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Reading South African Media Representations of Islam after 11 September 2001

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Abstract: In her paper, "Reading South African Media Representations of Islam after 11 September 2001," Gabeba Baderoon probes the resonances of news representations of 11 September 2001. Baderoon examines the events of that day from the perspective of South Africa, arguing that the international media became located and embodied through the representations of the highly visible and grievable deaths of just under three thousand people in the United States. Her analysis reveals a complex view that derives from the legacy of legislated racial discrimination crafted under the policy of Apartheid as well as the presence of Muslims brought as slaves during the country's earliest colonial history. Following Judith Butler's analysis of the 2001 war in Afghanistan, Baderoon argues that a death recognized as worthy of mourning signals a border of the human. A grievable death acknowledges the humanity of the person who has died. During Apartheid, one indication of the denial of Black people's humanity was the lack of grievability accorded in death.

Gabeba BADEROON

Reading South African Media Representations of Islam after 11 September 2001

Susan Sontag writes in her *Regarding the Pain of Others* that "The problem is not that people remember through photographs, but that they remember only the photographs" (89). Indeed, photographs seem to communicate directly. In fact, they generate a disorderly array of meanings and it is the role of words to discipline the meaning of a photograph. Pierre Bourdieu proclaims that "photos are nothing without words," but it may be truer that pictures are too many things without words (20). In the case of the news-photograph, it is the role of the caption to stabilize its unruly meanings. Sontag observes that "all photographs wait to be explained or falsified by the captions" (*Regarding* 5). However, the single voice of the caption is a constraint that the image constantly resists. Because the photograph is the record of one instant, there hovers within every photograph the ghost of the instant just before and just after. The photograph appears to shimmer and leak, and the relation of the image to the word is never settled.

At 8:46AM on Tuesday 11 September 2001, a hijacked plane, American Airlines Flight 11, crashed into the ninety-third floor of the north side of the 110-storey One World Trade Centre, the North Tower of the complex. The plane, loaded with sufficient fuel for a cross-continental flight, ignited on impact and caused a catastrophic fire in the building. Twenty-four hour news channels immediately focused their cameras on the sight and broadcast live footage of the North Tower burning. At 9:06AM, a second plane, United Airlines Flight 175, flew directly into the South Tower. The news channels captured this incident live. The sight of the second plane flying inexorably into its target would be repeatedly replayed, and would provide the basic visual vocabulary for the events of that day. Within two hours, another sight, described by John Updike as a "transforming event" would be added to the visual language of that day: the "endlessly recycled … image of the collapsing towers" (Rose <http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,,917712,00.html>). Investigation would reveal that a total of four planes had been hijacked on that day and, in addition to the two which crashed into the two towers of the World Trade Centre in New York City, at 9:45AM a third plane, American Airlines Flight 77, crashed into the southwest side of the Pentagon building in Washington D.C., and at 10:37AM United Airlines Flight 93 crashed into a field near the town of Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Two thousand nine hundred and seventy three people died in these four events. The visibility of those deaths, generated through thousands of words and images, invite a human connection, the literal meaning of sympathy, with those who died. I offer this unreservedly. This essay attempts to place those deaths, many of them inerasably visible, in the context of a history of representations of race and religion. Many commentators have asserted that the hijackings and destruction on 11 September constituted a moment when "the world changed." How these events in the United States attained local meaning in various parts of the world deserves attention. In this paper I look at the representation of 11 September 2001 in South Africa. To gather the evidence for this paper, I collected and photocopied the front and inside pages of the coverage of the events of 11 September in the *Cape Times* and *Cape Argus*, the two English-language daily newspapers in Cape Town held in the collection of the British Library at Collingwood. Of the week's coverage I selected approximately sixty pages. Representations and stories about the events of 11 September 2001 and the subsequent war in Afghanistan, I argue in this paper, reveal an evolution in images of Muslim men and women. This illustrates a notable turn in the evolution of an international media idiom about Islam -- which, I argue, amounts to the rhetoric of a new configuration of the human.

South Africa is an apt place to situate my investigation into representation and the human. It is notorious for the policy of Apartheid, or separateness, instituted under the National Party government, which shaped the country's politics from 1948 until 1994. Apartheid legislated discrimination against people who were legally designated into the racial groups Black, Indian, and "Coloured." This history of institutionalized racism was ended by the first democratic elections in the country's history in 1994. The association of South Africa with Islam may be surprising but, in fact,

the country has a small but well-integrated Muslim community whose presence dates from 1658 when the Dutch brought Muslim slaves to the Cape. While today Muslims constitute a small minority in South Africa -- under two percent of the population -- at one point, slaves, some of whom were Muslim, constituted the majority of the population of the Cape colony. South African perspectives of race have been profoundly shaped by slavery, and therefore Islam can be found at the center of the colonial and apartheid racial order.

