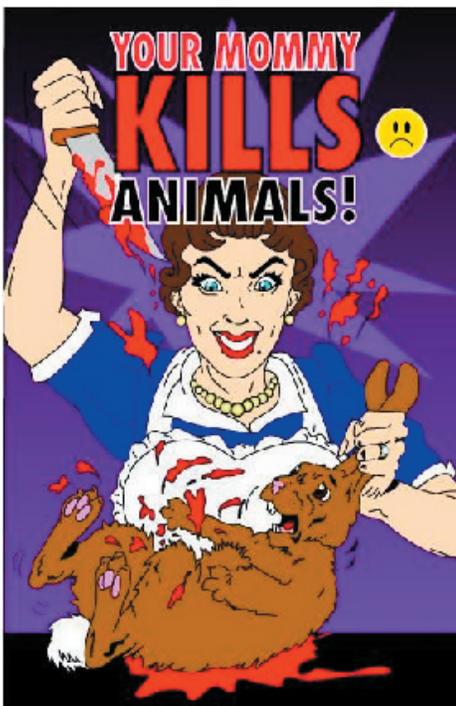
From Nick Shager at *Cinematical*: Those on both sides of the animal rights issue will find much to fume over in *Your Mommy Kills Animals*, Curt Johnson's in-depth, eye-opening examination of the movement, dubbed in 2005 by the FBI as the nation's number one domestic terrorist threat. That designation was apparently the motivation for Johnson's film, yet it's far from the only topic tackled, as the director also spends considerable time and analysis on PETA, the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), animal-testing corporation Huntington, and – most fascinatingly – the touchy internal differences between radical animal rights advocates and more moderate animal welfare supporters. They're all highly charged issues of methods and morality, and

ones that Johnson refuses to shy away from or takes sides over, challenging claims by all talking-head factions in a manner that doesn't completely obscure his own sympathies (which seem to lie with animal welfare backers), but which nonetheless give his rather comprehensive doc enough even-handedness to elevate it above propaganda.

**TAXI TO THE DARK SIDE**

Alex Gibney / USA / 106min  
<http://www.taxitothedarkside.com/>

Far from being a lefty cry of hysteria, it deliberately and devastatingly lays out its case through interviews with and news footage about a wide range of subjects, from Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney to soldiers imprisoned for abusing detainees, and to lawyers of Guantanamo inmates. If like myself you feel that Guantanamo is one of the worst blots ever to stain the democratic ideals of our country, you may



find your eyes welling with angry tears by the end of the film. Even if you disagree with me about the significance of Guantanamo, you owe it to yourself to see this movie, and then ask yourself whether you have been asking the right questions up to now.

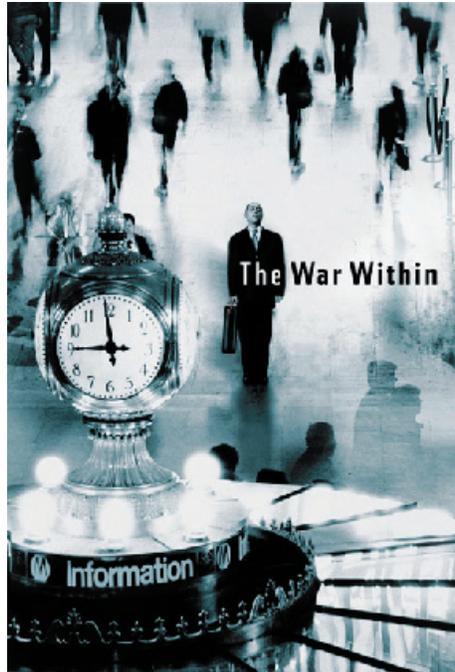
The film's title comes from one particular case, that of a meek Afghan taxi driver falsely accused by the Northern Alliance and imprisoned by the US at Bagram. He died in custody after his legs were "pulpified" in repeated, horrifying beatings. Dick Cheney's solemn insistence from a post-9/11 Meet the Press interview that the US must now begin using tactics of "the dark side" (i.e. torture) in order to vanquish terrorism provides the rest of the title.