Slavery is crucial to the way Muslims have been represented in South Africa. Muslims slaves were called "Malays," suggesting a geographical origin in South East Asia, though historians show the Dutch exploited nodes in an existing Portuguese slave trade and secured slaves from East Africa, Mozambique, India and South East Asia (Shell xxv). There was a small number of Free Blacks in the Cape, who were either manumitted slaves or free servants from Java (Worden, Van Heyningen, and Bickford-Smith 64). Included in the group of Muslims brought to the Cape were a small number of leaders sent into exile from South East Asia, where their resistant activities proved a hindrance to Dutch trade and colonial expansion. Cumulatively, images of Islam in South Africa constitute a picturesque tradition, evident in nineteenth-century landscape paintings of the Cape, in which "Malay" slaves are constructed as colorful, submissive, and law-abiding. In order to construct a relationship of belonging to the land, colonists in South Africa portrayed indigenous people, who resisted forced labor, as prone to "idleness" (Coetzee 28). In contrast, "Malays" were portrayed as skilled, industrious, placid, and law-abiding, and were characterized by colorful clothing and rituals. This picturesque construction of "Malays" proved a useful discursive tool, *filling the gap* between the "natives" and the settlers, and functioning rhetorically to secure European selfhood in the colonial landscape. The discourse of the picturesque both allayed settler anxiety about belonging in the landscape and disavowed the brutalities of slavery (Jeppie 89). Slave society in the Cape has been portrayed as "mild" in comparison with New World slavery (Keegan 16). In fact, due to the high number of male slaves relative to male colonists, the exercise of power by owners over slaves was often extremely violent (Worden 4).

In numerous paintings, travel writing, and cookbooks, "Malays" were portrayed as reassuringly compliant and lacking change and resistance. Such images continued after the abolition of slavery under British rule in 1834, well into the twentieth century. Relative to the size of the Muslim population, at various times they have been significantly visible in the media and in popular culture in South Africa. Portrayed consistently in settings such as weddings, funerals and feasts, Muslims were staged in colonial-era paintings, writings and newspapers as "quiet, kind, slow-speaking, fatalistic and passive" (Jeppie 3). This conception of Muslims as exotic and submissive contrasts radically with contemporary conceptions of Islam as militant and dangerous. During apartheid, as Muslims became visible in the anti-apartheid struggle and also after the Iranian revolution in 1979, another discourse around Islam also appeared: the association of Islam with violence (Bangstad 188). In 1996 a categorically new vision of Muslims – bearing guns and masked by Palestinian scarves - appeared in South Africa during coverage of the Pagad story (see Baderoon). In South Africa, the dominant ways of determining the boundaries of the human under apartheid, inherited from the colonial era, did not fully recognize Black people's humanity. Death is a crucial marker of the boundaries of the human. In her consideration of the representation of the war in Afghanistan, Judith Butler points to the way in which representations of death creates regimes of inclusion and exclusion. A death that is recognized as death encodes the border of the human. The deaths of those who are not regarded as human are also lacking in meaning, and therefore invisible. The question "Whose deaths are deaths?" allows us to understand deaths are "grievable," and, therefore, how dead bodies are treated -- whether they are buried, displayed or unmarked and unaccounted for. Apartheid South Africa therefore did not recognize Black people's deaths as deaths. Since its political transformation into a democracy in 1994, South Africa has faced long-unrecognized deaths because of processes such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, before whose committees witnesses consistently asked for assistance in finding the bodies of relatives murdered by the apartheid regime whose remains they had not been able to bury (Sanders

80). In one sense, the commission allowed South Africans to pose the question, Where is the body?