### THE WAR WITHIN

Joseph Castelo / USA / 2005 / 90min  
<http://www.warwithinmovie.com/>

From the Political Film Society (<http://www.geocities.com/polfilms/warwithin.html>): The War Within, directed by Joseph Castelo, attempts to explain the psychology of Moslem suicide bombers after 9/11. When the film begins, a Pakistani engineering student, Hassan (played by Ayad Akhtar), is abducted by the CIA on a street in the Latin Quarter of Paris. He is drugged and flown to Pakistan, where he is interrogated and tortured; flashbacks of his torture reappear as nightmares later in the film. Evidently his brother, who was living in Lahore, protested the American invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 but was shot dead. The CIA believes that Hassan must know about a terrorist cell, but he has no such knowledge. While incarcerated, he is befriended

by an Algerian terrorist who is a member of The Brotherhood. Presumably, Hassan is released from detention at some point and joins The Brotherhood, as the title "Three Years Later" appears between the detention scene and a view of the port of New York



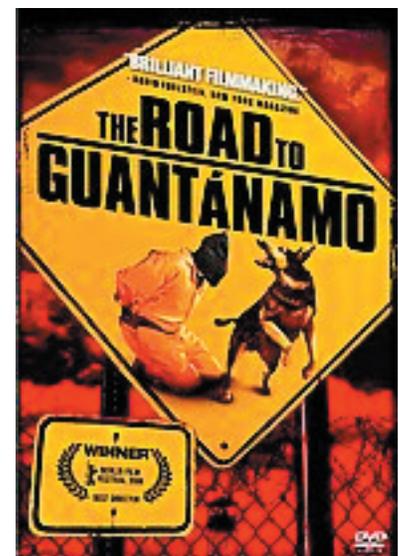
as containers are unloaded. A stowaway in a container, he is released by bearded men and informed of arrangements that will lead up to his mission.... The War Within provides a cinematic example of what many observers have been predicting: That overzealous methods by American officials are increasing, not decreasing, terrorism. Although the story is fictional, news reports earlier in 2005 indicate that several CIA agents in Italy, without the authorization of Rome, kidnapped individuals, one of whom was taken to Egypt and tortured to obtain information that he did not possess. Accordingly, the Political Film Society has nominated The War Within for best film on human

rights of 2005.

### THE ROAD TO GUANTANAMO BAY

Mat Whitecross and Michael Winterbottom / UK / 2006 / 95 min  
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0468094/>

From Kenneth Chisholm: In 2001, four Pakistani Britons, Ruhul Ahmed, Asif Iqbal and Shafiq Rasul and another friend, Monir, travel to Pakistan for a wedding and in a urge of idealism, decide to see the situation of war torn Afganistan which is being bombed by the American forces in retaliation for the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Once there, with the loss of Monir in the wartime chaos, they are captured by Northern Alliance fighters. They are then handed them over the American forces who transport them to the prison camps at the Guantanamo Bay base in Cuba. What follows is three years of relentless imprisonment, interrogations and torture to make them submit to blatantly wrong confessions to being terrorists. In the midst of this abuse, the three struggle to keep their spirits up in that face of this grave injustice.

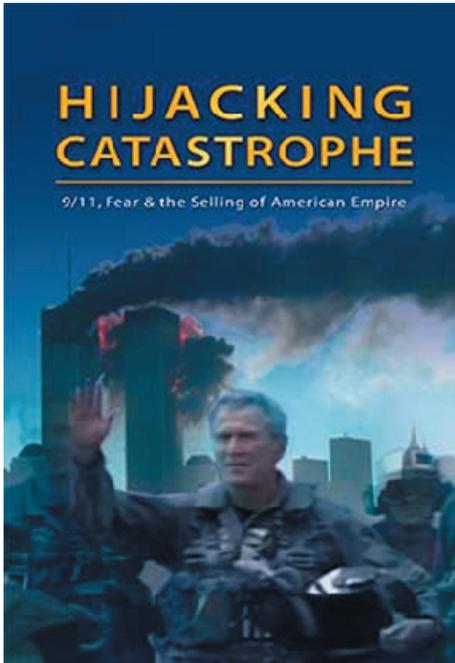


**HIJACKING CATASTROPHE:  
9/11, FEAR & THE SELLING OF  
AMERICAN EMPIRE**

Jeremy Earp and Sut Jhally / USA /  
2004 / 100min

<http://www.hijackingcatastrophe.org/>

MEF: *Hijacking Catastrophe: 9/11,  
Fear & the Selling of American*



*Empire* examines how a radical fringe of the Republican Party has used the trauma of the 9/11 terror attacks to advance a pre-existing agenda to radically transform American foreign policy while rolling back civil liberties and social programs at home.