In an interesting comparison, via the extensive array of photographs generated by the events of 11 September death came close to being made visible. Live footage was broadcast shortly after the moment of impact of the first plane. Then an important shift occurred. Jacqueline Rose reports that "in the days following September 11, the same news networks which endlessly recycled the image of the collapsing towers, pulled the footage of bodies falling to the ground out of respect for the dead, but it also stems from the western attitude that bodies must not be seen to die" (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,,917712,00.html>). Which codes of visibility highlight and obscure codes of humanity, and whose *absence* do we not see? It is illuminating to examine discourses of race in the aftermath of 11 September 2001, particularly in relation to representations of Islam. In an important sense, our notion of locality is shaped these days by our experience of media. On 11 September 2001, the international television news stations CNN, the BBC and Sky News demonstrated to South Africans the compelling idiom of a globalized mediascape. Since these organizations are based in the United States and Britain, a powerful though unarticulated geography is at work in world news. This geography works through disembodiment and the de-emphasis of location. From a symbolic center, a gaze is aimed with disembodied equanimity at the rest of the globe. Watching the news, an imagined global viewer is situated, at least symbolically, in this unarticulated place. With the events of 11 September, the seamless abstraction of this center unraveled. The center became materialized through the unsettling of conventions on television. In the television coverage of the events of that day, the voices of the newsreaders stammered, hesitated, and even became silent. The *Cape Times* reported that "News anchors stumble[d] over words to describe [the] immensity of drama as it unfold[ed] on screen" ([13 September 2001]: 9). The reactions to the shock and scale of events both illustrated the distance between the margins and that center, and gave an eerie sense of familiarity, as though "the United States [was] now a part of the rest of the world" (Antrim <http://www.newyorker.com/talk/content/?010924a_talk_wtc>). On that day, in addition to the disruption of form, the content of the news illuminated the matter of location, and situated the United States among places from which it had been considered categorically different: "Kabul, Sarajevo, east Mostar, Grozny, 16 acres of lower Manhattan after September 11 2001, the refugee camp in Jenin" (Sontag, "The Telling Shot" 5).

South African media organs engaged with the nexus of the local and the global to show how the country's setting mediated the meaning of the events of 11 September 2001. The *Cape Times* and *Cape Argus* relied heavily on internationally-sourced media coverage on 11 September, drawing articles from international press agencies, including Agence-France Presse, Reuters and Associated Press, as well as articles reprinted from *The Independent*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*. Yet, even within the range of international material, there was an important range of perspectives. It is significant that among its international sources, the South African media tapped not only those from the United States, but also non-American sources such as *The Independent*, whose reporter Robert Fisk's interview with Osama bin Laden appeared in the *Sunday Argus* of 15 and 16 September 2001.

Voices from outside the United States (although generally still a North American and Western European sample) allow one to discern the emphases and aporia in the dominant responses within the United States and among its allies. On television, South African news channels screened nonstop material from CNN, Fox News, and the BBC. However, as the story developed into the war in Afghanistan, sections of the South African media took steps to attempt to convey the larger story through local perspectives. San Reddy, a journalist at the subscription- television channel *e-tv* said in an interview that "it was easy to use wallpaper [but] CNN became tainted early in the war and we decided we couldn't draw solely on Western news sources" (Reddy interview). *e-tv* sent South African correspondents to New York, and during the war in Afghanistan, also to Pakistan and Afghanistan. The weekly national newspaper the *Mail and Guardian* as well as the South African Broadcasting Corporation also sent correspondents overseas at this time. There, reporters sourced

stories not only about the war, but also reflected on the economics of international journalism to show how stories arrive on the front page or lead the broadcast (see Brummer).

Therefore, direct importation of international sources was combined with attempts of varying substance and effectiveness to interpret the local meaning of the story. Such inflections ranged from accounts of South Africans who died in the planes or collapsed buildings ("Top SA-born executive on jet that hit Trade Centre," *Cape Argus* [13 September] 3), to the carefully modulated response of the South African government to the events ("Mbeki, world leaders condemn attacks," *Cape Argus* [12 September 2001] 5). It was also notable that the South African perspectives shown in the media included attempts to quote not only elite sources, such as the government and well-known analysts such as Clem Sunter, but also consulted local Muslim leaders and accessed the perspectives of ordinary Capetonians through phone-in polls, surveys and interviews. Letters to the newspapers and phone-in polls revealed a widely varying range of perspectives, with the majority conveying sympathy with the United States but insisting on neutrality in the "war on terrorism" (Otter and Ndlakavu 3). South Africans located in the United States at the time provided critical insights about the range of reactions within that country. For instance, columns by the South African journalist and academic, Sean Jacobs and Jessica Blatt, examining ambivalent responses to racial profiling among African Americans following 11 September added significantly to the complexity of the discussions in the South African media (Jacobs and Blatt)). Jacobs and Blatt show that in the aftermath of 11 September the practice of racial profiling attained a new acceptance even among minorities in the US. An African American man acknowledged his ambivalence: "It sickens me that I feel that way, but it's the real world" (qtd. in Jacobs and Blatt). Further, in the Capetonian dailies -- the *Cape Times* and the *Cape Argus* -- the scale and urgency of the story can be measured by the way they reported the events. On 12 September 2001 the entire front page of the *Cape Times* was covered by a photograph of the two burning World Trade Centre towers, with the headline "Moment the world changed" in five-inch black type across the top quarter of the page. No advertisements appeared on this page. The photograph on the cover of the *Cape Argus* of the same day, taking more than half of the page, shows the aftermath of the collapse of the buildings. The headline in upper-case letters above the photograph shows the evolution of the discourse about the events: "US ON WAR ALERT." As with the *Cape Times*, the front page of the *Cape Argus* carried no advertisements. On 12 September, the first day of reporting on the news, both the *Cape Times* and the *Cape Argus* carried articles conveying the urgency and extent of the crisis. A sense of the shock, poignancy, and grave danger of the events is conveyed in a series of detailed articles and photographs. In addition to the picture of the burning Twin Towers on the front page of the *Cape Times* on 12 September, on its inside pages the *Cape Times* reported that "Triple strikes leaves America reeling" (3). Page six carried details such as the number of deaths in the hijacked aircraft. The *Cape Argus* reported the widening implications and that the estimated "death toll will go into the 'thousands'" (3). The disruption to the financial system is reflected on page eight of the *Cape Times*: "World markets slump in panic in wake of attacks."

In tandem with these articles on the extent of the crisis there appeared immediate efforts at reassurance and cohesion. Widely reported in various media, George W. Bush asserted hours after the collapse of the twin towers at Barksdale Air Force Base that "Our military at home and around the world is on high alert status and we have taken the necessary security to continue the functioning of your government" (see, e.g., <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010911-2.html>). The speech was "hastily arranged," and was the first of two occasions on which President Bush would address the media on that day. The US president asserted a tone of "defiance" when he declared "We are being tested as a nation, we will show the world we can pass the test" (Bush qtd. in Cornwell 14). Other recuperative steps involved the uncovering of the planning and execution of the hijackings, transforming them from inexplicable events into "attacks," "plans" and "conspiracies." A recuperative discourse was also manifested on the international front. On 13 September the *Cape Argus* reported "Europe shoulder to shoulder with US" (Karacs 2). Maps and diagrams of the World Trade Centre complex started to appear in newspaper reports, their clarity an attempt to banish the

opacity and confusion symbolized by the smoke and collapsed buildings in New York City and Washington D. C. In numerous declarations, Osama Bin Laden was identified as the "prime suspect" and "US Enemy No. 1." However, despite the attempts described above, the extraordinary fragility of the moment was inescapably present. Further attempts at recuperation appeared in rapid succession, drawing on the languages of investigation, war and retribution, in some cases in tension with one another. In the press conference he held in Louisiana only a few hours after the attacks President Bush started to articulate the distinctive discourse that would ultimately frame the United States' response. He proclaimed that "Freedom itself was attacked this morning by a faithless coward. Freedom will be defended" (*Cape Times* [12 September 2001]). After arriving back at the White House the president addressed a nationwide audience in the United States, as well as a global one. Importantly, during this speech, Bush defined the events of that day as "acts of war." Talk of war rapidly gained momentum and substance and soon sedimented into the definitive response from the Bush administration. The discourse of war activated discussions to invoke the collective defense clause, Article Five of the Washington Treaty with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Drawing from this speech, already on 12 September the *Cape Argus* carried the note of war in its headline: "US ON WAR ALERT." The choice of the language of war to couch an assertion of resilience and strength, specifically an open-ended "war on terrorism" conducted by military means through a coalition with other nations, was met with ambivalence and even rejection by other countries. The attention attracted by the language of war is indicated by the use of quotation marks around the word in the *Saturday Argus* headline "Washington's newly declared "war" on terrorism."

The US President continued his speech on 20 September with a further metaphor: "This will be a monumental struggle of good versus evil. But good will prevail" (*Cape Times* [12 September 2001]). The additional layer of Manichean imagery, of good and evil, with us or against us, deepened ambivalence in other countries, evident in the caption to the map of the Middle East that appears on page three of the *Saturday Argus* of 15-16 September 2001: "New Rules: the United States seems intent on forcing the world to choose sides in its anti-terror campaign" (3). The hesitance felt by allies of the United States was conveyed in a statement by Vladimir Putin that "Russia opposed any indiscriminate retaliation for the US terror attacks and called instead for careful action based on proof." In a letter in the online publication, *ANC Today*, President Thabo Mbeki negotiated the complex discursive terrain by terming the events of 11 September "acts of terrorism" which he characterized as "deeply offensive to African culture and tradition," yet concluded by calling the acts "crimes" of "willful mass murder," using language that suggested the discourse of the prosecution, evidence, and the courts. Echoing this sense, President Mbeki's cabinet stated that "South Africa will co-operate with all efforts to apprehend the culprits and bring them to book. Justice must be done and it must be seen to be done. South Africa therefore recognises the right of the US government to track down the culprits and bring them to justice. Thorough investigations and incontrovertible evidence should inform any action taken" (South African Cabinet Statement of 19 September 2001 <http://70.84.171.10/~etools/newsbrief/2003/news0923.txt>).