The documentary places the Bush Administration's false justifications for war in Iraq within the larger context of a two-decade struggle by neoconservatives to dramatically increase military spending in the wake of the Cold War, and to expand American power globally by means of military force.

At the same time, the

documentary argues that the Bush Administration has sold this radical and controversial plan for aggressive American military intervention by deliberately manipulating intelligence, political imagery, and the fears of the American people after 9/11.

**TERROR'S ADVOCATE**

Barbet Schroeder / France / 2007 /  
135 min

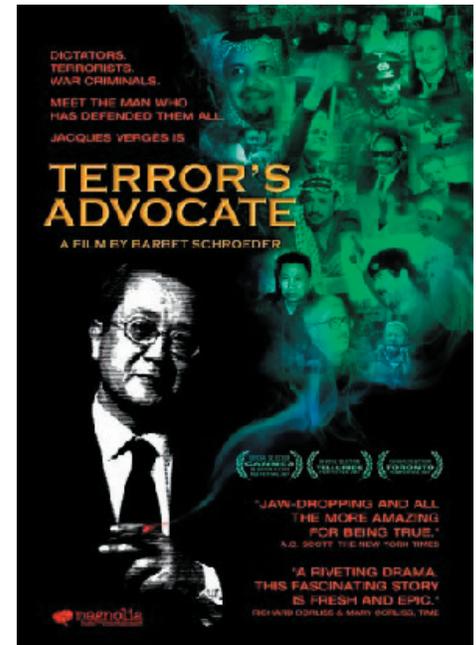
<http://www.terrorsadvocatefilm.com/>

Metacritic: Communist, anticolonialist, right-wing extremist? What convictions guide the moral mind of Jacques Vergès? Barbet Schroeder takes us down history's darkest paths in his attempt to illuminate the mystery behind this enigmatic figure.

As a young lawyer during the Algerian war, Vergès espoused the anticolonialist cause and defended Djamila Bouhired, "la Pasionaria," who bore her country's hopes for freedom on her shoulders and was sentenced to death for planting bombs in cafes. He obtained her release, married her, and had two children with her. Then, suddenly, at the height of an illustrious career, Vergès disappeared without trace for eight years. He reemerged from his mysterious absence and took on the defense of terrorists of all kinds, from Magdalena Kopp and Anis Naccache to Carlos the Jackal. He represented historical monsters such as Nazi lieutenant Klaus Barbie.

From the lawyer's inflammatory and provocative cases to his controversial terrorist links, Barbet Schroeder follows the winding trail left by this "devil's advocate" as he forged his unique path in law and politics. Schroeder explores and questions the history of "blind

terrorism" through his penetrating investigation of this compelling man, and leads us toward shocking revelations that expose long-hidden links in history.



**THE POWER OF NIGHTMARES:  
BABY IT'S COLD OUTSIDE**

Adam Curtis / UK / 2005 / 180min

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/3755686.stm>

BBC: In the past our politicians offered us dreams of a better world. Now they promise to protect us from nightmares. The most frightening of these is the threat of an international terror network. But just as the dreams were not true, neither are these nightmares. In a new series, the *Power of Nightmares* explores how the idea that we are threatened by a hidden and organised terrorist network is an illusion. It is a myth that has spread unquestioned through politics, the security services and the international media.



**ARABS AND TERRORISM**

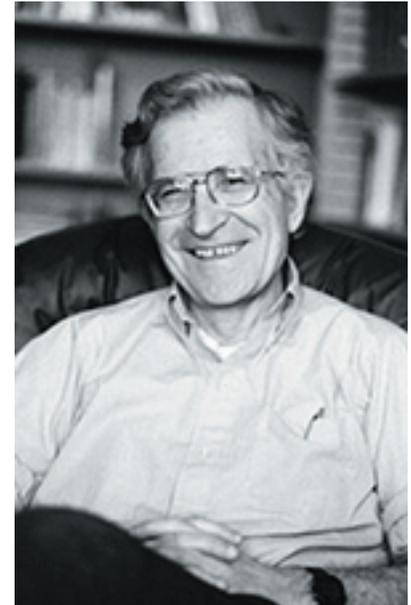
Hanan Ashrawi / 2007 / 135 min

<http://www.arabsandterrorism.com>

This is a multi-faceted research and documentary project on Arabs and Terrorism.



reveals instances where the U.S. government has favored terrorism in order to achieve its own means. Following the speech, he engages in an hour-long Q & A session in which he defends his position.