In contrast to the increasingly unified view from the United States government, public response within that country was sufficiently varied to result in a broadening of discussions in the media there. Noam Chomsky's short book *9-11* became a bestseller, attracting people who wished to probe the context for the events. Chomsky reported that as "a reflection of public concerns" the commercial media broadened the range of panelists and discussants to include radical commentators, which "never happened before" (97). There were also different emphases within the Bush administration, notable for instance in a report on 12 September 2001, Secretary of State Colin Powell suggested a measured pace to his government's reaction, saying that the United States would take "a comprehensive response," including steps taken "diplomatically." Secretary Powell indicated the United States was "far from selecting any particular targets for retaliation. We have to build a case first." On the other hand, the sub-heading "America pledges vengeance" to an article in the *Cape Times* of 12 September, seemed to encapsulate the tone of President Bush's warning that "we will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those

who harbour them" (2). The impression of the gathering momentum of military force is conveyed in the report that "the United States forges ahead in building a global anti-terrorism coalition."

Beside differences of tone within its government, a further kind of deliberation within the United States was reported on in the *Cape Argus*. The range included reflective and even critical voices among the US-American public and intelligentsia: "Now for the first time the US has really felt or experienced what so many other counties have experienced so many times, during war. And it's producing a kind of identity crisis, almost. People are wondering: 'Who are we? Who are these people doing this to us? Who hates us, and what are we doing that warrants this?'" (Alex Boraine qtd. in Morris 18). Such increasingly self-reflective questions connecting the actions of 11 September to the role of the United States in the world were appropriated and redirected by the administration of George W. Bush into a characterization as an attack on "the free world": "Americans are asking 'Why do they hate us?' They hate what they see right here in this chamber: a democratically elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedoms: our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other" (Bush <http://www.cnn.com/2001/US/09/20/gen.bush.transcript/>). This redirection of the expansive questioning generated by the hijackings into a set of bald polarities became the grounds for an eventually unassailable call for war and a narrowing space for alternative views in the United States. Amid the tight choreography of official efforts at reassurance, contrary voices were interpreted as unsettling the task of reconfiguring the meaning of the events.

One of the most obvious visual patterns established on 11 September in media coverage was the repeated showing of the inexorable approach and crash of the second plane, Flight 175, into the South Tower of the World Trade Centre buildings. On television, the moment of impact would be screened over and over again during the hours and days immediately following the event. Partly this selection is due to the fact that only one filmed image exists of the moment of impact of the first plane, Flight 11, hitting the North Tower, seen in the documentary *9/11*, while the full range of US and international media were covering the crash in the North Tower when the second plane crashed into the South Tower and therefore had live footage of the latter event. As a result, this image became exemplary of that day. In the newspapers a number of photographs on the day show the North Tower already in flames and the second plane about to hit the South Tower (for example, page three of the *Cape Times* on 12 September). Only when the second plane crashed into the other building, did recognition dawn that this was a deliberate act, not an accident.

What is the meaning of the repeated screening of this image? One may read into the image an account of the self taken by surprise, of an action so unimaginable that what is viewed again and again is precisely the impossibility of the event, the scale of the surprise, the audacity, the unpredictability combined with the shattering evidence of its calculation, its constructedness. The scale of the violation is seen as an indication of the monstrosity of the other. The sight of the crash of the planes was *meant* to be seen, it was constructed to be a "visual spectacle," to be viewed over and over again (Franzen <http://www.newyorker.com/talk/content/?010924a_talk_wtc>). What may one read into its meanings, and the meaning of revisiting it? Viewers in the West had become used, Sontag says, to images of suffering *elsewhere*, and photographs of war have confirmed the distance between the Western viewer and the location of suffering. One of the unsettling effects of the events of 11 September was the collapsing of the difference that had always distinguished the United States from places where buildings shatter and bodies die visibly, subject to unpredictable, indiscriminate violence. Therefore, one important set of meanings can thus be understood as the breakdown of this distancing effect. In the aftermath of 11 September, "the scorched wreckage at the Pentagon is reminiscent of Kabul" (Franzen <http://www.newyorker.com/talk/content/?010924a_talk_wtc>).