**MY DAD IS INTO TERRORISM**

William Karel / France / 2006 / 84 min

<http://www.mongrelmedia.com/films/MyDadTerrorism.html>

In the mid-1980s, Gilles Boulouque's high-profile investigation into a series of terrorist bombings in Paris made him an overnight celebrity and marked the end of a normal family life for his wife and children. Based on the memoir by his daughter, My Dad Is Into Terrorism recounts Boulouque's devotion to his work, his ultimate undoing at the hands of the media (and possibly his own superiors) and the downward slope to his eventual suicide.

It is unique in its breadth and scope: researched in 6 languages and filmed on location in 11 countries, with 120 experts/politicians and hundreds of street interviews in the United States, Europe, and the Arab world. It examines the dominant discourse on terrorism in the United States and Europe and offers critics an opportunity to respond.

**GITMO: THE NEW RULSE OF WAR**

Erik Gandini and Tarik Saleh / Sweden / 2005 / 90 min

<http://www.atmo.se/zino.aspx?articleID=14861>

Gunnar Rhelin, Variety: A low-key but hard-hitting attempt to find out what is happening to the prisoners at Guantanamo, documakers Erik Gandini and Tarik Saleh's "Gitmo" will be a welcome, if controversial, guest at fests and on webs around the world.... Gandini and Saleh are not allowed to meet or talk to any prisoners. When, at night, they hear them screaming in their cages, the response by U.S. officers is, "They are saying their prayers."



**DISTORTED MORALITY: AMERICA'S WAR ON TERROR? (WITH NOAM CHOMSKY)**

John Junkerman / USA / 2003 / 55 min

<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docId=4054523048548733881>

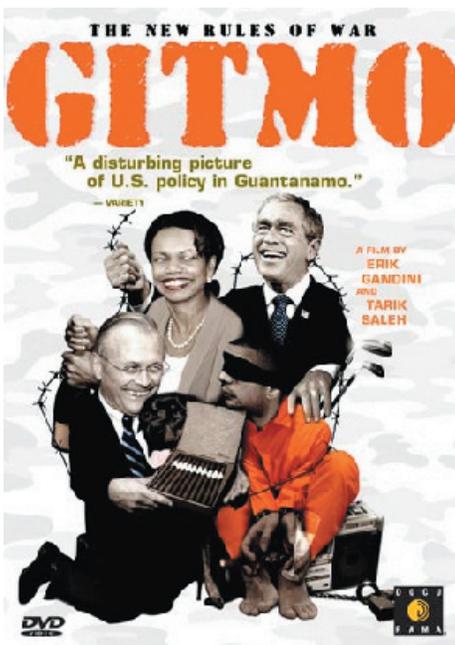
Andrea LeVasseur, All Movie Guide: *Distorted Morality - America's War on Terror?* features scholar Noam Chomsky presenting his thesis before an audience at Harvard University on February 6, 2002. He provides logical support for his argument against the U.S. government's proposed war on terror. Using thoughtful analysis and cited sources, Chomsky

If the filmmakers had shown only what they experienced at the base, "Gitmo" would have been interesting, but they took what

they learned at Guantanamo to other locations and their additional interviews around the world have made their "Gitmo" remarkable.

From the "private contractors" -- who work in the camps and, because they are not U.S. military, can torture the prisoners -- the filmmakers heard the various methods of abuse used at the base. And they interview Janet Karpinski, blamed in the torture scandals in Iraq, who tells how methods were exported from Guantanamo to Iraq, and suggests that such methods were sanctioned by people very high up in the U.S. government.

footage with material shot during the filmmakers' trips to various countries. Quality is fine, considering some of the circumstances in which it was shot.