In the aftermath of 11 September, the distinctiveness of the United States was overtly reclaimed and policed both in official utterances and in the media. The uniqueness of the transgression and its suffering were emphasized, and similarity disavowed. During coverage of the war in Afghanistan, CNN chair Walter Isaacson issued a directive that all reports on the deaths of civilians in Afghanistan resulting from US bombing were to be concluded with a reminder about the deaths

of Americans on 11 September, "in the context of a terrorist attack that caused enormous suffering in the United States" (Kurtz <http://www.commondreams.org/headlines01/1031-02.htm>). The subversive possibility that civilian deaths in both countries were tragedies of equal dimension was curtailed, and the pre-eminence of American deaths was reclaimed.

In addition to the moment of impact, the newspapers revisited again and again images of destroyed buildings, most frequently of the twin towers (though these were not the only structures destroyed in the seven-building World Trade Centre complex). The photographs of the remains of the twin towers are in stark contrast to the conventional image of skyscrapers and the crisp, closely packed grid of Manhattan Island, its city skyline characterized by right angles and straight lines of buildings in close proximity.

Regarding photographs of the atrocities carried out by General Franco during the Spanish Civil War, Sontag observes: "A bomb has torn open the side of a house. To be sure, a cityscape is not made of flesh. Still, sheared-off buildings are almost as eloquent as body parts" (Sontag, "The Telling Shot" 4). This is confirmed in images of the aftermath of 11 September, where the remnants of the two towers articulate a striking sense of fragility. They seem torn open and reduced to the vulnerability of bones or skeletons. Yet, contemplating a delicate filigree of steel structures - all that remains of the South Tower - even this metaphor of flesh and bone seems too heavy for these fragments. In their lightness, the remains seem not so much organic as resembling a fragile latticework barely more tangible than the surrounding emptiness. The sights are disjunctive, yet some of them are eerily beautiful. As Sontag noted, to verbalize that association was taboo. "To acknowledge the beauty of photographs of the World Trade Center ruins in the months following the attack seemed frivolous, sacrilegious." (*Regarding* 76).

Textures not usually associated with buildings were highlighted in unexpected combinations. The usually crisply modern Manhattan skyline with its angled collection of skyscrapers crowded together on the southern portion of the island has, in a photograph on page eighteen of the *Cape Argus* on 13 September, the unexpected characteristics of dust, opacity, and softness. Many photographs focus on this compelling interplay of concrete and smoke, whether in long shots taken from helicopters or more intimately from the ground or other buildings. These photographs convey the sense of the building as vulnerable, almost body-like, and the striking connotation that that body has been broken open and entered. The remains of the buildings convey a sense of the personal violation of the body of the state.

In contrast to the textured vulnerability of buildings in the newspaper images, the news photographs of faces and bodies of mourners in the United States during this time attained an almost structural scale and symbolism. Such faces appeared in extreme close-up, creating a monumental effect. An example appears on page three of the *Sunday Argus* of 13 September 2001, which has a large photograph of a woman's face, itself magnified into intimate detail. The face is presented sculpturally - with the texture of shadows and the tear on her cheek highlighting the shape of the nose and the eye. Although the close-up focuses attention on this one person, the effect is not to see her as an individual but instead as representative. Because of close cropping, one cannot see her hair, clothing, or other distinguishing characteristics. Even her weeping, identified in the caption as being caused by her inability to find a missing relative, is presented visually in a generalized way, reaching beyond individual loss to stand for the whole tragedy. On the front page of the *Saturday Argus* of 15/16 September, a large photograph shows a white hand holding a black hand; between them they clasp a small United States flag. Through such treatment, using extreme close-ups and symbolic gestures, parts of the body attain to the monumental. In this way, bodies and buildings seem to have been inverted, exchanging qualities and meanings. The abstract treatment given to the face of the woman above is in sharp contrast to the way in which the people who died on that day are shown. A conscious attempt was made to individualize them through the use of photographs and short biographies. On the front page of the *Cape Argus* on 15 September a collection of such photographs, from personal or family albums showing them in casual or smiling expressions, appeared. On the same page, a photograph of one of the suspected hijackers, Mohammed Atta, appears. Though it is also an individual photograph of his face, this one is differ-

ent to the collection above. It is a photograph from an identity document, showing a serious, unsmiling face, decidedly not casual. It is a face inscribed within a legal framework, a "suspected" face. Below, I contrast this "suspected" face with the face of the "prime suspect," Osama bin Laden. In addition to these images of the victims and perpetrators of the attacks, the *Cape Argus* presented photographs of South Africans accompanying the report of their views in an article titled "Capetonians favour neutrality in American's war against terrorism" (Otter and Ndlakavu 3). The individuality of the faces portrayed confirmed the insistence on a sympathetic yet distinctive national response in the article.

The portrayal of the bodies of those who died in the buildings and planes was an especially strong taboo after 11 September: while there are evocative photographs of people who are jumping from the buildings, including those who are holding hands and jumping together, their bodies once deceased are not shown, and there are no pictures of the impact of those bodies and none of the bodies on the ground. Sontag points out that while the Western media is oriented towards attention to violence in an often sensationalist manner, there is extreme discretion in dealing with violence enacted on First World people (Sontag 72). In contrast , violence acted on people in the Third World is often revealed in great detail: "The more remote or exotic the place, the more likely we are to have full frontal views of the dead and dying" (Sontag 72). The handling of this category of bodies raises the political meaning of discretion and tact. There was a deliberate abstention from showing dead bodies at the towers. The reasons for the taboo may therefore be traced to the history of images of suffering and the distinctive treatment of dead and violated bodies from the West. Even in the treatment of these bodies there are illuminating differences. The bodies jumping from the burning Twin Towers, signaled only the scale of the horror and loss. These are bodies that are not held in a grid of biography and fellowship, but bodies profoundly vulnerable and out of place. Images of vulnerable and injured bodies appear in the *Cape Argus* on 12 September on page three, which carried photographs of women with bloodied faces being carried from the building and on 16 September the *Sunday Argus* showed people who had emerged from the buildings covered in industrial dust. These do not approximate the images of "grievously injured bodies … from Asia or Africa" but they approach the "interdiction" on showing graphic suffering of Western bodies (Sontag, *Regarding* 72). The unspoken bounds on representing such suffering would have been fundamentally transgressed by the sight of the dead at the World Trade Centre. The proscription on the sight of bodies jumping from the buildings and on the streets below by the bounds of respect, propriety and "good taste" may therefore be seen to secure the uniqueness and exemption of the United States (*ibid*.). Sontag points out that the absences of images of the American dead "obscur[es] a host of concerns and anxieties about public order and public morale that cannot be named" (68-69). What cannot be named is the way in which death in these images resembles death elsewhere, and the human meanings of both.

Among the most compelling photographs that appear as part of the story of 11 September are those of the face of Osama Bin Laden. A photograph of bin Laden appeared immediately after the events of 11 September in the *Cape Argus* on 12 September 2001 with the caption, "No. 1 suspect: Osama Bin Laden" (5). Bin Laden's face can be read as part of a long history of representations of men of the East who are seen as a threat. However, within this history, the face of Osama bin Laden is different. Bin Laden is described as "tall, gaunt, charismatic, elusive" (Updike <http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2001/09/24/010924ta_talk_wtc>), also as "quiet" and unimpressive by Prince Bandar, the Saudi Ambassador to the United States in an interview on CNN, cited in the film *Fahrenheit 9/11*. Not many photographs of Bin Laden exist and in the coverage a small number of photographs and limited camera footage of Bin Laden circulated among numerous world media organs, for instance, the photograph that appears in the *Cape Times* on 14 September on page seven is the same as that on the cover of *Time* magazine on 1 October 2001 (credited to Associated Press). Similarly, the photograph in the *Cape Argus* of 12 September appears also in the *Saturday Argus* on 15-16 September. The photograph in the *Cape Times* on 14 September is a shot from the waist up, and shows details of the white turban and the white clothing of Bin Laden. His beard is full and comes down to below his neck. His gaze is directed away from the camera,