"Gitmo" -- title is soldiers' slang for the base itself -- never forces the filmmakers' views directly on the audience. Instead, Gandini and Saleh slowly show how one revelation leads to another, and how in the end this method of journalistic inquiry paints a disturbing picture of U.S. policy in Guantanamo. Film combines newsreel

## UPCOMING CONFERENCES

*Compiled by Ainsley Jenicek and Rawle Agard*

### 2008 Critical Race Studies Conference

Ryerson University, second weekend in November.  
Contact: Prof. Sedef Arat-Koc,  
saratkoc@politics.ryerson.ca

### Gender and Borders/Boundaries

27 June, 2008 at University of Manchester, UK.  
Website: [http://www.llc.manchester.ac.uk/research/centres/mdcsn/conferences/gender\\_and\\_borders/](http://www.llc.manchester.ac.uk/research/centres/mdcsn/conferences/gender_and_borders/)  
Contact: [genderbordersboundaries@hotmail.com](mailto:genderbordersboundaries@hotmail.com)  
This one-day interdisciplinary postgraduate conference examines gender issues as it relates to borders/boundaries, those sites of exclusion, control, dominance as well as exchange, transgression and creativity. Keynote speaker: Ruba Salih.

### Multiculturalisms and Art Research.

29-30 August, 2008 at the University of Turku, Finland.  
This two-day conference will involve panels on representations of multiculturalisms, multiculturalisms in the arts and in the media, multiculturalisms and gender, as well as multiculturalisms in the Nordic countries.  
Call for Papers: 250 word abstracts by May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008.  
Contact: Outi Hakola, Conference Secretary,  
[outi.hakola@utu.fi](mailto:outi.hakola@utu.fi).

### Nationalism, Ethnicity and Citizenship: Whose Citizens? Whose Rights?

30 June - 1 July, 2008 at University of Surrey, Guildford, UK.  
Website: <http://www.surrey.ac.uk/Arts/CRONEM/registration08.htm>  
This two-day conference will include multi-disciplinary perspectives on the questions raised by multiculturalism to traditional notions of nationalism, ethnicity and citizenship.  
The Centre for Research on Nationalism, Ethnicity and Multiculturalism (CRONEM) is running this conference.

### Thinking Beyond Borders Congress 2008

Website: <http://www.fedcan.ca/english/issues/whatsnew/thinkingbeyondborders2008.cfm>  
The Employment Equity Act, a series of programs that emerged to address systemic inequities in

Canada, is undergoing a 20-year review. Issues surrounding this Act include: cuts to the Status of Women, including its independent research fund and the deletion of "equality" from its mandate; funding to Multiculturalism is under review; and long-term fiscal pressures for underfunded post-secondary institutions reduce opportunities for hiring, which in turn reduces opportunities for equity access.  
Call for member-organized papers, panels, workshops or other conference programming.  
Contact: Donna Pennee, V-P, Equity Issues,  
[dpennee@uoguelph.ca](mailto:dpennee@uoguelph.ca)

### Deconstructing Islamophobia: Immigration, Globalization and Constructing the Other

<http://crg.berkeley.edu/index.html>  
The conference seeks to provide an open scholarly exchange, exploring new approaches to the study of the current period, and de-constructing the organizing process that gave birth to Islamophobia as well as its interconnectedness to existing and historical otherness in the area of race, gender and "post-colonial" studies.

### Representing Islam: Comparative Perspectives

International Conference University of Manchester 5-6 September 2008  
[http://www.llc.manchester.ac.uk/research/centres/cres/events/representing\\_islam/](http://www.llc.manchester.ac.uk/research/centres/cres/events/representing_islam/)

### 7th Global Conference

#### Violence and the Contexts of Hostility

Monday 5th May - Wednesday 7th May 2008, Budapest, Hungary  
For further details about the conference please visit:  
<http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/ptb/hhv/vcce/vch7/cfp.html>

### International Conference on the Representation of Islam and Muslims in the Media 2008,

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, July 29-30, 2008.  
For more information, see <http://www.icorm08.com.my/>  
The negative image of Islam and Muslims is becoming ever more pervasive around the world. It is hoped that this International Conference will succeed in examining the problematics of the noted communication scenario and open up new pathways to solution.