looking to the left. The expression on his face conveys a sense of stillness. In the photograph on page five of the *Cape Argus* on 12 September, Bin Laden is shown with his gaze directed at the camera. Yet in none of the representations is a sense of accessibility conveyed. This face, which has been expressly accused of the planning and execution of the attacks of 11 September 2001, resists connection to meanings of horror and murder, and demonstrates the way photographs always exceed the meanings attached to them. The offence of its stillness is everywhere. The insistent, unsettling multiplicity of photographs of Bin Laden is indicated in articles that refer to his "mystique." In contrast to the explicable face of Saddam Hussein for instance, or the Ayatollah Khomeini, the expression on the face of Bin Laden is neither stern nor threatening. It seems to convey calmness. Most significantly, the face does not signal reciprocity. It always conveys a sense of containedness. In filmed footage Bin Laden's gestures appear slow and careful. There is nothing hurried nor accessible about this face. Moreover, the face of Osama bin Laden has an unsettling refusal to be singular. It is almost average. Precisely its refusal to be exceptional complicates the ideological task of attaching meaning to his face. It is a face that appears quiet and unthreatening, yet, because it refuses to have one meaning, it is also unsettling. The varied meanings of the face of Osama bin Laden have come to stand for the bewilderment and impossibility of Islam itself. Bin Laden is a terrifying face of Islam, because his face refuses reciprocity.

What can be said, and thought, about Islam? The word "crusade," used by President Bush on 20 September 2001 to describe the "war on terrorism," derives from the medieval era when Islam was Christianity's defining enemy. It has been possible to ignore history and context in discussing Islam. In one sense, on 11 September 2001, religion entered the public space in a fundamentally constricted way. The scale of the challenge that Islam is assumed to pose -- a view of Islam as irrevocably different, irrational, and posing an unprecedented challenge -- is

itself a *religious* idea, and has motivated a particular set of rhetorical, legal, and military responses by the United States and its allies after 11 September 2001. It is argued that it is not possible to engage with Islam through existing norms or through the discourse of the law. This argument has been used to motivate the creation of a space by the United States where such a hindering apparatus does not apply, a space that is outside of the territory of the United States, not merely physically but also rhetorically and legally. In addition, even within the territory of United States, designated acts have been rhetorically and legally lifted outside its jurisdiction.

What implications does the creation of such a space have beyond the United States? Debates in the *Mail & Guardian*, South Africa's most prestigious weekly newspaper, have considered the insidious appeal of the model offered by the United States for other governments. The South African political scientist Peter Vale analyzed the way the United States, in the aftermath of 11 September 2001 positioned itself as speaking for the whole world, extrapolating its interests across a global reach (4). Similarly, Richard Calland warned of the increasingly divided views between elites and underclasses, showing that while exchanges and assumption of powers reminiscent of a "new age of empire" occurred at the level of the elites, sympathies were increasingly being shared among the world's underclasses (*Mail & Guardian* [15 February 2002]). In an article entitled "We need a new anti-terror law, but not this one," David Bruce articulated concerns that the definitions of terrorism in the revised Anti-Terrorism bill presented by the South African government were disturbingly broad. The impetus of events in the United States had attached themselves to local events to appear to justify a tilt toward state rather than judicial, parliamentary or individual powers (*Mail and Guardian* [25 April 2003]). This was a pattern that manifested itself in other parts of the world, and also within the United States.

Where does the boundary of the human lie after the events of 11 September 2001? Judith Butler analyzed US-American media coverage of the war in Afghanistan to ask whose deaths are visible and "grievable?" She concluded that there was a vastly unequal measure of the deaths of Afghan and US-American civilians. In Iraq, the United States does not record the number of civilians killed since the invasion of March 2003. "The figures that come to represent either the spoils of war or the targets of war are not quite human faces," Butler concludes (77). The formulation of Islam as perennial mystery allows Muslim bodies to recede into invisibility, represented only by

extremes. This formulation recalls the line of secrets from Freud's question "what does woman want" to Fanon's reformulation "what does the colonized want?" to the question posed after 11 September 2001: "What does Osama bin Laden want?" The answer, according to R.W. Johnson in the *Sunday Argus*, "absolutely nothing that the West has to offer" (Johnson 11). Reading 11 September 2001 from South Africa makes concrete perspectives from the margin, and shows how constructed and politically weighted the notion of a disembodied, neutral voice of international news organizations is. This voice, affected by 24-hour news broadcasts, became embodied and located on 11 September. South Africa, with its history of a minority Muslim presence since the founding of the colonies which would become the territory of the country, gives necessarily different media perspectives on the events of 11 September. This insistently different view shows how "the world changed" differently on 11 September 2001 and shifts the grounds of discussion of visibility and invisibility in the news. The parameters of the human in South Africa are freshly reconstituted after Apartheid and the creation of a category that stretches beyond the human into which Muslims fit is not evident in South African media representations of Islam. Instead, from a discourse that manifested its own anxieties about land and belonging, the South African discourse about 11 September has settled around law and transgression, rather than civilization and the boundaries of the human.

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